

## 1 Kings 22

We step back into the scene here having just learned a lesson regarding the grip of greed, and the “More” mentality. The bible says, “...we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Tim 6:7-10 and It’s not that being rich is a problem, or even working hard to make a good living is wrong, the bible teaches the opposite. We’re to do our best to provide for our families, be diligent workers and wise stewards with the resources that God entrusts to us. But its that insatiable, unquenchable desire that refuses to be satisfied and will compromise wherever the need may be in order to get ahead that will kill you, and serve as a snare to your soul. If you can land a good job, and advance in the company, get healthy raises now and then, hey that’s great. But remember that in the balance of it all needs to be the priority of keeping the main thing the main thing and the main thing is Jesus Christ And placing Him, and His protocol 1<sup>st</sup> in our lives. Remember Jesus said that our Heavenly Father knows that we need to eat, knows we need clothes on our backs, and liquids to keep us alive. And he said, “*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*” Matt 6:33 Be careful to keep proper priorities, be a man or a woman of godly integrity and uprightness of heart, and the Lord will take care of your life. And be content with such things as you have, God help us to learn what it means to be content.

Ahab, the king of Israel had “Samaria” but he wanted “All area.” and Even though he had power, prestige, position, popularity, possession and all those things that go along with being a king it wasn’t enough, the flesh is never satisfied. Satisfaction lies just ever so slightly out of our grasp and we seem to be perpetually persuaded that if I just had “\_\_\_\_\_” then I’d be satisfied. And you may be, for a week, or a month, perhaps a year, but eventually we find ourselves longing for something else to meet the need that what we thought would bring us contentment just couldn’t. Listen, only Jesus Christ truly satisfies, outside of Christ is discontentment and continual covetousness. “*Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied.*” Prov 27:20 Ahab had his eyes on a vineyard that he thought would make a great little vegetable garden right there by his palace. The problem is that the land wasn’t his; it belonged to a man of principled priorities, Naboth. And in his *desire* Ahab fell into the temptation and snare of covetousness, bearing false witness, and committing murder all so he could have some veggies with his dinner. The *desire* for more is a *dangerous* thing.

And even though it was Jezebel who devised the wicked plan of Naboth’s demise, God went to Ahab about it because the husband is accountable for his home. And he basically told Ahab that he was a dead man and that his lineage was going to be cut off because of the way that he’d provoked the Lord to anger. You know God knows the inner motives and ulterior agenda’s of our hearts, man looks to the outward appearance, but God searches our hearts.

And even though no one could pin all those things on Naboth circumstantially, God knew what was happening in reality. And God pronounced judgment upon him and Jezebel saying that the dogs would lick his blood off the ground like they did Naboth's and that they would eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.

Well, upon hearing that he actually humbled himself before the Lord and began to mourn, be clothed in sackcloth, and fast. And we read in vs 28-29 of ch 21.

God is so eager to show mercy, and I don't know if this was any real repentance on Ahab's behalf. But God definitely honored the fact that he humbled himself before the Lord, and He honors your humility before Him as well. We read in Isa 66:1-2, "*Thus says the LORD: 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist,' Says the LORD. 'But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.'*" and The idea behind that word "look" is to look upon with favor, with regard. God honors those who respond positively to His word. But the one who thinks he's exempt from God's word will be in for a rude awakening. Well, we read in vs 1-3.

Vs1-3

Remember God had granted Ahab victory over Ben-Hadad (king of Syria) against overwhelming odds so that Ahab would know that the Lord is God, not Baal. And God had appointed Ben-Hadad to destruction but Ahab let him go on the basis that everything under his jurisdiction that his dad had taken would be restored to Israel. Perhaps a few yrs had gone by and he hadn't made good on everything and so Ahab is saying here, "This territory is rightfully ours, but we've been too timid to claim it." and Jehoshaphat from the southern kingdom of Judah (who was a good king, a God-fearer) went to visit the godless Ahab (2<sup>nd</sup> Kings informs us that Ahab's daughter was Jehoshaphat's son's wife, that's where the connection is made) they had allied themselves through marriage. Which is a point in and of itself regarding being unequally yoked, when we get there we'll see that Jehoshaphat's son was a wicked king in Judah because his wife was Jezebel's daughter and the bible is real clear that we're not to yoke up with unbelievers in that way. How can the Temple of God have fellowship with idols, how can light and darkness co-exist, and yet so often I find people seeking to do just that, generally to the downfall of the believer. But while Jehoshaphat is there visiting Ahab we read here.

Vs4

Let's pause right here for a moment, there's a huge red light in this vs, anybody see it? Jehoshaphat in a nice and poetic way says, "sure I'll help you" but notice what he says, "*I am as you are.*" Stop right there, "No you're not Jehoshaphat, you're a godly king, Ahab is a godless king, you want to do what God would have you to do, Ahab wants to do what Ahab wants to do. You have a *desire* towards God; Ahab *disdains* the things of God. You may be of the same nationality but you're *not* as he *is*." So this is a bit of a stain on Jehoshaphat's record, he shouldn't have buddied up with Ahab like this.

The bible says, “...*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*” Eph 5:11 Its so important to be careful regarding who you link up with as it pertains to your endeavors. And I’m not saying you can’t higher non-believers to do the job, but I would say don’t go into business with an unbeliever. There are 2 different sets of standards there, and inevitably it’ll lead to compromise somewhere, so the caution here is to be cautious as to whom you choose to align yourself with. “*He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.*” Prov 13:20 You’ve got a buddy, or you gals have a girl friend who’s always blowing life with no real regard for repentance, hey, find a different buddy. Because mark my words (well its really God’s word) but their bad company will corrupt your good morals. Walk with the wise, and you’ll *become wise*, but hang out with fools and you’ll share their *demise*. Again, “*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.*” Prov 12:26 It was a mistake for Jehoshaphat to befriend Ahab, he just says, “Sure whatever you need man, me casa su casa” (kind of a thing).

But to his credit we see his convictions permeating to a degree even here as we read in vs 5.

Vs5

Now obviously it would’ve been better if Jehoshaphat would’ve inquired of God’s Word *before* he aligned himself rather than *after* he aligned himself. But nonetheless he says, “Yeah, lets do it, but lets go ahead and see what God has to say about it, what do you say?” and This is such a key for you and me as it pertains to the various endeavors of our lives, that we consult with the Lord and seek out His counsel regarding the situation. “God would you have me to do this, or partake in that.” Some things are black and white, “Should I stay the night with my boyfriend?” Let me tell ya you don’t even need to pray about that one, the answer is a resounding and emphatic “NO!” But we’re to be granting God access to guiding the details of our lives. And it’s not a major aspect of the context but I like the fact that Jehoshaphat said, “Lets inquire for the word of the Lord *today*.” We need the guidance of God’s word daily. Give us this *day* our daily bread, even as we’re to take up our cross daily, so we’re to count the cost and inquire of His word, daily. And I’m not going to say that it’s not a difficult discipline, but seek the Lord, that He might make it your desire, that it wouldn’t be a burden, but a blessing, not obligation, but opportunity.

Vs6

There are those who would make these guys out to be prophets of Baal, but since Jehoshaphat just asked for prophets of the Lord I think that that’s what these guys claim to be. But it seems to me that they fall into the category of hirelings rather than true shepherds, they’re Ahab’s “Yes” men. Just telling him whatever he wants to hear in the name of the Lord as long as they can keep their job, sort of a thing. False prophets, and they’re delivering the deceitful kisses of the enemy. The bible says, “*Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*” Prov 27:6

Tender to the touch, but destructive to the soul, this is a situation not unlike Paul warned Timothy about when he said, “...*the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*” 2 Tim 4:3-4 Not interested in the truth, but only in hearing what they want to hear, “Everything is going to be ok, do what you need to do, you’re still in God’s good favor.” That’s what keeps the paychecks coming, I think of that John Edwards fella, I don’t know if he’s still the fad, but for awhile he’s was the big thing, “Crossing Over.” But did you notice that he never had bad news for anyone? It was always ultimately assurance that all was good, and I don’t know that I’ve ever come across someone who called the psychic hotline and was told that death, dismemberment and destruction was right around the corner. That stuff doesn’t sell, I need good news, riches, the love of my life, and good fortune awaits me. And this is the type of thing we’ve got going on here in the name of the Lord, and it happens in churches today. But because Jehoshaphat genuinely loves the Lord, this doesn’t settle right with him, he’s got a check in his spirit about this whole thing, he’s discerning that though they’re speaking in the name of the Lord, that the whole situation doesn’t carry the countenance or the demeanor of the Lord. And the bible is real clear about God’s position against those who say, “Thus says the Lord,” when the Lord has not spoken. That’s why I try to be real careful about how I represent the Lord and what He has to say, because I don’t want to find myself in the position of saying that He’s said, what He’s never said. But Jehoshaphat senses that this is a hoaked up deal. Yeah there’s safety in the multitude of counsel, but be careful regarding the multitude you seek. It seems to be so common when someone is so desperately wanting to do what they want to do that they’ll keep seeking people out until they finally find someone who’ll agree with them and then they say, “That’s confirmation, that person’s hearing from the Lord.” Surround yourself with faithful friends.

Vs7-9

“There’s this one guy but I *hate* that guy because he’s always saying bad things about me. Can’t we just consent that these 400 are convincing enough?” God help us to be “the one guy” that’s willing to stand for righteousness regardless of the cost or how that places us on the outside of the loop. Micaiah’s like Elijah as far as Ahab is concerned, a prophet of doom. In reality these guys were the best friends he had, they were willing to suffer the consequences of telling him the truth rather than sucking up in order to stay in his good graces. As you follow the text it seems as though Ahab already had Micaiah in prison and he had to bring him up here to hear from him. You would think that after the prophet spoke of God’s granting him victory in the last 2 battles he might be open to hearing from the Lord, but he’s not interested, just wants to follow thru with his own agenda. And I find its common for people to hate the messenger because of the message. Like Paul said when writing to the Galatians, “*Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*” Gal 4:16 You’ve heard the saying, “The truth hurts.” Or “It’s only exposed toes that feel stepped on.” and Often times people take their aggressions out on the messenger, but its not my word, its God’s word. When Jesus was praying for His disciples in John 17 He said, “*I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them*” John 17:14

Why, because men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, but God's Word has a way of exposing situations and shining light on the reality of a particular circumstance or scenario. And Ahab hated that about Micaiah's messages, if he just repent and respond to God's Word, it would be good news, but because he wants to carry on in his carnal ways it he considers good evil and evil good. What does the bible say? "*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*" Isa 5:20 Yet how many find themselves in this category today? Ahab was there as well.

#### Vs10-12

So this is a prophetic side show complete with visual aids and everything! Ahab and Jehoshaphat are sitting there watching this whole charade and then Zedekiah comes forward with these horns of iron and starts running around all dramatic like and charging after people like a bull or something and says, "Thus says the Lord" when the Lord hadn't said. I mean he's really pitching the sale here, and the idea is that these 2 kings are these 2 horns of iron and the Lord will make them a dynamic unstoppable duo! and All the other prophets are all, "That boy's good!" and They jump on board in agreement with him.

#### Vs13-14

So the show is going on, Micaiah is back stage with the stage manager and he's pressuring him saying, "Look, everyone else is giving the king good news, can't you just follow suit for once, give him good news." As though rather than simply being a mouth piece he wields some sort of influence with God and can put in a good word for him so as to cause God to do what he wants him to do. But Micaiah says, "All I can say is what God says." Hey, here's an example to follow, this guy is going to hold true to God's Word regardless of the cost, who he's speaking before, or anything else. Paul echoed this mentality when he said, "*For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.*" 2 Cor 2:17

And again, "*...we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*" 2 Cor 4:2 and To the Galatians, "*For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.*" Gal 1:10 "The king may have me in chains but I'm the bondservant of the Lord, and I can only speak what He says." Good for you Micaiah, God help us to have this same resolve.

#### Vs 15-16

Apparently Micaiah's tone was obviously discernable as sarcastically agreeing with the others and Ahab was like, "Just give it to me straight, what's the Lord have to say?" "I want the truth!" "You can't handle the truth!" (Is the scene here.) Suddenly Micaiah's countenance gets real sober.

Vs17

In other words, “You’re going to die in this battle.”

Vs18

Rather than repent, he just repeats his frustrations. “See I told you this guy doesn’t like me, 400 guys saying good things and this guy alone speaking against me.” The bible says, “*Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, Yet his foolishness will not depart from him.*” Prov 27:22 God extended opportunity after opportunity to this guy and he just hardened himself against the word and the warnings of God. Prov 29:1 “*He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*”

Vs19-23

Micaiah tells him of a vision that he had, the hosts of Heaven at God’s right hand and His left. The right hand being the place of honor, the left meaning those fallen angels. People often believe that Satan or demons have no access to the presence of God, that’s not what the bible teaches. Job shows us that Satan very much so has access to God; now one day he’ll find his permanent place in the lake of fire. But as for now he can present himself before God, and if you think he’s an equal opposite to God, you’re greatly mistaken again. He has a very limited sphere of operation according to God’s allowing, God is the Creator, he is created. You would have to look to perhaps Michael the arc angel to find his opposite, but he’s no in anyway an equal opposite to God. And Satan, and the demonic entities can only go as far as God will allow, and in reality with this situation God is simply allowing Ahab the desire of his heart. He wanted to be deceived, wanted to hear only what he wanted to hear, didn’t care about the truth. And so God says, “Fine, if you’re not interested in the truth you’ll be given a strong delusion that you might believe the lie.” 2Thess tells us that God will allow that again on a global scale when after the rapture the A.C. is revealed and those who refused to believe in Jesus Christ will be deceived by the A.C. If you don’t want to hear or believe the truth God won’t force you to, you free to buy the lie. But know this, *deception* (Vs 22) leads to *disaster* (Vs23) culminating in *disregard* for God’s word (Vs 27) which results in *death* (Vs37).

Vs 24

“Hey, I’m the one speaking as by the spirit of the Lord here, what gives you the audacity to say that you’re speaking by the Lord saying something totally different?” It’s interesting to me to see that Zedekiah sensed that he was speaking by supernatural influence. They were both speaking by the spirit, but only 1 of them by the *Holy* Spirit. And this probably fortified Ahab’s position in going with the 400 remember when Jeroboam stretched out his hand at the altar in ch 13 against the man of God and his hand withered right there on the spot. Well Zedekiah just smacked Micaiah across the face and nothing happened to him, so, “I guess you’re not all that after all Micaiah?”

Vs25-28

Rather than repenting he disregarded God's Word, "Put him back in jail until I return in peace." and Micaiah says, "If you ever return in peace, God hasn't spoken by me," and he calls everyone there to take heed and bear witness.

#### Vs29-30

I wish I had a good reason why Jehoshaphat went ahead and sided with him, I just don't. Nor do I know why he didn't go "hmmm" when Ahab disguised himself saying he wanted to get into the thick of the battle, but he could go ahead and wear his robes.

#### Vs31-38

So the battle begins to rage, they all head for the king, he starts screaming like a Jr. high girl, they realize its not Ahab (In reality 2<sup>nd</sup> Chron 18:31 alludes to the fact that he cried out to the Lord and the Lord delivered him) but they quit pursuing him. And some guy just "randomly" fires an arrow and like a sin seeking missile the thing lodges right between the joints of Ahab's armor. And just like Micaiah had said he died that day and the people of Israel returned home like sheep with no shepherd, no leader to guide them back. Like Elijah said, the dogs licked his blood, and like the nameless prophet of ch 20 in vs 42 said, Ahab gave his life in exchange for Ben-Hadad whom he'd let go. So there's just no escaping the ramifications of the word of God. God is not a man that He should lie, and His word will *always* come to pass.

#### Vs39-40

So militarily and economically he was a pretty good king, but spiritually (which as far as God is concerned is really the only thing that matters) he was a dismal failure. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Again we see the necessity of seeking 1<sup>st</sup> the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness. (Now the scene shifts to Judah)

#### Vs41-50

Overall Jehoshaphat was a godly king of whom the Chronicles record more details. The reason his ships were wrecked was because he allied Ahab's son as well and the Lord destroyed that work (2<sup>nd</sup> Chron 20:37) and we see in vs 49 that Jehoshaphat finally learned his lesson and refused to enter a business relationship with the ungodly.

#### Vs 51-53

What can I say? Dad's (parents) have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying and don't belittle the influence you have in your children's life, like father, so often, like son. The things they hear and see *in* you, and learn *from* you, they will most likely emulate. Now they have a personal choice to make, and it's not always the right one, but we're to do our part in demonstrating to them what it means to lead our lives set *apart to* the Lord, being *right with* the Lord, and humble *before* the Lord, that they might imitate us as we imitate Christ.

Prayer points: Not to align ourselves with the ungodly, to seek out God's counsel daily, being willing to stand alone, against the crowd, firm in Your position as found in Your Word, to speak only what God says in a situation not tell people what they want to hear. To hold fast to the truth, not have itching ears and to have the testimony of not turning aside from doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord.

