

General Church Education



Israel and Judah Join Forces

1 Kings 22:1-8, 13-37, 41-44

Lesson 14

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is Our Prophet

For ages 11-12 years

Israel and Judah Join Forces

1 Kings 22:1-8, 13-37, 41-44

Teacher Background

This story takes place after the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were divided. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, visited Ahab, king of Israel. Ahab asked for his help to regain Ramoth Gilead from Syria. Jehoshaphat agreed, but wanted to know what might happen. Ahab called four hundred prophets, who said they would win. But Jehoshaphat wanted to hear from a true prophet of the Lord. Ahab reluctantly called Micaiah. Surprisingly, Micaiah said they would win. But he revealed that Ahab would die. While Jehoshaphat rode into battle like a king, Ahab went in disguise. Nevertheless, Syria spared Jehoshaphat and accidentally killed Ahab. As Ahab's chariot was being washed, dogs licked up his blood as Micaiah prophesied.

The dogs that licked Ahab's blood stand for treating faith with contempt. While Ahab showed remorse for stealing Naboth's vineyard, this story shows that the continued to disrespect the Lord and others. Ahab broke many commandments, and may have broken them all. There is a strong link between breaking one commandment and breaking them all because love to the Lord and love to the neighbor are at the center of all the Ten Commandments.

Focus Points

- When Jehoshaphat visited Ahab, Ahab asked for his help recovering Ramoth Gilead.
- Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet to find out what would happen. Micaiah predicted victory.
- Ahab died in battle and dogs licked up the blood from his chariot.

Readings from the Writings

“A ‘dog’ means the lowest of all within the Church, that is, the mean and lowly, as well as those outside the Church, and also those who talk a lot about things that have to do with the Church and have little understanding of them.” *Arcana Coelestia* 7784

“It is said by some that he who sins against one commandment of the Decalogue sins also against the rest, thus that he who is guilty of one is guilty of all. It shall be told how far this is in harmony with the truth. When a person transgresses one commandment, by confirming with himself that it is not a sin, thus without fear of God, he commits it; because he has thus rejected the fear of God he does not fear to transgress the rest of the commandments, although he may not do this in act. But the opposite is true of those who abstain from the evil forbidden in one commandment, and who shun and afterwards turn away from it as a sin against God. Because such fear God, they come into communion with the angels of heaven, and are led by the Lord to abstain from the evils forbidden in the other commandments.”

Apocalypse Explained 1028.2, 4

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following activity choices:

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak.” (1 Kings 22:14)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Jehoshaphat and Ahab Questions

Write a sentence to answer each question.

Avoiding Consequences

Ahab tried to avoid the consequences of Micaiah’s prophecy. Like Ahab, we often know when we have done something wrong and try to avoid the consequences. It takes courage to face our mistakes. Read four scenarios and think of a courageous way that a person might handle each problem.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Illustrate Jehoshaphat and Ahab in Battle

Draw a picture of King Ahab going into battle in disguise as a common soldier. Then draw a second picture of King Jehoshaphat going into battle in his royal robes. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-illustrate-jehoshaphat-and-ahab-in-battle-1-kings-22.pdf>

Ahab, a Weak and Evil King

A fill-in-the-blank activity. Use references from the Word to complete the story of Ahab. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-ahab-a-weak-and-evil-king-1-kings-16-1-kings-22.pdf>

A Chart of the Kings of Israel and Judah

As you learn about the kings of Israel and Judah, complete a chart. As you fill in the spaces, think about whether the king is good or evil. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-a-chart-of-the-kings-of-israel-and-judah-1-kings-2-kings.pdf>

Israel and Judah Join Forces

1 Kings 22:1-8, 13-37, 41-44

Vocabulary

alliance—an agreement based on similar interests

reprimand—tell someone they are doing something wrong

assurance—a promise intended to give confidence

During Ahab's reign the king of Judah died and his son Jehoshaphat became king. Like his father Asa, Jehoshaphat was a good king who tried to keep the worship of the Lord in Judah. After three years of peace between Israel and Judah, Jehoshaphat visited Ahab. Later, Jehoshaphat and Jeroboam made an alliance, and Ahab's daughter married Jehoshaphat's son.

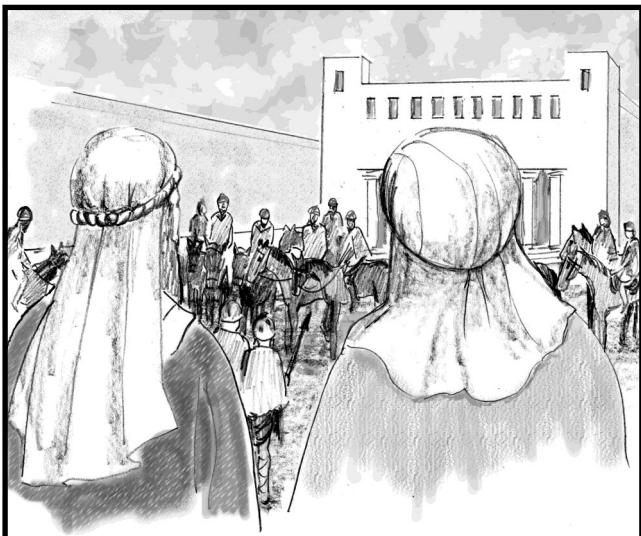
Ahab Asks for Help

During Jehoshaphat's visit, Ahab asked him if he would help Israel regain the city of Ramoth Gilead which the Syrians had taken. Jehoshaphat agreed.

"I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." (1 Kings 22:4)

However, Jehoshaphat wanted to ask the Lord what might happen. He knew that the Lord could see what would happen and that faith in Him could lead to victory. Ahab appeared to agree, but he called for four hundred prophets who told him what he wanted to hear—the kings would win using horns of iron made by Zedekiah, one of the prophets. But Jehoshaphat recognized the four hundred men as false prophets and asked for a true prophet of the Lord.

You see, Jehoshaphat's father followed the Lord. He probably learned about the Lord and may have spoken to true prophets in Judah. By insisting on finding someone who would speak for the Lord he showed that he wanted to do what was right.



Ahab hesitated to do what Jehoshaphat asked. Micaiah, the only true prophet he knew in Israel, had already prophesied his downfall. However, when Ahab told Jehoshaphat he hated the prophet, Jehoshaphat reprimanded him, so Ahab called for Micaiah.

Micaiah's Vision

As it turned out, Ahab was right to fear

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Micaiah. The messenger sent to the prophet knew that other prophets were telling the kings to go ahead and fight—that they would be victorious and regain the city. He strongly encouraged Micaiah to give the same message of hope. But Micaiah said,

“As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak.” (1 Kings 22:14)

Micaiah was not afraid to tell Ahab the truth because he spoke faithfully for the Lord. This gave him the courage to go against Ahab’s wishes if that was what the Lord required of him.

When Ahab asked Micaiah whether Israel and Judah should fight with Ramoth Gilead, Micaiah’s first answer might seem surprising. He told Jehoshaphat and Ahab that they would win. Ahab appeared surprised—as though he had expected the Lord to send him a different message. So he asked for assurance that the answer was truly from the Lord. This time, Micaiah told Ahab of a vision he had about the outcome of the battle.

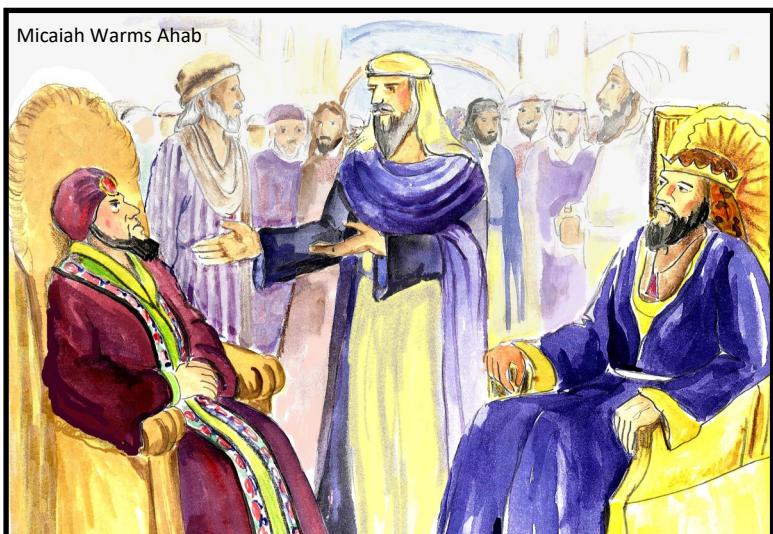
“I saw all of Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the Lord said, ‘These have no master. Let each return to his own house in peace.’” (1 Kings 22:17)

Consequently, Ahab told Jehoshaphat that the prophet had prophesied evil about him. If there was no shepherd leading Israel, then Ahab himself must be dead or captured.

Lying Spirits

Micaiah continued to repeat his vision. He told the kings he saw the Lord with “the hosts of heaven” on either side. The Lord spoke to the spirits, asking who would persuade Ahab to go to battle. An angel came forward and offered to be the one to convince Ahab to attack the Syrians in Ramoth Gilead. When the Lord asked him how he would do this, the spirit told the Lord that he would be a “lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets.” So Micaiah said that even though four hundred prophets had encouraged him, there would be a disaster.

The prophet Zedekiah challenged Micaiah and asked how a lying spirit could enter him and the other prophets. Micaiah said he would understand when he went into an inner chamber to hide. This may seem mysterious, but going into an inner chamber means to truly understand, to be wise from a wish to be good. Micaiah might have been telling Zedekiah that he would understand when he truly looked to the Lord.



Ahab Is Killed

Once again, we might wonder at Ahab’s foolishness. Instead of

listening to Micaiah, he took him prisoner and fed him nasty bread and water. Ahab determined to go to war and Jehoshaphat went with him. Ahab's lack of courage and faith in the Lord became clear as he prepared to go to battle. Jehoshaphat put on his kingly robes and led his soldiers into battle, but Ahab disguised himself as a soldier and snuck into the battle. At first the Syrians thought Jehoshaphat was Ahab, but soon recognized him as the king of Judah and left him alone.

The king of Syria had told his captains not to fight just any soldier, only with the king of Israel. Soon after this, someone randomly struck Ahab with an arrow, causing him to leave the battle and watch it from the sidelines. As he sat in his chariot his blood ran out from the wound and he died.

Later, as the sun set, the soldiers of Israel and Judah were told to return to their cities—it would seem that the Syrians had won. Ahab was taken to Samaria to be buried, and his chariot was washed at a pool in Samaria. While it was being washed, the dogs licked up Ahab's blood, as had been prophesied when he stole Naboth's vineyard. After this, Ahab's son Ahaziah, became king of Israel. He continued in his father's footsteps, doing all kinds of evil and serving Baal instead of the Lord.

Jehoshaphat Rules Judah

Jehoshaphat ruled Judah well, walking in the ways of his father, Asa. He removed people who were engaged in perverted activities, made peace with Israel, and worshipped Jehovah. Like his father, he did not remove all of the high places where people burned incense and made sacrifices. This would have made his reforms even greater, for all acts of worship were supposed to take place in Jerusalem at the temple. When Jehoshaphat died, his son Joram became king of Judah.

Listening to the Prophets

How different Ahab's life would have been if he had listened to the prophet's warning. His foolishness may be surprising. Each time Ahab chose evil, he received another prophesy of his downfall. He had seen such prophesies come true before, but he refused to turn from evil.

How often do we need to be warned of the consequences of poor choices before we stop making them? Who are the prophets that the Lord provides in our lives to tell us what will happen if we choose evil over good? Some of them our parents, teachers, ministers and others who truly care for us. We can also pay attention to the warnings in the Word as we read the stories about the people of Israel. Those warnings were meant not only for them, but for us as well.



Ahab Dies in Battle

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak.” (1 Kings 22:14)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Choose one or two.

Jehoshaphat and Ahab Questions

Write a sentence to answer each question.

Avoiding Consequences

Ahab tried to avoid the consequences of Micaiah's prophecy. Like Ahab, we often know when we have done something wrong and try to avoid the consequences. It takes courage to face our mistakes. Read four scenarios and think of a courageous way that a person might handle each problem.

Jehoshaphat and Ahab Questions

1 Kings 22:1-8, 13-37, 41-44

Write a sentence to answer each question.

1. Jehoshaphat became king of what nation?
2. What request did Ahab make of Jehoshaphat when Jehoshaphat went to visit him?
3. What did Jehoshaphat want to do before he was willing to do as Ahab requested?
4. Why was Ahab reluctant to do as Jehoshaphat asked?
5. What did Ahab do in place of following Jehoshaphat's request?
6. What was Jehoshaphat's response to Ahab's action?
7. What did Micaiah prophesy concerning Ahab if he went into battle?
8. What did Ahab do to avoid the fulfillment of the prophecy?
9. Did Ahab's plan work? Why or why not?
10. What happened to Ahab in the battle and then afterwards?
11. Who became king of Israel after Ahab?
12. What sort of reforms did Jehoshaphat enact in his country?

Avoiding Consequences

1 Kings 22:1-8, 13-37, 41-44

In this story Ahab tried to avoid the consequences that Micaiah prophesied. First, he tried to stop Micaiah from coming to his court. He suspected that the prophet would bring him bad news. Then, when he was warned that he would die or be captured in battle if he went ahead with the attack, he tried to disguise himself to remain safe.

People often try to avoid the consequences of their bad choices. We usually know when we have done something wrong, but we often look for ways to get out of what follows, whether it is a promised punishment as in Ahab's case, or a natural consequence, such as poor grades for not studying. It takes courage to admit to a mistake and accept its consequences without making excuses or lying to get out of it.

Look at the scenarios below and write of a most courageous way that each person might handle the problem.

1. Helen's teacher caught her cheating on a test. She knows that she will receive a zero and her parents will be called. What should she do?
2. John told his parents that he was going to Paul's house for dinner. But he was really going to the mall with his other friends. Paul gave John away when his parents phoned Paul's house to talk to John. John knows he will be in big trouble—what should he do?
3. Stacey lost her mobile phone (the second one in less than a year). She knows she will have to work to pay for it. What should she do?
4. Greg's parents do not want him to watch a certain TV show. He is by himself in the family room, watching TV while his parents have friends over. The show comes on, and he decides to watch it. His sister walks in on him and threatens to tell their parents. What should Greg do?

Answers

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Jehoshaphat and Ahab Questions

1. Jehoshaphat became king of Judah.
2. Ahab asked Jehoshaphat to fight the king of Syria.
3. Jehoshaphat asked to consult a prophet before fighting.
4. Ahab hated the prophet.
5. Ahab told the prophet to speak encouraging words.
6. Jehoshaphat told the prophet to speak the Lord's words.
7. Micaiah prophesied that Syria would kill the king of Israel and that Israel would be scattered.
8. Ahab disguised himself.
9. Ahab's plan did not work.
10. Ahab died and the dogs licked up his blood.
11. Ahab's son Ahaziah became king.
12. Jehoshaphat made friends with Israel and banished people who did not follow the Lord.