

1 Kings Chapter 22 Commentary

1Ki 22:1 ¶ "And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. 2 And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to; the king of Israel. 3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? 4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses."

There were three years of peace between Ahab and Benhadad, because of their covenant seen in **1Ki 20:34** *"And Benhadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away."* Why? The Syrian army was greatly depleted in the former battle, and he did not have the strength to make war with Israel. However, Ahab is telling Jehoshaphat, king of Judah: Benhadad has not fulfilled his oath to restore all the cities taken by Benhadad's father, namely the city of Ramothgilead. Wherefore, Ahab seeks to go and take the city from him by force. Ahab forgets that Benhadad has had three years to reestablish and strengthen his army.

We must read to the verse 20 to find out that the king of Israel is Ahab. So, we see that Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, comes down to Samaria to Ahab. We know not the reason, except that the providence of God is at work to bring about Ahab's death. What business could a good king have with a very bad king? We are told in **2Ch 18:1 ¶ "Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab."** We believe that this visit was the result of a marriage contract between Ahab and Jehoshaphat, for Ahab's daughter to be married to Jehoshaphat's son, seen in **2Ki 8:16-19; 16 ¶ "And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. 17 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him always a light, and to his children."**

This resulted in a stern rebuke from God by Jehu to Jehoram in **2Ch 19:1-3; 1 ¶ "And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. 2 And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD. 3 Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God."**

There is a warning here for us, seen in **Nu 32:23 "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."** As demonstrated in the texts above, Jehoshaphat sins will find him out. God's people should not have anything to do with those who are sowing seeds of evil, as seen in **Jas 1:19 ¶ "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."** I think we can safely say that Jehoshaphat is quick to speak and agree with one who is his adversary. Remember, Jehoshaphat is a good king, and Ahab is a bad king.

5 "And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD today. 6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

Jehoshaphat has enough sense to inquire of the Lord if this is the right thing to do. Ahab assembles his false prophets, and they all tell him to go and prosper, for the Lord shall deliver for the king.

7 "And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? 8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. 9 Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah. 10 And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets

prophesied before them. **11** And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. **12** And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king's hand. **13** And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. **14** And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak. **15** ¶ So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king. **16** And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?"

Zedekiah makes horns of iron and prophesies: with these shall the king push the Syrians until they are devoured.

Jehoshaphat has sense enough to realize that these are not prophets of God, and asks Ahab: is there not a prophet of God of whom we may inquire? Ahab acknowledges that there is one, but Ahab hates him for telling him the truth and always prophesying against Ahab.

They send for Micaiah, the prophet of the Lord. The one who goes to get him tells him what is going on and tells him to prophesy the same as the false prophets. Micaiah replies that he can only tell what the word of the Lord saith to him.

When Micaiah comes before the kings he prophesies exactly as the false prophets, but he does it with such sarcasm that both kings know that he is not telling them the truth. King Ahab scolds him to tell him the truth.

17 "And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. **18** And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?"

Micaiah now tells these kings: "***I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master:***" which would be a prophecy of Ahab's death. He also tells them to all go to their homes and not pursue this war against Syria.

Here we have a picture of those who hear the truth and receive it not, for their eyes are blinded, and they have ears that hear not, for their hearts are hardened against the word of God's truth, as we see in ***Joh 12:38-43; 38 "That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. 42 ¶ Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."***

At this point Jehoshaphat should have withdrawn from this covenant with Ahab and went home. However, God is still providentially using Jehoshaphat to get Ahab in the right place to bring about his death.

19 "And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. **20** And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. **21** And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. **22** And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. **23** Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee."

Micaiah continues and tells of the vision in which God revealed this unto him. Micaiah tells that the host of heaven were gathered to God on his right and left hands, and God asks who will go and persuade Ahab to go to Ramothgilead so he will be killed? Several spoke of what they could do but their ideas were not received. Then a spirit came before God, and tells God he will put a lying spirit in the mouths of the false prophets, and God tells

him to go and do so. God also tells the spirit that it will be successful. Micaiah tells the kings: God hath put the lying spirit, in the mouths of these false prophets, and that God has spoken evil concerning king Ahab, as I told you to start with.

At this point, having heard what God has said through the prophet Micaiah, and that it was God's purpose to slay Ahab: Jehoshaphat should have told Ahab: you are on your own. Why? Because God has said for everyone to go home and not go to war.

24 "But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee? 25 And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself."

Zedekiah, the false prophet that made the horns of iron, smites Micaiah on the cheek and asks: which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak to thee? Notice that in verse 21 the spirit is not capitalized, which indicates it was not a Spirit of God. However, it is capitalized in verse 24, which would indicate a true Spirit of God. This brings to remembrance that Satan, his angels, and all his evil spirits, recognize that there truly is a God in heaven, however, they refuse to bow to him in humble submission to his rule over them. This is what separates the saved from the unsaved.

Micaiah tells Chenaanah, you will understand when you hide yourself from death. There is a study reference here to **1Ki 20:30 "But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Benhadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber."** There seems to be no connection between these two incidents, except to show that Zedekiah would hide himself as Benhadad did when he lost his battle. Many commentators believe that Zedekiah went to battle with Ahab, to encourage him with his horns of iron, and when Ahab was wounded with a wound to death, Zedekiah went and hid himself as Benhadad did earlier. Why would Zedekiah hide himself? Because he would have been exposed to be a false prophet, and he hides to avoid being put to death, because in that time false prophets were slain.

We see a picture here that they treated Micaiah as they did Christ in **Mt 26:67 "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, 68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?"** Which certifies that Micaiah was truly a prophet of God and foretells of some of the things they will do to Jesus before they crucify him.

26 "And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; 27 And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. 28 And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you."

King Ahab has Micaiah put in prison and orders him to be fed the bread and water of affliction until he returns in peace, which will not happen. Micaiah tells king Ahab: "**If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me.**" Micaiah also tells Israel, this ignorant king is not listening to God, but you should hearken to the voice of God.

Again, we see that idolators have hardened hearts, eyes that see not, and ears that hear not. Both Israel and Judah are sold out to idolatry, with only the priesthood and some of Judah remaining faithful to God.

29 ¶ "So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead. 30 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. 31 But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. 32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. 33 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him."

Notice how slick with treachery king Ahab is. Ahab tells king Jehoshaphat to put on your royal attire, and I will disguise myself to go into battle. The king of Syria has ordered his people to fight only against king Ahab. The

Syrians, seeing king Jehoshaphat in his royal apparel, start to war against him. King Jehoshaphat cries out so that the Syrians understand that he is not king Ahab, and they turn away from him to seek king Ahab.

We see that God providentially protects Jehoshaphat, since he is a good king. God does the same thing in our own lives, even when we do like king Jehoshaphat and do stupid things.

34 "And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. 35 And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. 36 And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. 37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria."

Now we see the hand of God at work. A man draws a bow at a venture, and it just happened to smite king Ahab between the joints of the harness. It appears that the joints of the harness simply means where the pieces of armor were joined together. Howsoever, none can stay the hand of God in accomplishing his divine will and purpose, and that arrow was divinely guided to smite king Ahab and fulfill God's will. No armor of man can withstand the hand of the divine justice, and the decree of God. This is demonstrated for us in **Job 40:15-19; 15 ¶ "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. 16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. 17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. 18 His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. 19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him."** This text shows us: man cannot slay, nor control, behemoth, but Jesus, the Creator, is able to lay him low and subdue him. God will have his way, and none can stay his hand.

38 "And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake."

This is the fulfillment of the prophesy of Elijah in **1Ki 21:17-19; 17 ¶ "And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. 19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."**

When we think about all the prophesies of God, and how they come to pass, it is very astonishing to our minds. It is a reminder to us that God never fails to fulfill his promises and covenants. It also reminds us that we need to study the word of God to know what the covenants and promises of God are, which will be a comfort to us and a sustainer of our faith in Christ.

39 "Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, 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 stead."

Ahab dies and his son Ahaziah reigns in his stead. We are told that king Ahab made a house of ivory, which makes us wonder if he was trying to emulate King Solomon.

41 ¶ "And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42 Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 43 And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places. 44 And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel."

We are told here that king Jehoshaphat reigned for 25 years in Jerusalem, and that he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. However, there are still high places which have not been torn down and destroyed,

and the people still used them for sacrifices. We are not told if they are sacrifices to the Lord or not, but since high places were usually used in idolatry, we can presume they were still idolators in Judah.

King Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. Which one, we are not told here. There were three kings of Israel that reigned while king Jehoshaphat reigned: king Ahab, king Ahaziah, and king Jehoram. However, since king Ahaziah has just started to reign in king Ahab's place, we would believe that this is the king of Israel with whom he made peace. We know from scripture that he formed a league with Ahab, and he shall form a league with Jehoram.

45 "Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed, and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 46 And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land."

We shall read more of king Jehoshaphat later in Chronicles. We are told that the remnant of the sodomites that remained in Judah, which his father king Asa did not rid the land of, were removed under his reign, seen in **1Ki 15:11-14; 11 "And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father. 12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. 13 And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron. 14 But the high places were not removed: nevertheless, Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days."** Why mention just the sodomites? Sodomy was a part of idolatrous worship. Wherefore, we can believe king Jehoshaphat did a more thorough search of the land than his father did, thus ridding the land of all idols and sodomy.

This is a reminder to the New Testament Church that it is not to have in fellowship, with any that are practicing sexual immorality.

47 "There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king. 48 Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber. 49 Then said Ahaziah, the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not. 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 stead."

Why mention no king in Edom? Back in king David's reign over all Israel, Edom had been overthrown and became subjects to Israel and king David, who set up deputies to rule over Edom. This remained in place throughout Jehoshaphat's reign and will continue until his son Jehoram takes the throne. In Jehoram's reign, Edom will revolt and make their own king. We will read of this in 2 Kings and Chronicles. We point out, both Jehoshaphat and Ahab have sons named Jehoram, or Joram, who reigned after their demise.

51 "Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. 52 And he did 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 For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done."

Ahaziah, Ahab's son, was just like his father king Ahab and did evil in the sight of the Lord. Notice that Ahaziah only reigned two years. From here we will go into the next book and meet the Moabites again.

This chapter has given us examples of a lot of things we ought not to do, and a few of what we ought to do. Mostly, it points out to us that idolatry is an abomination in the sight of God. It is in direct conflict with the first of the Ten Commandments given to Israel and to us. What do you mean to us? Remember the scripture in **Mt 22; :35 "Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."** Is not the New Testament Church charged to love the Lord with all the heart, mind, and soul? Therefore, the Ten Commandments are still effective, as a schoolmaster, in our lives here in time. But I thought we were removed from under the law? We were removed from under the ceremonial and sacrificial

laws, not the Ten Commandments, which we are told are ***Ga 3:24-25 "our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."*** Also, the only one of the Ten Commandments not repeated in the New Testament is the keeping of the sabbath.

May God help us all to be completely obedient to God's laws and commandments, and especially to enable us to fulfill the two great commandments as outlined by our Saviour and Lord, we ask in the name of Jesus our Saviour, Amen!