

Ahab's Self Betrayal
By
Rev. Todd W. Allen

August 7, 2005 Villa Rica
1 Kings 22:2-28

We are not able to see the hearts of men as God does. We are not supposed to sit in judgment on men but we are accountable for our own response to the gospel, and we are expected to take a stand for Jesus Christ. No one can escape his accountability or responsibility. We all must stand before the Judge of all the earth and then shall each man have his own praise of God, according to his faith.

In our scripture today we have a situation that can speak to us all to warn us against trifling with the Word of God. It deals with a portion of history in the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel about 850 years before the birth of Christ. Israel had been one nation until the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death.

Now there was Judah in the south with Jehosaphat as the king and Israel to the north with Ahab as king. Jehosaphat was considered a good king. He followed the example of David in living a life of faith and in seeking to obey the Lord. We are told in the scriptures that God blessed him and established the kingdom in his control. We read in 2 Chronicles 17:3-6: **The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, ⁴but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. ⁵So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute**

to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. ⁶He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.

We learn in this scripture that Jehoshaphat became allied with Ahab through a marriage. This was the marriage of his son Jehoram to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

In thinking about the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel we might liken them to two denominations. They represented two political entities each with a state religion. If you lived in Judah you followed the king and his religion. If you lived in Israel you followed its king and his religion.

After the division of Israel into two kingdoms there never was a good king in the northern kingdom of Israel. God sent them prophets to recall them to the true and right worship of God but they never returned and eventually they were taken captive by Assyria and never returned from that captivity. Only Judah survived and was chastened by the Lord through the Babylonian captivity, from which a remnant returned.

Because of this marriage Jehosaphat became friendly with Ahab. He had met Ahab and Jezebel at the wedding. And so it wasn't surprising that some years later he went to visit Ahab at Samaria.

Ahab put on a big barbecue. Everybody was very friendly. The two kingdoms hadn't had such friendship since they had become two kingdoms. But Ahab just couldn't pass up the opportunity to use this new friendship to strengthen his own kingdom. He proposed that Jehosaphat go with him to Ramoth-gilead and retake it for the kingdom of Israel. Syria had possession of it but Ahab claimed it rightfully belonged to Israel.

Ahab had been thinking about this for some time and Jehosaphat was just the man to help him. After all,

Jehosaphat had a famous name in the earth. He had never been defeated in battle. Ahab was certain of victory if only Jehosaphat went to war with him. Jehosaphat agreed to go. He said, **"I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."**

This was an unwise decision on Jehosaphat's but because of the marriage alliance he is now joined in an enterprise with the wicked Ahab. The marriage alliance has now become a war alliance.

Jehosaphat would have done well to seek guidance from the Lord before giving his blessing to the marriage of his son to Ahab's daughter. I wonder what Elijah would have counseled him about that? Or about getting involved in a war venture with the northern kingdom? But to his credit Jehosaphat did say to Ahab, **"Please inquire first for the word of the LORD."**

Better late than never. Now it is right at this point that we can begin to see the difference in these two kings in their approach to religion and God. Ahab agrees to Jehosaphat's request. He had the same Jewish heritage as Jehosaphat.

The Word of God was still coming in those days. You could get the Word of the Lord from a prophet of God. All Christian denominations have the Bible. The Bible was the beginning authority for every group of Christian since the time of the apostles. It is how that Word is received and obeyed that determines a church's integrity and purity.

Ahab had no difficulty in agreeing to seek the Word of the Lord. He readily agreed. But where did he seek for the Word of the Lord? He went to his paid professional cadre of prophets. These men were his personal appointees, or that of his wife Jezebel.

These counterfeit prophets played the religion game to the hilt. They were handpicked men who could

always be depended upon to give the Word of the Lord that suited Ahab and Jezebel. They were hirelings, sycophants, false prophets. They remind me of those little creatures that are so plentiful in Florida called chameleons. Chameleons have a chemistry that enables them to change color to adapt to the plant they happen to be on at the moment. If they are on a green leaf they turn green. If they move to a red leaf they turn red. If they are on a black piece of bark they can turn black. They blend into the foliage and so elude their attackers or enemies.

These counterfeit prophets were like chameleons in that they could adapt to whatever political position the situation called for. They simply waited for a signal from their chief Zedekiah. Whatever he said they would follow suit and the king would have the word he wanted to hear. Not only were these false prophets very sensitive to the political winds they were superb actors too. They could put on a show.

⁶Then 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."

But these 400 men did not persuade Jehosaphat. He detected that they were simply appointees of Ahab and that they were not true prophets of God. So he said to Ahab, **"Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?"** ⁸The 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."**

It is interesting to note at this point that Ahab did not object to Jehosaphat's rejection of the authenticity of these appointed prophets. Ahab knew that they were not true prophets of God; otherwise I am sure that he would have protested to Jehosaphat that these men were reliable men of God. Instead he acknowledges that there is a genuine man of God around. But he says I hate him because he doesn't prophesy good about me but always has something bad to say about me.

Jehosaphat gave a soft answer to that. **"Let not the king say so."** He knows that the Lord only has his true prophets say what is right and good. If we are offended it is because we resent the Word of God.

God lets us see the root cause of Ahab's unbelief. He was a man who knew that God spoke by His Word, who knew that God had sent prophets who spoke the Word of God, but he didn't like the message that came. The Word of God was distasteful to him. He wanted to be religious but he didn't want the God of the Bible. He wanted a god who would accommodate himself to his goals and aspirations, to his needs and desires. So he employed men who would tickle his ears and speak the word he wanted to hear. He wanted the reputation of being a religious king, one who supported religion and tried to move in the will of God.

So Ahab agrees to send for the true prophet but he forewarns Jehosaphat that this man of God will probably speak against their plan to go to Ramoth-gilead. Ahab really didn't care what the prophet Micaiah would say, he already knew what he was going to do. His only concern was that Jehosaphat support him in the venture. So he sends for Micaiah. He told an officer to bring him quickly. He wants to get this obstacle out of the way as soon as possible.

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."

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

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. ¹¹Then 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.'" ¹²All 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."

These men were actors, showmen. They devised special effects for their prophesying. This lent dramatic effect to their words.

¹⁵When Micaiah 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." ¹⁶Then 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?"

Ahab detected that this man of God was not giving the Word of God. How about that? Even a false professor of Christ can tell the difference between the true Word of

God and a contrived message. Perhaps it was in the tone of voice of Micaiah. Maybe his words were said in a sarcastic way, or it may simply have been the look on his face. But in any case Ahab knew that Micaiah was putting him on. But now God gives a warning to Ahab.

But now God gives a prophetic warning to Ahab.
¹⁷So Micaiah 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.' "

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

Now the prophecy is enlarged and greater detail is given of how Ahab will be self-betrayed and meet his death.

¹⁹Micaiah 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. ²⁰"The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. ²¹"Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' 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.' 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."

Please notice that God can and does allow Satan to speak deceiving words to men when they refuse to heed the word of God. God is the sovereign Lord. He can allow the very deceptions a person practices to be the cause of his own self-betrayal.

The self-will and deceit of Ahab became the cause of his own betrayal and death. By this time in his life he was so hardened against the Word of God that he refused to listen to it even when he was told that he would die in this military adventure. Had he repented and humbly received the Word of the Lord he would have saved his life. But no, he was determined to reject the Word of God once more in favor of his own scheming ambition.

And what about Jehoshaphat? He heard this prophecy too and could have backed out of the deal, but apparently he felt obligated to abide by his earlier words and not lose face by refusing to join Ahab in this war venture.

In closing today I ask you to ask yourself this question, Do I receive the Word of the Lord humbly and meekly, or do I resent it when it pinches me and rebukes me? When you hear a message that speaks directly to your heart do you blame the preacher for the sharpness and bite of the Word of God and perhaps like Ahab you say to yourself, He never speaks anything that soothes me and comforts me but always says some words that hurt me and make me feel uncomfortable?

We can hear the Word of God and be offended by it. We can easily find fault with the Bible-believing preacher. We can resent the message that demands that we put away sin and live righteously and godly in Christ Jesus. Or, like Ahab, we can be ambivalent toward the Word of God. We are drawn to it and once in awhile and go to a Bible believing church to hear the Word preached, and then go on about our business as though it

never made any difference. We can listen to the false prophets of our modern culture who preach, "do your own thing and enjoy yourself. Don't listen to the prophets of doom who preach a literal judgment and a real hell."

Let me ask you a personal question. Have you come to Jesus Christ truly confessing your sins and asking God to cleanse you? Have you told the Lord that you are willing to forsake all your sins and live as a follower and disciple of Christ? Come to him today and begin following him and his Word.

Ahab's Self Betrayal
By
Rev. Todd W. Allen

August 7, 2005 Villa Rica
1 Kings 22:2-28

We are not able to see the hearts of men as God does. We are not supposed to sit in judgment on men but we are accountable for our own response to the gospel, and we are expected to take a stand for Jesus Christ. No one can escape his accountability or responsibility. We all must stand before the Judge of all the earth and then shall each man have his own praise of God, according to his faith.

In our scripture today we have a situation that can speak to us all to warn us against trifling with the Word of God. It deals with a portion of history in the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel about 850 years before the birth of Christ. Israel had been one nation until the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death.

Now there was Judah in the south with Jehosaphat as the king and Israel to the north with Ahab as king. Jehosaphat was considered a good king. He followed the example of David in living a life of faith and in seeking to obey the Lord. We are told in the scriptures that God blessed him and established the kingdom in his control. We read in 2 Chronicles 17:3-6: **The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, ⁴but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. ⁵So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute**

to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. ⁶He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.

We learn in this scripture that Jehoshaphat became allied with Ahab through a marriage. This was the marriage of his son Jehoram to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

In thinking about the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel we might liken them to two denominations. They represented two political entities each with a state religion. If you lived in Judah you followed the king and his religion. If you lived in Israel you followed its king and his religion.

After the division of Israel into two kingdoms there never was a good king in the northern kingdom of Israel. God sent them prophets to recall them to the true and right worship of God but they never returned and eventually they were taken captive by Assyria and never returned from that captivity. Only Judah survived and was chastened by the Lord through the Babylonian captivity, from which a remnant returned.

Because of this marriage Jehosaphat became friendly with Ahab. He had met Ahab and Jezebel at the wedding. And so it wasn't surprising that some years later he went to visit Ahab at Samaria.

Ahab put on a big barbecue. Everybody was very friendly. The two kingdoms hadn't had such friendship since they had become two kingdoms. But Ahab just couldn't pass up the opportunity to use this new friendship to strengthen his own kingdom. He proposed that Jehosaphat go with him to Ramoth-gilead and retake it for the kingdom of Israel. Syria had possession of it but Ahab claimed it rightfully belonged to Israel.

Ahab had been thinking about this for some time and Jehosaphat was just the man to help him. After all,

Jehosaphat had a famous name in the earth. He had never been defeated in battle. Ahab was certain of victory if only Jehosaphat went to war with him. Jehosaphat agreed to go. He said, **"I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."**

This was an unwise decision on Jehosaphat's but because of the marriage alliance he is now joined in an enterprise with the wicked Ahab. The marriage alliance has now become a war alliance.

Jehosaphat would have done well to seek guidance from the Lord before giving his blessing to the marriage of his son to Ahab's daughter. I wonder what Elijah would have counseled him about that? Or about getting involved in a war venture with the northern kingdom? But to his credit Jehosaphat did say to Ahab, **"Please inquire first for the word of the LORD."**

Better late than never. Now it is right at this point that we can begin to see the difference in these two kings in their approach to religion and God. Ahab agrees to Jehosaphat's request. He had the same Jewish heritage as Jehosaphat.

The Word of God was still coming in those days. You could get the Word of the Lord from a prophet of God. All Christian denominations have the Bible. The Bible was the beginning authority for every group of Christian since the time of the apostles. It is how that Word is received and obeyed that determines a church's integrity and purity.

Ahab had no difficulty in agreeing to seek the Word of the Lord. He readily agreed. But where did he seek for the Word of the Lord? He went to his paid professional cadre of prophets. These men were his personal appointees, or that of his wife Jezebel.

These counterfeit prophets played the religion game to the hilt. They were handpicked men who could

always be depended upon to give the Word of the Lord that suited Ahab and Jezebel. They were hirelings, sycophants, false prophets. They remind me of those little creatures that are so plentiful in Florida called chameleons. Chameleons have a chemistry that enables them to change color to adapt to the plant they happen to be on at the moment. If they are on a green leaf they turn green. If they move to a red leaf they turn red. If they are on a black piece of bark they can turn black. They blend into the foliage and so elude their attackers or enemies.

These counterfeit prophets were like chameleons in that they could adapt to whatever political position the situation called for. They simply waited for a signal from their chief Zedekiah. Whatever he said they would follow suit and the king would have the word he wanted to hear. Not only were these false prophets very sensitive to the political winds they were superb actors too. They could put on a show.

⁶Then 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."

But these 400 men did not persuade Jehosaphat. He detected that they were simply appointees of Ahab and that they were not true prophets of God. So he said to Ahab, **"Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?"** ⁸The 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."**

It is interesting to note at this point that Ahab did not object to Jehosaphat's rejection of the authenticity of these appointed prophets. Ahab knew that they were not true prophets of God; otherwise I am sure that he would have protested to Jehosaphat that these men were reliable men of God. Instead he acknowledges that there is a genuine man of God around. But he says I hate him because he doesn't prophesy good about me but always has something bad to say about me.

Jehosaphat gave a soft answer to that. **"Let not the king say so."** He knows that the Lord only has his true prophets say what is right and good. If we are offended it is because we resent the Word of God.

God lets us see the root cause of Ahab's unbelief. He was a man who knew that God spoke by His Word, who knew that God had sent prophets who spoke the Word of God, but he didn't like the message that came. The Word of God was distasteful to him. He wanted to be religious but he didn't want the God of the Bible. He wanted a god who would accommodate himself to his goals and aspirations, to his needs and desires. So he employed men who would tickle his ears and speak the word he wanted to hear. He wanted the reputation of being a religious king, one who supported religion and tried to move in the will of God.

So Ahab agrees to send for the true prophet but he forewarns Jehosaphat that this man of God will probably speak against their plan to go to Ramoth-gilead. Ahab really didn't care what the prophet Micaiah would say, he already knew what he was going to do. His only concern was that Jehosaphat support him in the venture. So he sends for Micaiah. He told an officer to bring him quickly. He wants to get this obstacle out of the way as soon as possible.

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."

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

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. ¹¹Then 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.'" ¹²All 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."

These men were actors, showmen. They devised special effects for their prophesying. This lent dramatic effect to their words.

¹⁵When Micaiah 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." ¹⁶Then 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?"

Ahab detected that this man of God was not giving the Word of God. How about that? Even a false professor of Christ can tell the difference between the true Word of

God and a contrived message. Perhaps it was in the tone of voice of Micaiah. Maybe his words were said in a sarcastic way, or it may simply have been the look on his face. But in any case Ahab knew that Micaiah was putting him on. But now God gives a warning to Ahab.

But now God gives a prophetic warning to Ahab.

¹⁷So Micaiah 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.' "

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

Now the prophecy is enlarged and greater detail is given of how Ahab will be self-betrayed and meet his death.

¹⁹Micaiah 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. ²⁰"The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. ²¹"Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' 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.' 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."

Please notice that God can and does allow Satan to speak deceiving words to men when they refuse to heed the word of God. God is the sovereign Lord. He can allow the very deceptions a person practices to be the cause of his own self-betrayal.

The self-will and deceit of Ahab became the cause of his own betrayal and death. By this time in his life he was so hardened against the Word of God that he refused to listen to it even when he was told that he would die in this military adventure. Had he repented and humbly received the Word of the Lord he would have saved his life. But no, he was determined to reject the Word of God once more in favor of his own scheming ambition.

And what about Jehoshaphat? He heard this prophecy too and could have backed out of the deal, but apparently he felt obligated to abide by his earlier words and not lose face by refusing to join Ahab in this war venture.

In closing today I ask you to ask yourself this question, Do I receive the Word of the Lord humbly and meekly, or do I resent it when it pinches me and rebukes me? When you hear a message that speaks directly to your heart do you blame the preacher for the sharpness and bite of the Word of God and perhaps like Ahab you say to yourself, He never speaks anything that soothes me and comforts me but always says some words that hurt me and make me feel uncomfortable?

We can hear the Word of God and be offended by it. We can easily find fault with the Bible-believing preacher. We can resent the message that demands that we put away sin and live righteously and godly in Christ Jesus. Or, like Ahab, we can be ambivalent toward the Word of God. We are drawn to it and once in awhile and go to a Bible believing church to hear the Word preached, and then go on about our business as though it

never made any difference. We can listen to the false prophets of our modern culture who preach, "do your own thing and enjoy yourself. Don't listen to the prophets of doom who preach a literal judgment and a real hell."

Let me ask you a personal question. Have you come to Jesus Christ truly confessing your sins and asking God to cleanse you? Have you told the Lord that you are willing to forsake all your sins and live as a follower and disciple of Christ? Come to him today and begin following him and his Word.

Ahab's Self Betrayal
By
Rev. Todd W. Allen

August 7, 2005 Villa Rica
1 Kings 22:2-28

We are not able to see the hearts of men as God does. We are not supposed to sit in judgment on men but we are accountable for our own response to the gospel, and we are expected to take a stand for Jesus Christ. No one can escape his accountability or responsibility. We all must stand before the Judge of all the earth and then shall each man have his own praise of God, according to his faith.

In our scripture today we have a situation that can speak to us all to warn us against trifling with the Word of God. It deals with a portion of history in the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel about 850 years before the birth of Christ. Israel had been one nation until the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death.

Now there was Judah in the south with Jehosaphat as the king and Israel to the north with Ahab as king. Jehosaphat was considered a good king. He followed the example of David in living a life of faith and in seeking to obey the Lord. We are told in the scriptures that God blessed him and established the kingdom in his control. We read in 2 Chronicles 17:3-6: **The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, ⁴but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. ⁵So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute**

to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. ⁶He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.

We learn in this scripture that Jehoshaphat became allied with Ahab through a marriage. This was the marriage of his son Jehoram to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

In thinking about the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel we might liken them to two denominations. They represented two political entities each with a state religion. If you lived in Judah you followed the king and his religion. If you lived in Israel you followed its king and his religion.

After the division of Israel into two kingdoms there never was a good king in the northern kingdom of Israel. God sent them prophets to recall them to the true and right worship of God but they never returned and eventually they were taken captive by Assyria and never returned from that captivity. Only Judah survived and was chastened by the Lord through the Babylonian captivity, from which a remnant returned.

Because of this marriage Jehosaphat became friendly with Ahab. He had met Ahab and Jezebel at the wedding. And so it wasn't surprising that some years later he went to visit Ahab at Samaria.

Ahab put on a big barbecue. Everybody was very friendly. The two kingdoms hadn't had such friendship since they had become two kingdoms. But Ahab just couldn't pass up the opportunity to use this new friendship to strengthen his own kingdom. He proposed that Jehosaphat go with him to Ramoth-gilead and retake it for the kingdom of Israel. Syria had possession of it but Ahab claimed it rightfully belonged to Israel.

Ahab had been thinking about this for some time and Jehosaphat was just the man to help him. After all,

Jehosaphat had a famous name in the earth. He had never been defeated in battle. Ahab was certain of victory if only Jehosaphat went to war with him. Jehosaphat agreed to go. He said, **"I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."**

This was an unwise decision on Jehosaphat's but because of the marriage alliance he is now joined in an enterprise with the wicked Ahab. The marriage alliance has now become a war alliance.

Jehosaphat would have done well to seek guidance from the Lord before giving his blessing to the marriage of his son to Ahab's daughter. I wonder what Elijah would have counseled him about that? Or about getting involved in a war venture with the northern kingdom? But to his credit Jehosaphat did say to Ahab, **"Please inquire first for the word of the LORD."**

Better late than never. Now it is right at this point that we can begin to see the difference in these two kings in their approach to religion and God. Ahab agrees to Jehosaphat's request. He had the same Jewish heritage as Jehosaphat.

The Word of God was still coming in those days. You could get the Word of the Lord from a prophet of God. All Christian denominations have the Bible. The Bible was the beginning authority for every group of Christian since the time of the apostles. It is how that Word is received and obeyed that determines a church's integrity and purity.

Ahab had no difficulty in agreeing to seek the Word of the Lord. He readily agreed. But where did he seek for the Word of the Lord? He went to his paid professional cadre of prophets. These men were his personal appointees, or that of his wife Jezebel.

These counterfeit prophets played the religion game to the hilt. They were handpicked men who could

always be depended upon to give the Word of the Lord that suited Ahab and Jezebel. They were hirelings, sycophants, false prophets. They remind me of those little creatures that are so plentiful in Florida called chameleons. Chameleons have a chemistry that enables them to change color to adapt to the plant they happen to be on at the moment. If they are on a green leaf they turn green. If they move to a red leaf they turn red. If they are on a black piece of bark they can turn black. They blend into the foliage and so elude their attackers or enemies.

These counterfeit prophets were like chameleons in that they could adapt to whatever political position the situation called for. They simply waited for a signal from their chief Zedekiah. Whatever he said they would follow suit and the king would have the word he wanted to hear. Not only were these false prophets very sensitive to the political winds they were superb actors too. They could put on a show.

⁶Then 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."

But these 400 men did not persuade Jehosaphat. He detected that they were simply appointees of Ahab and that they were not true prophets of God. So he said to Ahab, **"Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?"** ⁸The 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."**

It is interesting to note at this point that Ahab did not object to Jehosaphat's rejection of the authenticity of these appointed prophets. Ahab knew that they were not true prophets of God; otherwise I am sure that he would have protested to Jehosaphat that these men were reliable men of God. Instead he acknowledges that there is a genuine man of God around. But he says I hate him because he doesn't prophesy good about me but always has something bad to say about me.

Jehosaphat gave a soft answer to that. **"Let not the king say so."** He knows that the Lord only has his true prophets say what is right and good. If we are offended it is because we resent the Word of God.

God lets us see the root cause of Ahab's unbelief. He was a man who knew that God spoke by His Word, who knew that God had sent prophets who spoke the Word of God, but he didn't like the message that came. The Word of God was distasteful to him. He wanted to be religious but he didn't want the God of the Bible. He wanted a god who would accommodate himself to his goals and aspirations, to his needs and desires. So he employed men who would tickle his ears and speak the word he wanted to hear. He wanted the reputation of being a religious king, one who supported religion and tried to move in the will of God.

So Ahab agrees to send for the true prophet but he forewarns Jehosaphat that this man of God will probably speak against their plan to go to Ramoth-gilead. Ahab really didn't care what the prophet Micaiah would say, he already knew what he was going to do. His only concern was that Jehosaphat support him in the venture. So he sends for Micaiah. He told an officer to bring him quickly. He wants to get this obstacle out of the way as soon as possible.

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."

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

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. ¹¹Then 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.'" ¹²All 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."

These men were actors, showmen. They devised special effects for their prophesying. This lent dramatic effect to their words.

¹⁵When Micaiah 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." ¹⁶Then 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?"

Ahab detected that this man of God was not giving the Word of God. How about that? Even a false professor of Christ can tell the difference between the true Word of

God and a contrived message. Perhaps it was in the tone of voice of Micaiah. Maybe his words were said in a sarcastic way, or it may simply have been the look on his face. But in any case Ahab knew that Micaiah was putting him on. But now God gives a warning to Ahab.

But now God gives a prophetic warning to Ahab.
¹⁷So Micaiah 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.' "

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

Now the prophecy is enlarged and greater detail is given of how Ahab will be self-betrayed and meet his death.

¹⁹Micaiah 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. ²⁰"The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. ²¹"Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' 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.' 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."

Please notice that God can and does allow Satan to speak deceiving words to men when they refuse to heed the word of God. God is the sovereign Lord. He can allow the very deceptions a person practices to be the cause of his own self-betrayal.

The self-will and deceit of Ahab became the cause of his own betrayal and death. By this time in his life he was so hardened against the Word of God that he refused to listen to it even when he was told that he would die in this military adventure. Had he repented and humbly received the Word of the Lord he would have saved his life. But no, he was determined to reject the Word of God once more in favor of his own scheming ambition.

And what about Jehoshaphat? He heard this prophecy too and could have backed out of the deal, but apparently he felt obligated to abide by his earlier words and not lose face by refusing to join Ahab in this war venture.

In closing today I ask you to ask yourself this question, Do I receive the Word of the Lord humbly and meekly, or do I resent it when it pinches me and rebukes me? When you hear a message that speaks directly to your heart do you blame the preacher for the sharpness and bite of the Word of God and perhaps like Ahab you say to yourself, He never speaks anything that soothes me and comforts me but always says some words that hurt me and make me feel uncomfortable?

We can hear the Word of God and be offended by it. We can easily find fault with the Bible-believing preacher. We can resent the message that demands that we put away sin and live righteously and godly in Christ Jesus. Or, like Ahab, we can be ambivalent toward the Word of God. We are drawn to it and once in awhile and go to a Bible believing church to hear the Word preached, and then go on about our business as though it

never made any difference. We can listen to the false prophets of our modern culture who preach, "do your own thing and enjoy yourself. Don't listen to the prophets of doom who preach a literal judgment and a real hell."

Let me ask you a personal question. Have you come to Jesus Christ truly confessing your sins and asking God to cleanse you? Have you told the Lord that you are willing to forsake all your sins and live as a follower and disciple of Christ? Come to him today and begin following him and his Word.

Ahab's Self Betrayal
By
Rev. Todd W. Allen

August 7, 2005 Villa Rica
1 Kings 22:2-28

We are not able to see the hearts of men as God does. We are not supposed to sit in judgment on men but we are accountable for our own response to the gospel, and we are expected to take a stand for Jesus Christ. No one can escape his accountability or responsibility. We all must stand before the Judge of all the earth and then shall each man have his own praise of God, according to his faith.

In our scripture today we have a situation that can speak to us all to warn us against trifling with the Word of God. It deals with a portion of history in the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel about 850 years before the birth of Christ. Israel had been one nation until the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death.

Now there was Judah in the south with Jehosaphat as the king and Israel to the north with Ahab as king. Jehosaphat was considered a good king. He followed the example of David in living a life of faith and in seeking to obey the Lord. We are told in the scriptures that God blessed him and established the kingdom in his control. We read in 2 Chronicles 17:3-6: **The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, ⁴but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. ⁵So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute**

to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. ⁶He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.

We learn in this scripture that Jehoshaphat became allied with Ahab through a marriage. This was the marriage of his son Jehoram to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

In thinking about the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel we might liken them to two denominations. They represented two political entities each with a state religion. If you lived in Judah you followed the king and his religion. If you lived in Israel you followed its king and his religion.

After the division of Israel into two kingdoms there never was a good king in the northern kingdom of Israel. God sent them prophets to recall them to the true and right worship of God but they never returned and eventually they were taken captive by Assyria and never returned from that captivity. Only Judah survived and was chastened by the Lord through the Babylonian captivity, from which a remnant returned.

Because of this marriage Jehosaphat became friendly with Ahab. He had met Ahab and Jezebel at the wedding. And so it wasn't surprising that some years later he went to visit Ahab at Samaria.

Ahab put on a big barbecue. Everybody was very friendly. The two kingdoms hadn't had such friendship since they had become two kingdoms. But Ahab just couldn't pass up the opportunity to use this new friendship to strengthen his own kingdom. He proposed that Jehosaphat go with him to Ramoth-gilead and retake it for the kingdom of Israel. Syria had possession of it but Ahab claimed it rightfully belonged to Israel.

Ahab had been thinking about this for some time and Jehosaphat was just the man to help him. After all,

Jehosaphat had a famous name in the earth. He had never been defeated in battle. Ahab was certain of victory if only Jehosaphat went to war with him. Jehosaphat agreed to go. He said, **"I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."**

This was an unwise decision on Jehosaphat's but because of the marriage alliance he is now joined in an enterprise with the wicked Ahab. The marriage alliance has now become a war alliance.

Jehosaphat would have done well to seek guidance from the Lord before giving his blessing to the marriage of his son to Ahab's daughter. I wonder what Elijah would have counseled him about that? Or about getting involved in a war venture with the northern kingdom? But to his credit Jehosaphat did say to Ahab, **"Please inquire first for the word of the LORD."**

Better late than never. Now it is right at this point that we can begin to see the difference in these two kings in their approach to religion and God. Ahab agrees to Jehosaphat's request. He had the same Jewish heritage as Jehosaphat.

The Word of God was still coming in those days. You could get the Word of the Lord from a prophet of God. All Christian denominations have the Bible. The Bible was the beginning authority for every group of Christian since the time of the apostles. It is how that Word is received and obeyed that determines a church's integrity and purity.

Ahab had no difficulty in agreeing to seek the Word of the Lord. He readily agreed. But where did he seek for the Word of the Lord? He went to his paid professional cadre of prophets. These men were his personal appointees, or that of his wife Jezebel.

These counterfeit prophets played the religion game to the hilt. They were handpicked men who could

always be depended upon to give the Word of the Lord that suited Ahab and Jezebel. They were hirelings, sycophants, false prophets. They remind me of those little creatures that are so plentiful in Florida called chameleons. Chameleons have a chemistry that enables them to change color to adapt to the plant they happen to be on at the moment. If they are on a green leaf they turn green. If they move to a red leaf they turn red. If they are on a black piece of bark they can turn black. They blend into the foliage and so elude their attackers or enemies.

These counterfeit prophets were like chameleons in that they could adapt to whatever political position the situation called for. They simply waited for a signal from their chief Zedekiah. Whatever he said they would follow suit and the king would have the word he wanted to hear. Not only were these false prophets very sensitive to the political winds they were superb actors too. They could put on a show.

⁶Then 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."

But these 400 men did not persuade Jehosaphat. He detected that they were simply appointees of Ahab and that they were not true prophets of God. So he said to Ahab, **"Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?"** ⁸The 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."**

It is interesting to note at this point that Ahab did not object to Jehosaphat's rejection of the authenticity of these appointed prophets. Ahab knew that they were not true prophets of God; otherwise I am sure that he would have protested to Jehosaphat that these men were reliable men of God. Instead he acknowledges that there is a genuine man of God around. But he says I hate him because he doesn't prophesy good about me but always has something bad to say about me.

Jehosaphat gave a soft answer to that. **"Let not the king say so."** He knows that the Lord only has his true prophets say what is right and good. If we are offended it is because we resent the Word of God.

God lets us see the root cause of Ahab's unbelief. He was a man who knew that God spoke by His Word, who knew that God had sent prophets who spoke the Word of God, but he didn't like the message that came. The Word of God was distasteful to him. He wanted to be religious but he didn't want the God of the Bible. He wanted a god who would accommodate himself to his goals and aspirations, to his needs and desires. So he employed men who would tickle his ears and speak the word he wanted to hear. He wanted the reputation of being a religious king, one who supported religion and tried to move in the will of God.

So Ahab agrees to send for the true prophet but he forewarns Jehosaphat that this man of God will probably speak against their plan to go to Ramoth-gilead. Ahab really didn't care what the prophet Micaiah would say, he already knew what he was going to do. His only concern was that Jehosaphat support him in the venture. So he sends for Micaiah. He told an officer to bring him quickly. He wants to get this obstacle out of the way as soon as possible.

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."

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

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. ¹¹Then 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.'" ¹²All 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."

These men were actors, showmen. They devised special effects for their prophesying. This lent dramatic effect to their words.

¹⁵When Micaiah 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." ¹⁶Then 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?"

Ahab detected that this man of God was not giving the Word of God. How about that? Even a false professor of Christ can tell the difference between the true Word of

God and a contrived message. Perhaps it was in the tone of voice of Micaiah. Maybe his words were said in a sarcastic way, or it may simply have been the look on his face. But in any case Ahab knew that Micaiah was putting him on. But now God gives a warning to Ahab.

But now God gives a prophetic warning to Ahab.
¹⁷So Micaiah 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.' "

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

Now the prophecy is enlarged and greater detail is given of how Ahab will be self-betrayed and meet his death.

¹⁹Micaiah 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. ²⁰"The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that.
²¹"Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' 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.' 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."

Please notice that God can and does allow Satan to speak deceiving words to men when they refuse to heed the word of God. God is the sovereign Lord. He can allow the very deceptions a person practices to be the cause of his own self-betrayal.

The self-will and deceit of Ahab became the cause of his own betrayal and death. By this time in his life he was so hardened against the Word of God that he refused to listen to it even when he was told that he would die in this military adventure. Had he repented and humbly received the Word of the Lord he would have saved his life. But no, he was determined to reject the Word of God once more in favor of his own scheming ambition.

And what about Jehoshaphat? He heard this prophecy too and could have backed out of the deal, but apparently he felt obligated to abide by his earlier words and not lose face by refusing to join Ahab in this war venture.

In closing today I ask you to ask yourself this question, Do I receive the Word of the Lord humbly and meekly, or do I resent it when it pinches me and rebukes me? When you hear a message that speaks directly to your heart do you blame the preacher for the sharpness and bite of the Word of God and perhaps like Ahab you say to yourself, He never speaks anything that soothes me and comforts me but always says some words that hurt me and make me feel uncomfortable?

We can hear the Word of God and be offended by it. We can easily find fault with the Bible-believing preacher. We can resent the message that demands that we put away sin and live righteously and godly in Christ Jesus. Or, like Ahab, we can be ambivalent toward the Word of God. We are drawn to it and once in awhile and go to a Bible believing church to hear the Word preached, and then go on about our business as though it

never made any difference. We can listen to the false prophets of our modern culture who preach, "do your own thing and enjoy yourself. Don't listen to the prophets of doom who preach a literal judgment and a real hell."

Let me ask you a personal question. Have you come to Jesus Christ truly confessing your sins and asking God to cleanse you? Have you told the Lord that you are willing to forsake all your sins and live as a follower and disciple of Christ? Come to him today and begin following him and his Word.

Ahab's Self Betrayal
By
Rev. Todd W. Allen

August 7, 2005 Villa Rica
1 Kings 22:2-28

We are not able to see the hearts of men as God does. We are not supposed to sit in judgment on men but we are accountable for our own response to the gospel, and we are expected to take a stand for Jesus Christ. No one can escape his accountability or responsibility. We all must stand before the Judge of all the earth and then shall each man have his own praise of God, according to his faith.

In our scripture today we have a situation that can speak to us all to warn us against trifling with the Word of God. It deals with a portion of history in the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel about 850 years before the birth of Christ. Israel had been one nation until the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death.

Now there was Judah in the south with Jehosaphat as the king and Israel to the north with Ahab as king. Jehosaphat was considered a good king. He followed the example of David in living a life of faith and in seeking to obey the Lord. We are told in the scriptures that God blessed him and established the kingdom in his control. We read in 2 Chronicles 17:3-6: **The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, ⁴but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. ⁵So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute**

to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. ⁶He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.

We learn in this scripture that Jehoshaphat became allied with Ahab through a marriage. This was the marriage of his son Jehoram to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

In thinking about the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel we might liken them to two denominations. They represented two political entities each with a state religion. If you lived in Judah you followed the king and his religion. If you lived in Israel you followed its king and his religion.

After the division of Israel into two kingdoms there never was a good king in the northern kingdom of Israel. God sent them prophets to recall them to the true and right worship of God but they never returned and eventually they were taken captive by Assyria and never returned from that captivity. Only Judah survived and was chastened by the Lord through the Babylonian captivity, from which a remnant returned.

Because of this marriage Jehosaphat became friendly with Ahab. He had met Ahab and Jezebel at the wedding. And so it wasn't surprising that some years later he went to visit Ahab at Samaria.

Ahab put on a big barbecue. Everybody was very friendly. The two kingdoms hadn't had such friendship since they had become two kingdoms. But Ahab just couldn't pass up the opportunity to use this new friendship to strengthen his own kingdom. He proposed that Jehosaphat go with him to Ramoth-gilead and retake it for the kingdom of Israel. Syria had possession of it but Ahab claimed it rightfully belonged to Israel.

Ahab had been thinking about this for some time and Jehosaphat was just the man to help him. After all,

Jehosaphat had a famous name in the earth. He had never been defeated in battle. Ahab was certain of victory if only Jehosaphat went to war with him. Jehosaphat agreed to go. He said, **"I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."**

This was an unwise decision on Jehosaphat's but because of the marriage alliance he is now joined in an enterprise with the wicked Ahab. The marriage alliance has now become a war alliance.

Jehosaphat would have done well to seek guidance from the Lord before giving his blessing to the marriage of his son to Ahab's daughter. I wonder what Elijah would have counseled him about that? Or about getting involved in a war venture with the northern kingdom? But to his credit Jehosaphat did say to Ahab, **"Please inquire first for the word of the LORD."**

Better late than never. Now it is right at this point that we can begin to see the difference in these two kings in their approach to religion and God. Ahab agrees to Jehosaphat's request. He had the same Jewish heritage as Jehosaphat.

The Word of God was still coming in those days. You could get the Word of the Lord from a prophet of God. All Christian denominations have the Bible. The Bible was the beginning authority for every group of Christian since the time of the apostles. It is how that Word is received and obeyed that determines a church's integrity and purity.

Ahab had no difficulty in agreeing to seek the Word of the Lord. He readily agreed. But where did he seek for the Word of the Lord? He went to his paid professional cadre of prophets. These men were his personal appointees, or that of his wife Jezebel.

These counterfeit prophets played the religion game to the hilt. They were handpicked men who could

always be depended upon to give the Word of the Lord that suited Ahab and Jezebel. They were hirelings, sycophants, false prophets. They remind me of those little creatures that are so plentiful in Florida called chameleons. Chameleons have a chemistry that enables them to change color to adapt to the plant they happen to be on at the moment. If they are on a green leaf they turn green. If they move to a red leaf they turn red. If they are on a black piece of bark they can turn black. They blend into the foliage and so elude their attackers or enemies.

These counterfeit prophets were like chameleons in that they could adapt to whatever political position the situation called for. They simply waited for a signal from their chief Zedekiah. Whatever he said they would follow suit and the king would have the word he wanted to hear. Not only were these false prophets very sensitive to the political winds they were superb actors too. They could put on a show.

⁶Then 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."

But these 400 men did not persuade Jehosaphat. He detected that they were simply appointees of Ahab and that they were not true prophets of God. So he said to Ahab, **"Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?"** ⁸The 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."**

It is interesting to note at this point that Ahab did not object to Jehosaphat's rejection of the authenticity of these appointed prophets. Ahab knew that they were not true prophets of God; otherwise I am sure that he would have protested to Jehosaphat that these men were reliable men of God. Instead he acknowledges that there is a genuine man of God around. But he says I hate him because he doesn't prophesy good about me but always has something bad to say about me.

Jehosaphat gave a soft answer to that. **"Let not the king say so."** He knows that the Lord only has his true prophets say what is right and good. If we are offended it is because we resent the Word of God.

God lets us see the root cause of Ahab's unbelief. He was a man who knew that God spoke by His Word, who knew that God had sent prophets who spoke the Word of God, but he didn't like the message that came. The Word of God was distasteful to him. He wanted to be religious but he didn't want the God of the Bible. He wanted a god who would accommodate himself to his goals and aspirations, to his needs and desires. So he employed men who would tickle his ears and speak the word he wanted to hear. He wanted the reputation of being a religious king, one who supported religion and tried to move in the will of God.

So Ahab agrees to send for the true prophet but he forewarns Jehosaphat that this man of God will probably speak against their plan to go to Ramoth-gilead. Ahab really didn't care what the prophet Micaiah would say, he already knew what he was going to do. His only concern was that Jehosaphat support him in the venture. So he sends for Micaiah. He told an officer to bring him quickly. He wants to get this obstacle out of the way as soon as possible.

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."

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

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. ¹¹Then 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.'" ¹²All 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."

These men were actors, showmen. They devised special effects for their prophesying. This lent dramatic effect to their words.

¹⁵When Micaiah 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." ¹⁶Then 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?"

Ahab detected that this man of God was not giving the Word of God. How about that? Even a false professor of Christ can tell the difference between the true Word of

God and a contrived message. Perhaps it was in the tone of voice of Micaiah. Maybe his words were said in a sarcastic way, or it may simply have been the look on his face. But in any case Ahab knew that Micaiah was putting him on. But now God gives a warning to Ahab.

But now God gives a prophetic warning to Ahab.
¹⁷So Micaiah 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.' "

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

Now the prophecy is enlarged and greater detail is given of how Ahab will be self-betrayed and meet his death.

¹⁹Micaiah 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. ²⁰"The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that.
²¹"Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' 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.' 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."

Please notice that God can and does allow Satan to speak deceiving words to men when they refuse to heed the word of God. God is the sovereign Lord. He can allow the very deceptions a person practices to be the cause of his own self-betrayal.

The self-will and deceit of Ahab became the cause of his own betrayal and death. By this time in his life he was so hardened against the Word of God that he refused to listen to it even when he was told that he would die in this military adventure. Had he repented and humbly received the Word of the Lord he would have saved his life. But no, he was determined to reject the Word of God once more in favor of his own scheming ambition.

And what about Jehoshaphat? He heard this prophecy too and could have backed out of the deal, but apparently he felt obligated to abide by his earlier words and not lose face by refusing to join Ahab in this war venture.

In closing today I ask you to ask yourself this question, Do I receive the Word of the Lord humbly and meekly, or do I resent it when it pinches me and rebukes me? When you hear a message that speaks directly to your heart do you blame the preacher for the sharpness and bite of the Word of God and perhaps like Ahab you say to yourself, He never speaks anything that soothes me and comforts me but always says some words that hurt me and make me feel uncomfortable?

We can hear the Word of God and be offended by it. We can easily find fault with the Bible-believing preacher. We can resent the message that demands that we put away sin and live righteously and godly in Christ Jesus. Or, like Ahab, we can be ambivalent toward the Word of God. We are drawn to it and once in awhile and go to a Bible believing church to hear the Word preached, and then go on about our business as though it

never made any difference. We can listen to the false prophets of our modern culture who preach, "do your own thing and enjoy yourself. Don't listen to the prophets of doom who preach a literal judgment and a real hell."

Let me ask you a personal question. Have you come to Jesus Christ truly confessing your sins and asking God to cleanse you? Have you told the Lord that you are willing to forsake all your sins and live as a follower and disciple of Christ? Come to him today and begin following him and his Word.