

Audio Transcript of Sermon
October 5, 2024
The Kings of Israel and Judah, Part 2

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Last week we started our study on the kings of Israel and Judah. Of the seven kings we looked at last time, only two did what was right in God's eyes and the others did not do what was right. Last week as we concluded the study, we were at the place where Asa, King of Judah did what was right in the eyes of God, and Baasha, King of Israel did not do what was right. Baasha was so far removed from doing what was right that God sent Jehu, a prophet, to convey His message. God wanted Baasha to know that He had set him as the leader of the tribes of Israel, and even though God allowed him to have that title and honor, Baasha chose to ignore what God would expect and followed in the ways of Jeroboam to cause the people to sin, and to sin so badly it provoked God to anger. After conveying this part of the message, Jehu then added there would be no lineage to the house of Baasha, and that in death there would be dishonor as bodies would be eaten by the animals. Baasha eventually died and his son Elah followed him on the throne for a very short time, only two years. First Kings sixteen verse one.

1 Kings 16:1-8

- 1. Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,**
- 2. Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins;**
- 3. Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.**
- 4. Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat.**
- 5. Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?**
- 6. So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.**
- 7. And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the Lord against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did**

in the sight of the Lord, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

8. In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.

As Elah began his reign over Israel, there was a plot already underway to overthrow him. Zimri, captain of half of the chariots saw an opportunity and took that opportunity when Elah was drunk at the house of Arza, his steward for the king's residence at Tirzah. Zimri went inside and killed Elah. Zimri then systematically killed all possible family of Elah who could have a claim to the throne. To ensure there was no family of Elah hiding in plain sight among close friends and distant relatives, Zimri had those people killed as well. Verse nine.

1 Kings 16:9-14

9. And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah.

10. And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.

11. And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends.

12. Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet,

13. For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

14. Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

With the methodical elimination of the ruling family, we might think that Zimri would reign for decades to come, but his reign would be measured in days, seven of them, one week. Some of his subjects living next to the Philistines heard what Zimri did to their king, and they wanted nothing to do with him as king. They chose Omri to be their king instead. With the support of the people, it didn't take long for Omri to come to Tirzah to confront Zimri. Zimri, sensing that he would

lose everything very soon chose to set the palace there on fire while he was inside, and Zimri died in the fire. First Kings sixteen verse fifteen.

1 Kings 16:15-20

15. In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines.

16. And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.

17. And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.

18. And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died,

19. For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.

20. Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

After Zimri died the people of Israel became divided again over who should be their king and like today's politics, about half wanted one person, Tibni the son of Ginath to be king, and half wanted Omri to be king. It took about three years to work through that division and Tibni died. Omri was moving forward with his leadership and bought a hill upon which the city of Shemer was built. In the eyes of God, Omri was worse than all the kings of Israel to date and died eight years later. First Kings sixteen verse twenty-one.

1 Kings 16:21-28

21. Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri.

22. But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

23. In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.

24. And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria.

25. But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him.

26. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

27. Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

28. So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

Ahab, son of Omri, followed on the throne, and his reign was longer for twenty-two years. Ahab did more evil than any other king before him and went much further in evil by marrying Jezebel, princess of the Zidonians. Jezebel was a worshipper of Baal and to satisfy his wife, Ahab had an altar to Baal built, and also established a grove of trees for the prophets of Baal. First Kings sixteen verse twenty-nine.

1 Kings 16:29-34

29. And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

30. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.

31. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

32. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

33. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

34. In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

As we saw earlier with Baasha, God used a prophet to get Ahab's attention during the middle of a famine and drought. Elijah, a prominent prophet, was sent to tell Ahab that rain was on the way. Not knowing that rain would come, Ahab had Obadiah his chief of staff help to gather animals to the remaining bodies of water where they could drink water. Unlike Ahab, Obadiah greatly feared God, and scholars think Ahab's Obadiah is the same Obadiah that wrote the book in the Bible. Obadiah had secretly hidden one hundred prophets of God and hid them in two separate groups in caves giving them bread and water. Getting back to the task at hand, to make the job quicker in gathering the animals, Ahab and Obadiah split up. First Kings eighteen verse one.

1 Kings 18:1-46

- 1. And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.**
- 2. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.**
- 3. And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly:**
- 4. For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.**
- 5. And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.**
- 6. So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.**

As God would have it, Obadiah met Elijah and immediately recognized him. Elijah told Obadiah to tell Ahab that he was here to see him, and Obadiah knew that wouldn't set well with Ahab and could cause Ahab to order his death. He explained that Ahab had been trying to locate him without success. Obadiah's fear was that Elijah would change his mind after he told Ahab, and that Ahab would become extremely angry. Elijah assured Obadiah he would not hide from Ahab. Verse seven.

- 7. And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?**
- 8. And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.**
- 9. And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?**
- 10. As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.**
- 11. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.**
- 12. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.**
- 13. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?**
- 14. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.**
- 15. And Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him today.**

When Ahab heard that Elijah was looking for him, Ahab went to meet Elijah and told Elijah that the suffering of Israel was Elijah's fault. Elijah responded by telling him that their suffering was not the result of the message he was bringing, but because Ahab and his father's house had rejected God and the commandments of God and followed the teachings of Baalim. He challenged Ahab to a spiritual duel where he would stand alone with God against the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of the grove on Mount Carmel. A huge crowd was gathered there to watch this event. On the day of the showdown Elijah explained that how he alone was the prophet of God and how there were four hundred fifty prophets of Baal, along with the four hundred prophets of the grove. Elijah told them this showdown would settle if they should worship Baal or God. Elijah would prepare a young bull for sacrifice, and the prophets of Baal would also prepare a young bull for sacrifice, both in similar manners. Both would prepare wood to be under the young bull but would not ignite it with fire. Both would call on their god to ignite the wood to burn the sacrifice, and whichever sacrifice was ignited first would confirm the identity of the true God, whether

Baal or God. Elijah encouraged them to call on Baal since that was whom they worshipped, and the prophets called all morning. By noon with their sacrifice not yet burning, Elijah told them to increase the intensity of their requests to Baal, in case Baal did not hear them. They even went as far as to cut themselves with knives to draw blood, and by mid-afternoon nothing had changed. Verse sixteen.

16. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17. And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

18. And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.

19. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

20. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

21. And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

23. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:

24. And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

25. And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

26. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

27. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

28. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

29. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

Elijah then got to work preparing his sacrifice. He repaired the altar previously used to worship God that had fallen into disrepair positioning twelve stones for the sons of Jacob. He made a trench around the altar, big enough to hold a good amount of water. He finished by placing the sacrifice on the altar. He then told the people to drench the sacrifice and wood with four barrels of water, and they repeated that two more times. He also had them fill the trench with water. By this time, it was the time of the evening sacrifice and Elijah prayed loudly enough to be heard, and at the conclusion of his prayer fire consumed the sacrifice and the wood beneath it. The fire was so intense it incinerated the stones of the altar and evaporated the water around the offering. Elijah then explained that clearly the God of Israel is God, and he told the crowd that was gathered there to not let any of the prophets of Baal escape. Elijah then had the prophets brought to the nearby Kishon Brook where he killed them all. Verse thirty.

30. And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

31. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

32. And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

34. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

35. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.

40. And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

After the prophets of Baal were dead, Elijah told Ahab there was the sound of a huge rainstorm, and after praying seven times on Mount Carmel, he saw a small cloud and told Ahab to immediately go home because the amount of rain could keep him from traveling. Ahab departed to go to Jezreel by chariot and Elijah ran to Jezreel. Verse forty-one.

41. And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

42. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

43. And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

44. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

45. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

46. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel how Elijah had killed all the prophets of Baal, and she sent word to Elijah how she intended to have him killed by that time tomorrow. That threat caused Elijah to immediately depart for Beersheba which belonged to Judah. He left his servant there and continued a day where the events overpowered his will, and he thought it would be better if God just let him die. God showed mercy to Elijah and gave him food and water, and he traveled to Mount Horeb. First Kings nineteen verse one.

1 Kings 19:1-18

1. And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.

3. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

4. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

5. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

8. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

It was at that cave that God challenged Elijah still wallowing in his misery. In Elijah's mind he was the only one serving God, and God told Elijah there were yet seven thousand people in Israel who had not worshipped Baal. Even though the efforts of Ahab and Jezebel had caused much damage, they hadn't totally eliminated the knowledge of God. Verse nine.

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9. And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

10. And he said, I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

11. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:

12. And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

13. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

14. And he said, I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15. And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:

16. And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel–meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

17. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

18. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

The king of Syria, Ben-Hadad, came to lay siege to Samaria, to take the wealth of the Kingdom of Israel, and to ridicule King Ahab by taking his wives and children and making them his slaves. The king of Syria was so confident he gave prior notice to Ahab through messengers, and Ahab essentially agreed. Those messengers carried Ahab's response to Ben-Hadad and returned and now it seemed like Ben-Hadad wanted even more. Ahab's advisors told him not to give

him more than what was originally agreed. That made the king of Syria angry and prompted a military response. I Kings twenty verse one.

1 Kings 20:1-43

1. And Ben-hadad 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.

2. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad,

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

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

5. 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;

6. 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, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.

7. Then 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.

8. And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent.

9. Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, 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 Ben-hadad 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.

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.

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.

As the army of Syria was approaching Ahab's position a prophet of God came to him and told him that the approaching army was huge and that God would deliver it to Ahab so that Ahab might know that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was God, not Baal that was worshipped. Ahab understood that to win he needed to get the young men involved in the fight. Because Ben-Hadad thought victory was certain he was already very drunk, and when told of the approaching fighters he thought they were approaching to surrender and gave orders not to harm them. He didn't understand that the approaching army was ready to slay his army. The fighting got so bad, Ben-Hadad had to flee by horse. Verse thirteen.

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.

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.

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.

16. And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.

17. And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.

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.

19. So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.

20. And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on an 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.

That same prophet of God told Ahab not to become overconfident and explained that Ben-Hadad would return the following year for round two of the conflict. The Syrians tried to use military strategy and told their king it would be better to fight from the valleys instead of the hill. He was also told to put military commanders over groups of soldiers so that local and immediate decisions could be made

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regarding the fight. When the two armies came to fight each other, the armies of Israel were like two little kids, and the armies of Syria was a huge fighting horde. The Syrians were confident they would win. Again, God caused the battle to go in favor of the Kingdom of Israel so that King Ahab would know that it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who is God, and not Baal. Verse twenty-two.

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.

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.

24. And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms:

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.

26. And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.

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.

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.

They stayed in their opposing camps for seven days and then the battle was true to what the prophet had said, one hundred thousand Syrians were killed in the battle and the rest fled to the city of Aphek, where the Syrian king was advised to ask for mercy from Ahab. To show repentance, they wore sackcloth for clothes and ropes on their heads. Ahab and Ben-Hadad came to terms where Syria would return all previously seized territory. Verse twenty-nine.

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.

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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 Ben-hadad 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.

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 Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive? he is my brother.

33. Now the men did diligently observe whether anything would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot.

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.

As tensions were easing, Ahab came across prophets and when he understood their message, he understood he shouldn't have been kind to Ben-Hadad. One prophet asked a man to smite him, and when the man refused, the punishment for the refusal was to be eaten by a lion. He asked a second man to smite him, and the second man did smite him, wounding the prophet. The prophet used ashes to disguise himself and approached Ahab asking how letting somebody go in battle should be treated. Ahab told the prophet to figure it out for himself. That prophet then told Ahab that because he let Ben-Hadad go, he would lose his life and the life of his people. Verse thirty-five.

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.

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.

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.

38. So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face.

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.

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.

41. And he hastened, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets.

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.

43. And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

The twists and turns of the Kings of Israel and Judah continue. Even though Ahab was promised death by the prophet, we will see that between this battlefield and his death many events will yet unfold. Before we get to that next place in the story, we will observe the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, and we will continue this study in a few weeks.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Day of Atonement. Until then, thank you for joining us today.