

Life Lesson 80
Jehoshaphat, Ahab, and the Lying Prophets
Text: I Kings 22 and II Chronicles 18

Introduction

Is it right to be friends with everybody? We should always be friendly, but we can get in trouble being close friends with people who are against God.

The Story

Wicked Ahab ruled Israel and good King Jehoshaphat ruled over Judah. They made a truce and King Jehoshaphat went to visit Ahab.

“We are really related, even though we are two countries now,” Ahab told him. “Come and join with us in our battle to take the city of Ramoth-Gilead back away from the Syrians. If you help us, we will give you help when you need it.”

That sounded good to Jehoshaphat. Often what sounds good is not God’s will at all. Ahab was a wicked man and God didn’t want Jehoshaphat to be partners with him.

“We will go with you,” Jehoshaphat said. “Let’s ask the Lord about it.”

Did you notice something? He had it backwards. He should have asked God *first* and *then* given Ahab an answer. Many times we do just that! We decide to do something and then ask God to bless it. We can save ourselves lots of heartache and trouble by asking God first and then making our decision.

Ahab was glad to trot out his prophets. He knew they were false prophets and would agree with whatever he said.

“Should we go and fight?” Ahab asked.

“Go ahead, for the Lord will give the city to you,” they all replied.

Perhaps it was apparent to Jehoshaphat that these were false prophets. He asked if there were any other prophets around.

“Well, there is Micaiah,” Ahab replied. “I hate him because he always prophesies bad things against me.”

“Let’s hear what he has to say,” Jehoshaphat said.

Ahab sent a messenger to get Micaiah.

“Don’t give a bad prophecy this time,” the messenger begged Micaiah “The others said what the king wanted to hear. Just agree with them and you won’t get into trouble.”

“I will only say what the Lord tells me,” Micaiah answered.

“What does the Lord say?” Ahab asked. “Shall we go and fight for Ramoth-Gilead?”

“Go and fight, for the Lord will give you the city,” Micaiah replied.

He must have sounded sarcastic because it made Ahab angry.

“How many times do I have to tell you to tell me only what the Lord says! Don’t try to be funny.”

“All right.” Micaiah was serious now. “I see Israel scattered among the hills like sheep that have no shepherd. And the Lord said, ‘These have no master. Let them return every man to his own house in peace.’”

Ahab turned to Jehoshaphat and said, “Didn’t I tell you he would prophesy evil against me?”

Foolish Ahab. He didn’t want to hear a lie and he didn’t want to hear the truth. He just wanted his own way. Even though he had this warning from God that he would be killed in battle, he went right on with his plans.

I hope you won’t be like foolish Ahab. When God tells you something – please listen and obey.

“Take this fellow and throw him in prison,” Ahab ordered. “Feed him on bread and water until I return.”

“If you come back, you’ll know that my words aren’t from the Lord. The Lord says you won’t be coming back.” Micaiah replied.

This should have been enough to convince Jehoshaphat to go back home and end his alliance with Ahab. For some reason he went right on and joined in the battle.

“I’m going in disguise,” Ahab told Jehoshaphat. “You wear my robes and I’ll dress like a common soldier.”

Jehoshaphat went to war dressed like King Ahab. He didn’t know that the Syrian soldiers had special orders to kill Ahab, no matter what.

“Don’t chase anyone else,” the king of Syria commanded his 32 captains. “Go get Ahab and kill him.”

When the soldiers saw Jehoshaphat in Ahab’s robes, they naturally assumed he was Ahab and went after him. What a mess he was in! If God hadn’t rescued him, he surely would have been killed. He cried out as they were all chasing him and they saw that he wasn’t Ahab. Then they left him alone and went to find the real Ahab.

A soldier saw Ahab and shot him with an arrow. He wore armor, but the arrow hit right where the pieces of armor were joined. Ahab knew he was wounded, but he propped himself up in his chariot and kept fighting until evening. Then he died, just as God said he would.

And just as God had said, the Israelites were scattered on the hillside like sheep without a shepherd. Those who were left alive went home in defeat.

Jehoshaphat met Jehu, the prophet, as he went home with his defeated army.

“Should you help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord?” he asked Jehoshaphat. “You have done a bad thing and that’s why God has disciplined you.”

Jehoshaphat learned his lesson. He made no more alliances with ungodly nations. When his people needed help, he sought it from the Lord, and the Lord helped them. When Ahab’s wicked son, Ahaziah, wanted to join Israel’s navy with Judah’s army, Jehoshaphat told him, “no.”

The Life Lesson

There is much for us to learn about friendship in this lesson. Who should be your best friends? They should be people who believe as you do. If you love the Lord with all your heart, you will have friends who love Him, too. If you hang around with people who hate God and want only to go their own way, you'll find yourself becoming just like them. They will face the anger of God, and if you are with them, you'll receive some of their judgement, just as Jehoshaphat did.

Review Questions

Was Jehoshaphat a good king or a bad king?

Good

Did King Ahab love the Lord?

No, he worshipped idols.

What did King Ahab want King Jehoshaphat to do?

Make a treaty to help each other in battle.

What did the lying prophets say?

"You will win the battle."

What did Micaiah say?

"You will be killed and your army will lose the battle."

Why did the Syrians chase only after Jehoshaphat?

Because he was wearing Ahab's clothes, and they thought he was Ahab.

Did Ahab die in battle?

Yes.

Does God want us to be partners with those who are against God?

No