

## The stray arrow

This is a doozy of a stranger things Bible story. It's the story of Ahab the King of Israel trying to outrun sin, bad choices, and death.

*1 Kings 16:30-33 "Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. 31 He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. 32 He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. 33 Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to arouse the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him."*

It's not good when your reign begins with a statement that you were worse than all of them before you. It might even be worse that you married a horrible woman as well. Ahab was a weak king who abandoned the Lord and eventually abandoned any authority he had as king. I am taking the long road to the stranger thing because, frankly this king asked for it. The trouble with Ahab is that he always had to go further. He hated good advice and always accepted wicked council.

I love this exchange in 1 Kings 18:17-18 *"When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" 18 "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals."* The prophets in Ahab's day were swirling around his kingdom. Elijah and Micaiah were making life hard for Ahab. I find it interesting that in chapter 20 a prophet is not named but in

verse 42 of that chapter this unnamed prophet condemns Ahab to death. I believe that this prophet was Micaiah.

Then things get stranger. Jezebel, Ahab's wife, tells Elijah that he will die tomorrow. She also helps her weak king by killing a man who was in his way. Now, that man was Naboth. Ahab wanted his land but he had refused. After Jezebel had him killed the Prophet Elijah says in verse 23 *“And also concerning Jezebel the Lord says: ‘Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.’* This saying about the dogs and blood is mentioned three times. I wonder if it was a popular saying to condemn or curse someone.

Then King Ahab decided that he wanted to take the land of King Aham. He enlisted the help of another king named Jehoshaphat. Usually, these kings will inquire of a prophet beforehand. Look at verse 18 in chapter 22 of First Kings *“The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, ‘Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?’* Then things get even stranger. Interestingly enough, there is a cut away scene in heaven. The Lord is asking if there is anyone who might entice the King to go to war. A Spirit comes forward and says they will do it. There are things in heaven that we just don't understand. Who was the Spirit? The real point is that Ahab does not listen to God but he will listen to enticing spirits. Two different Prophets told him that he was heading the wrong way. Yet, Ahab pushed ahead anyways.

Then Ahab tries to cheat death by threatening the Prophet Micaiah. I was impressed that Micaiah was forward and confident in his prophesy. King Ahab then tells King Josaphat to wear the kingly robes. Ahab disguises himself. Then in 1 Kings 22:34 it says *“But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told his chariot driver, ‘Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I've been wounded.’* With all the prophesies, warnings, and scandals around him, King Ahab found a way to die in a stranger thing

way. A random arrow hits him in just the right spot. Then it says in verse 38 *“They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria (where the prostitutes bathed), and the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the Lord had declared.”*

These dogs were busy. Earlier they licked up the blood of his wife Jezebel too. In the Bible there is a prophesy that not one arrow will be shot over a wall in a battle. That seems a tough thing to do. It’s just as amazing that one arrow ended Ahab in a battle of swords, chariots, and spears. The real moral of this story is playing with fire. Ahab from day one wanted what he wanted from land, wives, to only good news. It’s odd that he seemed to revere the Lord in some ways. Yet, I doubt he really believed in the Israelite God. Read 1 Kings 16-22. It’s a strange story that is interesting. I guess the answer is don’t be an Ahab!