

I Kings 20:22-29**I Kings 20:13-21**

We are starting a new year and as is my habit, I look at every verse in the Bible with the New year, 2023, in it...interestingly, the Lord showed me an excellent way to approach and navigate the 'waters' we find in 2023. We will look at **I Kings 20:23** in particular but we will view it in context in **I Kings 20:22-28**.

22Then 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." 23Now the servants of the king of Aram said to him, "Their gods are gods of the mountains, therefore they were stronger than we; but rather let us fight against them in the plain, *and* surely we will be stronger than they. 24Do this thing: remove the kings, each from his place, and put captains in their place, 25and 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, and surely we will be stronger than they." And he listened to their voice and did so. **I Kings 20:22-25 NASB**

1. Their enemy comes to attack at the turn of the year. (v22)
 1. Ben-hadad, King of Aram gets battle advise from his leaders explaining God's situational weaknesses'. (v23)
 2. Israel's 'gods' are only gods in the hills and mountains...Israel will be weaker, and we will defeat them in the plains. (v23)
 3. The 'new' battle strategy...replace the 'politicians' with soldiers.
 4. Our chariots will work much better in the plains than in the mountains.
2. The 'backdrop'...

13Now 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.'" 14Ahab said, "By whom?" So he said, "Thus says the LORD, 'By the young men of the rulers of the provinces.'" Then he said, "Who shall begin the battle?" And he answered, "You." 15Then he mustered the young men of the rulers of the provinces, and there were 232; and after them he mustered all the people, *even* all the sons of Israel, 7,000.

16They went out at noon, while Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the temporary shelters with the thirty-two kings who helped him. 17The young men of the rulers of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out and they told him, saying, "Men have come out from Samaria." 18Then he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; or if they have come out for war, take them alive."

19So these went out from the city, the young men of the rulers of the provinces, and the army which followed them. 20They killed each his man; and the Arameans fled and Israel pursued them, and Ben-hadad king of Aram escaped on a horse with horsemen. 21The king of Israel went out and struck the horses and chariots, and killed the Arameans with a great slaughter. **I Kings 20:13-21 NASB**

1. Israel had won a lopsided battle against Ben-hadad, but he had not perceived God's greatness nor His purpose.
2. Ben-hadad's advisors were sore losers and they 'flattered' Ben-hadad and set up a battle plan that would crush Israel.

26At the turn of the year, Ben-hadad mustered the Arameans and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. 27The sons of Israel were mustered and were provisioned and went to meet them; and the sons of Israel camped before them like two little flocks of goats, but the Arameans filled the country. 28Then a man of God came near and spoke to the king of Israel and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because the Arameans have said, "The LORD is a god of *the* mountains, but He is not a god of *the* valleys," therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD.'" **I Kings 20:26-28 NASB**

26 And at the return of the year, Ben-hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel.

27 The Israelites were counted and, all present, went against them. The Israelites encamped before the enemy like two little flocks of lost kids [absolutely everything against them but Almighty God], but the Syrians filled the country.

28 A man of God came and said to the king of Israel, 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 hands, and you shall know *and* recognize by experience that I am the Lord. **I Kings 20:26-28 AMPC**

1. Aram means high, exalted, above you, bigger than you, greater than you or we are, more than you or we are.
2. Israel..." looked like two little flocks of lost kids", absolutely everything against them but Almighty God...(v27 AMPC)
3. God sends a prophet to speak to King Ahab..."Because the Arameans have said "the Lord is a god of the mountains and is not a god of the valley (plains), therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand (singular-spoken to Ahab), and you (plural spoken about Ahab, Israel and all the Arameans) will know that I AM the Lord."
4. Know this, what you see 'surrounding' you is not the complete picture. You can't ignore it, nor can you become overwhelmed by it.
5. Sometimes it feels like absolutely everything is against you except Almighty God...so what do you do?
 1. First, you gather-not scatter. (v27)
 1. They were 'mustered', provisioned, and positioned for battle.
 2. They were of one heart, one loyalty, and one purpose...seeking God and opposing the enemy.
 3. They waited on God for seven days...God had a plan...without it they could not make it.

They encamped opposite each other seven days. Then the battle was joined; and the Israelites slew of the Syrians 100,000 foot soldiers in one day. **I Kings 20:29 AMPC**

What are you (or we) facing?

God is God of the high ground and the lowest 'ditch'! There is 'no situational advantage' for the enemy when opposing God.

1. The 'outlook' for the new year was pretty grim...but the outcome was magnificent!

You and we need to freshly abandon ourselves to Him, trust Him, and believe in His sovereign power.