

KEY TEXT

1 Kings 20:1-22 (NKJV)

Now Ben-Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings *were* with him, with horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, and made war against it. ² Then he sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, and said to him, "Thus says Ben-Hadad: ³ 'Your silver and your gold *are* mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine.' "

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4 And the king of Israel answered and said, "My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have *are* yours."

5 Then the messengers came back and said, "Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, 'Indeed I have sent to you, saying, "You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children"; **6** but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, *that* whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put *it* in their hands and take *it*.' "

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7 So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Notice, please, and see how this *man* seeks trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold; and I did not deny him."

8 And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent."

9 Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell my lord the king, 'All that you sent for to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.' "

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And the messengers departed and brought back word to him.

10 Then Ben-Hadad sent to him and said, "The gods do so to me, and more also, if enough dust is left of Samaria for a handful for each of the people who follow me."

11 So the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell *him*, 'Let not the one who puts on *his armor* boast like the one who takes *it off*.' "

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12 And it happened when *Ben-Hadad* heard this message, as he and the kings *were* drinking at the command post, that he said to his servants, "Get ready." And they got ready to attack the city.

13 Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.' "

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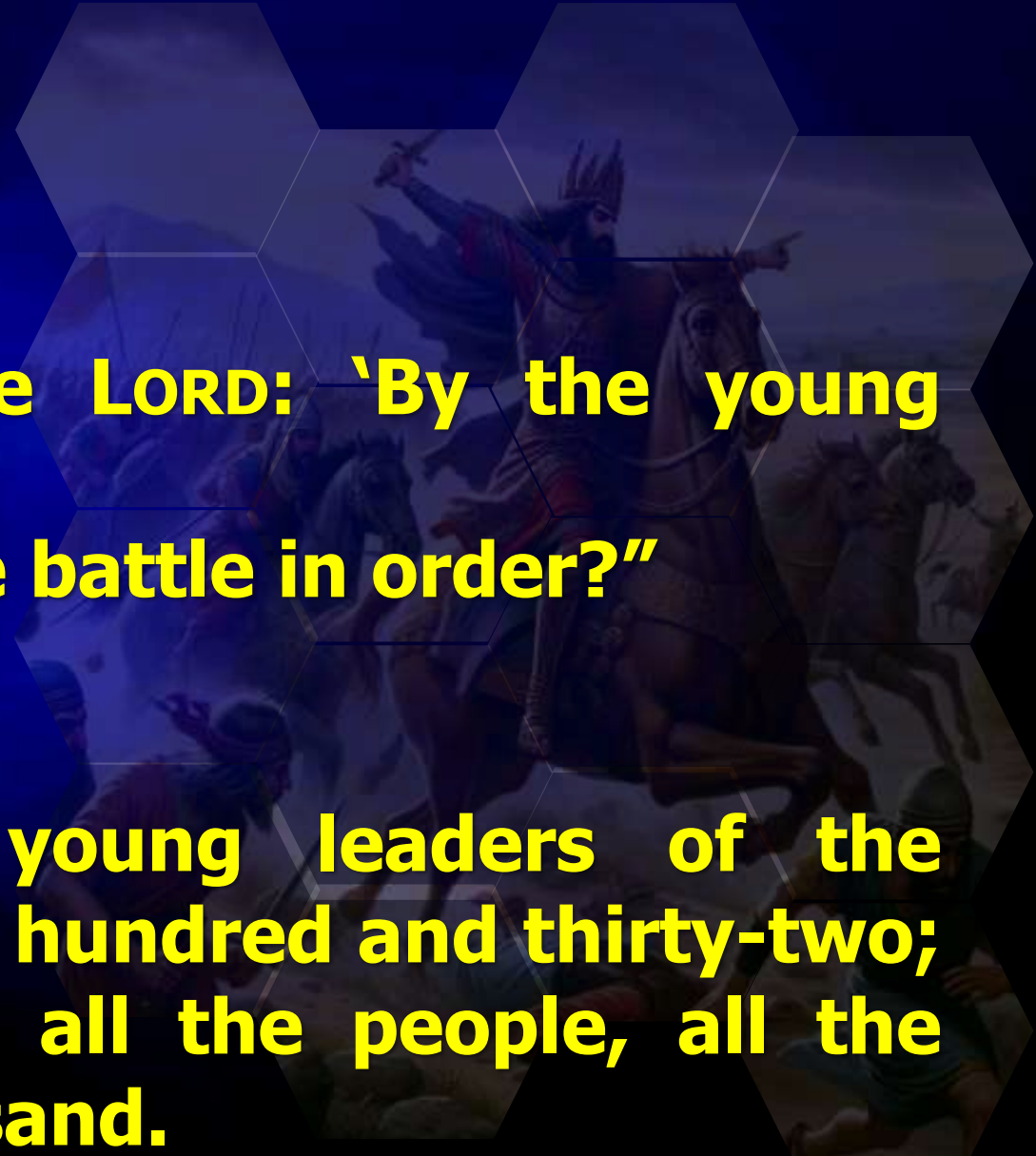
14 So Ahab said, "By whom?"

And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'By the young leaders of the provinces.' "

Then he said, "Who will set the battle in order?"

And he answered, "You."

15 Then he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israel—seven thousand.



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16 So they went out at noon. Meanwhile Ben-Hadad and the thirty-two kings helping him were getting drunk at the command post.

17 The young leaders of the provinces went out first. And Ben-Hadad sent out *a patrol*, and they told him, saying, "Men are coming out of Samaria!" **18** So he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; and if they have come out for war, take them alive."

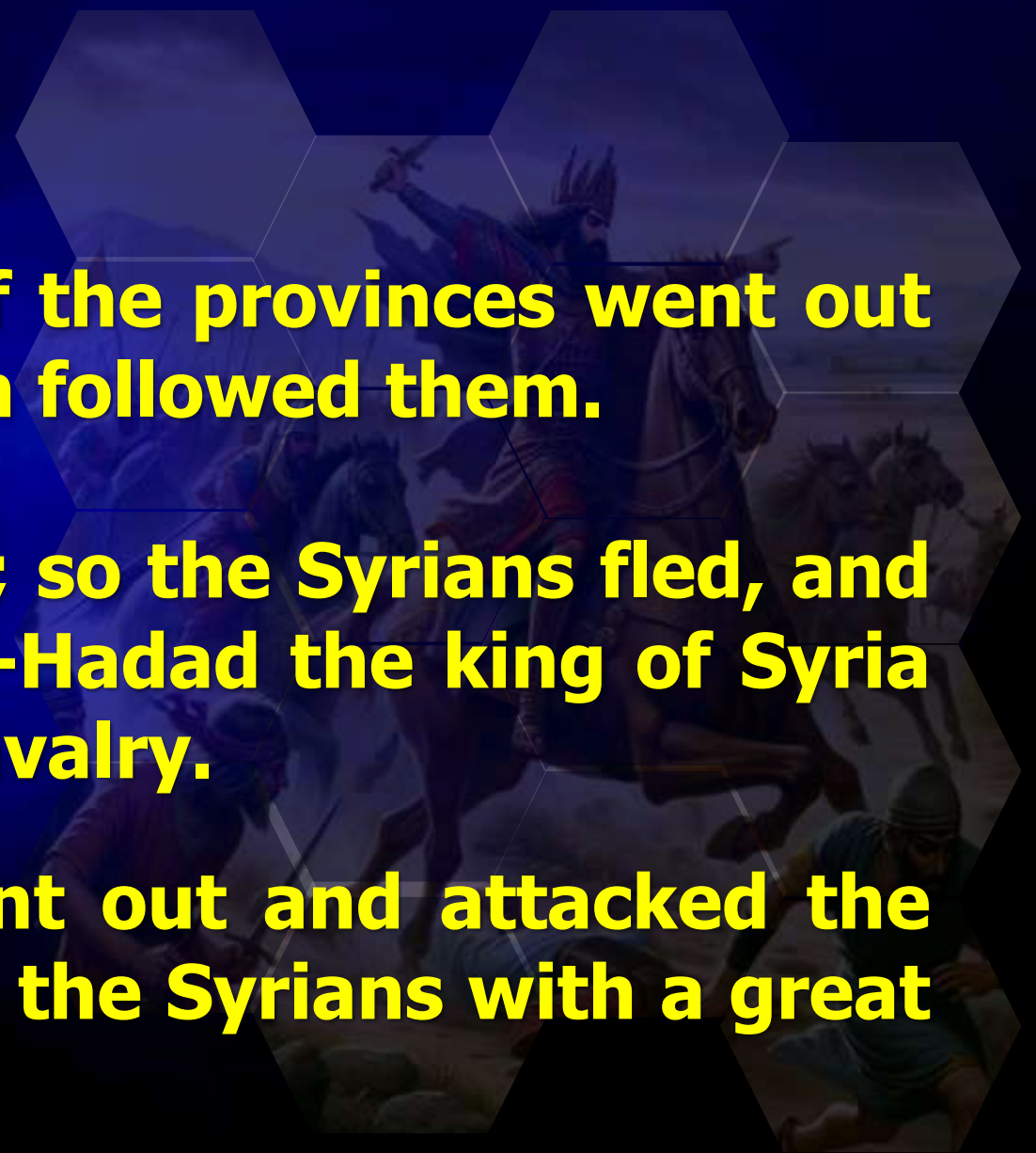
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19 Then these young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them.

20 And each one killed his man; so the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them; and Ben-Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry.

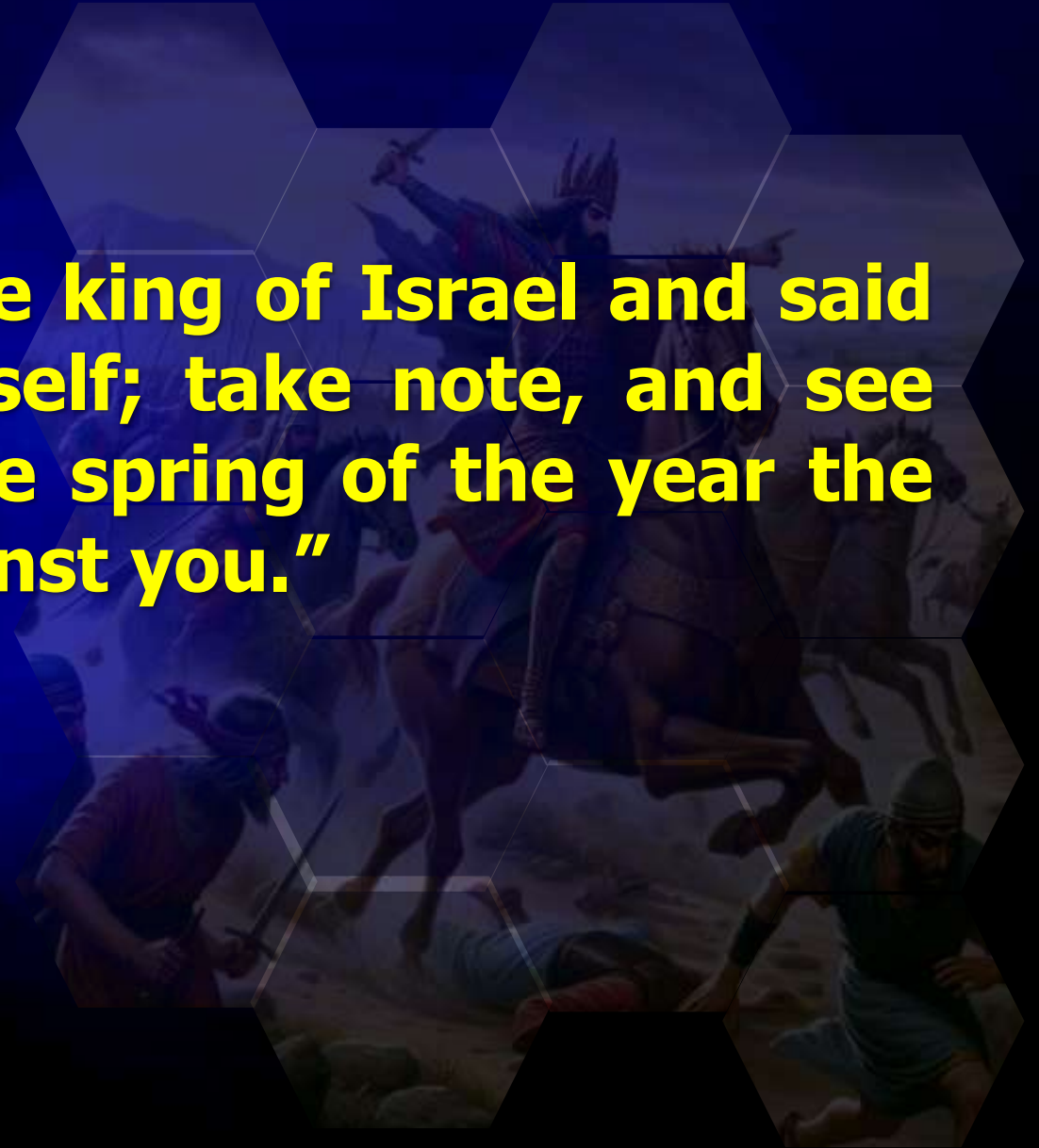
21 Then the king of Israel went out and attacked the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.



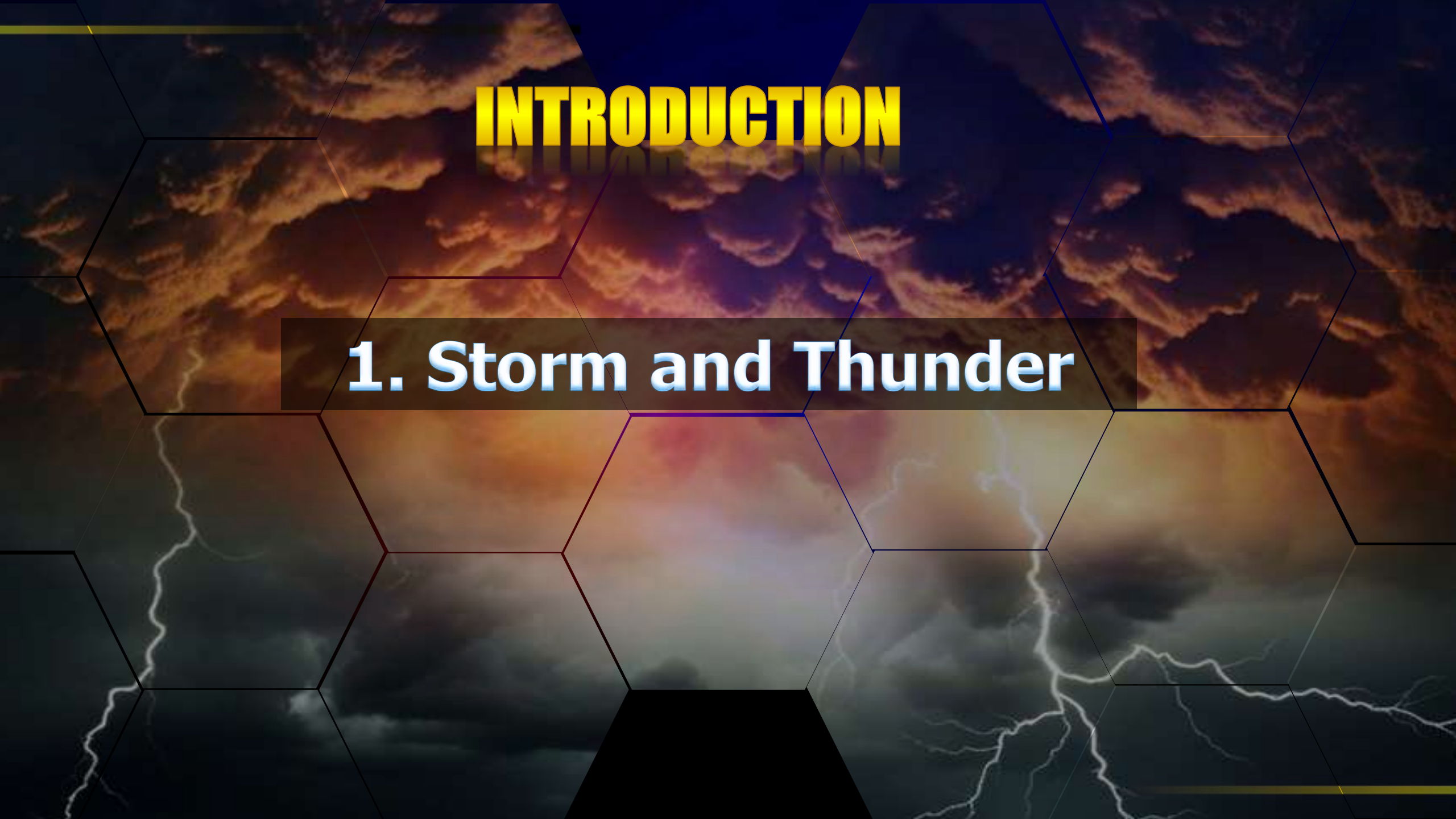
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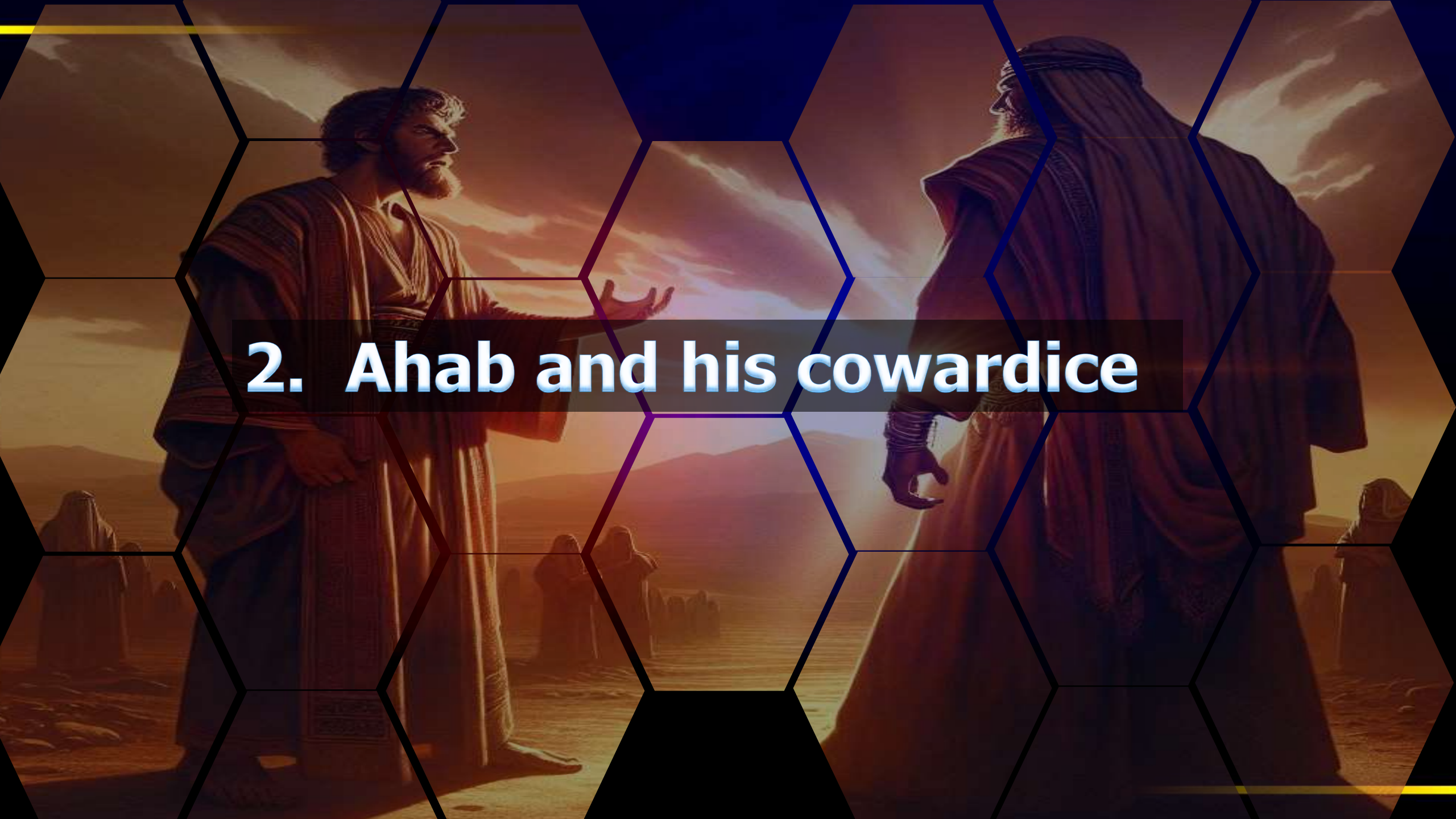
22 And the prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, "Go, strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do, for in the spring of the year the king of Syria will come up against you."



INTRODUCTION

The background of the slide is a dramatic, stormy sky with dark, swirling clouds and bright, jagged lightning bolts. Overlaid on this background is a grid of hexagonal shapes, some of which are filled with a dark blue or black color, creating a geometric pattern. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, greys, and oranges from the lightning and clouds.

1. Storm and Thunder



2. Ahab and his cowardice



TITLE

COMPROMISING

WITH

EVIL

Outline:

- **Benhadad's Background and Battle plan**
- **Benhadad Limiting God**
- **Benhadad's Defeats**
- **Ahab's Missed Opportunity**
- **Our Gospel Hope**



MAIN POINTS

(I) BENHADAD'S BACKGROUND AND BATTLEPLAN

Background of 1 Kings 20

Background of Benhadad

Benhadad is a **TITLE of the reigning king of Syria.**



"Benhadad" = "son of Hadad."



Hadad was the god of storm and thunder.





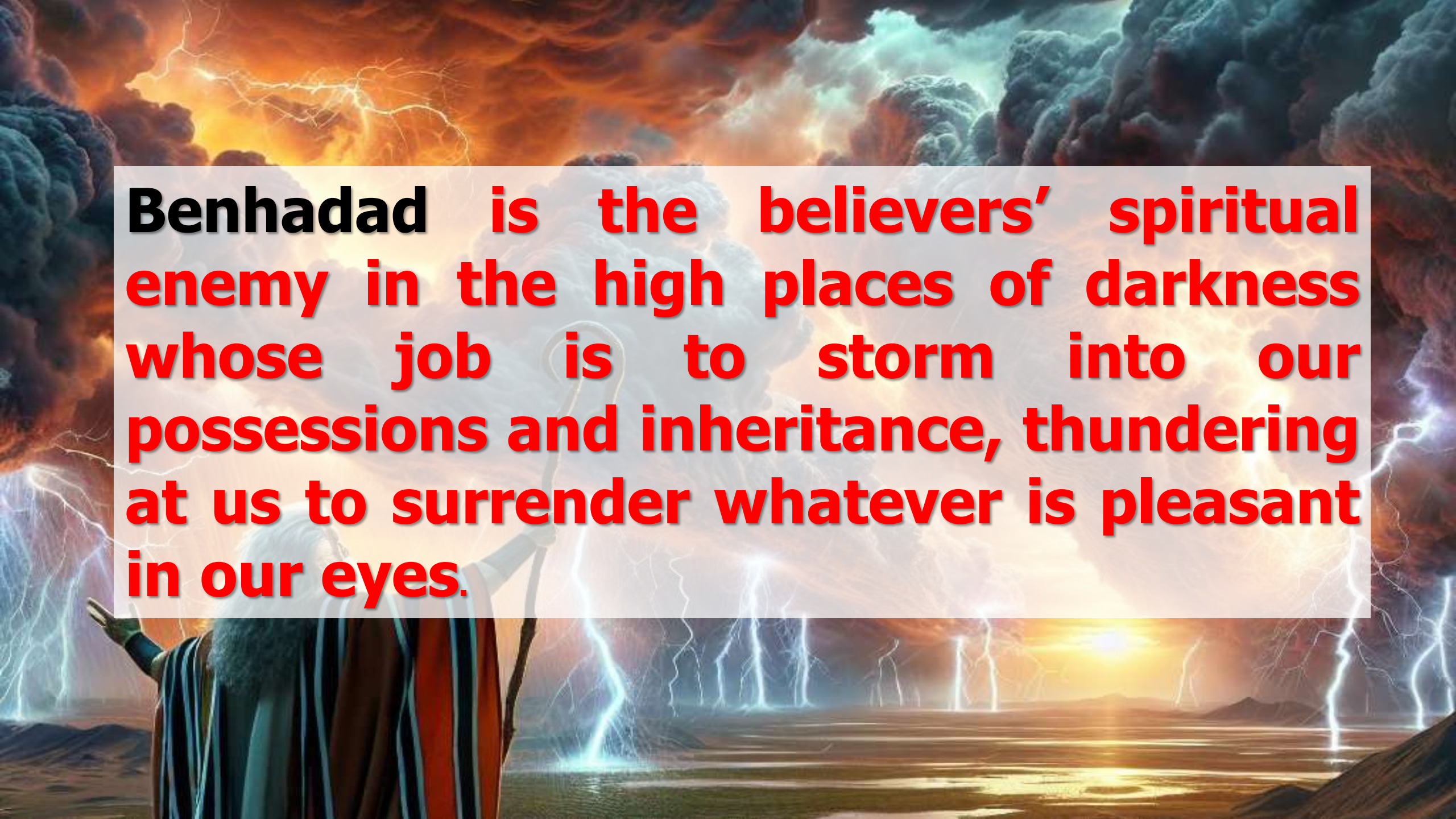
Benhadad means
“god of storm and thunder”.

The capital of Syria was Aram.

***Aram* = "heights, high region"**



→ THE DARK SPIRITUAL FORCES AT WORK HERE.

A dramatic scene of a storm with lightning and a figure in the foreground. The sky is filled with dark, swirling clouds and bright, jagged lightning bolts. In the foreground, a figure with a long white beard and a blue and red robe is visible, holding a staff and pointing towards the storm. The ground is dark and reflective, mirroring the intense light from the sky.

Benhadad is the believers' spiritual enemy in the high places of darkness whose job is to storm into our possessions and inheritance, thundering at us to surrender whatever is pleasant in our eyes.

Benhadad not only wants:

➤ **our OUTWARD LIFE** – our wealth and loved ones

“your gold *are* mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine” (verse 3)



➤ **our INNER LIFE**

**"they shall search your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, *that* whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put *it* in their hands and take *it*."
"(verse 6).**

"Your house" implies our private life.

“Whatever is pleasant in your eyes” = heart’s delights.

“put it in their hands and take it” = forcefully take it

Battleplans of Benhadad

V1-2 - Now Ben-Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings *were* with him, with horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, and made war against it.

Benhadad gathered all his army for what?

➤ **To go up against Israel – to oppose**

➤ **To besiege (to surround; to close in -ESV) Israel – to pressurize, to overwhelm**

➤ **To war against Israel – to eradicate**

➤ **His army that was gathered composes of 32 kings.**



Application: Satan doesn't do it alone when he wants to storm into a believer's life. He gathers 32 kings = 32 dominions to **START** a war against God's people.



Number 32 = START

Application: The AGITATOR, the PROVOKER IS ALWAYS THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS.

Benhadad's battle plans are:

- **Intimidating**
- **Unreasonably demanding**
- **Persistent**
- **Condescending**
- **Arrogant**
- **Wily**

Application: That is how the enemy of our soul storms into our lives. What is your Benhadad today? What is the thing or the person who is used by the devil to storm and thunder at your life with intimidation and unreasonable demands to the point you give in to him?

Ahab's response to Benhadad's attack

How did Ahab handle the attack of Benhadad?

Ahab surrendered to the enemy.

He compromised.

Application: Today, in the church, there are many who know Jesus' commands but do not know the **PERSON OF JESUS**. Knowing truth is not enough. Reading the Bible is not enough. If we do not know the character of Jesus and surrender to the Holy Spirit, we will never see the teaching of Christ in the way God intended.

Even after Ahab compromised by willing to give in to Benhadad's **first request for his wealth and family, Benhadad pushed in for more – now he wanted every thing Ahab had and everything that gave Ahab pleasures.**

Application: That is how the enemy of our soul works. When we give him an inch, he put his whole hand in and take everything that is pleasant in our life. We shouldn't be negotiating with sins or the devil or even with evil people.

(II) BENHADAD LIMITING GOD

With Benhadad's second atrocious and demanding request, Ahab did the only right thing in this chapter –

7 So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Notice, please, and see how this *man* seeks trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold; and I did not deny him."

His elders gave wise advice:

⁸ And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent."

In other words – RESIST THE DEMANDS OF THE DEVIL. RESIST THE DEMANDS OF SIN. RESIST THE DEMANDS OF EVIL PEOPLE.

With the help of his advisors, Ahab grew **A SPINE and eventually decided to **STAND UP** to Benhadad.**

This certainly had less to do with the wisdom of Ahab's advisors and much more to do with the **PROVISION OF GOD answering the prayers of faithful men like Elijah and Elisha.**

We know this is true because an unnamed prophet came to Ahab and promised victory

13 Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the Lord: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I *am* the Lord.'"



Why would God do such a thing?

Because His love far exceeds ours. When we reach our breaking point, God knows how to pull strings that will glorify His name above all other names.

The unnamed prophet gave Ahab His battle plan.

**In order to win this battle,
Ahab must lead the young
leaders/young men (who
are the armor bearers of
the governors) into war.**



13 Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the Lord: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I *am* the Lord.'

14 So Ahab said, "By whom?"

And he said, "Thus says the Lord: 'By the young leaders of the provinces.'

Then he said, "Who will set the battle in order?"

And he answered, "You."

Application: KJV uses the words **"young men"** in **verse 14**. The young men here are the young soldiers, showing us, it is never wrong or too late to release the next generation into the battleground.

It is this truth:

– that if you would enjoy this glory, you must become a soldier of Christ, albeit your young age.

That if you would be victorious you must put on the whole Christian armor and look to God for grace.

That as the young new generation, you must fight **under the leadership -Ahab was to lead the battle and be **supported** by the old soldiers behind you.**

God's normal way of working is to use the people **already with the Christian leader, even if they seem to be a very unlikely army.**

What was the format of the battleline?

1⁹ Then these young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them.

1st battleline – 232 young leaders/young men



2nd battleline – army of Israel composing of 6768 soldiers



This small number of 7000 with 232 young men in the forefront, against the massive number of Benhadad's army shows that God could and would work through each group.

Outcome:

v²⁰ And each one killed his man; so the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them; and Ben-Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry. ²¹ Then the king of Israel went out and attacked the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.

The 7000 strong army of Ahab routed the massive army of Benhadad.



Application: Never underestimate the young people of God's army. Don't despise the next generation. They can do great exploit for God too. God sees great potential in young men and women.

So, the Syrians went into full retreat and Benhadad must escape for his life.

Rather than seeing the **MIGHTY POWER OF GOD, the Syrians came up with a foolish plan.**

They figured that Israel's gods were **gods of the hills and that was why they were stronger than them.**

They thought that the **GOD OF ISRAEL like their gods had **LIMITATIONS.****

What limits have you placed on God?

- Limited in sight
- Limited in knowledge
- Limited to prosperity
- Limited to the character of love
- Limited in His demands
- Limited in prayers



In summary:

Many think that God is a "God of hills but not of the plains". They think that God is a God of the past but not of the present. They think that God is a God of a few special favorites but not of all His people. They think that God is a God of one kind of trial, but not of another kind.

“Depend upon it, since Satan could not kill the church by roaring at her like a lion, he is now trying to crush her by hugging her like a bear. There is truth in this, but it is not all the truth. Do you really think, my brethren, that God cannot preserve His Church in the particular trial through which she is now passing? Is he the God of the hills of persecution but not the God of the valleys of prosperity? Will God aid a Whitfield and not help a poor local preacher holding forth upon the green? Will he assist the earnest minister who addresses thousands, and desert the simple girl who teaches a dozen little children the old, old story of the cross? Is this after the fashion of God, to patronize the eminent and neglect the lowly? Does Jesus despise the days of small things?” (Spurgeon).

If you believe so, then like the Syrians, you have a wrong theology of God and we will come to wrong conclusion and action: “If we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they” (verse 23).

(III) BENHADAD'S DEFEATS

In the following spring, Benhadad came to avenge their previous loss.

He came with overwhelming forces.

²⁴ So do this thing: Dismiss the kings, each from his position, and put captains in their places;

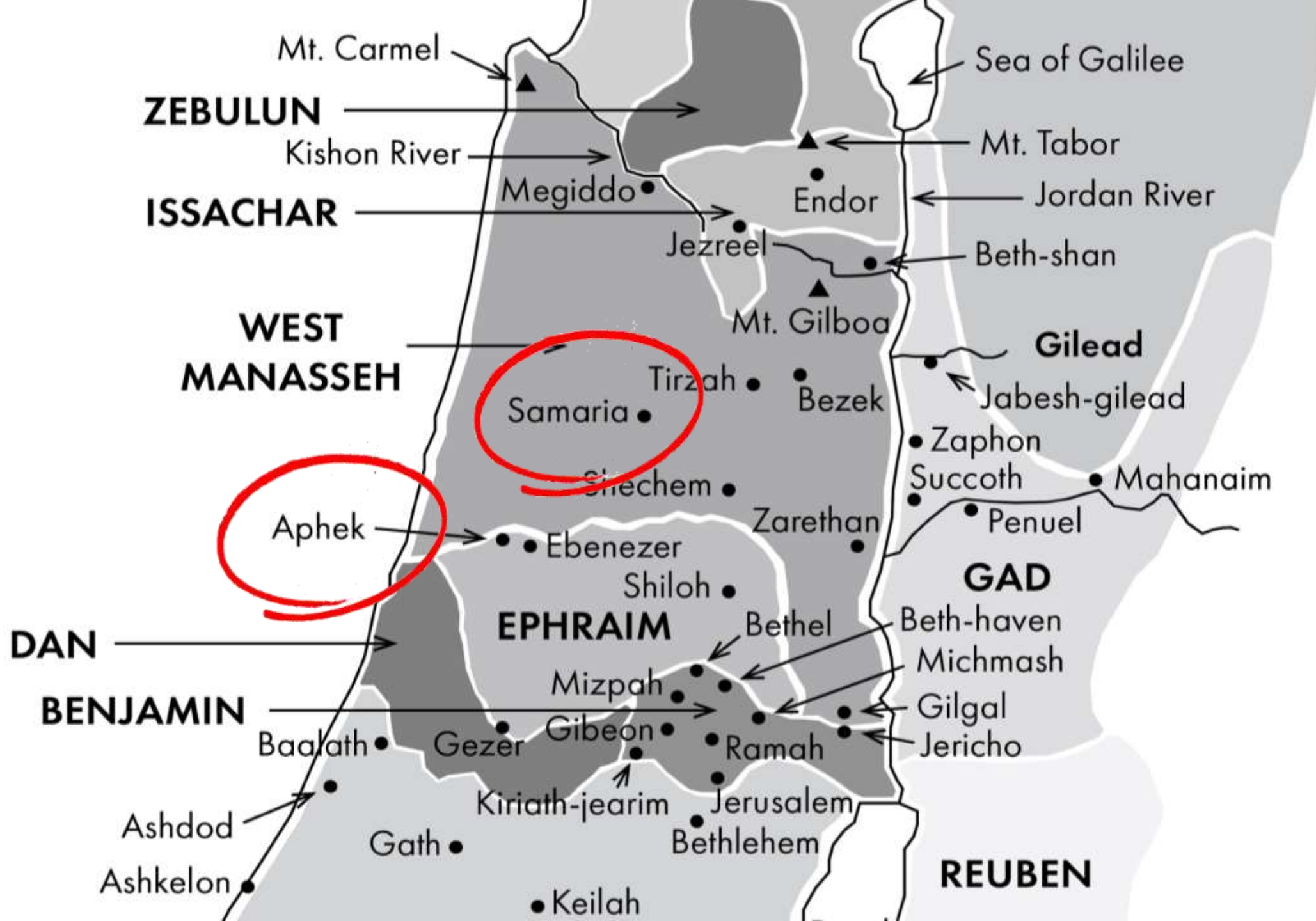
26 So it was, in the spring of the year, that Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. 27 And the children of Israel were mustered and given provisions, and they went against them. Now the children of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the countryside.

Instead of using the 32 kings, he dismissed them and put captains [ESV- commanders].

This is now putting the higher echelon in the spiritual darkness hierarchy - from 32 kings representing the “world rulers of this present age” in Ephesians 6:12 to “principalities”.

He brought in a massive army to Aphek with commanders leading them.





Application: When Satan is defeated by God in the first round, he will garner greater spiritual forces to storm our life.

Ahab also mustered his army to go up against the Syrians.

Notice in **verse 26 how the Syrian army outnumbered the Syrian.**

The army of Ahab looked like "two little flocks of goats against the army of Syrian that filled the countryside."



Again, the **grace of God entered into the scenario.**

A man of God came to Ahab and told him that God was going to give them enormous army into their hands and everyone would know that the God of Israel is the Lord.

28 Then a man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel, and said, "Thus says the Lord: 'Because the Syrians have said, "The Lord *is* God of the hills, but He *is* not God of the valleys," therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the Lord.'" **29 And they encamped opposite each other for seven days. So it was that on the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers *of* the Syrians in one day. 30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men *who were* left. And Ben-Hadad fled and went into the city, into an inner chamber.**

**God took the flawed theology of the Syrians as a
PERSONAL INSULT.**

**“God resents their blasphemy and is determined to punish it. They shall now be discomfited in such a way as to show that God’s power is everywhere, and that the multitude of a host is nothing against him.”
(Clarke)**

Application: Our flawed and wrong ideas about God always take away from His glory and majesty, never adding to them.

Verse 29 records that Israel killed 100,000 Syrian soldiers in a single day. The 27,000 that fled had a wall fall on them at Aphek. Do not forget how small Israel's army was: **7000 (verse 15)**.

This is an amazing victory that can only be attributed to the **power of God**.

It was clearly a miracle, yet it was a miracle working **THROUGH** the existing army of Israel.



God wanted to show that as **UNLIKELY AS IT SEEMED,**
HE COULD WORK THROUGH THIS OUTWARDLY WEAK
AND INEFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT.

Even against the odds,
God has the power to
give victory.



Application: God is not limited in our lives but can give us the victory that we seek. We cannot approach our sins, addictions and vices believing that God is not strong enough to help us conquer these things.

Will we suggest that God is not powerful enough to bring us victory over these sinful areas in our lives?

What sin do you think you cannot stop? What vices do you think you cannot overcome?

If we believe this, then what is God exactly offering us?

If we could be holy by ourselves, then we would not need a Savior for our sins.

**HOLINESS IS ONLY GOING TO BE ACHIEVED THROUGH
A FULL DEPENDENCE ON THE POWER OF GOD.**

**So, for the second time, God helped the army of Israel
to defeat the massive army of Benhadad and he fled
the city and hid in the inner chamber.**

(IV) AHAB'S MISSED OPPORTUNITY

31 Then his servants said to him, "Look now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel *are* merciful kings. Please, let us put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your life."

32 So they wore sackcloth around their waists and *put* ropes around their heads, and came to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says, 'Please let me live.' "And he said, "*Is* he still alive? He *is* my brother."

33 Now the men were watching closely to see whether *any sign of mercy would come* from him; and they quickly grasped *at this word* and said, "Your brother Ben-Hadad." So he said, "Go, bring him." Then Ben-Hadad came out to him; and he had him come up into the chariot.

34 So *Ben-Hadad* said to him, "The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Then *Ahab said*, "I will send you away with this treaty." So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.

Even after God helped to defeat the Syrian army, Ahab once again showed his true character (verse 35-41).

A prophet of God went to illustrate Ahab's blunder using himself as a metaphor.

What did Ahab do?

Ahab WELCOMED the enemy back into his presence ["chariot" -verse 33) and he called Benhadad "my brother" (verse 32).

Application: Aren't we like Ahab many times? We always have "amnesia of the evil deeds of evil people".

How can evil and righteousness walk together?

How can the “son of storm and thunder” be brother of “son of righteousness”?

Why such reconciliation and acceptance from Ahab?

He harbored selfish interest for trade and business.

34 So *Ben-Hadad* said to him, “The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria.”

Then *Ahab* said, “I will send you away with this treaty.” So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.



Every opportunity brings with it corresponding responsibility (verse 31-32).

Victory, a victory achieved by direct Divine Interference, had placed Benhadad – the enemy of God and of Israel – in the power of Ahab.

It was an opportunity not to be thrown away.

The Lord had appointed Benhadad to "utter destruction (verse 42) and Ahab knew it.

Benhadad was to be taught to know, in avenging justice, the greatness of that God he had blasphemed, and the power of the state he ruled was to be so broken as to render it incapable of giving FURTHER TROUBLE to Israel.

The purpose of God and the safety of Israel were placed in the hands of Ahab; the enemy might now be punished and his power for ever crushed.

Ahab neglected the opportunity and he lived long enough to see and regret it.

It is a grave, solemn moment when we are brought into the presence of an **ACKNOWLEDGED EVIL which we have the power to destroy.**

We have need to pray for courage and fidelity to act wisely and decisively.

We are not in a position to extend grace and pardon to the enemies of God.

Unfortunately, many Christians promote a message of **TOLERANCE AND ACCEPTANCE excusing and justifying people who live in rebellion to the word of God.**

Those who reject God's instruction and blaspheme Him are enemies of God (Romans 5:10**).**

Enemies of God will face His judgment.

The last thing we want to be found doing is **SUPPORTING those whom God's judgment is going to fall.**

Application: Are you compromising with the enemies of God today?

Who are the Benhadad of your life?

It could be your sins or your addiction.

It could be a wrong value system that you have embraced.

Application:

It could be the wrong secular narrative of the world which you have invited into your belief system – like be tolerant and accepting to LGBTQ, gay marriages, cohabitation before marriage, sex before marriage, reactivity to good core values like respect for elders and authority, integrity, submission.

We totally forgot how much wreckages all these Benhadads have caused in our lives.

And we promote this hyper-grace driven forgiveness with no framework of God's justice and righteousness.

Are you inviting Benhadad into your chariot – your house, your friendship or your business venture?

If so.....

“Because you have let go out of your hand the man whom I had devoted to destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life; and your people for his people.” (verse 42)

Ahab missed the opportunity God gave him and he had to pay with his life and his nation.

The curses and the divine judgment upon Benhadad were transferred to Ahab and Israel.

**The next generation
suffers when we
compromise.**

This act of Ahab taking God's victory and God's blessings and throwing it away also means Ahab did not follow through on the **grace of God by doing what God's law said.**

We need to receive God's grace and follow through with:

- **obedience.**
- **sanctification.**
- **Removal of all wickedness from our lives.**

COMPROMISING WITH BENHADAD, WITH EVIL AND WICKEDNESS WILL COST YOU AND THOSE RELATED TO YOUR LIFE.

(V) OUR GOSPEL HOPE

Ahab is described as the worst king in Israel's history (1 Kings 21:25). He not only introduces, encourages, and normalizes Baal worship, he also takes advantage of God's kindness.

We expect someone as evil as Ahab to meet God's fiery punishment, like the kind we saw on Mt. Carmel.



But we don't expect God to mercifully give wicked Ahab victory in battle.

And we expect even less that Ahab would be blind to these demonstrations of both God's power and grace.

In that way, we're all like Ahab.

But instead of prophets like the unnamed prophet or Elijah or undeserved victories against Syrians, we have the Greater Prophet Jesus to show us who Yahweh is ([Hebrews 1:2](#)).

In a demonstration of grace, Jesus went to battle against enemies He was under no obligation to fight — our pride, our sins, our selfishness and our mortality ([2 Timothy 1:10](#)).

Even though death and sin were our crosses to bear, He died in battle against them.

More unexpected than mercy towards a wicked king and more shocking than fire falling from heaven, Jesus died instead of His enemies so that His enemies will know that He is the Lord ([Romans 5:10](#)).



And in a final demonstration of God's power, Jesus rose from the dead and today rules as a gracious King forever (1 Corinthians 15:55).

Jesus' death and resurrection are not just proof for unbelieving hearts that He is the Lord, but also a prophetic drama (Romans 6:4).

Jesus' death and resurrection do not prophesy condemnation and death, but predict eternal life for anyone who recognizes God's true power and repents of their pride and selfishness.

We're not doomed like Ahab. We don't have to be at war with God. In Jesus we know who God is, and He has made peace by the blood of His cross
([Colossians 1:20](#)).

The problem with Ahab is **HE IS A WEAKLING.**

He has no moral spine.

He cannot stand up to what is right and he crumbles under pressure.

Even though the unnamed prophet appeared to him three times to give him the grace of God, he threw them all away and, in the end, accepted evil as his brother.

COMPROMISE – that is the problem of Ahab.

Compromise = “concession; middle ground; half-and-half”.

= No wholeheartedness for God and His Word and values.

The root of compromise is SELFISHNESS.

What is the root of the root?

SELF-PRESERVATION

We compromise our Christian values and convictions because we want to **preserve ourselves in the area of financial gains, luxury, comfort and reputation.**

Ahab deserved to die in this battle with Benhadad but we have Jesus today, who unlike Ahab, did not uphold **self-preservation just to negotiate with the enemy of our soul – Benhadad.**

Jesus gave up His life on the cross for us so that by His one death He could once and for all deal that **one ultimate fatal blow upon the Benhadad of our souls so that the storms and thunders the devil send into our lives will never kill us but instead we will win over him.**

He let go of His self-preservation so that we could have His preservation over our everything that the enemy wants to take away from us.

Jesus has taken that **ULTIMATE STORM from the devil and our sins on the cross.**

He has taken that **ULTIMATE THUNDER OF GOD'S WRATH** for our sins so that He can be the Lord of our storms and thunder and not the devil.

With one command from the lips of Jesus, the storm and thunder will be quieted.

That's the power and authority Jesus won on the cross for you and me.

All He asks us to do now is to rely on His power and authority to resist evil and sins and not compromise.

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Now, let His grace work all the way through in us so that we don't have to cave in to the thundering demands of the enemy of your soul but we can stand on His victory and speak the name of Jesus, our Victor and by His blood, so that sin can be vanquished and every evil spirit that seeks to storm into our life, has to bow under that name and blood of Jesus.

Do not limit God and the power in Jesus' name.

Jesus gave up everything so we can obey Him wholeheartedly and not halfheartedly.

Catch the totality of Christ's sacrifice so our heart can respond in the same manner.

