

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Sept.24

This marks 100 weeks of devotions for you. Congratulations! And keep going!

MONDAY

When the messenger reports Ahab's refusal to King Ben-Hadad, he is furious, and threatens to turn Israel into a dust bowl. Ahab answers with a proverb which means "don't count your chickens until they hatch." The king is even more enraged to hear that response, and he immediately calls his troops to battle.

READ: I Kings 20:10-12

It's hard to know who wins the battle of words here - some fairly severe blasts from both sides. But it's not hard to see what's ahead for Israel if God does not step into the story, for Syria is the much stronger power at the moment. Is that not always the story? If it were not for God... If God did not intervene... If God's mercy did not come to us at that moment... and so on. God's help, His intervention, His mercy - it always comes to us at the moment we need it!

TUESDAY

A prophet shows up just then, and he promises Ahab that God will deliver him. When Ahab asks how God will do that, the prophet predicts that the princes of Israel will fight, and that the Lord would cause them to win.

READ: I Kings 20:13-15

A lethal combination is noted: it's the young princes of Israel (all 232 of them) and the citizens themselves (all 7000 of them). As they fight, God will deliver them from their enemies. In other words, do your best, child of God, and allow God to have His way in what happens. Do your best, weary Christian, and watch God bring about His mighty purposes in you and through you.

WEDNESDAY

The 232 young princes lead the 7000 men of Israel out to battle, they meet the Samaritans, and experience a quick victory over the drunken Syrian soldiers. It turns into a great one-side defeat. The prophet predicts another battle in the spring of the year.

READ: I Kings 20:16-22

The stronger army - the one with 32 kings under Ben-Habad's command, is soundly defeated by the army of the Lord, although King Ben-Habad manages to escape. "Manages to escape" means that he is free to try again. That's true of the temptations which come our way. Once we give into anger or pride or whatever, those same temptations will come at us again and again, seeking a home once more. No wonder Israel is told to, once again, to prepare. So must we!

THURSDAY

The king of Syria has spiritual advisors who explain this defeat by suggesting

that the God of Israel is the God of the mountains. Fight on the plain and the gods of the Syrians will triumph. As predicted, the Syrians do attack in the spring and looks at first as if Syria faces an easy foe.

READ: I Kings 20:23-27

The Israelites looked like two little flocks of lost sheep, the Bible says, while the Syrians army fills the hillsides. Last time, the Syrian army looked stronger. This year, it looks even more so. Chief Sitting Bull Ben-Hadad is circling the camp and the Israelites look about ready to melt in front of them. Just when things looked completely hopeless, God raised up a deliverer identified in the text at just the right moment. He was a man of God.

FRIDAY

This man of God told the king of Israel that God will deliver the Syrian army into his hands. And so it was, after a 7-day siege, a battle resulted in 100,000 foot soldiers from Syria being killed. 27,000 more died when a wall collapsed on them.

READ: I Kings 20:28-30

Let us pay attention to the reason God gives for giving deliverance to the army of Israel: "because the Syrians have claimed that I am not the god of the valleys." And the overwhelming victory God allowed the Israelites to have over the Syrians was fought where? Your guess: "In the valley?" And you are ever so right! For He is the God of the mountains, the plains, the valleys, the fields, and the deserts. There is no place where His name is not to be made known and lifted up. What was true for ancient Israel is true for you and me today. Oh that we might make known the wonders of His grace!

SATURDAY

The servants of King Hadad encouraged him to feel out the king of Israel as he pursued peace. He does so and finds an easily appeased king. Hadad promises him some land and trade, and Hadad agrees to a quick treaty.

READ: I Kings 20:31-34

On the surface, it might seem a good thing that the king of Israel was hoping to have peace with Hadad and re-establish trade and such. The problem is that God had said NO to all that. What fellowship does light have with darkness? The answer is NONE. What does the kingdom of God and of light have in common with the kingdom of Hadad and of darkness? The answer is NOTHING. God has chosen us as His special people. He has marked us as His own. He has set us apart from all other people to be His people. Let us cherish our calling, give reverence to our position in Christ, and honor the privileges we have as lights in the darkness.

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