

APRIL 18

Read 1 Kings 20–21

CHAPTER 20

AND Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and *there were* thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.

2 And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad,

3 Thy silver and thy gold *is* mine; thy wives also and thy children, *even* the goodliest, *are* mine.

4 And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I *am* thine, and all that I have.

5 And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children;

6 Yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, *that* whatso-

ever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put *it* in their hand, and take *it* away.

7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this *man* seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not.

8 And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not *unto him*, nor consent.

9 Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Benhadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.

10 And Benhadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.

11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell *him*, Let not him that girdeth on *his harness* boast himself as he that putteth it off.

12. And it came to pass, when *Benhadad* heard this message, as he *was* drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set *yourselves in array*. And they set *themselves in array* against the city.

13 ¶ And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD.

14 And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, *Even* by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou.

15 Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, *even* all the children of Israel, *being* seven thousand.

16 And they went out at noon. But *Benhadad was* drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.

17 And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out

first; and *Benhadad* sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.

18 And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.

19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.

20 And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and *Benhadad* the king of Syria escaped on an horse with the horsemen.

21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

22 ¶ And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.

23 And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods *are* gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.

24 And do this thing, Take the

kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms:

25 And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, *and* surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so.

26 And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Benhadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.

27 And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.

28 ¶ And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD *is* God of the hills, but he *is* not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

29 And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day

the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.

30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and *there* a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men *that were* left. And Benhadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

31 ¶ And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel *are* merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.

32 So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and *put* ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, *Is* he yet alive? he *is* my brother.

33 Now the men did diligently observe whether *any thing would come* from him, and did hastily catch *it*: and they said, Thy brother Benhadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Benhadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot.

34 And *Benhadad* said unto

him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then *said Ahab*, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

35 ¶ And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him.

36 Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him.

37 Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded *him*.

38 So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face.

39 And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this

man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver.

40 And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So *shall* thy judgment *be*; thyself hast decided *it*.

41 And he hasted, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he *was* of the prophets.

42 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of *thy* hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.

43 And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

CHAPTER 21

AND it came to pass after these things, *that* Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which *was* in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it *is* near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; *or*, if it seem good

to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

5 ¶ But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, *and* eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed *them* with his

seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:

10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And *then* carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city, *even* the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, *and* as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, *even* against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

15 ¶ And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

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.

19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? 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.

20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found *thee*: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

21 Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,

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.

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.

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.

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.

DEVOTIONAL COMMENTS

King Ahab has gone down in history as the most wicked king ever to rule Israel. His wife, Jezebel, ruled him from behind the scenes and saw to it that the worship of Baal was made the official religion of the land. Ahab sold himself to work evil and in today's reading we see his sins and his final judgment.

Chapter 20 presents Ahab's defense. In verses 1-12 he was challenged by the king of Syria, who was assisted by 32 other kings. The Lord intervenes to save King Ahab and his people, even though Ahab did not deserve being saved. Finally, in verses 31-43 Satan accomplishes his mission as he leads Ahab into a wicked compromise with the enemy.

Chapter 21 records Ahab's deception as he desired the vineyard of Naboth. How terrible that lust and greed brought death to an innocent man, just to satisfy King Ahab and his wicked wife.

In reality, King Ahab was a great soldier who could have led Israel to victory and peace had he followed the Lord in truth; but his alliance with Baal worship and the evil influence of his godless wife brought him defeat. Ahab did experience the goodness of God in the military victories, yet refused to submit himself to the Law. He humbled himself outwardly when judgment was announced, and even then received a stay of execution, but his shallow repentance did not last. The years of drought and the great demonstration of God's glory on Mt. Carmel did not soften his hard heart. He heard one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament and yet did not repent! His 22 years of reign only led the nation farther away from God. Proverbs 29:1 tells us, "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

PROVERB FOR TODAY

"The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit" (Proverbs 18:11).

TREASURE PATH TO SOUL WINNING

Spend this month reviewing the previous 13 lessons. For today, review Memory Verse Assignment 3 (found on page 10).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

JOE L. MAY

HYMN FOR TODAY

JESUS PAID IT ALL

by Elvina M. Hall, 1820-1889

It has been stated that all religious systems can be spelled with just two letters—D O. The gospel of Christ, however, is spelled with four letters—D O N E! This hymn text, written by a lay woman named Elvina Hall, speaks pointedly to this basic truth, which is the very basis of our Christian faith.

Mrs. Hall wrote these words one Sunday morning while seated in the choir loft of the Monument Street Methodist Church in Baltimore, Maryland, supposedly listening to the sermon by her pastor, the Rev. George Schrick. One can imagine a conversation something like this following the service:

"Pastor Schrick, I must confess that I wasn't listening too closely to your message this morning. Because, you see, once you started preaching about how we can really know God's love and forgiveness, I began thinking about all that Christ has already done to provide our salvation. Then these words came to me, and I just had to get them down on paper. And the only paper I could find at the time was the flyleaf of this hymnal. So I scribbled the words on that."

The pastor recalled that the church organist, John Grape, had just previously given him a copy of a new tune that he had composed, which he had titled "All to Christ I Owe." To the amazement of all, they soon discovered that John Grape's tune fit perfectly with Elvina Hall's words scribbled on the flyleaf page of the hymnal. Since its first published appearance in 1874, this hymn has been widely used in churches, especially for the communion services.

*I hear the Saviour say, "Thy strength indeed is small!
Child of weakness, watch and pray; find in Me thine all
in all."*

*Lord, now indeed I find Thy pow'r; and Thine alone,
can change the leper's spots and melt the heart of stone.*

*For nothing good have I whereby Thy grace to claim—
I'll wash my garments white in the blood of Calv'ry's
Lamb.*

*And when before the throne I stand in Him complete,
"Jesus died my soul to save," my lips shall still repeat.*

Chorus:

*Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain—He washed it white as
snow.*

ON THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1775

THE DATE OF PAUL REVERE'S MIDNIGHT RIDE.

1874

DAVID LIVINGSTONE WAS BURIED.

On this date David Livingstone was buried and to him went the affection of millions of people who would have died as heathen had they not heard the story of Christ from this great missionary. Could it be that we could pray down some David Livingstones today? England could use a David Livingstone. France needs a David Livingstone. Italy needs a David Livingstone. Switzerland needs a David Livingstone. Greece needs a David Livingstone. Egypt needs a David Livingstone. Even Jerusalem and Palestine need a David Livingstone. Pray for missionaries today. Pray for God to raise up some giants of the Faith. Oh, to have another Spurgeon in England, another Savonarola in France, another Luther in Germany, another Calvin in Switzerland, another Judson in India, another Paul in Athens, and another Peter in Jerusalem. Hold missionaries before the Lord today and, for that matter, every day.

1906

THE DATE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE.

Four hundred fifty-two people died, and \$350,000,000.00 of property was lost.

1923

THE OPENING OF YANKEE STADIUM.

1949

IRELAND BECAME A REPUBLIC.

Pray for the Irish today, for Christians, Christian workers, preachers, and missionaries in this part of our world.

**ON THIS DATE IN
AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY**

1818

ANDREW JACKSON DEFEATED FORCE OF INDIANS AND BLACKS AT BATTLE OF SUWANEE, ending First Seminole War.

1864

SURROUNDED BY A SUPERIOR REBEL FORCE, FIRST KANSAS COLORED VOLUNTEERS SMASHED THROUGH REBEL LINES and sustained heavy casualties in an engagement at Poison Spring, Arkansas. Captured black soldiers were murdered by the Confederate troops.

1941

DR. ROBERT WAEVER NAMED DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT SECTION charged with integrating blacks into the national defense program..

BUS COMPANIES OF NEW YORK CITY AGREED to hire black drivers and mechanics. Agreement ended a four-week boycott.

1955

BANDUNG CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF COLORED NATIONS OF AFRICA AND ASIA opened in Indonesia.

BILL RUSSELL NAMED COACH OF THE BOSTON CELTICS basketball team and became the first black to coach an established team in professional athletics.

JAMES B. PARSONS NAMED CHIEF JUDGE OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT in Chicago and became the first black to hold that position.

1976

DEATH OF PERCY JULIAN (76), holder of more than 138 chemical patents, and a pioneer synthesizer of cortisone drugs.

1977

ALEX HALEY, AUTHOR OF ROOTS, AWARDED THE PULITZER PRIZE.

1989

INDEPENDENCE DAY IN ZIMBABWE.

A Christian Life:

OLIVER BOYCE GREENE

1915-1976

Oliver Boyce Greene was born on February 14, 1915, in Greenville, South Carolina. He accepted Christ as his Saviour when he was 20 years old. Five months later, the Lord called him to preach, and, to prepare for this, he entered North Greenville Baptist College. After attending college for two years, he entered the full-time ministry as an independent Baptist evangelist.

For 35 years, he conducted revivals all across America in churches and in his own tent, until failing health forced him to stop. Also, he preached a daily radio broadcast over a network which grew from one station in 1939 to 180 stations at his death. The Gospel Hour is still heard coast to coast by his taped messages.

Dr. Greene was a prolific author, writing and publishing many verse-by-verse commentaries on the Bible in addition to numerous sermon books and soul-winning booklets. The soul-winning booklets were a literary form pioneered by Dr. Greene, whose dream it was to see short, well-written, and attractive booklets placed in the hands of hundreds of thousands of people around the world.

Dr. Greene was called home to be with the Lord on July 26, 1976, but his work lives on. His influence will continue to be felt for years to come through his radio ministry, through the millions of soul-winning booklets currently in circulation, but, most important, through the tens of thousands of people he led to the Lord through his efforts.



MEMORY VERSE ASSIGNMENT 3 (for review):

Please spend time reviewing these memory verses. If you have been completing the assignments in the TREASURE PATH TO SOUL WINNING, then you already have spent a week memorizing the Scriptures below. Now it's time to review!

NEW BIRTH THE ONLY ENTRANCE INTO GOD'S SPIRITUAL FAMILY

The Lost are:

BLIND, and cannot SEE.

() John 3:3

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

IGNORANT and cannot UNDERSTAND.

() John 3:4 (1 Cor. 1:18; 2:14)

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

HELPLESS, and cannot ENTER.

() John 3:5

Jesus answered, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

SINFUL, and first birth is REJECTED.

() John 3:6 (Romans 8:8)

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

DEPRAVED and new birth is a MUST.

() John 3:7

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.