

Ahab: Getting What You Ask For

1 Kings 16:29-22:40; 2 Chron. 18

- **Ch. 16: King Ahab**

- Ahab. He was the 8th king of the northern tribe.
- He reigned over Israel in Samaria for 22 years.
- Married Jezebel, daughter of a Sidonian (Phoenician). Sidon was the firstborn of Canaan, the son of Ham. This was against the Law (Deut. 7:1-5). This resulted in Baal worship.
- He provoked the Lord to more anger than any king before him, which says a lot, because his father (Omri) did more evil than all who were before him.

- **Ch. 17: A Drought, Widow, & Son**

- Elijah prayed for no rain and told Ahab there would be no rain "these years." (This ended up lasting 3 1/2 years - Luke 4:25; James 5:17). Elijah went to a brook and was fed morning and evening by ravens until the brook dried up.
- Elijah went to Zarephath (which belonged to Sidon). God cared for the widow through Elijah by providing food and raising her son from the dead.

- **Ch. 18: Mount Carmel**

- God instructed Elijah to confront Ahab in the third year of the drought. Elijah first spoke to Obadiah, who was faithful to God and hid 100 prophets in caves when Jezebel was seeking to kill them. Obadiah was afraid to tell Ahab that Elijah was present, but he was reassured that everything would be okay.
- Ahab and Elijah both met and accused the other of troubling Israel. Elijah told him to assemble all Israel, the 450 prophets of Baal, and the 400 prophets of Asherah at Mount Carmel.
- We know the rest - it's an iconic scene, ending with Jehovah responding to Elijah and the slaughter of all false prophets in the Kishon brook.
- Elijah prayed for rain (James 5:17) and instructed Ahab to leave before it hit. Ahab made it to Jezreel, and Elijah beat him there on foot!

- **Ch. 19: After Carmel**

- Ahab told Jezebel, who sent a message to Elijah stating she would have him killed within 24 hours, so he fled out of fear.
- Here's another classic scene. Elijah asked God to take his life, but God sent him to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. Elijah stayed in a cave. We know the rest. It ends with God reminding him how thousands of others hadn't bent the knee to Baal. He was to anoint Hazael as king of Syria, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as his predecessor. The one who escapes from Hazael would be put to death by Jehu, and the one who escapes from Jehu would be put to death by Elisha. God would leave 7,000 in Israel who hadn't worshipped Baal. Elijah called Elisha to follow him.

- **Ch. 20: War With Syria**

- Originally, Asa, king of Judah, allied with King Ben-hadad of Syria (not to be confused with Assyria) against Israel during the reign of Baasha. Syria turned its attention towards Israel once again while Ahab was king.
- God told Ahab through a prophet that Ben-hadad would fail. Sure enough, a small number of soldiers defeated the Syrians in the hills, and Ben-hadad fled.

- The prophet told Ahab the Syrians would try again, which they did, in the plains because they believed Israel's gods were the gods of the hills. Sure enough, Ben-hadad made another war in the spring. However, God defeated them because they said He was a god of the mountain. He wanted to make a point. Ben-hadad surrendered to Ahab, who spared his life. Ben-hadad restored the cities his army had previously taken.
- Then a prophet asks a man to strike him (who doesn't and is killed by a lion). Another man strikes and wounds him. The prophet disguised himself and pretended to be a soldier who was in charge of a captive. He said that since he accidentally allowed the man to escape, his life was required, or he had to pay a talent of silver. Ahab told him he sealed his own fate with his own words, at which point the prophet removed the false bandage and rebuked Ahab. He said that since Ahab allowed Ben-hadad to go, though God devoted him to destruction, Ahab would lose his own life and his people. Ahab went home to Samaria vexed and sullen.

- Ch. 21: Nabo's Vineyard

- Ahab becomes vexed and sullen again after a man named Nabo refused to sell him his property/vineyard because it was his inheritance. In fact, he was so upset that he pouted in bed and wouldn't eat. He told his wife why he was upset, and she comforted him by reassuring him that the vineyard would be his.
- Jezebel wrote a fraudulent letter, purporting to be from Ahab, to the city's leaders. The letter instructed them to proclaim a feast, put Nabo at the head of the table, and have two worthless men accuse Nabo of cursing God and the king. They did, leading to the stoning of Nabo. Jezebel told Nabo that the vineyard was his since Nabo was dead, and he arose to take it.
- God told Elijah to meet Ahab in the vineyard. He was rebuked for the death of Nabo and for taking his land. God said that in the place where dogs licked up Nabo's blood, so would they lick up Ahab's blood. Furthermore, disaster would strike his whole household. Finally, God said dogs would eat Jezebel within the walls of Jezreel. Dogs would eat anyone belonging to Ahab who died in the city, and birds would eat anyone of his who died in the open country.
- Ahab repented. God told Elijah He would refrain from bringing disaster in his days, but would in his son's days upon his house.

- Ch. 22: False Prophets & Ahab's End

- In a very rare occurrence, the king of Judah (Jehoshaphat) allied with Ahab to battle against Syria for Ramoth-gilead.
- However, Jehoshaphat wanted to inquire about the word of the Lord. So, Ahab gathered 400 prophets, who told the king they would be victorious. Jehoshaphat asks if there's any other prophet available. Ahab confirmed Micaiah was available, but the king hated him because he never prophesied good for the king, only evil. Jehoshaphat encourages the king to call him. Meanwhile, the two kings sat on their thrones, adorned with all their splendor, as the false prophets promised them victory.
- Read vs. 13-23. Micaiah was warned to speak favorably, but he said he wouldn't only on behalf of God. When the king asked Micaiah if they should battle, he (apparently sarcastically) promised victory. This annoyed Ahab, who told him to speak the truth. At that point, Micaiah told them to go home. Then Micaiah shared a vision: the Lord sitting on His throne, with the host of heaven standing on His right and left. God asked the host who would entice Ahab to fight so he would fall at Ramoth-gilead. Finally, one spirit came forward, explaining that he would do so by putting a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets. The Lord approved so

that disaster would come upon Ahab. Zedekiah struck Micaiah, and Ahab had in put in prison. Micaiah doubled down, stating that if Ahab returned in peace, then God had not spoken through him.

- The two kings decided to move forward with war. Ahab disguised himself and went into battle, while Jehoshaphat wore his robes. Meanwhile, the Syrian king instructed the captains of his chariots to fight only against the king of Israel. They spotted Jehoshaphat, assuming he was the king. He cried out, and the Lord helped him, so they turned their attention from the king. A particular Syrian soldier drew his bow at random (not really) and struck Ahab between his scale armor and breastplate. Israel fled back to their homes. Ahab died, and they buried him. However, as they washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, the dogs licked up his blood, and the prostitutes washed themselves in it, thus fulfilling God's word.

Ahab Application?

- When there's an Ahab, there's an Elijah.
 - Like the potter and his clay, so is the Lord with us all. You see how God uses someone like Elijah in contrast to Ahab. There's so much we have to do (the power of free will), but if we think for one second that God doesn't ultimately work things out to His will, we've deceived ourselves. I find comfort in knowing that God is always there. When I look back at my own life, I don't always remember what was going on or what I was thinking. Sometimes I can't tell if my decisions were innocent or corrupted, but with God, I always know He's present, and whatever He does is the right thing.
- When there's an Ahab & Elijah, there's always God.
 - Like the potter and his clay, so is the Lord with us all. You see how God uses someone like Elijah in contrast to Ahab. There's so much we have to do (the power of free will), but if we think for one second that God doesn't ultimately work things out to His will, we've deceived ourselves. I find comfort knowing that God is always there and who is there. When I look back at my own life, I don't always remember what was going on or what I was thinking. Some times I can't trust if my decisions were innocent or corrupted, but I know God was present and always does right.
- We get what we ask for.
 - Look at life's decisions. Put the two principles together: free will and God working things out. Yet, at the end of the day, God always wants good for us all, so if it's going badly, if God has molded us for destruction, whose fault is it really? So take note of Ahab's decisions, and then consider your own. Look at the big picture:
 - He marries an idolatrous woman. He knew he shouldn't, but hey, it's a great political move.
 - He allied himself with Jehoshaphat by giving his daughter in marriage to Jehoshaphat's son (2 Chron. 18:1-3; 2 Kings 8:25-27).
 - He named some of his children in honor of God: Ahaziah ("Jehovah holds"), Jehoram ("Jehovah is high"), and Athaliah ("Jehovah is strong"). That didn't help his heart. It was clearly divided, and he didn't seem to deal with his glaring hypocrisy.
 - He allowed the Syrian king to live because he clearly thought it would be beneficial.
 - He was as upset over losing a vineyard as he was after learning he was going to die.
 - He repented, but it seems he did so when it was convenient.
 - He had preferred prophets.
 - He talked Jehoshaphat into wearing his robes to battle (ruthless).
 - He died for it all. Now, it was no random kill shot, but whose fault was it really?