

David or Ahab: What's The Difference?

Franklin Church of Christ
Edwin Crozier
August 28, 2005
AM Worship

Introduction:

Last week, while discussing my kids Bible class lessons I was intrigued. Tessa was learning about David coveting Uriah's wife. Ethan was learning about Ahab coveting Naboth's vineyard. If we just take a look back through history, we may not think much about David and his connection to Ahab. However, when we put them side by side we see that these two characters have a lot in common. So much so, that when we notice how differently God dealt with them, we are pressed to ask, "What's the difference?" We can learn some important lessons from comparing and contrasting these two men.

Discussion:

- I. Comparing David and Ahab.
 - A. Both David and Ahab coveted what belonged to another. (**II Samuel 11:2-3; I Kings 21:1-6**).
 - B. Both saw what they coveted from their palace (**II Samuel 11:2; I Kings 21:1**).
 - C. Both already had what they were coveting (**I Chronicles 3:1-3,9; I Kings 21:2**).
 - D. Both killed in order to have what they coveted (**II Samuel 11:14-17; I Kings 21:8-16, 19**).
 - E. A prophet was sent to both (**II Samuel 12:1ff; I Kings 21:17ff**).
 - F. A punishment is decreed upon the house of both (**II Samuel 12:10-12; I Kings 21:21-24**).
 - G. Both repented of their sins (**II Samuel 12:13; I Kings 21:27-29**).
 - H. Yet, on the judgment day which one of these two do you want to be? I want to be David. I don't want to be Ahab. From the general Bible picture of these two men, it will go well with David in judgment, but not so for Ahab. The question we ask is, with so many similarities regarding these sins, "What's the difference?"

- II. David was affected permanently by his repentance, Ahab was not.
 - A. There is no doubt that David's experience affected him permanently.
 1. We see how David handled the death of Bathsheba's first son in **II Samuel 12:15-23**. David was willing to submit to the consequences of his sin.
 2. But even beyond this, years later when David received the further punishment promised in **II Samuel 12:10-12**, David also accepted this humbly still leaning on God. When Absalom rebelled and nearly stole the kingdom from David, we see a telling experience in David's life. In **II Samuel 16:5-13**. David recognized this was the fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy. He accepted it humbly in hope that God would look upon him and return good to him.
 3. Additionally, a subtle but interesting point is to be made from **I Chronicles 3:5**. David and Bathsheba's third son was named after the prophet who pronounced judgment upon David for his sin, Nathan. This demonstrates David's relationship with God's messenger and also with God. David was a friend of God after his repentance.
 - B. Ahab, however, was not affected permanently.
 1. Ahab's great sin was idolatry (**I Kings 16:29-33**). Despite his repentance and humility before Jehovah in the case of Naboth's vineyard, Ahab was still an idolater who followed false prophets. In **I Kings 22:4-7**, Ahab and Jehoshaphat were going to war against the Arameans in Ramoth-Gilead. Jehoshaphat wanted to consult the Lord. So Ahab produced 400 prophets. However, when they were finished, Jehoshaphat recognized they were all idolatrous prophets. He still wanted to hear from one prophet of God.
 2. Additionally, unlike David, Ahab did not develop a friendship with God's true prophets. Therefore, he did not develop a relationship with God. **I Kings 22:8** demonstrates the kind of relationship Ahab had with God's prophets. Ahab himself said he hated the true prophet of God, Micaiah. Ahab had humbled himself before God for a certain crime. But he had not changed his life to a life of humility before God.
 3. There is no doubt Ahab's repentance was true in **I Kings 21:27-29**. God testifies to its sincerity. However, it was limited in scope. In time, Ahab returned to his rebellious ways.
 - C. Which one represents us: David or Ahab? Many people find themselves in the shoes of these two men, having committed a sin and face to face with the drastic consequences. The weight of their guilt comes crashing down on them. They humble themselves before God and seek forgiveness. However, after a time they have not developed a relationship with God. Therefore

they return to rebellion. We must humble ourselves completely before God, developing a relationship with Him, devoting ourselves to prayer and His word as the Christians in **Acts 2:42**.

III. David's sin was an incident in his life, Ahab's was a habit.

- A. God told Samuel that David was a man after His own heart in **I Samuel 13:14**. Additionally, we see the life of David from the time he demonstrated his faith in God with Goliath to the time he demonstrated his faith in God when Saul tried to kill him to the time he demonstrated faith in God when Absalom rebelled. David's life was filled with service to God. Yet, David, like all men, was not perfect. He sinned. The sin with Bathsheba and Uriah is a regrettable example. However, David's habit was to serve God; this sin was the exception.
- B. Ahab on the other hand was a sinner from the word go. The sin with Naboth was simply a part of his habit. The story of Ahab begins by saying he did more evil than all those kings who went before him in **I Kings 16:30**. This is repeated in **I Kings 21:25-26**. Yes, Ahab did some things right, as all people do. His repentance after Elijah rebuked him is an example of this. However, Ahab's habit was to sin, this righteousness in repentance was the exception.
- C. A good illustration I have used before is that of painting. There are two kinds of painters. There is the painter so called because that is his job and his life. But there is also the painter who is so called because he has painted before. Painting is not my life's work. Therefore, I am not a painter in that sense. However, I have painted and will probably paint again sometime. Therefore, I am a painter in the second sense. Ahab was a sinner in the first sense, it was his life's work. David was a sinner in the second sense. That is, he had sinned and would probably sin again but it wasn't his life's work. His habit was serving God.
- D. Paul talks about this in **Romans 6:1-18**. We are no longer slaves to sin and we must not present ourselves to sin as its slaves. Paul was dealing with an objection that encouraged Christians to strive to sin so God's grace would increase. Paul explained when Christians get back into their old habits and become slaves to sin again, God's grace doesn't increase, it leaves. John also refers to this, attacking the Gnostics in **I John 3:6-10; 5:18**. To understand this verse we must understand its context. John is teaching against a heresy which taught the physical body was fully sinful and could not be changed. Therefore, the mind simply had to be right with Christ but the body was going to sin no matter what. Therefore, a group of so-called "Christians" existed saying they were born of God but they were habitually engaging in all manner of sin claiming they couldn't help themselves. But John, demonstrating the fallacy of this teaching, says those born of God do not sin. The term translated "sin" in these texts refers to a habit of sinning, continual repetition of sin. This is exactly what the heretics were professing was righteous. This is exactly what Ahab did. John says Christians don't behave that way. He is not saying Christians never ever sin. In fact, in **I John 1:8-10**, John says we all sin. The question is where are we walking, in the light or in darkness, where is our continual path (**I John 1:6-7**).

Conclusion:

In their similarities, we are often like David and Ahab. We too have sinned. We too have faced the consequences of our sins. The question is, in their differences who will we be like: David or Ahab? Will we strive to grow as Peter encourages us in **II Peter 1:5-8** as David did, adding virtue and self-control, making serving God our habit or will we go back to Ahab's example allowing sin to be our habit in life?