**The Amazing Grace of Yahweh!**

**I Kings 20:1 – 20:43 (Lesson #17)**

***20:1 Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his army together. Thirty-two kings were with him, and horses and chariots. And he went up and closed in on Samaria and fought against it. 2 And he sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel and said to him, "Thus says Ben-hadad: 3 ’Your silver and your gold are mine; your best wives and children also are mine.’" 4 And the king of Israel answered, "As you say, my lord, O king, I am yours, and all that I have." 5 The messengers came again and said, "Thus says Ben-hadad: ‘I sent to you, saying, "Deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children." 6 Nevertheless I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants and lay hands on whatever pleases you and take it away.’"***

The name, Ben is Hebrew for “son” “Hadad” is a prominent Syrian false god, very similar to Baal. He too is the god of thunder. Ben-hadad is the title of the reigning king of Syria (Aram), much like pharaoh or president.

We saw one Ben-hadad in I Kin 15:18, he was the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion. In that passage, King Asa of Judah makes a treaty with Ben-hadad to help protect himself against the king of Israel, who was threatening Judah. We talked about how Asa gave up God’s best (Ben-hadad’s army’s destruction), when he went against God’s will and entered into a covenant with this Ben-hadad (II Chr 16:7-9).

Here in I Kings 20, we read Ben-hadad once again attacks the northern kingdom of Israel, where Ahab is now the king. Most Bible scholars believe this is the son of the Ben Hadad from I King 15.

**Vs 1 -** We see that Ben-hadad has 32 kings, **feudal Lords** or **tribal lords** over different provinces helping him.

Ben-Hadad gathers all of his army and 32 kings (these are likely lords or princes over different provinces of Syria) and he goes up against Samaria to fight against the capital city of the northern empire.

He sends messengers into the city, to Ahab the king of Israel.

**Vs 2-3 –** Essentially,He says through his messengers, to King Ahab, everything you have is mine.

This is a command for Ahab to surrender to Ben-hadad (unconditionally). This is a command from Ben-hadad for Ahab (and the nation of Israel to become his vasal).

**Vs 4 –** King Ahab responds: Ahab did not even appear to think about it. He quickly capitulated to Ben-hadad. He quickly committed the nation of Israel, the ten northern tribes to serving a pagan nation.

This is essentially an unconditional surrender. Yes, we belong to you, we will serve you, we will pay tribute to you. Ahab is saying, I surrender.

**THOUGHT:** ohhh that Ahab had responded to Yahweh this way on Mount Carmel or even in Jezreel!

**APPLICATION:** *“Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.” (Pr 15:22 ESV)*

**Vs 5 -** It seems that Ahab folded so early that Ben-hadad upped the ante. It could also be that Ben-hadad was simply looking for a fight, we cannot be sure.

But hearing that Ahab surrendered (unconditionally) without so much as any negotiations, Ben-Hadad ups the demand.

Now Ahab is a weak and evil king. Everything we have read about him points to a man who will not stand up, even against his wife, and his surrendering to Ben-Hadad seems to support this idea. **He is a childish, petulant, weak, evil, toad of a king.**

But this new ask is impossible for any King to agree to.

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***7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land and said, "Mark, now, and see how this man is seeking trouble, for he sent to me for my wives and my children, and for my silver and my gold, and I did not refuse him." 8 And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent." 9 So he said to the messengers of Ben-hadad, "Tell my lord the king, ‘All that you first demanded of your servant I will do, but this thing I cannot do.’" And the messengers departed and brought him word again. 10 Ben-hadad sent to him and said, "The gods do so to me and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people who follow me." 11 And the king of Israel answered, "Tell him, ‘Let not him who straps on his armor boast himself as he who takes it off.’" 12 ¶ When Ben-hadad heard this message as he was drinking with the kings in the booths, he said to his men, "Take your positions." And they took their positions against the city.***

**Vs 7 -** Beginning in verse 7, Ahab calls together the elders of Israel, likely the tribal leaders of the 10 northern tribes.

**APPLICATION:** *“Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.” (Pr 11:14 ESV)*

He recites to them what has happened, and you see even Ahab recognizes that this may not be about surrendering, this man Ben-Hadad may simply be looking for a fight!

**Vs 8 –** The elders encourage Ahab, and tell him he cannot consent to this request. Again, one wonders why he did not seek council in the first place.

**Vs 9 –** You see the message, I will surrender, but I will not do this second thing that you demanded. So, the messengers carried that word, and they brought word back from Ben-Hadad.

**Vs 10 -** Here is the word they brought back in verse 10: First, this response sounds similar to Jezebel’s response to what Elijah did. What he is essentially saying is we are going to destroy this place, level it to the ground, and the dirt and dust that remains of Samaria, once I am finished, will not even suffice to provide a handful for each soldier who is with me. **We will devastate this place! Clearly Ben-hadad is a bully, but we suspected that already when he came out to war against Israel.**

**Vs 11 –** **First, this is the only time where Ahab seems to act like a man,** this little weenie of a toad king is willing to surrender to God’s enemies before even a prayer had been offered to the true and living God. **Now this response appears very bold, but it is also extremely foolish:**

**Bold first:** We get what this means, **do not count your chickens before they are hatched**, **do not sell the bearskin rug before you kill the bear**.

**Extremely foolish:** The nation has just exited a 3 ½ year famine, they are very weak and powerless, no reserves to handle any lengthy siege. Secondly, at this point in history, Syria is a much larger, much more powerful nation.

**Vs 12 -** Three quick observations:

1. The **amour comment enraged** the pagan king Ben-hadad.

**APPLICATION:** *“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Pr 15:1 ESV)*

1. We see Ben-hadad’s lack of **concern or even respect** in reference to the army of Israel. He sees them as grasshoppers.
2. We see Ben-hadad’s **lack of discipline** in the battlefield.

In the temporary command shelters that they have erected in the field of battle, and we see what he is doing. In the midst of an active campaign, **he is getting drunk**, in the middle of the day, with the other princes or lords over different provinces.

This clearly shows he has no fear of the power of the nation of Israel at this time and it shows how foolish he is to behave in such a manner in a foreign land, in the middle of getting ready to go to war.

**APPLICATION*:*** *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Pr 1:7 ESV)*

**Now pretend you have never read this story, our expectation is that wicked Ahab and Jezebel are about to get their clocks cleaned, they have sewn the wind, and they are about to reap a whirlwind.**

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***13 And behold, a prophet came near to Ahab king of Israel and said, "Thus says the LORD, Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will give it into your hand this day, and you shall know that I am the LORD." 14 And Ahab said, "By whom?" He said, "Thus says the LORD, By the servants of the governors of the districts." Then he said, "Who shall begin the battle?" He answered, "You." 15 Then he mustered the servants of the governors of the districts, and they were 232. And after them he mustered all the people of Israel, seven thousand.***

Then from nowhere, behold an unknown and unnamed prophet of Yahweh comes near to King Ahab.

**The fact that God is still speaking to Ahab is amazing grace!**

**Vs 13 -** God asks Ahab, have you seen the multitude that has come out Israel? **BEHOLD,** I will give it into your hand **(THIS DAY)** and **you shall know that I am Lord.**

This has been Yahweh’s goal over and over!

**APPLICATION:** God was doing all this that people might know that Yahweh is God. **(I Kin 8:6, 8:43, 18:37)**

**That is God’s goal today.** That men and women would come to know Jesus Christ and profess faith in Him.

**Vs 14 -** Ahab says, who is going to deliver this great multitude. The Lord responds by the servants of the governors of the districts, by the leaders in the nation of Israel. Then Ahab asks, OK, who will start this battle. The prophet responds… YOU!

**This seems almost comical, and I suppose it is.** The sovereign of the universe can use anything or anyone to accomplish His will.

**Vs 15 -** **But here is the amazing part, the man who a few verses ago was willing to surrender the nation without a fight, now follows Yahweh’s lead and steps out!**

You will not hear me say much positive about Ahab, but here, he steps into his God given role and musters the servants of the governors, the leaders out of all ten tribes.

All together he musters 232 people. Now to put this in some perspective there are 32 princes and probably tens of thousands of troops. Based on some things we will learn in a few verses we can guess over **100,000** **troops** are with Ben-Hadad.

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***16 And they went out at noon, while Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the booths, he and the thirty-two kings who helped him. 17 The servants of the governors of the districts went out first. And Ben-hadad sent out scouts, and they reported to him, "Men are coming out from Samaria." 18 He said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive. Or if they have come out for war, take them alive." 19 So these went out of the city, the servants of the governors of the districts and the army that followed them. 20 And each struck down his man. The Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them, but Ben-hadad king of Syria escaped on a horse with horsemen. 21 And the king of Israel went out and struck the horses and chariots, and struck the Syrians with a great blow. 22 ¶ Then the prophet came near to the king of Israel and said to him, "Come, strengthen yourself, and consider well what you have to do, for in the spring the king of Syria will come up against you."***

**Vs 16 -** So these men 232 + 7000 go out of the city at noon, to do what the prophet has told them they are to do and that is engage the enemy.

**APPLICATION:** We can never judge by outward appearance.

*“****27*** *But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;* ***28*** *God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,” (1Co 1:27-28 ESV)*

**Ahab, has taken council from Yahweh and Ben-hadad is taking courage from strong drink!**

**Vs 17 -** The servants of the governors go out first (the 232) and Ben-Hadad had sent out scouts who report to him: ***"Men are coming out from Samaria."***

Now he likely thinks it is some type of peace envoy, some type of negotiating team, it is unlikely he is thinking it is SEAL Team Six or anything like that.

**Vs 18 –** You can see his total contempt for anything Israel might attempt to do, and his absolute trust in the superiority of his army, or it might be the alcohol talking.

**Lesson and APPLICATION:** *“Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.” (Pr 20:1 ESV)*

**Vs 19 -** So the 232 go out and the 7,000 follow them, Israel’s entire army, every man they could muster has been sent out onto the battlefield in what is absolutely overwhelming odds.

**Vs 20-21 –**So, if we are understanding this right the 7,232 went out and each struck down a Syrian. The Syrians, surprised by all of this flee, and Israel begins to take chase. **Ben-hadad, half tanked, jumps on his horse and flees.**

Ahab goes out and strikes down horses and apparently destroys chariots, and the writer of Kings tells us that the Syrians were struck with a very great blow that day.

All because God stepped in the middle of this and brough a great victory, although he brought that victory through their efforts.

**APPLICATION:** God can do things without us, but most of the time He chooses to do things through us. He desires to use us to accomplish His will for His glory!

**Vs 22 -** Then the unnamed prophet comes to Ahab, and says to him. Here again, we see God’s grace and Ahab does not even appear thankful or repentant.

This advanced warning is more amazing grace. He says, strengthen yourself (be strong, repair and fortifiy), and think through “consider well”, think about what you should do. For in the Spring the King of Syria will come back.

So Ahab, this evil wicked king is once again, assisted by God, all with at least one intent that this wicked king might see the folly of serving false gods and turn and serve the true and living God.

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***23 And the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods are gods of the hills, and so they were stronger than we. But let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. 24 And do this: remove the kings, each from his post, and put commanders in their places, 25 and muster an army like the army that you have lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot. Then we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they." And he listened to their voice and did so.***

So, now we are let in on an inter-office communication, a little back-channel chatter from the soldiers to the Syrian high command, possibly a little deep Syrian Theology!

They have been routed and now they are attempting to explain (justify) why.

**Vs 23 -** So their point to the king was, we got routed because we picked geography that favored their gods (hilly regions) and not our gods (plains).

**This highlights a few things about their beliefs**:

1. They had a complete misunderstanding about Israel, there were not “gods” they served, but just God.
2. It is possible that they had heard stories about Mt Sinia and Mt Carmel, who knows for sure.
3. They accredited their success or lack thereof to the gods.

BUT, they made a fundamental error. By the way it is one I see made quite often among believers and unbelievers alike. They thought too little of Yahweh. They chalked their failure up to accidently fighting on the mountains and if they go and fight in the valley they will be successful.

**They thought way too little of Yahweh. They assumed he was a diety that had limitations.**

**APPLICATION:** Do we really believe that God can do anything, can heal anyone, can turn around any situation. Sometimes we can have a small view of our awesome, all powerful God!

**Vs 24-25 -** Then we learn about additional “back channel chatter” between the servants and the king:

1. They recommend removing the “kings” or governors who accompanied him and put “commanders” in their place.
2. Then muster an army, men, horses, and chariots like the one he had (and lost) this day.
3. Then we will meet up with them in the plain, and we will be stronger than they are!

**We then read that Ben-hadad, listened to their voice. So we should imagine that the Syrians are coming back.**

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***26 In the spring, Ben-hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. 27 And the people of Israel were mustered and were provisioned and went against them. The people of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, but the Syrians filled the country. 28 And a man of God came near and said to the king of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, ‘Because the Syrians have said, "The LORD is a god of the hills but he is not a god of the valleys," therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD.’" 29 And they encamped opposite one another seven days. Then on the seventh day the battle was joined. And the people of Israel struck down of the Syrians 100,000 foot soldiers in one day. 30 And the rest fled into the city of Aphek, and the wall fell upon 27,000 men who were left. Ben-hadad also fled and entered an inner chamber in the city. 31 ¶ And his servants said to him, "Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. Let us put sackcloth around our waists and ropes on our heads and go out to the king of Israel. Perhaps he will spare your life." 32 So they tied sackcloth around their waists and put ropes on their heads and went to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-hadad says, ‘Please, let me live.’" And he said, "Does he still live? He is my brother." 33 Now the men were watching for a sign, and they quickly took it up from him and said, "Yes, your brother Ben-hadad." Then he said, "Go and bring him." Then Ben-hadad came out to him, and he caused him to come up into the chariot. 34 And Ben-hadad said to him, "The cities that my father took from your father I will restore, and you may establish bazaars for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." And Ahab said, "I will let you go on these terms." So he made a covenant with him and let him go.***

**Vs 26 –** Springtime comes, the time when the kings would often go out to do battle because the weather was more conducive to living out in the open fields.

And we see that the Syrians under Ben-hadad do not go to Samaria (a city build on a hill) to engage Israel, but instead engage Israel at Aphek.

**Vs 27 -** So Israel comes out against this hoard of Syrians and the writer of Kings tells us that they were in the field like **“two little flocks of goats”** while the Syrians filled the entire land.

**Vs 28 -** Here God sends a man of God, a prophet, to come near the king. This is **likely a different prophet**, although we cannot be sure.

This man of God says to the king: Yahweh says, because they believe that Yahweh is only a God of hills and not a God of valleys, I plan to give this GREAT MULTITUDE, into your hands:

1. To show them who the true and living God is
2. To show you, that you and the nation of Israel may know that I am Yahweh!

**Again, God’s amazing grace being extended to Ahab! YET AGAIN! God keeps speaking to Ahab. Again we see God’s desire that people may know him.**

**DISCUSSION:** I often hear people say the God of the Old Testament seems like a vengeful, wrathful, angry God and Jesus of the New Testament seems like a much more graceful being, like they are very different.

**Two things:**

1. This is a very superficial reading of the Old Testament, for when you really work through the stories you see a patient, long-suffering God, who is constantly calling sinners to Himself.
2. It is a superficial reading of the New Testament as well:

*“****1*** *¶ But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,* ***2*** *and with his wife’s knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles’ feet.* ***3*** *But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?* ***4*** *While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God."* ***5*** *When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it.” (Ac 5:1-5 ESV)*

God is a long-suffering and patient God, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But that long-suffering has an ending and there is no warning when that long-suffering comes to an end. Thus, it is better not to trifle with God.

**APPLICATION:** God is sovereign, and he can and often does step into our world to glorify Himself. That people may know that Yahweh is God!

Mt Carmel was enough to convince Ahab. The rain that came after 3 ½ years was enough. God extends grace one again, that Ahab might know Him!

**Vs 29 -** Then after seven days, the battle began… **The two little flocks of Israelites, struck down 100,000 foot soldiers.** This would have been a massive defeat. To imagine 100,000 dying in one day, this would have been devastating to the Syrians.

**We recognized that God brought this victory, but he brought it through the efforts of the people.**

**APPLICATION:** God has some amazing things he plans to do and he plans to do them through your obedience!

**Vs 30** - So, we can imagine that this shocked Beh-hadad, and he directs the army to flee into the city of Aphek where they have some protection and possibly walls around the city.

It is then we read, that a wall within this city fell down, and in one moment struck down another 27,000 Syrian soldiers. Yahweh appears to be instrumental in continuing to bring a great victory for the nation of Israel and to continue to show the Syrian army and her king that Yahweh, He is God!

**APPLICATION:** Sometimes, God fights our battles for us!

**Messiah:** Just like David took down Goalith, just like God has delivered up Ben-hadad, it is our David the Lord Jesus Christ who takes down our greatest foe (sin and death)!

**Vs 31 -** At least 127,000 have died, then the servants, present a plan to Ben-hadad, a way to get out of this disaster with their life.

So word is out that the Israelites are merciful. Not sure where they heard that, but OK. So they recognize they need to look repentant not royal or militant. Off with the royal robes and military clothes and on with the sackcloth!

The **sackcloth likely signifies their penitence** while the **ropes** on their heads likely indicated their **submission to Ahab** and his army and the fact that they are willing to be led by these ropes.

**Vs 32 -** So they donned their sackcloth and ropes, and headed out of the city onto the battlefield. We can imagine they carried no weapons and likely advanced the battlelines of the Israelites with their hands raised in the air.

They were delivered to King Ahab, as he stood in his chariot (you will see that in a moment) as the mighty general of the armies of Israel.

**MESSIAH:** This is a picture of judgement, the Lord Christ (king of the universe), those who have rejected his reign and judgment falls. **For all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor 5:10).**

There face to face with the King of Israel (Ahab), they deliver a message: ***"Your servant Ben-hadad says, ‘Please, let me live.’"***

Plans A and B have failed and now they are hoping plan C will keep them from the gallows.

**Vs 32b -** And Ahab said, ***"Does he still live? He is my brother."***

Ahab, the king of Israel, when he hears this request from the general that has came out against him twice says: ***"Does Ben-hadad still live? He is my brother."***

This **evil wicked king**, views this **king who has been seeking to destroy him** as **“his brother.”** He has some **bizarre love and/or adoration** for this other pagan king.

**Ben-hadad was not Ahab’s brother, he was Israel’s enemy!**

**Vs 33 -** These servants or politicians were **looking for a sign** that Ahab might show some mercy. **This was indeed it!**

Notice, they quickly took up the discussion and said: Yes, your brother Ben-hadad lives. Then Ahab said go and bring him.

Consider for a moment what Ahab should have done with this enemy of God, this enemy of righteousness.

**Vs 33b -** So they escorted Ben-hadad in sackcloth and ropes around his head out of the city and they brought him to King Ahab, and Ahab asked Ben-hadad to join him in his chariot.

**Ahab invites this enemy of God up into the chariot.** This is to provide him a place of honor, a place of equal standing with the King of Israel, to say Ben-hadad is equal to the King of Israel!

**APPLICATION:** *“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2Co 6:14 ESV)*

**Vs 34 -** So Ben-hadad steps up into the chariot, I can imagine in my mind, Ahab extending his hand to assist this wicked king.

Then Ben-hadad says:

1. I will **give back the cities my father took** (this is likely Ben-hadad I).
2. I will **allow you to set up bazaars (street markets) in Damascus** (the capital city of Syria).

Then Ahab says: **You are free to go on these terms!**

**APPLICATION:** Whenever we make a deal with the devil we are the junior partner!

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***35 And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his fellow at the command of the LORD, "Strike me, please." But the man refused to strike him. 36 Then he said to him, "Because you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as you have gone from me, a lion shall strike you down." And as soon as he had departed from him, a lion met him and struck him down. 37 Then he found another man and said, "Strike me, please." And the man struck him —  struck him and wounded him. 38 So the prophet departed and waited for the king by the way, disguising himself with a bandage over his eyes. 39 And as the king passed, he cried to the king and said, "Your servant went out into the midst of the battle, and behold, a soldier turned and brought a man to me and said, ‘Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.’ 40 And as your servant was busy here and there, he was gone." The king of Israel said to him, "So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it." 41 Then he hurried to take the bandage away from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. 42 And he said to him, "Thus says the LORD, ‘Because you have let go out of your hand the man whom I had devoted to destruction, therefore your life shall be for his life, and your people for his people.’" 43 And the king of Israel went to his house vexed and sullen and came to Samaria.***

**Vs 35 -** Now, at first this seems totally disconnected to verse 34 and everything we just read, but I promise you. This is totally connected and completely relevant.

Here we learn about a “certain man” who was one of the sons of the prophets. Again, God has His men. Here we learn about what appears to be like a school of the prophets. This man (a prophet) looks at one of his fellow prophets and says, the Lord has commanded that you strike me.

Now prophets often taught important truth through graphic physical messages and pictures (think of David and the story by Nathan about the man with the sheep).

So, this prophet, looks at a fellow prophet and says… God has commanded that you strike me (subtext, for He has a message that he desires to deliver through you doing this). This other prophet, hearing from a fellow prophet, says no, I will not strike you.

Before we advance here is what you should hear: This fellow prophet is saying no, I will not obey the word of Yahweh and do what he says. NO.

**APPLICATION:** This reminds us that we are to obey God’s Word. But let’s be honest it also reminds us that we have not!

**Vs 36 -** Now on the face this seems harsh. Two points:

1. This man was a prophet and should have known to obey God’s word.
2. This highlights the significance that God places on obeying His Word.

**APPLICATION:** Now let’s be honest, this is how things should be! Disobedience to God’s word should result in judgment. But because God is graceful, compassionate, long-suffering, and kind. What should happen, does not happen immediately. Men and women are given chance upon chance upon chance.

**APPLICATION & MESSIAH:** Let’s not miss the point, Jesus died to redeem us, He paid the debt we owed, because we had all disobeyed God’s word.

*“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned —  every one —  to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa 53:6 ESV)*

*“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Ro 3:23 ESV)*

**MESSIAH:** But understand, those who reject the Messiah, and die in that condition, will be judged, and that without mercy!

**Vs 37 -** So, he found **another prophet** and likely said, strike me please for Yahweh has commanded it. The man struck him and wounded him. That as you will see was God’s goal. This man was to serve as a living object lesson for wicked king Ahab.

**Vs 38 -** So the freshly wounded prophet, places a bandage over his eye to help disguise himself. And waits (by the way) for the king. The king knew this prophet by sight and knew he was a prophet, so the prophet is disguising himself!

**Vs 39-40** - So the king passes by and the disguised prophet calls out to the king (this is a story, again much like Nathan did with David).

Here is the story in summation: I was in the fight against the Syrians and a soldier, right in the midst of battle, brought a Syrian fighter to me who he had captured, and he said, ***‘Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.’***

Now I was busy, going here and there, and when I looked back the prisoner was gone. Unstated, I should not be required to give my life or to pay a fine, after all I was busy.

**Vs 40b** - Your own lips have sealed your judgement; you do not need to hear anything from me.

Before the king could shift his attention back to his chariot…

**Ahab’s determination:** (Message): *“You’ve just pronounced your own verdict.” (1Ki 20:40 Message)*

**Vs 41 -** The prophet then quickly removes the bandage from his eye, and the king instantly recognizes that he is one of the prophets.

Isn’t it just like God, that in spite of all that Ahab and Jezebel are doing and how hard they are pushing back against God, Yahweh has had his prophets there with them this whole time!

**APPLICATION:** How many times across our Christian experience has God been faithful to us, even when we were unfaithful. How long has God been patient with us, even when we really deserved his anger?

**Vs 42** - Then the prophet speaks, and **he speaks for Yahweh…**

Thus says Yahweh. **I devoted Ben-hadad to destruction**. I am the one who was instrumental in bringing this all together, and **you chose to let free the one I intended to judge**, because of his sins. **You are guilty of the little story that you quickly knew the correct answer about.**

**I render the same judgment that you rendered… Your life for his life and your people for his people.**

**Vs 43 -** So the king heads back to the palace, back to Samaria.

And there the coward-king, the boy king is “vexed and sullen” rather than responding in **repentance before God**. He is **sad** and **displeased**, he is **frustrated**. The Message translates it that he was in a **“very bad mood”** while the BBE indicates that he was **bitter and angry**.

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