

1 Kings 20

King James Version (KJV)

20 And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots; and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. (These are vassal kings of the lands that he had previously conquered)

²And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, (Over the years, there were many kings named Benhadad in Syria. Benhadad means son of Hadad)

³Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.

⁴And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have. (Ahab was a wuss – he tried to buy off the Syrians)

⁵And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; (He's not accepting what Ahab sends; he wants it all)

⁶Yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away. (Never give into a bully. He will always come back for more. Ahab was better off resisting)

⁷Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not. (Ahab didn't refuse his first request. He sent him some of each. It was not enough for Benhadad)

⁸And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent. (This is good advice)

⁹Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Benhadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.

¹⁰ And Benhadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. (Benhadad and his 32 vassal kings and all the people that he rules <the kings and the people of conquered nations>. Benhadad is saying he has such a large army that there isn't enough dust in Samaria for each of them to get one handful)

¹¹ And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off. (a proverb – you can brag if you survive the battle. He who puts on his harness is going into battle. He who takes off his harness after the battle is the one who has survived)

¹² And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city. (Declaring war in the middle of a drunk fest; liquid courage. He was embarrassed by Ahab in front of his drinking buddies)

¹³ And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD. (God is still trying to save the people of Israel. Will they wake up and repent?)

NOTE: (God sent a prophet to Ahab only after he had found the courage to stand up to Benhadad)

¹⁴ And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou. (Grow a backbone, Ahab. It's time for ou to lead)

¹⁵ Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand. (These 7,000 were the warriors of Israel who refused to worship Baal. Most of the population had become Baal worshippers)

(They were a type for the Elect in the end times. They will be greatly outnumbered by the heathen, but they will be victorious, none the less. Ahab's men were physical warriors. God's Elect will be spiritual warriors)

¹⁶ And they went out at noon. But Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. (Benhadad and his vassal kings)

¹⁷ And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Benhadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria. (They are coming to attack Benhadad. They aren't running away)

¹⁸ And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive. (Drunken arrogance – only 232 of them, take them alive) (This is a terrible strategy. It puts Benhadad's army at a great disadvantage)

¹⁹ So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them. (232 leaders and 7,000 warriors)

²⁰ And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the horsemen.

²¹ And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. (It was God, through the 7000 that got the victory and sent the Syrians running. Ahab and the army of Israel are only mopping up the remainders of the battle)

²² And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee. (The prophet is warning Ahab to get ready for a Syrian reprisal. They will be back in the spring)

²³ And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. (Although a larger army on the plains has the advantage, they are forgetting that God and one make a majority against any sized heathen army. The Syrians don't understand that it was God who gave Israel the victory)

²⁴ And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms: (Replace the drunk vassal kings with military commanders)

²⁵ And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so. (Although this is good advice, no one can stand against God and be victorious. These heathen people don't understand that)

²⁶ And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Benhadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel. (Aphek = strength or fortress; they chose this place because it was on the plains)

²⁷ And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country. (The Syrians greatly outnumbered the Israelites)

²⁸ And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD. (God is still trying to wake the Israelites up; to know that Yahoveh is the one God. Again, it won't change Ahab)

NOTE: (Ahab was a weak-willed man, who married a strong willed, heathen, evil woman. Never let a mate or spouse lead you away from Almighty God. Never lose your faith because of pressure by other people or by governments. Stay true to God and He will stay true to you)

²⁹ And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. (By the grace of God)

³⁰ But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Benhadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

³¹ And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life. (Ropes around their neck – a sign of total submission, as if they were slaves to Israel)

³² So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive? he is my brother. (He is my compatriot) (This is an insult to God, by Ahab. God gave him the victory so that he could destroy Syria and not become a friend of their king. Ahab is a lost cause)

³³ Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Benhadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Benhadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. (Ahab is an idiot. God delivered Benhadad and Ahab basically releases him, so he could attack Israel again later) (They will be back in 3 years and they will kill Ahab)

³⁴ And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away. (Probably the cities of Naphtali that were taken in battles long ago when Asa ruled)

³⁵ And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him. (Strike him – not kill him)

³⁶ Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him. (A prophet who refuses to obey the Word of God is as bad as a prophet who disobeyed God in Chapter-13)

³⁷ Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him. (He drew blood)

³⁸ So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face. (ashes = bandages – bad translation) (He wanted to look like he just returned from the battle)

³⁹ And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else

thou shalt pay a talent of silver. (Guard the Syrian prisoner at the cost of your life. If he escapes, you will either lose your life or pay a talent of silver)

⁴⁰ And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it. (Your saying shall be your judgment)

(God set Ahab up. He just declared his own judgment)

⁴¹ And he hasted, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets. (ashes = bandages – bad translation)

⁴² And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. (Ahab should have killed Benhadad, not released him)

⁴³ And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria. (Maybe Ahab is finally starting to believe that there is a God in Israel)