

## Lesson 7      15 September 2013

### Ahab's Death

**Lesson Scope:** [1 Kings 22](#)

#### Lesson Focus

Following Israel's victory over the Syrians, Ahab made a covenant with wicked king Ben-hadad and sent him away in peace. For this action, God pronounced judgment on Ahab, saying, "Thy life shall go for his life."

Ahab incurred further judgment for cooperating with Jezebel's wicked scheme to kill Naboth. Elijah informed Ahab that his posterity would be cut off and that dogs would lick his blood where they had licked Naboth's blood.

At the time of this lesson, three years of peace had passed since the battle with Syria. Ben-hadad had not kept his promise to restore Ramothgilead (1 Kings 20:34). In his determination to recover Ramoth-gilead by force, Ahab asked Jehoshaphat to go with him to battle against Syria.

People today have varied philosophies about divine retribution. Some advocate the idea that a loving God would never consign a soul to eternal punishment. Others scoff at the thought of eternal judgment. Still others claim that all roads lead to the same place and that everyone will finally make it to heaven.

This lesson needs to be seen with a firm conviction that divine retribution is sure to fall on all who are not following God and His Word. Be convincing in your teaching, for the eternal welfare of souls is at stake. Each of us personally must be convinced of the truth of Matthew 7:13-14.

Carnal man invents a deceptive sense of security about his life and future. The wicked will not escape the reaping for what they have sown.

**Lesson Aim:** To show the futility of trying to escape divine retribution.

**Theme Verse:** [Proverbs 29:1](#). He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

## Lesson Text

### A False Hope

**1 Kings 22:4-7** <sup>4</sup>And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses. <sup>5</sup>And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day. <sup>6</sup>Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king. <sup>7</sup>And Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?

**1 Kings 22:15** <sup>15</sup>So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.

### A Fair Warning

**1 Kings 22:16-23** <sup>16</sup>And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but *that which is* true in the name of the LORD? <sup>17</sup>And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. <sup>18</sup>And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? <sup>19</sup>And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. <sup>20</sup>And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. <sup>21</sup>And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. <sup>22</sup>And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. <sup>23</sup>Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

### A Fatal Arrow

**1 Kings 22:29-38** <sup>29</sup>So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead. <sup>30</sup>And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. <sup>31</sup>But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his

chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. <sup>32</sup> And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it *is* the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. <sup>33</sup> And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. <sup>34</sup> And a *certain* man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. <sup>35</sup> And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. <sup>36</sup> And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. <sup>37</sup> So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. <sup>38</sup> And *one* washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake.

## Questions for Study

### A False Hope

1. Why did Ahab gather so many prophets to give him counsel?
2. Explain Jehoshaphat's hesitancy to believe the four hundred prophets.
3. What things make us vulnerable to wrong counsel?

### A Fair Warning

4. What do verses 1 Kings 22: 15-18 reveal about Ahab?
5. What do we learn about God's dealings with men from this glimpse into the spirit world (1 Kings 22: 20-23)?
6. From what sources do we receive warnings from the Lord?

### A Fatal Arrow

7. Why did Ahab disguise himself?
  8. What lessons can we learn from the details surrounding Ahab's death?
- Lesson

## Analyzing the Passage

Jehoshaphat's visit to Ahab (1 Kings 22:2) did not mark the beginning of their socializing. Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, had married Ahab's daughter (2 Chronicles 21:5-6).

Whether as a result of misgivings or as a matter of normal practice, Jehoshaphat requested that they seek a word from the Lord about the plan.

The four hundred prophets whom Ahab gathered together (1 Kings 22:6) are not called prophets of Baal or prophets of Jehovah. They were Ahab's prophets, likely involved with perverted worship of Jehovah. Even though they professed to speak for God, Jehoshaphat doubted their credibility. He therefore sought a true prophet of the Lord.

In 1 Kings 22:15, notice that Micaiah spoke in irony to emphasize the folly of pursuing an already-chosen course.

Adjure (1 Kings 22:16) means "command."

The prophecy of Micaiah in 22:17 should have greatly alarmed Ahab. He had been told by a prophet in 20:42 that his life would go for Benhadad's life. Perhaps this is why he decided to disguise himself.

Micaiah's vision (1 Kings 22:19-23) reveals that God has a plan for those who deliberately turn from Him. He allows evil agents to deceive them. In this case, a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets deceived Ahab.

At a venture (1 Kings 22:34) means "at random." God directed the arrow to pierce guilty Ahab where two pieces of his armor met.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **A False Hope**

1. Gaining support from the godly gives the wicked a false sense of security (2 Kings 22:4). Ahab may have thought that Jehoshaphat's presence would ensure success for his efforts. Those who are not living consistently feel more comfortable if godly people support their course in life.

We must beware lest we be giving support to this type of person. We are not called to pass judgment on individuals. But neither do we want to endorse the actions of those who are not measuring up to the requirements of Scripture.

2. The obstinate seek counsel that supports their own desires (2 Kings 22:6). Ahab gathered those who he knew would tell him what he wanted to hear. In our search for good counsel, let us be sure we are seeking from among those who have proven faithful to the Lord and who are personally seeking to do His will. To seek elsewhere is only to deceive ourselves.

3. A feigned search for truth proves deceptive (2 Kings 22:7, 15). God always rewards a sincerely seeking soul. But those who only pretend to seek His ways are not able to understand truth. God reveals Himself only to those who wholeheartedly desire to follow Him.

If we seek God's ways only to be accepted of our brethren in the church, we will not truly understand the principles of Scripture. A personal conviction of truth is needed to produce spiritual understanding (1 Corinthians

1:18; 3:1).

### **A Fair Warning**

4. Rejecting truth does not change its accuracy (1 Kings 22:17-18). God cannot lie; His truth cannot change. Those who reject His Word only deceive themselves, and they will finally stand before God and be tried by the very Word they have rejected.

5. Discrediting the messenger of truth will provide no escape from divine retribution (1 Kings 22:18). It is native to human nature to speak against those who proclaim truth. We should rather take their message seriously and adjust our lives accordingly.

We should be careful not to discredit spiritual leaders who faithfully proclaim truth and make consistent applications. Concluding that "it's just his idea" will never free us from God's requirements.

6. The Lord superintends details to bring about His purposes (1 Kings 22:20-23). The Lord provides for the spiritual well-being of those who choose to serve Him, and He also permits the wicked to continue their course away from Him into eternal perdition.

This truth makes the choices we make in life very serious. We are moving either one direction or the other. We can be assured that as we choose right, the Lord will continue to assist us in that course.

### **A Fatal Arrow**

7. The wicked attempt to escape divine retribution by posing to be something that they are not (1 Kings 22:30). Trying to deceive others into thinking that we are something that we are not is futile. Even though we may sometimes deceive men, we will never deceive God. If we deceive others, we will also be deceiving ourselves. This will issue into a hardening process that will take us away from the Lord. The end of such a course will be nothing short of eternal ruin. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

8. God fulfills His Word with exacting detail (1 Kings 22:37-38). The details of Ahab's death remind us that God's Word will be fulfilled just as He has proclaimed. May we continue to align our lives with the principles of His Word, so that at the end of life we may hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21).

## **Important Teachings**

1. Gaining support from the godly gives the wicked a false sense of security (22:4).
2. The obstinate seek counsel that supports their own desires (22:6).
3. A feigned search for truth proves deceptive (22:7, 15).
4. Rejecting truth does not change its accuracy (22:17-18).
5. Discrediting the messenger of truth will provide no escape from divine retribution (22:18).
6. The Lord superintends details to bring about His purposes (22:20-23).
7. The wicked attempt to escape divine retribution by posing to be something that they are not (22:30).
8. God fulfills His Word with exacting detail (22:37-38).

## **Answers to Questions**

1. Why did Ahab gather so many prophets to give him counsel?  
The consciences of the ungodly are salved when they feel they are in the majority. No doubt Ahab chose those who he knew would tell him what he wanted to hear.
2. Explain Jehoshaphat's hesitancy to believe the four hundred prophets.  
Jehoshaphat had more sensitivity to the will of God than Ahab did. He was able to discern that these men were saying what Ahab wanted to hear, not what God had revealed.
3. What things make us vulnerable to wrong counsel? When we need advice, we might ask someone who we think might tell us what we would like to do, rather than seeking advice in an unbiased way. We might resist a brother's concern and the advice he gives to us.
4. What does 1 Kings 22: 15-18 reveal about Ahab?  
He had some interest in knowing the true will of God, but he was really not interested in obeying it. He seemingly gave no thought to amending his ways.
5. What do we learn about God's dealings with men from this glimpse into the spirit world (1 Kings 22:20-23)?  
God deals with men according to their interest in obeying Him. God superintends the forces of the spirit world. God is always righteous in His dealings with men.
6. From what sources do we receive warnings from the Lord?  
God warns through His Word and by His Spirit through the conscience. Faithful servants of the Lord, such as our brethren and church leaders, may also warn us. Unusual happenings, such as natural disasters or the sudden

death of an acquaintance, can also warn us.

7. Why did Ahab disguise himself?

He was apparently somewhat uneasy about the whole situation. He was no doubt remembering the prophecies that had come to him. He had the mistaken idea that he could escape retribution by his own conniving.

8. What lessons can we learn from the details surrounding Ahab's death?

No one can ever escape divine retribution. Every word of God in prophecy will be fulfilled exactly as God said it. Sin will always be dealt with in divine justice.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

There's a God who's standing at heaven's door;  
He's looking this universe o'er;  
And He sees each mortal with a searching eye  
You can't do wrong and get by.  
No matter how much you may try;  
Nothing hidden can be; ev'rything He doth see  
You can't do wrong and get by.

—*L. A. Ellis*

### **Research Guide**

1. In *Doctrines of the Bible* read the chapter titled "The Judgment."
2. In a topical Bible read Scriptures on "Judgment."