

GOD OVER ALL. 1 KN. 20:1-22. 04/16/23. #54.

20 Now Ben-Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings were with him, with horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, and made war against it. Then he sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, and said to him, "Thus says Ben-Hadad: 'Your silver and your gold are mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine.'" And the king of Israel answered and said, "My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have are yours." Then the messengers came back and said, "Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, 'Indeed I have sent to you, saying, "You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children"; but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, that whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put it in their hands and take it.'" So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Notice, please, and see how this man seeks trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold; and I did not deny him." And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent." Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell my lord the king, 'All that you sent for to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.'" And the messengers departed and brought back word to him. Then Ben-Hadad sent to him and said, "The gods do so to me, and more also, if enough dust is left of Samaria for a handful for each of the people who follow me." So the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell him, 'Let not the one who puts on his armor boast like the one who takes it off.'" And it happened when Ben-Hadad heard this message, as he and the kings were drinking at the command post, that he said to his servants, "Get ready." And they got ready to attack the city. Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the Lord: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the Lord.'" So Ahab said, "By whom?" And he said, "Thus says the Lord: 'By the young leaders of the provinces.'" Then he said, "Who will set the battle in order?" And he answered, "You." Then he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israel—seven thousand. So they went out at noon. Meanwhile Ben-Hadad and the thirty-two kings helping him were getting drunk at the command post. The young leaders of the provinces went out first. And Ben-Hadad sent out a patrol, and they told him, saying, "Men are coming out of Samaria." So he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; and if they have come out for war, take them alive." Then these young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them. And each one killed his man; so the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them; and Ben-Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry. Then the king of Israel went out and attacked the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter. And the prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, "Go, strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do, for in the spring of the year the king of Syria will come up against you."

1. Ahab caves

- a. Ben-Hadad of Syria gathers 32 kings to attack Samaria with a large army
 - a1. Ben-Hadad (Son of Hadad) was a name of the kings (a title like Pharaoh or Caesar)
 - a2. Each city had a king ruling over it
- b. Ben. besieges Samaria with his large army
 - a1. Ahab has no forces to resist the army
 - a2. Ben. begins making demands
- c. Ben. declares that all of Ahab's treasure, his loveliest wives, & children belong to him
 - a1. This is the tribute Ben. demands
 - a2. Ahab immediately complies
- d. Ahab's humiliation & recognition of Ben. superiority is immediately evident
 - a1. Ahab calls him "my lord, the king"
 - a2. Ahab seems to have little pride or strength

2. A bridge too far

- a. Ahab's quick compliance encourages Ben. to demand even more
 - a1. A bully is not satisfied with one concession
 - a2. Unless you stand up to a bully = takes all
- b. Ben. intends to send servants to pillage the palace
 - a1. Ahab is to allow them to take all they want

a2. A further humiliation to demonstrate how pathetic & powerless Ahab is

c. Ahab calls his elders for counsel

- a1. They encourage him to reject demands
- a2. Ben. wants to know how far he can intimidate Ahab (heading toward full surrender)

3. The shield of Israel

- a. Ahab rejects Ben.'s second demand
- b. Ben. threatens to make Samaria a pile of dust
- c. Ahab states an unusually brave thing for him:
"Don't boast when you are putting your armor on as if you were taking it off" (empty boasting)
- d. Ahab has no idea what to do
- e. A prophet of God & states God will deliver Israel
 - a1. Not for Ahab's sake (a wicked king)
 - a2. For God's covenant sake = to prove that he is the Lord (God's reputation)
 - a3. God will determine when Israel is to be punished & by whom & by what manner
 - a4. Ahab's inferior numbers made a miracle necessary (God's specialty)
- f. Ahab believes him & asks "by whom?"
 - a1. By the young provincial leaders
 - a2. Army of 7,000 under 232 platoon leaders (size of 1 brigade)
- g. Ahab is to set the battle array
 - a1. At noon the young leaders emerge from Samaria (followed by troops)
 - a2. Ben. is drunk in his command post
 - a1. He commands to take the men alive
 - a2. Very confident of victory
- h. In the initial skirmish, the Israelites kill all that they engage & the Syrian army flees
 - a1. A great victory against impossible odds
 - a2. Ahab does not follow up the victory
- i. The prophet warns that Ben. will be back in spring
 - a1. Evil never takes a break or admits defeat
 - a2. Never can let guard down against enemy
- j. All spiritual victories are followed by new tests