

1 Kings 22:1-28

Announcements:

- Facility updates - Things are happening. Come out on the 28th (needs/phases/projects soon...)
- Special message next week - (Aliens, AI, Islam, etc), then holy week, then 1 John.
- Baby dedication (11:30am) - Christopher/Ashley Torres (Abraham (3 months old))

Please open to 1 Kings 22 (a passage that stood out to me personally last year - Relevant!)

- Also, the parallel account is in 2 Chronicles 18 (just FYI)

Message Title: Popular or Faithful?

- Going with the Flow (verses 1-6)
- Swimming Upstream (verses 7-18)
- Spiritual Realities (verses 19-28)

A call to speak bold truth and not be ashamed of God's Word or apologetic for it...

Read verses 1-6

- PRAY

Going with the Flow (verses 1-6)

Setup context... Track with me!

A little context

- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Judges, Kings...
- This is roughly 120 years after King David. (850 BC ish) - battling Syrians...

V. 1 - Three years passed without war between Syria (Aram) and Israel

- Syria = Aram (hebrew = translations (Arameans)) | Israel = Northern kingdom
- These two nations have been at each other for roughly 2,500 years... (**be very brief here...**)
 - Arab-Israeli War (1948) - Syria involved = Nation - Miraculous!
 - Six-Day War (1967) - Syria involved = City of David - Miraculous!
 - Yom Kippur War (1973) - Surprise attacks from Syria (Golan Heights) - Miraculous!
 - And many scuffles since then...
- Back to the context of our text...
 - Back in chapter 20 - Ahab & Ben-Hadad - "A-bad & been-real-bad!" (both evil rulers)
 - Ahab (Israel) + Ben-Hadad (Syria) fight over Samaria = Capital of Israel
 - Israel won a battle in the hills and then another in the valley (two great victories!)
 - Peace treaty agreed...
 - 1 Kings 20:34, NIV - "I will return the cities my father took from your father," Ben-Hadad offered. "You may set up your own market areas in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Ahab said, "On the basis of a treaty I will set you free." So he made a treaty with him, and let him go."
- And our text today says, "Three years passed without war..."

V. 2 - Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to visit [Ahab] the king of Israel

- Following the death of Solomon, the nation had a **civil war and split in two**... (*Judah / Israel*)
- **Jehoshaphat the king of Judah** - generally a very good king. (priests, law, revival, victory...)
- **[Ahab] King of Israel** - A very bad king. **The worst!** (Jezebel, Baal's, Asherah...)
 - 1 Kings 16:33 - "**Ahab did more to provoke the Lord... than all the kings of Israel**"
- Which is why it is **strange to see Jehosaphat partnering** with him at all. **Compromise!**
- **Why?** Because of **marriage**... (2 Chronicles 18:1 - "by marriage he allied himself with Ahab")
 - **Jehoram** (son of J) + **Athaliah** (daughter of Ahab/Jezebel) = **She brought corruption!**
- "**Went down**" in elevation, but I say "**went down**" spiritually here as well... (1 Cor. 15:33)

V. 3 - **[Ahab] said...**

- V. 3 - Do you know that **Ramoth-Gilead is ours (it belongs to us!)**
 - **Ben-Hadad** apparently never returned this city as promised in the treaty...
 - **Strategically important location:** Eastern outpost! - **MAP!** (modern day = Jordan)
- V. 3 - **We hesitate** ("we're doing nothing about it...")
 - We shouldn't be just sitting on our hands any longer (in some contexts is a good word!)
- V. 3 - Take it out of the hand of the **king of Syria** (time to **break the treaty**)

V. 4 - So he said to Jehoshaphat, "**Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?**"

- **The big ask!** (Makes sense: Near Jerusalem, Trade routes, Fortress location, City of Refuge)

V. 4 - Jehoshaphat said... "**I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.**"

- This is the way it should have always been, one nation, one people. **However, in this case...**
- The "**bride compromise**" leads to the "**battle compromise**" (**rebuked!** - 2 Chron. 19:1-3)
- **Righteous people** can sometimes **make bad decisions**. (like a strong swimmer caught in a powerful rip tide (followed the crowd and ignored the warning signs)) - **examine yourself**

But the King of Judah did do one thing right...

V. 5 - Jehoshaphat said... "**Please inquire for the word of the Lord today.**"

- **Yes! This is the stuff!** How often do we fail to do this...? (**guilty!**) (Matthew 6:33)
- **The problem:** Jehoshaphat should have done this sooner (before partnering with Ahab)

V. 6 - **[Ahab] gathered the prophets together** (but, as we will see... **not true prophets of God**)

- V. 6 - About **four hundred men** (1 Kings 18 - 450 Baal (killed) + 400 Asherah (these guys?))

Asking these 400 prophets...

V. 6 - Shall I... **fight, or shall I refrain?**

- V. 6 - They said, "**Go up**, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king."
 - "**You're fine, just go with the flow man!**" (many people will tell you that today...)
 - They told the king what they knew **he wanted to hear**... (acting like everything is fine)
 - They even **used religious language** to make it sound good "**the Lord will deliver...**"

Warning: Are you seeking confirmation of your own bias or the truth?

- 2 Timothy 4:3, NLT - "A time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and **will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear...**" (you want a certain kind of pastor?)
 - **False prophets will come and will deceive...** (Mt. 24) (**Olivet Discourse**)

Beware of the “majority” opinion...

- 1 Samuel 8 - The people of **Israel wanted a king** “like the nations around them...”
- Matthew 27 - **Pilate knew Jesus was innocent** but succumbed to the pressure of the crowds...

Any dead fish can float downstream, it takes a live one to swim against the current...

Swimming Upstream (verses 7-18) (without reading everything upfront...)

V. 7 - Jehoshaphat said, “Is there not still **a prophet of the Lord**, that we may inquire of Him?”

- This is **discernment** on Jehoshaphat’s part. *We need that same discernment as well...*
- Good discernment comes from **knowing the Word**. **2 Chron 17 - Priests taught the Word!**
- I believe **people are hungry for this today**:
 - Not the *big shows* or the *entertaining hype*, but *real churches with solid bible teaching...*
 - But, *sadly*, it’s *hard to find...* (**Vision: WE CAN COMMIT THIS TO YOU!**) (*bereans!*)

V. 8 - [Ahab] said... “There is still one man, **Micaiah** the son of Imlah” (**highlighted fellow!**)

- *Ahab may have hated him* because **Micaiah’s** name means “**Who is like Yahweh?**”
- “There is still **one man**” - He was not just *jumping on the bandwagon...* **This man stood alone**.
 - **Noah stood alone** as a *preacher of righteousness* against all of civilization around him.
 - **Elijah stood alone** against the popular priests of *Baal and Asherah...*
 - **Stephen the 1st Martyr stood alone** against the *rigid Pharisees* of his day...
 - **Are you willing to stand, even if you’re the only one standing?**
 - It is **not easy being a lone voice for God** (Family, work, neighborhood, sports, school)

V. 8 - **But I hate him**, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, **but evil (disaster)**

- *John 15:18-19, NLT* - “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.” - *we’re seeing that today.*

V. 8 - Jehoshaphat said, “**Let not the king say such things!**” (**That’s not like the King of Israel!**)

- **Good Word!** **God’s people should hear from God’s teachers** (*even if it’s difficult to hear...*)
- **Like a good doctor** who tells patients *hard truths about their health* - *you may not like the news, but you need him to give you a real diagnosis* (not just say **everything is fine**...)
 - **Don’t despise or avoid** people that speak *hard truths* into your life...

V. 9 - Then [Ahab] **called an officer** and said, “**Bring Micaiah...**”

- **Officer/court official** was sent to retrieve the prophet - evidence (v. 26) he was **already in jail**.
 - Picture a **malnourished looking** fellow in **rags and chains**...
- “**Bring Micaiah... quickly!**” = You can *sense the attitude* - “**Ah, let’s get this over with...**”

(try to **imagine the scene** in your mind)

V. 10 - **[Both kings]:**

- Put on their **robes** - majestic **royal** apparel
- Sat each on his **throne** - seats of **authority**
- At a **threshing floor** - places of **spiritual significance** (David built altar; Solomon built temple)
- At the... **gate of Samaria** - **Capital** of Israel. (**Book of Ruth!**)
- **All the prophets** prophesied before them - **crowd supported** at the place of **decision making**

- This is all a **very royal and official** type of setting...

V. 11 - **Zedekiah** the son of Chenaanah...

- Appears to be **a key prophet** among the **false prophets** (or at least, **true prophets that strayed?**)

V. 11 - He made **horns of iron**, and said, **“Thus says the Lord: ‘With these you shall gore the Syrians’”**

- **Horns of Iron** - **Object lessons**. Common among prophets (**Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Agabus (belt)**)
 - **Two horns** = two forces (**Israel & Judah**)
- **Thus says the Lord. Be very careful, friends...** (I am **actively listening** for this...(test))
- **Gore the Syrians until they are destroyed** - He gave a **definitive prophecy** about victory.
- “prophets” can be **entertaining, enthusiastic, and innovative** - And, be **dead wrong...**

V. 12 - And **all the prophets** prophesied so, **“Go up... prosper... the Lord will deliver”**

- **Yeah, what he said!** (this is what **swallows people up** in society - **heard/crowd mentality**)
 - **Crowds have been wrong before: The Golden Calf, 12 spies, crucifixion...**
- **All = unanimous** (that's **very difficult to go against...**) (especially **400 to 1** - you'd seem crazy!)

V. 13 - [the messenger to Micaiah], **“the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king.**

- **“Everyone is saying it... You don't want to go against the masses do you?”** (**peer pressure**)

V. 13 - **Let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement (favorably).**

- **“Just go with the flow. Don't rock the boat. Don't say anything offensive. Be a yes man.”**
- **“Make a unanimous decision and we can move on”** **pressure to conform** from a **court official.**
- Great pressure is put upon **Christians/preachers today as well:**
 - **Don't speak against certain cultural ideologies or political issues...**
 - **Don't rock the boat... Don't say anything that might be offensive...**
 - **Don't call out specific sin or say anything confrontational** (**you can find them!**)

But now, ask yourself, do you modify God's truth to be liked or avoid confrontation? (prov 28:1)

V. 14 - Micaiah said, **“As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak.”**

- **Amen!** Reminds me of **Daniel, or Rack, Shack and Benny (bold!)**
- **Peter and John in Acts 4** - **“We cannot but speak the things we've seen and heard”**
- **Gal. 1:10, CSB** - **“For am I trying to persuade people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.”** (**I'm tempted**)
 - Micaiah was determined to be **faithful, not popular. (that's their main idea)**

V. 15 - [Ahab asked] **“Micaiah, shall we go to war?”**

V. 15 - Micaiah said, **“Go and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king!”**

- **This is strange!** (same as the others...)
- It's **clearly sarcasm** given **what was said before and after**, in context (**tone / facial expression?**)

V. 16 - [Ahab] said, **“How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?”**

- **Quit playing, man!** You **never agreed with them before or spoke well of me in the past...**
 - **(tell me the truth!) - I like that...** (I want that even if it hurts...)

- V. 17 - [Macaiah] said, "**I saw...**" Tone went from **mocking to serious** (shared **a vision from God**)
- V. 17 - All **Israel scattered** on the mountains - Scattered, not victorious... (military defeat)
 - V. 17 - As sheep that have **no shepherd**. - Israel's leadership is nowhere to be found...
 - V. 17 - The Lord said, ("**their master has been killed**") - **Death...**
 - V. 17 - Let **each return to his house** in peace - **The people should NOT "go up..."**
 - **Peace/Safety** would be found in **heeding the exhortation** - (This is **Counseling 101**)
 - **Telling the truth is an act of love!** Sadly, some people don't and **won't receive it...**

- V. 18 - [Ahab] said, "Did I not tell you he would **not prophesy good** concerning me?"
- The king has **confirmation bias**. He's **already made up his mind**. Therefore, **dismissing...**
 - Those **conformed by the world do this towards churches/Christians** as well...

Now, a **peek behind the curtain into the spiritual realm...** (more happening than we can see)

Spiritual Realities (verses 19-28) (without reading everything upfront...)

- V. 19 - Micaiah said, "Therefore **hear the word of the Lord**"
- **Earlier we got a false/sarcastic word**, now we're getting **the real deal!**
- V. 19 - "**I saw...**" (another **vision** from God...)
- V. 19 - The Lord **sitting on His throne** (the place of **Sovereign rule**)
 - V. 19 - And all the **host of heaven** (**tzeva ha-shamayim**) standing by Him (**Isaiah 6 & Rev. 4**)
 - **God and His Divine Council** behind the scenes... (**Bene ha-Elohim**) (**NOT polytheism...**)
 - **Details for another sermon.** (Psalm 82, 89, Deut 32, Job 1-2, 38, portions of Daniel)
 - **Ephesians 6:12** - "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against **principalities**, against **powers**, against the **rulers** of the darkness of this age, against **spiritual hosts** of wickedness in the heavenly places..." **Spiritual hierarchies** at play...
- V. 20 - The Lord said, '**Who will persuade (entice) Ahab** to go up, **that he may fall?**'
- **The Lord has decreed** it is **time for Ahab to die...** but He asked, **who and how?**
 - V. 20 - One spoke **in this manner**, and another **in that manner...**
 - The **divine council deliberating...** - **suggestions** are floating around...
- V. 21 - Then **a spirit came forward** and stood before the Lord, and said, '**I will persuade him.**'
- **A spirit** - a **member of this angelic council**, but closely **parallels Job 1-2** (**ha satan**)
 - Here, a **willing/adversarial being** asks **permission of God** to proceed with a plan.
- Vv. 22-23 - The Lord said to him, '**In what way?**' (speaking to this **spiritual, angelic being...**)
- V. 22 - 'I will go out and be **a lying (deceiving) spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.**'
 - You know there are **lying spirits at work in this world** don't you?
 - **Even through "apparent prophets of God"** (**Matthew 24 warnings...**)
- V. 22 - The Lord said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. **Go out and do so.**'
- **Permission granted...**
- V. 23 - "Therefore look, **the Lord has put a lying spirit** in the mouth of all these prophets of yours"
- The verse is **NOT** saying **God Himself is being deceptive or lying** (**outside of His nature!**)

- On the contrary... **God already spoke truth** through the **TRUE PROPHET (Micaiah)**
- But **God did allow** for spiritual deception to fall upon Ahab as **a Divine Judgement**.
 - Matthew 8 - Jesus "**permitted**" the demons to enter the swine and into the abyss.
 - Romans 1 - **God gave them up** to uncleanness, vile passions, & debased minds
 - 2 Thess 2:11 - God will **send strong delusion** on those who are perishing because they reject the truth and have pleasure in unrighteousness. (next week's message basis)
- Psalm 18:26 - "With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd." - **Ahab was fighting against God**. So God would deal with him accordingly.
- V. 23 - The Lord has declared **disaster against you**. - **Judgement sovereignly decreed**

From the heavenly scene back to the earthly scene...

V. 24 - Zedekiah... **struck Micaiah on the cheek**

- **This is how people respond to truth, sometimes!**
- **(the same thing happened to our Lord & Savior)**

V. 24 - And said, "Which way did the spirit from the Lord go from me to speak to you?"

- This is some prophet taunting (chirping!) right here... Words dripping with sarcasm...

V. 25 - Micaiah said, "Indeed, **you shall see** on that day when you go into an **inner chamber to hide!**"

- "You wanna talk some smack? **You will find out soon enough buddy...**" You're going to be running and hiding like a scared little chicken soon.."
- **Our Lord and Savior (the True Prophet) did better** (silent like a sheep before His shearers)

V. 26 - So the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and **return him to... the governor** of the city...

- "Lock him up again... We're done with him..."

V. 27 - Put this fellow **in prison**, and feed him with **bread and water of affliction (meager rations)**

- **Back in the slammer** with worse conditions than before... *Not the first nor the last...
 - (Joseph, Jeremiah, JTB, Paul and Silas, end of Hebrews 11...)
- There is often **a cost for standing for truth**. Jesus told us to "count the cost" (Luke 14)

V. 28 - But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, **the Lord has not spoken by me.**"

- You **test a prophet by the truth of his prophecies**, (Deut 18:21-22)

V. 28 - And [Micaiah] said, "**Take heed, all you people!**" ("Everyone, mark my words!")

- Addresses the entire crowd now... **True prophecy** = Ahab died and battle lost Vv. 34-40...
- **Final words from a faithful prophet!** ("He who has ears to hear, let him hear!")

Closing:

A **direct, bold, blunt** passage of scripture... Here's **three main points** from my heart as a pastor:

1. **Warn you of the deceptive voices in this world** (1 kings 22 is not an isolated incident, It's a consistent biblical pattern - people must choose between **popular opinion and divine truth**)
 - o **John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress** - Christian's journey. Warfare & deception lurking...
2. **Stay true to God's Word** Don't water it down or change it. (speak it in love (1 Cor. 13:2))
3. **Be bold and stand for the Lord**. Even if you're the only one... (the courage of Micaiah)
 - o **There's power in one**. One person taking directions from the Heavenly Headquarters

It's all about **being faithful to the Lord**, rather than **being liked or popular** (and it might cost you!)

- **Ridiculed, slapped, arrested...**
- *Who wants to sign up for that ministry?*
- *Whose ministry does that sound like? **Our Lord Jesus Christ...***

G.O.S.P.E.L. - Altar call?

PRAY