

Be Like Micaiah

(May 12, 2023)

Originally, I wanted to make this series just about Jehoshaphat, but then I realized there were other kings we could learn from regarding how to trust the Lord, how to do the right thing, and how to avoid the dreaded problem of pride. We will start with Jehoshaphat but include other kings too.

We do not find a perfect king in the Old Testament, of either Israel or Judah. In fact, there were a total of zero good kings connected with Israel, after the nation split into two separate nations. Some of the kings of Israel were absolutely horrible kings and a few seemingly delighted in trying to poke God in the eye.

The kings of Judah did not fair much better overall, except for a few. Eight out of 20 kings were generally good; Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah (to an extent), Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. These at least attempted to follow the LORD and were successful to a degree; some more than others.

The one commonality for the good kings is that they deliberately *chose* to do what was right before God. Repeatedly, the Scriptures tell us that a particular good king "*did what was right in the eyes of the Lord*" and then proceeds to tell us what he did correctly (**2 Chronicles 14:2**, etc.). Normally, this included removing the altars of foreign gods and the high places, as well as destroying carved images, etc. These things were an abomination to God and rightly so. We tend to think "*well, I would never worship a foreign god represented by a carved image!*" but we need to think seriously about that because there are many things in life that can be worshiped and placed above God in importance even though we don't necessarily physically bow the knee to them.

1 and 2 Chronicles are filled with narratives of kings who deliberately ignored Israel's covenant with God dating back to Mt. Sinai during Moses' leadership. Instead of relying on God for direction, and worshiping Him only, most kings just did things their way. In effect, they were practical atheists.

What makes one king choose the self-centered way that is completely opposed to God, while a few chose to follow God's decrees? Some had hearts that were turned to Him in awe, in love and in worship. The rest? They were in it for what they alone could get out of it, like many to most politicians today throughout the world. Being a powerful leader can be lucrative and self-serving. It is probably somewhat easy (depending on the person's heart), to begin to reach for the things that benefit themselves instead of doing what is best for the people they represent. The temptation can be powerful, I would imagine.

2 Chronicles 17

Law of the LORD with them. They went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people.

¹⁰ And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat. ¹¹ Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver for tribute, and the Arabians also brought him 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats. ¹² And Jehoshaphat grew steadily greater. He built in Judah

Jehoshaphat is an example of a good king of Judah. Yet, he made mistakes. In **2 Chronicles 17**, we read Jehoshaphat became king and did was right in the eyes of the Lord. He went so far as to remove the "high places" from the land of Judah. Those high places were a constant snare to the people of Judah, tempting them away from worship of the only God.

All of this led to fear gripping the nations around the land of Judah. They were afraid to attack Judah because of Jehoshaphat's rule and doing the right things.

Then we get to **2 Chronicles 18** and things go a bit awry where Jehoshaphat made an error, uniting with terribly evil King Ahab, Israel's king. That was a serious mistake and it does not matter what Jehoshaphat's motive may have been. Maybe he wanted to try to ease tensions between Israel and Judah and cement a bond between both kings. Maybe Jehoshaphat thought he could woo Ahab back to God, forgetting that Ahab was never in God's corner from the beginning. Maybe there were other reasons that we are not aware of, but in truth, it really was a mistake that he did not even realize *was* a mistake.

Please note that nowhere in the biblical text did Jehoshaphat seek the Lord's counsel to determine if he even *should* get together with Ahab. So how did Jehoshaphat get involved with Ahab in the first place? It was done through *marriage*. This was very common in ancient kingdoms to ensure peace between foreign kingdoms.

Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance and by marriage he allied himself with Ahab (2 Chronicles 18:1)

Marriages in those days were often entered into because of how they created allies with other nations. Jehoshaphat, because of marriage with someone from Ahab's line, became allied to Ahab, which ultimately almost cost Jehoshaphat his life.

Eventually, Jehoshaphat visited Ahab in Samaria, Israel's capitol. There was a party and right away we see what Ahab was aiming to do.

Will you go with me against Ramoth Gilead? (2 Chronicles 18:3)

What could Jehoshaphat say? He couldn't refuse because his marriage created an alliance with Israel, even though he may not have wanted to enter into war. So he said he would, but he wanted to know what God wanted so he insisted that they inquire of the Lord. Maybe he was hoping to hear "No" from God. However, King Ahab's "prophets" all said what the king wanted to hear.

It obviously bothered Jehoshaphat in his gut that all the prophets were in unison regarding what Ahab should do. Jehoshaphat asked whether or not there was someone else who would seek the Lord on the king's behalf. Ahab stated that there was another prophet - Micaiah the son of Imla - but Ahab didn't like him because he "*never prophesies good concerning me,*" (**2 Chronicles 18:7**). Gee, it couldn't be that Ahab was a terrible king because of how he allowed Baal to push out the God of Israel because of his wife, Jezebel, could it?

Jehoshaphat's response to Ahab was, "*Let not the king say such things!*" (v 4). Okay, but the king *did* say it and meant it. Jehoshaphat was involved with a person who was not at all righteous, didn't care about being righteous and certainly didn't care whether or not the God of Israel was pleased with him (Ahab). Why was Jehoshaphat even bothering because he was literally in fellowship with an "unsaved" person who had no inclination to seek and serve the God of Israel. This meant that Jehoshaphat was unequally yoked (2 Corinthians 6:14). Instead of being able to affect Ahab for good, Jehoshaphat is dragged down with Ahab to a degree. That's also a lesson for Christians. We should be careful who we associate with as far as friends go because chances are great that we will fall to their level, rather than lifting them up to ours.

So in comes Micaiah and interestingly enough, he responds to the king using *sarcasm*, "*Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!*" (v 14b) Micaiah was simply telling the king what he wanted to hear in a sarcastic way. Ahab doesn't buy it.

How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?

Ahab clearly doubted the veracity of the message. So he questioned Micaiah who comes out with the real message that Ahab did not want to hear.

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.

Ahab's response tells us how he viewed truth.

Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?

Then Micaiah tells those gathered more truth, how God would defeat Ahab using a lying spirit to tell Ahab lies, which the king would believe. Micaiah finishes with the following words to Ahab, "*Therefore look! The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the Lord has declared disaster against you*" (v 22). The very prophets Ahab counted on for information and wisdom were liars. It's not that much different from today with the many "prophets" within Christendom constantly ascribing to God what God is not telling them, but some lying spirit *is*.

For telling the actual truth though, Micaiah was struck on the cheek by Zedekiah and ultimately sent to prison by King Ahab. Essentially, King Ahab "canceled" Micaiah because he didn't like what he heard. What does that remind you of today?

Truth angers so many people today who will either ignore it or attack the messenger who brings it. In fact, many become enraged when they hear the truth. The message is clear: don't tell the truth about transgenderism (that people *cannot* actually change their birth chromosomes, but can only *appear* to change genders *outwardly*). Don't tell the truth about COVID and the CV cocktail that has been injected into people. Don't tell the truth about America's southern border or the abysmal political situation in America and how we got here.

Above all, do *not* tell the truth about people's need for Jesus. Whatever you do, do *not* do that because you'll risk offending someone and you may incur their anger. Yet, Micaiah not only told the truth to Ahab, but he told the truth to Zedekiah, the guy who hit Micaiah in the face and what he said panned out, which proved that stated truth.

It's coming to a point where the attacks against Christians and the truth we espouse (by our lives or words), will put targets on our backs and we will be fair game for the godless. Do we shrink from telling the truth to "save" ourselves or do we continue to tell the truth in spite of consequences? It's not easy. It can make us feel uncomfortable and physically unsafe, but we need to ask God to give us the conviction to state the truth all the time and to override our uncomfortable feelings about that. I don't want to stand before Him one day knowing that I kept my mouth shut because I wanted to save myself from problems.

We are truly living in the days of Noah and Lot and I don't want to be like Lot, do you? I want to be known for an unwavering commitment to my Lord and Savior, Jesus. He deserves my absolute and unfailing love, respect, reverence, and dedication to follow Him without reservation. He can provide the ability to do that under the pressure from the world's attacks.

In these days of increased pressure where truth is constantly being attacked and seen as lies or misinformation, Christians cannot afford to act like some of the kings of old, who did what they wanted and didn't care what God thought about it. We need to be like Micaiah, who stated the truth regardless of what other people thought of it. We may be slapped. We may be imprisoned, but we must continue to tell the truth.