

II CHRONICLES

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Chronicles chapter 17 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Tonight we will begin looking at Jehoshaphat, who was king in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and his life will cover the next four chapters of II Chronicles. And, as we will see, he was a godly king, not perfect, but he loved the Lord and brought reform to the nation. Now here's the thing. As you look at these men of God have you seen that they are not perfect, that they had problems, even David?

Then why in the world does God portray them as men of God if they were not perfect? Because there are no perfect men! As we have seen when we went through I and II Kings, a perspective from man, all the sins of the kings, even the good ones. Here in Chronicles we see God's perspective you might say and He edits out most of the bad stuff and gives to us the highlights of these men. And we can glean from their lives spiritual lessons to help us grow. We can learn from the good they did and desire to follow after them and we can learn from the bad they did and desire to avoid those things in our lives! So with that as our background, let's begin reading in II Chronicles chapter 17, starting in verse 1 as we look at the life of King Jehoshaphat.

II CHRONICLES 17

VERSES 1-4

1. Remember that Jehoshaphat is the son of Asa, who was a good king in Judah but he did not finish his life well. His walk with the Lord was hindered as illustrated by his diseased feet. But Jehoshaphat walked in the ways of King David, and keep in mind that God uses David as the good standard to measure the kings by!
2. Notice that he strengthened himself against Israel, who was a threat to Judah and he fortified certain cities to be ready in case of battle. What a great lesson for us. In times of peace, in times when not much is happening, we should fortify our lives, spiritually speaking because the battle will come and we need to be ready. We need to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and not ours!
3. There are a few points here that show the heart of Jehoshaphat. First of all we are told that he walked in the ways of David and that was a good thing as I have said. David loved the Lord and the passion of his life was to worship the Lord. Secondly, he did not seek after the Baals or the false gods but sought the Lord! I know, that is the way it should be and yet, how often idols get in our way of worshiping the Lord. In Leviticus 19:4 the Lord told Moses to go and tell his people, **“Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the Lord your God.”** There is the warning before they ever entered the land and when you study the history of the Jews, how often they went down this road of worshiping the false gods!

And the third thing is that Jehoshaphat did not follow in the ways of the Northern Kingdom of Israel but followed after the commandments of the Lord. Keep in mind that at this time the Northern Kingdom of Israel had as their king, Ahab. And both Ahab and his wife Jezebel were wicked, they introduced Baal worship, setup altars to worship Baal by, took care the priests of Baal and killed the priests of God. They were the Demonic Duo of the Old Testament! And the comparison is like night and day. Jehoshaphat and the Southern Kingdom of Judah followed the Lord. May we be known for that in our own lives!

VERSES 5-6

1. When you read these verses there is an interesting contrast between King Solomon and King Jehoshaphat. What do I mean by that? Simply, they both had riches, they both prospered and were honored but Solomon focused on the riches, the prosperity, while Jehoshaphat focused on the Lord. That is where he found joy and peace, in the ways of the Lord and that is where we will find true joy and peace, by focusing on the Lord, resting in Him and not in possessions.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, “**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**” We tend to do just the opposite. We focus on all the material things first and then Jesus and then we wonder why we are not filled with joy, with peace. It is because our focus is wrong and we see here that Jesus is saying our focus must be on Him, and not to focus on the material things, He will supply our needs.

Are material things wrong? No. Are riches wrong? No. If God does bless you with riches, then don't be consumed with these riches, don't lose your focus. Listen to what David said should be our response to material blessings. In Psalm 62:10 we read, **“... If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them.”** In other words, don't let it go to your head! Don't put your trust in them; keep your focus on the Lord. Remember what God told Abraham in Genesis 15:1, **“... ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.’”** Don't lose sight of that fact, that God is our shield and our reward, keep things in proper perspective. Riches, material possessions can be taken away and sometimes very quickly, but the Lord can never be taken away! That is the perspective we need to have as we focus on the Lord!

VERSES 7-9

1. Did you see what Jehoshaphat did here? He sent out the leaders and the priests throughout the land to put on skits to entertain the people! No, he did not do that. Then maybe he sent them out to teach the 40 Days of Purpose program throughout the land! No, he did not do that either. Well, maybe he sent them out to tell people that words have no meaning and we don't really know what the Law says, but you just need to experience God anyway you want! No, he did not do that either!

I wish more leaders and people would see this and apply this to their ministries and their own lives! Jehoshaphat not only removed the idolatry from the land, which was important to do, but he also recognized that man does not live in a vacuum, and if you remove something from a persons life, you have to replace it with something else or they will return to their old ways, and maybe even worse than before.

So as he removes the false worship he replaces it with the true worship of God. And the way he does this is by sending out leaders, sending out priests throughout the land to teach the people the Words of God, the Law! You see, any person who is not walking with the Lord is in bondage to the things of this world, to the ruler of this world, Satan. But, once you turn from those wicked ways, once you turn to the Lord, you are free! It is as Jesus said in John 8:31-32 “**. . . ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’**”

But where does our faith come from, how does our faith grow? Not by programs but by the Word of God opened up to us by the Spirit of God. Paul tells us in Romans 10:17, “**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**” And isn’t it interesting how the Devil has gotten so many church leaders, so many pastors away from the Word of God, which will set the people free, which will help the people grow in the faith or come to the faith! May we learn from what Jehoshaphat did, teaching the Word of God to the people!

In regards to what Jehoshaphat did, listen to what Morgan wrote, “No better service can be rendered to the nation than that of proclaiming the Word of Jehovah to the people, in cities, towns, villages, and hamlets. By such proclamation the heart of the people may be turned to Jehovah, and so He be enabled to do for them all that is in His heart.” If we want to see our family, our community, or work place, our state, our nation, our world turn towards the Lord, then it must begin with our own hearts and we must bring the Word of God to the people because God’s Word is a love story of Jesus who came to take away the sins of the world. If you negate the Word of God then you lose the story!

2. People today want to see revival and thus, they put together all kinds of programs to see revival break out. But, as J. Vernon McGee said, “Until the church gets back to the Word of God, there will be no real revival. All movements in or out of the church will come to naught unless they are anchored in the Word of God. There are wonderful things that are happening today. Some are inside the church; some are outside the organized church. If they are rooted in the Word of God, revival will be the result”

3. Now some may think that this is simplistic, just teaching the Word of God, but it is not. How do I know for sure? Because of the results that we see in the nation of Judah, the fruit that is born out of teaching the people the Word of God and that is given to us in the next verse.

VERSE 10

1. Why were the other nations fearful of the Southern Kingdom of Judah? Was it because of their army we read about in verse 2 of II Chronicles chapter 17? It was not the army that brought fear upon these other nations; it was as the Word of God was taught that other nations saw the power of God in the peoples lives. It is as Solomon wrote in Proverbs 16:7, “**When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.**” That is what we are seeing here, a time of peace and prosperity. Even those nasty Philistines, who were a constant thorn in the side of the Jews, were subdued at this time. And keep in mind that this was all a result, not of wars, but of people surrendering their lives to the Lord and then, “**. . . the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lanes that were around Jerusalem.**” II Chronicles 17:10.

It is as Clarke wrote, “Thus the nation became thoroughly instructed in their duty to *God*, to the *king*, and to each *other*. They became, therefore, as *one man*; and against a people thus united, on such *principles*, no enemy could be successful.” What a lesson for us to learn. To submit to one another in the fear of the Lord and what enemy can then come against us! May we bring the Word of God to people because that is where faith begins, that is where faith grows!

VERSES 11-19

1. As we have read, the Southern Kingdom enjoyed a time of peace and prosperity - why? They had this time of peace and prosperity because they were taught the Word of God. I know that sounds so simplistic, but it is true. If the Word of God becomes part of our life, David, in Psalm 1 says that we will be like a tree planted by the waters, which give the tree life. We get our nourishment as we draw from the living waters.

Today many have tossed the Word of God away and replaced it with other things, programs, activities, rituals, that will not give you life, but will starve you to death. Instead of finding strength you will become weak. Remember what Paul said in Hebrews 4:12, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”**

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, **“For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart.”** In other words, as the Word of God is spoken, as the Word of God is read, as the Word of God is studied, it will cut right to the heart of the matter because it is living and is able to transform our lives through the power of God’s Spirit! Jehoshaphat and the Southern Kingdom of Judah saw that first hand and may we learn that lesson!

2. There is one more point that I would like to make here and that is found in verse 16, this man named Amasiah, who **“... willingly offered himself to the LORD. . . .”** Folk’s, you can’t force people to offer themselves to the Lord. You can’t make people serve the Lord because, if you do, then you have to force them to continue to do the work. People that willingly offer themselves to the Lord you don’t have to tell them to do things, you don’t have to remind them to do things, they just do it because they love the Lord and their service is unto the Lord and not to man. Man is only benefiting from the service but the service is unto the Lord!

Spurgeon put it like this in regards to this man and what he did. He wrote, “Amasiah is a man of whom we do not know anything beyond this – he ‘willingly offered himself unto the Lord.’ There must have been a turning-point in his career, a time when first he knew the grace of God, which wrought such a change in him. There must have been a waking up to the feeling that God deserved his love and his life.”

There are a few principles regarding our service to the Lord, what we see in this man here. Here is what a servant of God looks like,

- No one had to press him into service.
- No one had to seek him out for service.
- No one had to look after him once he had begun serving.
- No one had to lead him.

That should be the way we serve the Lord, because, as Paul said in Colossians 3:23-24, “**And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.**” In other words, Paul is telling us that the things we do in life; we need to give it our all, to do our best because we are serving the Lord. We need to have that perspective in life because if we don’t, our witness may be off!

And once again, listen to what Spurgeon has to say regarding our service to the Lord, for many feel that they are not in ministry and thus, they are not serving the Lord. That is wrong as Spurgeon wrote, “There is no lawful occupation in which a man cannot thoroughly serve the Lord. It is a great privilege and blessing to be set apart to the work of winning souls; but we must never separate that work from all the rest of the callings of life, as though it alone were sacred, and all the rest were secular and almost sinful. Serve God where you are.” We are all in the ministry and we are serving where God has us, at least I hope you are serving! May we willingly offer ourselves to the Lord for His service!

II CHRONICLES 18

VERSE 1

1. We have seen Jehoshaphat bring reform to the nation by removing the idols from the land. We saw him bring reform to the land by bringing the Word of God to the people, teaching them the Law of God. And then we read that he allows his son Jehoram to marry the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, this ***DEMONIC DUO*** of the Old Testament. Their daughter’s name was Athaliah, and she too was just as wicked as her parents and she almost wipes out the lineage of David.

To me this is one of those really confusing alliances, and maybe one of the strangest in the whole Bible. Jehoshaphat, who was a godly king, teams up with Ahab who was one of Israel's most wicked kings. The only reason I can come up with why Jehoshaphat would do this is that he was trying to heal the wounds between the two kingdoms. But just as oil and water don't mix, good and evil do not mix! And you never sacrifice truth and righteousness for the sake of unity!

Paul makes this point in II Corinthians 6:14-18 as he wrote, and this is from The Amplified Bible, **“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers [do not make mismatched alliances with them or come under a different yoke with them, inconsistent with your faith]. For what partnership have right living and right standing with God with iniquity and lawlessness? Or how can light have fellowship with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and Belial [the devil]? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement [can there be between] a temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in and with and among them and will walk in and with and among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. [Ex 25:8; 29:45; Lev 26:12; Jer 31:1; Ezek 37:27.] So, come out from among [unbelievers], and separate (sever) yourselves from them, says the Lord, and touch not [any] unclean thing; then I will receive you kindly and treat you with favor, [Isa 52:11.] And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. [Isa 43:6; Hos 1:10.]”**

I think that is pretty clear. Yes, Jehoshaphat wanted to heal the wounds of these two nations, but the Northern Kingdom of Israel did not repent, they did not get right with God and thus, you can't unite under those circumstances because light and darkness do not mix! I am dealing with this issue right now and it is something that I have been praying about for a while, but I feel that I have to act upon it. We have taken two of our teachers off our radio station, off the air because of the alliances they have made. One of them has taught with Leonard Sweet, who is emerging church leader and the other has taken a stance with the writer of the Shack, an unbiblical book. While their teaching so far has been good, these alliances are not and thus, we have taken them off the air and replaced them with teachers that have not made these kinds of alliances!

VERSES 2-3

1. If you allowed your son to marry their daughter, you eventually had to go down and visit them and that is what we see here with Jehoshaphat, he is going to down to visit Ahab and Jezebel. And they have this big feast for Jehoshaphat and his people and then Ahab asks him if he would help gain back the city of Ramoth Gilead. (I Kings 20:34). Now this city that was in the hands of the Syrians was suppose to be returned with other cities by Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria. But, for whatever reason, Ramoth Gilead was not returned and Ahab wants help in getting in back.

The amazing thing is the Jehoshaphat agrees to help in this battle, but why? Maybe it was because Ramoth Gilead was only some 40 miles from Jerusalem and he felt it was safer to have Ahab control the city than the Syrians.

VERSES 4-8

1. Yes, Jehoshaphat wants to help Asa out, he has pledged his allegiance to Asa and this battle, but he has one request and it is a good one. Before they go into this battle they need to pray and see what the Lord wants to do and that is the best thing to do folk's before you rush into anything, especially a battle! Instead of rushing on ahead, make sure the Lord is with you in this.

So Asa gathers together 400 prophets, and please understand that these false prophets were most likely not the prophets of Baal and Asherah, for Elijah destroyed those 800 prophets on Mount Carmel prior to this incident. (I Kings 18). These 400 prophets were most likely the false prophets of the calf worship that Jeroboam had established. Yes Ahab had prophets, but they were not of God. These guys were yes men, that spoke only to please the king and when they used the name of God to speak, it was meaningless. So they told the king that he should go into this battle because God would give them this victory. We shall see about that.

2. As you look at what these false prophets were doing, you might say that they were an ecumenical council, and I am not using that in a good way! You see, we want everyone to be able to join together, we may have different views of God and how we get to God, but all roads will get you there, it just may take longer is the mentality and it is wrong. The basis for unity must be in accordance with the Word of God I don't care how good the cause is and don't put the Lord's name as a tag on what you are saying if it is unbiblical. That is what these false prophets were doing!

3. Now as Jehoshaphat hears these 400 false prophets tell the king that he should go into battle, Jehoshaphat asks if there is another prophet around, why? I think Jehoshaphat recognized that something was not right, God had given him discernment and he was looking for a true prophet of God and not a yes man.

So Ahab tells Jehoshaphat that there is one more prophet in the land but he does not like him because he only speaks bad things about me. And I think that Ahab knew where to go to hear from a true prophet, but he was not interested in the truth, only to have his ears tickled. And when people speak the truth, they are hated by the unsaved because it exposes their deeds, which are evil. They are very comfortable living in darkness. But Jehoshaphat sticks up for this prophet of God, rebuking Ahab for his harsh words against this man of God.

Remember how Paul warned Timothy about the last days, what it would be like. In I Timothy 4:1-2 he wrote, **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”**

And in II Timothy 4:2-5 Paul warned Timothy to, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

People don't want the truth because they can't handle the truth, they don't want to know that Jesus is the only way because then they are accountable to Him. Thus, they find teachers who will tickle their ears with fairy tales and are lulled to spiritual sleep! What a sad statement that is but it is what we are seeing today!

4. One more point here. How did they know where this prophet was located - because they went to get him quickly? Probably because they put this troublemaker in prison, it was one way to shut him up, and now they were able to get him and bring him to the king quickly.

VERSES 9-11

1. Here we see both these kings, dressed in their kingly robes, sitting before these 400 prophets so they could hear from them what the Lord wanted them to do. And one of these guys, Zedekiah by name, grabs some horns and places them upon his head and started charging all around the room. This was the first seeker friendly service on record! Just kidding, but he uses this visual aid to drive home the point, you might say. He puts these horns on his head and shouts that Israel will gore the Syrians. And what he was trying to show them was that Ahab and his men were going to push back and defeat the Syrians. That is what he was saying and not necessarily what God was saying.

Now, as Zedekiah finished his little skit, the rest of these prophets shouted in unity that Jehovah God was going to give them the victory. It is interesting that they knew of Him but they did not follow after His commands. Why do I say that? Because only the Levites were to be the priests but Jeroboam kicked out the true priests and allowed anyone to become a priest, all they needed to do was buy their way into the ministry. You see, you can say, “Lord, Lord!” all you want, but those words are meaningless if you don’t do what the Lord has said, if you don’t have a relationship with him. Your words are empty and as Jesus said to those that just honored Him with their lips, “**... ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’**”
Matthew 7:23.

2. Now keep in mind that there was still one more prophet to speak and let’s see what he has to say regarding this battle and what these kings should do.

VERSES 12-15

1. So Ahab sends this messenger to go and get the true prophet of God. And when he comes to Micaiah he warns him to speak only good to the king, just as the other prophets were speaking. He even brought Micaiah the book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* to help him out! Not really, but now why did this messenger say these things to Micaiah? Because everyone knew that Micaiah spoke the truth of God, but they were not interested in the truth, they only wanted a positive message! They only wanted a feel good message! Nothing harsh, nothing judgmental, nothing that might convict! Sound familiar?

2. You all know that it is not always easy to speak the truth, but the heart of a true man or woman of God will always speak the truth. You see, our first responsibility must be to the Lord. We should not water down what we say or try to placate people, just speak the truth in love. And I think that is the key, that we do it in love. Now, just because we bring the truth in love does not mean everyone will receive the message, they may even get angry at what we say, and they may even get mad at us. But we can't change the message to make them feel good about living in sin, that is wrong and we are accountable!

3. Now as Micaiah comes before these two kings, he tells them, "Live long and prosper!" No, but he kind of said those words. He told them in regards to the question if they should go into battle or not, "**Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!**" Now we don't know the inflection in the voice of this prophet of God, but I'm sure it was sarcastic. Not only does the king pick up on this but so did all those who were there. But he was saying what the king wanted to hear, but the king could not just let that go for all knew this prophet was not speaking the truth.

4. And the king tells Micaiah, "**How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?**" I think that was just for show because everyone knew that Micaiah's words were sarcastic. You see, Ahab did not want the truth; he only wanted Micaiah to speak in a convincing way. Today we see people speak in the name of Christ all kinds of lies, but they speak in such a way as to convince the people. That is what Ahab wanted, not necessarily the truth.

VERSES 16-17

1. Well, it looks like Micaiah did not finish that book, How to Win Friends and Influence People because this prophet of God tells the king that he will be killed in the battle and that his men will be scattered like sheep without a shepherd. Not a positive message but it is the truth!

2. We see that even today with people. For instance, a friend or relative who is living in sin and they come to you and tell you with the hopes of you saying, "It is okay, you have done nothing wrong." Now they don't really want the truth, they just want you to give a blessing to the sin that they are in. You see, they want you to say those words with conviction to make them feel good about what they are doing. And then, when you speak the truth, when you tell them that they are in sin and they need to repent and get right with God, they get mad at you. They did not really want the truth but they wanted you to tickle their ears and make them feel good!

Case in point. Years ago a woman from the church I was at called me because she wanted my blessings for her divorce. I explained to her that she had no grounds for divorce and she said that her Christian friends at work said that she did. I told her again, that scripturally there is nothing that says you can divorce your husband. Was she looking for the truth? Absolutely not! What she wanted was for me to speak with conviction that she could get a divorce, she wanted a new truth but I would not give it to her.

Another time, when I was an assistant pastor, there was a gentlemen who came up to me with a problem and I told him what the Scriptures said and he did not like what I told him. So he went to the next assistant pastor, and he didn't like what he said and he did this 3 or 4 times until he just gave up and did what he wanted and in the end, he was hurt by his unbiblical actions! May we learn the lesson, God is right, His Word is true and thus, may we listen and apply it to our lives!

3. For Ahab, he really did not want to hear the truth, for once it was spoken he shuns the words of this prophet and says to Jehoshaphat that he is such a negative person. He never says anything good about me. Maybe because there was nothing good to say! Ahab was a wicked king who was leading the nation into Baal worship, away from the true and living God and instead of listening to the prophets of God, who were warning him, he listened to the false prophets and it will cost him his life!

VERSES 18-22

1. Here is a very controversial passage and many people have great difficulty with what is said here. They can't understand how a holy and righteous God can send forth a lying spirit. And are there lying spirits in Heaven? First of all we know what the Bible says about God, "**God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?**" Numbers 23:19. So God is not lying but it does say that He is sending a lying spirit out to Ahab and he will use these false prophets to deceive him. So who is this lying spirit, where does he come from?

First of all we have to understand that Satan and his demons, which are nothing more than fallen angels, still have access to heaven. I realize that is hard to believe because we think they are in Hell, but that is totally wrong. And I guess that destroys those faith teachers that say Jesus was in Hell 3 days and 3 nights being tortured by Satan, for Satan is not bound nor is his domain in Hell.

In Job 1:6 we read, “**Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.**” I thought God did not have fellowship with Satan or any of his demons? He doesn’t! Then what is going on here? God can allow evil in His presence but He cannot have fellowship with evil! And make no mistake about it, there is coming a day when they will be cast from heaven but that has not taken place as yet. It is not till the midpoint of the Tribulation Period that Satan and his demons no longer have access to God; they can no longer come before Him. In Revelation 12:7-9 we read, “**And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**”

2. Is God being fair here? It seems that He is the one causing Ahab to go down this path and be deceived by sending this lying spirit! God is not forcing Ahab to do anything that he doesn’t want to do, God is totally fair. Ahab wanted to be deceived, and thus, God would give to him what he wanted and God will accomplish this through this lying spirit!

3. Make no mistake about it; God gives all of us a choice. Thus, if you reject the truth you open yourself up to receive a lie, just as Ahab did. Ahab heard the truth, but he rejected it, and because of that he opened himself up to be deceived by the enemy. In fact, we are told in II Thessalonians chapter 2 by Paul that those that reject the love of the truth, the salvation message, that God will send them a strong delusion, that they will believe a lie for they have rejected the truth. Because of that they will be condemned. When you see what people believe today you can see the demonic lies they have opened themselves up to, because they have rejected the truth of God. Here, God allows this demon to go to Ahab with these lies, for he rejected the truth.

VERSE 23

1. It is interesting how Zedekiah responded to what Micaiah said; he struck him on the cheek! When false prophets are defeated, when what they have said is put down, they many times respond with violence or violent words to put down the other person and that is what we see here! And so, by his actions, Zedekiah is exhibiting the exact opposite of what a man of God should be. How do I know that? Because in James chapter 3 we are told that the wisdom that is from above, a godly wisdom is pure, it is peaceable, it is gentle, it is willing to yield, it is full of mercy and it is full of good fruits. Do you see the difference? Wisdom from above is not characterized by force, but by love! May love flow from our lives, the love of Christ!

VERSES 24-27

1. The false prophet, Zedekiah struck Micaiah on the cheek and now King Ahab is throwing him in prison and giving him just a scant amount of water and bread. And Micaiah makes a final plea by saying if Ahab does return in peace, then he is a false prophet, but Micaiah is confident in what the Lord has told him and he will not see Ahab any more!

VERSES 28-29

1. There are just some things that I don't understand and this is one of them. After hearing these words of Micaiah, I don't know why Jehoshaphat followed after Ahab. God was telling him not to go, and Jehoshaphat did just the opposite, he went into battle anyway!

2. Now this is also strange and I can understand why Ahab did what he did, but I don't get why Jehoshaphat did it. You see, Ahab must have thought, "Hey, what if this prophet is right and they want to kill me? I don't want to die in battle." So to try to stop the prophecy of Micaiah from coming to pass, Ahab disguises himself as a regular soldier and not as a king. He takes off his royal robes. But, on the other end, he tells Jehoshaphat to go into battle as a king, to wear his royal garments. By doing this he was like a man who had a giant bull's eye on his chest. And again, I can't understand why he agreed to this. Ahab was setting him up to be a target and Jehoshaphat goes along with it! You see, the enemy would look for the king to kill him and then the rest of the army would give up and Jehoshaphat is the one wearing the royal robes, he will be the target as we will see!

VERSES 30-32

1. The king of Syria was smart. He knew that if you killed the king, his army would be scattered. So he tells his men to focus on the king, set your sights on him and destroy him. So Ahab was wise in disguising himself and Jehoshaphat was foolish for doing what he did, making himself the target!

2. Now as they enter the battle, Jehoshaphat recognizes that he is a sitting duck, and they are trying to kill him. So he yells out to them, "It's not me you're looking for, I'm not the guy!" I don't know about you, but that never worked for me! You see, I don't think that his words stopped their attack, for it says, "**The LORD helped him, and God moved them to turn away from Him.**" God is so gracious and merciful that even in our foolishness He protects us, but don't tempt Him. I think Jehoshaphat was doing what he thought was the right thing, but it wasn't and God is protecting him, his heart was right, his actions were not!

3. Jehoshaphat worked so hard to relate to Ahab, to unite the kingdom, that the enemy mistakes him for Ahab. I think we do the same from time to time. We try so hard to relate to the world, that we are mistaken for the world. We must be careful that in our desire to see people turn to Christ that we don't water down the message or lower our standards. When we do that we dim our light and we can dim it so much that they can't see Christ in us, but the world. As James 4:4 says, "**Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**" James just lays it out there, if you are a friend of the world, then you are at war with God because the world is at war with God!

VERSES 33-34

1. This tells me that nothing happens by chance, but all is ordained by God. This archer let's his arrow fly, not trying for any target in particular, and it strikes Ahab between his armor with a mortal wound. You see, you can't escape the judgment of God no matter how hard you try. Many, like Ahab, pretend to be something they are not. Ahab dressed as a soldier, and many today dress like Christians, and outwardly they look good. But inwardly their heart is far from the Lord. You may fool others with your disguise, but you can't fool God and you can't escape His judgment.

Morgan wrote this regarding what men may do, “Men may secrete themselves so that other men may never find them; but when the hour of their judgment has come, God takes hold on some ordinary event and makes it the highway on which He comes to carry out His purpose. ‘It just happened,’ says the man of the world. ‘God did it,’ says the man of faith.”

If you have not accepted the free gift of God through His Son Jesus Christ, then it doesn't matter how good you look, you are lost in your sins, judgment is coming! But as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** For Ahab, he would have rather been like Micaiah in jail than in this chariot. Yes, wicked men may prosper for a time, but men of faith prosper in the end!