Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"Wrong Surrender, Wrong Alliance. Wasted Opportunity"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): 1 Kings 20:1-43; *1 Samuel 15:22-23*

It's remarkable how quickly we can surrender when the pressure is coming from the wrong direction. We can resist ADONAI's call to trust *Him* yet surrender quickly to someone else when circumstances seem overwhelming. We call it being practical. But whose reality are we measuring? Are we making decisions according to the things we can see, or are we living in light of the God we cannot see? That question lies at the heart of 1 Kgs. 20 and its tragically wasted opportunity.

Ahab, king of the northern kingdom of Israel, had already received extraordinary demonstrations of ADONAI's power. The Lord had brought drought and answered Elijah with fire on Mount Carmel. Yet Ahab's heart remained stubborn. We might expect God to be finished with him. But the story was never primarily about Elijah, or even Ahab. The story is about the Lord calling His people to return. Astonishingly, ADONAI was still pursuing this rebellious king. The question was whether Ahab would finally surrender to the One who had been reaching out to him all along.

1. SURRENDERING TO THE WRONG KING (1 KGS. 20:1–12)

Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, marched against Samaria with a massive coalition of armies. Israel was weakened by years of drought, and Ahab knew he was outnumbered. Ben-Hadad demanded Ahab's silver, gold, wives, and children. And Ahab responded, *"As you say, my lord the king: I am yours, along with all I have"* (1 Kgs. 20:4). What? The king who had repeatedly refused to submit to the King of the universe now surrendered almost immediately to an earthly king! The Lord had revealed His authority over rain and fire, but Ahab resisted. Yet when an enemy appeared with overwhelming military strength, Ahab simply gave in. He feared man rather than God, because his decisions were governed by what his eyes could see.

There is something else Ahab failed to understand: he was surrendering what was not his to surrender. Israel belonged to ADONAI. Ahab was only a steward. The words he spoke to Ben-Hadad were *precisely the words he should have spoken to the Lord*: **"I am Yours, along with all I have."** Ben-Hadad wasn't satisfied; he demanded more, threatening to seize whatever Ahab treasured. That is how sin works. The enemy intimidates, takes ground, and then demands more. How often do we look at the odds, calculate what seems reasonable, and surrender our peace, our convictions, or our obedience without even seeking the Lord? Earthly wisdom must never replace our trust in ADONAI. The question is not merely whether we will surrender. It is to whom we will surrender.

2. THE LORD'S CONTINUED PURSUIT (1 KGS. 20:13–30)

Just when we might expect judgment to fall, an unnamed prophet approached Ahab with a remarkable word from ADONAI. God would deliver the enormous Aramean army into his hand, *"and you will know that I am Adonai"* (1 Kgs. 20:13). Why would the Lord give such a victory to a king who had rejected Him again and again? This was another gracious overture from the Lord: "It's Me! I am ADONAI!" The drought had not brought Ahab to repentance. The

fire on Carmel had not softened his heart. And still, God reached out. With just 7,000 troops, Israel won a stunning victory over an army consisting of more than 125,000 troops. The prophet then warned that Ben-Hadad would return. A victory had been won, but the war was not over. Ahab needed to strengthen himself and continue listening to the Lord.

When Aram returned, its leaders reasoned that Israel's God must be a god of the mountains, but not of the valleys. They assumed His power was limited. ADONAI would expose that lie. Once again He promised victory so that Ahab would know who He was. Israel looked like two little flocks of goats compared with an army that covered the land. But those little flocks had their "Plus One"—the one true God! ADONAI is not merely the God of the mountains. He is Lord of the valleys, the plains, and every circumstance in between. He is Lord when the fire falls and when He speaks in a still, small whisper. He is Lord in our highest, happiest moments and when enemies seem to surround us. And the God who pursued Ahab still calls people to return today.

3. THE WRONG ALLIANCE AND THE COST OF DISOBEDIENCE (1 KGS. 20:31–43)

After the second devastating defeat, Ben-Hadad, who had once arrogantly demanded everything Ahab possessed, was now begging for his life. By the power of ADONAI, the tables had completely turned. But instead of seeking the Lord, Ahab called Ben-Hadad his brother, welcomed him into his chariot, and made a covenant with him. Ben-Hadad offered to return captured cities and grant trading privileges in Damascus. The arrangement may have looked advantageous. But Ahab was again making a decision that was not his to make. ***The Lord*** had given the victory and had devoted Ben-Hadad to destruction. Ahab had no authority to overrule Him. Rather than thanking ADONAI and asking what obedience required, he effectively said, "I'll take it from here." He embraced an unreliable king while disregarding the faithful King who delivered him.

A prophet then confronted Ahab through an illustrated parable. A man had been entrusted with guarding a prisoner but became busy with other things, and the prisoner escaped. Ahab immediately pronounced judgment on the negligent man, only to discover that he had pronounced judgment on himself. ADONAI's word was clear: because Ahab had released the man devoted to destruction, his own life would answer for it (1 Kgs. 20:42). Yet Ahab went home sullen and resentful. He did not humble himself, repent, or acknowledge the Lord. He hardened his heart again. We may excuse partial obedience as mercy or common sense. But we do not get to revise God's instructions according to our preferences. Saul made that mistake with Agag (1 Sam. 15). And Ahab made it with Ben-Hadad. The Lord sees consequences we cannot see. When He speaks, our calling is to trust and obey—not halfway, but wholeheartedly.

CONCLUSION

Ahab's story is deeply challenging because it forces us to ask questions about our own hearts. To whom are we surrendering? What voices and pressures are shaping our decisions? Are we grateful for the Lord's victories while quietly taking control of our lives again? Have we made an alliance with something the Lord has called us to leave behind? Perhaps we have experienced His kindness yet resist His authority. The tragedy of Ahab is not that ADONAI failed to reveal Himself. The tragedy is that Ahab kept refusing the One who pursued him. Again and again the Lord gave him an opportunity to turn, and again and again Ahab held onto his rebellion. Grace is astonishing, but we must not presume that opportunities to repent can be endlessly rejected without consequence.

Scripture tells us that all of us have sinned, and that the consequence of rebellion against God is death. But in His extraordinary love and mercy, ADONAI sent Yeshua to give His life in our place. What undeserved grace! So don't merely admire the patience of God in Ahab's story; respond to the Lord who is calling you now. If you have never surrendered your life to Yeshua, call on Him in repentance and faith. And if you belong to Him but have been holding back some area of your life, bring that to Him today. Lay down the compromise. Release the illusion that you know better. Don't walk away stubborn and raging when His Word confronts you. Instead, soften your heart and say to the true King, "As You say, my Lord the King. I am Yours, along with all I have." Surrender fully to the One whose faithful love has pursued you all along.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was Ahab so willing to surrender to Ben-Hadad while continually resisting ADONAI? What does this reveal about fear and misplaced trust?
2. Why did the Lord grant Ahab two remarkable victories despite his stubborn rebellion? What do these victories reveal about God's character?
3. Where are you presently tempted to make decisions based primarily on visible circumstances, pressure, or other people's opinions rather than seeking ADONAI?
4. Is there an area of your life where a compromise seems reasonable or beneficial, even though you know the Lord is calling you to wholehearted obedience?
5. How can we respond to God's gracious correction with repentance instead of resentment, and what would that response look like this week?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, You are the Lord of the mountains and the valleys, the King above every earthly power. Thank You for Your patience, Your faithfulness, and Your relentless mercy toward us. Forgive us for fearing people more than we fear You, for leaning on our own understanding, and for receiving Your blessings while resisting Your Word. Expose every wrong alliance and every place where we have compromised. Through Yeshua, soften our hearts and draw us into genuine repentance. Teach us to trust You when the odds seem impossible, to obey You even when we do not understand, and to surrender all that we are and all that we have. May our lives declare that You alone are ADONAI.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.