

MICAH: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Bible Background – 1 KINGS 22:1-40

Printed Text – 1 KINGS 22:15-23, 26-28

¹⁵ When Micah arrived before the king, Ahab asked him, “Micah, should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should we hold back?” Micah replied sarcastically, “Yes, go up and be victorious, for the LORD will give the king victory!”

¹⁶ But the king replied sharply, “How many times must I demand that you speak only the truth to me when you speak for the LORD?”

¹⁷ Then Micah told him, “In a vision I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD said, ‘Their master has been killed. Send them home in peace.’”

¹⁸ “Didn’t I tell you?” the king of Israel exclaimed to Jehoshaphat. “He never prophesies anything but trouble for me.”

¹⁹ Then Micah continued, “Listen to what the LORD says! I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the armies of heaven around him, on his right and on his left.

²⁰ And the LORD said, ‘Who can entice Ahab to go into battle against Ramoth-gilead so he can be killed?’ “There were many suggestions,

²¹ and finally a spirit approached the LORD and said, ‘I can do it!’

²² “‘How will you do this?’ the LORD asked. “And the spirit replied, ‘I will go out and inspire all of Ahab’s prophets to speak lies.’ “‘You will succeed,’ said the LORD. ‘Go ahead and do it.’

²³ “So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all your prophets. For the LORD has pronounced your doom.”

²⁶ “Arrest him!” the king of Israel ordered. “Take him back to Amon, the governor of the city, and to my son Joash.

²⁷ Give them this order from the king: ‘Put this man in prison and feed him nothing but bread and water until I return safely from the battle!’”

²⁸ But Micah replied, “If you return safely, it will mean that the LORD has not spoken through me!” Then he added to those standing around, “Everyone mark my words!”

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

In the modern world of government and politics, many who long for a just society, cry out for someone who is bold enough to speak truth to power. Most of us do not live in a world of *Alice in Wonderland*, where a mere word of truth results in a mad ruler declaring, “Off with her head!” However, the people who value honor and power by this world’s standards often fear the loss of position and influence that may come with speaking the pure truth. In this lesson, we will read about Micah, the prophet of God who lived in such a kingdom; that to speak the Lord’s truth could have

certainly led to his death—and he spoke the truth anyway. We should aspire to have that kind of boldness that compels us to speak the word of God to anyone, no matter the perceived risks.

Background: In 1 Kings 22, we find the kings of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms having trouble accepting the Word of God from His prophets. The king of the North, the evil Ahab, now holds the upper hand, while the king of the South, the God-fearing Jehoshaphat, has become his vassal. By treaty, Jehoshaphat is under obligation to help Ahab in any way he asks. Syria was presently at peace with Israel and Judah but held a section of land called Ramoth-gilead. After three years of not receiving Syria's promised tribute, Ahab wants to go to war against Benhadad, the Syrian king. Ahab asks Jehoshaphat, "Will you join me in battle to recover Ramoth-gilead?" (1 Kings 22:4, NLT). Jehoshaphat has no alternative other than agreeing to help Ahab. But wisdom prevails and Jehoshaphat wants counsel from the Lord (v. 5). Ahab agrees to listen to a god but not the God of Abraham; instead, he listens to the prophets of his own state religion, prophets of Baal (v. 6). These men are false prophets who tell Ahab what he wants to hear. Jehoshaphat wants to hear from a true prophet of God, not these pseudo-prophets, so he asks Ahab if such a prophet is available (v. 7). Ahab then calls his officials to bring forth Micaiah, the son of Imlah (vv. 8-9). This passage is the only place Micaiah is mentioned in Scripture.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 413

Micaiah's Prophecy

1 Kings 22:15-18: About to attack the Syrians of the city of Ramoth in Gilead with Jehoshaphat's help, the king of Judah insists on hearing what God has to say about it. Calling on 400 false prophets who say, "go for it," Jehoshaphat wants to hear from a true prophet from the God of Abraham. Micaiah, who Ahab says never has anything good to say about him, comes, and agrees with the 400 prophets of Baal. But Ahab, knowing that he's being insincere and sarcastic, urges him to speak the truth. His message? Ahab will die in this battle. Rather than heed the voice of God's wisdom, Ahab's response was more of "I knew he'd say that."

◆ *When you ask God in prayer for the truth about yourself, are you willing to accept His answers?*

Micaiah's Vision

1 Kings 22:19-23: There is more to reveal of God's prophecy concerning Ahab's situation. God will destroy Ahab because of all of the evil that he has done, how he has totally corrupted God's people, Israel, and his disobedience to God's plan (1 King 20:42). But the vision depicts God before an army of angels asking for a plan to entice (Heb. *Patah*) Ahab to go into battle against Syria. The vision indicates that even the false prophets were used as influencing forces to lead Ahab to his demise. God is sovereign and will do what is necessary to carry out His will (John 12:40; 2 Thessalonians 2:11; Exodus 14:4,8).

Micaiah in Prison

1 King 22:26-28: So furious is Ahab about Micaiah’s prophetic word, that he orders Micaiah to be imprisoned in the custody of the governor and the king’s son. Let him stay until I return, says the king and Micaiah will certainly look foolish because the prophecy would not have come true. But Micaiah never doubted God’s word or backed down from proclaiming it to be true. He knew that Ahab would not return, and that even he[Micaiah] may die in prison, but he declared to everyone to internalize the words that he had spoken. Like Micaiah, we cannot back down from the truth, even when everyone around us disregards it, even enormously powerful people.

◆*Shall we follow the way of the crowd and serve ourselves or shall we wait on the word of the LORD however He chooses to send it?*

Conclusion

It seems that in our society, lies are glorified more and more. The truth, especially biblical truth is not what many people want to hear. But, as Christians, we must weigh the risks of being truthful against the consequences of getting caught up in lies. Even if God seems to be the only one pleased with us for telling the truth, that must be what we are committed to—speaking the truth, speaking it in love, no matter the consequences.

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Call in the New Testament. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Spring Quarter), 409-419. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.
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May 2, 2021 – Study Guide 9

Lesson for Next Week – May 9, 2021 – Study Guide 10

ISAIAH: OFFERING HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Bible Background ♦ ISAIAH 29
Printed Text ♦ ISAIAH 29:13-24
Devotional Reading ♦ JEREMIAH 29:10-14

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Discipline the Immoral Person with Respect
(1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5)

TUESDAY

Uphold Justice for All Peoples
(Exodus 23:1-9)

WEDNESDAY

Seek and You Will Find Me!
(Jeremiah 29:10-14)

THURSDAY

Lip Service Is Not Enough
(Mark 7:1-8)

FRIDAY

Jerusalem Punished and Rescued
(Isaiah 29:1-8)

SATURDAY

Judah, Blind to God's Ways
(Isaiah 29:9-12)

SUNDAY

Israel Will Enjoy a Bright Future
(Isaiah 29:13-24)