

The Defeat of Syria: God is above everyone and everything

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[0 : 00] Go ahead and take your Bibles tonight, turn over to 1 Kings chapter 20, 1 Kings chapter 20, as we get a few handouts here this evening on that. We can get some help with that as we turn to 1 Kings chapter 20.

Thank you, John. Appreciate that. You know, we've been looking through here at the kings of Israel and of Judah, as we've been looking here at the divided kingdom there, as we've gone through the different kings.

We've come to Ahab, and we've been looking at Ahab in Judah. Right now is Jehoshaphat, and we'll come back to Jehoshaphat here.

I think, Lord willing, next week we'll come back as these two tie together once again. But we looked last week here in 1 Kings chapters 18 and 19 at the spiritual battle that had taken place on Mount Carmel.

And once again it revealed to Israel that the same Lord that brought them out of Egypt is the same God that came down with fire from heaven and consumed the sacrifice from the prophet Elijah.

[1 : 15] And the victory really brought about a clear picture of who they had to choose, whether they were going to serve Baal or whether they were going to serve God.

And we saw that Elijah the prophet and the others that were with him there killed the prophets of Baal. And the winner was declared, but Ahab, as we're going to see here, still had to go back and tell Jezebel, you know, and tell her what had happened.

And Baal and his prophets had been decisively crushed up on Mount Carmel. And we know here that this brought about a price on the head of Elijah that he fled to Beersheba and currently possessed by Judah.

Beersheba had been taken there. But Israel had been facing a drought, if you remember. And after the conflict up on the Mount and the sacrifice that the rains had come, but Elijah went in the power of the Lord through that.

But also after that, we know that Elijah went and we find that he hid down at Beersheba because of Jezebel's threat to kill him. And we're going to see here that God already had a plan for that because as we're going to look here tonight, Elijah once again kind of disappears from the scene for a while.

[2 : 43] And we're not going to dig into Elijah since we're focusing on the kings, but I want you to see here just to know that what happens here, God takes and uses even to protect Elijah because it distracts or takes away from the focus they had wanting to get back at Elijah for what happened out up on Mount Carmel.

It also brings about a different direction that they had to take because the Syrians come and invade Israel. And sometimes we need to look at, we're going to see here tonight, that God is above everyone and everything as he works through the defeat of Syria.

Because even though God is using an enemy that comes in, we're going to see that God also used it to protect. And in the same time, God's also working in the heart of Ahab and in the children of Israel.

You know, and the wonderful thing is I was thinking through this and preparing the one thing that came to mind, you know, I'm glad we have a God that can chew gum and walk at the same time. Amen.

I mean, he can do multiple things all simultaneously. You know, he can take care, provide, he can protect, he can do all these things above and beyond what we could even comprehend.

[4 : 01] And so I'm thankful that, you know, we don't serve a God that's limited in time or space or means. We serve a God that supersedes all those things.

All those things, or he supersedes them. And we're going to see here that as Elijah passes from the scene here for a few years once again, we're going to see the focus becomes upon Ahab and his posterity.

And we're going to look at that here in a little bit. But there's a lot of things happening here in the interim. We find Ben-Hadad, along with 32 other kings, arrive with Syria in his sight.

So let's pick up here in 1 Kings chapter 20. As we're going to look here tonight in verse 1, it says, And Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, gathered all his hosts together. And there were thirty and two kings with him, and the horses and chariots.

And he went up and besieged Samaria and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab, king of Israel, into the city and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-Hadad, and thy silver and thy gold is mine, the wives also, and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.

[5 : 12] And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine and all that I have. And the messengers came again and said, Thus speaketh Ben-Hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver and thy gold and thy wives and thy children, yet I will send my servants unto thee tomorrow 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, thou shalt put it in their hand and take it away. And the king of Israel called all the elders of the land and said, Mark, I pray you, then 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. And all the elders and the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent.

Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-Hadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send forth 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. And Ben-Hadad said unto him and said to the gods, So do unto me, and more so, If the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls of all the people that follow me.

[6 : 34] 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. And it came to pass, And Ben-Hadad heard this message as he was drinking, He and the kings in the pavilions.

And he said unto his servants, Let's set yourselves in array and set themselves, And they set themselves in array against the city. So let's pray.

Heavenly fathers, we come before you tonight, Lord. We just thank you for your word. We're thankful for the pictures and the things that we can understand and even apply to our lives, Lord, practical realities of who you are, what you've done, Lord.

the importance even tonight of turning to you and trusting you in even the difficulties of life, not to turn our back upon who you are.

Lord, help us to learn as we walk through the life of Ahab and the things and the children of Israel, here that we might see you not only there, but, Lord, see you working even in our own lives in these areas.

[7 : 43] And, Lord, we just ask it all in your precious name. Amen. You know, as we see here, the Lord had just revealed himself to Ahab through Elijah the Tishbite up on Mount Carmel.

And now we see that the Lord puts Ahab to the test. Because, remember, Ahab had seen, and they had to make a choice. Remember, Elijah's message was pretty simple.

One that he made a very declarative that you have to decide who are you going to serve. You know, why halt you between two opinions? You know, how long are you going to try to serve Baal and to serve God?

You know, you have to make a choice. And we saw that and put to the test and how God here, we're going to see, protects Elijah from the fury of Jezebel.

And so we're going to see how God quickly redirects the enemy on the doorstep Syria and uses this series of confrontations between Ahab and Ben-Hadad to draw God's attention even more to Ahab and to his relationship with him.

[8 : 53] Because we saw last week that God always extends mercy and grace as much as possible. You know, it's amazing to see how God, even Ahab, the most wicked king to date, we saw God still extend out to him an opportunity to turn to him.

You know, the wonderful thing is, no matter where somebody is in life, we learn one very clear factor that no matter what's happened or where people are, no matter what they've done, while you're still drawing breath, somebody has an opportunity to repent and come to God.

Nothing limits us from being able to turn to him in this life except our own selves. You know, our sin is separated, but Jesus took care of everything, didn't he?

There's nothing else needed but the blood of Christ to cover any sin to be able to be right with God. And so we're going to look here tonight, the confrontation of the kings.

You know, the confrontation of kings here is Ben-Hadad and his colleagues invade Israel and besiege the city of Samaria as we just read here. And, you know, he sends forth the first negotiation as he has 32 kings with him.

[10 : 08] In other words, I want you to understand that the number of people that came with the king of Syria was like an insurmountable number of people. I mean, it was just a massive army that had gathered and besieged Samaria.

And he sends in the first negotiation and he says, Hey, Ahab, the first thing you're going to do is you're going to surrender all your silver. You're going to surrender all your gold.

You're along with your wives and your children. All those things I'm going to take. And, you know, we see here that really Ahab really surrenders this out pretty quickly.

You know, the Bible doesn't tell us why, but look in verse 4. Look at his first initial response to what's happening.

Here it says, And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine and all that I have.

[11 : 08] I mean, he capitulates very quickly to this demand. I mean, it's like he just very quickly turns and says, Hey, you can have my wives. You can have my children.

You can have my gold. You can have my silver. You just need to depart. You know, he gives them and tells them they can have all these things. You know, we don't know.

All the Bible doesn't give us an insight into the back. Thinking of Ahab here, you know, I imagine that he might have been feeling outnumbered. He might have been feeling hopeless and helpless in the midst of things.

Because remember, Israel had just suffered a great famine. The land was devastated. There was a lot of problems associated with that.

We're going to see, even as God works through this moment in the life of Ahab and the children of Israel, you know, but we find here that Ahab would send forth these things to Benadad and he would take what was requested and depart.

[12 : 12] But Benadad instead makes an additional demand. I think it's one of those things that, you know, hey, this was too easy. Let's see what else we can get. You know, one of those things where if I can get, if he'll give us this, this easily, what else can we get from him?

And so he sends forth the next seeking to ransack the palace and the houses of the people there, the officials, and for everything that they thought would be of value.

You know, he raised the stakes just from what Ahab had to what everybody had. Because I want you to see here, what did he tell them? Whatsoever, look in verse 6, whatsoever is pleasant to thine eye.

I mean, you think about that. You imagine somebody being able to walk through your house and say, that looks what I want to take and they can just take it. I mean, you think about whatever looks good to them, you know, it's like, that's a pretty open door.

You know, that's a broad spectrum of stuff and broad spectrum of things that they could take and we see this coming about because the eye is something that's never satisfied.

[13 : 20] You know, you think about the door that you open, you know, think about what Solomon says in Ecclesiastes chapter 1 and verse 8. It says, all things are full of labor, man cannot utter it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear filled with hearing.

In other words, you know, you can never quit looking at things. I mean, as long as you have sight, you're always consuming. Your eye is an all-consuming thing that draws in.

I mean, it's continually there and the desire that is there. You know, how many times do you get something, want something because you see it first? You know, our sight is something that draws us in.

You know, and we see here that this, whatever their eye was pleasant to them and this sparks, for some reason, we find it gets a little backbone in Ahab because now he calls for a meeting of the officials and the elders in the land, you know.

And so we find here that Ahab is meeting with the elders of the land and the response is they responded by encouraging Ahab not to listen to the threat nor consent to the increased demands.

[14 : 30] I mean, look here at verse 8 as we read earlier and it says, and all the elders and all the people said unto him, hearken not unto him nor consent. In other words, hey, what are you thinking?

You know, what are you doing? Don't just concede everything that he wants and to give that to him. So the message is returned to Benadad who is drinking and relaxing in his pavilion.

I mean, you think about Benadad here, he's so confident that he's just hanging out. He's like, I'm so overwhelming number of these guys that I'm not even concerned with what's going on.

I am so powerful, so mighty, so comfortable in all those that I've conquered that I'm just basically chilling out in his pavilion. He's sitting in the shade just relaxing and we find that they're drinking and in the pavilion, you know, they're getting drunk, they're just having a good time, they're not taking it seriously, you might say, in this.

And so we find here the return message that he comes and the messengers come back from Ahab and we find that he was shocked at what was said.

[15 : 45] Notice in verse 10 what he tells him here in reply. And Ben-Hadad sent unto him and said, The gods do so unto me and more so if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls of all the people that follow me.

Now, I want you to see the picture here for a moment. What he's saying is, he says, you can go round up and sweep the dust off the streets and if that were soldiers wouldn't be enough to defeat us.

Think about the arrogance in the statement. He basically says, you can sweep up the dust of the streets and if every piece of dust was a soldier, you still wouldn't stand a chance. He's pretty arrogant in his statement.

And we're going to see here as Ahab, a reply is pretty classic. Notice what he tells him here. He says, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he putteth it off, Now, you know, to us, that phrase doesn't mean much but it really simply is this, you know, don't mark your victory before you've actually fought the battle.

You know, don't say, I'm one before you even got on the field. You know, we might phrase it a different way today. Don't count your chickens before they hatch. You know, if you've ever raised chickens and had eggs, an egg can look good but it doesn't mean it's going to have anything.

[17 : 11] You know, I want you to understand that that's the reply that he's sending back to him. But he's replying back and saying, don't be taking off your uniform and your weapon before the battle even begins thinking it's going to be so easy.

You know, he tells him here and you know, it's important because we see the arrogance that's somewhat being exchanged here. You know, we see a lot of people today exchange that same idea of arrogance, don't they?

And a lot of pride that's brought in. You know, look over to Proverbs chapter 27 for a moment. Proverbs chapter 27 because as we see Ahab here and God dealing with him, pride is a core issue in the life of Ahab.

You know, the reality is pride can be a core issue in our life. Pride can hinder us a lot. Pride gets a hold of us because notice here in Proverbs 27 verse 1 he says, Boast not thyself of tomorrow for thou knowest not what the day may bring forth.

You know, I want you to understand you don't always have a guarantee of tomorrow. You know, you might have a lot today and you'd have nothing tomorrow. You know, the Bible makes that very clear.

[18 : 27] If you read through and you look at the book of Job, Job was wealthy among men one day and by the end of the following day he had no animals, he had no workers, he had no family.

Everything he had of value was gone. You know, those things come and go but we need to remember here that Benadad was in the midst of the other kings and he was drinking and boasting of the victory.

You know, I can just imagine this scenario because if you can look at people and think about people today, imagine people hanging out and he makes a threat to Ahab and all the other 32 kings are sitting there.

He makes a threat to Ahab and says, this is what you're going to do, this is what you're going to give me. And Ahab comes back out and says, okay, well now I want more.

The king's here that he wants more. Now Ahab comes out and says, no. I don't know about you but the reality is what's going to happen there? What's going to be the reaction? Bandad's going to have a lot of pride because his pride is on the line now.

[19 : 34] You know, how dare you come out because it's almost like embarrassing him in front of all the other kings that he's conquered. I mean, I want you to see the picture here because, you know, oftentimes we can react the same way.

When something doesn't go or we get a response the way we don't, we can rear up our pride and get ahead of ourselves. You know, his reply was getting ahead of himself in that because we're going to see here that he was just trying to save faith so he responds by readying the army to conquer the city.

I mean, everybody's hanging out and all of a sudden he says, hey guys, get in place. I'm upset. You know, Ahab has just mocked me in front of everybody. But we're going to see here that God takes a confrontation and God's going to turn it into a crushing defeat.

You know, a crushing defeat. Look here at verse 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. Now we know why God allowed this. You know, we have a picture of why God allowed it.

[20 : 50] Why? So Ahab and the children of Israel could see once again. Remember, he already showed him he was God up on the mount with Elijah. Now he's back here facing the Syrians and the others with him.

And God says, I'm allowing this and I'm going to give you victory to show you, to reveal fully to you that I am the Lord God of Israel.

I am the one. And it was not just Ahab that heard that prideful reply of Anad but the Lord did also. I want you to see here, we're going to look here, the Lord deals with the king of Syria and his pride too.

God's going to deal with it in a very crushing way, but the Lord is going to do that. You know, we need to understand that the Lord is, pride is something that keeps us from God.

Pride is one of the things that keeps people from salvation. Pride keeps people from repentance. You say, how does pride work? Well, they're more worried about what somebody else thinks than what God thinks.

[22 : 01] And I want you to see here, people try to exalt themselves in that. Look to, in the Old Testament, turn to Obadiah, look down at verse four. Here, Obadiah is writing about a similar situation of pride.

Notice what he says in Obadiah chapter one, verse four. If you have chapter two in Obadiah, you need a different Bible. Not a very big book, but notice what he says there. He says, though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, hence I will bring thee down, sayeth the Lord.

Now, I want you to understand, God has a way of humbling an individual, to realize that you are not more powerful or greater than God. You know, we live in a generation that thinks they exceed God.

God. You're in trouble when you think you are more powerful than God. God will humble people who declare that.

Bible tells us one day every knee will bow. People may think they're going to get away with it for a while, but one day accountability is coming. They will face accountability, accountability.

[23 : 12] And while we don't know who this mystery prophet is, we know it's not Elijah, because where's Elijah? He's down in Beersheba, and we know God's dealing with him and some of the things going on in his life.

We see a whole different perspective of things happening down there, and these things even still interlace with one another as we're going to see here. We don't know who this prophet was, but he came with authority.

Look at verse 13. Notice the authority he came with. He says this, saying, what? Thus said the Lord. You know, there are some things in life we need to understand that God just says, thus saith the Lord.

It's just the way it is. It's not open for discussion. It's not debatable. It's not, how do I feel about it? It's, no, God says, thus saith the Lord.

There are things that are unchangeable. It has nothing to do with what we think about it. You know, as God is working through this authority, he's telling Ahab, he says, you've seen the multitude.

[24 : 20] You've seen Syrians taking positions around you, getting ready to crush you. And that's what it looks like. I mean, the numbers were astronomical.

And what does God tell him? Look at the end of verse 13. He says, thus saith the Lord, I will deliver you, deliver it into thine hand this day, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.

You know, here's a prophet of God comes to Ahab and says, Ahab, let me tell you something. If you listen to the prophet, I'm going to deliver them into your hand in a mighty way.

And we're going to see God do that very clearly here in just a little bit. So Ahab, remember, just witnessed fire come down from heaven, and now God sends another prophet and tells him, hey, I'm going to show you, once again, I'm God, even in this situation.

That I'm above all the pride, I'm above all the arrogance, I'm above everything that people think, that they have all the power and might, and God says, I'm above all that.

[25 : 23] Because notice, as we look down through here, what takes place. I love the next phrase there in verse 14. Ahab looks at the prophet, and by whom?

You know, here's a guy that's very prideful and wants to make decisions, and suddenly God says, hey, I'm going to send you out to do that, and he looks at him and says, who, me?

You know, there's a lot we could cover there. Because even as Christians, as believers today, sometimes God says, hey, I'm going to give something great, and we look at him and say, who, me?

By whom? You know, God looks at him and says, by you. Notice what he tells him here. He says that even by the young men of the princes of the providence, then he said, who shall order the battle?

And he answered, thou. You know, he says, hey, I've got an army for you, and you're going to lead them. You're going to be in charge of this.

[26 : 23] Now, I want you to see here, because as we read through this, verses 14 and 15, revealed here that he numbered the young men of the princes of the providence, and they were 232.

So how many people do we have so far in his army? 232. You know? I can just imagine Ahab. You got the, talk about the dust of the street.

If you gathered them up, you wouldn't have enough soldiers. And he says, 232 people. You know? But I want you to see something else here, because notice who else that he brings forth.

And he says, and after them, he numbered all the people, all the children of Israel, being 7,000. Now, 7,000 is an interesting number here. Because I want you to see something here.

Here's Israel, who had large armies, but now he's down to 232 princes, churches and leaders of people and 7,000 people.

[27 : 22] You say, well, what's so interesting about 7,000? Turn back over to chapter 19 for a moment. Now, the Bible doesn't make this direct connection, but I think it's interesting God's reply in chapter 19.

Because notice, who's willing to trust God to go out? You know? I don't think they found a whole lot of volunteers except for 7,000. Who are these 7,000?

Look in verse 18. It says, yet have I left me 7,000 in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. In other words, he says, I got 7,000 guys that are willing to go out to battle because they trust me.

Ahab is down. He can't find all his friends he did have. But when the prophet comes, he's got 7,000 that trust the Lord, and the Lord said, hey, we're supposed to follow Ahab into battle.

Ahab into battle. And they said, hey, if God said it's going to give us victory, we're going to trust God. It looked insurmountable. You know, all the things that they do.

[28 : 29] You know, we always need to remember that God doesn't look at numbers to accomplish his things. You know, look back a little earlier. Go back to 1 Samuel chapter 14.

We find another man here earlier by the name of Jonathan. If you ever want a good study of character, study the life of Jonathan. Because Jonathan was a humble individual, but yet a bold individual. He did not run scared of anything, but yet never looked at himself as above where God put him.

But notice what he says here. Here's Jonathan in 1 Samuel 14 verse 6. And Jonathan said to the young man that bear his armor. So here's Jonathan and his armor bearer.

And he says, come, let us go over into the garrison of these uncircumcised. He's talking about the Philistines. Now notice what Jonathan says. It may be that the Lord will work for us, for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.

You know, he wasn't being prideful to say, I'm so great. He says, let's go see what God's going to do. Because I want you to understand, you can read through a little later there in 1 Samuel, you'll see God gave him a great victory.

[29 : 42] Even though it looked hopeless. Even here it looked hopeless. Ahab would have to trust the Lord for the victory. Now, it's interesting here too in strategy because they leave the city at noon.

That was not the time of day for an army to come out of the city. You know? I want you to understand, they had a lot of things that they practiced very meticulously in ancient warfare.

And it was that way for a reason. You know? You didn't get into a battle in the late afternoon. That wasn't a good time to get into the battle, you know? The heat of the day.

Because remember, where was the Syrian king and all his friends? They're sitting in the pavilion in the shade, hanging out. They're drunk.

They're making fun of Ahab. And here Ahab comes out and Benadad says, hey, he hears news, hey, there's some men come out of the city.

[30 : 41] He's figuring that this is the people that surrendered to him. So he sends his troops in and says, hey, capture these guys alive.

Whether they come out with ill will or good will, no matter what, I want you to bring them back alive. Now, I want you to understand, Benadad put his guys in a bad situation because his rules of engagement got him in trouble.

You know? Because he says, hey, you're not supposed to kill him. You know what? The 7,232 that came, they had one thing in mind. We're going to get rid of you. That's not good rules of engagement for first contact.

You know? Try to capture them to somebody who wants to kill you. That's not a good combination, just let me tell you. But we're going to find here that they slew those that came to confront them.

Look down at verse 20. It says this, and they slew every one his man and the Syrians fled and the Israel pursued them and Benadad, the king of Syria, escaped on a horse with the horsemen.

[31 : 47] And the king of Israel went out and smote the horses and chariots and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. You know, the results were a great defeat. They conquered them.

But we're going to see here next the conquest that takes place. Look here at verse 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 the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.

Now I want you to see what's happening here because God had given a great victory. He had chased them away, destroying the chariots and all the ground forces of the Syrians. But it wasn't long before the prophet shows up again and tells Ahab, Hey, don't rest on your laurels.

Don't sit back. You know, the one thing I can tell you there, sometimes we'll get a victory for the Lord and we get in trouble because we sit back. Instead of holding and continuing, we step back. Sometimes in conflict you have to push forward even when you're victorious.

Spiritually it's true the same. sometimes you get a great spiritual victory. It's not time to sit back and relax. It's still time to be focused and you have to be prepared because he's telling them, Hey, he's going to be back in the spring and God continues here to reveal himself to Ahab a desire that he and Israel would turn from their evil ways and return to worshiping God alone.

[33 : 21] You know, all throughout Ahab, even though he's marked as one of the most wicked kings, isn't it amazing that you see God still extending out there Ahab, repent and come to me.

You know, God's a merciful God. He wants people to have an opportunity. He gives such grace to us and mercy. You know, the warning alone should have caused Ahab to repent when you think about it.

Hey, God says, Hey, I gave you a great victory that you know I'm Lord. Now they're going to return in the spring and you need to be prepared. God sends the prophet to him and tells him what's going to happen.

You know, he says to prepare for that spring offensive and this new conquest into Israel would bring a massive army that would fill the country. You know, Benadad had returned to crush Ahab and Israel.

He was set. He wasn't going to be defeated. Matter of fact, he had cheered his people up. He made an excuse for the loss. Now, take a look here and this is in verse 23.

[34 : 33] And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are the god 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.

And do this thing, take the kings away and every man out of his place and put captains in their rooms and number thee an army like the army that thou hast lost horse for horse, chariot for chariot and we will fight against them in the plain and surely we will be stronger than they.

And he hearkened unto their voice and did so. Now, you need to understand a little something about geography and battle to understand what's happening here because in the hills and valleys in the sharp hills and valleys a chariot becomes less effective.

Chariots are effective warfare out on open plains. You know? Because the area is open and they become more maneuverable and effective in what they do.

So what did the Syrians say? We got defeated because we were in the hills around Samaria so we're going to get them out into the plains and we're going to crush them because our god is the god of the plains. Theirs is the god of the hills because they had victory there.

[35 : 47] We're going to get them out where our god can get victory. Now they're going to find out that that doesn't matter but that's the way people think. So he puts together a great army and he comes down to Apeke there which is on the plains in northern Israel and it was this declaration that the Lord used to reveal his power was not restrained to the hills or the valleys.

God says I can my ability is not limited by geographic location. I want you to see here what happens here. It says in verse 27 the children of Israel were numbered and they 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 you know and the man of God 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's not God of the valleys there where I deliver all this great multitude into thy hand and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

Here's God once again saying guys trust me I'm going to show you who I am. They've mocked me and I'm going to show them what that results in. Because remember here this had nothing to do directly with Israel God said I'm going to judge Syria for their pride.

I'm going to judge them and hold them to account you know to understand who God is it was for them and also those in us that came with the Syrians.

You know the arrogance of the Syrians they came with crushing force. You notice here as we read what Israel looked like two little flocks of sheep gathered on the hillside compared to the Syrians that consumed all the valley and the area around.

[37 : 40] They looked like two little flocks of sheep among them. You know but I want you to understand God had told Israel before turn back to Deuteronomy chapter 4 for a moment Deuteronomy chapter 4 look here in verse 39 because God wanted to reveal who he is not who they thought he was you know that's one of the other problems that we see today is people like to make a God to their own image of who they think.

What were the Syrians doing? They made a God to say hey he's the God of the hills but we have a God of a valley that's more powerful. I want you to understand God looks at him and says I'm not constrained by either.

Notice what it says here in verse 39 he says know therefore this day and consider where in thine heart that the Lord he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath and there is none else.

You know one of the things to always keep in mind is to realize we serve a God that's above everything else. We walk on his creation. We walk on what he holds together.

You know the psalmist in Psalm 47 verse 2 says for the Lord most high is terrible he is a great king over all the earth. You know I want you to understand we serve a God that's greater than any location.

[38 : 59] God says that I am God of all of it. Not just some of it but all. And so the prophet here reveals to Ahab that the Lord is not doing this for him instead he's presenting a great truth that everyone that he is the Lord.

Notice what he says there in verse 28 he says that ye may know that I am the Lord. That you might know not have to question to clear it up in your mind remember up on the mount what was Elijah's challenge?

Why halt you between two opinions? Let's put it a different way. Elijah looks at him and says why are you acting confused? Why are you confused who God is?

God says I have revealed myself I have shown you I have shown myself more powerful than anything else and you need to trust me Israel's out on the camping out there with their troops that look like two little flocks of kids they're out there for seven days waiting for the battle to begin and we're going to see what takes place here look at the verse 28 excuse me verse 29 and they pitched one over against the other seven days and so it was on the seventh day the battle was joined and the children of Israel slew the Syrians a hundred thousand footmen in one day but the rest to Affleck into the city and their wall fell upon twenty seven thousand of the men that were left and Benadad fled and came into the city into the inner chamber you know talk about a crushing defeat here they are they look like two little burps of people amongst all the others God says he wipe out a hundred thousand you know and then to add injury to insult you're on the run you get inside the city walls and the Bible says God knocked the wall over and killed twenty seven thousand more that's more demoralizing than you think the wall was their defense the very thing that they were looking for for defense fell over and killed them opened the city up to Israel

Benadad's hiding here with the inner parts of the city but we're going to see here that Ahab let pride get in the way again and missed the very thing God was trying to show him remember God said I want you to know that I am Lord that I am the one that you ought to be heeding and paying attention to but we're going to see that instead Ahab takes his pride and makes compromise his compromise with evil look here at verse thirty one and the servants said unto him behold now we have heard that the king of Israel are the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings let us I pray thee put on sackcloth on our loins and ropes upon our heads and go out to the king of Israel per adventure he will save thy life and so they girded sackcloth on their loins and put ropes on their heads and came to the king of Israel and said thy servant!

[42 : 13] Now that's an interesting statement because he's making connection with him and what this connection of brotherhood is is one king to another one person in authority to another person in authority the Syrian officials come out and Ahab says hey it'll be okay you know as they secure and they come out humbly you know are you going to let Mahadad live and you know Ahab quickly forgot that it was the Lord that had given the victory you know pride gets in the way when we have victory sometimes I mean it's how fast do you get your eyes off what happens I mean you think about the deliverance God gave to him and right away he turns away our hearts can be and pride can really reveals the wickedness that lies within how we can focus on ourselves you know we see here instead pridefully accepts the terms of surrender you know

Ben-Hadad had offered to return all the cities that had been captured by his father years earlier we found that along with providing markets in Damascus I mean you think about that hey you can come trade in Damascus and we'll give you all your cities back if you just let me live he never considered something very important the Bible says as a matter of fact that Ahab made a covenant with Ben-Hadad all this the prophet of God had said thus saith the Lord and Ahab never even considered to look back what does God have to say about it you know there's times in life we get a victory or God delivers us and we never stop to say what does God have to say about where I am right now what's God's guidance for where I am right now how does God want me to go forward what does God want for me to do because I want you to see here this leads to the next thing we're going to see here quick is that it's the condemnation of Ahab you know we don't have time here to read everything but we'll talk about this just a little bit verses 35 through 43 you know

Ahab had failed to seek the Lord's will for the resolution of the battle with Syria he would face the condemnation of the Lord the Lord once again sends a prophet and the prophet disguises himself he has somebody smite him with the sword so he looks like he's been out in battle he puts ashes on his face and he comes to him and he tells him very clearly that God is not pleased with what his decision was you know he speaks to him look down at verse 42 and we'll finish up here this evening but notice this and he said unto him the prophet unto Ahab thus saith the Lord hey you know what the prophet comes and says hey you didn't inquire about what God said but I'm going to tell you what God said about where you're at right now notice what he says thus saith 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 and the king of

Israel went to his house heavy and displeased and came to Samaria you know we don't have time tonight but you know it's amazing how often we get upset with God when we don't do things God's way and then upset it doesn't turn out the way we want you know we can get our eyes on the wrong thing when we let pride get in the way Ahab we can learn a lot from Ahab of how pride hinders our