



bits from bob....

Busy “here and there”

January 11, 2021

About 857 B.C., about 70 years after Solomon’s death, Ahab king of Israel and Ben-Hadad king of Aram were at war. Despite Ahab’s tendency to disobey God, on this occasion God delivered the Arameans into the hands of Israel, on more than one occasion. After a battle in which Aram suffered severe losses, Ben-Hadad went to Ahab and asked for mercy. Accepting the concessions that were offered, Ahab made peace and established a treaty with Aram.

A prophet of God disguised himself as a wounded soldier and stood beside the road, waiting for king Ahab to pass by. The prophet presented a hypothetical case to Ahab, as though the prophet were the one being described. “Your servant was in the battle and was given a captive to guard. If the captive escaped, the punishment was either the servant’s life or an incredible sum of money.”

The prophet then describes the escape of the captive, “While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared.”

Of course, the prophet was describing king Ahab. When the king affirmed the punishment, the prophet spoke God’s word against the king. “You have set free a man I had given over to destruction and death.” You will pay, even as you have said.

The narrative reinforces the importance of obeying God completely, seeking and doing God’s will, accepting responsibility. A secondary point, often made, is the one I call attention to as we begin 2021—the little phrase, “busy here and there.” We too are busy here and there. Consider these lessons.

→ Stay focused on the primary goal – don’t let the captive escape. Don’t drop the ball.

God defines our spiritual priorities, be alert, listen, pay attention.

Ministry, members and elders, teachers, evangelism and disciples, saving and staying saved.

Is what matters most still on track?

→ Don’t be distracted.

Life easily calls us in a different direction. Again, listen to the leader, pay attention.

Ministry, many things that can be done, push this—push that.

I want to support good works, but I must not be distracted from what is best.

Am I doing what is best, what is most important?

→ Filling your days vs. doing what matters.

It is not number of hours in a life but how much life is put in the hours.

Life is easily filled with things that don’t matter much and don’t matter eternally.

Ministry, fill the day, and then the day is gone. What did you do?