

## **“a certain man” & the Gospel**

**“And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.”** 1 Kings 22:34 (see also 2 Chronicles 18:33)

Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* is one of the finest literary resources that any English speaker can have in their library after the King James Bible, and one reason is that he used the Bible to define a lot of the words. In one of his definitions under the word “*VENTURE*” he writes “*–at hazard; without seeing the end or mark; or without foreseeing the issue. A certain man drew a bow at a venture. 1 Kings xxii*”

Reading the verses previous to this will show that Ahab had teamed up with good king Jehoshaphat to go and fight the Syrians. Also, he had dressed like a normal line soldier rather than in his kingly robes, because the prophet Micaiah had just prophesied that he would be killed in this very battle. Ahab of course was not a Godly man, but he was probably “spooked” by that prophecy, and figured that he would up his chances of survival by blending in a little bit.

At some point in the battle, “**a certain man drew a bow at a venture**”, and the idea is that it was the type of shot made by the English longbowman in the Middle Ages. At the battles of Crecy and Agincourt in the Hundred Years War, along with many others, English Archers famously stopped French cavalry charges by loosing volley after volley of arrows upon the them as they charged. They would aim upwards to increase their range and allow the arrow to fall within the distant enemy formation (One French nobleman who survived the charge at Crecy said “it was as if it snowed,” since English arrows were normally fletched with white goose feathers), and as they got closer, the shots would become more and more accurate and hit home with greater armor puncturing velocity.

The “**certain man**” probably was not aiming at Ahab, but God surely was! The man was just being a good soldier by firing over into where the enemy was. He’s kind of like the “**sower**” which went forth to sow in Luke 8. He was just throwing stuff out there and hoping for the best.

When the arrow hit, it didn’t strike an armor plate directly, but imbedded in between the “**joints**” of it, exactly where it needed to be. On a military history note: I’ve heard people credit the Romans as the first to use plate armor that articulated for increased movement, blah, blah, blah, but right here, 850+ years before the “Gaiuan reforms” that brought on that kind of thing in the Roman army, we see armor with joints in it already. The ole King James is, yet again, hundreds of years ahead of the scholars.

The point is, that God directed that arrow to right where it needed to go in order to fulfill “**the word of the LORD.**” Isaiah 55v11 says that the word of God “**shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent**

it.”

Furthermore, when Ahab was hit, he KNEW it immediately! Many people in high stress situations have stories of not realizing that they'd been badly hurt til after all the excitement was over. I've talked to many a war veteran that has mentioned that. However, Ahab realized it right when it happened and told his chariot man that **“I am wounded.”**

King Agrippa had a similar realization after hearing Paul speak, and said **“Almost thou persuades me to be a Christian.”** (Acts 26v28) He was under conviction so hard that he admitted it in front of a whole courtroom full of people!

As Church age Christians, there are some ways that we should be like this **“certain man.”**

He had an offensive weapon designed to pierce. We have **“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”** (Eph 6v17) which can pierce **“even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”** (Heb 4v12)

He was doing his job by “sowing” his arrows out onto the battlefield. We need to **“preach the word”** (2 Tim 4v2) and be **“stedast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,”** (1 Cor 15v58) and follow Paul's example of constantly **“Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence”** (Acts 28v31)

Also, we need to pray and ask God to allow his word to “land” somewhere that it will accomplish his work, and that whoever is “hit” by it will respond to the Holy Spirit and **“call upon the name of the Lord”** and be saved.

Now, if the Lord has already provided you with a “target of opportunity”, then by all means do like Ehud did to Eglon and bury your **“sword of the Spirit”** right into their mid section. Tell them what God said about sin and hell and salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, but in the absence of that, let's be like that **“certain man,”** and sow God's word faithfully and let the Lord accomplish what He pleases with it.