Lesson #6 -- Ahab: The Sins of Serving Self February 23, 2010

I. God's Amazing Patience and Grace

A. Ahab and Elijah (I Kings 17-19)

- Elijah predicted no **rain or dew** until God said so (Deuteronomy 11:13-17)

- Elijah confronts the people (I Kings 18:20,21)

- Elijah **"partners" with God** to reveal that "The Lord—he is God!" (I Kings 18:38,39: James 5:17,18)

Life Principle: *God uses believers to "partner" with Him in accomplishing His purposes..*

Application: ***How do you allow God to draw you to pray for unbelievers or the uncommitted—that He will turn their hearts back again?***

- ***How are you willing to be a spokesman of God's truth and a testimony that "the Lord—he is God!"?***

B. Ahab and Ben-Hadad (I Kings 20)

- Prophet of God promised deliverance to show God was **"the Lord"** (vs.13, 28)

- Prophet predicted Ahab's death for sparing Ben-Hadad's life

C. Ahab's **humility** and **God's grace** (I Kings 21:25-29; Luke 15:11-32)

Life Principle: *True change must be more than "cosmetic"—it must affect the heart and life!*

Application: ***How do you try to express your gratefulness for God's grace in your life?***

- ***How is obedience an expression of gratefulness for God's grace in your life? How is continued disobedience really an "abuse" of God's grace?***
- ***When have you made a "cosmetic" change in your behavior that didn't really affect your heart or attitudes? How successful or long-lasting was that change?***

II. The Penalty of Ahab's Determined Disbelief and Disobedience

A. Ahab and Naboth (I Kings 21)

B. Ahab and Jehoshaphat (I Kings 22)

- Micaiah's prophecy of Ahab's defeat

- Ahab's disobedience and death

Life Principle: *The "cost" of sinful choices is much higher than we ever imagine (Galatians 6:7,8)*

Application: ***How have you seen that sin is more "costly" than you had thought it would be? How do you keep uppermost in your thinking the fact that sin is always an act of rebellion against God?***

- ***What deterrents have you put in place to keep you from following your human sinful desires when you are tempted to disobey God's clear commands?***

III. God Always Keeps His Covenants

A. Israel's continuing **decline** (II Kings 9-16)
--no good kings in Israel, although some were better than others
--Jehu carried out all of Elijah's prophecies again Ahab's family and tore down temple of Baal in Samaria; but did not turn away from worship of golden calves or keep the law of the Lord wholeheartedly
--virtually all kings were given the same condemnation (II Kings 15:9 *He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as his fathers had done. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit*.)

B. Abrahamic Covenant & Mosaic Covenant (Genesis 12,15,17; Exodus 20)

C. God's warnings against **covenant breaking** (Exodus 19:3-6; Deuteronomy 7:8-13 and 29:24-28; Joshua 23:6-16)

D. God's punishment of Israel for their continued disobedience (II Kings 17)
--Israel finally invaded by Assyria and forced to pay tribute of 1,000 talents (i.e. 37 tons) of silver
--in final years Tiglath-Pileser took certain cities of Israel & deported 27,000 Israelite people to Assyria
--Hoshea was final king—after a siege of 3 years, Samaria was captured and more people deported; other captive peoples were resettled in Israel, bringing other foreign worship w/ them → Samaritan people of N.T. times (II Kings 17:22,23)

E. Living today as **God's "covenant" people**

- New covenant in Christ's blood (Luke 22:20; II Corinthians 5:20b,21

- Come out and be different (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

Life Principle: *God always calls His people to be "separate" from the evil influences of the world around them and to follow Him wholeheartedly!.*

Application: ***In what ways does your life show that you live differently from the world around you and desire to follow God wholeheartedly? Why has this always been God's standard for His people?***

- ***Are there any areas in which you need to improve and become more "separate?" What steps do you need to take to begin (or continue) this process?***