

I'D MIND MY OWN BUSINESS

TEXT:

1 Kings 20:39-40:

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 [escaped]. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.

INTRODUCTION:

The text is simple and plain – right to the point.

- He understood the command.
- He was capable of doing it.
- He respected the one who gave him the order.
- He knowingly and willfully shirked that duty to devote himself to lesser things by becoming “busy here and there”.

IT IS EASY TO CONDEMN THIS MAN.

- He neglected a command in the midst of the battle.
- At the worst — he was a traitor;
- At the least — he was foolish and incompetent.
- It is always easy to see another’s shortcomings.
 - Illustration: The mote in our brother’s eye often bothers us more than the beam in our own eye.
- It was easy for the king to condemn him because of his failure and his weak excuse.

WHO WAS THE KING?

The King was Ahab. In the book of **1 Kings**, we have the account of the battle between Ahab and BenHadad, the king of Syria.

Ahab, as king of Israel, was burdened with the defense of his land, and was hopelessly outnumbered by a force from Syria. Ahab was a wicked king. Yet, God sent his Prophet, Micaiah, to tell Ahab that God would be with him in this battle, so he should take the offensive and crush the Syrian army.



1 Kings 20:13: 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.

Ahab led his men — following the instructions of Micaiah — knowing that Micaiah was speaking for God.

The battle was a spectacular victory! It makes us think of the Six Day War of modern-day Israel against Egypt.

Why did God do this for Ahab?

- For the sake of God's people, Israel
- In mercy to Ahab, offering him an opportunity for repentance, and
- To bring a quick end to the insolent pride of BehHadad, the king of Syria

Ahab's safety and prosperity were out of immediate danger. However, Ahab:

- Ran ahead of God and the prophet, and made his own terms of peace with Benhadad.
- He planned alone:
 - He planned alone to build streets and garrisons in Damascus.
 - This plan was not providing for his own small kingdom which had want of many things.
 - There was no attempt to crush — or even reprove — BenHadad for his blasphemy against God.

- BenHadad — Ahab’s enemy and God’s enemy — went free, with the title of Ahab’s brother!
- Ahab, who turned to God in time of desperation, now turned away in time of apparent security.

1 Kings 20:31-33

31 And his [king Benhadad] 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 [Ahab], and said, Thy servant Benhadad 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 any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Benhadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Benhadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot.

WHO SPOKE TO THE KING?

- He was not a soldier who shirked his duty.
- He was a prophet, referred to in other passages of Scripture as Micaiah — which means “Who is like God”.



The historian, Josephus, also mentions his name in his writings about king Ahab.

Micaiah disguised himself, went to king Ahab, and told him the story we read in our opening text (**1 Kings 20:39-40**). He came just like Nathan the prophet did to King David when he gave him the parable of the lamb (See **2 Samuel 12:1-14** to read the full account).

1 Kings 20:38-40:

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.

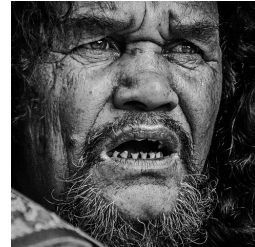
40 And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.

He came to proclaim Ahab's guilt:

- Ahab knew he was to defeat the Syrians.
- He was capable of doing it, with God's help.
- He respected the one who gave him the order — Michaiah — who spoke for God.
- He willingly spared the blasphemous king BenHadad.
- Then, he contemplated the honors of building streets and garrisons in Syrian Damascus.

AHAB'S REACTIONS TO THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET

- He listened with rage to what he saw only as another man's story of failure.
 - He saw the mote in this man's eye, but not the beam in his own.
 - He agreed such a man was worthy of death.



MICAHIAH'S MESSAGE

- Michaiah removed his disguise and was recognized by king Ahab.
- Just as Nathan told David "*Thou art the man*", Michaiah told Ahab:
 - *You have let go the man marked by God for destruction; and now your life shall go for his; and thy people for his people.*

1 Kings 20:41-42: 41 And he hasted, 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.

How did Ahab receive the message?

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

Note that it says that Ahab went to his house “**heavy and displeased**”. He was neither remorseful nor repentant, and was most likely resentful toward God, and enraged at the prophet.

CONCLUSION

This is God’s Word. Is it “relevant” today? Indeed it is. We can see the sin in the man of the parable, and we can see the sin of Ahab. But, can we see — clearly — any message for us? **Is there something today that God has told us to do that we are not doing with all our energy and devotion?**



- The Bible tells us what our assignment is. To Witness, to love, to bear others burdens, to pray, to praise, and to seek His Will for our individual lives.
- He gives strength and wisdom to do that which He has ordained that we should do for Him.
- We know in Whom we have believed, and we give Him reverent respect.
(Remember, Ahab **knew** his assignment. He got the strength and guidance from God, and even believed His word was true.)
- Do we, too, know and fulfill all of this, yet turn away to keep busy at lesser things — things which are contrary to the Word of God?

In some degrees, Micaiah could speak to each one of us in this way and say: YOU are the one . . .

- The one who believes and follows God to a point.
- Then you serve your own wisdom instead of God’s.
- You are the one who does not always put first things first.

Ahab returned to his house heavy and displeased, for he did not want judgment.

Will you turn away — sorrowful and exasperated at this firm challenge? Or will you — this moment — repent of that area in your life where you have chosen to work your own will and pleasure instead of His?

Repentance comes first, followed by a commitment to take Him as the absolute Lord of your life.

Then His Guidance will come, followed by His strength.

Proverbs 3:5-6:

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

⁶ In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

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