

Ahab Defeats the Syrians

A Play Based on 1 Kings 20

Characters: Narrator
Ahab, king of Israel
Ben-Hadad, king of Syria
A Prophet
Ben-Hadad's messenger

Optional: use robes or large T-shirts as costumes. The two kings could wear crowns and fancier clothes. Ben-Hadad's messenger might use a scroll to read from. Ben-Hadad could have a wine goblet. The prophet needs a shawl or scarf to cover his face near the end of the play.

Scene: There are two scenes. The first shows the actions surrounding the first battle with the Syrians, the battle in the hills. The second shows the actions surrounding the second battle with the Syrians, the battle in the plains. The action takes place in two locations—Ahab's headquarters and Ben-Hadad's headquarters.

Scene I

The Narrator stands in the center of the stage. King Ahab sits in a chair on one side of the stage. King Ben-Hadad sits in a chair on the other side of the stage. His messenger stands beside him.

Narrator: Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, gathered all his forces together and besieged Israel. Then he sent a messenger to Ahab, the king of Israel.

Messenger crosses the stage to Ahab, bows, and speaks.

Messenger: Thus says Ben-Hadad: "Your silver and your gold are mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine."

Ahab: My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have are yours.

Messenger crosses the stage to Ben-Hadad, bows and waits for a moment, then crosses back to Ahab.

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

Narrator: Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land and asked their advice about what he should do. And they all answered, "Do not listen or consent." So Ahab spoke to Ben-Hadad's messenger.

Ahab: 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."

Messenger crosses the stage to Ben-Hadad, bows and waits for a moment, then crosses back to Ahab.

Messenger: Thus says Ben-Hadad, "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."

Ahab: Tell Ben-Hadad, "Let not the one who puts on his armor boast like the one who takes it off."

Messenger crosses back to Ben-Hadad who is drinking. Ben-Hadad stands up, shakes his fist, and speaks.

Ben-Hadad: Get ready!

Ben-Hadad sits down and drinks again.

Narrator: So a great multitude of the Syrians prepared to attack. Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel.

Prophet enters and stands before Ahab.

Prophet: Thus says Yehowah: "Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I am Yehowah."

Narrator: Then Ahab mustered the young leaders of the provinces and after them all the people. Meanwhile Ben-Hadad was getting drunk. The young leaders of the provinces went out with the army and each one killed his man. The Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them. Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, escaped, but many of the Syrians were killed with a great slaughter.

Ben-Hadad and the messenger exit in a hurry.

Prophet: *(to Ahab)* 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.

Scene II

The Narrator stands in the center of the stage. King Ahab sits in a chair on one side of the stage. King Ben-Hadad sits in a chair on the other side of the stage. His messenger stands beside him.

Messenger: The Israelites' gods are gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, then surely we will be stronger than they. So do this thing: Dismiss the kings each from his position, and put captains in their places; and you shall muster an army like the army that you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will fight against them in the plain; surely we will be stronger than they.

Ben-Hadad nods and the messenger exits.

Narrator: So it was, in the spring of the year that Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to fight against Israel. Now the children of Israel encamped before them the Syrians like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the countryside.

Ben-Hadad exits. Prophet enters and stands before Ahab.

Prophet: Thus says Yehowah: "Because the Syrians have said, 'Yehowah 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 Yehowah."

Prophet exits.

Narrator: 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. But the rest fled, including Ben-Hadad.

Ben-Hadad and the messenger enter in a hurry. Ben-Hadad does not sit.

Messenger: 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.

Ben-Hadad nods. Messenger crosses to Ahab and kneels before him.

Messenger: Your servant Ben-Hadad says, "Please let me live."

Ahab: Is he still alive? He is my brother.

Narrator: Now the men were diligently watching to see whether any sign of mercy would come from him; and they quickly grasped at this word.

Messenger: Your brother Ben-Hadad.

Ahab: Go, bring him.

Messenger exits and then immediately returns with Ben-Hadad who also kneels.

Ben-Hadad: 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.

Ahab lifts Ben-Hadad to his feet.

Ahab: I will send you away with this treaty.

Narrator: So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.

Ben-Hadad and Ahab clasp hands. Ben-Hadad and the messenger exit with great relief. Ahab stands and begins to walk across the stage slowly.

Narrator: But a prophet waited for the king by the road, and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes.

Prophet enters with a scarf partially covering his face and stops Ahab.

Prophet: Your servant went out into the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, "Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver." And while your servant was busy here and there, he was gone.

Ahab: So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it.

Prophet takes off the scarf, and Ahab recognizes him.

Prophet: Thus says Yehowah: "Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people."

Narrator: And the king of Israel went to his house sullen and displeased.

All characters exit in different directions.

The End