

Commentary on First Kings chapter 22, by Chuck Smith 10.12.22

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October memory verse Matthew 1:21

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

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So they went for three years without war between Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat who was the king of the southern tribes Judah, he came up to visit Ahab. And the king of Israel [that would be Ahab] said to his servants, Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? So he said to Jehoshaphat, Will you go with me to battle at Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king, I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses are as your horses. So Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, Let's inquire of the Lord and see if we're to go to battle. So the king of Israel gathered his prophets together, and he said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. So Jehoshaphat said, Is there [the king from Judah said] you have any other prophet that we can ask ([1Ki 21:26-29](#); [22:1-7](#))?

So he said there is this one guy Micaiah but that guy never gives me a decent prophecy. He's always saying something evil. And he said, "Oh, don't say that. Let's call him in and see what he has to say." In the meantime this one prophet Zedekiah made some iron horns and he put them on his head and he went running around with these iron horns on his head and he said,

Thus saith the LORD, With these shall you push the Syrians, until you have consumed them. And all the prophets said, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: the LORD is going to deliver it in the king's hands. So the messenger who went over to get Micaiah spake unto him, said ([1Ki 22:11-13](#)),

Now look, all of the other guys have given him good prophecies so come on in and say something good. Don't lay a heavy one on him, you know.

So "the prophet answered, he said," As the LORD lives, [I'm only going to tell him and I can only tell him what the LORD tells me to tell him. And] what the Lord says, that's what I'm going to speak. So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead or shall we forbear ([1Ki 22:14-15](#))?

And no doubt he answered him in a very sardonic, sarcastic way so that Ahab realized that the guy was, you know, just saying what they wanted to believe.

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Go, and prosper: for the LORD is going to deliver it into the hand of the king ([1Ki 22:15](#)).

And he said it in such a way that the king knew that the guy wasn't sincere.

And he said, How many times have I told you don't tell me anything that is not true in the name of the LORD ([1Ki 22:16](#))?

He said, "All right. You want to know the truth."

I saw all of Israel scattered on the hills, like sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace ([1Ki 22:17](#)).

In other words, he's prophesying the death of Ahab, "the shepherd over the people. The people are all scattered over the hills because their shepherd has been destroyed."

And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Didn't I tell you that this guy gave me a bad one ([1Ki 22:18](#))? He never says anything good.

And the prophet Micaiah went on to say, Hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and the host of heaven was standing by him on his right hand, on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he might fall, be killed at Ramothgilead? And one suggested this and another suggested another thing. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, How? And he said, [I will go forth, and be a lying spirit in his mouth and in the mouth of all.] I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets. And he said, That will work. Go ahead ([1Ki 22:19-22](#)).

Very interesting thing. Micaiah's vision of heaven. "I saw the throne of God, all of the host standing around God." God said, "How we going to get Ahab over there to Ramothgilead that he might fall there?" And the angels were suggesting different things until one spirit came up and said, "I've got an idea."

"What is it?" "Well, I'll be a lying spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets."

The Lord said, "That will work. Go ahead."

Why would God commission a lying spirit? It doesn't seem, you know, quite right. Something that we don't often consider is that in a sense, Satan is a servant of God. He is serving God's purposes. That is why God has allowed him to exist. That's why God has allowed him freedom. He is acting in the sphere of his own free will, but yet the controls are ultimately held by God. We have made a tragic mistake in our thinking processes as we think of Satan as an opposite of God. Satan is not an opposite of God.

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God is an eternal, omnipotent, self-existent being, whereas Satan is a created being and is in the rank of angels. So if you're looking for an opposite of Satan, you'd have to look at maybe Michael, one of the archangels. There you would have opposites. But in no way is he an opposite of God. No way does he rank even near God. He is existing under the total sphere of God, and though he is opposed to God, he is not an opposite of God in any sense of being an opposite to God Who is God, the eternal, omnipotent God. Satan is definitely limited in his understanding, in his abilities, in his powers.

He comes and the false prophets give to Ahab these lies, encourage him to go against Ramothgilead. So Ahab then ordered the true prophet Micaiah, said, "Put him in prison until I return in peace." And he said, "If you return at all, then I'm not a prophet of God."

So they headed for Ramothgilead. Jehoshaphat the king from Judah was going with Ahab. And as they were getting to Ramothgilead against the Syrians, Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Hey, you take my chariot and all. I'm going to put on just a common garb. I want to get into the battle."

And so he took off his king's robes in order that he might just really get into the battle himself. He was just sort of thirsty for a little excitement. And so he left his chariot, the king's chariot, got in another chariot and so that he could get into the thick of the battle.

And in the meantime, the Syrian commander said to his fellows, "Now look, all we want is the king. So let's concentrate and get hold of Ahab. And if we kill him, then, you know, the rest of the people will be so demoralized that that's all we have to do."

So they saw Jehoshaphat sitting in Ahab's chariot with Ahab's robe on. And so they figured it was Ahab so they started to pursue the one chariot until Jehoshaphat started going on the lamb, you know. And these guys were chasing him because they weren't really concentrating on the battle, just on the one guy. That's all they wanted. And when they finally got up to him, they realized that it wasn't Ahab, that it was Jehoshaphat.

But, and of course, this is an interesting scripture. A certain man drew a bow at a venture ([1Ki 22:34](#)). In other words, he just, you know, let go, let fly an arrow in the direction of their enemy. And actually the arrow hit Ahab, and he turned to the driver of his chariot and he said, Turn and carry me out of the battle; because I am wounded. And the battle increased that day: and the king was propped up in the chariot against the Syrians, but he died at the evening time: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a proclamation throughout all of the host about the time the sun was setting, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according to the word of the LORD which he spake. Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, all that he did, the ivory house that he had made, all of the cities which he built, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ([1Ki 22:34-39](#)).

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So we come to the close of Ahab, and his son Ahaziah reigned in his place. Now Jehoshaphat and now shift gears. You remember last week we told you we had two kingdoms, the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. So meanwhile, back in the north, back in the northern kingdom. Now we spent a lot of time up in the north, not because of Ahab but because of Elijah. Really he became the central character of the story. And so a lot of print is given to Ahab only because of the fact that Elijah was a prominent character during this particular period of their history.

But back in the southern kingdom where the descendants of David are on the throne, Jehoshaphat who was the son of Asa [who was a good king for the most part] began to reign over Judah in the fourth year that Ahab was reigning in Israel ([1Ki 22:41](#)).

Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he began to reign; he reigned for twenty-five years. And he walked in all of the ways of Asa his father [who I said was a fairly good king]; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places [for pagan worship] were not taken away; for the people offered burnt incense yet there in the high places. And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel ([1Ki 22:42-44](#)).

You remember he had come up and was invited by Ahab to go in battle against Ramothgilead. So there was an alliance between the two kings.

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, the wars and so forth, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the king of Judah ([1Ki 22:45](#)). So we will get that story when we get into Chronicles because we do have the chronicles of the kings of Judah, though we do not have the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land. And there was then no king in Edom: but a deputy ([1Ki 22:46-47](#)). That is, in the area south of the Dead Sea and on the far bank, there is no king, only a governor over the land.

Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken up [no doubt in the storm] at Eziongeber. And so Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with your servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not. And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. Now Ahaziah who was the son of Ahab [back up in the north] began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, and he reigned for two years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, he walked in the ways of his father Ahab, and in the ways of his mother [that wicked Jezebel]: And he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger Jehovah, the God of Israel, according to all that his father had done ([1Ki 22:48-53](#)).