

# BECAUSE HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF

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“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.”

I Kings 21:29

The Bible says this of Ahab, the king of Israel: he “did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him” (I Kings 16:30). In I Kings 21, Jezebel, king Ahab’s wife, arranged for Naboth to be killed and for his vineyard to become the property of Ahab. God then spoke to Elijah to give a message to Ahab. The message was clear. God would soon judge the evil of Ahab and his wicked wife, Jezebel. When Ahab heard the words of the man of God, “he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly” (I Kings 21:27). Then the word of God came to Elijah, as is recorded in our text. God saw how this wicked man humbled himself, and because he humbled himself, the promised judgment would be delayed until after his death.

There are two lessons in our Scripture that are worth our consideration. Initially, we see a prime example of the mercy of God. We do not know how lasting Ahab’s repentance was, or how long he maintained this posture of humility. But it was enough to be rewarded with a measure of God’s mercy. May we never forget how merciful God is. To the wickedest king to ever rule over Israel, God granted a reprieve. His family would still experience the judgment of God, but not in the lifetime of Ahab.

Why would God take heed to the desperate repentance of an habitual rebel? The answer is simple – because God is that way. His mercy endures forever. He saw the

repentance of the prodigal son and showed him mercy. He saw the repentance of king Hezekiah and added fifteen years to his life. He saw the repentance of the thief dying next to Him and granted repentance. God is a merciful God.

Also, we see in this text how important it is that we take the word of God and the preacher seriously. What lesson could be learned from someone as evil as Ahab? When the wicked king heard that judgment was coming, it so affected him in his heart that he was moved to sorrow and humility. When God speaks, we need to take His words just as seriously as Ahab did on this occasion. Our hearts should respond to the truth of God's Word. And when we do, God is ready to show mercy.