Three Chariots

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday June 6th, 2021

Text: *I Kings 22:35; II Kings 9:33; II Kings 2:11*

### Intro

1. In God’s word we find the promise of eternal life applies to both eternal punishment and eternal reward (life) – *Mt. 25:31-46*
	1. The end of the righteous and the wicked are contrasted even in the place of the dead as seen in the story Jesus told of the rich man and Lazarus the poor man – *Lk. 16:19-26*
2. Balaam once said to King Balak of Moab, when speaking as God directed (Num. 23:10): “Who can count the dust of Jacob, Or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the upright, And let my end be like his!”
3. For our end to be like the upright, our lives must be characterized as righteous!
	1. Our character is revealed by how we react to trials and tribulations and reflected in our conduct!
4. Let us look at the end of three people represented by their chariots and contrast their character of life that brought them to their respective ends!

#### Ahab

* 1. Character – *Weakness and Wickedness*
		1. I Kings 16:30-33: King Ahab demonstrated a passive-aggressive character. He was spiritually weak, engaging in wicked behavior, marrying a woman wholly unsuited to be queen, and unwilling to restrain her shameful behavior.
		2. I Kings 21:20, 25-26: He “sold himself” to do evil/wickedness!
		3. Ahab’s lack of character is seen in his dealings with Naboth: coveting his vineyard (I Kings 21:1-7: Acting childish for not getting his way), ignoring the principle of family possession (Ex. 20:17; Lev. 25:23-28), thinking himself above the Law of God (Num. 36:7), and allowing his wife to kill an innocent man so he could take possession of land he could not buy (I Kings 21:15-16).
	2. Application:
		1. Are we like Ahab, weak and vacillating, wicked and covetous? (Lk. 12:15; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5)
		2. Have we sold (out) ourselves to do evil (Mt. 16:26: “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”)?
	3. Chariot – *Ahab’s Fixed Doom*
		1. God mercifully delayed the worst judgments that had been pronounced against the house of Ahab (I Kings 21:19-24) because he humbled himself (21:27-29).
		2. But, despite the mercy of God, disaster still awaited the weak king!
		3. After three years, King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah fought against the Arameans (Syrians) at Ramoth-Gilead *(I Kings 22:1-40).*
		4. Despite the warnings from God that Ahab would die and the army would be scattered *(I Kings 22:5-28: the prophet Micaiah)* and all precautions (I Kings 22:30: Ahab disguised himself), Ahab was mortally wounded on the battlefield, and died in his chariot, just as Micaiah had predicted (I Kings 22:29-40).
		5. I Kings 22:34-38: It all happened “according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken” concerning Ahab’s death (22:20-23) and his blood from the chariot being licked up by dogs (I Kings 21:19).
	4. Application
		1. The death of Ahab (I Kings 22:35) is a reminder that no one can escape from the presence or the judgment of God (Ps. 139:7-12; Jer. 23:23-24; Heb. 4:13).
	5. The chariot of Ahab represents his fixed doom despite his cowardice in disguising himself *(I Kings 22:30),* and his hubris in thinking he could fool God *(I Kings 22:34-35)!*

#### Jezebel

* 1. Character – *Wickedness & Corrupt Influence*
		1. Queen Jezebel demonstrated a domineering character, assuming leadership in religious and family affairs, exercising a corrosive and corrupting influence upon others (I Kings 18:19; 21:25; II Kings 9:22).
		2. Jezebel was murderous:
			1. I Kings 18:4, 13; 19:1-2: Destroyed the prophets of the Lord, killing whoever she could find!
			2. I Kings 21:6-16 (Micah 2:1-2): When Ahab pouted over Naboth’s refusal to sell his vineyard, Jezebel organized a criminal conspiracy, bringing false charges against an innocent man, orchestrating his death on the charge of blasphemy – a sin that she consistently committed.
		3. Rev. 2:19-23: In the book of Revelation, Jezebel becomes an abiding symbol of corruption and compromise (Whether literal or figurative, Jezebel is seen as a corrupting influence associated with sexual immorality and idolatry).
	2. Application:
		1. Do we share a similarity with Jezebel, exercising a corrupt and corrosive influence? *(Rev. 2:20-23)*
		2. Through our words and deeds, do we “teach” others to compromise? Do we engage in character assassination? Do we hate our brothers and sisters (Gal. 5:13-15; I Jn. 3:15: Hating one another is equated with murder!)?
	3. Chariot – *Jezebel’s Dreadful Death*
		1. Jezebel met death at the hands of Jehu, whom Elijah and Elisha anointed as the 11th king of Israel *(I Kings 19:15-18; II Kings 9:1-13).*
		2. Jehu returned to Jezreel, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel *(Samaria was in the Valley of Jezreel where Ahab’s palace was – I Kings 16:23-24: Omri bought and built Samaria; 21:1: Naboth the Jezreelite’s vineyard was next to the palace),* and overthrew Joram, King Ahab’s son and chosen successor *(II Kings 9:14-26),* fulfilling the word of the Lord (II Kings 9:22-26).
		3. Then he pursued King Ahaziah of Judah, overtaking and killing him at the ascent of Gur, at Ibleam *(II Kings 9:27-29; II Chr. 22:7-9: From God).*
		4. II Kings 9:30-37 (I Kings 21:23): Coming again to Jezreel, Jehu ordered that Jezebel be cast headlong from an upper palace window into the street below. Driving his chariot and horses over her broken body, he trampled her underfoot. Afterwards, the burial party found nothing remaining of the queen’s corpse except her skull, hands and feet (Eaten and licked up by the dogs)!
		5. Jehu exacted judgment upon Ahab’s house by killing all the remaining descendants of Ahab *(II Kings 10:1-17),* and also the worshippers of Baal *(II Kings 10:18-30),* fulfilling the word of God – *I Kings 21:19-24;* II Kings 10:17, 30
		6. *Jehu’s chariot was an instrument of God’s judgment & wrath!*
	4. Application
		1. The death of Jezebel (II Kings 9:30-37) is a reminder of the shame that is associated with sin (Acts 1:18-19: Judas; II Pet. 2:20-22: Fallen Christian).
	5. The chariot of Jezebel was a dreadful death because of her shameful and wicked character!

#### Elijah

* 1. Character – *Conviction*
		1. The prophet Elijah demonstrated a godly and steadfast character (I Kings 17:1), rebuking the sins of Ahab and Jezebel, correcting his misconceptions (I Kings 21:20), pronouncing destruction upon his house *(I Kings 21:17-29).*
		2. His character and conviction is also reflected in Messianic prophecies regarding John the Baptist, who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Mal. 4:5-6; Mt. 11:7-15; Lk. 1:17).
			1. Like the prophet of old, John courageously confronted sin, calling God’s erring people to repentance *(Mt. 3:1-12)* and confronted Herod’s adultery with his brother’s wife Herodias *(Mt. 14:3-4)* that resulted in his imprisonment and death *(Mt. 14:8-11).*
		3. James 5:16-18: Elijah is used by James as an example of righteousness and accomplishing much in prayer!
	2. Application
		1. Are we like Elijah, manifesting an unwavering commitment to truth (Prov. 23:23)?
		2. Are we willing to stand and be counted, even in the face of opposition and danger (Eph. 6:10-13)?
	3. Chariot – *Elijah’s Glorious Deliverance*
		1. In contrast with the inevitable death of Ahab and shameful end of Jezebel, Elijah’s departure from this life was glorious and triumphant!
		2. II Kings 2:1-14: Crossing over Jordan with Elisha, his servant and successor, Elijah was separated from Elisha by a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire and was carried up to Heaven by a whirlwind (II Kings 2:11)!
	4. Application
		1. The end of Elijah’s life (II Kings 2:11) reminds us of blessings that God has reserved for the faithful (Rev. 2:10; 21:3-7)
		2. Recall Balaam’s discourse: “Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his!” (Num. 23:10).
	5. The chariot of Elijah symbolized God’s glorious deliverance of Elijah as a reward for a life of faithful service and dedication to the truth!

## Conclusion

1. For the righteous, the day of one’s death is better than the day of one’s birth
	1. Eccl. 7:1-2: The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.
	2. Rev. 14:13: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”
2. The wicked will get what they deserve and will not know peace!
	1. Is. 3:11: “Woe to the wicked! It will go badly with him, For what he deserves will be done to him.”
	2. Is. 48:22: “There is no peace for the wicked,” says the LORD.
	3. Rev. 20:10: “…they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”
	4. Rev. 20:15: “And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”
3. For those who remain faithful to the Lord, the end of a matter is better than its beginning *(Eccl. 7:8).* Yet, for those who fall away, the last state is worse for them than the first *(II Pet. 2:20).*
4. If we endure to the end, we will receive God’s eternal blessings! (II Tim. 4:6-8; Js. 1:12; Rev. 2:10)
5. Let us share in Balaam’s conclusion: “Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his!” (Num. 23:10)
6. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent of your sins and be baptized!
7. If a Christian in error, Repent and return to God!
8. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!