

Theme: God shows himself mighty, just, and full of mercy - all for the sake of his people and the glory of his name. It is who he is and who his true king must be.

Background: Three more chapters of Ahab's failings – and three more pictures of God's grace.

Introduction: Two infamous Ahabs

I. Ahab the Faithless (Expedience Not Obedience)

A. Israel under siege – Round 1

1. Thus says Ben-Hadad... (2)
 - a. Submission now!
 - b. Make that "humiliation"
2. Ahab takes counsel
 - a. Submission – yes. Humiliation – no.
 - b. Ahab declares war (11)
 - The odds are not in Israel's favor
3. Thus says the LORD... (13)
 - a. Unexpected support
 - With a promise of deliverance
 - With a purpose – To know I am the LORD
 - b. Ahab asks "how?"
4. Battle is joined quickly
 - Ben-Hadad is not really "in command" (18)
5. Israel prevails
 - Because the Lord fought for them

B. Israel is attacked – Round 2

1. Ahab is warned (22)
2. Ben-Hadad's poor (disastrous) theology (23)
 - A god of the hills, but not of the valleys/plainsNOTE: Bad theology has deadly consequences
3. Ahab musters the troops – Israel looks like two little flocks of goats
4. Thus says the Lord... (28)
 - A promise of deliverance
 - With a purpose – To know I am the LORD
5. Victory is achieved (29,30)

C. Ben-Hadad's surrender (30b-34)

1. Pleading for their lives (32)
2. Ahab receives him as "brother"
3. Making a covenant with the enemy of the Lord

D. Ahab's judgment

1. A new prophet (35)
 - a. Preparing to confront the KingNOTE: It isn't safe to deny or reject the word of the Lord!

- b. The parable
- 2. Ahab's sentence (42)
 - Life for life, people for people
 - NOTE: Ahab shows himself no shield or protector of Israel
 - Consequence: Ahab and the nation fall under God's Judgment (20:42)
- 3. Ahab's responds – poorly

II. Ahab the Unjust (Oppression, Not Justice)

- A. I want a garden
 - 1. Naboth's vineyard – to be precise
 - 2. Naboth won't sell or trade
 - He is a faithful Israelite (21:3)
- B. Jezebels scheme – highlights...
 - 1. Ahab's weakness
 - a. Weak spiritually, morally
 - b. Jezebel rules
 - Her mocking "You're the king – you *are* the law!" (7a)
 - 2. Jezebel's solution
 - a. Orchestrate Naboth's death
 - b. It's all yours, sweetie.
 - Including the responsibility
- C. Justice perverted
 - 1. A simple, wicked affair
 - 2. Ahab will not protect God's people nor their inheritance
- D. Justice demanded!
 - 1. "Thus says the LORD..."
 - Elijah comes – in the name of the Lord
 - 2. Like Jeroboam and Baasha – is the house of *Ahab!*
- E. Ahab undone (21:27)
 - 1. Ahab feels the weight of judgment!
 - 2. Signs of repentance
- F. God's mercy

III. The God of Grace

- A. Who comes unexpectedly (20)
 - 1. For the sake of his promise
 - 2. For the sake of his people
- B. Who upholds justice (21)
 - 1. Ahab would not – God's Son will!
 - 2. With grace toward his people

Next week: 1 Kings 22:1-40