

Series: Questions

Title: Necessity of Obeying God's Word

Text: 1 Kings 20: 13

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**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?**

We have here another question asked by the Lord, "Hast thou seen all this great multitude?"

The enemy, Benhadad, king of Syria, had come up against Ahab, king of Israel, with 127,000 soldiers, *plus, horses and chariots*. That is like saying plus fighter jets and B1 Bombers—some think it was about 4000 chariots—a massive enemy came against Israel. Benhadad was proud, bold and feared nothing.

Israel on the other hand was a different story. God had reserved only a very small remnant. Yet, God said, **1 Kings 20: 13...behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.**

During the first battle the LORD made it so the king of Israel and his remnant sent this giant army retreating. Then Benhadad, king of Syria, blasphemed God calling him the god of the hills but not the god of the plains. So he put his skilled captains in place of the kings and sent the exact same number against Israel a second time—127,000.

**1 Kings 20: 27:...and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country. 28: And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, 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. 29: And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. 30: But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Benhadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.**

The LORD had commanded Ahab to slay king Benhadad. Ahab was to obey the word of the LORD. But he did not! When the enemy, Benhadad, offered to restore Israel some of the land they had taken, on the condition Ahab would let him live, for his own personal gain, *Ahab disobeyed the word of the LORD*, entered covenant with Benhadad and let him live.

So once again the LORD sent forth his prophet: **1 Kings 20: 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. 43: And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.**

**Our subject:** Necessity of Obeying God's Word

**Proposition:** It is absolutely necessary that we obey the word of God.

## **THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL**

The word of God we are to obey is to believe on his Son.

John 6: 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

We have a greater enemy than Benhadad and his great army. God himself is our enemy if we meet God under the curse of the law. Our own sinful self is our enemy. Satan and his wicked servants in this earth, along with sin, death and hell is our enemy.

But Christ is the faithful, obedient King. He is nothing like King Ahab. When God the Father promised Christ that he would deliver all his enemies into his hand so long as Christ obeyed and honored and magnified his word and his holy law—Christ obeyed perfectly.

What was required of Christ in order for God to show us mercy? When Ahab showed Benhadad mercy it was in disobedience because it was at the expense God's word (God's law), who appointed Benhadad to die. So the prophet said to Ahab at the end of verse 39, *"thy life for his life or else thy shall pay a talent of silver to redeem life."*

In order for God's law to be honored, all those God's will show mercy, first had to die because we were enemies of God by our disobedience. God sent forth his Son to honor his law saying to Christ of every sinner he would save, *"thy life for his life."* And the price of our redemption from the curse of the law was not silver or gold but *"the precious blood of Christ as a Lamb, without blemish and without spot."* (1 Pet 1: 19)

Now, by Christ's obedience, God can show his people mercy because mercy and truth are met together in Christ--*"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom 6: 3)

Salvation, righteousness, sanctification, redemption: is not by our obedience to the law of God but by Christ's!

Romans 4: 2: For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.  
3: For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

How was Abraham made to believe on Christ? Christ, who was Abraham's Righteousness, came and preached the gospel to Abraham like as God did to wicked Ahab, *"Hast thou seen all this great multitude of your enemies? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD."* The difference is that Christ conquered Abraham and brought him to repentance.

If we are going to obey God by believing on Christ we first have to be brought by God to repent from our works and come to Christ asking mercy. Notice what the servants told Benhadad in **verse 31: And his 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, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live.**

Have you heard? The King, Christ Jesus, is the merciful King. Come to Christ in humility asking mercy and you shall receive mercy! The mercy Ahab showed was disobedience to God. But because Christ obeyed God's law in laying down his life for his people, now all who come to Christ begging mercy hear this from Christ, verse 32, "And he said,...he is my brother." Verse 33, "he caused him to come up into the chariot" which was an act of friendship, of reconciliation. God was in Christ and has reconciled all his people unto

him. When God puts his word of reconciliation in his child then he teaches us that God in Christ is now the friend of all who believe on him. In verse 34, Benhadad came saying what he would restore, but Christ tells the repentant sinner what Christ has restored for him. And so Christ makes a covenant with his believing brother.

Sinner, come to Christ repentant, asking mercy, believing on him—his thoughts are not our thoughts. You will find mercy. When the gospel was preached unto Abraham, by the effectual grace of God, scripture says,

Romans 4: 20: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21: And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22: And therefore it was imputed to him for [because of Christ's] righteousness [on whom he believed]. 23: Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25: Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Faith rests in Christ who delivered me and justified me and arose for me! Faith confesses he is our only Righteousness and the Holiness of our hearts. So the first word of the LORD we must be brought to obey is, *“that ye believe on him whom [God] hath sent.”*

## **CONTINUE LOOKING TO CHRIST ALONE**

When the Spirit of God has effectually called us to faith in Christ, we are to obey the Lord's word by fighting the fight of faith trusting and looking to none but Christ our King.

Every believer brought to faith in Christ is God's chosen remnant sent forth to do battle with great enemies in this world.

One of our enemies are God's unregenerate elect whom he shall call out who, while dead in sins, are enemies in their minds because of their wicked works. Why did God conquer this enemy for wicked Ahab? He didn't do it for Ahab but *verse 15, “all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.”* God told Elisah in 1 Kings 19: 18: *“Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.”* I am not saying those seven thousand were the exact elect remnant but that number being mentioned this close in scripture is to remind us that everything God does with kings and nations in this world is, not for wicked kings and wicked nations, but for his elect Israel, chosen by grace—the remnant scattered throughout this world.

Romans 11:5: Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Two, the rest of the world who are enemies are those who reject our gospel who shall be hardened by our gospel because they will not believe on Christ. All Christ's enemies shall be made his footstool.

When God told Ahab he would deliver the enemy into his hand, Ahab asked, in verse 14, *“By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces...”* 15: Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.”

These “232 young men of the princes” were young pages under the princes. They knew nothing about war; they were not soldiers and not great in number. And there were only 7000 of all the children of Israel to go forth and fight with them. This was against the Syrian army of 127,000 valiant soldiers.

Yet, this little remnant is who God chose through whom God promised to make his word effectual and deliver Israel from the hand of the enemy. Why? It is a picture of Christ's church sent to spread Christ's gospel!

1 Corinthians 1: 27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28: And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Brethren, it is better for God to use us "foolish, weak, base, despised things, to bring to nought things that are: so that no flesh should glory in his presence."

Who gets the glory when sinners are conquered? Ahab asked another question in verse 14, "*Then he said, Who shall order the battle?*" It means who will strike first and lead and command these men. "And he answered, Thou." Who else should command the children of Israel but the king of Israel? Who else should command his church but Christ our King? So then "*he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*"

Then notice, what they did when the LORD promised to deliver their enemies into their hand, verse 16, "And they went out at noon." Faith obeys our Lord.

But where do we get our strength? After the first battle, verse 22, "*And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself.*" Notice, it was through the word preached by God's prophet that they were commanded to go, strengthen themselves. It is through the preaching of the gospel that the Spirit of God strengthens us. But who is our strength for this warfare?

Philippians 4:13: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Before our enemies in this world we are like this little remnant. Verse 27, "*the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.*" We are pitched before the enemy like little flocks of sheep. But we shall be more than conquerors by Christ our King.

Romans 8: 36: As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37: Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Oh, yes, we believe Christ is our Strength when we are on the mountain but sometimes we face trials in the valley! After Israel defeated Syria in the hills they were brought down to the valley where they were again outnumbered. Yet, Christ is our Conquering King and Strength in the valleys, too! Verse 28, the Lord again sent his prophet and through his gospel said, "*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.'*"

God give us grace to obey him as Christ's church, under Christ's command, depending upon Christ's strength, in the valleys as well as hills. God our Savior and King shall keep us and conquer all our enemies even as he promised.

## **USE ONLY ONE WEAPON**

We are to obey God's word by using one weapon in this warfare, the preaching of Christ and him crucified in truth.

The disobedience of Ahab was that he dishonored the word of God by showing mercy to a sinner who God said had to die. He showed mercy at the expense of truth.

If we bring the law down to man's level saying man can keep it, rather than using it to declare all guilty—we show mercy at the expense of truth.

If we say God loves all men and wants to save you if you will just make the blood of Christ effectual by accepting Jesus—we show mercy at the expense of truth.

If receive men who come giving their terms for surrender, trying to bribe us or God, we show mercy at the expense of truth—verse 34, "*Benhadad said unto Ahab, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria.*" Benhadad was not the victor. It was not his place to make conditions. He confessed no wrong-doing but blamed it on his father. And he took credit as being the one who would restore all and give Ahab permission to build. Sinners do not come to Christ unless we come confessing *I and I alone have sinned and done this evil in thy sight.* We do not come to Christ if we come saying I will restore and I will let you build in my city

It is with the two edges of this gospel sword that Christ says, "*I kill and I make alive.*" Sinner's must first be killed by the gospel and know themselves to die before they can be healed in mercy by the gospel. So our one weapon in this warfare is the gospel of Christ and him crucified preached in truth.

Hebrews 4: 12: For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13: Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

God make us like this prophet in this passage—verse 13, "*Behold there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD...28: And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, "Thus saith the LORD."* Even when declaring God's word meant his own hurt he declared God's word—verse 35, "*And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbor in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee.*" The man he told to do this looked to his own reason and saw no reason to smite him so he refused. But doing so he disobeyed the word of the LORD and the LORD killed him. We are not to refuse to declare God's word when it means we will be smitten for doing so. Nor are we to refuse God's word when it does not make logical sense to us. We are to obey God's word and preach Christ crucified according to the scriptures in truth no matter what!

God had his prophet smitten according to his word so that, like the preaching of the gospel, every time Ahab heard someone talk about it, Ahab would be reminded of God's judgment that lay in store for him.

Yet, this certain prophet did not question God, he did not offer an alternate suggestion to God, he obeyed the LORD by declaring the word of the LORD even when it meant his own self being smitten and he did not stop till he found another man who would smite him.

Brethren, is that not what Christ did for us? "*Smite the shepherd*", God said. Christ said, "*Shall the servant be greater than his Lord? If they have rejected my word they will reject yours also.*" If we will be faithful to declare the gospel in truth then I can assure you from experience, we will suffer hurtful rejection and it will cost you. But if our worship and service to Christ costs us nothing then its worth the same to God. Yet, for the believer, it is light affliction to suffer in order for Christ to be glorified in his gospel! The gospel of Christ crucified is our one weapon in this great warfare of calling out Christ's lost sheep!

2 Corinthians 10: 3: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6: And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

**Amen!**