



Pierced Armor

1 Kings 22:34-35

1 Kings 22:34-35 KJV And a *certain* man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. [35] And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.

I. INTRODUCTION—GENERAL GEORGE CUSTER

If you have any familiarity with American history at all, I am certain that you have run across the name of George Custer. He was called the Boy General and was one of the most self-assured Indian fighters who ever lived. While he did have some accomplishments to his credit, he is known most of all for his biggest failure.

He graduated from West Point in 1858 last in his class. However his academic rating did not deter him in the least and when the Civil War started managed to serve well in the Union Army. His strength was that he served diligently early in his career under some very prominent officers. He served Winfield Scott, Irvin McDowell, and finally under General George McClellan. He did well in the Battle of Bull Run but really proved himself in the Appomattox campaign which led to the surrender of General Robert E. Lee.

After the Civil War took place, he began to get involved in the Indian campaigns as America stretched on to the west. He primarily fought with the Sioux and the Cheyenne and early on had some victories. But his progress and success led to his downfall.

Against the advice and wisdom of his commanders, he plunged in to the Battle of Little Bighorn against the Sioux and the Cheyenne. He took somewhere around 550 men and ran right into an ambush of 3500 Indians led by Crazy Horse and lost his life. His last attributed historical quote by some of the men who were with him stated that he said, “Hurrah boys, we’ve got them! We’ll finish them up and then go home to our station.”

But it was not to be and shortly thereafter he died foolishly.

-Much can be gleaned from historical battles such as these and the passage we have read in this text gives to us another similar story—a man who refused to listen to the voice of God.

II. THE BACKGROUND OF 1 KINGS 22

A. Ahab and Benhadad

-The text that we read comes from a time in Ahab’s existence that he was in a battle against Ben-hadad. The king of Syria came with a vast army that had thirty-two other kings in an alliance against Ahab in Samaria.

-The Lord intervened in behalf of Ahab and Samaria and delivered them into their hands. His small army defeated the Syrians and their allies so that later they would say that Israel’s God could win victories in the hills but not in the valleys and the plains.

-So the following year, they attacked again but God gave a great victory to the wicked Ahab (1 Kings 20:13-30). But the devil was at work in all of it despite God’s hand of deliverance for Ahab.

-The Syrians drew them into a wicked alliance. The enemies of God made Ahab to believe that these Syrians were repentant and humbled in their defeat and Ahab got caught up in believing his press reports about how great he was and did not kill Ben-hadad.

-But on his way home, there was an anonymous prophet sitting by the road (1 Kings 20:31-43) who had disguised himself. When Ahab came along, he enquired of the prophet who then got up and told a story.

-He told a tale about a prisoner who had escaped and before the story was completed Ahab had confessed his guilt and passed his own sentence. Most scholars believe that this disguised prophet was none other than Micaiah who would confront him again in 1 Kings 22.

B. Wasted Opportunities

-The situation facing Ahab in his life was his refusal to take advantage of his opportunities. Ahab should have killed his enemies when they were on the ropes but instead he chose not to do so.

-Ahab was not the first king to do this, Saul fell into the same plight with the Amalekites and one of the young men of the enemy killed him.

-But this kind of thing doesn't just happen to kings, I have known preachers who refused to kill the troubling spiritual and inner enemies of their heart and in the end, their armor was pierced. I have known good saints of God who did not take care of the troubling and besetting sins of their lives and it pulled them out of the church.

-When we have the opportunity to take down the enemies that attempt to destroy us spiritually and we do not do it, it will come back to haunt us.

-His twenty-two year reign over Israel was marked by wasted opportunities and flesh-driven choices.

He heard one of the greatest prophets in history in Elijah but it did not impact him.

He married a godless wife who influenced him in a terrible way.

He put the nation into an alliance of Baal worship that was destructive.

He was a great soldier who could have led Israel to greatness but did not.

He never submitted to the laws of God.

He watched a huge victory of God take place on Mount Carmel when the fire fell from heaven but it did not change his heart.

-So many "Ahab's" live in this generation and are guilty of the same things.

God pleads with them to get their heart right.

Preachers plead with them to make some spiritual adjustments in their lives.

Their friends plead with them to get in the Church and get plugged in.

Their parents plead them to make the right decisions.

It seems as if at every turn of life they have someone or something that pleads with them. . . all to no avail.

-I plead with you Ahab that you would hear the voice of God to turn around and get your heart in the place that God wants it to be. If you don't your armor is going to get pierced!

III. A KING ARMED AGAINST GOD

-All of Ahab's actions determined that he would be a king who was armed against God. This whole chapter gives us a story of a king who was preparing himself to die in a place that would be far from where God wanted him to be.

-The heart of a wicked man is constantly lusting after things that will never be satisfied with empty idolatry. The wicked man has to get his hands on something, something to satisfy, something to say, "It's just a game and I am going to win it!"

-So we get to 1 Kings 22 and Ahab now decides he will defeat what he earlier refused to deal with. But his refusal to deal with it in God's time has already sealed his doom. When God opens up the windows of heaven and encourages us do His will, we must do it then!

-Ahab lingered just like Lot did and it pierced his armor.

-So for a third time, Syria is going to come back again. When word gets to Ahab about he goes to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, to solicit his help. There was another tie that firmed up the possibility of the alliance; Ahab's daughter was the wife of Jehoshaphat's son.

-The story can be summed up in that there was a gathering of false prophets to Ahab and Jehoshaphat who told them to go into battle and they would gain the victory. Jehoshaphat does not feel that this is the true message of the Lord and asks Ahab if there are any real men of God still in the Kingdom. Ahab tells him that there is one named Micaiah but that he cannot stand him.

-Micaiah comes in and first plays the game. "Go into battle! You can do it! Atta-boy! God is for you!" Ahab listens to the same words coming from another man and then tells him, "I don't for a minute believe what you are saying is right!"

-Micaiah then agrees with him and tells him what the real message was. "I saw Israel scattered like a bunch of sheep that have lost their shepherd! You better stay home and not go!" What Ahab does with the true message makes for some chilling principles.

-He was a man who was literally arming himself against God. But when you arm yourself against God, you will end up with pierced armor and you will die in your chariot.

A. A Rejected Message—1 Kings 22:18

1 Kings 22:18 KJV And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?

-Ahab had been warned by the prophet Micaiah of the danger of going into battle but he did not like that message.

-The rejected message is what would have saved him.

1 Kings 22:8 KJV And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. . .

-Ahab hates him because Micaiah never says anything good to him. It is always repent, turn this nation back to God, get your wife converted, do the will of God, and so forth. The true and authentic message stings Ahab to the point of misery. But his own spiritual misery causes him to hate the voice of the prophet.

A guilty conscience always fears the truth.

Truth feared turns into hate of the messenger and his message.

A guilty conscience or a hated message never overcomes divine truth.

Alexander Maclaren—The truth which and man or a generation requires most is the truth which he likes least. . . . Nauseous medicines and sharp lancets are adapted to the sick man quite as truly as pleasant food and soothing ointment.

Years ago, a sailor who was about to go on a whaling expedition asked someone where he could hear a good sermon. After finding out about a church, the sailor went. When he returned he was asked about the sermon and how he liked it. He told the man, "I didn't like it much. It was like a ship leaving for whaling; everything was shipshape; anchors, rope, sails, food and provisions, but there were no harpoons on board."

-Sermons, if they are of any use whatsoever, they will sting us, they will punch us, they will prod us, and they will save us!

Charles Spurgeon, the famous London preacher summed it up like this:

What would you think of a man who has fallen overboard from a ship and is drowning but refuses the rope? He says, "I don't like that rope; I don't think that rope was made by the best manufacturer besides there is a bit of tar on the rope. I don't like the sailor who threw it over the side of the ship." When the man drowned, the sailors who finally retrieved his body simply said, "It served him right."

-Please don't reject the message it is the hope of glory.

B. Locked up the Prophet—1 Kings 22:26-27

1 Kings 22:26-27 KJV And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; [27] And say, Thus saith the king, Put this *fellow* in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.

-The message that he received from the true prophet so inflamed Ahab that he put Micaiah back into prison.

-It is one thing to reject the message but it is entirely something different and more ardently opposed to God to lock down His messenger.

-Ahab follows the path of every sinner who fights against the words of God. He cannot see God but he can see His spokesmen so he will fight what he can see. Most sinners fall into that same temptation.

They are idolaters in action.

They are persecutors in life.

They refuse to repent and turn from their sin. . . So they escape it by locking up the very voice that will save them in the end.

-Men imprison their preachers but they also imprison their consciences. If we are willing to admit it there are times that deep down our conscience has agreed with the preachers and the saints in our lives. Their words have confirmed what God was clearly directing us to do.

-There has been more than one who has willingly refused to listen to the words of advice of a friend or a minister once they set their minds to following through a certain course of action that in the end destroyed them.

-I dare say that all of us have not at some point treated our conscience or our pastor like Ahab treated Micaiah.

Put him in prison.

Shut up the conscience in a dark dungeon.

Stuff a gag in the pastor's mouth so you can't hear.

Close off your own ears.

-Why? Because we know that what we are doing, what we have determined to fulfill, is forever wrong.

C. Disguised Himself—1 Kings 22:30

1 Kings 22:30 KJV And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.

-Hidden was the fact that he was a king. Living in the palace one way and living in the world in another way.

-That is the deadly danger of hypocrisy.

Thinking in one direction but living in another.

Condemning things in others but giving a pass to ourselves.

Embracing the truth but living in sin.

-Ahab had the trappings of a soldier but he was really a king.

-You ask, "How do I know if I am disguising myself in hypocrisy?" You pray the Scriptures. . . like this one. . .

Ephesians 4:17-32 WNT Therefore I warn you, and I implore you in the name of the Master, no longer to live as the Gentiles in their perverseness live, [18] with darkened understandings, having by reason of the ignorance which is deep-seated in them and the insensibility of their moral nature, no share in the Life which God gives. [19] Such men being past feeling have abandoned themselves to impurity, greedily indulging in every kind of profligacy. [20] But these are not the lessons which you have learned from Christ; [21] if at least you have heard His voice and in Him

have been taught--and this is true Christian teaching-- [22] to put away, in regard to your former mode of life, your original evil nature which is doomed to perish as befits its misleading impulses, [23] and to get yourselves renewed in the temper of your minds and clothe yourselves [24] with that new and better self which has been created to resemble God in the righteousness and holiness which come from the truth. [25] For this reason, laying aside falsehood, every one of you should speak the truth to his fellow man; for we are, as it were, parts of one another. [26] If angry, beware of sinning. Let not your irritation last until the sun goes down; [27] and do not leave room for the Devil. [28] He who has been a thief must steal no more, but, instead of that, should work with his own hands in honest industry, so that he may have something of which he can give the needy a share. [29] Let no unwholesome words ever pass your lips, but let all your words be good for benefiting others according to the need of the moment, so that they may be a means of blessing to the hearers. [30] And beware of grieving the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you have been sealed in preparation for the day of Redemption. [31] Let all bitterness and all passionate feeling, all anger and loud insulting language, be unknown among you--and also every kind of malice. [32] On the contrary learn to be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you.

-Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. . . Don't quench the Spirit. . .

-This is how you test your spirit. . . by comparing your life to what God has in mind for you.

IV. CONCLUSION—CASTING CROWNS—IF WE'VE EVER NEEDED YOU. . .

-Ahab went into a battle he never should have been in. He was a king who was fighting against the Syrians but when he put on his armor on that day, he was literally fighting against God.

-He had determined in his mind that he would come home safe from this battle and he would then have Micaiah executed. So determined was he that he put Jehoshaphat in command of the forces on that day and he thought it would be enough.

-What he did not realize was that he was armed against God. Everything that is mentioned in Ephesians 6 was stripped away from him.

The helmet of salvation—gone!

The breastplate of righteousness (holiness)—stripped away!

The belt of truth—lost!

The shoes of peace—torn off!

The shield of faith—ripped off!

The sword of the Spirit—missing in action!

-People who put themselves in this situation will have to entirely defend themselves at every turn in the battle.

-So I conclude with the words to a song that a friend of mine put me onto. He called me a couple of weeks ago and told me to Youtube the song by Casting Crowns. . . If We've Ever Needed You. .

If We've Ever Needed You—John Mark Hall & Bernie Herms

Hear our cry, Lord, we pray
Our faces down, our hands are raised
You called us out, we turned away
We've turned away

With shipwrecked faith the idols rise
We do what is right in our own eyes
Our children now will pay the price
We need Your light, Lord, shine Your light

If we've ever needed You
Lord, it's now, Lord, it's now

We are desperate for Your hand
We're reaching out, we're reaching out

All our hearts, all our strength
With all our minds, we're at Your feet
May Your kingdom come in our hearts and lives
Let Your church arise, let Your church arise

If we've ever needed You
Lord, it's now, Lord, it's now
We are desperate for Your hand
We're reaching out, we're reaching out
We're reaching out

If we've ever needed You
Lord, it's now, Lord, it's now
We are desperate for Your hand
We're reaching out, we're reaching out

If we've ever needed You
Lord, it's now, Lord, it's now
We are desperate for Your hand
We're reaching out, reaching out

We need You now
Revive us now
We need You now