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1 Kings 21 - 22



1 Kings - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg provides a comprehensive analysis of 1 Kings 21-22, which narrates the reign of King Ahab. The story revolves around the dispute over Naboth's vineyard, which ultimately leads to Naboth's unjust execution. The chapter also sheds light on the ways in which Ahab and his wife Jezebel engage in sinful practices that provoke God's wrath. Despite the presence of a few good kings, the overall picture of Israel's monarchy during this period is one of corruption and disobedience to God's commands.

Transcript

Alright, we have two more chapters to take in our study of 1 Kings, and they continue to deal with the period of Ahab's reign. It's interesting, the variety of information we have about Ahab. I mean, he was like a war hero in the previous story, but also a kind man, who showed generosity toward his opponent.

However, that was one he shouldn't have. And he has persecuted the prophet Elijah, and now he's a guy who is definitely not as strong a character and a leader as his wife is. And she is, of course, that evil Sidonian queen, Jezebel.

And we're going to see her behavior a little more in this chapter than we've seen it so far. We've heard about Jezebel killing the prophets of Yahweh, sponsoring the prophets of Baal. We've heard about her issuing her threats against Elijah.

But we haven't really seen her in action yet. We've heard about these things sort of as things that were done somewhere in the past but not described. But we will see Jezebel in all her glory in chapter 21.

It came to pass after these things that Naboth, the Jezreelite, had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab, the king of Samaria. Now that's probably a good neighborhood if you're right next door to the king, like live next to the White House or something like that. However, if the property values were high, it was not necessarily an advantageous place for Naboth on this occasion to live, as it turned out.

So Ahab spoke to Naboth saying, give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a

vegetable garden because it is near, next to my house. And for it, I will give you a vineyard better than it. Or if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money.

So it's a fair offer. I mean, he says, I'll give you something better or whatever value you wish, however, there was a matter more than money that interested Naboth. And that was the honor of his family and the idea that God had given each family in the days of Joshua, a certain territory that was not supposed to transfer to other parties, at least not permanently.

And Naboth said to Ahab, the Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my father's to you. Notice it says Yahweh forbid. Naboth invokes the name Yahweh.

Ahab is a Baal worshiper, it would seem. And Naboth is a believer living next door. And he says, I'm sorry, I've got a conscience about this.

This is my father's inheritance. I can't sell it. I can't even trade it for a better place.

So Ahab went into his house, sullen and displeased or pouty because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him, for he had said, I will not give you the inheritance of my father's. And he laid down on his bed and turned away his face and he would not eat any food. What a juvenile type of behavior.

But Jezebel, his wife, came to him and said to him, why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food? So he said to her, because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, give me your vineyard for money or else if it pleases you, I'll give you another vineyard for it. And he answered, I will not give you my vineyard. Then Jezebel, his wife, said to him, you now exercise authority over Israel.

Arise and eat food and let your heart be cheerful. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who were dwelling in the city of Naboth, with Naboth.

And she wrote in the letters saying, proclaim a fast and seat Naboth with high honor among the people and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him saying, you have blasphemed God and the king. Notice she doesn't say Yahweh. She probably can't bear it under that name.

Then take him out and stone him that he may die. So the men of his city, the elders of the nobles who were inhabitants of the city, did as Jezebel had sent to them as it was written in the letters which she had sent to them. They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth with high honor among the people.

And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him and the scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth in the presence of the people saying, Naboth has

blasphemed God and the king. Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones so that he died. Then they sent to Jezebel saying, Naboth has been stoned and is dead.

Now here's an upstanding citizen which his neighbors have no qualms about lying about in court and having him killed innocently. And why? I mean are they? Now most of the neighbors probably believe the witnesses. We don't know who put the witnesses up.

Somebody under Jezebel's orders put up these two scoundrels to bear false witness against him. Obviously the community had to be convinced that he was guilty because the neighbors would not wish to kill him if he was innocent. But when you find a couple of witnesses against a man and say he's done things worthy of death, well then the community cannot really object to his execution.

And so there were some wicked people, the witnesses themselves of course, under the law of Moses as false witnesses, they should be given the same punishment as their victim. That's what the law said that if someone bears false witness against somebody then the punishment that he would have received will be given to them. So these men were men worthy of death themselves but they got away with it.

Ahab didn't however. Now Ahab wasn't directly involved in this as near as the story records but Jezebel had sent these orders with his seal on it. That means they at least appeared to come from the king's desk and they may well have.

In any case if Ahab was not involved in this directly he's responsible for allowing his wife to go out and do her dastardly deed under his name. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite about whom we've not heard much in the past chapter and a half. Last we heard he had gone down and called Elisha to be his follower and we'd heard nothing since then.

And the Lord said arise go and meet Ahab the king of Israel who lives in Samaria. There he is in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone down to take possession of it. You shall speak to him saying thus says Yahweh have you murdered and also taken possession? And you shall speak to him saying thus says the Lord in the place where dogs lick the blood of Naboth.

Dogs shall lick your blood even yours. Then Ahab said to Elijah have you found me oh my enemy? And he answered I have found you because you've sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold I will bring calamity on you I will take away your posterity and I will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel both bond and free.

I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Naboth and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah because of the provocation with which you have provoked me to anger and made Israel sin. And concerning Jezebel the Lord has also spoke saying

the dog shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. The dog shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field.

Now this kind of disposal of a dead body would be very rare. A king and a queen would usually be buried in state with a very fancy procession and mourning and great elaborate funeral and buried in fancy tombs. A person who was eaten by birds or eaten by dogs would be somebody either who died out on the battlefield and was consumed by vultures before they could get to him and bury him or in the case of dogs somebody whose corpse was just thrown out to the dogs because of the great contempt with which they were viewed they would not be permitted a decent burial and they're left out to the animals to eat.

Now for that to be happening to a king or a queen would be a particularly undignified end and yet it did happen. Now it says in the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth so the dogs there shall lick your blood. Actually Ahab didn't die in Jezreel but in Samaria I believe and but the dogs did lick his blood.

He was killed in battle, well he was wounded in battle and when he got home his chariot was filled with his blood and when they washed out the chariot there was the dogs licked his blood. Jezebel eventually was thrown out of a tower by her servants at the orders of Jehu and she died and Jehu and his men just walked over her corpse as they walked in and had lunch. When they came out the dogs had basically dismembered her and torn her to pieces and there was nothing left but a few scraps of her body.

So this curse of Elijah that which would seem in the natural to be very unlikely to take place actually happened more or less literally. But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in Israel in the sight of the Lord because Jezebel his wife stirred him up. Now the author here blames Jezebel for stirring him up to be as wicked as he was.

He was not a great man, he was not a great good man or a great bad man. He ended up being bad, exceedingly bad because of the influence of his exceedingly bad wife. He also had a soft spot in him and he was not as murderous as Jezebel was but he was stirred up to do wrong things by an evil wife in his case.

He should have been more of a leader himself. He should have resisted the influence of his wife and that would be something he'd be responsible for but he just he was stirred up by his wife to do things he would not otherwise have done. And we see that he's even capable of some measure of repentance because he's not altogether bad at heart.

He was a very bad ruler in that he established Baal worship at the instigation of Jezebel becomes in that sense the worst ruler Israel ever had. But he's also a man who's kind of wimpy in some ways and juvenile and not not a strong man it would appear at all. And it says and he behaved very abominably and following idols according to all that the

Amorites had done whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.

So it was when Ahab heard those words that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went around mourning. So he'd heard that this horrible fate would come upon him and all of his offspring and it affected him. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite saying see how Ahab has humbled himself before me because he has humbled himself before me I will not bring the calamity in his days but in the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house.

In other words God says I'm not really going to change my judgment call on this because frankly he has done the damage. And yet because he's humbled himself I'm not going to let all these horrible things happen in his lifetime. He won't have to experience them or see them with his eyes the massacre of his children and so forth.

And so Ahab would die not peaceably however. He would die in battle and that is how the next chapter is occupied to tell us about how that happened. Now three years passed without war between Syria and Israel.

Actually in that time secular history tells us that Syria and Israel together fought against Assyria. There's this secular the history recorded by Sennacherib of Assyria records how that there was a battle against him fought by a coalition of Israel and Syria around this time. About three years after the peace treaty was made between Ahab and Syria there was this coordinate effort on their part to resist the encroaching reach of Assyria which was expanding in that direction about that time.

Sennacherib claims that he won that battle but since he didn't press his advantage at that time it makes you wonder. Sometimes these kings claim that they won when they didn't win. And so it would seem that although it's not recorded in scripture Ahab and Ben-Hadad both together did ward off an attack from Assyria.

Apparently not worth mentioning in the scripture however. And it was about that time probably just after that time that we read of this in chapter 22. Now three years passed without war between Syria and Israel and it came to pass in the third year that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to visit the king of Israel.

Now we first we've heard of Jehoshaphat only very briefly in that when Aza died in chapter 15 verse 24 says Aza rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father. Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place. Now that's all we've heard before this of Jehoshaphat.

All these chapters in between have been about Ahab and of course Elijah who interacted with Ahab. Meanwhile all this time Jehoshaphat has been reigning in Judah and now he is introduced into the story only because he befriended Ahab. Now we're not going to be told much in first kings about Jehoshaphat.

At the end in this chapter in verses 41 through 53 we or at least 50 through 50 41 through 50 we have a brief notice of Jehoshaphat's reign without much detail. The main story in first kings is about his coalition with Israel with Ahab on this occasion when Ahab died. However in chronicles we have considerably more about Jehoshaphat enough to convince us that he was one of the best kings that Judah ever had.

He was one of four kings that was a reformer. There were eight kings of Judah that are said to be good kings. Four of them were actually reformers who sought to bring sweeping reforms in Judah and Jehoshaphat was one of those.

And some details about his reforms and even about a very remarkable victory he had against a huge army coming against him are given in second chronicles and we will take time to look at those chapters when we come to the proper place. But that's this Jehoshaphat about whom we've heard nothing previously except that as the son of Asa he had come to reign in Judah. It came to pass in the third year that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to visit the king of Israel and the king of Israel said to his servants, do you know that Ramoth Gilead is ours but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria? Now we don't know at what point Syria had taken Ramoth Gilead from him.

Ramoth Gilead is on the eastern shore of the Jordan in Gilead and it was a bordered city and therefore it was important an important defensive location and for the Syrians to hold it even though there was no war at this time between Syria and Israel was not considered to be in the long term in Israel's advantage after all Syria sometimes had been their enemy and for them to control Ramoth Gilead was not a positive thing. They had apparently captured it some earlier time unrecorded and had never returned it and now there's been three years with no war between Israel and Syria but now Ahab's thinking you know I've never really felt comfortable about Syria occupying Ramoth Gilead. Maybe we should go and take it back from them.

In other words let's have a war with them again and get this territory back that's rather strategic and it's ours after all it belongs to Israel. So he said to Jehoshaphat will you go with me and fight Ramoth Gilead and Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel I am as you are my people as your people my horses as your horses in other words as far as I'm concerned we're one nation here we're all the 12 tribes of Israel we're all one big happy family here my soldiers my horses I am like you and available to you and Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel please inquire of the word for the word of Yahweh today. Now I don't know if Jehoshaphat knew that Ahab was not a Yahweh worshiper although Ahab was a syncretist he probably did worship Yahweh some of the time and Baal some of the time and other gods some of the time but Jehoshaphat was a godly man of Yahweh and he said listen I don't want to go and do anything like this unless we hear from Yahweh about what he thinks we should do.

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together now this was up in Ahab's capital Jehoshaphat was visiting him and Ahab's capital had like all kings had prophets on their staff however these prophets were false prophets we do not read that they were prophets of Baal but they were certainly mercenary prophets they were not genuine prophets they didn't speak the word of the lord they didn't even speak in the name of Yahweh which is something Jehoshaphat apparently noticed. He says the king of Israel gathered the prophets together about 400 men and said to them shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to fight or shall I refrain so they said go up for the lord will deliver it into the hand of the king notice lord is just there it's not it's not Yahweh it's Adonai and therefore they're not really speaking in the name of Yahweh and Jehoshaphat said is there not still a prophet of Yahweh here that we may inquire of him so there's 400 prophets but none of them are right are prophets of Yahweh but Jehoshaphat just noticed they're not speaking in the name of Yahweh don't you have anyone in this country that speaks in the name of Yahweh well of course Elijah did but he was hard to lay your hand on not easy to find you couldn't just call him anytime you wanted to he might be anywhere but there was one known prophet of Yahweh there in the town and Ahab said to Jehoshaphat there is still one man Micaiah the son of Imlah by whom we may inquire of Yahweh but I hate him because he does not prophesy good concerning me but evil you know these guys would just get a clue if the prophets of Yahweh the reliable prophets prophesy evil things about you and that God was angry at you and God's going to judge you it seems like they'd say you know the sooner the penny would drop and say you know what God's against me maybe I ought to do something different maybe I ought to change maybe I to get God on my side it's like these guys they just didn't get the idea which seems like common sense here's a prophet of Yahweh yeah he always speaks to him but he always says bad things about me well then why don't you change so he'll say good things about you oh that's unthinkable he said I hate this Micaiah he always prophesies bad things not good things about me and Jehoshaphat said let not the king say such things then the king of Israel called an officer and said bring Micaiah the son of Imlah quickly the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah having put on their robes sat each on his throne they apparently had a guest throne for the king of Judah there for the times when he was visiting and so they this was a regal occasion they're both wearing their kingly garments they're not in their civvies they'd been playing tennis before so they were in their shorts then they put on their put on their robes to make this more uh an official thing gonna make some official decisions about going to war but they have to hear from the prophet of Yahweh first and it says they were at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria and all the prophets prophesied before them so as Micaiah was being brought in these false prophets were all standing there giving their their sermons their prophecies after all that's what they were paid to do now Zedekiah the son of Chenana had made horns of iron for himself this is one of the false prophets and he said thus says Yahweh now he says oh you want to hear from Yahweh I'll speak in the name of Yahweh if you'd like thus says Yahweh with these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed well it's a

little belated to be bringing Yahweh into your prophecies and these guys will just say whatever they think the king wants to hear since Ahab was not a worshipper of Yahweh they didn't mention Yahweh until the king said well we want to inquire of Yahweh so they're okay this is what Yahweh said these prophets are very pliable and very uh accommodating but they're not genuine and they're saying what the king wants to hear what he wants to hear is that he's going to win this war that's not exactly what God is saying verse 12 and all the prophets prophesied so saying go up to rameth gilead and prosper for the lord will deliver you it into the king's hands excuse me will deliver it into the king's hands then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him saying now listen the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king please let your word be like the word of and speak encouragement Micaiah said as the as Yahweh lives whatever Yahweh says to me I will speak then he came to the king and the king said to him Micaiah shall we go to war against rameth gilead or shall we refrain and he answered him go and prosper for Yahweh will deliver it into the hand of the king now of course that's what the other prophets were saying and it may surprise us that Micaiah would come and say the same thing well it surprised Ahab too in fact he recognized that Micaiah was not really saying what he really thought there's a very good chance that Micaiah was saying it in a sarcastic or mocking tone mimicking the other prophets so as to make it clear that he was only saying what the king wanted to hear and not what was really true so the king said to him how many times shall I make you swear that you will tell me nothing but the truth in the name of Yahweh then he said I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains as sheep that have no shepherd and Yahweh said these have no master let each return to his house in peace in other words after the battle the king is gone there's no shepherd of Israel they're dead he's dead and so the people just disperse from the battlefield and the king of Israel said to Joseph did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me but evil then Micaiah said therefore hear the word of Yahweh I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne and all the host of heaven standing by on his right hand and on his left and Yahweh said who will persuade Ahab to go up that he may fall at rameth gilead so one spoke in this manner and another spoke in that manner then a spirit came forward and stood before the lord and said I will persuade him and the lord said to him in what way so he said I will go out and be a lion spirit in the mouth of all his prophets and he said you shall persuade him and also prevail go out and do so now therefore look Yahweh has put a lion spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours and the lord has declared disaster against you now this is interesting because he's saying that God has intended to deceive you but I'm here telling you about it the lord is now telling you that he's trying to deceive you by sending a false lion spirit in the mouth of your prophets now there's several layers of this because on the one hand God intends for Ahab to be deceived on the other hand Micaiah speaking for God says don't listen to them they're lying to you God has put a lion spirit in their mouth and he wants you to know that that's a lion spirit you shouldn't listen to that but he's put it there to deceive you I mean does God want him to be deceived or not it seems obvious that God is you know sending the deception but he is also giving fair warning that it's that it's a

deception and he shouldn't believe it reminds me of what some people say when you suggest that you know the earth and universe might not be billions of years old and they talk about all the things that are found in the earth's crust and all the all the evidence they think exists in the sky of a billions and billions of years old universe and you say well you know that that might have all been done in the last few thousand years and they say what did God try to deceive us then you know did God build all these things in it to deceive us and make us think it's older than it is why would God want to deceive us I think how could you say God's deceiving you when in his word he's told you how old it is you know now you've got a choice you can go by what God tells you or by your own inferences from what you're looking at and if you go by what you are inferring from what you look at God didn't deceive you he's told you about it in this case God didn't deceive Ahab I mean he he did allow the lying prophets to lie to him knowing that he would listen but he also says don't listen to them he sends his prophecy don't listen to these guys they're lying to you don't do it it's like while God is trying to drag Ahab off into battle where he'll die all the while God's saying don't go don't go I'm telling you this is going to be bad for you I'm warning you now who's deceiving Ahab God can't be blamed for deceiving when he sent the true prophet Micah to tell him it was a deception it's it's really a kind of a strange set of affairs one thing that's strange about it is of course that it has God sending a lion spirit at all a lion spirit we presume is an evil spirit and why would God send an evil spirit and yet this is not the first time we've read of this in the historical books we saw in uh in actually in judges that God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem his hometown so that they had a a wedge between them and they turned against him uh we also found that God sent an evil spirit against Saul to judge him and now God sends a lion spirit to the mouth of Ahab's prophets to judge him it's obvious that in the bible evil spirits come from the presence of God he sends them but this is not to be confused as some kind of a teaching that God and the evil spirits are on the same team God is sovereign and nothing is allowed to happen unless he at least permits it he doesn't always initiate it but he permits certain things the devil came to God and said let me afflict Joel well God had the right to say yes or no to that on this occasion God said yes and therefore the devil came from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Joel but it wasn't God who initiated the activity it's God that weighed the suggestion of the devil and decided to allow it in this particular case whereas he would not allow it in other cases that's because he had put a hedge around Job on other occasions and the devil couldn't do anything to him God has the power to prevent the devil from doing anything if he wishes he can protect God's people from anything that the devil may try to do against them but he may allow it for his purposes in this case we see that God wanted had a purpose his purpose was to judge Ahab the particular suggestion about putting a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets wasn't it wasn't initiated by God but by an evil spirit itself an evil spirit came and offered its services or asked permission as it were to come against Ahab and his prophets and God permitted it just like he permitted Satan to go out and afflict Joel and this is what I think these few pictures we have where the veil is pulled back and we see what's going on in the

negotiations between God and the spirit beings it gives us some way of making sense although it's strange but it helps us make sense of what's really going on here the devil and the demons are making suggestions asking permission to do harm to people and God is the one who has the right to veto or to allow it in this case Micaiah says God allowed it because it suited God's purposes it apparently suited God's purposes to test Job so he allowed the devil to do what he did it suited God's purpose to judge Saul so he let an evil spirit come to him but that evil spirit had to come to God first and get permission likewise it suits God's purpose for lying prophets to deceive Ahab and so he allows this lying prophet to come even sends it as we could say but that doesn't mean the lying spirit was actually God's friend evil spirits are on the other side but God almost to their chagrin uses them for his purposes they only apparently have malicious intent but God can take even the malicious things that the demons do and turn around and use them for some purpose in his in his economy in this case getting rid of a very very bad king so Micaiah said you know the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of your prophets well of course in doing that he says that right in front of these 400 prophets and he's basically said you're a bunch of liars you're being inspired by evil spirits not by the Yahweh so one of them the guy who had the horns verse 24 Zedekiah the son of Chanaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said which way did the spirit of the Lord go from me to speak to you now apparently what this means is the spirit of Yahweh was speaking from me when did he leave me to speak through you and like I said indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide now he does not say from what he'll be hiding perhaps from Jehu who will come to wipe out all this false prophets and all the house of Ahab and so forth it may be that that's when this man would also meet his end or would have to hide in order to avoid that the king of Israel said take Micaiah and return him to Ammon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son and say thus says the king put this fellow in prison and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction until I come back in peace then Micaiah said if you ever return in peace Yahweh has not spoken by me and he said take heed all you people as he's been dragged off in chains under arrest he's just told him listen people hear what I said pay attention you'll see I was right so the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead now it's strange that Jehoshaphat went along now what a strange decision that was Joseph said well let's not go unless I hear from Yahweh about this so Yahweh speaks and says this is going to be the death of Ahab so Joshua says okay let's go why not sounds like it's a good sounds like a winner you know let's go and fight what is Joshua thinking here in second chronicles chapter 20 we find that when Jehoshaphat got back from this battle to his own land a prophet approached him and rebuked him for having associated with Ahab and befriending him that's in second chronicles 20 verses 35 through 37 we'll just turn there real quickly and show you this so I mean we wonder why Jehoshaphat would have done this apparently God wondered why he would too and in second chronicles 20 verses 35 through 37 says after this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah the king of Israel who acted very wickedly and he allied himself with him to make ships of Tarshish etc but Eliezer the

son of Dodovah of Mereshish prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah and this is of course the son of Ahab and it was part of his alliance with Ahab it was part of his friendship with the northern kingdom and these wicked these wicked kings up there the lord has destroyed your works then the ships were wrecked so that they were not able to go to Tarshish this is of course a different story in Jehoshaphat's life but the prophet rebukes him for allying himself with these northern kings who are so wicked so we see the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah going to Ramoth Gilead together and the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat now listen to this and Jehoshaphat goes along with this this is almost too childish Ahab says Jehoshaphat I'll disguise myself and go into the battle but you put on your robes I mean the king in the battle was gonna be the name target of the enemy and so he says you dress like a king and I'll go and dress like an ordinary soldier and Jehoshaphat said yeah that sounds good why not and so Jehoshaphat you know he was a good man but not a smart man apparently you know and here Ahab is transparently saying make yourself the target so I can get in and out of there safely and so that's what they did so the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle now the king of Syria had commanded the 32 captains of his chariot saying fight with no one small or great but only with the king of Israel so it was when the captains of the chariot saw Jehoshaphat that they said surely it is the king of Israel because he was the one dressed like a king so they mistook him for Ahab therefore they turned aside to fight against him and Jehoshaphat cried out and it happened when the captains of the chariot saw that it was the king not the king of Israel that they turned back from pursuing him so here Jehoshaphat had a big target on him saying shoot me and yet because God because he was a good man God spared him he could have been killed and then they could have found out it wasn't the king of Israel but they recognized that it wasn't him before they killed him and so they they turned back and he was spared now a certain man drew a bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor so that he said to the driver of his chariot turn around and take me out of the battle for I'm wounded and the battle increased that day and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians and died at evening the blood ran out from the wound onto the floor of the chariot which is significant later on then as the sun was going down a shout went throughout the army saying every man to his city and every man to his own country so because uh because Ahab died essentially the war was over and so everyone withdrew and apparently Ramoth Gilead stayed in the hands of the Syrians and Ahab came to his end and the sheep had no shepherd as was said in the vision of Micaiah now whether Micaiah was ever released from prison because his prophecy was shown to be true we don't know we never read of him again and it is possible that he was released but it's also possible that he was not the interesting thing here is that Ahab had taken measures to make sure that it didn't happen that he would die he disguised himself he was an ordinary looked like an ordinary soldier and the guy who killed him didn't recognize him he was just shooting at random into the Israelite camp or into the chariots of Israel and an arrow happened to strike Ahab and not I mean it struck him in a vulnerable spot in the joints of his armor presumably his armor would

have deflected an arrow if it had not hit him in one spot where the armor wasn't covering and it wasn't necessarily a vital organ that struck but he bled to death it would seem he just had a big wound that was bleeding and they didn't have any way to stop it so he bled to death there on the battlefield in his chariot so the king died and was brought to Samaria and they buried the king in Samaria he actually did get buried but his blood was licked by dogs as Elijah the prophet had said when someone washed the chariot at the pool of Samaria the dogs licked up his blood while the harlots bathed according to the word of the lord which he had spoken um the while the harlots bathed is a strange phrase to have in there and the syriac version actually says as they washed his armor apparently the Hebrew text was ambiguous and the Masoretic text says that the dogs licked his blood while the harlots bathed that doesn't seem like the harlots bathing if that was in fact going on at the time would be very relevant to the story and it's not even clear why the harlots would be bathing at all in that pool at that time while the chariot's being washed out so maybe the targums and the syriac version have preserved an earlier Hebrew version of this because instead of while the harlots bathed it says while they washed his armor which makes some sense the dogs would lick his blood while his armor was being washed because they'd washed out the chariot already and its blood was on the ground now the rest of the acts of Ahab and all that he did in the ivory house which he built and all the cities that he built are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Ahab rested with his fathers then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place now Jehoshaphat the son of Aza had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king and he reigned for 25 years in Jerusalem his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi and he walked in all the ways of his father Aza he did not turn aside from them doing what was right in the eyes of the lord nevertheless the high places were not taken away for the people offered sacrifices and burnt incense burned incense on the high places now here it says the high places were not taken away in the detailed description of his reforms in second chronicles it does say he took away the high places and it's possible for both things to be true it's possible that he did take away the high places at one point but in the course of his reign at later time people built them again and he left them intact and didn't take them away again he may have become lenient after his initial reforms and if people set them up again it may have been remembered against him that he didn't take them away or it's possible that he didn't take them away initially and later he did but one passage says he did and one passage says he didn't take away the high places it says in verse 44 also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel which as we saw in second chronicles 20 verses 35 through 37 that was not a good thing now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat the might that he showed and how he made war are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah and the rest of the perverted persons by the way we're going to talk about these other things that Jehoshaphat did looking over second chronicles in a moment but the perverted persons who remained in the days of his father Eza he banished from the land there was then no king in edom only a deputy of the king Jehoshaphat made merchant ships to go to ofer

for gold but they never sailed for the ships were wrecked at izi and geber this is what we read about in the 20th chapter of chronicles and it says this is because he had made an alliance with uh uh ahaziah the son of ahab and this was something that god was not pleased with and so the ships were wrecked apparently maybe in port maybe a storm came in and just wrecked the ships or maybe they were out at sea and they were wrecked but they they didn't ever sail to ofer to get gold as he intended then ahaziah the son of ahab said to jehoshaphat let my servants go with your servants in the ships but jehoshaphat would not and jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried in with his fathers in the city of david his father then jehoram his son reigned in his place and before we look at the other material about jehoshaphat just there's these final verses about the northern kingdom ahaziah the son of ahab became king over israel in samaria in the 17th year of jehoshaphat king of judah and he reigned two years over israel he did evil in the sight of the lord and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of son of nebat who had made israel sin for he served baal and worshipped him and provoked yahweh god of israel to anger according to all that his father had done now of course second kings continues without a break it's the it's just one book that was broken in half for convenience so the story of ahaziah in the north resumes and elijah and elisha are central still in the consideration of the beginning chapters of second kings however kings has passed over without much information about jehoshaphat's reign only his alliance with the king of the north is really focused upon but there are several chapters in second chronicles that deal with him in second chronicles 17 through 20 pretty much of course we can't look at all that in detail but we can look the main points second chronicles chapter 17 tells about jehoshaphat's reforms when he came to power much of what is said is summarized also in kings but here we have a bit more details second chronicles 17 6 through 10 says and his heart took delight in the ways of the lord moreover he removed the high places the wooden images from judah now that's what king said he didn't do so again this may refer to something he did initially and then they were rebuilt during the 25 years of his reign and he allowed them to stay and didn't take them down again also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders ben hale obadiah zechariah nathaniel and and micaiah not the same micaiah from previous story to teach in the cities of judah and with them he sent the levites uh shemaiah nathaniah uh zebediah asahel shimmerimoth uh jehonathan adonijah tobijah and tobadanijah the levites and with them elishamah and jehoram the priests so he had these uh teachers of scripture along with the levites and priests and he sent them throughout the land to teach people the law to educate them so they taught in judah and had the book of the law of the lord with them they went throughout all the cities of judah and taught the people and the fear of the lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around judah so that they did not make war against jehoshaphat it says in proverbs when a man's ways please the lord he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him and so jehoshaphat was so pleasing the lord that god prevented any of the nations around them to attack him and read about some of the nations like the philistines bringing presents to him and so forth and it goes on talking about his power and such in

details that we will not examine right now however in chapters 19 and 20 we have additional information in chapter 19 of second chronicles it says jehoshaphat the king of judah returned safely to his house in jerusalem this is after he had had this gone to rameth gilead with ahab this chapter 18 of second chronicles tells that story about that battle that we read about in the last chapter of second kings our first king excuse me first kings 22 says then jehoshaphat the king of judah returned safely to his house in jerusalem and jehu the son of hinani the seer went out to meet him and said to king jehoshaphat should you help the wicked and love those who hate the lord therefore the wrath of the lord is upon you nevertheless good things are found in you and that you have removed the wooden images from the land and have prepared your heart to seek god so it wasn't all good for him his his alliance with ahab was criticized by this prophet as we saw elsewhere in chapter 20 his alliance with uh ahaziah was criticized by eliezer another prophet it says so jehoshaphat dwelt in jerusalem and he went out again among the people from beersheba to the mountains of ephraim and brought them back to the lord god of their fathers then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of judah city by city and said to the judges take heed to what you are doing for you do not judge for man but for the lord who is with you in the judgment now therefore let the fear of the lord be upon you and take care and do it for there is no iniquity with the lord our god no partiality nor taking of bribes moreover in jerusalem for the judgment of the lord and for the controversies jahasa had appointed some of the levites and priests and some of the chief fathers of israel when they returned to jerusalem that's apparently after they came back from teaching in the land of the law and he commanded them saying thus you shall act in the fear of the lord faithfully and with a loyal heart whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities whether of bloodshed or offenses against the law or commandment against statutes or ordinances you shall warn them lest they trespass against the lord and wrath come upon you and your brethren do this and you will not be guilty and take notice amariah the chief priest is over you in all the matters of the lord and zebediah the son of ishmael the ruler of the house of judah for all the king's matters also the levites will be officials before you behave courageously and the lord will be with the good he didn't say the lord will be with you he said the lord will be with the good if you're good then he'll be with you otherwise not so he urged his judges and his priests to make sure that they had a conscience before god as they judged they wouldn't take bribes and they would not pervert justice which apparently is an extremely common thing for judges to do and so he ran a clean administration he abolished idolatry the greatest offense and he also abolished to the extent that he could injustice in the courts and there's one other story about him that's very fascinating it occupies all of second chronicles 20. it's about a war and it's a war in which he was attacked by great multitude and this battle is unusual in that it apparently did not involve any fighting on the part of israel and yet their enemies were wiped out to the last man by each other and the the main strategy of this war was that the singers would go out and sing and praise god on the battlefield and thus we see worship and singing used as a means of warfare it happened at this after this that the people of moab with the

people of amon and others with them besides the ammonites came to battle against joseph then some came and told joseph saying a great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea from syria and they are in hazzaz on tamar which is in and getty and joseph feared and set himself to seek yahweh and proclaimed a fast throughout all judah so judah gathered together to ask help of yahweh and from all the cities of judah they came to seek yahweh then joseph stood in the congregation of judah and jerusalem in the house of the lord before the new court and said oh lord god of our fathers are you not god in heaven and do you not rule over the kingdoms of the nations and in your hand is there not power and might so that no one is able to withstand you are you not our god who drove out the inhabitants of this land before your people israel and gave it to the descendants of abraham your friend and they dwell in it and have built you a sanctuary in it for your name saying if disaster comes upon us such as the sword judgment pestilence or famine we will stand before this temple and in your presence this is of course referring to solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple for your name is in this temple and cry out to you in our affliction and you will hear and save and now here are the people of amon moab and mount seir whom you would not let israel invade when they came out of the land of egypt but they turned from them and did not destroy them here they are rewarding us by coming to throw us out of your possession which you have given us to inherit oh our god will you not judge for we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us nor do we know what to do but our eyes are upon you and this is a wonderful prayer really i mean it'd be wonderful if if our nation would turn to god with those kinds of humble words you know when facing terrorist threats or whatever anything instead of relying on horses and chariots to rely on the lord our god and he says we don't know what to do this enemy's too big for us we're just looking to you you let us know what to do and we're just going to you know trust in you really now all judah with their little ones their wives and their children stood before yahweh and the spirit of the lord came upon jehaziel the son of zechariah the son of benaiah the son of jeal the son of madaniah a levite of the sons of asaph in the midst of the congregation and he said listen all you of judah and you inhabitants of jerusalem and you king joseph thus says yahweh to you do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude for the battle is not yours but god's tomorrow go down against them they will surely come up by the descent of ziz and you will find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of jeruel you will not need to fight in this battle position yourself stand still and see the salvation of yahweh who is with you oh judah and jerusalem do not fear or be dismayed tomorrow go out against them for yahweh is with you and jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground and all judah and the inhabitants of jerusalem bowed before the lord worshiping the lord then the levites of the children of the koathites and of the children of the korahites stood up to praise the lord god israel with the voices loud and high and they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of tekoa and as they went out jehoshaphat stood and said hear me oh judah and you inhabitants of jerusalem believe in yahweh your god and you shall be established believe his prophets and you shall prosper and when he consulted with the

people he appointed those who should sing to the lord and who should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army and were saying praise the lord for his mercy endures forever when they began to sing and to praise the lord set ambushes against the people of amon moab and mount seir who had come against judah and they were defeated for the people of amon and moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount seir to utterly kill and destroy them and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of seir they helped to destroy one another so when judah came to the place overlooking the wilderness they looked toward the multitudes and there they were dead bodies fallen on the earth no one had escaped i guess the last guy fell on his own sword they all killed each other off not one man escaped i guess the last guy who killed someone had to kill himself this obviously was due to god setting them in confusion and killing the people who were their friends this happened also in gideon's day god made the midianites confused so they killed each other off and that's how god sometimes worked things out sometimes the devil tries that strategy against christians get some confused so they kill each other off so he doesn't have to fight them so when jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies and precious jewels which they stripped off for themselves and so forth and there's basically the rest of this chapter just tells uh the closing information about uh jehoshaphat being a good guy and walking in the ways of aza his father and sleeping with his fathers when he died but this battle is a key story uh in one of the encouraging stories in the books of kings because a godly king looked to god and god miraculously allowed them to win without fighting of course one could argue that singing and praising god is fighting in a certain way it is a certain form of warfare the enemies of israel were demonically inspired people who worship demons and spiritual warfare worship and praise to god is a form of spiritual warfare apparently it caused the demons to get perplexed and confused and the people who were controlled by them got so confused they couldn't tell who the enemy was and they killed each other off and so we have the final chapter in the life of jehoshaphat and when we come back to begin second kings we're going to be looking again at the northern kingdom which is not really faring any better in second kings than it did in first kings and yet we have those interesting stories of elijah and elisha still in front of us