

Finishing Well – 1 Kings 20

- I. Introduction
 - a. In 1 Kings 20, Israel has a problem
 - i. Ben-Hadad is offering to be Israel's overlord
 - 1. "Living in the chaotic environment of the ancient near eastern world, with despotic rulers and rampaging armies everywhere you turn, how can a second tier ruler of a minor nation avoid being steamrolled by a major world power?"
 - 2. "Ben-Hadad and his Syrian minions provide personalized overlord services. He will spare no trouble to ensure that you are not oppressed, pillaged or extorted **by anyone else.**"
 - 3. He demands wives, children, gold and silver
 - 4. Ahab agrees
 - a. They did not have the power to resist
 - b. Weakened by three years of drought and famine
 - c. Syrian military is vastly superior
 - ii. This overlord makes housecalls!
 - 1. "Why go through the hassle of collecting and sending your tribute and slaves? For your convenience, Ben-Hadad and his Syrian minions will come collect them personally, all for just a small additional charge."
 - 2. Ahab refuses: He is looking for trouble!
 - iii. Ben-Hadad's threat: You are toast!
 - iv. Ahab's reply
 - 1. "Let not him who puts his armor on boast as he who takes it off."
 - 2. This statement of Ahab is a message I want to sink into our hearts and minds
 - b. Finishing well
 - i. It is good to begin well
 - ii. It is better to continue well
 - iii. But it is essential to finish well
- II. Key Thought – In this chapter, King Ahab lives out the consequences of not finishing what he started in following after God
- III. Ahab Begins Well (20:13-21)
 - a. God offer to partner with Ahab: I will do this for you (20:13)
 - i. It is an offer to partner with Ahab in accomplishing God's purposes
 - ii. Does he deserve it? NO!
 - 1. Evil-practicing Ahab (1 Kings 16:30)
 - 2. Jezebel-marrying Ahab (16:31)
 - 3. Baal-worshipping Ahab (16:32)
 - 4. Prophet-hunting Ahab (18:10)
 - 5. Nation-troubling Ahab (18:18)

- iii. Has he done anything at all to earn a second chance? NO!
 - 1. It's not much different with us, is it?
 - b. Ahab's response is exactly right
 - i. How must I act in order to receive this blessing? (20:14)
 - ii. He not only finds out what the conditions are for this blessing, he acts upon them (20:15-19)
 - iii. God rewards his faithfulness (20:20-21)
 - c. He has started very well!
- IV. Ahab Continues Well (20:22-30)
 - a. A warning from God (v. 22)
 - i. Strengthen yourself
 - ii. Consider what you must do
 - iii. There is more fighting ahead
 - b. Ben-Hadad makes a fatal strategic mistake (v. 23-25)
 - i. He belittled God
 - ii. All our enemies do this
 - 1. Goliath
 - 2. Assyria
 - iii. And that is why it is inevitable that they should fail and fall
 - 1. The faithful know this
 - a. Caleb & Joshua
 - b. David
 - c. Hezekiah
 - 2. Our job is just to clean up what is leftover when God defeats the unrighteous
 - c. God will fight for Ahab again
 - i. It doesn't look good (v. 26-27)
 - 1. But race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong
 - ii. God will fight for Ahab (v. 28)
 - iii. I will give them into your hand
 - iv. A second success (v. 29)
 - v. They can't get away from God (v. 30)
 - d. Ahab has continued well
- V. Ahab finished poorly (v. 31-34)
 - a. God has delivered Ben-Hadad into Ahab's hand
 - i. The one who said;
 - 1. Everything you have is mine
 - 2. I will come take every thing from you that makes you happy
 - 3. There won't be anything left of Samaria
 - 4. Their gods only have power in the hills
 - 5. He has been judged by God
 - ii. The only way he is going to escape to judgment of God is if Ahab lets him go
 - 1. But that is what he does
 - a. He could have killed him

- b. He could have enslaved him
 - c. But he ended up taking a present from him and forming an alliance with him!
 - 2. He partners with Ben-Hadad instead of God!
 - 3. Unbelievable!
 - 4. Mercy is good
 - a. But we must not be merciful to evil
 - b. We must destroy it in our personal lives
 - i. Our besetting sins want to rule us and destroy us
 - 1. We may overcome them once or twice, but they keep coming back
 - 2. In Christ, we gain the power to have complete victory over them...
BUT...
 - ii. Our besetting sins say to us, “please let me live”
 - iii. “Just keep me around and I won’t interfere with your service to God”
 - iv. “Have pity on me!”
 - v. But our old man must be crucified, put to death, and buried (Rom. 6:4-6)
 - c. We must defy evil in our homes, families, churches and communities
 - d. And we must never, ever come to terms of peace with evil
- b. God rebukes Ahab (v. 35-42)
 - i. First demonstration – Wound the prophet
 - 1. One companion will not – dies
 - 2. Another companion does
 - ii. Second demonstration – Keep the prisoner
 - 1. Ahab judges rightly
 - 2. He is guilty
- c. There is still an opportunity to finish well
 - i. Accept correction
 - ii. Repent
 - iii. Finish what was left undone
 - iv. But instead Ahab mopes (v.43)
 - 1. I just can’t please God
 - 2. Why even try?
 - 3. He was undefeated on the battlefield
 - 4. But totally defeated spiritually
 - 5. He and his people will pay the price for King Ahab’s failure to finish well

VI. Conclusion

- a. “Let not him who puts his armor on boast as he who takes it off.”

- b. It is good to intend well
 - i. But let us make sure that we are partnered with God
 - ii. Strengthen ourselves
 - iii. Consider what we must do
 - iv. So we can finish well
- c. What do we need to finish?
 - i. Making a commitment to Christ
 - 1. This is not a 30 day trial, with a money-back guarantee
 - 2. It is a lifelong commitment
 - 3. He WILL show himself to be Lord, whether we acknowledge and fight with him or not
 - ii. Raising our family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord
 - 1. We need to get the job done
 - 2. Keep our focus
 - 3. Otherwise, while we are busy here and there our children will be gone, gone from our homes, gone from faithful service to the Lord, lost into the world.
 - iii. Whatever we do, do it with all our might
 - 1. Even the smallest tasks deserve our faithful attention
 - 2. Anything worth doing is worth doing well
 - 3. And anything worth doing well is worth finishing well
 - 4. EXAMPLE: My Greek study
 - 5. It feels REALLY GOOD to finish well
 - iv. Finishing the Christian race
 - 1. He who endures to the end will be saved
 - 2. If you are faithful unto death I will give you a crown of life
 - 3. 2 Tim. 4:6-8
 - 4. What finishing well sounds like: “Well done good and faithful servant, you have been faithful in a little, I will make set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.”(Matt. 25:23)