

**1st Kings 22: 1-28; “Micaiah Preaching to the Kings”, Message # 16 in the series –
“Lessons from the Life of Elijah”, A Bible Study conducted
by Pastor Paul Rendall on February 7th, 2018,
for those gathered at his home.**

We are studying the life of Elijah, but in this passage that we are studying tonight, you will not find Elijah’s name mentioned at all. Rather, we will be looking at the words and actions of another faithful prophet of the Lord; a man named Micaiah, who confronted Ahab one last time with the word of the Lord, so that he might know the awful consequences of his own wickedness. Here in last episode of Ahab’s life, we see the Lord God Almighty acting as his sovereign Judge. Common grace has been spurned or not improved, and so Ahab is delivered over to his own sinful heart. He will be utterly destroyed. Let us receive the truth that our God is the sovereign Ruler over all men and all nations, and He orders all things according to the counsel of His will. In these verses we see the awful outcome of disobedience to the Lord’s word by Ahab. What we find here is the outcome of a wicked life of disbelief; his continual ignoring and disobeying the word to him, through Elijah and other prophets who were sent to him. This rejection of God’s word to him, did lead him to hell when he died, but it also led him, according to the word of Lord, to experience total personal disaster, even in this life, in the way that he died.

In looking at this chapter we also find another king who is mentioned; that is, Jehoshaphat the king of Judah. Jehoshaphat was the son of good king Asa. It says in verse 43 that “he walked in all the ways of his father Asa”. “He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord.” “Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.” Jehoshaphat was a good man, but he had much to learn, as one of God’s elect people, and God would surely teach him. This incident in his life was one of those times of teaching. Towards Jehoshaphat God acted as a Father. But specifically, tonight, we want to open up truth of what a true prophet is like, what he will do in the most difficult of situations, and what will be the result of his faithful ministry. We can apply these truths to those who would desire to be faithful preachers of the word. 1st of all – Here we find that a true prophet was called for, by a righteous king. (verses 1-9) 2nd – A true prophet was not one to speak comfort and encouragement to those who were false or sinful. (verses 10-18) 3rd – A true prophet was willing to suffer so that God’s word would be faithfully proclaimed. (verses 19-28)

1st of all – A true prophet was called for, by a righteous king. (verses 1-9)

You will recall that back in 1st Kings 20, verse 34, that Ahab made a treaty or a covenant with Ben-Hadad, that wicked king of the Syrians who God had devoted to destruction. God had mercifully delivered Ahab and Israel from destruction and captivity because He would show Ahab and all Israel how merciful and faithful a God He was. This He did twice for Ahab, and thus he showed him much common grace. Well, Ahab continued to act disobediently as a king, and we saw in a previous study that he let Ben-Hadad go, without putting him to death. And so, a prophet came to Ahab and told him in verse 42 of chapter 20, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people’. And so, it says, that “the king of Israel went to his house sullen and displeased”.

We saw in our last study, that following this sullen reaction, that wicked Ahab coveted Naboth’s vineyard and his wicked wife Jezebel proceeded to get it for him, after Naboth had righteously declined to give it to him. She then had Naboth set up on the false charges of blaspheming God and the king, and they took Naboth outside the city and stoned him with stones, so that he died. And so, Ahab proceeded on, down to the vineyard to take possession of

it, and he ran into Elijah who confronted him with his sins. Ahab, when he heard the words of judgment which were pronounced against him and against Jezebel, humbled himself before God, and as a result of this humbling, God said to Elijah that He would not bring the calamity in his days; but in the days of his son He would bring the calamity on his house.

So 3 years passed without war between Syrian and Israel, and it came to pass in the 3rd year that Jehoshaphat went down to visit Ahab, and Ahab, thinking that this would be a good time to try to recover the territory of Ramoth-Gilead from the Syrians he asked Jehoshaphat whether he would go with him to help him. And Jehoshaphat foolishly agreed to this alliance and combining of forces in battle. But before he actually went into battle with Ahab, he wisely said to him – “Please inquire for the word of the Lord today. The kings of Israel gathered the prophets together, about 400 of them, and asked them whether they should go up against Syria to regain Ramoth-Gilead. These 400 prophets said – “Go up, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king.” We then see, since Jehoshaphat is a righteous man, and he had some amount of good and righteous discernment, ask – “Is there not still a prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of Him?” He evidently knew that the 400 prophets who had prophesied victory in battle were not really prophets of the Lord. They were false prophets. And even though there were so many of them, he had the spiritual wisdom to ask for a true prophet of the Lord.

This is something important for us to consider; who a righteous king, or any righteous person whosoever, will get their counsel from. Look over at Proverbs chapter 20, verse 18 – “Every purpose is established by counsel; by wise counsel wage war.” You can see from this verse that it takes wise counsel to wage war. But where will these kings get their counsel? Will they take it from a true prophet; a person who knows the Lord and who faithfully represent the truth of the Scriptures, or will they take it from the worldly false prophets who say that they know the true and living God, but they are only willing to counsel sinful selfishness, or moral compromise, or even outright evil? Now look over at Proverbs 12, verses 1 and 2. “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.” “A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of wicked devices He will condemn.” Ahab was not a man who loved instruction, but Jehoshaphat did love it, and that is why he asked for a true prophet of the Lord to speak to them. Verse 2 – “A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of wicked devices He will condemn.” Jehoshaphat obtained favor from the Lord, and one of the reasons was that He would take counsel with God’s true prophet. But Ahab, the man of wicked devices, because he hated Micaiah, God would condemn him.

Notice Ahab’s response to Jehoshaphat’s question. Verse 8 – “So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, ‘There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.’” “And Jehoshaphat said, ‘Let not the king say such things!’” So, we see here, that the wicked man may even know who the true prophet of the Lord is, but still, he hates him because he does prophesy good concerning him, but evil. In other words, it is not the truth of right and wrong that concerned Ahab. It was whether he could get what he wanted in the situation that he was in. It is the same sinful motivation that led him to covet Naboth’s vineyard, except this time it is getting the territory of Ramoth-Gilead back. If he can get what he wants by believing falsehoods or lies, or misrepresentations of the word of the God, he will listen to the false prophets because they will prophesy supposed good to him. This is self-deception of the worst order, and it is characteristic of many wicked men and many wicked kings and leaders. But the king of Israel, wanting to win Jehoshaphat over to his own perspective, called to have Micaiah brought to them quickly. He will prove to Jehoshaphat that what he is saying is true, and thus prove his whole selfish point, he thinks. This leads us to our 2nd point.

2nd – A true prophet was not one to speak comfort and encouragement to those who were false or sinful. (verses 10-18)

In verse 10 we find that the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on their robes, they sat each on his throne, at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. “Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, ‘Thus says the Lord: ‘With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.’” And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, ‘Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the king’s hand.’” Christian, take note. In matters of greatest political importance to a nation and its leaders, there may be many false and wicked men who will attempt to falsely influence the decisions of the king, or in the case of our country, our President. These false counselors may be in the majority and they may be attempting to even speak on behalf of God. And it is quite amazing here, that when the messenger goes to Micaiah to tell him to come and give the kings the word of the Lord, that he said to him in verse 13 – “Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, ‘Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king.’” “Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement.”

This is often what people would like to see in terms of good government, they think – uniform counsel and advice being given, irrespective of whether that counsel is based upon God’s word the Bible, or not. They only want the counsel that will comfort and encourage them, and tell them of their having success and victory. In this case, since the prophet in the Old Testament times spoke the word of the Lord which was directly given to him by God, a person like Zedekiah, and those false prophets with him, would be asserting that God was speaking through them also, when He really had not spoken to them at all. That is what was happening in this case. But turn with me over to Jeremiah 23: 16-22. “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you.’” “They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the LORD.” “They continually say to those who despise Me, ‘The LORD has said, ‘You shall have peace’; and to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, ‘No evil shall come upon you.’” “For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD, and has perceived and heard His word?” “Who has marked His word and heard it?” “Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in fury – A violent whirlwind!” “It will fall violently on the head of the wicked.” “The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart.” “In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.” “I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran.” “I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.” “But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them from their evil way And from the evil of their doings.” You see, this is why Micaiah said to the messenger in verse 14 – “As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak.”

This was the truth of the matter; that Micaiah would do his best to turn these kings and the people of Israel from their evil ways, and the evil of their doings. But you will also notice that he was the only true prophet on the scene! So, when Micaiah comes to prophesy to them, he is asked by king Ahab – “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?” “And he answered him, ‘Go and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king!’” He was not saying this in the name of the Lord; he was saying this in jest. He said it in such a way that Ahab immediately understood that he was mocking the prophets and trying to bring Ahab to understand that all he wanted to be told that they would succeed. And so, he gave him what he wanted, but made it clear that he really did not mean it or believe it. Ahab knew that he was jesting and so he says to him – “How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?” This shows that there must have been many such times when Micaiah had spoken to Ahab in a similar manner, trying to show him how sinful he was to listen to false prophets.

Is it right for a preacher to jest when speaking about false prophets? Evidently, it is, for we see it here, and we see it also in Elijah at Mt. Carmel when he jestingly says that the 400 false prophets of Baal should continue to call upon Baal; that he was asleep or he wasn't listening. Whatever will awaken those persons who are being deceived by false prophets, I think may be legitimately attempted, in the hope that those who are being deceived, may see the truth. But Micaiah's truthful word to Ahab was this – "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 house in peace." This was the truth of the matter; that the nation of Israel had no king who would be a wise master; the people were like sheep without a shepherd. They should not therefore undertake to go to war. Micaiah would not speak comfort or encouragement to sinful Ahab, and therefore we find Ahab saying to Jehoshaphat – "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil? But how could Micaiah prophesy good concerning him when he was not willing to turn away from his sins in repentance and call upon the Lord in order to learn to do righteousness. This, Ahab had not the slightest thought of doing.

3rd – We see here that this true prophet Micaiah was willing to suffer so that God's word would be faithfully proclaimed. (verses 19-28)

Here in verses 19-23 we find one of the most bold and powerful descriptions in all the word of God, as to real interaction that must go on in heaven concerning God's Providential Ordering of Events in relation to His Eternal Decrees and Purposes. God was set forth by Micaiah to Ahab as "sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left." "And the Lord said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?'" "So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner." "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, and said, "I will persuade him." "The Lord said to him, 'In what way?'" "So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'" "And He said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail.'" "Go out and do so." Then Micaiah says to Ahab in verse 23 – "Now therefore, look!" "The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the Lord has declared disaster against you."

This brought an immediate and angry reaction from Zedekiah the false prophet. He went over and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the Lord go from me to speak to you?" "And Micaiah said, 'Indeed, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!' God gave this intimate knowledge of Zedekiah's future, to Micaiah to give to him, so that Zedekiah would see and understand that he was prophesying a lie, and that he would pay for it in sorrow and displeasure when Israel lost the coming battle with the Syrians. He would have to slink away and hide. Ahab also was angry. In verse 26 it states that he said – "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; and say, 'Thus says the king: 'Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I come in peace.'" But Micaiah, as he was being led away said – "If you ever return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me." "And he said, "Take heed, all your people."

In closing let us see the faithfulness of this man Micaiah. He was a man who was faithful to declare the truth, even in the midst of great opposition. His faithful testimony to Ahab, was that God was a mighty Judge who was going to bring him down to destruction because he would not repent of his sins. Because of his faithful testimony to Ahab, Jehoshaphat, who was looking on and listening, would later see his great mistake in allying himself with Ahab. He would repent of his sins and he would go on to walk in the ways of the Lord. Let us see that the Lord accomplishes all of these great purposes of judgment and salvation through the seeming foolishness of the message preached. 1st Corinthians 1: 21 – "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." (NAS)

