

# 1 Kings 22 - Ahab Dies; Jehoshaphat's Good Reign in Judah; The Beginning of Ahaziah's Evil Reign in Israel

II. The divided kingdom from the North-South division until the Assyrian invasion (1 Kings 12:1—2 Kings 17:41)

(12) Israel during Elijah's Ministry (1 Kings 17:1—2 Kings 1:18)

(C) Ahab's ongoing covenant rebellion (1 Kings 20:1—22:40)

(c) Ahab's death as a result of rejecting Micaiah's prophecy (22:1-40)

(D) Jehoshaphat's reign in the South (22:41-50)

(E) Ahaziah's reign in the North (22:51-53)

Another significant battle occurred between the battle of Ramoth-gilead, which the writer recorded in this chapter (853 BC), and the battles he recorded in 1 Kings 20. Ahab and his Aramean ally Ben-Hadad II (860-841 BC) defeated their mutual foe, King Shalmaneser III of Assyria, at Qarqar on the Orontes River in Aramea (also in 853 BC). Assyrian records set the date for this battle *making it one of the clear benchmarks in OT chronology*.

The writers of Scripture did not refer to this battle, but a record of it that Shalmaneser wrote has survived and is now in the British Museum [see James Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, p278-79, for a translation of it]. Perhaps it was this victory that encouraged Ahab to challenge his ally at Ramoth-gilead.

## 1 Kings 22

(c) Ahab's death as a result of rejecting Micaiah's prophecy (22:1-40) (Cf. 2 Chr 18:1-11)

1 Now three years passed without war between Aram and Israel.

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1 And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.

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2 During that third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit the king of Israel.

2 And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.

- For three years after the battle of Aphek (Cf. 20:26-34) there was no war between the Israelites and the Arameans

— However, in the third year (853 BC), shortly after Ahab and Ben-Hadad had fought Shalmaneser at the Battle of Qarqar (see introduction note above), Ahab decided that he needed to retake the important city of Ramoth in Gilead from the Arameans who had taken it from Israel earlier

### **An Alliance with the North**

One of the strangest partnerships in the Bible...

One result of Jehoshaphat's formidable strength was his attractiveness to Ahab, king of Israel, who both feared him and wished to use him as an ally. Ahab was the second king of the Omride dynasty of Israel, the most illustrious family in the Northern Kingdom's history. He had come to power at about the same time as Jehoshaphat (Ahab reigned from 874-853 BC). He was related to Jehoshaphat by a marriage alliance (Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram had married Athaliah, Ahab and Jezebel's daughter; 1 Kings 21:6; 22:2b).

3 Now the king of Israel said to his servants, "Are you aware that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, yet we are hesitant to take it out of the hand of the king of Aram?"

3 Now the king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, and we are still doing nothing to take it out of the hand of the king of Aram?"

3 The king of Israel asked his servants, "Were you aware that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, but we aren't doing anything to remove it from the control of the king of Aram?"

**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 So he said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go to battle with me at **Ramoth-gilead**?" And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Consider me yours, my people yours, and my horses yours!"

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."

4 Then he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you join me in battle against Ramoth-gilead?" "I'm with you," Jehoshaphat answered the king of Israel. "My army will join yours, and my cavalry will be your cavalry."

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.

- God had given Jehoshaphat peace; Ahab is asking him to go to war

- Several years had passed between Jehoshaphat's visit (v2) and Ahab's invitation (v4; Cf. 1 Chr 18:1-2)

— Evidently the three years of peace mentioned in v1 followed the Battle of Aphek (20:26-30; 873 BC). Ahab's invitation to Jehoshaphat to join him in battle against the Arameans at Ramoth-gilead (v3-4) must have taken place in 854 or 853 BC.

- "...Ramoth-gilead" - had been one of the chief cities in Gad, about 33 miles east of Jezreel, but the Arameans had captured it

- Jehoshaphat agreed for political reasons though he should not have done so for spiritual reasons; he was a godly king, faithful to the Lord

— What had happened that would cause a good king like Jehoshaphat to make an alliance with a king as wicked as Ahab? Why would he fraternize with his natural enemy? It's an abnormal alliance, an unnatural confederacy.

— At this point it seems strange, but we will find out later that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, had married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel

— This was a case of a boy with a godly heritage married a girl with a wicked one...and the wicked influence prevailed

[2 Chr 18:2]

**5** However, Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please request the word of the LORD first."

**5** Moreover, Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire first for the word of the LORD."

**5** But Jehoshaphat also asked the king of Israel, "Please ask for a message from the LORD, first."

**5** And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day.

- Jehoshaphat was a devotee of Yahweh, so it would be typical for him to inquire concerning the Lord's will, though Ahab could not have cared less to do so

[2 Chr 18:6]

**6** So the king of Israel assembled the prophets, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Should I go to battle against Ramoth-gilead or should I refrain?" And they said, "Go up, for the Lord will hand *it* over to the king."

**6** Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle or shall I refrain?" And they said, "Go up, for the Lord will give *it* into the hand of the king."

6 So the king of Israel called in about 400 prophets and asked them, "Should we go attack Ramoth-gilead, or should I call off the attack?"

"Go attack them," they all said, "because the Lord will drop them right into the king's hand!"

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.

- To satisfy Jehoshaphat, Ahab called for the prophets, about 400 of them

— These were evidently prophets of the Lord (not to be confused with the 400 prophets of Baal that Elijah had already slain)

— Evil kings often had false prophets, who told them what they wanted to hear (Is 30:10-11; Jer 14:13-16; 23:16,21,30-36)

— Baal prophets would have been unacceptable to Jehoshaphat, but these were apostate prophets. They had no concern about obtaining and relating the true word of the Lord. Their desire was to give their king the kind of advice they thought he wanted to hear. This would please him and he would favor them.

— They could have been Jezebel's "400 prophets of the Asherah" who apparently escaped the execution of Ahab's "450 prophets of Baal" on Mt. Carmel (Cf. 18:19)

[2 Chr 18:6]

7 But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no longer a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of him?"

7 But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?"

7 But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD left here that we could talk to?"

7 And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?

- Their answer to Ahab's question somehow led Jehoshaphat to believe that they did not have the mind of the Lord, so he requested a *faithful* prophet of whom they could inquire (Cf. 2 Kings 3:11)

8 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, but I hate him, because he does not prophesy *anything* good regarding me, but *only* bad. *He is* Micaiah the son of Imlah." But Jehoshaphat said, "May the king not say so."

8 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. *He is* Micaiah son of Imlah." But Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say so."

8 "There is still one man left by whom we could ask the LORD what to do," the king of Israel replied to Jehoshaphat, "but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me. Instead, he prophesies evil. He is Imlah's son Micaiah."

But Jehoshaphat rebuked Ahab, "Kings should never talk like that."

**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.

- Ahab replied that there was one man of God remaining whom they could contact.

However, that one always prophesied evil for Ahab and for that reason Ahab hated him.

— Obviously Ahab was more concerned about feeling good than he was about knowing the truth

- Micaiah is the longer form of Micah (not to be confused with the prophet in Isaiah's day whose book bears his name)

— Micaiah, like Elijah, was one of the comparatively few faithful prophets in Israel in that day

— Urged on by Jehoshaphat's continuing interest in hearing from Micaiah, Ahab sent for him

[2 Chr 18:7]

9 Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah quickly."

9 Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah son of Imlah."

9 Nevertheless, the king of Israel called one of his officers and ordered him, "Bring me Imlah's son Micaiah quickly."

**9** Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.

- Other instances where a prophet provided war oracles from God include: 1 Kings 20:13,28; 2 Kings 3:11-19; 6:12-22; 7:1-7; 13:14-20; 2 Chr 11:1-4; 20:14-19

10 Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting, each on his throne, dressed in *their* robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them.

10 Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in *their* robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them.

10 Now the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah were each sitting on their respective thrones, arrayed in their robes, on the threshing floor at the entrance to the city gate of Samaria, and all of the prophets were prophesying in front of them.

**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.

- Perhaps Micaiah lived in or near Samaria where this conversation took place
- The threshing floor was usually an elevated area; it would have been a good place for Ahab and Jehoshaphat to prepare themselves for battle
- The gate of the city was the most popular place to assemble, so a large crowd was gathered including the 400 prophets
- Before Micaiah arrived there was a very interesting interlude. Another false prophet, Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, stepped forward to make his prophecy...

11 Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made horns of iron for himself and said, "This is what the LORD says: 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed!'"

11 Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made horns of iron for himself and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are consumed.'"

11 Chenaanah's son Zedekiah made iron horns for himself and told them, "This is what the LORD says, 'With these horns you are to gore the Arameans until they are eliminated!'"

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.

- One of these prophets, Zedekiah (Cf. v24), had even fashioned some horns out of iron and claimed blasphemously that God had told him that the two allied kings with the horns would gore the Arameans to destruction

12 All the prophets were prophesying this as well, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and succeed, for the LORD will hand *it* over to the king."

12 All the prophets were prophesying thus, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and prosper, for the LORD will give *it* into the hand of the king."

12 All the other prophets were saying similar things, like "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and you will be successful, because the LORD will hand it over to the king!"

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 Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him saying, "Behold now, the words of the prophets are unanimously favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably."

13 Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him saying, "Behold now, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably."

13 Meanwhile, the messenger who had gone off to summon Micaiah advised him, "Look, everything that the other prophets were saying was unanimously favorable to the king. So please, cooperate with them and speak favorably."

**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 But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, I shall speak it."

14 But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I shall speak."

14 "As the LORD lives," Micaiah replied, "I'll say what my God tells me to say."

**14** And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

- Micaiah told him that he would utter whatever words the LORD gave him regardless of what others might say. Like Elijah, Micaiah was prepared to stand alone against hundreds of false prophets.

**15** When he came to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, should we go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or should we refrain?" And he said, "Go up and succeed, for the LORD will hand *it* over to the king!"

**15** When he came 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 succeed, and the LORD will give *it* into the hand of the king."

**15** When Micaiah approached the king, the king asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should I not?"

"Go to war," Micaiah replied, "and you will be successful, because the LORD will hand it over to the king!"

**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.

- Ahab, as the host, asked Micaiah the same question he had asked the other prophets (v6)

— Micaiah told the king sarcastically exactly what he wanted to hear

16 Then the king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear that you will tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

16 Then the king said to him, "How many times must I adjure you to speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

16 When he heard this, the king asked him, "How many times do I have to make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth? Now do it in the name of the LORD!"

**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?

- Ahab recognized at once what Micaiah was doing: his own reply was equally sarcastic — He had probably never told Micaiah to swear to tell him nothing but the truth before, as he did not need to. But Ahab's saying that probably sounded good.

17 So he said, "I saw all Israel **Scattered on the mountains, Like sheep that have no shepherd.** And the LORD said, '**These *people* have no master. Each of them is to return to his house in peace.'**"

17 So he said, "I saw all Israel Scattered on the mountains, Like sheep which have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each of them return to his house in peace.'"

17 So Micaiah replied: "I saw all of Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD told me, 'These have no master, so let them each return to his own home in peace.'"

**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.

- The time for sarcasm was over. Micaiah related the burden of the Lord in all its devastating simplicity and force.

- "...Scattered on the mountains, Like sheep that have no shepherd" - Micaiah said he had seen, perhaps in a vision, all Israel scattered over the hills of Gilead like sheep without a shepherd, wandering and in need of leadership

- "...These *people* have no master" - the Lord had told the prophet that these sheep had no master, obviously a reference to Ahab

- "...Each of them is to return to his house in peace" - after the shepherd would be killed in battle, the sheep would return home without being pursued by the enemy, Aram

18 Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy *anything* good regarding me, but *only* bad?"

18 Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

18 Then the king of Israel told Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you that he wouldn't prophesy anything good about me, but only evil?"

**18** And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?

- The king responded to this prophecy of his death glibly. He could not have believed the LORD's word and gone into battle.

— Saul had done the same thing, also under the influence of an evil spirit (1 Sam 16:14-15)

**19** And *Micaiah* said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the angels of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left.

**19** *Micaiah* said, "Therefore, hear 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 and on His left.

**19** But *Micaiah* responded, "Therefore, listen to what the LORD has to say. I saw the LORD, sitting on his throne, and the entire Heavenly Army was standing around him on his right hand and on his left hand.

**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.

- *Micaiah* proceeded to explain the rest of what God had shown him, not about the battle but about the advice both kings had been receiving from the 400 prophets

— *Micaiah* saw the host of heaven, the angelic armies of God, assembled around God's heavenly throne

**20** And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one *spirit* said this, while another said that.

**20** The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that.

**20** "The LORD asked, 'Who will tempt King Ahab of Israel to attack Ramoth-gilead, so that he will die there?' And one was saying one thing and one was saying another.

**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** Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will entice him.'

**21** Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.'

**21** "But then a spirit approached, stood in front of the LORD, and said, 'I will entice him.'

**21** And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.

**22** And the LORD said to him, 'How?' And he said, 'I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You shall entice *him*, and you will also prevail. Go and do so.'

**22** The LORD said to him, 'How?' And he said, 'I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice *him* and also prevail. Go and do so.'

**22** "And the LORD asked him, 'How?'

"I will go,' he announced, 'and I will be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets!'

"So the LORD said, 'You're just the one to deceive him. You will be successful. Go and do it.'

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 then, behold, the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours; and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

23 Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you."

23 "Now therefore, listen! The LORD has placed a lying spirit in the mouth of all of these prophets of yours, because the LORD has determined to bring disaster upon you."

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.

- God Himself instigated and authorized the deception of Ahab, as indicated by His initial question (v20)

— God is truthful in that He keeps His unconditional promises to His people and fulfills His sovereign decrees and oaths. God's commitment to truthfulness, however, does not mean that He never uses deceit as a method of judgment on sinners. But He does so without compromising His truthful character and commitment to righteousness.

- The point was clear to all: the 400 prophets spoke with a lying spirit to deceive, and to lead Ahab to disaster in battle and to his death (v6,10-12)

— The Lord had apparently permitted a "lying spirit" (i.e. a demon) to speak through the 400 prophets as a means of bringing Ahab to his death

— Let it be remembered that Ahab had had ample chance to know truth through Elijah, but had stubbornly resisted it

**24** Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah approached and struck Micaiah on the cheek; and he said, "How did the Spirit of the LORD pass from me to speak to you?"

**24** Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, "How did the Spirit of the LORD pass from me to speak to you?"

**24** Right then, Chenaanah's son Zedekiah approached Micaiah and struck him on the cheek. Then he asked him, "How did the Spirit of the LORD move from me to speak to you?"

**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?

- Zedekiah (Cf. v11) certainly understood Micaiah's message as did everyone else. A slap in the face was a great insult (Cf. Job 16:10; Lam 3:30; Micah 5:1), greater than it is today.

— The false prophet was bluffing to the very end, brazenly claiming that he had not invented his prophecy himself but that it had been given to him by the Lord

25 And Micaiah said, "Behold, you are going to see *how* on that day when you go *from one* inner room to another *trying* to hide yourself."

25 Micaiah said, "Behold, you shall see on that day when you enter an inner room to hide yourself."

25 Micaiah replied, "You'll see how when the day comes that you run away to hide yourself in a closet!"

**25** And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

- Micaiah did not need to argue about whose prophecy had come from the LORD and whose had come from the lying spirit; time would tell. He was not trying to scare people when there was no real cause for fear.

— Zedekiah would soon find out who had the true word from the Lord when he fled to hide in an inner room (i.e. after Ahab had been killed, the false prophets would flee in terror)

26 Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah and return him to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the **king's son**;

26 Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son;

26 Then the king of Israel ordered, "Take Micaiah and place him in the custody of Amon, the city governor. Hand him over to Joash, the king's son.

**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;

- Ahab's reaction evidences the blindness and folly that overtakes those who disregard the Word of the Lord

— Rather than repenting, as he had done previously (21:27), now hardened in sin to the point of insensibility, Ahab ordered that Micaiah be given to Amon, the city mayor, and to Joash, the king's son.

- "...king's son" - possibly a title (office) of a royal official; however, it may also be taken as the literal son of Ahab (Cf. 2 Chr 28:7; Jer 36:26; 38:6)

27 and say, 'This is what the king says: "Put this *man* in prison, and feed him enough bread and water to survive until I return safely.'"

27 and say, 'Thus says the king, "Put this man in prison and feed him sparingly with bread and water until I return safely.'"

27 Give him this order: 'Place him in prison on survival rations of bread and water only until I come back safely.'

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 But Micaiah said, "If you actually return safely, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Listen, all you people!"

28 Micaiah said, "If you indeed return safely the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Listen, all you people."

28 "If you return alive," Micaiah responded, "then the LORD has not spoken by me." Then he added, "Listen, all you people!"

**28** And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Harken, O people, every one of you.

- Micaiah had the final word, however, and it was another gracious but strong warning for Ahab, indicating that the king would not return from battle safely

— The prophet also called on all present to remember his words for they would prove that the LORD had spoken through him when his prophecy came to pass

**29** So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up *against* Ramoth-gilead.

**29** So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up against Ramoth-gilead.

**29** So the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah both attacked Ramoth-gilead.

**29** So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.

30 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into the battle, but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into the battle.

30 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into the battle, but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into the battle.

30 The king of Israel suggested to Jehoshaphat, "I'll go into battle in disguise, but you keep your royal uniform on." So the king of Israel disguised himself and they both went into the battle.

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.

- Despite Micaiah's warning Ahab, the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, his ally, went up to Ramoth-gilead to face Ben-Hadad II, the king of Aram

— Despite his bold front, Ahab secretly feared that Micaiah was telling the truth. He, therefore, suggested that Jehoshaphat should dress in his regal robes (perhaps a special uniform), but that he himself should disguise himself as an ordinary soldier.

— The good Jehoshaphat did not perceive that he was being involved in trickery, which nearly cost him his life

31 Now the king of Aram had commanded the thirty-two commanders of his chariots, saying, "Do not fight with the small or great, but only with the king of Israel."

31 Now the king of Aram had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, saying, "Do not fight with small or great, but with the king of Israel alone."

31 Meanwhile, the king of Aram had issued these orders to 32 of his chariot commanders: "Don't attack unimportant soldiers or ranking officers. Go after only the king of Israel."

**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.

- Ahab did not know that he had become the personal target of Ben-Hadad and his men

— The king of Syria, it seems, did not care if everyone else escaped uninjured so long as he could have the king of Israel slain

— In view of the fact that Ahab had recently spared Ben-Hadad's life (Cf. 20:31-34), this was gross ingratitude. Perhaps Ben-Hadad justified his conduct on the ground that Ahab was a violator of the peace treaty, for Ahab had renewed the war to retake Ramoth-gilead.

32 So when the commanders of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "Surely he is the king of Israel!" And they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out.

32 So when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "Surely it is the king of Israel," and they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out.

32 So when the chariot commanders observed Jehoshaphat, they said by mistake, "It's the king of Israel!" and they turned aside to attack him. But Jehoshaphat cried out.

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.

- Dressed in his royal attire Jehoshaphat became the target of the whole Aramean army

— Under attack he cried out something that told the Arameans he was not the man they sought. Perhaps he cried out to God as well as to the soldiers since he trusted in and prayed to the Lord.

33 Then, when the commanders of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him.

33 When the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him.

33 When the chariot commanders saw that their target was not the king of Israel, they stopped pursuing him.

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.

**34** Now one man drew his bow **at random** and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am severely wounded."

**34** Now a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the fight; for I am severely wounded."

34 Meanwhile, somebody drew his bow aimlessly and struck the king of Israel between the scales where his armor breastplates joined, so he instructed his chariot driver, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, because I've been severely wounded."

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.

- "...at random" - "in his simplicity," or "without taking specific aim"

— The mathematical probability that the arrow would find its right target was extremely low. Yet directed by the judgment of the Lord, it found its mark.

— The manner in which Ahab was fatally wounded is one of many examples in Scripture of God using an incident that would have been regarded as accidental to accomplish His purpose

— Ahab was injured by an arrow shot at random. The man who shot the arrow did not knowingly aim it at the chink in the king's armor, but God directed him and guided the fatal missile to its mark (Prov 16:33).

35 The battle raged on that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot in front of the Arameans, and he died at evening, and the blood from the wound ran into the bottom of the chariot.

35 The battle raged that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot in front of the Arameans, and died at evening, and the blood from the wound ran into the bottom of the chariot.

35 The battle continued on for the rest of the day while the king of Israel was propped up in front of the Arameans until the sun set, at which time he died. The blood from Ahab's wound ran down into the bottom of the chariot.

**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.

- The king's chariot was large enough to accommodate Ahab as he sat propped up in it to watch the battle until sunset, when he died

— The reference to Ahab's blood running down onto the floor of his chariot sets the stage for the later word about the fulfillment of the prophecy of Ahab's death (v38)

36 Then the word passed throughout the army close to sunset, saying, "Every man to his city, and every man to his country!"

36 Then a cry passed throughout the army close to sunset, saying, "Every man to his city and every man to his country."

36 As the day drew to a close, this order was circulated throughout the army telling the soldiers, "Everybody go back to his city and to his own land."

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.

- The battle broke up when Ahab died; Ben-Hadad had achieved his objective as the Israelites could not take Ramoth-gilead

**37** So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria.

**37** So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria.

**37** So the king died and was brought back to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria.

**37** So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.

- The body of Ahab was returned to Samaria where he was buried. Had he not repented earlier (21:27) he would not have been buried at all (21:28-29).

— The fact that the Israelites buried Ahab at all is a tribute to God's grace

38 They washed out the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood (*it was there that the prostitutes bathed themselves*) in accordance with the word of the LORD which He had spoken.

38 They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood (now the harlots bathed themselves *there*), according to the word of the LORD which He spoke.

38 They washed the chariot by the reservoir of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood near where the prostitutes went to bathe, in keeping with the message that the LORD had spoken.

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.

- Ahab's chariot was then driven around to a pool (in the same place that Naboth died), where it was washed

— He suffered the disgrace of having the dogs lick his blood, and that at the pool where the despised and unclean prostitutes bathed. Perhaps this was fitting since Ahab, like the prostitutes, had sold himself to do evil.

— The story of Ahab concludes with his blood being desecrated in the company of Samaria's despised prostitutes and dogs. Ahab died as God had predicted he would (20:42; 21:19,21).

39 Now as for the rest of the acts of Ahab and everything that he did, and the ivory house which he built and all the cities which he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab and all that he did and the ivory house which he built and all the cities which he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

39 Now as to the rest of Ahab's accomplishments, everything that he undertook, the ivory palace he built, and the cities that he built, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, are they not?

**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 lay down with his fathers, and his son Ahaziah became king in his place.

40 So Ahab slept with his fathers, and Ahaziah his son became king in his place.

40 That's how Ahab died, just as his ancestors had, and his son Ahaziah became king in his place.

40 So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

### **Summary of Ahab's Evil Reign in Israel**

Ahab was a capable ruler in spite of his gross spiritual idolatry, which the writer of Kings emphasized. Other extra-biblical references to him indicate that he was generally successful militarily. This was due to the natural abilities that God had given him, and because God showed mercy to Israel. Saul, too, had the potential to be a good king of Israel. Ahab's alliance with Jehoshaphat began the period of peace between Israel and Judah that lasted 33 years. Archaeologists have discovered more than 200 ivory figures, bowls, and plaques in only one storeroom of Ahab's Samaria palace—a tribute to the wealth he enjoyed (Cf. v39). He also fortified several cities in Israel (v39).

However, in spite of all his positive contributions, Ahab's setting up of Baal worship as the official religion of the nation weakened Israel as never before. His reign took the Northern Kingdom to new depths of depravity. Because he did not acknowledge Yahweh as Israel's King, and did not submit to Him, Ahab's personal life ended in tragedy, even a violent death (Cf. Saul, 1 Sam 31).

Furthermore, the nation he represented experienced God's chastening instead of His blessing. Agricultural infertility and military defeat marked Ahab's reign.

Here is a summary of some points of comparison between King Ahab and King Saul:

- God gave both kings military victories at first
- Both kings failed to obey God completely by not executing their captured enemies
- God rejected both kings for their disobedience
- Neither submitted to Yahweh's authority
- Both kings voiced a measure of repentance
- Both learned they would die in battle but proceeded anyway
- Both kings disguised themselves before going into battle
- Both kings died violent deaths in battles with Israel's and Yahweh's enemies

The lives of Saul and Ahab reinforce the lessons they teach: submission to Yahweh brings blessing, but proud selfishness leads to destruction. As leaders of God's people, their behavior affected the people they led and resulted in hard times agriculturally, militarily, and spiritually. This is always the case.

(D) Jehoshaphat's reign in the South (22:41-50) (Cf. 2 Chr 20:31-37)

**41** Now Jehoshaphat the son of Asa became king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

**41** Now Jehoshaphat the son of Asa became king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

**41** Asa's son Jehoshaphat became king over Judah during the fourth year of the reign of King Ahab of Israel.

**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-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for twenty-five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

42 Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

42 Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king. He reigned 25 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah. She was the daughter of Shilhi.

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.

- Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, began his reign in Judah in 873 BC as co-regent with his father — This co-regency existed because of Asa's poor health (15:23) and it continued for three years until Asa's death in 870 BC, when Jehoshaphat became sole ruler

— This was the first instance of co-regency since Solomon had ruled jointly with David for a brief time

— Jehoshaphat was king for 25 years altogether (873–848 BC). He was one of Judah's eight good kings and one of its four reformers, like his father Asa.

— His reign ended with a co-regency with his son Jehoram that lasted five years (853–848 BC)

— For all but Ahab's first year on the throne of Israel, Jehoshaphat ruled over Judah; he became Judah's sole ruler in Ahab's fourth year (v41)

43 He walked entirely in the way of his father Asa; he did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD. However, the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

43 He walked in all the way of Asa his father; he did not turn aside from it, doing right in the sight of the LORD. However, the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places.

43 He lived like his father Asa and never abandoned that life. He did what the LORD considered to be right. Nevertheless, the high places were not demolished, and the people continued to sacrifice and burn incense on the high places.

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.

- Jehoshaphat removed the high places in Judah (according to 2 Chr 17:6), but 1 Kings 22:43 and 2 Chr 20:33 indicate that he did not remove them. Apparently he did remove them, but when the people restored them he did not remove the restored high places.

— Other kings of Judah who did not remove the high places were Joash (2 Kings 12:3), Amaziah (2 Kings 14:4), Azariah (2 Kings 15:4), and Jotham (2 Kings 15:35)

— Ahaz sacrificed at the high places (2 Kings 16:4), perhaps ones he restored. Those were then removed by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:4), rebuilt by Manasseh (2 Kings 21:3), and demolished again by Josiah (2 Kings 23:8,13,15,19)

44 Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel.

44 Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel.

44 Jehoshaphat also made a peace treaty with the king of Israel.

44 And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

- As mentioned previously (Cf. v39–40), Jehoshaphat and Ahab united in a treaty which resulted in peace between Judah and Israel during his reign

— This peace gained strength through the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, and Ahab's daughter Athaliah, who followed Jezebel's example and caused Judah problems

later (Cf. 2 Kings 11)

— A prophet rebuked Jehoshaphat for his alliance with Israel (2 Chr 19:2)

(1) His "bride compromise" when he married his son to Ahab and Jezebel's daughter (2 Kings 8:16-19; 2 Chr 18:1; 21:4-7)

(2) His "battle compromise" when he went into war with Ahab (18:2—19:3)

(3) His "boat compromise" when he joined with Ahab's son Ahaziah in a commercial venture (22:48-49; 2 Chr 20:31-37)

**45** Now *as for* the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might which he showed and how he made war, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

**45** Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might which he showed and how he warred, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

**45** Now the rest of Jehoshaphat's accomplishments, the power that he demonstrated, and how he waged war are written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, are they not?

**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 cult prostitutes who remained in the days of his father Asa, he eliminated from the land.

46 The remnant of the sodomites who remained in the days of his father Asa, he expelled from the land.

46 He also eliminated the male cult prostitutes who still remained from the time of his father Asa.

46 And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

- Jehoshaphat's achievements and attitudes are more fully expounded in 2 Chr 17-20.

These included ordering the teaching of the Law of Moses throughout Judah.

— God miraculously delivered Judah from the united armies of Moab, Ammon, and Edom in response to the king's prayers and his obedience to the Lord

— He was a strong ruler whose favor Philistia and Arabia courted

— Jehoshaphat also instituted many judicial reforms in Judah. The writer of Kings noted his purge of the remaining male shrine prostitutes (Cf. 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12) in particular.

— He was better than his father Asa, but not as highly acclaimed by the writers of Scripture as Hezekiah and Josiah, the other reforming kings who followed him years later

**47** Now there was no king in Edom; a governor *served* as king.

**47** Now there was no king in Edom; a deputy was king.

47 There was no king reigning in Edom; there was only a stand-in king.

47 There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king.

- Edom had been under Judah's control, but revolted during Jehoshaphat's reign

48 Jehoshaphat built ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go, because the ships were destroyed at Ezion-geber.

48 Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber.

48 Jehoshaphat had ocean-going vessels from Tarshish sail to Ophir for gold, but they never made it because they were shipwrecked at Ezion-geber.

**48** Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber.

- As a result of the unstable political situation in Edom, Jehoshaphat was able to build a fleet of trading ships at Ezion Geber on the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba with Israel's king Ahaziah, Ahab's eldest son (Cf. 2 Chr 20:36)

— The plan was to bring back gold from Ophir, in southwestern Arabia (Cf. 1 Kings 9:28; 10:11) as Solomon had done. But in some way the fleet was wrecked and never fulfilled its mission.

— It may well have been the Edomites who destroyed his ships at Edom's port of Ezion-geber

49 Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat was not willing.

49 Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat was not willing.

49 Ahab's son Ahaziah had offered to go. "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships!" he said. But Jehoshaphat was not willing.

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 lay down with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of his father David, and his son Jehoram became king in his place.

50 And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of his father David, and Jehoram his son became king in his place.

50 Later, Jehoshaphat died, as did his ancestors, and he was buried alongside his ancestors in the City of David. Jehoram his son became king in his place.

**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.

- Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram began reigning as co-regent with his father in 853 BC. When Jehoshaphat died in 848 BC, Jehoram reigned until 841 BC.

(E) Ahaziah's reign in the North (22:51-53)

**51 Ahaziah** the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel for two years.

**51** Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel.

**51** Ahab's son Ahaziah became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of King Jehoshaphat of Judah. He reigned for two years over Israel.

**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.

- "Ahaziah" - "Yahweh has grasped"; he was the oldest son of Ahab and Jezebel

— He began his reign of two official years (one actual year) in 853 BC and he ruled until 852 BC, during Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah

— Ahaziah's reign fell during the 33-year period of Israel and Judah's alliance (874-841 BC; 1 Kings 16:29—2 Kings 9:29)

52 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 misled Israel into sin.

52 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 caused Israel to sin.

52 He practiced what the Lord considered to be evil by living life like his father and mother did. He lived like Nebat's son Jeroboam, who led Israel into sin.

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.

- One of the results of Ahaziah's decision to following his parents' idolatrous example was that, during his reign, Israel lost some of its control of Moab (2 Kings 1:1; 3:5)

53 So he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done.

53 So he served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done.

53 He served Baal, worshipped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, in accordance with everything his father had done.

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 followed his parents' evil ways and those of Jeroboam. Baal worship continued in Israel under his protection and encouragement.

A short summary of Ahaziah's two-year term as king (853-852 BC) concludes 1 Kings. The events of his reign continue in 2 Kings 1. This unusual breaking place between 1 and 2 Kings was due to the need to divide this long book into two parts, each of which could fit on a standard scroll.