

# The Danger of Political Correctness

1 Kings 22:1-8

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**Bible Text:** 1 Kings 22:1-8  
**Preached on:** Sunday, August 2, 2015

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If you have your Bibles with you today, I'd like for you to turn with me, if you would, to 1 Kings 22 and we're going to be looking at verses 1 through 8 this morning. 1 Kings 22:1-8.

1 For three years Syria and Israel continued without war. 2 But in the third year Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. 3 And the king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, and we keep quiet and do not take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?" 4 And he said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to battle at Ramoth-gilead?" And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 5 And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Inquire first for the word of the LORD." 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, "Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king." 7 But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here another prophet of the LORD of whom we may inquire?" 8 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, Micaiah the son of Imlah, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say so."

Let's pray.

*Heavenly Father, we bow in your sweet presence today to praise you and thank you for the privilege of getting into your word. We ask, Father, that you guide and direct our thinking. Father, we pray for our nation today as we look at a country that is increasingly turning its back on God. We would ask, Father, that you would bring revival to this nation; that Father, you would bring such a deep conviction of sin that the people of America would not, could not stand the plight of what they are in. Father, may you open our spiritual eyes, open our spiritual ears, open our spiritual hearts, Lord, that we might see our desperate need for Christ. We ask, Father, that you help us now that we might understand the danger of political correctness as we look at this passage and see*

*the errors that are made here and the dangers that are involved. Jesus, we love you today. We thank you that you are truth and we pray, Father, that we might be a people of truth, and it's in your holy and precious name we pray. Amen.*

You may be seated.

Many of you have read the great literary classic by Herman Melville, "Moby Dick," but did you realize that that book is not just a great whale story? Herman Melville was a man who deeply understood the depravity of the human heart. He named the character, the main character of his book, a very odd name but it was not by accident. The name that he gave his main character was Ahab, Captain Ahab. Where did he get that name from? He got it right straight out of Scripture. Let me read you from 1 Kings 16, starting at verse 29 through 31, the description of Ahab.

29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. 30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. 31 And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him.

Ahab was the epitome of rebellion against God. He married Jezebel, a very wicked woman, and brought her down from the area of Tyre and Sidon and she brought with her 450 prophets of Baal. She brought into Israel the wicked religion of Amalekite Baalism which was as filthy and perverted a religion as Satan has ever vomited up from the pits of hell. Ahab was a man who hated the prophets of God. He was a man who tried everything he could to turn the people of Israel away from the true God Jehovah to the false god Baal. His heart was filled with evil.

When Herman Melville wrote his book, "Moby Dick," he used this king as a role model or as a picture of Ahab the captain. Most of you know the story, the story of Moby Dick. Captain Ahab is a captain of a whaling ship. He's already had an encounter with a great white whale and in that first encounter he had with him, the great white whale bit one of his legs off and so he had to spend the rest of his life hobbling around on a wooden leg. He was so filled with anger and rage at that whale that he made a determination in his heart that he was going to put all of his effort, all of his energy, all of his time into searching out that whale and bringing him to destruction. Now folks, this story, Moby Dick, is filled with great great symbolism. The great white whale is a picture of God. The size and the power of the whale represent the vastness and the strength of Almighty God. The color of the whale represents the purity of God, he was white. There is a chapter in Moby Dick called "The Whiteness of the Whale." Ahab is a picture of the human heart's fight and struggle against God. Ahab is angry because this whale has brought such difficult circumstances in his life and he is fighting against the sovereignty and the power of the whale.

Folks, does that not sound like our human heart? It was Paul who said that we are by nature children of wrath; that we fight against three things, the world, the flesh and the devil. Moby Dick is a novel that has its roots in the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of 1 Kings. This chapter deals with truth and the world's hatred toward that truth. It was relevant in Elijah's day, it was relevant in Herman Melville's day, and folks, it is very relevant in our day and time, so relevant that I have entitled this message "The Danger of Political Correctness."

I've got seven points that I want to share with you this morning. Number 1 is a remnant that desires the truth. There is a remnant that desires truth. Look at verse 5,

5 And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Inquire first for the word of the LORD."

Russell Moore, who works with the Southern Baptists and is just a very godly man, said the following about the remnant of God's people in America in this day and time right now. I want you to listen carefully to this.

"Christianity is dying. At least, that's what major newspapers are telling us today, culling research from a new Pew Center study on what almost all sociologists are observing these days—the number of Americans who identify as Christians has reached an all-time low, and is falling. I think this is perhaps bad news for America, but it is good news for the church.

Christianity isn't a political party, dependent on crafting ideologies to suit the masses. We received this gospel; we did not invent it. But, that said, such is not the means to 'success'—even the way the sociologists define it.

The future of Christianity is bright. I don't know that from surveys and polls, but from a word Someone spoke one day back at Caesarea Philippi [that's Jesus]. The gates of hell haven't gotten any stronger, and the Light that drives out the darkness is enough to counter every rival gospel."

What he's saying there is that it's better to have a remnant, a smaller group of people who are sold out to Christ, who love the Lord, who love the truth, than to have a giant crowd that is phony and hypocritical.

Now here's the situation: King Jehoshaphat of Judah made a trip to see King Ahab of Israel. King Ahab of Israel starts telling him about the problem they are having with Syria, they have taken Ramoth-gilead, and so Ahab asked Jehoshaphat if they can join together military forces and they can fight against Syria to defeat them. Jehoshaphat thinks, "Well, that sounds like a pretty good idea. That sounds like a very wise idea." So Jehoshaphat says, "I think that may work. So my people will be as your people and your horses will be as my horses." But Jehoshaphat also had a qualification, verse 5 again, "And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, 'Inquire first for the word of the LORD.'" What Jehoshaphat was saying was this, "I want truth. I don't want opinions. I don't want what people feel. I want to know what God has to say in this matter."

Folks, Jehoshaphat was a man of God. He represents a small small minority of people, the Bible calls that the remnant. He was not just a hearer of the word, he was a doer of the word. He was not just a pew warmer. He was a man who believed in the Lord and loved the Lord and loved the word of God, saturated his heart with it and wanted to walk with God. Folks, I want you to know that in every generation through church history God has always had a remnant. He has had a remnant and many that are sitting in this congregation, I would say most that are sitting in this building right here today are part of that remnant but I want you to know know you are a minority. You are a minority and you are going to be swimming against the cultural current. In Luke 12:32, Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Notice he didn't call us giant crowd, he says little flock. The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Narrow is the way that leads to life and narrow is the gate that leads to life and narrow is the way, and few there be that find it." God always has his remnant.

2. A politically correct opposition. Verse 6,

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, "Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king."

King Ahab knew that Jehoshaphat was a man of God, that he was not just going to let this issue slide, so he goes to his advisers, his political advisers, his so-called prophets, and he says to them, "I've been talking to Jehoshaphat trying to encourage him to go to battle with us, to join military forces together and to go and to fight against Syria, but he wants to know what is the will of God in this matter. Should we go to Ramoth-gilead and fight and defeat Syria, or should we just sit back and do nothing?" He says, "Jehoshaphat wants to know what is the will of God so I'm asking you to tell him." So what are they thinking? They're thinking, "Well, Ahab, what do you want the will of God to be? Yeah, we're in your pocket. We know that we need to conform because we have a great job. We're making a lot of money. We're very comfortable. We don't want to rock the boat. We like the way things are going."

Does that not sound like the U.S. Congress? Folks, we were told by the Republican Party before last election that if we had a majority of Republicans in the Senate, a majority of Republicans in the House, that things were going to change; that they would deal with Obamacare, that they would deal with illegal immigrants coming across the border, that we could count on them. We've got a majority in both Senate and the House and not one thing has changed. If you put your hope for this nation in any political party, whether it be Democrat, Republican, Libertarian or whatever it may be, then you are in for a rude awakening because, folks, if our politicians are not sold out to Jesus, if they are not walking the way of the cross, then nothing is going to really change.

Jehoshaphat, who is part of the remnant, wanted to know the truth. He wanted to know what does God have to say in this matter. These false prophets, these political advisers to

Ahab were not about to tell Ahab the truth because they knew that if they did tell him the truth, that Ahab would get mad and they would lose their jobs. There was, to them, no question about what the will of God was, the will of God was the will of Ahab as far as they were concerned. So they said to Ahab, "After much deliberate and fervent prayer," yeah, right, they said, "we've come up with a conclusion and we believe that God would have us to go ahead, join together forces with Judah and fight against the Syrians and," they said, "if you do that, God will give you the victory." Exactly what Ahab wanted to hear.

There is a Norman Peale, Robert Schuller, Joel Osteen type of response: just take care of it with positive thinking. Don't be negative, just write your own ticket with God. If it will benefit you, then by all means do it. Be encouraging but don't be negative, don't rock the boat. Just conform and be politically correct and everything will be fine. Is anything like that going on in churches in America today? Folks, it is sad what's going on in churches in America today. I talked to a guy not long ago who is in a seeker-friendly church, he said his wife wants to go there, that's why they go. He says, "I've been there for four years," he said, "not one time have I ever heard the word 'sin, judgment, the wrath of God, hell or eternal punishment.'" He said, "Just one time I wish that I could sit in the pew and feel one tinge of conviction about my sin," he said, "but it's not going to happen because they know that that will make people feel uncomfortable and if people feel uncomfortable, then they might leave." These false prophets were not about to make Ahab feel uncomfortable. Why? Because their jobs were on the line.

That takes us to the third point: antagonism against the word. Look at verse 7 through 8,

7 But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here another prophet of the LORD of whom we may inquire?" 8 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, Micaiah the son of Imlah, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say so."

Jehoshaphat looks at these prophets of Ahab and he hears their positive confessions and then he kind of shakes his head in disgust and then he looks over at Ahab and he says, "King of Israel, what is wrong with you? These are nothing but yes-men. These are nothing but just hirelings. Do you not have one guy around here that will tell us the truth? Do you not have one man that has a greater fear of God than he has of you?" And old Ahab said, "Well, yeah, there's one. His name is Micaiah, he's the son of Imlah, but I hate him! I just hate him because he always prophesies negative things about me. He squelches our fun. He's always talking about holiness and repentance and submission to God. I hate him." Did I not tell you this passage was relevant? Does America want to hear the truth today? Does America want to know what God thinks? No.

Last week we saw documented video evidence of Planned Parenthood, who is primarily paid through your tax dollars, is they were taking baby parts, lungs, hearts, livers, kidneys, and selling those baby parts for a profit making millions and millions of dollars. Where did they get those baby parts from? They got those baby parts from aborted

babies, babies that they had aborted, babies that they had murdered in the womb, and they took those little baby parts and sold them for millions and millions of dollars worth of profit. Our President was absolutely outraged at that. What was he outraged about? Was he outraged because babies were being slaughtered in the womb? No. Was he outraged because body parts of those precious little babies were being sold to make an illegal profit? No. He was outraged because he felt like those that were videoing the tape of those that they were talking to from Planned Parenthood were having their privacy invaded. Folks, we have a level of corruption in this government today that is absolutely unbelievable. There is a secular humanist agenda that is pro-rebellion, anti-God, radical feminists, pro-gay, pro-transgenderism, and that absolutely hates the word of God and anybody who proclaims it, and now anybody who even condones it.

Elijah was one of the greatest prophets to ever live, Ahab said about him, "He's my enemy," and then Micaiah comes up and he knows he's a great prophet of God, he knows he tells the truth, and Ahab says, "I hate him." The true prophets of God have always been hated by the world. They took Jeremiah and they threw him down into a muddy pit and he almost starved to death. They took Isaiah and a saw and sawed him in half. They decapitated John the Baptist. They crucified Peter upside down. They decapitated the Apostle Paul. They clubbed Thomas to death. They stoned Stephen. They burned John Hus to the stake. They burned Polycarp to the stake. And folks, there are more Christians being martyred for their faith today than there has ever been in the history of the church. Why? Because the world is antagonistic against the word of God.

Point 4: pressure to conform. Verses 13 through 14,

13 And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, "Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king. Let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." 14 But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I will speak."

The king sent a messenger to Micaiah to prepare him, to get him ready. The messenger told him what was going on. He said, "Look, the king is trying to get a treaty going with Judah. He's already talked to Jehoshaphat. He thinks things are going well. The king is very happy so when you talk to the king and you talk to Jehoshaphat, we want you to just be very very encouraging. Don't be negative. Don't say anything that's going to be out of the way and make him uncomfortable. We want you to be politically correct. We want you to compromise if you have to for the good of everybody. That's what we want you to do."

Now we have to be very careful here because there are a lot of Christians who use Jehoshaphat's stand for the truth to be mean and combative and pugnacious. There are some Christians who think that one of the spiritual gifts is criticism and they've got an overdose, and that's not good. They enjoy beating people up with the Bible. They enjoy jumping on young Christians and just discouraging them and frustrating them, and that's not a good thing. But having said that, that I'm not advocating meanness or

pugnaciousness, I am advocating backbone. Folks, the church needs backbone. I love the song that we sing here called, "O Church, Arise," and my favorite line in that song is this, "The church is an army bold, whose battle cry is love."

Romans 12:1-2, Paul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Our society is pushing us to conform. A few weeks ago I shared with you that the word "conformed" in the Greek in the New Testament means "to be poured into the mold." Back in the 1920s, Adolf Hitler understood the principle. To build a Germany that he wanted, he would have to control the thinking of the people. He knew that wasn't going to happen overnight but here was the plan: attack the family, attack the church, and then control the school systems. Little children in the school system were taught the principles of Nazism. They were taught to just trust their parents. They were taught to kind of ignore the teachings of Scripture because they were naïve and too simple. And they were told to trust the state, trust the government because the government had their best interest in mind. They were to conform into a cookie-cutter society for the good of the state, and those who would not conform could be eliminated. I talked to a friend of mine not long ago who was born in Germany, who was raised in Germany, and he said, "Doug, what's going on in America right now is eerily similar to what went on in Germany during the rise of Hitler."

So what do we do to not be conformed to this world? Romans 12:1 and 2 tells us. We are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. How does that happen? It happens as you saturate your heart with the word of God, as you make a commitment in your heart to walk with God in obedience to that word for his glory. And then what do you do? Then you stand. You stand. Come hell or high water, you stand. You stand how? Lovingly, compassionately, firmly and powerfully you stand and you refuse to conform.

I love how Micaiah said this, he said, "As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I will speak." That's the way it ought to be. Point 5: what we need to hear, not what we want to hear. Verses 15 through 23,

15 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 he answered him, "Go up and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."

Micaiah is speaking there with a smirk on his lips. I mean, you can just see the sarcasm just dripping out of his mouth.

16 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?" 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, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?" 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; 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. 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."

King Ahab wanted to get Ramoth-gilead back, he wanted to get back the land that he had lost. He wanted to go and fight Syria and he felt like this was his best opportunity to win that battle. Was it? Absolutely not. He received a prophecy from Micaiah, "If you go to battle against Syria, you're going to be defeated, and not only that but, Ahab, you're going to lose your life." Boy, that's not what Ahab wanted to hear but it sure was what he needed to hear, and if he had listened, his life would have been spared.

Sixth point: the calls to be politically incorrect. Verses 26 through 28,

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 in prison and feed him meager rations of bread and water, until I come in peace.'"" 28 And Micaiah said, "If you return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Hear, all you peoples!"

If you're going to be loyal to God's word, then you're going to lose some friends. You're going to make some people irate. Paul told us that was coming. 2 Timothy 3:12 he said, "all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." What does it mean to live godly? It means that you saturate your heart with the word of God and that you attempt by the power of the Holy Spirit to be obedient to that word for the glory of God and, folks, when that happens and your life changes, just your godly life is going to make some people mad and if you add a witness, a verbal witness on top of that, you're going to make a lot of people mad, and when people get irritated enough, persecution is inevitable. Micaiah was thrown into prison for doing, what? For just speaking the truth. For just doing exactly what Ahab asked him to do.

The last point is vindication by the word. Verses 30 through 38,

30 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you wear your robes." And the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle. 31 Now the king of Syria had commanded

the thirty-two captains of his chariots, "Fight with neither small nor great, but only with the king of Israel." 32 And when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "It is surely the king of Israel." So they turned to fight against him. And Jehoshaphat cried out. 33 And when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. 34 But a certain man drew his bow at random 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." 35 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. 36 And about sunset a cry went through the army, "Every man to his city, and every man to his country!" 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 the dogs licked up his blood, and the prostitutes washed themselves in it, according to the word of the LORD that he had spoken.

I want to take a minute and I want to read you something Philip Rykens said about this. I thought it was excellent. Rykens said,

"This is what happens to someone who rejects God's word and follows his own plans instead in contradiction to God's will. Notice the sovereignty and the irony of God's justice. In Syria, they called it a lucky shot but in Israel people knew better. Ahab was able to fool the Aramaeans but he was not able to fool God. The bow drawn at random was released according to divine Providence. Once God had determined that Ahab would die, he might as well have ridden in the battle with a huge target painted on his chest. The arrow of divine judgment always finds its mark.

Ahab's unlucky death, as it must have seemed to the king himself, vindicated the word of God. The Lord truly had spoken through his prophet when he promised that it would be for Ahab's life for Benhadad's. The Lord truly had spoken through the prophet Elijah when he promised that the dogs would lick up Ahab's blood. The Lord truly had spoken through the prophet Micaiah when he promised that Ahab would not return home safely from the battle. Just as Micaiah promised, the sheep of Israel were left without a shepherd and about sunset a cry went through the army, 'Every man to his city and every man to his country!' The lesson is easily drawn: do not reject the word of God. Do not resist his will.

The Scripture says that we need to confess our sins and believe in Jesus Christ. If we know this, we should not delay but ask Jesus to be our Savior and Lord. If we do not know Christ, we should not continue to sin against our better judgment. Having a sexual relationship outside of marriage, carrying a grudge, speaking falsehood, are sins against the holiness of

God. If we know that these things are contrary to the will of God, then we should not continue to have immoral sex or carry a grudge or live a lie. We should not allow ourselves even a small lust or petty resentment. If we know the will of God about such things and do as we please, we are as foolish as Ahab.

We must be careful not to let Ahab's epitaph become our own. An apt summary of the reason for the king's demise is this: ultimately he is judged as a man who heard from God yet did not act on the revelation he received. By the grace of God, may it not be said of us that we heard from God but did not believe in him or live for him."

In Isaiah 55:11, the Scripture says the word of God will not return unto him void. Micaiah was vindicated. Everything that Micaiah had prophesied came to pass with 100% accuracy. He said that Judah and Israel would lose the battle against Syria, they did. He said that Ahab would be killed and the dogs would lick his blood and they did. You know, that time period for vindication was very short. He said it one day, a few days later it happened. You may live for Christ, you may obey God, you may stand for truth and you might not be vindicated in this life, it might be in the next life, but whether vindication comes today or tomorrow or in eternity, rest assured of this, brothers and sisters, it will come. It will come.

We can't afford to be politically correct. Why not? The price is not worth it. The price is the glory of God.

Let's pray.

*Heavenly Father, we bow in your sweet presence now in humility as we've looked at a passage, Lord, that deals with such horrible sin, such neglect of truth, such fighting and struggling against the truth of your word. Father, that's going on in our nation. Help us to know how to combat it. Help us, Father, that we might be a people that show great love to those who are committing these atrocities and yet stand for such truth that we would never compromise our conviction. Father, help us that we might be the people of God that you called us to be, and it is in Jesus' holy and wonderful and precious name that we pray. Amen.*