

1 Kings 22
March 16, 2025

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: What vulnerabilities do leaders face when they surround themselves with only yes-men and women? [Let people engage]

Transition: Today's text is filled with interesting variables. We have 400 apostate prophets who act as yes-men to Ahab; we have Ahab whose feelings have been hurt for the last three years because a more powerful king has humiliated and annexed off some pieces of land. We have a true prophet who unveils that God purposely sent "lying spirits" to the 400 prophets – and interestingly – Ahab was self-aware enough to know they were just telling him what he wanted to hear. The list goes on! Let's read the text and see what truths we can squeeze out of it. Let's begin.

BOOK:

Micaiah Prophecies Against Ahab

22 For three years there was no war between Aram and Israel. ² But in the third year Jehoshaphat king of Judah went down to see the king of Israel. ³ The king of Israel had said to his officials, "Don't you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us and yet we are doing nothing to retake it from the king of Aram?"

⁴ So he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." ⁵ But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "First seek the counsel of the Lord."

⁶ So the king of Israel brought together the prophets—about four hundred men—and asked them, "Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

"Go," they answered, "for the Lord will give it into the king's hand."

⁷ But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?"

⁸ The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."

"The king should not say that," Jehoshaphat replied.

⁹ So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah at once."

¹⁰ Dressed in their royal robes, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor by the entrance of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them. ¹¹ Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made iron horns and he declared, "This is what the Lord says: 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.'"

¹² All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. "Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious," they said, "for the Lord will give it into the king's hand."

¹³ The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, "Look, as one man the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs and speak favorably."

¹⁴ But Micaiah said, "As surely as the Lord lives, I can tell him only what the Lord tells me."

¹⁵ When he arrived, the king asked him, “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?”

“Attack and be victorious,” he answered, “for the Lord will give it into the king’s hand.”

¹⁶ The king said to him, “How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?”

¹⁷ Then Micaiah answered, “I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, ‘These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.’”

¹⁸ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Didn’t I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?”

¹⁹ Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. ²⁰ And the Lord said,

‘Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?’

“One suggested this, and another that. ²¹ Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will entice him.’

²² “‘By what means?’ the Lord asked.

“‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said.

“‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the Lord. ‘Go and do it.’

²³ “So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you.”

²⁴ Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. “Which way did the spirit from (or Spirit of) the Lord go when he went from me to speak to you?” he asked.

²⁵ Micaiah replied, “You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room.”

²⁶ The king of Israel then ordered, “Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon the ruler of the city and to Joash the king’s son ²⁷ and say, ‘This is what the king says: Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely.’”

²⁸ Micaiah declared, “If you ever return safely, the Lord has not spoken through me.” Then he added, “Mark my words, all you people!”

Ahab Killed at Ramoth Gilead

²⁹ So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. ³⁰ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes.” So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

³¹ Now the king of Aram had ordered his thirty-two chariot commanders, “Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel.” ³² When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, “Surely this is the king of Israel.” So they turned to attack him, but when Jehoshaphat cried out, ³³ the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel and stopped pursuing him.

³⁴ But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told his chariot driver, “Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I’ve been wounded.” ³⁵ All day long the battle raged, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans. The blood from his wound ran onto the floor of the chariot, and that evening he died.

³⁶ As the sun was setting, a cry spread through the army: “Every man to his town; everyone to his land!”

³⁷ So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried him there. ³⁸ They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria (where the prostitutes bathed), and the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the Lord had declared.

³⁹ As for the other events of Ahab's reign, including all he did, the palace he built and inlaid with ivory, and the cities he fortified, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? ⁴⁰ Ahab rested with his fathers. And Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king.

Jehoshaphat King of Judah

⁴¹ Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king of Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. ⁴² Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³ In everything he walked in the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. The high places, however, were not removed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there. ⁴⁴ Jehoshaphat was also at peace with the king of Israel.

⁴⁵ As for the other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, the things he achieved and his military exploits, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ⁴⁶ He rid the land of the rest of the male shrine prostitutes who remained there even after the reign of his father Asa. ⁴⁷ There was then no king in Edom; a deputy ruled.

⁴⁸ Now Jehoshaphat built a fleet of trading ships (ships of Tarshish) to go to Ophir for gold, but they never set sail—they were wrecked at Ezion Geber. ⁴⁹ At that time Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my men sail with your men," but Jehoshaphat refused.

⁵⁰ Then Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the city of David his father. And Jehoram his son succeeded him.

Ahaziah King of Israel

⁵¹ Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. ⁵² He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, because he walked in the ways of his father and mother and in the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. ⁵³ He served and worshiped Baal and provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger, just as his father had done.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

God can use even the false prophet to accomplish his purpose. Just as God can use heathen nations to punish those who have sinned; so when false prophets lead false men astray, the will of God can be brought to pass by them.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1 Kings 22)*. Victor Books.

III. Ahab's Defeat and Death (22)

Ahab did not defeat Syria when he had the opportunity, so the enemy came back to attack him and finally kill him. Similarly, King Saul had failed to destroy the Amalekites, and one of their young men killed him. Since Ahab's daughter was married to King Jehoshaphat's son (2 Chron. 21:1–7), his alliance with Ahab for this battle was not surprising. Note that King Jehoshaphat wanted to know God's will about the battle, so they inquired of the prophets that ministered to Ahab. Of course, the heathen prophets in their blindness catered to the desires of the two kings and promised victory. But their promises sounded hollow; Jehoshaphat wanted to hear from a prophet of the Lord. Micaiah was the only one available (and he was a prisoner), so they sent for him and asked for his message. In holy sarcasm, Micaiah echoed the promises of the heathen prophets, but the king knew he was pretending. Is it not strange the way the lost want to hear from the Lord, but yet they do not want to hear the truth and obey it? Micaiah told the truth: the heathen prophets were being used to tell lies, for King Ahab would die in the battle and Israel would be scattered. What did the faithful prophet receive for his ministry? Bread and water in the prison. But he had been faithful to the Lord, and that is all that counted.

Ahab thought to avoid death by disguising himself, for the soldiers would seek to kill the king first. (Paul follows this idea in Eph. 6 when he cautions us not to fight against flesh and blood, but to battle against Satan through prayer and the Word. Once you have defeated the king, the rest is easy.) Jehoshaphat went into battle in his royal robes, and the Lord protected him, but Ahab in his disguise was slain. Verse 34 indicates that the soldier shot the arrow without even aiming, yet the Lord directed it to its proper target. When the judgment of the Lord comes, no devices or disguises will protect the sinner. Israel lost the battle and also lost her king.

The king was buried at Samaria; the bloody chariot was washed at the pool; and the dogs licked the blood, as God had promised (20:42 and 21:19). Ahab's wicked son Ahaziah reigned in his place, and the nation continued in its sinful course.

King Ahab was a great soldier who could have led Israel to victory and peace had he followed the Lord in truth, but his alliance with Baal worship, and the evil influence of his godless wife, brought him defeat. Ahab experienced the goodness of God in the military victories, yet refused to submit himself to the Law. He humbled himself outwardly when judgment was announced, and even then received a "stay of execution," but his shallow repentance did not last. The three and a half years of drought and the great demonstration of God's glory on Mt. Carmel did not soften his hard heart. He had "sold himself to do evil," and he would not repent. He heard one of the greatest prophets of OT history, Elijah, and yet did not repent. His twenty-two years of reign only led the nation farther away from God.

Constable, C.L. (1985). *1 Kings*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 533-536) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

6. Ahab's death (22:1–40)

a. *Ahab's alliance with Jehoshaphat (22:1–4)*

22:1–4. For three years after the battle of Aphek (cf. 1 Kings 20:26–34) **there was no war between** the Israelites and the Arameans. However, **in the third year** (853 b.c.), shortly after Ahab and Ben-Hadad had fought Shalmaneser at the Battle of Qarqar, Ahab decided that he needed to **retake** the important city of **Ramoth in Gilead** from the Arameans who had taken it from Israel earlier. Ramoth was one of the chief cities of the tribe of Gad, 28 miles east of the Jordan and 15 miles south of the Sea of Kinnereth, almost directly east of Jezreel. To field an army large enough to defeat the Arameans Ahab asked **Jehoshaphat** the **king of Judah** to ally with him against Ben-Hadad II. **Jehoshaphat** agreed for political reasons though he should not have done so for spiritual reasons; he was a godly king, faithful to the Lord.

b. Ahab's prophets' counsel (22:5–12)

22:5–7. **Jehoshaphat** wanted divine counsel from **the Lord** before he and Ahab embarked on their mission. Ahab apparently could not have cared less. But to satisfy Jehoshaphat, Ahab called for **the prophets, about 400** of them. These were evidently prophets of the Lord; Baal prophets would have been unacceptable to Jehoshaphat. But they were apostate prophets. They had no concern about obtaining and relating the true word of the Lord. Their desire was to give their king the kind of advice they thought he wanted to hear. This would please him, and he would favor them. Their answer to Ahab's question somehow led **Jehoshaphat** to believe that they did not have the mind of the Lord. So he requested **a prophet** true to **the Lord** of whom they could **inquire** (cf. 2 Kings 3:11).

22:8–12. Ahab replied that there was **one man** of God remaining whom they could contact. However, that one always prophesied evil for Ahab and for that reason Ahab said he hated **him**. Obviously, Ahab was more concerned about feeling good than he was about knowing the truth. **Micaiah**, like Elijah, was one of the comparatively few faithful prophets in Israel in that day. Urged on by Jehoshaphat's continuing interest in hearing from **Micaiah**, Ahab sent for him. Perhaps Micaiah lived in or near **Samaria** where this conversation took place. **The threshing floor** was usually an elevated area; it would have been a good place for Ahab and **Jehoshaphat** to prepare themselves for battle. **The gate of** the city was the most popular place to assemble, so a large crowd was gathered including the 400 **prophets**. One of these prophets, **Zedekiah** (cf. v. 24), had even fashioned some **horns** out of **iron** and claimed blasphemously that God had told him that the two allied kings with the horns would **gore the Arameans** to destruction. With this prediction **all the other prophets** agreed, adding their own optimistic promises of victory.

c. Micaiah's prophecy (22:13–28)

22:13–14. **The messenger who** was sent to get **Micaiah** urged him to **agree with** the **other prophets in giving an optimistic prediction**. But **Micaiah** told him that he would utter whatever words **the Lord** gave him regardless of what **others** might say. Like Elijah, Micaiah was prepared to stand alone.

22:15–16. **The king**, probably Ahab the host, **asked ... Micaiah** the same question he had asked the other prophets (v. 6). Micaiah seems to have been familiar with this procedure; he had probably been through it several times before. His reply was sarcastic, though probably not delivered in a sarcastic tone which would have been inappropriate for a man of his character. Ahab recognized at once what **Micaiah** was doing. His own reply was equally sarcastic. He had probably never told Micaiah to **swear to tell him nothing but the truth** before, as he did not need to. But Ahab's saying that probably sounded good.

22:17–18. The time for sarcasm was over. **Micaiah** related the burden of the Lord in all its devastating simplicity and force. Micaiah said he had seen, perhaps in a vision, **all Israel scattered over the hills of Gilead like sheep without a shepherd**, wandering and in need of leadership. **The Lord** had told the prophet that **these** sheep had **no master**, obviously a reference to Ahab. After the shepherd would be killed in battle the sheep would return **home** without being pursued by the enemy, Aram. Ahab reacted to this sober warning offhandedly (v. 18; cf. v. 8), unwilling to consider it seriously.

22:19–23. **Micaiah** proceeded to explain the rest of what God had shown him, not about the battle but about the advice both kings had been receiving from the 400 prophets. He called on the two kings to **hear the word of the Lord**. Micaiah **saw ... the host of heaven**, the angelic armies of God, assembled **around** God's heavenly **throne**. Whether the conversation Micaiah then described (vv. 20–23) actually took place in heaven or whether it was a revelation given in anthropomorphic terms to help Micaiah and his audience visualize what was taking place on the threshing floor before them, the point was clear to all: The 400 **prophets** spoke with a **lying spirit** (vv. 22–23) to deceive, and to lead Ahab to **disaster** in battle and **to his death** (v. 20). Micaiah, however, spoke the truth. The Lord had apparently permitted a “lying spirit” (i.e., a demon) to speak through the 400 prophets as a means of bringing **Ahab** to his death.

22:24–25. **Zedekiah** (cf. v. 11) certainly understood Micaiah's message as did everyone else. A slap **in the face** was a great insult (cf. Job 16:10; Lam. 3:30; Micah 5:1), greater than it is today. The false prophet brazenly or innocently claimed that he had not invented his prophecy himself but that it had been given to him by the Lord.

Micaiah did not need to argue about whose prophecy had come **from the Lord** and whose had come from the lying spirit; time would tell. He was not trying to scare people when there was no real cause for fear. Zedekiah would **find out** who had the true word from the Lord when he fled **to hide in an inner room** (i.e., after Ahab had been killed the false prophets would flee in terror).

22:26–28. Ahab's reaction evidences the blindness and folly that overtakes those who disregard the Word of the Lord. Rather than repenting, as he had done previously (21:27), now hardened in sin to the point of insensibility, Ahab ordered that **Micaiah** be given to **Amon**, the **city** mayor, **and to Joash, the king's son**. “King's son” is apparently a title of a royal official and is not to be taken as the literal son of Ahab (cf. 2 Chron. 28:7; Jer. 36:26; 38:6). Ahab told Amon and Joash to **put** the prophet who had warned him of impending doom **in prison**. **Micaiah** had the final word, however, and it was another gracious but strong warning for Ahab, indicating that the king would not **return** from battle **safely**. The prophet also called on **all** present to remember his **words** for they would prove that **the Lord** had **spoken through** him when his prophecy came to pass.

d. The battle of Ramoth Gilead (22:29–40)

22:29–33. Despite Micaiah's warning Ahab, **the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat**, his ally, **went up to Ramoth Gilead** to face Ben-Hadad II, **the king of Aram**. Perhaps Ahab suggested his plan to **enter the battle ... disguised** (probably as a regular soldier or officer) out of fear for his life in view of what Micaiah had said.

Jehoshaphat did not realize that this tactic would put him in greater danger until the battle began. He may not have been aware of Ben-Hadad's anger against Ahab that led the king of Aram to concentrate his attack on **the king of Israel**. Ben-Hadad may have wanted to kill Ahab alone because he knew that without their king the soldiers of Israel would not fight effectively.

Probably the fact that Ahab was now breaking his treaty with Ben-Hadad (cf. 20:34) angered the Aramean king too. Dressed in his royal attire **Jehoshaphat** became the target of the whole Aramean army. Under attack he **cried out** something that told the Arameans **he was not** the man they sought. Perhaps he cried out to God as well as to the soldiers since he trusted in and prayed to the Lord.

22:34–36. The manner in which Ahab was fatally wounded is one of many examples in Scripture of God using an incident that would have been regarded as accidental to accomplish His purpose. Ahab was injured by an arrow shot **at random**. The man who shot the arrow did not knowingly aim it at the chink in the king's **armor**, but God directed him and guided the fatal missile to its mark. The king's **chariot** was large enough to accommodate Ahab as he sat **propped up in** it to watch the battle until sunset.

The reference to Ahab's **blood** running down **onto the floor of his chariot** sets the stage for the later word about the fulfillment of the prophecy of Ahab's death (v. 38). The battle broke up when Ahab died; Ben-Hadad had achieved his objective as the Israelites could not take Ramoth Gilead.

22:37–38. The body of Ahab was returned **to Samaria** where he was **buried**. Had he not repented earlier (21:27) Ahab would not have been buried at all (21:28–29). Ahab's **chariot** was then driven around to an out-of-the-way **pool** where it was **washed**. Ahab was despised by God for his wickedness. The story of Ahab concludes with his **blood** being desecrated in the company of Samaria's despised **prostitutes** and **dogs**. Ahab died as God had predicted he would (20:42; 21:19, 21).

22:39–40. In excavating Samaria archeologists discovered more than 200 **ivory** figures, panels, and plaques in one storeroom. Ahab used large quantities of ivory to beautify his **palace** in various ways. He also **fortified** several **cities in Israel**.

In addition to the projects just mentioned, Ahab ruled capably in spite of the gross spiritual apostasy that characterized his administration. He was generally successful militarily because of his own native ability and God's mercy on Israel. His alliance with Judah under Jehoshaphat began the first real period of peace between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms since the monarchy had split and it lasted about 30 years until the reign of Jehu began in 841. But in spite of Ahab's other accomplishments his building a Baal altar and temple and encouraging Baal worship (16:32–33) weakened Israel as never before.

L. Jehoshaphat's good reign in Judah (22:41–50)

22:41–43a. Asa's son, **Jehoshaphat**, began his reign in Judah in 873 b.c. as coregent with his father. This coregency existed because of Asa's poor health (15:23) and it continued for three years until Asa's death in 870 b.c. when Jehoshaphat became sole ruler. This was the first instance of coregency since Solomon had ruled jointly with David for a brief time. **Jehoshaphat** was **king for 25 years** altogether (873–848 b.c.). He was one of Judah's eight good kings and one of its four reformers like **his father Asa**.

22:43b–44. According to 2 Chronicles 17:6 Jehoshaphat removed **the high places**, but 1 Kings 22:43 and 2 Chronicles 20:33 indicate that he did not remove them. Apparently, he did, but when the people restored them he did not again obliterate the restored high places. Other kings of Judah who did not remove the high places were Joash (2 Kings 12:3), Amaziah (2 Kings 14:4), Azariah (2 Kings 15:4), and Jotham (2 Kings 15:35). Ahaz sacrificed at the high places (2 Kings 16:4), perhaps ones he restored. Those were then removed by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:4), rebuilt by Manasseh (2 Kings 21:3), and demolished again by Josiah (2 Kings 23:8, 13, 15, 19).

As mentioned previously (cf. comments on 1 Kings 22:39–40), Jehoshaphat and Ahab united in a treaty which resulted in **peace** between Judah and **Israel** during his reign. Unfortunately, this treaty involved the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter Athaliah who followed Jezebel's example and caused Judah problems later (cf. 2 Kings 11).

22:45–47. **Jehoshaphat's** achievements and attitudes are more fully expounded in 2 Chronicles 17–20. These included ordering the teaching of the Law of Moses throughout Judah. God miraculously delivered Judah from the united armies of Moab, Ammon, and **Edom** in response to the king's prayers and his obedience to the Lord. He was a strong ruler whose favor Philistia and Arabia courted. Jehoshaphat instituted many judicial reforms in Judah also. The writer of Kings noted his purge of the remaining **male shrine prostitutes** (cf. 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12) in particular.

22:48–50. As a result of the unstable political situation in Edom in his day (cf. v. 47)

Jehoshaphat was able to build **a fleet of trading ships ... at Ezion Geber** on the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba with Israel's king **Ahaziah**, Ahab's eldest **son** (cf. 2 Chron. 20:36). The plan was to bring back **gold** from **Ophir**, in southwestern Arabia (cf. 1 Kings 9:28; 10:11) as Solomon had done. But in some way the fleet was **wrecked** and never fulfilled its mission.

Jehoshaphat had **refused** to let Ahaziah's **men sail with** his own. This venture resulted in failure and frustration for Jehoshaphat as did all his other joint efforts with Israel.

Jehoshaphat's son **Jehoram** began reigning as coregent with his father in 853 b.c. When Jehoshaphat died in 848 b.c., Jehoram continued to reign till 841.

M. The beginning of Ahaziah's evil reign in Israel (22:51–53)

22:51–53. A short summary of Ahaziah's reign concludes 1 Kings, but the events of his rule follow in 2 Kings.

Ahaziah ... of Israel began his reign of **two** official **years** (one actual year) in 853 b.c. and he ruled until 852, during Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah. Ahaziah was the elder **son of Ahab**. Since Ahaziah had no son his brother Joram (also called Jehoram) succeeded him when he died. His **mother** was Jezebel. Ahaziah followed his parents' **evil ways** and those of **Jeroboam**. **Baal** worship continued in Israel under his protection and encouragement.

Mathews, K. A. (1998). The Historical Books. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (p. 144). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Micaiah's Prophecy and Ahab's Death (22:1–53). A monument of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III tells how he fought the united armies of Ahab and Ben-Hadad at Qarqar on the Orontes River in 853 b.c. (see 20:34). The result was probably a stalemate. When the Assyrians retreated, Ben-Hadad renewed his hostilities by capturing Ramoth Gilead near the border of Israel (see 2 Kgs. 10:32–33). Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, joined Ahab to fight the Arameans. Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with the prophets at Ahab's court and insisted on hearing from the prophet of the Lord. Micaiah, brought from Ahab's prison, predicted that Ahab would be killed in defeat. Ahab ridiculed his prophecy. But Micaiah told him how in a vision he had seen God send a deceiving spirit to mislead Ahab's counselors.

This vision does not mean that Micaiah believed God was a liar. This vision was a pictorial way to explain that God had permitted the false prophets to mislead Ahab to effect His divine judgment.

Ahab went into the battle disguised, but God found him through a Bowman's arrow! Ahab's bloody chariot was washed in Samaria, and his blood was licked by dogs, just as the word of the Lord had said (see 21:19).

Jehoshaphat's twenty-five-year reign continued the religious reforms of his father Asa. Meanwhile, Ahaziah followed his father Ahab by worshiping Baal. His two-year reign was shortened by the judgment of God (see 2 Kgs. 1:1–18).

Theological and Ethical Significance. First Kings, like Deuteronomy, warns against forgetting God in times of economic prosperity. Having known material abundance, many today have left God out of their lives as the ancient Israelites did. Having abandoned faith, many have compromised their values to those of pagan society. The collapse of Israelite society warns of the consequences of sin.

First Kings reveals the power of the word of God in shaping history. The courage of those, like Elijah, whose hearts were captive to the word of God challenges today's Christians to let their presence be felt. After the prophet Micaiah had seen Yahweh's throne room, he was not impressed by King Ahab's threats. Those of us who have experienced the height and depth and breadth of God's love in Christ Jesus should be bold to speak God's word of judgment and grace to our world.

The history of Israel and Judah is the story of a people's failure to fulfill God's purpose for them. God, however, is faithful in spite of human failure. Though we are called to obedience, our hope lies in God's grace. We see this grace most clearly in Jesus Christ, "who as to his human nature was a descendant of David" (Rom. 1:3).

Tatum, S. L. (1972). 1 Kings. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (pp. 206-207). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

The Death of Ahab (1 Kings 22:1–40)

The passage—After three years of peace in Israel, Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, came to visit Ahab. They discussed the captivity of Ramoth-Gilead by the Syrians. They made an alliance to go together to capture it. Jehoshaphat said, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."

They asked their prophets if they should go up to battle. Four hundred who claimed to be prophets of God encouraged them to go to war. This is what they wanted to hear. When the prophet Micaiah heard of the prophecy he was encouraged to agree. He replied that he must speak only as God directed. His first answer, however, did not agree with the other prophets. We later learn that he wanted Ahab to go to his death. Ahab suspected this and insisted on the truth. Micaiah then prophesied truthfully that Israel would be scattered like sheep. He said God had caused the four hundred prophets to lie to entice Ahab into battle where he would die. Micaiah was put in prison for his prophecy.

Ahab went into battle disguised as a commoner. Jehoshaphat rode in the royal chariot. The Syrians were looking for Ahab to kill him and almost killed Jehoshaphat by mistake. When they recognized that he was not Ahab, they let him go. Ahab, however, was wounded by an arrow released at random. He died from the wound and his blood covered the bottom of his chariot. As they were washing it, the dogs licked up his blood as Elijah had prophesied. The death of

Jehoshaphat is also related in verses 45–50. His reign is more fully covered in 2 Chronicles 17–20.

Special points—The author of the books of First and Second Kings seemed to be more interested in recording the history of Israel, while the author of the Chronicles gave emphasis to the record of the prophets and kings of Judah. This explains the great amount of space devoted to Ahab and the little to Jehoshaphat. The horns of iron used by Zedekiah in verse 11 were symbolic of the power he was claiming for Ahab and Jehoshaphat in battle.

Truth for today- God can use even the false prophet to accomplish his purpose. Just as God can use heathen nations to punish those who have sinned; so when false prophets lead false men astray, the will of God can be brought to pass by them. Be assured that your sins will find you out. Every item of the prophecy of Elijah concerning the death of Ahab for the murder of Naboth was carried out in detail.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Kings 22). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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