

2 Chronicles 18

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[0 : 00] Some changes to really some clarification that we have here in the 18th chapter of 2 Chronicles. But in the 1 Kings incident, this is the first time that we meet Jehoshaphat is in relation to the account recorded for us here.

But we do know from our study now where we're at in 2 Chronicles, we've already met Jehoshaphat in chapter 17. We've seen the influence he had for good upon the nation.

We'll continue to see the influence he has for good even in spite of the events that we'll find tonight. So we're really focusing on, in 2 Chronicles, the kings to the south, the kings of Judah.

We're following the lineage of David. This is one of those rare occurrences where we have interactions with those kings to the north. And we will have interaction with the most notorious of them all, Ahab, because it directly affects kind of what's going on with the lineage of David. But we'll get into a little bit more clarification of that in just a moment. Hopefully that'll be a little clearer to you by the time we are finished. So let's pray, and then we'll get right into our text together.

[1 : 12] Father, thank you so much for this day. Thank you for just a grand opportunity we have for being together. Thank you for your faithfulness and your goodness towards us. We thank you for the privilege we have of fellowship with one another.

And we praise you for the opportunity we have to study your word. So, Lord, we pray now as we open up the word of God that it would be opened up before our eyes. We know that in our own understanding, our own abilities, Lord, that we can receive it not.

But we come asking that by the power and presence of your spirit, that we would have eyes to see and ears to hear. I pray that you give us an understanding, an understanding that leads to transformation in our own lives.

And, Lord, that it leads us to an application to bring glory and honor to you. We do continue to pray, Lord, for those in the back working with their youth and children. We pray that in all manners and all ways you be glorified.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. 2 Chronicles 18 will be our text this evening. And the word of God says, Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor, and he allied himself by marriage with Ahab.

[2 : 21] Some years later, he went down to visit Ahab at Samaria, and Ahab slaughtered many sheep and oxen for him and the people who were with him and induced him to go up against Ramath-Galib. Ahab, king of Israel, said to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, Will you go with me against Ramath-Galib?

And he said to him, I am as you are, and my people as your people, and we will be with you in the battle. Moreover, Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, Please inquire first for the word of the Lord. Then the king of Israel assembled the prophets, 400 men, and said to them, Shall we go against Ramath-Galib to battle, or shall I refrain? And they said, Go up, for God will give it into the hand of the king.

But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not yet a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire of him? The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him.

For he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. He is Micaiah, son of Imla. But Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, Bring quickly Micaiah, Imla's son.

[3 : 30] Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, and they were sitting at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of

Samaria.

And all the prophets were prophesying before them. Zedekiah, the son of Chinanah, made horns of iron for himself and said, Thus says the Lord, With these you shall gore the Arameans until they are consumed.

All the prophets were prophesying thus, saying, Go up to Ramath-Galib and succeed, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king. Then the messenger, who went to summon Micaiah, spoke to him, saying, Behold, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king.

Are uniformly favorable to the king. So please let your word be like one of them and speak favorably. But Micaiah said, As the Lord lives, what my God says that I will speak.

When he came to the king, the king said to him, Micaiah, Shall we go to Ramath-Galib to battle, or shall I refrain? He said, Go up and succeed, for they will be given into your hand. Then the king said to him, How many times must I adjure you to speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?

[4 : 39] So he said, I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep which have no shepherd. And the Lord said, These have no master. Let each of them return to his house in peace. Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?

Micaiah said, Therefore hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the hosts of heaven standing on his right and on his left. The Lord said, Who will entice Ahab, king of Israel, to go up and fall at Ramath-Galib?

And one said this, while another said that. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said to him, How? He said, I will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.

Then he said, You are to entice him and prevail also. Go and do so. Now therefore, behold, the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of these your prophets, for the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you.

Then Zedekiah, the son of Chanana, came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, How did the spirit of the Lord pass from me to speak to you? Micaiah said, Behold, you will see on that day when you enter an inner room to hide yourself.

[5 : 47] Then the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah and return him to Ammon, the governor of the city, and to Jehosh, the king's son, and say, Thus says the king, Put this man in prison and feed him sparingly with bread and water until I return safely.

Micaiah said, If you indeed return safely, the Lord has not spoken by me. And he said, Listen, all of you people. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, went up against Ramoth-Galib. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you put on your robes.

So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle. Now the king of Aram had commanded the captains of his chariots, saying, Do not fight with small or great, but with the king of Israel alone.

So when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, It is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him. But Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him, and God diverted them from him.

When the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. A certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. So he said to the driver of the chariot, Turn around and take me out of the fight, for I am severely wounded.

[6 : 56] The battle raged that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot in front of the Arameans until the evening. And at sunset, he died. I want you to see this evening, an unwise union.

An unwise union. When we study the life of Jehoshaphat, we see a man who made great impact simply by being one who was seeking after the heart of the Lord.

His heart rejoiced, and really, if we go back to chapter 17, it says his heart was proud regarding the things of the Lord. And God richly blessed him.

It's blessings that we need to take in context, and that's why I'm so thankful that we have the 17th chapter and the events therein recorded before we have this chapter, because it really helps to kind

of set the stage.

When we read the account in 1 Kings, we kind of say, Okay, so there was a king of Judah who made an alliance, and he shouldn't have made that alliance. But here we begin to dig a little bit further, because in its context, we begin to see really just how unwise this is, and the tragedy that it brings about.

[8 : 04] We really are kind of left with a comparison of two people, both of which love the Lord, because when we go into the 19th chapter, we will see that God did spare Jehoshaphat, because he was seeking after the Lord.

He did good, but he made an unwise union here. He is judged for this, but not eternally judged or condemned. But we see that he suffers for this nonetheless.

But in the midst of this, we also have Micaiah, who is this man who loves the Lord. And we don't want to lose sight of him and his faithfulness in the midst of this dark season. But I just want you to see this unwise union.

The first thing that we notice when we come to this, or that really captures our attention, is the temptation itself. The temptation to enter into the union. Now, we see that because it tells us, it starts out in verse 1 of the 18th chapter.

Now, Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor. I mean, that's astounding. He had great riches, and he had honor. When we go back to the 17th chapter, we find that he is so established on the throne, nations that aren't even subject to him are bringing him riches.

[9 : 20] He has honor that resonates beyond the borders of Judah. It says that the dread of the Lord rests upon all the nations surrounding Judah, so he's living peacefully.

So here's the question that I ask immediately. What did Jehoshaphat have to gain from entering into a union and alliance with Ahab?

The answer to that is really nothing. His army was greater than Israel's army at that time. Israel wasn't threatening him. They weren't coming before him.

He did not gain any riches from that union. He did not gain any greater honor from that union. There may be one little clue to it in 1 Kings 22, verse 44.

And it's recorded after this event, but it tells us in the 44th verse there of the 22nd chapter. And it's kind of in passing, but I think it really is telling that when Jehoshaphat reigned, he reigned upon the throne.

[10 : 19] He came upon the throne in the fourth year of King Ahab's reign. But then it was just one statement. It says, and he made peace with Israel. Maybe, possibly, Jehoshaphat's desire and his longing for the Lord, he wanted to see the entire people of God united and come together.

Now, we know he entered into this union by allowing his son to marry Ahab and Jezebel's daughter. Now, you need to know that that one alliance, by the way, is so much more than just man agreeing to a marriage.

This is Satan's inroad into the Davidic line to try to destroy the Davidic lineage. I got really excited earlier this week. I was talking to someone. They were down here, and they were asking me where I was studying.

It's really cool. So you have to just kind of deal with this for just a moment. For just because of that one marriage, you need to know who Ahab's father-in-law was. Ahab's father-in-law is Omri. Omri is the idolatrous of another nation.

That's Jezebel's dad. And so she grew up in idolatry, right? So now, all of a sudden, Omri, the father of idolatry, Omri's granddaughter, is married into the Davidic lineage.

[11 : 28] And as soon as Jehoshaphat dies, his son begins to bring that idolatry into Judah. We'll find that out later. So now Satan has an inroad into the Davidic lineage.

And it is, you know, when Jehoshaphat's son comes to rule, he kills all of his brothers. So now the Davidic lineage seemingly, supposedly, is reserved to one, right?

Just Jehoshaphat. Now he has children, but when he dies, it is his wife that kills all of her children. Save the one baby that is hid in the temple for six years.

So it seems like Satan has an inroad to try, much like he's always done since the book of Genesis, right? To try to destroy the seed that will crush the head. You know the beauty of it all is, though?

Is that when we get to the New Testament, Satan was focused on the wrong thing. Because all of those are descendants of Solomon. Solomon's not in Mary's genealogy.

[12 : 29] The whole time, Nathan's just over here living his life. And Nathan's children are having children. And now they may not be sitting upon the throne, but they are the seed of David. And it is through the lineage of Nathan that Jesus comes physically through Mary.

And even then, Satan doesn't succeed because that one child is hidden in the temple. And the Davidic lineage legally is maintained through Coniah or Jeconiah. But spiritually, it's maintained through Nathan.

So Satan was even fighting the wrong battles. But that's a side note. What we need to see here is all that came about because of this one unwise union.

But why? Where's the temptation? The temptation is this. Jehoshaphat made peace with that which God had already cursed.

By the time Jehoshaphat enters into this union and quote unquote makes peace with Israel, Ahab has already done enough wickedness that God has already declared that he will die.

[13 : 37] Now during this time where he enters into this union, there is a reprieve because Ahab humbles himself. And God spares him for a short time. And he spares him for three years.

And he knows three years is when Jehoshaphat enters into that reign with him. But after three years, Ahab's done kind of being good and decides to go fight against Ramoth Gilead. But the problem is, is when we are tempted to make peace with that which God has already cursed.

Friend, listen. We cannot live peacefully with that which God has already condemned. It is the fellowship of light and darkness and it cannot happen.

But the temptation is there. And Jehoshaphat succumbs to that temptation. Good motives. He has nothing to gain from it. Because by the way, we have nothing to gain when we enter into unions and alliances with the world.

At least nothing worthwhile. He already had riches. He already had honor. He already had security. He already had authority.

[14 : 44] He already had power. However, we do nothing but lose when we align ourselves with that which God has condemned. There's the temptation.

Number two, we see the trouble. We see the temptation. Now we see the trouble. Look at this. Verse two is very telling. Now we've only made it, I know, to the second verse.

I promise we won't take that long. We only have four points tonight. Number two. Look at this. Some years later. For in the moment we befriend the world or we make an alliance that we should not make may not necessarily be the moment the trouble comes.

Jehoshaphat entered into this alliance and made peace with Israel and at least for quote unquote some years it seemed to be okay. But some years later.

He went to visit Ahab. Make no mistake about it. No matter how peacefully it looks on the onset or how much it looks like there was no problems caused.

[15 : 53] The reward will always be reaped for what we sold. Then some years later he went to visit Ahab at Samaria and Ahab slaughtered many sheep and oxen. Now pay attention to this for him.

Now that's telling. I know we're not really splitting hairs here. But who did Ahab slaughter all the sheep and oxen for? For Jehoshaphat.

He didn't slaughter them for the Lord. He didn't slaughter them as worship. He slaughtered them for Jehoshaphat and for those that were with him.

When the enemy begins to appeal to you. Trouble is certain to follow. Many years later some years later he went and he made things pleasant and he appealed to his desire.

Because we know that by this time Jehoshaphat has reestablished the priest. Jehoshaphat has restored the temple. Jehoshaphat has already replenished the treasuries in the temple. And they're used to seeing sacrifices.

[16 : 56] They're not doing that up there. And all of a sudden when Jehoshaphat and his men come we do it for him. When we begin to make alliances we shouldn't make. We should not be surprised when it seems to be everything we thought it would be.

But it was immediately following these sacrifices. Look at what happens. So he slaughtered many sheep and oxen for him and the people who were with him. And induced him to go up against Ramath-Galib.

I can assure you Ahab had ulterior motives for his sacrifices. The enemy of our souls may give us what we want for a moment.

But it's only because he wants to induce us to do something we have no right in doing. And that momentary pleasure experienced is soon followed by the petition to join in something we should not be.

Ramath-Galib. He appealed to his flesh. He offered the sacrifices. He made him feel important. He gave him prestige. He gave him position. He's got him there on the public square.

[18:08] And then he says. Won't you go with me to fight against Ramath-Galib. Now the irony of it is that Jehoshaphat's father had the opportunity.

Ramath-Galib really is a city by this time that has fallen to the kings of Aram. And Jehoshaphat's father, if he had been obedient to the Lord, could have defeated the hand and the king of Aram. But he entered into a temporary alliance with Aram. And now the king of Israel, Ahab, is asking Jehoshaphat, would you go with me? I am as your people. Yes.

The trouble happens. When we succumb to the temptation and we enter into an unwise union, we have the flesh appealed and appeased.

And all of a sudden we're going further than we ever intended. He went to go visit his friend. And now he's about to end up on the battlefield. You befriend the world long enough and you'll end up fighting the battles with the world instead of against it.

[19:11] Third, we notice the truth. There's the temptation. There's the trouble. And now here's the truth. He agrees to do it.

But then he says, Moreover, Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, Please inquire first for the word of the Lord. Now pay attention. This is why when you get to your Old Testaments, the names of God matter. Okay, the names of God matter.

And the name of God being used by the author matters. And the name of God being proclaimed by the people matter. Now Jehoshaphat's question is very certain. He says, Please inquire first of the Lord.

Do you notice that? Unless you read, I think the Legacy Standard Bible, it says, Please inquire first of Yahweh. But if you're reading any other translation, it says capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D.

And that is Yahweh, the covenant name of God. So what Jehoshaphat is asking is, Yes, I'll go with you, but please inquire. Let's first inquire of the covenant God. So Ahab says, Okay, I've got priests.

[20:15] Oh, he had a multitude of priests. He brought 400 priests. He brought them to the public square there. And there's these 400 priests there. And they're out there. And he says, Should I go? Notice the response of these priests.

The priests say, Go up for God will give it into the hand of the king. Red flag. They did not use the same name of God. Jehoshaphat said, Ask the covenant God Yahweh if we should go.

They made a declaration. He said, Yes, Elohim says go, for I'll give it to you. Now Elohim is the name of God, but it is not a God that you're in relation with.

Elohim is the creator God. In the beginning God, Elohim, created the heavens and the earth. And he is creator God. Sure, and it is the true God, but it is the God that's even acknowledged by false prophets.

Balaam acknowledges Elohim. People throughout the Old Testament acknowledge Elohim. When we see people declaring of other nations who are not worshipers of Yahweh, and they can acknowledge him because they can say there is a creator God.

[21:18] Even today, we will have people who say, Yes, I believe in a creator of something because, you know, this had to come from something. Surely there's somebody did something. There's this big creator God up there.

But they have a problem talking about Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. And moving from the, yes, he's there, to the relation. This is why it declares to us in the New Testament that everyone who names the name of Jesus Christ is our brother and sister.

And in the Old Testament, really that covenant was confined to that name because you did not call him Yahweh if you were not in a covenantal relationship with him.

I have names that only my wife can call me because we're in that relationship. Names that mean something. They have meaning behind them.

Each of us do. Things that if anybody else called us that, it'd be a problem. But anybody can call me Billy Joe because that's my name. That's who I am.

[22 : 24] That's my generic name. You don't have to know much about me just to know my name's Billy Joe. But if you know a little bit more about me, then there are more revelations. And I've told you that. I've had all kinds of names over the years.

And some of them, I'd get really upset if you called me that. But I could be really friends with some other. Some of you know that one of my names growing up was Fat Boy. Not everybody called me Fat Boy because we had problems if you called me Fat Boy.

But my best friends called me Fat Boy. And that was okay. Why? Because we were in a relationship. We knew one another.

Right? We were close. And it meant something. It signified who we were. So these false prophets, they declare Elohim.

Yes, that God in the sky. Jehoshaphat's asking, what about the God we're in covenant relationship with? And he sees through it. Because notice the next question he asked.

[23 : 25] Is there not yet a prophet of the Lord? There it is again. Who we may inquire of. Jehoshaphat's heart was so sad.

He knew the difference, right? He says, wait a minute. I know you've got 400 people out here saying one thing. But where is the prophet of the Lord? And I love this.

He says, is there not yet a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire of him? Here. That is in Israel. In Samaria. Where all this idolatry is taking place. Notice what the king of Israel says.

There is yet one man. Oh, God is never without a witness. There is yet one man. There's a multitude of false prophets.

But he said, but there's one man. We don't know anything else about Micaiah other than this account. He is the one man who is there. All that we know, it seems to be implied from the text, he was already imprisoned.

[24 : 24] Because they had to go get him and bring him there. And then they, it says, take him back. Right? Go give him back to the ones that were guarding him. So there was but yet one man.

Now, admittedly, the false prophets began, they saw what was happening. They began to use the covenant name of the Lord after this. And say, oh, go, yeah, for the Lord, the Lord, the Lord.

They're throwing it around like they should have.

But the heart spoke first. And the king, they go, some in Micaiah. Micaiah, the one who summons him and says, everybody else is saying the same thing.

Please, just say the same thing. He says, I can only say what the Lord my God tells me to say. Do you want to know how one man can be strong?

And it's seen in this. When they go to get Micaiah, they bring him. And there's this note inside the text.

[25 : 21] And it's not accidental because it's in 1 Kings and it's here also in 2 Chronicles. That while they're going to get him, Jehoshaphat is setting up on his throne. Ahab is setting up on his throne.

They're in all of their royal array and royal attire. And they're at the gate of the city. That is, in the place of judgment. They're sitting there in all of their splendor and all of their glory.

And this one man, Micaiah, is about to be brought before him. The difference is, is that before Micaiah stood before the men sitting on their thrones, he says he had already seen the Lord God sitting on his throne.

The throne of heaven always overrules the thrones of earth. He had already stood before the one who was sitting on the throne of heaven.

Long before he was summoned to stand before the ones sitting on their thrones at the public gate. And he delivers the truth. Now, sure, he starts out with what the king wants to hear.

[26 : 24] But he says it so tongue-in-cheek that everyone knows. And he gives two prophecies. The first prophecy he gives when he comes is he says, I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep which have no shepherd.

And the Lord said, These have no master. Let each of them return to his house in peace. Notice this. First, the prophecy is against one man. That is Ahab. Let all these return to their house in peace.

And the second prophecy is just like it. It's the prophecy. How can Ahab be summoned until his death? And he gives the prophecy of the deceiving spirit given to all the prophets, the false prophets there. And that the Lord was calling him to his death.

He delivers the truth. And Jehoshaphat hears it. So now we have the temptation, the trouble, the truth.

And fourth and finally, we have the tragedy. He delivers this truth and he delivers very boldly. They take him back and they imprison him. He calls attention to this account so that all would hear.

[27 : 28] The last words of Micaiah are, Listen, all you people. What happens to Ahab will be a testimonial sign to the authenticity of the words that Ahab has just spoken.

Praise be to God, he got to declare it publicly. And now we come to the tragedy. So the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, went up against Ramoth Gilead.

In spite of the truth, because the world really has no need for truth. Because it thinks it's found a way around truth. Ahab says, Now I don't know what in Jehoshaphat made him think this was a good idea, but he did anyway.

Because, by the way, my friend, when you are tempted by sin and you agree to walk with sin, it will take you further than you ever thought it would and you will do things you could never have imagined possible. That when the one you're fighting with and you're fighting his battle, when he tells you, I'll disguise myself, but you wear your royal attire.

That just sounds foolish to me. But does it not sound so much more foolish when we discuss and think about our own sins? Like, how in the world could I ever do that?

[28 : 38] But Ahab says, I heard the truth, but I think I know a way around it. I will disguise myself so that no one knows who I am. But yet, in the midst of all this, we still see the greatness of God's mercy.

And really, it is the chronicler that records it for us here. Because when we read this account in 1 Kings, we find Jehoshaphat in his royal attire. The king of Aram told him not to fight with the small or the great, but only the king alone.

So they see one wearing the crown, so go attack him. And he cries out, and they leave him because they realize this isn't Ahab. And so the implication is that maybe the dialect of his voice, maybe there were some differences there.

All of a sudden, they realize that's not the right guy, and they left him alone. The chronicler clarifies it for us exactly how it happened. Because when it's there, when they're after him, it says, Jehoshaphat cried out.

And here's what we're told. The Lord helped him. And God diverted them from him. In spite of his unwise union.

[29 : 44] What a display of mercy and grace. That when his sin took him to the point of tragic death, God delivered him.

He didn't break his covenant. The Lord helped him. And diverted them from him, so they turned.

And then we have one of the grandest displays of the sovereignty of God.

That once God has decreed it, it is settled. That once the courtroom of heaven has stated it, it is set in stone no matter how much man tries to avoid it.

And then a man at random drew his bow and shot it. The wording there means he shot it at nothing. He just shot an arrow. And that arrow went into the joint of someone's armor.

Someone that was in disguise. They found one little joint. And that man happened to be Ahab. Who was riding by in a chariot.

[31 : 00] And an arrow that was shot at nothing hit the one thing God said it was going to hit. And he said, take me out of the battle. And Ahab died.

And when we get the full picture of it, when we read 1 Kings, The very spot where they washed the blood out of the chariot Was the spot the prophet had stood before Ahab and told him the dogs would lick up his blood.

Friend, listen to me. When God says it, it does not matter what we do to try to avoid it. It is a settled reality.

And the tragedy is, is that men and women think they can make their way around it. That they think they can disguise themselves or hide themselves or avoid what is certain.

The reality is that the courtroom of heaven overrules the courtroom of man.

[32 : 06] And in his sovereignty, In his sovereignty, He dictates the affairs of all of this world. Jehoshaphat made an unwise union.

But God in his sovereignty, Fulfilled his absolute purpose. Because he, If we really want to be, Have our brains smoked, We have to say this.

Ahab probably would have never went to the battlefield Did he not have the reinforcements of Jehoshaphat. Can God use a sinful decision of one of his people for his glory and his purposes? Yes. Did God ordain that Jehoshaphat make that sinful decision? No. But he is sovereign. And his purposes always come about. And we see it in 2 Chronicles 18. Thank you, my brothers. Thank you.