

Norwood's Notes: Brief Summaries of Bible Stories

These "notes" are intended to provide a general overview of the basic stories of the Bible in the hope of building greater biblical knowledge and encouraging Bible reading and study. For more information, visit www.UjimaChurch.org

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24 - Highlights from 1 Kings 22 - 2 Kings 3 & 2 Chronicles 18-20, "Micaiah, Elijah, & Elisha"

After three years of fighting the Syrians, King Ahab of Israel asked King Jehoshaphat of Judah to go with him into battle against the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead. While King Jehoshaphat was willing, he first wanted to hear a word from the Lord on the matter. King Ahab summoned his court prophets, who did what they typically would do... tell the king exactly what he wanted to hear. Dissatisfied with their words, Jehoshaphat asked if there was not another who could speak the word of the Lord. Reluctantly, Ahab admitted that a prophet named "Micaiah" had not yet come before them, but Ahab didn't like to hear from Micaiah because he never said what Ahab wanted to hear (1Kgs 22 & 2Chr 18). Micaiah was brought before the two kings, having warned those who brought him that he would only say what the Lord gave him to say. The prophet initially, and sarcastically, told Ahab that he would be victorious. Knowing that Micaiah was mocking him, Ahab demanded that he speak the truth. Micaiah then told him that he would be defeated and would die in the battle. With an outraged Ahab listening, Micaiah then went on to also declare disaster for the false prophets in Ahab's court. King Ahab then had Micaiah thrown in prison and placed on meager rations of bread and water.

Ignoring the prophet Micaiah's words, Ahab went into battle, but did not wear his royal robes as Jehoshaphat did. When the Syrians saw King Jehoshaphat, they thought he was King Ahab and turned to fight against him. When they heard Jehoshaphat cry out, the Syrians realized it was not Ahab and turned back. Then a Syrian archer shot an arrow at random and struck Ahab between the scale of his armor and breastplate, mortally wounding him. Ahab bled to death, propped up in his own chariot, watching Micaiah's prophecy come true.

King Jehoshaphat returned safely to Jerusalem, but the prophet Hanani chastised him for having allied with the wicked King Ahab, telling him that the Lord's wrath was against him (2Chr 19). As foreign enemies mounted against him, Jehoshaphat sought the Lord and ordered the people to a sacred fast. As the king and the people cried out to the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord spoke through a Levite named Jahaziel and said, *"Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's"* (2Chr 20:15). The next morning, the king

ordered that those who sang the praises of the Lord would go before the army, giving thanks to the Lord. As they sang, the enemy forces began to fight among themselves, destroying one another! For three days, the victorious people of Judah walked over the battlefield, collecting the spoils. On the fourth day they worshiped the Lord, rejoicing over the victory He had given them.

In the northern kingdom, Ahab's son Ahaziah became king of Israel, but was injured in a fall. He sent messengers to inquire of the false idol, Baal, whether he would recover. The Lord sent the prophet Elijah to intercept the messengers, sending them back to King Ahaziah to tell him that because he sought after an idol, he would surely die. The king sent fifty soldiers to bring Elijah to him, but at the prophet's word, fire came down from heaven and consumed them. A second unit of fifty went out to bring the prophet to the king, and they too were consumed by fire from heaven. When third unit of fifty was sent to Elijah, the captain pleaded for mercy and the Lord told Elijah to go with them and tell the king to his face that he would die from his injuries, which he did. Because Ahaziah had no son, his brother Jehoram, the second son of Ahab, became king of Israel (2Kgs 1).

The Lord sent Elijah on a journey to the Jordan river and his assistant, Elisha, was determined to follow him, because Elisha knew that Elijah was going to be taken away by God. When they reached the river, Elijah rolled up his cloak and struck the water with it and the water parted, so they walked through on dry ground! Elijah asked Elisha what he wanted him to do for him before he was taken away. Elisha asked that a double portion of Elijah's spirit would rest upon him. As they walked, chariots and horses of fire divided the two prophets and Elijah was taken up in a whirlwind into heaven, but his cloak fell back to the earth! Elisha returned to the Jordan river and when he struck it with Elijah's cloak, it parted! (2Kng 2)

While at Jericho, Elisha was told that the water was bad and the land unfruitful. He asked the people who were suffering to bring a bowl with salt in it, which he used to bless the spring of water and heal it, so that it no longer caused illness. Later, as he traveled to Bethel, a large group of disrespectful youths mocked him and threatened him. Elisha cursed them and two bears came from the woods, tearing forty-two of them.

The idolatrous King Jehoram of Israel asked King Jehoshaphat of Judah to help him go to war against the King of Moab. Joined also by the king of Edom, Jehoshaphat asked that a prophet of the Lord be consulted and the three kings sought out Elisha. Elisha was angry that the wicked King Jehoram had come to him, but out of his respect for King Jehoshaphat, he inquired of the Lord. Elisha prophesied that, without wind or rain, pools of water would appear for them and their livestock to drink and that they would be victorious against Moab, which was exactly what came to pass (2Kgs 3).