

# MICAHIAH - 1 KINGS 22:1-38 (2 CHRON. 18)



Today we continue with our series on “People in the Bible You Should Know.” Are you enjoying this series? Today we’re going to discover a person not many of you will know, but I contend we ought to have T-Shirts with his name on them! He is a man for the ages – a person whom ALL of us who are followers of God should not only know, but ask God for his kind of life. His kind of faith. His kind of courage.

I am talking about my old friend Micaiah. Can you say it with me, “Mě-kī-uh.” T-Shirts...

- “I like Micaiah.”
- “Micaiah – Just Do It!”
- “Don’t mess with Micaiah....or me!”

## Two Kings

To learn his story, you’ve got to get to **1 Kings 22**. This was a dark, sad period in the history of God’s people. The nation was divided because of disobedience. Judah had only a mediocre King, **Jehoshaphat**. Yet things had been so bad that, compared to previous kings, he was considered a good king.

**1 Kings 22:43** ...*he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. The high places, however, were not removed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.*

He followed Yahweh, the one true God...but He didn’t do it wholeheartedly. (On a scale of 1-10, he was a “good” king...) He believed, but as King he did not cleanse the country of the false Cannonite Gods and their high places that earlier Kings had reintroduced. He was better than some, but it’s sad - he had such great opportunities to make a difference for God, but wasted his life.<sup>1</sup> And when his mediocre career ended, his son, Jehoram, drove Judah back into total apostasy. In fact Chronicles tells us that because of Jehoram’s sins, Judah suffered a plague

<sup>1</sup> According to 2 Chronicles 17:6 Jehoshaphat removed the high places, but 1 Kings 22:43 and 2 Chronicles 20:33 indicate that he did not remove them. Apparently he did early in his ministry, but when the people restored them he did not again obliterate the restored high places<sup>1</sup>

and was attacked by the Philistines and the Arabs, the latter resulted in the loss of his wives and sons

And Judah, the Southern nation, was the “better” one. The North, Israel, was so much worse. When our story begins, Israel is being ruled by **Ahab**. Remember Ahab. The most wicked king who ever ruled over the Jews. He and his wife Jezebel were confronted by Elijah earlier in this book. Who remembers?

Well Ahab is still in power, and he’s no better than before.

## The Story

The first 8 verses of Chapter 22 set the stage of our drama. Ahab and Jehosophat come together and Ahab convinces Jehosophat to join forces to retake a portion of the land, Ramoth Gilead, now ruled by a third king, the king of Aram.

**1 Kings 22:3-4** *The king of Israel had said to his officials, “Don’t you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us and yet we are doing nothing to retake it from the king of Aram?”* <sup>4</sup>*So he asked Jehoshaphat, “Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?”* *Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, “I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.”*

Jehoshaphat agrees, telling you how questionable his leadership over Judah is, considering the nature of Ahab.

However, Jehoshaphat at least has the good sense to try to find out if God might have something to say about their propped conquest.

**1 Kings 22:5-8** <sup>5</sup>*But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, “First seek the counsel of the LORD.”* <sup>6</sup>*So the king of Israel brought together the prophets—about four hundred men—and asked them, “Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?”*

LET’S stop a moment. These were not true prophets of Yahweh, they were most likely “Ahab’s version of them”. Paid to say what Ahab wanted.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A few commentaries associate the four hundred prophets in verse 6 with Jezebel’s prophets of Baal, some of whom might have survived the massacre at Mount Carmel.<sup>30</sup> But more than likely they were prophets of Ahab’s adulterated version of

*“Go,” they answered, “for the Lord will give it into the king’s hand.”*

### Enter Micaiah

<sup>7</sup>But Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there not a prophet of the LORD here whom we can inquire of?” <sup>8</sup>The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah.” “The king should not say that,” Jehoshaphat replied.

**1 Kings 22:9** <sup>9</sup>So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, “Bring Micaiah son of Imlah at once.”

Now we don’t know very much about this prophet Micaiah before this. He was not a superstar in Biblical history. He did not lead the people out of the Promised Land, like Moses. He did not have a long illustrious prophetic career, like Isaiah. He did not defeat 500 prophets at one time, like Elijah.

But he did follow after Elijah in Israel and remained in the nation of depraved Israel after Elijah left the scene. His name, Micaiah, means “*Who is like the Lord (Yahweh) is*” – that says something. And apparently, surrounded by a *million contrary voices*, he remained able to be a faithful prophet of the words of God.

So much so that Ahab says, “**I hate that man** –he never says anything good. He never agrees with me or tells me what I want to hear.”

As I said, Micaiah should be a modern-day hero for us today. He understands “today.” There are a lot of people today that don’t want to hear certain things, even if they are true. It’s more important to be *politically correct* than to be correct.

However, the reason I want you to focus on Micaiah today is for what comes next. Micaiah is going to be pressured to conform to the wishes of king Ahab. He is going to get all kinds of pressure, some subtle, others in the form of sledgehammers - all meant to get Micaiah to weaken and to give in to the acceptable views of the day - in his case, to agree with the false prophets and give a favorable report on whether to fight.

All the prophets report in, beginning in verse 10.

As expected, the false prophets give the “majority

report”:

**1 Kings 22:10-12** <sup>10</sup>*Dressed in their royal robes, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor by the entrance of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them.*

<sup>11</sup>*Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made iron horns and he declared, “This is what the Lord says: ‘With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.’ ”* <sup>12</sup>*All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. “Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious,” they said, “for the Lord will give it into the king’s hand.”*

A couple of things I notice here.

First, in verse 10. Doesn't it seem kind of strange that the first two Kings get on their royal thrones and dress-up in their royal robes before they inquire of Micaiah? It doesn't say they did that in v.6 with the 400?

I think this is the first level of intimidation. When you want people to "see it your way" one of the things you can do is get all "high and mighty" on them, and this is what Ahab and Jehoshaphat do.

And the next thing I noticed is that even though Ahab had already heard from his "yes men prophets" he pulls them out again to "perform" before Micaiah gets his turn. Talk about pressure to conform!

Have you ever been there? Has anyone tried to pull rank on you in order to sway you? Maybe it's the "Alpha dog" in your group of friends? Maybe it's the popular crowd. Maybe it's the older kid.

- Maybe it's when you are riding in a car and everyone else is sharing a joint or some pills and they come around to you and it's your turn.
- Or you're with your boss and some coworkers and they start laughing at someone who is different than you and them.

All of a sudden it's not so easy to do what you think is right. Plus, you know if you do what's right, that the others will make it seem like you are sitting in judgment on them.

Micaiah knows all about this. The false prophets make it pretty clear - they are going to "go along to get along." The king wants them to predict victory; that's what they do. You *will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed*. *It's all good. You're on the winning team!*"

Let's keep reading.

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Yahweh worship, which held that Baal and Asherah could be worshiped along with Yahweh.

**1 Kings 22:13** <sup>13</sup>*The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, “Look, as one man the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably.”*

Not-so-subtle pressure here, wouldn't you say? “Hey, everybody's doing it, why can't you?” “400 people can't be wrong can they? If you were smart you would just agree with them, because if you don't someone's gonna be really mad.”

But you have got to love Micaiah's answer. Like I said Christian T-shirts should be made.

**1 Kings 22:14** <sup>14</sup>*But Micaiah said, “As surely as the Lord lives, I can tell him only what the Lord tells me.”*

That's a verse we ought to memorize. , *“As surely as the Lord lives, I can do only what the Lord tells me.”*

I like the next part. I'm sure something is lost in the translation...

**1 Kings 22:15-16** <sup>15</sup>*When he arrived, the king asked him, “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?” “Attack and be victorious,” he answered, “for the Lord will give it into the king's hand.”* <sup>16</sup>*The king said to him, “How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?”*

And it's obvious isn't it that Micaiah must have had a note of sarcasm in his response. *“Sure, go ahead, attack and be victorious. And your baldness will go away, and you'll probably win the lottery too!”* Sarcasm and Ahab knows it. <sup>16</sup>*The king said to him, “How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?”*

Probably never, but he knew he wasn't getting it now.

**1 Kings 22:17-23** <sup>17</sup>*Then Micaiah answered, “I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, ‘These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.’ ”*

(in other words, The Shepherd, the King, is Missing –dead.)

<sup>18</sup>*The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?”* <sup>19</sup>*Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left.* <sup>20</sup>*And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?’ “One suggested this,*

*and another that.* <sup>21</sup>*Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’* <sup>22</sup>*“ ‘By what means?’ the Lord asked. “ ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said. “ ‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the Lord. ‘Go and do it.’* <sup>23</sup>*“So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. **The LORD has decreed disaster for you.**”*

Woah! That is quite a mouthful. Talk about not caving in to pressure.

You see, Ahab and Jehoshaphat, wanted to believe a lie more than they really wanted the Lord's will. God is not the father of lies; the Devil is (John 8:44). So God permitted an evil spirit to accomplish what Satan is always intent on doing.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, a little more intimidation is coming... **1 Kings 22:24-28** <sup>24</sup>*Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. “Which way did the spirit from the Lord go when he went from me to speak to you?” he asked.*

This false prophet was brazenly claiming that the Lord instructed him to slap Micaiah, trying to make Micaiah predictions seem just as silly. But Micaiah did not back down and continues.

<sup>25</sup>*Micaiah replied, “You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room.”* <sup>26</sup>*The king of Israel then ordered, “Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon the ruler of the city and to Joash the king's son* <sup>27</sup>*and say, ‘This is what the king says: Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely.’ ”* <sup>28</sup>*Micaiah declared, “If you ever return safely, the Lord has not spoken through me.” Then he added, “Mark my words, all you people!”*

Think about it. He was willing to stand on the side of truth. But that did not mean there was not a price to pay. Ahab put him in prison. But there was no turning back in the mind of Micaiah.

Listen people. If we are going to declare faith in Jesus Christ, then we must also be willing to take a stand for the things we believe in. We cannot call ourselves disciples of Jesus if we do not follow him. And, like Micaiah, sometimes there is a cost that we must pay.

One of the foundational declarations of the person

<sup>3</sup>*Spirit filled life study Bible. 1997, c1991 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.*

who becomes a follower of Jesus Christ is the simple but profound statement, "Jesus is Lord." Lord means master. Lord means that Jesus is the Director and we are the followers.

If we say that we love him and yet we don't do what he says, the Bible says we are only fooling ourselves and the truth is not in us.

LET'S BE HONEST TODAY. Is it possible that there are certain areas of your life that you have failed to bring under Christ's lordship? Areas that you know are displeasing to him? Maybe it's in your thought life? Or controlling your emotions? Or what you do with your body? Or what you see with your eyes?

It's time to stop making excuses. The devil did not invent temptation in the year 2000. He has been exercising his prerogative to tempt followers of God from day one. It began with Adam and Eve. He continued with Micaiah. And it continues today with you and me. But God is also on the throne. *"Who is like the Lord is?" He is the same yesterday today and tomorrow.* Just as he gave Micaiah the strength to resist and to declare the truth, he will also give you the strength to live under the teaching of his Word.

PLAY VIDEO – [what\\_r\\_u\\_saying.mpeg](#)

**This is important for multiple reasons.** First of all, it's important **FOR YOU.** You and your relationship with God. He saved you so he can bless you and guide you. But he can't bless an intentionally dirty vessel. He can't pour his blessings into something that is stained with willful sin.

But on top of that. Living like Micaiah is important not only for you, but **FOR THOSE AROUND YOU.** Those that have become your mission field. God has you planted where you are because he cares about the people you know and love. He wants them to know Jesus Christ to. But that is unlikely to happen if you compromise your faith. You become no better than a false prophet. People need to Lord and they need you and I to live a life that reflects Him.

Here to me is the saddest part of this biblical account. <sup>29</sup>*So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead.*

In the end, Micaiah speaks the truth. And Jehoshaphat, a God-fearing King, who wisely wanted to seek out the direction of the LORD - sadly and

wrongly does not live up to his faith and falls in with Ahab. Rather than take seriously God's truth, he caves in and goes along with Ahab, entering into a battle that they can only lose. And they did. And Ahab dies as Micaiah said he would.

You can continue to read later, and you will read about Ahab's death and Israel's defeat, just as Micaiah prophesied. It is another sad chapter for God's people. God's disobedient people.

How about you? How about me?