

## Lessons from the Life of Ahab Part 2

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Last time I spoke, we looked into one of the kings of Israel. When you look into it, there is more detail about this one king than all the other kings after David and Solomon. We looked into the life of this king, King Ahab, to see what lessons we might learn from his life. As I typically do, on the way home after services, I was kicking myself because I left out a major point in one of the lessons regarding what we need to learn. I was also made aware of the fact that I didn't use a term quite accurately. We always want to get things right. The Elders and Deacons in the Pacific Church of God are not afraid to admit that sometimes, we make mistakes and fall short. But we have an opportunity to get things right in this life. So, I made the decision for that sermon, the first part was the life of Ahab and we posted that on the website. The second part—the lessons to learn from the life of Ahab—were not posted and that's what we are going to cover today.

We're going to expand that a bit because we have more time to do so. By way of introduction, what I would like to do is briefly summarize what we covered last time in case we have some new viewers. If you are like me, as we get older, the memory banks short circuit after a while and we need refreshing. We're going to summarize and maybe add a few details.

We began by talking about the fact that after Solomon's death, Israel became divided. The question that I didn't have time to cover last time was, why did God do that? Why would God divide the nation of Israel? We find the answer in 1 Kings 11. By way of review, 1 Kings 11:1 tells us why God had to step in and divide the nation of Israel.

**1 Kings 11:1** *But king Solomon [we know was David's son] loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;*  
2) *Of the nations concerning which the LORD [Jehovah] said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: [the reason we are told this] for surely, they will turn away your heart after their gods: (KJV)*

Last time we read God's admonition in Deuteronomy 7.

2 continued) ... *Solomon clave* [the King James says, it means "clinged"] *unto these in love.*

3) *And he had seven hundred wives ... (KJV)*

Now pause for a minute and think about having 700 mothers in law—think about that. Each mother in law is politicking and pushing to have her daughter favored in the court of Solomon. You want to bring trouble on your head, go do that. Then we are told there are *princesses* and the Hebrew means, "a female noble". Those were probably political marriages to bring Israel closer together with some other foreign country.

3 continued) *princesses, and three hundred concubines* [today we would say mistresses]: [here's the point] *and his wives turned away his heart.*

4) *For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods* [not the one true God]: *and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.*

5) *For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians* [that was where Jezebel came from and was probably a priestess of this god or goddess], *and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.*

6) *And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.*

7) *Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem* [within sight of Jerusalem he built a temple for a pagan god if you can imagine that], *and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.* (KJV)

Not just one, but a second one.

8) *And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.* (KJV)

He enabled his wives to worship their pagan gods by providing space and a place for them to do so. You can imagine God Almighty's reaction to this.

9) *And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice ...* (KJV)

That is even more remarkable that he would do that after coming into the presence of God and God speaking to him—it's just amazing.

10) *And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.* (KJV)

His heart was turned as he got older.

11) *Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.* (KJV)

Last time we read the scriptures about the prophet Ahijah anointing Solomon's servant Jeroboam to be king over the Northern Ten Tribes. We find that in verse 28 through 34. So, King Solomon died in 938 B.C. and Rehoboam his son was in line to be king. I was talking with Will Berg this past week and we have Jeroboam and Rehoboam and, in many cases, people get those two confused and think, which is which? Will said the way he remembers it, is, you have Solomon beginning with an S, and you have

Rehoboam his son, beginning with an R. R and S are together in the alphabet, so that's how he remembers it. Jeroboam, the J is further back toward the beginning of the alphabet. So, Solomon begat Rehoboam—it's a good way to remember it. We found out last time, that at Rehoboam's coronation we would say, the Northern Ten Tribes asked Rehoboam to lighten the load. Solomon had placed all kinds of burdens on the people—financial burdens, burdens of service and so on. They asked his son, would you please lighten the load? Rehoboam we discovered, rejected the counsel of the older men in Solomon's court and he listened to his cronies. Those of his own age. We would say today, he listened to his entourage or the group that travels around with him. What he decided to do was not lighten their burdens, but to make their burdens heavier. At that juncture the Northern Ten Tribes said, we're out of here and walked away from Rehoboam.

**1 Kings 12:19** *So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. 20) And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again [he had fled to Egypt because Solomon was after him], that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel [the Northern Ten Tribes]: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. (KJV)*

And parts of Benjamin too. Now Jeroboam had to make a choice—he had to choose. Rule righteously under God's law and please the Most High---Who actually was responsible for ordaining Him—so you would think that would be the logical path. Or he could do things his own way and suffer the consequences of walking his own way. Jeroboam made the human choice. He rejected Jehovah and put himself first. He took the human steps to protect his turf, to protect himself, to exalt himself rather than relying on God to take care of him. The bottom line was, Jeroboam did not trust God. He made two calves of gold, and he said the same thing that Aaron said at the bottom of Mount Sinai when Moses was up there for longer than the people wanted. He said, look these two calves are the ones that brought you out of Egypt. Same thing that Aaron had said. He set one calf in Bethel, ten miles north of Jerusalem just across the border into the Northern Ten Tribes, and the other he set far north into Dan at the northern part of the kingdom. He did so with human reasoning, to make travel more convenient and easier to worship in those two places instead of going all the way down to Jerusalem. He ordained a feast in the eighth month rather than the seventh month, as God commanded. He basically was competing with Jehovah's Feast in Jerusalem; the total opposite of what God wanted.

Then we are told, he made a temple of temples as a substitute for God's Temple in Jerusalem. He made priests of the lowest rank, the lowest order of men, not Levites. The problem is, when you ordain a bunch of suck-ups, you will suffer the consequences. We've seen that happen in the modern-day church of God, and this happened then. You ordain, or put into office, suck-ups, look what you're going to get. We will see that as we go through. Jeroboam made the purposeful choice to lead Israel into idolatry. He broke every one of the first four commandments.

Then we came to the subject of the matter, the seventh king of the Northern Ten Tribes and as we know, that is Ahab. We will see this in 1 Kings 16:28, just as a review.

**1 Kings 16:28** So Omri [who was the father of Ahab] *slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.*

29) *And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. (KJV)*

That is roughly 875 to 853 B.C. Here's the condemnation of Ahab.

30) *And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. (KJV)*

He is the seventh. Every one before him—more so than Solomon, more so than Jeroboam.

31) *And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing ... (KJV)*

The Hebrew means “trifling”. We would say today, “no big deal”.

31 continued) ... [it seemed no big deal] *for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat ... (KJV)*

So, Ahab became king only forty-one years after Jeroboam and we have seen that the sins of Jeroboam were to lead Israel into idolatry, breaking the first four commandments. We are told here that Ahab was even worse. He was worse than all the kings before him. We have to ask the question, if Solomon did what he did and Jeroboam did what he did, what did Ahab do to make it worse? What was the condemnation there? We find it in the latter part of verse 31.

31 continued) ... *that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal [means “with Baal”, so Jezebel’s father was a proselyte of Baal] king of the Zidonians, and [as a result of taking Jezebel to be his wife] went and served Baal, and worshipped him.*

32) *And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.*

33) *And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. (KJV)*

Part of the reason for that is that Jezebel was responsible for killing the prophets of God Almighty. We can read that in chapter 18. Then you remember the story where Elijah slaughtered 450 prophets of Baal—they had the shootout between them. Was Baal going to provide the fire for the offering, or was God Almighty? God came down and obliterated that altar after the prophets of Baal cut themselves and danced around all day long. After that happened, he cut to pieces 450 prophets of Baal and Jezebel was

not happy. You remember that story in chapter 19, she set out to kill him and he went on the run.

Finally, after all this, the Almighty God, the Most High God, had had enough. He just had had enough. 1 Kings 21:17 which we covered last time, is a reminder to bring everybody up to date.

**1 Kings 21:17** *And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18) Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. (KJV)*

You remember last time, Jezebel had Naboth killed for Ahab's benefit so he could take this piece of land.

*19) And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? [You have really done this thing?] And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. (KJV)*

This prophet is looking Ahab in the eyes and telling him this. He's saying enough is enough Ahab, this is what's going to happen to you.

*20) And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? (KJV)*

If you look at the back story of Ahab, every time he met Elijah, Elijah didn't have any good things to say. So he didn't like to go to Elijah because he would not hear what he wanted to hear.

*20 continued) ... And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold [the Hebrew can mean "surrendered"] thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. (KJV)*

Verse 21, out of the New King James. He said Ahab is going to die, but notice this.

*21) Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. (NKJV)*

Your descendants are going to be wiped out. Going on in verse 22 in the King James.

*22) And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.*

*23) And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.*

*24) Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.*

*25) But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. (KJV)*

The Hebrew for *stirred* can mean “entice” or “provoke”. She was right there pushing and he yielded to that.

*26) And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. (KJV)*

So, Ahab not only followed in the sins of Jeroboam, he amplified them under Jezebel’s influence. She, as was said before, was likely a priestess of that pagan religion and she influenced and she pushed and she provoked Ahab. He not only allowed it, but he promoted idolatry and he protected idolatrous religion. He chose other gods before the true God and with Jezebel’s provocation and Jezebel’s support he allowed her to kill the prophets of the Almighty God. Satan was behind it all and what Satan wanted to do, of course, was to wipe out the true religion. He was provoking Ahab and Jezebel as his tools to make that happen.

The question then becomes, as we summarize and end the introduction, why did God devote so much space to this one guy? This supremely evil king—why did He do that? The title of this second part is five lessons that we can learn from the life of Ahab.

We’re going to start with the most important one. It should be obvious, as it is a theme throughout this whole study.

### **1. The most important lesson is, we have to put Jehovah first.**

We have to put the Almighty, the Most High, the living God, first in our lives. This is all that God Almighty asked of Solomon, of Jeroboam and He asked it of Ahab. Just put Me first. Obey My commandments, obey my statutes and it will go well with you. You will be blessed—that’s all He asked. Notice in 1 Kings 11:31, Jeroboam is being anointed now as king of the Northern Ten Tribes and God used the prophet Ahijah to do this. As we covered last time, he told Ahijah to go do this.

*1 Kings 11:31 And he [Ahijah] said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:*

*32) (But he [referring to Rehoboam, Solomon’s son] shall have one tribe for my servant David’s sake, and for Jerusalem’s sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)*

*33) [Why did He do it?] Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes [they just refused what God wanted, which was to do what was right in God’s eyes], and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. (KJV)*

Sad situation—if only they had done what God wanted.

38) *And it shall be, [this is all God is asking] if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. (KJV)*

I'm going to give Israel to you, just walk as I asked you to walk. Put Me first, worship Me and no other gods. When you look at and you read the history of Israel and then later the Northern Ten Tribes in Judah, what is the one constant? You can read every verse, every word and what is the one constant? Ancient Israel would worship anything but the true God. That was the theme. Solomon turned to false gods, Jeroboam worshipped the golden calves, Ahab was the worst of the lot, doing all of the above plus killing the prophets of God—being responsible for that.

Think about it when we compare ourselves to the Almighty God. Here God came to these kings and said I'm going to make you king. This is what I want you to do. Put Me first, keep my commandments, keep my statutes, worship Me and have no other gods. If you will just do that, life is going to be good. You will survive, the nation will prosper. The Almighty God said this, the Most High Father said this. We, as human beings compared to our Father who is Eternal, who has always lived, never had a beginning, will live forever and never will have an end and He lives today, are absolutely nothing. All He asks, all He asked of these kings—especially Ahab—will you just put Me first? Will you think of Me every time you speak and will you think of Me every time you act and will you think of My commandments when you have to make decisions and to make choices. Will you remember My statutes and judgements that give you guidance—will you just do that? Will you just keep the first four commandments? That is what God asked. As we approach the Passover—it's coming on not far away—we have to ask all of those questions of ourselves. Looking at the lessons from Ahab, am I putting my Father first in everything I do?

Sometimes we compartmentalize our lives. We go to work. That's a different thing so we stop thinking about God, about His words and laws and we go do our jobs. Or we go somewhere else and do something else. The fact is, we put God in a box, put Him on the shelf in the closet, close the door and go off to work and God isn't involved in our work or that part of our lives. In that sense we are not putting God first. When we approach Passover, we have to ask the question, am I putting God first in every single thing I do? My work life, my family life, my recreational life, my entertainment life—in everything I do, am I putting Him first? Is He always in the forefront of my mind or do I go for long periods of the day without even thinking about God? He is not even in the picture. Those are questions we have to ask because we are learning lessons from the life of Ahab. We are going to see in the next point how it all ended and we do not want to end that way. What God asks of us is, put Me first, worship Me only, keep my Holy days, treat your neighbor as yourself, but put Me first.

This leads to the second big point. This is something that Ahab learned before the end of his days.

## 2. We must answer for the choices we make.

Sometimes we think we can get away things. The human mind can think that somehow, we can do something that God doesn't notice. He is off doing something else, He is asleep or taking a nap and we can do something and He is not aware of it. It's like there is a segment that is apart from our religious life that we can go do and get away with. Did Ahab get away with it? In 1 Kings 22:34 He is in a battle with the king of Syria. Remember the prophet Ahijah said, the dogs are going to lick your blood one of these days and we have come to that day of reckoning.

**1 Kings 22:34** *And a certain man drew a bow at a venture [at a place, at a point], 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 [out of the midst of the army]; for I am wounded.*

35) *And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians [so the troops could see him standing up in his chariot not aware he was mortally wounded], and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.*

36) *And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.*

37) *So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.*

38) *And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armor; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake. (KJV)*

Just as Elijah had prophesied in chapter 21.

Then what was the second thing that Elijah prophesied? He prophesied Jezebel's end. Let's look at Jezebel's end for the choices that she had made. These were the decisions she made. After the death of Ahab, his and her son, Ahaziah reigned two years and then Ahab's son Jehoram reigned after him. Now we come to the end of Jezebel in 2 Kings. God is now going to deal with Jezebel. He has already dealt with Ahab, and now it is Jezebel's turn to face the consequences of her sins.

**2 Kings 9:1** *And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead: (KJV)*

This is about fifty miles northeast of Samaria, the capitol of the Northern Ten Tribes.



2) *And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber;* (KJV)

Going on in verse 6.

6) *And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, even over Israel.* (KJV)

Now his marching orders were in verse 7.

7) *And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master ...* (KJV)

So a servant is now going to make a blow against Ahab's house.

7 continued) *... that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, [and who is responsible?] at the hand of Jezebel.* (KJV)

If you think you can get away with killing the prophets of the Almighty God, you have made a horrible, horrible mistake. Verse 22.

22) *And it came to pass, when Joram [this is the second son of Ahab, who was king at the time] saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? [Are we going to make a deal and be friends?] And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms [I'm reading out of the King James, the Hebrew can mean "idolatries" and that was what she was noted for] of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?* (KJV)

How can we have peace when she still walks the place and has done what she has done.

24) *And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.* (KJV)

So, Jehu kills the second son of Ahab. The fitting thing is that this king gets thrown into the same field which belonged to Naboth, whom Jezebel had killed so Ahab could have that field. Now his second son gets thrown into that field.

I will read verse 30 out of the New Living Translation.

30) *When Jezebel, the queen mother [being the queen mother, she had a certain status as the mother of the kings—several kings], heard that Jehu had come to Jezreel [he was coming after her], she painted her eyelids and fixed her hair and sat at a window.* (NLT)

It is just my speculation, but my guess is that she painted them as we see in the Egyptian hieroglyphs, where it is dark over the eyelids and comes back to the side. Let us just say that it attracts a lot of attention. Do you think she might have an agenda in doing this?

31) *And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? (KJV)*

The prophet just said to Jehu, I want you to slay your master. She is now pointing out that Zimri who killed King Elah in 1 Kings 16—the man who killed the king later committed suicide. The implication was, do you want to end up like the man who killed the last king? Are you going to commit suicide? Are you going to commit suicide for me, hopefully?

32) *And he lifted up his face to the window [he is having nothing of this], and said, Who is on my side? who? (KJV)*

So the eunuchs and the caretakers had to make a choice. He's down there on his horse with his army, she is up there at the window, they are behind her—three or four of them—and he is asking them, who are you for? Me or her? Whose side are you on?

32 continued) *... And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.*

33) *And he said, Throw her down. So, they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. (KJV)*

If the fall didn't kill her, the horses trampling her did kill her. He didn't spend a long time on it—verse 34.

34) *And when he was come in, he did eat and drink ... (KJV)*

He went in and said I'm hungry—she's done, she's over with.

34 continued) *... and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. (KJV)*

Her dad was a king.

35) *And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.*

36) *Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: (KJV)*

That happened while he was eating and drinking. A pack of hungry dogs can consume a human body very quickly. How would you like that to be your end? That is your legacy, so to speak.

*37) And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; (KJV)*

Meaning what was left of her would just be thrown out into a field like you would throw manure out in a field to fertilize it. That's basically what was left of her and what happened. The reason for it:

*37 continued) ... so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel. (KJV)*

So you could not walk up and see a grave stone or a mausoleum or something like that and say, here is the body of Jezebel. No—there was going to be no trace of her. It reminds me of the lake of fire. Those who go into the lake of fire will have no marker for them. There is going to be no gravestone for them. The prophet Isaiah says God will wipe away the memory of them. It will be no more. In that sense, hers was a precursor to the lake of fire.

Ahab allowed his wife to provoke him. Not only did he support her, he actively participated in her provocations and the killing the prophets of the Almighty. As I said last time, instead of this being the marriage from hell, it was the marriage that led to hell—meaning the grave.

We've seen what happened to Ahab, we've seen what happened to Jezebel, his wife and now the third prophecy was, your line is going to be stopped. You are going to have no male descendants. There is not going to be another king in your line because of what you've done.

**2 Kings 10:1** *Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. (NKJV)*

Obviously, he had many wives and he took his pleasure and they had children in Samaria. We are going to see that there were certain men who were responsible for raising his children.

*1 continued) ... And Jehu wrote and sent letters to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to those who reared Ahab's sons, saying:*

*2) Now as soon as this letter comes to you, since your master's sons are with you [all seventy of his sons are with you], and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city also, and weapons, [because of all that]*

*3) choose the best qualified of your master's sons, set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house. (NKJV)*

Because I'm coming. I'm going to fight you so I'm giving you warning, you better arm yourselves and you better pick a king because I'm coming. We see what their reaction was in verse 4—was there a lot of loyalty there?

4) *But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Look, two kings could not stand up to him; how then can we stand?"*

5) *And he who was in charge of the house, and he who was in charge of the city, the elders also, and those who reared the sons, sent to Jehu, saying, We are your servants, we will do all you tell us; but we will not make anyone king. [We are not going to come against you at all] Do what is good in your sight."*

6) *Then he wrote a second letter to them, saying: If you are for me and will obey my voice, take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow. Now the king's sons, seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, who were rearing them.*

7) *So it was, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons and slaughtered seventy persons, put their heads in baskets and sent them to him at Jezreel.*

8) *Then a messenger came and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons." And he said, Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning." (NKJV)*

We are going to have a display of what happened to Ahab's line, for everybody to see.

9) *So it was, in the morning, that he went out and stood, and said to all the people, You are righteous. Indeed I conspired against my master and killed him; but who killed all these? [All of his sons].*

10) *Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of the Lord which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the Lord has done what He spoke by His servant Elijah."*

11) *So Jehu killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and his close acquaintances and his priests, until he left him none remaining. (NKJV)*

The house was cleaned. We would say the swamp was drained completely. No swamp has been drained in the last couple of years that I've seen, but Jehu went and he drained the swamp—he cleaned house. The point is, we can't play games with God Almighty. Maybe we think we can, but we can't. Look at Galatians 6:7. This is something we need at Passover time—as we prepare for Passover—to remember this verse. We can't play games with God. We cannot allow ourselves to be deceived.

**Galatians 6:7** *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: [you can't play games with God] for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (KJV)*

If there is a biblical example of that principle, it's Ahab and his wife Jezebel and his seventy sons and his priests and anybody that was associated with him. Like Jeroboam before him, Ahab put himself before God Almighty. He actively turned Israel against the

Most High and was responsible—ultimately responsible—for the deaths of many servants of God. He and Jezebel and his children, were called to account for that. The lesson for us is, we are all held accountable. We can't get away with our sins. We can't get away with our choices and deeds. There is going to come a time, as we read in Matthew 25, of a separation of the sheep and the goats. There is a day of accountability that all of us face. We are not going to be able to mock God or wink at God or have God wink at our sins—we are held accountable. That is the second big lesson.

The third lesson is one that is encouraging—highly encouraging.

### **3. Our Father is filled with mercy.**

God Almighty is filled with mercy and sometimes we can be deceived into thinking that we have a God in heaven—Jehovah—who is waiting for us to sin. He has the hammer out and watching us and just waiting for us to cross the line and then He is going to slam the hammer down on our toes or our fingers or whatever.

When I came into this church, that was the picture that was taught a lot in the mid-sixties. The wrath of God, ruling with a rod of iron, flames coming down and consuming and all of this. Over the years it just built up so that you had this underlying picture of God, Who somehow took pleasure in punishing us or slamming the hammer down on us. That is just the opposite to the truth about God and who God is. Look at Psalm 86:15. David sinned mightily, as we know. David had a heart after God's own, who pursued God, and, yes, he slipped and fell and committed horrible sins, but he always had God in the front of his mind. Even in his weaknesses, he always came back to God. Read this in the New Living Translation. David is speaking.

**Psalm 86:15** *But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry ... (KJV)*

It took a lot for God to finally have enough and say, I'm going to rend this kingdom, I'm going to split it in two—it took a long time.

15 continued) ... *and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness ... (KJV)*

We have to understand that God is a God of mercy. God is waiting on us to do certain things so that He can show us mercy. Earlier we stopped short of an incident that happened with Ahab. In 1 Kings 21, we read the earlier verses 17 through 26 where Elijah told Ahab that the dogs were going to lick his blood in the same place that they had licked Naboth's blood and that He would see that all of Ahab's male descendants were destroyed—eliminated. He also told him that dogs would eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Now we come to verse 27 and we see this astounding event.

**1 Kings 21:27** *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. (KJV)*

The Hebrew can mean “gently”. As we would say, he was treading very lightly because he did not want to anger God anymore. This shook him.

28) *And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,*  
29) *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house. (KJV)*

Ahab died not long after this event in the very next chapter. Jezebel was murdered after Ahab died in 2 Kings 9, which we read and the seventy sons were murdered after Ahab died in 2 Kings 10. We have the scripture record of all of Ahab’s evil, idolatry, blasphemy, putting himself before the Almighty, killing the prophets and the servants of God. But because of his actions here—humbling himself, walking softly, sackcloth and ashes—our Father had mercy. Think about all that he had done. Now we come to this juncture and God had mercy to the extent that the consequences of his actions were postponed until after his death. It’s important to note, as I mentioned last time, Ahab’s sins were not forgiven—they were not forgiven—this is not a matter of forgiveness of sins. Hebrews 10 says, it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Only Christ’s sacrifice and His blood can do that. Despite that, the Almighty showed Ahab mercy and favor in postponing the death of Jezebel and his sons. He wasn’t forgiven but God had mercy.

Here again, as we come to the Passover, sometimes as we look back over the previous year, we can wonder—will my Father, really have mercy on me because of all my sins? Because of what I’ve done? Is the hammer coming down and I’m just going to be squashed like a bug or will God have mercy on me? Will God be patient with me and kind with me and understanding with me?

The point is, if Jehovah can have mercy on somebody like Ahab, who sinned directly against Him, the Most High God can have mercy on us also. One of the lessons in Ahab’s life is that our Father has an unlimited capacity to have mercy. Which when you think about it, should strike awe in all of us. You look at what Ahab did and then in this moment, he humbled himself and God showed mercy. The question becomes, God showed mercy, but what was it that Ahab did that triggered God’s mercy? Given Ahab’s horrible sins, if we can understand what Ahab did that caused God to have mercy, maybe we should do some of the same things that would cause God to have mercy on us when we sin.

That leads to the fourth point.

#### **4. Humility and repentance cause our Father to show us mercy.**

Humility and repentance. Ahab humbled himself, he fasted, he went softly. The point is that our Father looks for the same in us. When we get into a bad place and sometimes it can happen over months or years. We get ourselves in a bad place, we drift off course

and we're not in a good place relative to our relationship with God. Our Father looks for certain things in us that we can come back from. Go to Psalm 51 and read one verse, verse 17. David, as we know, in the situation with Bathsheba, we could make a laundry list of all of David's sins—lying, deceit, murder, adultery and the list goes on and on. The big one of course is not putting God first, putting himself first, his desires first. Notice what David said—he learned a lesson.

**Psalm 51:17** *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (KJV)*

What God is looking for, is a broken spirit, not asserting ourselves. The spirit He is looking for is where we lay prostrate on the ground, as low as we can possibly get and say to God, You are supreme. You have no beginning, You will have no end, You are the living God and I am a worm, I am nothing. When we come to God in that spirit and say I want you to wash me clean and I want you to put Your Spirit in me. I want to please You and I want to do Your will and stop doing what I've been doing. That's how David came to God. God obviously forgave him. Romans 2:4 is talking about a characteristic of God that leads us in the direction we should go, once we recognize our sins.

**Romans 2:4** [Paul says to the church at Rome and by extension to us today] *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness [this is the Father's goodness] and forbearance and longsuffering; [he says, are you going to despise that or diminish that or belittle that?] not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (KJV)*

The Holy Spirit in us leads us to turn to our Father in repentance. Paul noted that in Acts 20:21. Paul had gathered the elders together at Ephesus and he is addressing them. We are just going to take this one verse and show the fact that repentance is directed in a certain direction.

**Acts 20:21** [Paul talking to the elders] *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, [what is he testifying, what is he witnessing] repentance toward God [has to be the Father], and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (KJV)*

Paul is telling us our repentance has to be toward God—we repent to God. We don't repent to another human being. We repent to God Almighty and His Spirit in us, leads us to first, feel guilty—recognize our sin and feel horribly guilty about it—and that guilt can lead to repentance to God Almighty. That is if we heed that guilt, if we listen to it, listen to our conscience as we would say today. Then we have to act on it. We have to act on that guilt and that guilt will lead us to turn back to our Father. When we do something wrong, the Holy Spirit leads us to feel guilty—it's that knot in our stomach that we screwed up. I shouldn't have said that, I shouldn't have done that, I shouldn't think that. That can lead us to repentance, directed at our Father, if we heed and if we act.

There are three things we must do. There is one verse, Acts 26:20, that has a lot in it. Read this out of the NIV. Paul is speaking before King Agrippa who was the king of Judea. He has a chance to witness to the highest leaders of the land and notice what he says.

**Acts 26:20** *First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem [remember he was converted on the road to Damascus so he preached in Damascus and then he went to Jerusalem] and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, [he preached three things] I preached that they should [number one] repent and [number two] turn to God and [number three] demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. (NIV)*

Three things; repent, turn and then prove your repentance is valid by what you do. Notice what Christ said in Luke 3:8—out of Jesus' own mouth. Right in the beginning of His teaching and the beginning of his preaching, one of the first things he hit. He is telling the Jews, and He is telling the disciples around Him:

**Luke 3:8** *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. One of the highest-ranking men in the Worldwide Church of God who was caught (let's say) committing sin, justified it by saying, "God winks at my sins because of what I do for the work". God gives me a pass because of who I am and what I do. You talk about being deceived. You talk about thinking that because I do all this, I am up here and the common folk don't get away with it. God winks at me because of who I am and what I do. Where Christ just said, look fella, God can raise up stones to replace the likes of you or any of us. He doesn't need any of us. Nobody is essential. No human being is essential to God and God's plan. We are just honored to be a part of it. We have to be careful that we don't think of ourselves more highly than we should. We should not think of ourselves highly at all.

We should be lying flat on the ground with our hands outspread, begging for mercy and forgiveness. We can't be deceived as this individual was deceived. It was a cop-out. We have to have fruits that demonstrate the fact that we have repented. How do you do that? You don't sin anymore—you don't do it again. That's how we prove to God that we have truly repented. Once you slam that door and say, I am done with that part of my life, I am done with those sins and weaknesses, I am not going to do those again and Father I'm going to prove that to You. You watch me going forward, I am not going to do that again with Your help and Your Spirit. That is the kind of commitment that God is looking for.

If we want our Father's mercy and favor, we must have the humility that leads us to repent and the humility that leads us to want to change. Then we have to exercise God's Spirit that gives us the power to change.



The fifth and final point.

**5. If God showed Ahab mercy, after all he had done, we should show mercy to others.**

I am so thankful that God doesn't carry grudges. I've known people that carry grudges. My mom carried a grudge all her married life. I think the second year of their marriage, she wanted a dress and my dad wouldn't buy it for her. She was a stay at home mom. I don't know all the back story on that, all I know is that fifty years later, she still had a grudge against my dad because he did not buy her a dress back then. She never got over it, she never put it behind her—it was always there. Thanks to our Father in heaven that He doesn't do that with us. He doesn't carry grudges. God is eager and ready to show mercy, if we do our part. When we do our part, then mercy flows. But we have to do our part. Peter understood this. He was so impetuous. He was the guy that was ready, aim, shoot. Often through his impetuosity, he got himself out ahead of where he should have been.

**2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* (KJV)

Some people take this as, then everybody is going to be saved. That is not true. God has long-suffering toward us. His goal, His desire, His wish, is that we would all repent. Since He has given us free moral agency and allowed us to choose, as Ahab chose, then that's up to us. That is entirely up to us. The point is, if God is ready to show long-suffering to us and mercy to us, should we not likewise do that to others. If our Father could show mercy to Ahab after Ahab directly sinned against Him, directly provoked Him and yet our Father showed mercy when Ahab humbled himself and walked quietly, should we not show mercy to other people? We should be ready to show mercy to other people. Back in Luke 6:36 are some of Christ's first teachings. This is something we forget. We forget that the Head of the church, our older Brother, is the One who set the path for us, so that we can and will want to walk in His footsteps:

**Luke 6:36** *Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.* (NKJV)

We need to follow our Father's example and here we see that example in the situation with Ahab. It goes on to say:

37) *Judge [in this context it means to "condemn"] not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.*

38) *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*" (NKJV)

When we forgive somebody, we're not wiping away their sins at all. When we show mercy to somebody, it has nothing to do with wiping away their sins in God's eyes. We don't wipe away their sins, only our Father can do that through the blood of His Son. When we show mercy to others—to our brothers and sisters—when we forgive, we are not wiping away their sins but we are recognizing and acknowledging the fact that if somebody does something bad against us, we are recognizing the fact that they are imperfect just like I am. Who am I to condemn them, to not speak to them, to carry a grudge for the rest of my life? Who am I to do that when God does just the opposite to us?

When we forgive, we are not wiping away their sins but when we forgive, when we show mercy, when we don't condemn somebody, when we want to reconcile, we are recognizing the fact that they are human. I am human, we all make mistakes and we are ready to forgive as God is ready to forgive. We are ready to show mercy just as God is ready to show us mercy. My point here, is that we are not to carry grudges, and we are not to allow a burr to get under the saddle toward another human being. If somebody does something evil or wrong—like lies about us or condemns us or tries to torpedo us—that's between them and God. They have to answer to God for that. They don't have to answer to me or to you. What we have to do is to ask God to have mercy on them and to show them their sins. Be ready to reconcile, ready to show mercy to them if the opportunity ever comes to us. So, the fifth and final point is, if God shows mercy to us, maybe it is a good idea for us to be ready to show mercy to others.

Let's wrap it up now. We started off in the very beginning showing that all of God's word is here for a reason. It is there for a purpose. It is God-breathed and we examined the life of a king of Israel—a very evil man—who lived almost 2900 years ago. We asked the question, why did God devote so much space in His word to the life of this one king.? It's obvious that there are things He wants us to learn from this king's life. We learned that we are held accountable for what we say, what we do, what we think and who we are at our very core. We are held accountable to God. He will not be mocked, we cannot play games with or trick God. We can't pull the shade down and go do something bad and come back with a smile on our face and lift the shade up and everything is cool with God. It doesn't work that way.

We have seen the Almighty God's great capacity to show mercy. If He showed mercy on Ahab, then maybe He will show mercy on us, if we turn and we humble ourselves and we repent. The key to being shown mercy is humility and repentance.

As we come closer to the Passover, we need to keep these lessons in mind. As we come to the Passover, we do not want to carry grudges, we do not want to have bitterness towards others. Even people that have lied about us, tried to deceive others into believing horrible things about us. Even if they do that, we have to be ready to show mercy, ready not to carry any grudges and to have no root of bitterness spring up in us toward other human beings. Those are the lessons that we learnt.

But the big, big lesson is, that we must put God first. Solomon did not, Jeroboam did not and Ahab certainly didn't. They put themselves first, breaking the first four commandments. They put their desires, their pleasures, their agendas, their goals, in front of God Almighty. They were there to serve themselves and not serve the people under them that God had given them. They didn't do that. The huge lesson for us is that we must always put God first regardless of the cost. We have to trust God, that if we put Him first, He's got our back. Which He will do. Anything less than putting God first, then we become like Ahab. If we do not put God first—anything less than putting God first—then we are in the same boat as Ahab. Let us thank God Almighty for the lessons that He teaches us in His word.