



Word War I and II

Lesson 19 • 1Kings 20:1-30

1Kings 20-22 Overview: *Apostasy Fails to Prevail in the End Because Word of the LORD Rules Over All!*

The **Loyal Remnant** believes this and lives this out even in the worst of times (though imperfectly).

The **Disloyal Rebels** are those who profess they believe this but fall away and eventually deny it.

1Kings 20 Is All About: A War of Words Rooted in a War of Worldviews!

*Whose VOICE will you listen to? Whose WORLDVIEW is shaping your thinking and living?
Whose WORD will you obey in every area of your life?*

Word War I – A War of Words Between **KINGS**

The Brutal Bully Ben-hadad vs. the Disloyal Apostate Ahab! 1Kings 20:1-21

1. Ahab Is Beaten Before the Battle Even **BEGINS**. (1)

*Ahab is facing overwhelming military odds, so he and Israel are in a **HOPELESS** situation!*

2. Worldly Power **BOASTS** in Worldly Strength. (2-12)

Round 1 (2-4) Ben-hadad sends his servants as his messengers to boast of Ahab's complete **SUBMISSION!**

"Thus says Ben-hadad, 'Your silver and your gold are mine; your most beautiful wives and children are also mine.'" (2-3)

"The king of Israel answered and said, It is according to your word, my lord, O king; I am yours, and all that I have." (4)

Round 2 (5-9) Ben-hadad sends his servants again but this time to boast of Ahab's total **DEVASTATION!**

"Thus says Ben-hadad..." (5-6)

Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land... (7-9)

"Tell my lord the king, 'All that you sent for to your servant at the first I will do, but this thing I cannot do.'"

Round 3 (10-12) Ben-hadad speaks again – more directly this time – and instead of boasting he is **SWEARING!**

"May the gods do so to me and more also, if the dust of Samaria will suffice for handfuls for all the people who follow me." (10)

The king of Israel answered and said, "Tell him, 'Let not him who girds on his armor boast like him who takes it off.'" (11)

"When Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking with the kings in the temporary shelters, he said to his servants, 'Station yourselves.' So they stationed themselves against the city." (12)

Word War I Is a War of Words Between Two Kings

*King Ben-hadad is a **bully** that has a **mighty army** to back-up his boastful words, but King Ahab is a **blow-hard** in a **hopeless situation** that can't back-up his boastful words!*

3. Word War I Is Won by the ALL-POWERFUL Word of the LORD. (13-21)

Now behold, a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver them into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the LORD.'" (13)

Observations

- 1) Pay attention to the repetition of "BEHOLD."
- 2) The LORD is taking the initiative to show amazing GRACE to the undeserving in their hopeless situation.
- 3) By His spoken Word, the LORD is revealing Himself to be all-KNOWING and all-POWERFUL.
- 4) The LORD makes sure His people understand that it is the power of His SOVEREIGN grace that wins the war!
- 5) The LORD speaks this word of saving grace for the FAME His Name and to show mercy to the undeserving.
- 6) What does a drunken Ben-hadad have to say about 7,000 Israelites coming out to battle led by men that who are not much more than mere boys?
- 7) Israel WINS Word War I but the King of Aram escapes, while Ahab kills all the chariots and horses.

So these went out from the city, the young men of the rulers of the provinces, and the army which followed them. They killed each his man; and the Arameans fled and Israel pursued them, and Ben-hadad king of Aram escaped on a horse with horsemen. The king of Israel went out and struck the horses and chariots, and killed the Arameans with a great slaughter." (19-21)

Word War II – A War of Words Between GODS

The Bad Theology of Ben-hadad's Servants vs. the True Theology of the LORD! 1Kings 20:22-34

1. Ben-hadad Is Beaten Before the Battle Begins but Doesn't KNOW It. (22)

Wise Words (22) Spoken by the LORD's Prophet Rooted in GOOD Theology

Foolish Words (23-25) Spoken by Ben-hadad's Servants Rooted in BAD Theology

- 1) We LOST last time, because of the *wrong location* with the *wrong leaders* following the *wrong strategy!*
- 2) We will WIN next time, because they have small gods like our gods!

They aren't all-mighty

They aren't all-knowing

They aren't all-present

Good theology is rooted in a "BIG GOD" who is large and in charge and His Word rules over all.

Bad theology is rooted in a "LITTLE GOD" who is small and only in charge of certain places and people!

"And [Ben-hadad] listened to their voice and did so." (25b)

2. Godly wisdom prepares for battle with SPIRITUAL strength. (22)

Then the prophet came near to the king of Israel and said to him, "Go, strengthen yourself and observe and see what you have to do; for at the turn of the year the king of Aram will come up against you."

Some translations tend to over-interpret this as military strengthening.

NET – "Go, fortify your defenses. Determine what you must do, for in the spring the king of Syria will attack you."

NIV – "Strengthen your position and see what must be done, because next spring the king of Aram will attack you again."

NLT – "Get ready for another attack. Begin making plans now, for the king of Aram will come back next spring."

But other translations allow for spiritual strengthening!

NAS – "Go, strengthen yourself and observe and see what you have to do..."

ESV – "Come, strengthen yourself, and consider well what you have to do..."

CSB – "Go and strengthen yourself, then consider carefully what you should do..."

NKJV – "Go, strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do..."

Explanation

- 1) **“Go”** ...walk in all the ways of the LORD!
- 2) **“Strengthen yourself”** ...in the LORD and His Word before the battle!

*“But David **strengthened himself in the LORD** his God.” 1Samuel 30:6*

*“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous!** Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” See Joshua 1:5-9*

- 3) **“Observe and see”** ...to it that you understand and discern that wisdom comes from the LORD!
- 4) **“What you have to do”** ...to do all that the LORD commands of His covenant people to win the Word Wars!
Jeremiah 11:3-7; 32:23

“GO! STRENGTHEN YOURSELF in the LORD by KNOWING His WORD and DISCERNING His WILL and His WAYS, so you can WALK in them to DO ALL that the LORD had commanded you to do!” as covenant King!”

3. Word War II Is Won by the Word of the LORD Who Rules Over ALL. (28-30)

Observations

- 1) The LORD once again takes the initiative to show amazing **GRACE** to the undeserving in their hopeless situation.
“Then a man of God came near and spoke to the king of Israel and said, ‘Thus says the LORD...’” (28)
- 2) By His spoken Word, the LORD is once again revealing Himself to be the “I AM” God who rules over all.
“I AM” the God who is **ALL-Knowing** –
“I AM” the God who is **ALL-Present** –
“I AM” the God who is **ALL-Powerful** –
- 3) The LORD speaks this word of saving grace for the **FAME** His Name and to show mercy to the undeserving.
- 4) Israel wins Word War II in ways that remind us of the battle of **JERICHO** when they first entered the Promise Land!

The Word of the LORD Rules Over Salvation and Condemnation

- **Jesus is LORD and He is the WORD of God who saves His people from condemnation by grace through faith in Him and His Kingship.**

Repent of your unbelief and run to Him today for deliverance before it is too late and the King returns to judge the living and the dead!

“Thus says the LORD, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 9:23-24

- **Prepare yourself spiritually as His people to overcome the Enemy that seeks to destroy us!**

Act like a man of God or woman of God that makes it a priority to know your God! Get ready for spiritual warfare by being strong in the LORD and in His might! Be a man or woman that boldly does ALL that God requires to defeat the enemy that is seeking to destroy you and those you lead!

“By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.” Daniel 11:32

“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” 1Corinthians 16:13-14

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:10-12