



Lesson 119

Ben-hadad's War Against Ahab

Story Elements

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: 1 Kings 20:1-43 • Setting: circa 872 B.C., between the valley of Jezreel and Syria • Main Characters: God, Ahab, Ben-hadad, and two unnamed prophets • Plot: Israel is miraculously delivered from Syria, but Ahab bungles the victory by showing mercy when he should have shown wrath. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key word(s): “ye shall know that I am the _____” (vv 13, 28) • Climax: 1 Kings 20:28 <i>“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.”</i> |
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Siege and Surrender

1. (1 Ki. 20:1-4) Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, gathered a large force of tributary kings and besieged Samaria.
 - (a) Ben-hadad sent his terms of surrender to Ahab, demanding rights to all his property – gold, silver, wives, and _____. Ahab submitted to Ben-hadad's demands.
 - (b) (1 Ki. 20:5-8) Emboldened by Ahab's spinelessness, Ben-hadad pushed his demands further: even his _____ would be allowed to take from Ahab's house whatever they liked. Such an insult caused even Ahab to wonder at Ben-hadad's arrogance.
2. (1 Ki. 20:9-12) Ahab followed the counsel of the elders and refused Ben-hadad's insulting demands. Ben-hadad responded with arrogance and hateful threats, but Ahab replied with a proverbial statement: *“Let not him that _____ his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.”* (v 11)
3. (1 Ki. 20:13-15) The LORD sent a prophet to Ahab to tell him that God would give Israel a miraculous victory so that Ahab would know that the LORD is God. The miracle would come by way of 232 local leaders and a meager army of _____ young men.
 - (a) (1 Ki. 20:16-18) Meanwhile, Ben-hadad was already deep into the wine supply by noontime. Upon hearing of the small band of Israelites he ordered them taken ____.
 - (b) (1 Ki. 20:19-21) The overconfident Syrians were caught off guard, and the Hebrews smote them and put the invaders to flight. The prophet warned Ahab that the Syrians would return in the _____.

Prophets and Prisoners

4. (1 Ki. 20:22-26) Believing that the Hebrews' deity was only strong in the hills, Ben-hadad's advisors counseled him to battle Israel in in the plain and to replace the

tributary kings with more experienced and loyal _____. The Syrian king listened to his advisors, and in the spring the Syrians gathered at Aphek to battle the Hebrews.

(a) (1 Ki. 20:27-28) Once again the Hebrews were _____ by the Syrians; once again the LORD promised a victory for Israel *“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.”* (v 28)

(b) (1 Ki. 20:29-30) The battle commenced, and the Hebrews slew 100,000 Syrian footmen in one day. The 27,000 survivors fled to Aphek, but a city ____ collapsed on them, leaving none alive. Ben-hadad also fled to Aphek and hid in a secret chamber.

(c) (1 Ki. 20:31-34) According to his counselors' advice, Ben-hadad humbly surrendered himself to Ahab, who was more than glad to pardon his vanquished foe and to promise mercy and renewed Syrian-Hebrew relations.

5. (1 Ki. 20:35-40) An unnamed prophet met Ahab in the way and told him of a hypothetical situation wherein a prisoner was lost. Ahab gave judgment that the man responsible for the lost prisoner should be executed. The prophet then gave Ahab the word of the LORD, saying, *“Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter _____, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.”*

Application

6. Ahab's act of mercy may seem to be a righteous thing to do, but what was his real reason for condescending to Ben-hadad? _____

7. It is not coincidental that Israel defeated Syria with an army that numbered 7,000 – the same number of faithful Hebrews who had not bowed the knee to Baal. The lesson is that God wins the victory, though his followers are in the _____.

8. The object lesson given by the prophet in 20:28-42 was dramatically illustrated when a lion attacked a man who refused to smite the prophet. Such a startling event reminds us that disobedience to God's explicit command cannot be justified by _____.

Notes: _____

Answer Key: Key word(s): LORD • 1. a) children; b) servants • 2. girdeth on • 3. 7,000; a) alive; b) spring • 4. commanders; a) outnumbered; b) wall • 5. destruction • 6. Pride: Ahab failed to see that God had won the victory and assumed the fate of the conquered blasphemers was his own to decide. • 7. minority • 8. good intentions

How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study: (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. Keep in mind that some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.