

Now three years passed without war between Syria and Israel. ²Then it came to pass, in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to visit the king of Israel. ³And the king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you know that Ramoth is ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?" ⁴So he said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?" Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." ⁵Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today." ⁶Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred 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." ⁷And Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of Him?" ⁸So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!" ⁹Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imlah quickly!" ¹⁰The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on their robes, sat each on his throne, at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. ¹¹Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" ¹²And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver it into the king's hand." ¹³Then 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 one of them, and speak encouragement." ¹⁴And Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak." ¹⁵Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?" And he answered him, "Go and prosper, for the LORD will deliver it into the hand of the king!" ¹⁶So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?" ¹⁷Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'" ¹⁸And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

1. Ramoth wrangling

- a. There had been 3 years of peace between Syria & Israel after Ahab's forces defeated Ben-Had. twice
 - a1. Syria had been the aggressor previously
 - a2. Syria gave no provocation to fight again
- b. King Jehoshaphat of Judah came to visit Ahab
 - a1. Jeh. was known as a righteous king
 - a2. Jeh. wanted peaceful relationships with Israel & twice is pulled into Isr.'s wars
 - a3. Since Ahab was a wicked king, Jeh. needed to be cautious around him
 - a4. Jeh.'s accommodating character left him with his guard down & resulted in trouble
- c. Ramoth-Gilead (*the heights of Gilead*) was one of the Levitical cities of refuge in territory of God
 - a1. It had apparently been taken by Syria
 - a2. When Ben Hadad promised to give back the cities his father had taken from Ahab's father, Ramoth was not one of them
 - a3. It bothered Ahab that Ramoth still was in Syrian hands

d. Ahab saw an opportunity to reclaim Ramoth with Jehoshaphat's help

2. A quick response & a second thought

- a. Ahab tells Jeh. that Ramoth-Gilead is ours
 - a1. It belonged to Israel as a united kingdom
 - a2. Judah would not receive Ramoth (also called Mizpah) if retaken since it was across the Jordan from Samaria
 - a3. Ahab appeals to Jeh.'s patriotism
- b. Ahab hesitated to retake Ramoth, lacking strength
- c. Ahab asks Jeh. if he would join him in the battle
 - a1. Ahab figures that Judah's troops would tip the balance in Israel's favor
 - a2. Ahab offers nothing for Jeh.'s services
- d. Jeh. wants to be obliging, so he immediately offers his army for the effort (did not think it through)
- e. Jeh. quickly has 2nd thoughts
 - a1. He wants to check with a prophet of God
 - a2. Ahab's prophets all concur with Ahab

3. No profit in the prophets

- a. Jeh. realizes that these were pagan prophets who knew nothing of the future (what is he doing here?)
- b. Jeh. asks if there is a prophet of God available
 - a1. Ahab states that there was one (Micaiah), but he always prophesies bad about Ahab
 - a2. There is a reason why dire prophesies are given to evil men
- c. Jeh. wants to hear from Micaiah
 - a1. Zedekiah fetches Mic. & warns him to concur with Ahab's prophets
 - a2. Like Balaam, Mic. states that he will say only what the Lord tells him to say
- d. Ahab asks Mic. if they should attack Ramoth-Gil.
 - a1. Mic. tells him to go up & prosper
 - a2. Ahab could tell that Mic. was sarcastic
 - a3. Ahab warns Mic. to tell the truth
- e. Ahab would not follow the truth, but wanted it
- f. Mic. proceeds to give Ahab a warning, knowing that he would not follow it, for his demise was sealed