



CHAPTER 20

When

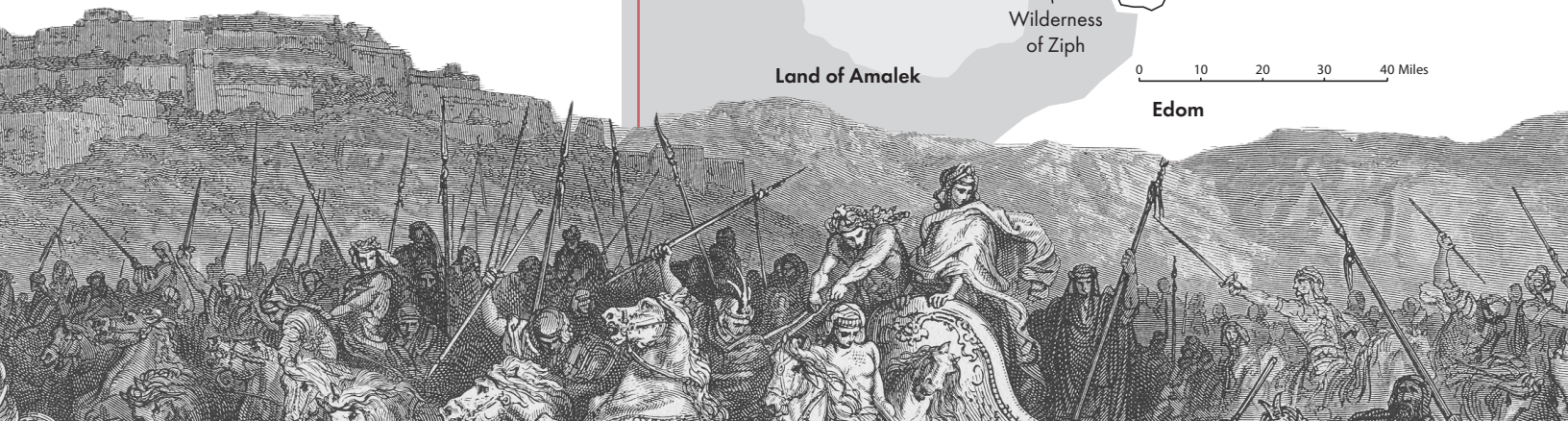
- According to the timeline we are using for this study, the kingdom of Israel and Judah divided in 975 B.C.
- The period that followed, called the period of the “Divided Kingdom,” lasted the next few centuries. Israel remained a cohesive nation until 721 B.C. (Assyrian captivity), while Judah lasted until 607 B.C. (Babylonian exile).
- King Ahab’s reign over Israel (22 years) probably fits somewhere between 920-890 B.C.

Key Characters

- **Ahab** – Omri’s son and one of Israel’s most wicked kings.
- **Ben-hadad** – King of Syria.
- **A Prophet of God** – This man delivered a message of punishment to King Ahab after his battle with the Syrians.

Where

- The kingdom of Syria was just to the north of Israel’s territory.
- Israel’s capital was Samaria.
- The Syrian soldiers fled to Aphek after being routed by the army of Israel.



Outline

- **AHAB REJECTS THE REQUESTS OF THE KING OF SYRIA (20:1-12):**
 - + Ben-hadad of Syria and a confederation of 32 kings attacked Samaria.
 - + Ben-hadad sent messengers to Ahab claiming all of Ahab's possessions as his own.
 - + Later, Ben-hadad told Ahab he was sending men into Samaria to spoil the city and take anything they wanted.
 - + Ahab protested, and refused to let Ben-hadad proceed, so Ben-hadad readied his men to attack.
- **AHAB'S FIRST BATTLE WITH THE SYRIANS (20:13-22):**
 - + God promised to give Ahab victory, even though his army was significantly smaller.
 - + Ahab instigated the battle when Ben-hadad and his allies were drinking. They defeated Ben-hadad's men, but the king escaped on a horse.
 - + Israel "struck the horses and chariots, and struck the Syrians with a great blow" (20:21).
 - + A prophet of God warned Ahab the Syrians would return in the spring.
- **AHAB'S SECOND BATTLE WITH THE SYRIANS (20:23-34):**
 - + Ben-hadad's advisors counseled him that his loss was due to the Israelite God being a god of the hills. They advised him to rebuild his army and fight in the plain next time.
 - + Ben-hadad did as they instructed and brought his new army to Israel in the spring.
 - + The Syrians "filled the country" but the Israelites were like "two little flocks of goats."
 - + God's prophet told Ahab Israel would be victorious. God was going to prove His lordship extended well beyond the hills of Samaria.
 - + Israel killed 100,000 Syrians and 27,000 more were killed when the walls of Aphek fell on them (perhaps miraculously).
 - + After the battle, Ahab let Ben-hadad live. He made a covenant with him and sent him home.
- **A PROPHET CONDEMNS AHAB FOR ALLOWING BEN-HADAD TO LIVE (20:35-43):**
 - + A prophet told a man to strike him because the Lord commanded it.
 - + When the man refused, the prophet told him he would be killed by a lion for disobeying God.
 - + The prophet found another man and repeated the instruction. This time the man struck him and injured him.
 - + The wounded prophet bandaged his eye and sat in the road, waiting for King Ahab.
 - + When the king arrived, the prophet pretended he was a man who had been entrusted with guarding another man at the risk of his life, and he had failed his job. He told Ahab the man he was supposed to be guarding had escaped.
 - + Ahab told him he deserved to die for failing at his job.
 - + But then the prophet took off his bandage and announced a condemnation on the king.
 - + God had entrusted Ahab with destroying Ben-hadad, but Ahab had failed and let him go. God was going to require Ahab's life as punishment.

Application

- We are not in a position to extend grace and pardon to the enemies of God.
- Ahab shouldn't have extended grace or pardon to Ben-hadad.
- Unfortunately, many Christians promote a message of tolerance and acceptance, excusing and justifying people who live in rebellion to the word of God.
- Those who reject God's instructions and blaspheme Him are enemies of God (Romans 5:10).
- Enemies of God will face His judgement. The last thing we want to be found doing is supporting those one whom God's judgement is going to fall (Romans 1:32).

