

1 Kings 21-22 - The Repentance of King Ahab

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1 Kings, chapter 21. For the last few chapters, we've been focusing in on the kings of Israel. You might say, well, duh, isn't that what Kings is all about?

Well, you have to remember there's been a split. There was a split in the kingdom, and the northern area is called Israel. The southern kingdom is called Judah, and they have their own kingdoms, their own monarchy that goes along with those kingdoms.

The Book of 1 Kings, 1 and 2 Kings deals with all of the kings from Israel and from Judah, whereas 1 Chronicles deals with the kings of Judah and 2 Chronicles. And so, we're going, we've been bouncing back and forth dealing with kings of Israel, kings of Judah, kings of Israel, kings of Judah.

But we've been on the kings of Israel the northern kingdom for some time now because we've been dealing, in much more detail, with the ministry of 2 prophets one of which hasn't really risen yet in our text, although we heard of him last week, and that's Elisha.

We're still in the ministry of Elijah and during the prophetic ministries of those 2 men we seem to kind of hone in on the kings of Israel who are reigning during that time and the king who is on the throne right now is a man by the name of Ahab who is married to a woman named Jezebel. Jezebel is not an Israelite, she's a Phoenician princess. And she has been very instrumental in bringing Baal worship into the land of Israel.

I don't know if you've ever done any research or looked up. It's not something you probably would do unless you had to, about what Baal worship is all about. Baal worship was tied to fertility.

And I've often thought to myself, what's the big draw by all these pagan religions? I mean, why, when these people had the option of worshipping YAHWEH, the Lord God, and worshipping these pagan gods, what's the draw to worshipping these pagan gods? I mean, why? Why worship a pagan god?

Well, if you look into Baal worship, you find out why, what the draw was, and it started off kind of just pertaining mostly to fertility of their crops and things like that and Baal would be the one who would give them great crops.

Okay, but you think well what else, well the whole fertility thing stretched into other areas of life including sexuality. You know what the big draw with Baal worship was? It's the big draw with people today. It's sensuality. It's sex. It's what Hollywood is focused on in movies, television shows, and so forth. It's all about sex and it's interesting, Satan has very few new tricks up his sleeve. He just finds new ways of presenting them.

And sex might be presented in a form of pagan worship, or it might just be presented like it is today, as just what it is. The sensuality of living. Doesn't really matter it's all the same stuff. It's the same draw. That's what was so big about Baal worship. It appeared, or it appealed rather to people's sensuality, so, there you go. That's why Baal worship took over in such a powerful way in the kingdom of Israel.

Now, we're coming to the end of Ahab's reign in Israel. God has already prophesied. We ended last week with a prophecy given against Ahab that God was going to wipe out his house and yet that hasn't yet seemed to have brought Ahab to his knees.

Let's begin reading here in chapter 21 and it introduces us to yet another character. It says, *“Now Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.” (ESV)*

Now, when it says *“king of Samaria,”* remember, Samaria was, at this time, a city, and it was the place where the king reigned. That was, they would call that was the royal city of the nation of Israel. But it is apparent from the text here that the kings also had a palace in Jezreel, which is north, and next to the palace there was this beautiful vineyard owned by a man by the name of Naboth. And we're just simply told that he had this vineyard next to the palace.

And it tells us in verse 2, *“And after this Ahab said to Naboth, ‘Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house, and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money.’”* ³ *But Naboth said to Ahab, “The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.”*

Alright, now stop there for just a moment. It sounds like Ahab is being fairly fair about this thing at this particular point. He says, hey, you've got this

vineyard, it's right, I can see it right outside my window. How about you just give me your vineyard and I'll find you some different land, better land or I'll pay you for it. Sounds like a fairly decent real estate transaction.

You'll notice the strong response of Naboth. He says, "*The Lord forbid that I should give it to you.*" And he refers to it as, "*the inheritance of my fathers.*"

And you think, boy, that's a pretty strong response for somebody who's just been offered money for his property. I mean, if somebody offers you money for a piece of property you own, you might say no thanks, I'm not interested in selling. Or, well, why don't you sweeten the offer a little bit and we'll talk. I mean, that's some of the things you might say if somebody wanted to buy your property. I've never been offered money for a piece of property where I responded to the person, the Lord forbid that I should sell it to you.

And the reason is Naboth is actually following the word of the Lord, even in this pagan society. You see the nation of Israel had been given land, parceled out through Joshua when they came into the land and conquered it and displaced the Canaanites. And the land was given to people in the nation of Israel, according to their tribal allotments, and that land was never to be sold. If it was ever sold to pay for a debt on the year of Jubilee, it goes back to the original owner so that the land never ceases to be part of the clan or tribe to which it was given. Does that make sense?

God meant, when He gave the land to the people of Israel, He meant for it to stay, owned by the people to whom it was given. So, when Naboth is saying, the Lord forbid that I should give you my father's inheritance, he's basically following the directive of the Word of God related to the giving, buying, and selling, and so forth, of land, and so forth.

But notice here in verse 4, it says, "*And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen* (Which is kind of his M.O.) *because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him, for he had said, 'I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.' And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food.*" In other words, he pouted.

Does this sound like a king to you? You're really seeing kind of an insight into the character of this man, Ahab. If he doesn't get his way, he pouts. We ended our study last week with him receiving a prophetic word that God was going to judge his family, and it says he went home and pouted. He didn't repent, he pouted.

Here he is again. I mean, doesn't it sound really like a child? You come up into their bedroom and they've got their face turned to the wall and it's like, hey, dinnertime. I'm not hungry. But this is where Ahab is. So along comes Jezebel, a.k.a. mommy. You're going to see how that fits in here. Not his mother, it's his wife.

“⁵ “But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, “Why is your spirit so vexed that you eat no food?” ⁶ And he said to her, “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money, or else, if it please you, I will give you another vineyard for it.’ And he answered, ‘I will not give you my vineyard for it.’” I'm just doing the pouty talk, because it just goes with it, doesn't it? I know how to pout.

“⁷ And Jezebel his wife said to him, “Do you now govern Israel?” I think that's a really polite thing, interpretation or translation of what she said. I think she probably said, are you the king? Something like that, like man up.

She says, “Arise and eat bread and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

Actually, you know what? I think the question, do you govern Israel is probably a good question because we're finding out right here who really does govern Israel. Right? Who wears the pants? Or maybe you should say, who's sitting on the throne of Israel? And it's really Jezebel. But, she says, hey, get up and have something to eat. I'll get you the vineyard of this Naboth character.

Here's what she did. “⁸ “So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the leaders who lived with Naboth in his city. ⁹ And she wrote in the letters, “Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth at the head of the people. ¹⁰ And set two worthless men opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, ‘You have cursed God and the king.’ Then take him out and stone him to death.”

¹¹ And the men of his city, the elders and the leaders who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters that she had sent to them, ¹² they proclaimed a fast and set Naboth at the head of the people.” They gave him a place of honor. The head of the table was always a place of honor.

“¹³ And the two worthless men came in and sat opposite him. And the worthless men brought a charge against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying,

“Naboth cursed God and the king.” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones.

¹⁴ Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, “Naboth has been stoned; he is dead.”

¹⁵ (And) As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, “Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead.” ¹⁶ And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.”

Stop there for a moment if you would please. We asked the question, well now wait a minute they got rid of Naboth, but what about his family? I mean, if the man died, wouldn't it just go to his heirs? Well, it doesn't say it here, but when you get into 2 Kings, let me put this actually on the screen for you. We read this,

2 Kings 9:26 (ESV)

‘As surely as I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons—declares the LORD—I will repay you on this plot of ground.’ Now therefore take him up and throw him on the plot of ground, in accordance with the word of the LORD.

‘As surely as I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons—declares the LORD—I will repay you on this plot of ground.’ (And it goes on to say) Now therefore take him up and throw him on the plot of ground, in accordance with the word of the LORD.

It says here in 2 Kings chapter 9, that not only did they stone Naboth, they stoned his family too. This lie was perpetrated against this man and his entire family.

Jezebel knew and understood that in order to get this vineyard for her husband, she had to not only eliminate the man, she had to eliminate all of those who would be in line to receive that property after he died. You can see just how heinous this crime is.

And to declare a fast, did you catch that? It's all couched in very religious terms. Prepare a fast. Declare a fast in the community, and we're going to bring all the people together, and we're going to talk about them, have a council meeting. And we want you to seat Naboth at the head of the table, but seat next to him. Notice what they call these men, worthless men. Two worthless men who are going to make a false accusation.

Well, it says in verse 17, *“Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ¹⁸ ‘Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, (right now) he is in the vineyard of Naboth, (which of course is in Jezreel) where he has gone to take possession. ¹⁹ And you shall say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, ‘Have you killed and also taken possession?’’ And you shall say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood.””*”

Now, I want you to take note of something at this point in the prophecy here that is being given to king Ahab. Did you notice it says that the Lord is saying here that in the place where Naboth died, and the dogs attended to his remains so also in that same place will dogs attend to your remains.

Remember something about dogs. Dogs, for the most part, were wild in that culture and society. People didn't keep dogs like they do today. We didn't, they didn't have the kind of pets like you and I. Dogs were considered a great nuisance in that society. And it was a huge insult to refer to somebody as a dog.

You'll remember the Jews called the Samaritans dogs and that's because dogs were basically, they hung out at the garbage dump. That's where they lived. They fed off garbage, they were wild, they were off, they often attacked people, and they were not this was not Fido or Lassie. These are not creatures that people look to and they would obviously feed on the remains of other animals, and in some cases here, even people.

Elijah is going to do what the Lord told him to do. It says, ²⁰ *“Ahab said to Elijah, (when he found him, he says) ‘Have you found me, O my enemy?’ He answered, ‘I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the LORD. ²¹ Behold, I will bring disaster upon you. I will utterly burn you up, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel. ²² And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, (you'll remember he was the first king of the separated kingdom of Israel) and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the anger to which you have provoked me, and because you have made Israel to sin.*

²³ *And of Jezebel the LORD also said, ‘The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the walls of Jezreel.’ ²⁴ Anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and anyone of his who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat.”*”

Now I want you to pay close attention here to verses 25 and 26. These are important. Spoken here kind of parenthetically, but nonetheless important, it tells us here that up to this point,

²⁵ “*(There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited. ²⁶ He acted very (And you're going to have a different word, perhaps, in your Bible, if it's a different one here in the ESV, it's) abominably in going after idols, as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the people of Israel.)*”

That parenthetical statement is an important one for you to hear. There was none who distinguished himself quite like Ahab to do evil in the nation of Israel up to that point okay. You got it? Nobody else did anything worse. Ahab, he was king of the heap when it comes to being a total pagan. He incited the Lord to anger, and He was the worst.

That's an important thing for you to hear because so many times you read through the Old Testament and you see nothing but judgment, or people say they see nothing but judgment and anger. I want you to hear what happens here in the last few verses of this chapter.

And this is the first time Ahab had ever done this, but in verse 27 it says, “*And when Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and (he) put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted and (he) lay in sackcloth and went about dejectedly. ²⁸ And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ²⁹ “Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days; but in his son's days I will bring the disaster upon his house.”*”

Now, God knew that Ahab's son was not going to change and follow a different path than his father had. And He knew that his son was not going to repent in any way. But Ahab repented. This is the man who, at this point in time anyway, is said to have done worse than anybody before him. He was so evil. He was so wicked. I mean, his heart was just so dark. And yet notice that Ahab, in the midst of his sin, in the midst of his darkness, he gets God's attention. How do you get God's attention? Repent.

Listen, God will never ignore repentance. He will never ignore repentance. Here's how David said it. “*A broken and contrite spirit, O Lord, you will not despise.*” It's really saying the same thing, but David understood what it meant to be broken before the Lord. What it meant to humble oneself and say, I'm wrong. What stands in the way of us doing that? Stupidity? Maybe. But pride.

It's pride, isn't it? Yeah, I have been, it's really funny, just lately, the Lord has been just showing me again through a series of, I guess, things that I've been studying or whatever, just how dangerous is our pride. We're so prideful. We are such prideful people. And you know what proves our pridefulness? Is that we won't admit we're prideful.

That's probably the number one proof that we are prideful is that we don't want to admit that we're prideful, but we are. Extremely very prideful. We don't want to humble ourselves. We don't want to, we don't want to follow the Lord. Why don't people come to God and walk with Him? Because they're prideful. They don't want to. I don't want to. It's just really amazing,

But I just find it so incredible and such a reflection of God's mercy that this man Ahab, who, if I was God and you can thank Him that I'm not, but I would wipe the guy out long before this. Right? I mean God, and it shows how long suffering He is. And Sue and I were talking about what that means here just today. Suffering long and how God suffered the things of Ahab, the actions of Ahab against his people, but He was patient. And Ahab came to a place of humility and surrender, and he humbled himself before the Lord, and God noticed.

Now, earlier in the chapter, did you notice that I told you I wanted to take note of that prophecy that Elijah gave to Ahab saying that in the place where Naboth died and where the dogs attended to his remains, in that same place, dogs will attend to your remains. Well, guess what? It didn't happen that way. We're going to get into the next chapter. We're going to find out that instead of dying at Jezreel, he actually died in Samaria.

And so you might look at that and go, well, now wait a minute. Is that a prophecy unfulfilled? And believe me, it has been a point of great debate over the years among Bible scholars and teachers and things like that. And they look at it and they go, whoa, we got a, what's the deal here? Where's a prophecy in chapter 21 and it's not fulfilled in chapter 22. But there's this one issue that you've got to deal with. And that is, Ahab repented.

See, the point of repentance is that it will stay the hand of God's judgment. And it did in a very genuine sense here. God said to Elijah, have you noticed Ahab, he has repented. He's humbled himself. Therefore, I will not bring this judgment in exactly the way I said I would during his lifetime. It will happen in his son's lifetime because his son will walk in his ways, but I will not bring this about in his lifetime like I was going to do. What was the difference? Repentance.

Repentance. That's the difference. And you need to understand how powerful that is. To repent of one's sins. Listen, all of us in this room who have accepted Christ as our Savior, we were on the fast track to judgment before we came to Jesus, right? We were on our way. I was heading for hell full speed ahead, and so were you. And then what happened? We repented of our sins. God opened our eyes to what we really were, and we chose to look at it, and to admit it, and to confess. And you know, the word confess basically means to agree.

We're just agreeing with what God already said, and so we basically all confessed, we agreed, that we were sinners, and we turned from our sin to Him, and we said, please forgive me of my sin. Well, what happened? Our path toward judgment changed, didn't it? It's like, Err. We stopped right there, and we turned, and we started going toward the Lord and our eternity and everything was transformed from that point on. And I know I'm talking about our perspective down here below, but the point is, that's our perspective.

That's where we live So what made the difference? Repentance. What even gives us the ability to begin to hear from God? Repentance. Before Jesus began His public ministry God sent a man, named John, out into the wilderness to do one thing. Encourage people to repent. That was his job. Did you ever notice, John the Baptist never performed one single miracle? Not even one. He had a one string guitar, as they say, and he played it faithfully, and it was this. Baptism unto repentance.

He would go around, and he'd say, hey, the Kingdom of God is upon you. Repent and be ready and open your eyes and that's all he did. He convinced people of their sin, and they would come to him and say, I want to be baptized. Okay, come on. He'd bring them into the Jordan and dunk them in the water and baptize. And you know, it says in the Book of Luke says that those whom John baptized heard the words of Jesus, and they said, that's right, that's true.

But those who refuse to be baptized by John, it says in the book of Luke, rejected God's purpose for their lives. What was the difference? Repentance. That was it. It's the only thing. You know, you can't overstate the importance that repentance plays in our lives. So, I'm amazed I really, I'm amazed at how God responds to the repentance of this man.

Chapter 22. It says, ¹ *“For three years Syria and Israel continued without war. ² But in the third year Jehoshaphat the king of Judah (that’s the southern kingdom) came down to the king of Israel.”*

And again, I've mentioned this many times, but don't be weirded out by the fact that it says the king of Judah came down. It's not talking north south. It's talking elevation. The southern kingdom of Judah was a higher elevation than the northern kingdom. You actually go downhill to go north in Israel. And so, Jehoshaphat, who by the way we haven't even really been introduced to yet, is on the throne of Judah, and he is a godly man, but he is a gullible man.

And we're going to see that in this chapter. So, he comes down to basically visit, kind of drop in on the king of Israel, who is still Ahab at this time. And now remember, it says that Syria, on their northern border, they haven't had any skirmishes now for three years.

But it says in verse 3, *“And the king of Israel said to his servants, “Do you know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, and we (just) keep quiet and do not take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?””*

Do you guys remember last week there was, we talked about that battle between Israel and Syria? And God wanted Ahab to wipe out the king of Syria? And you remember that Ahab didn't do it. Instead, he invited him into his chariot and called him his brother, and the king of Syria said, hey, listen, you spared my life. I'll give you back the cities we took from you. And Ahab said, agreed, go home in peace. And then you remember the prophecy came.

And that's what we ended with last week. The prophecy came to Ahab. Hey, you let the king of Syria go when God had devoted him to destruction, and therefore God is going to devote to destruction your home and family and so forth. Well, this is one of the cities that the king of Syria had promised to give back and he never did. So, he didn't make good on his promise. And so now it's like three years or more down the road, and now he's kind of sulking about it.

He's talking to his servants, and he goes, you know, that king of Syria, he said he was going to give us back the city of Ramoth Gilead. You'll notice he never did. And he's probably getting his guys all lathered up about it. You know, you're right. What are we going to do about that? Well, I think we ought to go get it back.

He says to Jehoshaphat, who's there visiting, he says, hey, will you go with me to battle at Ramoth Gilead? And Jehoshaphat, who is gullible. A godly man, but gullible. He lacks discernment. He says, *“I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.”* In other words, he's saying, yeah, absolutely, I'll go to war with you.

Now if Jehoshaphat was really truly walking in the discernment of the Lord he would have said, well, he probably wouldn't even have gone to visit Ahab, honestly. But he would have said, you know what Ahab? You're not a godly man. You repented when Elijah came and prophesied destruction over your house but there's a lot of movement you need to make toward the Lord.

You know what? If you're going to go up against Syria, you're on your own, pal. I mean, I understand that we're, like, related from the standpoint of we're all Jews, but I just don't think it's a good idea.

But he agrees to go along and Jehoshaphat, but here notice what he says, ⁵ *“And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “Inquire first for the word of the LORD.”* It's always kind of a hard thing when you talk to somebody who isn't walking with the Lord and you say to him hey, let's pray about that shall we? And they don't want to do that. But if they are going to go through the motions, they're going to make sure that the deck is stacked in their favor, and that's exactly what Ahab does.

It says, ⁶ *“Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, “Shall I go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I refrain?” And they said, (yeah) “Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.””*

You got it. This is your battle. The day is yours. Go for it. You're the man. So then, what are they all doing? Telling him exactly what he wants to hear. Right? But Jehoshaphat, who is a believer, knows that something's wrong. And so, look what he says. ⁷ *“Is there not here another prophet of the LORD of whom we may inquire?”*

See, Jehoshaphat just knows. This is weird. You've got 400 guys who are all sitting there like bobble dolls doing this number. They're going, should I go up to war? Yeah, go ahead, go to war. And that's all they're going to ever do for the king is just sit there and nod their head yes. And Jehoshaphat knows. Have you ever talked to somebody who has kind of fixed the will of the Lord in their mind so that it can only go their way?

I mean, I've seen it happen with people, and I won't get into examples, but I've seen it happen where somebody will make a good case for how they're praying about it. But the fact of the matter is, it's all set into motion and they're going to do what they want to do. And they'll say, well, I've been praying about it, but they're not praying to the point where they're listening. Sure, they might've uttered a prayer, once.

And now they're praying about it. It's the way you lie to your dentist about whether or not you've been flossing, and you say, yeah, I flossed because you did it once after your last appointment. And it's that same thing. Yeah, yeah, we're praying about that. We prayed but I really don't really want to hear from God. Jehoshaphat, he knows that something's wrong. So, isn't there another prophet of the Lord here?

And look what Ahab says, verse 8, *“And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, (Well, you know) “There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, Micaiah the son of Imlah, (no) but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil.” And Jehoshaphat (just simply) said, “Let not the king say so.””*

In other words, dude, you shouldn't say that. Isn't that interesting? I remember before I started walking with the Lord, when people would tell me things that I knew were true, but I didn't want to hear it, I would dislike the person. I would just dislike the person. Ahab doesn't have a problem with Micaiah, he has a problem with God. Right? He doesn't want to hear what God has to say. And so he goes, Yeah, there's another prophet in Micaiah, but I hate the guy because he never says anything that I want to hear.

He always speaks evil to me. It's evil. Yeah, the Word of the Lord is evil. Well, I suppose you might think so if it isn't what you want to hear. So, what are we going to do? Let's just hate the messenger. Isn't that the way people feel about you sometimes? You ever shared the Lord with somebody or confronted somebody in the area of their sin and they ended up just hating your guts because you spoke the truth. I hate you.

You don't love me. If you loved me, you'd support me in sin. Really would I support you in sin? If you really loved me. You understand, that's emotional manipulation, right? By the way, very childish. It's really the same sort of a thing that Ahab is doing here about Micaiah. And all Jehosaphat says is, oh don't say that.

⁹ *“Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said, (all right) “Bring quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah.”*

Now, the reason they had to bring Micaiah is because he was locked up for the things that he'd been saying, because he'd been honest enough and bold enough to tell the king what the Word of the Lord was, so he was already behind bars. So he goes, yeah, there's this one prophet but I've got him locked up right now

because he's got, just I hate him. Well, just bring him. All right, go get him, go get Micaiah.

“¹⁰ Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying before them.” 400 men all saying the same thing. Go to war oh king, you will be successful.

¹¹ “And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron and said, “Thus says the LORD, ‘With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed.’”

Nothing better than a prophet with props. He built some props. He's got these horns. I don't know if it was something he put on like a big hat with horns. I don't know what he was doing, maybe snorting like a bull. And remember horn signify strength in the Old Testament.

In fact, sometimes you'll hear, you'll see in the Psalms the horn of my salvation He's the strength of my salvation. By making horns he's, it's a symbol of strength and with these horns, you will gore the enemy, go into battle oh king, you're going to be successful. And it's like, he's going around doing this thing and all 400 of them are saying the same thing.

And it says in verse 12 that, *“And all the prophets prophesied so and said, “Go up to Ramoth-gilead and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king.”*

You'll notice that there, the word Lord in your Bible is in caps. Notice that? And remember, LORD, when it's in all caps, you know what that means. That's the unpronounceable name of the Lord. That's YAHWEH. Yahovah. We actually don't know how it's pronounced regardless of what someone who comes to your door claims, but it is the divine name.

They are prophesying in the name of the Lord. Okay? So, it tells you what kind of prophets they are. They're not necessarily false prophets. They were, we're going to find here in a moment that they are being led into a false message, but they're prophesying in the name of YAHWEH and saying, go.

¹³ “And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, (all right now listen pal) “Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king. (So) Let your word be like the word of one of them, and (you) speak favorably. (too)” ¹⁴ But Micaiah said, “As the LORD lives, what

the LORD says to me, that I will speak.” He says that, but then he waffles on that.

He goes on here in verse 15 and says, *“And when he had come to the king, the king said to him, ‘Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?’ (And by this time, he's hearing all these 400 guys talking) And (so) he answered him, ‘Go up and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king.’”*

That's the way I hear him saying it in my movie, in my mind. There's absolutely no conviction. There's absolutely no excitement. There's no passion. All these other guys, they're not only passionate, they've got props, and they're telling the king go, the victory is yours. And I can just see Micaiah, the king says to him, Micaiah, so should we go up against Ramoth Gilead? And I can just hear him going. Go up against Ramoth Gilead, for the Lord has given it into your hands. And absolutely Ahab knows that this guy has not given him a word of the Lord.

And that's why in verse 16 it says, *“But the king said to him, ‘How many times shall I make you swear that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?’ (As if he hasn't been up to this point. And here's Micaiah's response) ¹⁷ And he said, ‘I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, ‘These have no master; let each return to his home in peace.’”¹⁸ And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, (Well) “Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?”*

Because essentially what he's saying, when he says, they have no master. He's saying, here's what I saw. I saw you guys go to war. And then I saw your side without a leader. That means Ahab, you're going down. That's what I saw. I saw you dying in battle. That's what I saw. And that's why Ahab turns to Jehoshaphat and says, see what did I tell you? He's always prophesying bad stuff against me.

¹⁹ *“And Micaiah said, ‘Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; (Note that) ²⁰ and the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said one thing, and another said another. (And) ²¹ Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, ‘I will entice him.’*

²² *And the LORD said to him, ‘By what means?’ And he said, ‘I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And he said, ‘You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.’ ²³ Now therefore behold,*

the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has declared disaster for you.””

Now stop there for just a moment. Interesting, isn't it that Micaiah is given this vision, this spiritual vision. of how the Lord is working behind the scenes in this situation. And ultimately, he sends forth or allows a lying spirit to work in the mouths of these 400 prophets to tell Ahab what he wants to hear so that he will go to his death. Now, if your theology is a little weirded out by that, and you're thinking, well, that sounds a little strange.

Is that really what good angels do? Do they go around lying? Do they tell lies for God? No, I believe that this is a demonic spirit. You say, well, what are they doing before the throne of God? Hey, listen, the demonic spirits have access to the throne of God, and they will have that access until sometime during the tribulation period. In the Book of Job, we know that Satan came and appeared before the Lord and began to accuse Job to God.

But sometime during the course of the great tribulation, the Bible tells us Satan will be cast to the earth and he will know at that time that his time is short and he will begin to virulently persecute the people of God who are alive on the earth at that time, the people who've come to Christ during the great tribulation period. Satan and his minions. are not without access to heaven.

Now, did you notice I told you to take note of it? What Micaiah said was I saw heaven and I saw all of these angels coming before the Lord, some on His right and some on His left.

Now, it's an interesting statement because we know that in almost every instance where the right and the left are specified, you always have on the right side, those who are accepted and in relationship with the Lord. And on the left, you have those who are opposed to the Lord. Just as Jesus said, one day in the great judgment, the sheep will on the right hand of the Lord and the goats on the left.

And so it is very possible that what Micaiah is seeing, and I believe that it is, that with the angelic host that are devoted to the will of God and the purposes of God, there's also the demonic host that are there standing before the Lord, and when God speaks out and says, who will go forth and entice Ahab to go into war? And one of these demonic spirits chirps up and says I'll be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets, and He says fine go and you will succeed. And again, it's because the Lord has declared disaster for Ahab.

Verse 24. *“Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, ‘How did the Spirit of the LORD go from me to speak to you?’”²⁵ And Micaiah said, ‘Behold, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide yourself.’”²⁶ And the king of Israel said, ‘Seize Micaiah, and take him back to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king’s son,’²⁷ and say, ‘Thus says the king, ‘Put this fellow (back) in prison and feed him meager rations of bread and water, until I come (back) in peace.’”*

Notice what he's saying here. I defy the word of the Lord, and I will come back in peace. *“²⁸ And Micaiah (turned to him and) said, (listen) ‘If you return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me.’ And he said, ‘Hear, all you peoples!’”* (probably as he's being dragged away) *²⁹ So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead.”*

And again, I want to just reiterate, Jehoshaphat is gullible. He heard this stuff. He should have had the discernment to say, you know what? I don't care if it is 400 to 1. That one man, that sounded like God to me. I mean, believers ought to be able to hear the voice of the Lord, right? They ought to have the discernment.

And by the way what would motivate someone to be the lone voice 400 to one and to give the king potentially news that he doesn't want to hear? What would your motivating factor be to get into his good graces? To get a gift from the king to make him like you? None of those things.

The only reason you would tell the king, don't go to war because you're going to die. is because you're going to be faithful to God. He wants desperately to hear go to war, and you're the one person out of 400 that says don't go. That's ridiculous. That's insane. Listen, Jehoshaphat should have seen it coming. And you and I need to grow to a place where we can hear God's voice.

Can I just tell you a little something? A lot of times God's voice is opposed to what we want. Not always, but a lot of times. Because sometimes what we want is very self-centered, very me oriented, and the Lord comes along, and I tell you, I can always tell when the Lord's speaking to me because it's usually the opposite of what I want. Honestly, I figure, well, yeah, that sounds like the Lord correcting me. And more often than not, that is, in fact, the case.

Verse 30. Oh, I love this part. *“And the king of Israel (Ahab, this sly old fox) said to Jehoshaphat, (tell you what) ‘I will disguise myself and go into battle, (just like any of the other soldiers. But I tell you what. Why don’t you) wear your (royal) robes.’” And the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.”* I mean, gullible. If I was Jehoshaphat, I would've said no, because

everybody knows that the king's going to be a target, right? If you can kill the king, you can stop the battle. And look what it goes on to say in the very next verse.

“³¹ Now the king of Syria had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, (listen) “Fight with neither small nor great, but only with the king of Israel.””

He's telling them, listen, just work your way past the rest of these soldiers. They're nothing. Get to the king and kill him. Focus on the king. Bring him down. And I can't believe that Jehoshaphat agrees to go into the battle with his royal robes.

“³² And when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, (of course) they said, “It is surely the king of Israel.” (al that dust and melee of the battle, they can't tell for sure) So they turned to fight against him. And Jehoshaphat cried out.”

Now, by the way, if you read this same passage in Chronicles, you will find out that Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord. He was a godly man, ultimately, and he prayed to God. He was in the battle, and he knew that he was being hunted by all these captains. And it says he prayed, and he cried out to God, and God delivered him. But remember what God said would happen to Ahab?

It says, *“³³ And when the captains of the (I'm reading verse 33 again. When the captains of the) chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. ³⁴ But (listen to this) a certain man (just a guy) drew his bow at random (note those words and just happened) and struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, “Turn around and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded.””* All right, stop there.

You want to prove God is sovereign? This is craziness. First of all, Ahab convinces Jehoshaphat to go into the battle wearing his royal garments. That's like painting a big target, right? On your front and back saying, shoot here. He might as well have put up neon lights flashing saying, here's the king, get me. But it wasn't Jehoshaphat's time to go, was it? Even though he's gullible, he's still a godly man. He shouldn't be in battle with the king of Israel, with Ahab, but yet God is going to be merciful because Jehoshaphat's going to cry out to the Lord.

Now, what did God say to Ahab? You will die in this battle. But did he listen? Ahab is doing everything he can to thwart the plan of the Lord. Here's what he's going to do. I'm going to disguise myself. They're not going to know I'm the king. I mean, how are they going to know that I'm the king? I'm going to wear exactly what every other soldier has on. Right? And even though they're going after the king, and they were told to go after the king, it says, one of the men of Syria, get this, get this, shot his bow at random. You know what that means?

It's like a hail Mary pass in a football game. Have you ever seen those at the end of a, usually at the end of a football game? Not always, but usually at the end. And it's kind of one of those, we throw it up for grabs passes and everybody goes into the end zone, and you just hope one of the guys wearing your color pulls it down. Right? Called the hail Mary pass. Here's a guy, he's got his bow. He's not even aiming. He just goes, phew!

And not only you would think the guy is not going to hit the broad side of a barn. Not only does he hit someone. He hits Ahab. Not only does he hit Ahab, it's right between the breastplate and the little armor thingy, just, you know, just, there's probably, I don't know how much room there is. Not much. Right? I mean, it's dead on. Legolas couldn't have done better. He's like, just whoosh right into the thing. Right. And he's like, oh. He tells his chariot guy to pull him out of the battle because he's wounded.

And the guy who shot the arrow probably didn't even know what he did. He probably just went foosh, I'm getting out of here. And he's the one who ends up, killing Ahab. Why? You couldn't plan something like that. How did it happen just that way? Because God said that was the way it was going to happen. God said that Ahab was going to go down in the battle. And how did he go down? With this random shot that wasn't random at all because it was guided by the hand of the Lord.

Verse 35 says, *“And the battle continued that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians, until at evening he died. And the blood of the wound flowed into the bottom of the chariot. (You know where that's going, don't you?)”*³⁶ *And about sunset a cry went through the army, “Every man to his city, and every man to his country!”*”

And that's a way of directing a cessation of hostilities. That's, it's basically a way of saying the king is dead. There's nothing to fight for anymore. Just go home. And so, it says here that,³⁷ *“So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria.”*³⁸ *And they washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, (And guess what? Here we go. There's the dog thing. It*

says not only did) *and the dogs licked up his blood, and the prostitutes washed themselves in it, according to the word of the Lord that he had spoken.*” And all that is meant to suggest to you and I, as gross as it sounds, that God did not allow Ahab to have a noble death. That's the bottom line. And you got to understand, for the Israelites, having a noble death meant a lot.

“³⁹ Now the rest of the acts of Ahab and all that he did, and the ivory house that he built and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ⁴⁰ So Ahab slept with his fathers, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.”

Boy, can we do the rest here? I don't think so. We're going to, you know what, we're going to leave this. No, we're not either. I'm going to finish this. Just tell the people in Awana. We're just going to read through this.

“⁴¹ Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah (Now we're talking, we're going back, picking up Jehoshaphat) in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. ⁴² Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³ He walked in all the way of Asa his father. He did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the Lord. Yet the high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places. ⁴⁴ Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel.

⁴⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he showed, and how he warred, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ⁴⁶ And from the land he exterminated the remnant of the male cult prostitutes who remained in the days of his father Asa. ⁴⁷ There was no king in Edom; a deputy was king. (or ruler) ⁴⁸ Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion-geber. ⁴⁹ Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Let my servants go with your servants in the ships,” but Jehoshaphat was not willing.

⁵⁰ And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Jehoram his son reigned in his place. ⁵¹ Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel. ⁵² He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. ⁵³ He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger in every way that his father had done.”