



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

## Old Testament Survey

### Lesson 28 – The Reigns of Wicked Ahab and Godly Jehoshaphat (First Kings 17-22; Second Chronicles 17-20; Psalms 46-48, 83)

#### Ahab of Israel (874-853 BC)

Omri's son, Ahab, married Jezebel of Sidon and introduced the Phoenician worship of Baal and Asherah into Israel. The Bible says of Ahab: **"But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up"** (1 Kings 21:25). He was responsible for the persecution and death of the LORD's prophets in Israel. He was responsible for the death of Naboth and the robbery of Naboth's vineyard.

Yet Ahab did listen to the prophet of the LORD who directed him to attack Benhadad I of Syria. He also repented in a way when Elijah told him of God's judgment on his dynasty. In the end, however, Ahab died as an unbeliever. Although the prophet Micaiah warned him that the battle against Benhadad I would lead to his death, Ahab did not listen but went out to fight against him anyway. So Ahab was killed in battle, as the LORD had said.

#### Elijah the Tishbite

When Ahab outlawed the worship of the LORD in Israel and replaced it with the worship of Baal and Asherah, the LORD wanted to prove to His people that He was a God of power and infinitely superior to the idols of men. For this purpose, God raised up two mighty prophets: Elijah and Elisha, and He gave them strength to work miracles of power. God gave them power even to raise the dead. The three men who appeared in glory at the high mountain where Jesus was transfigured were the three great miracle-workers of Holy Scriptures: Moses, Elijah, and **JESUS** the Messiah.

#### Jehoshaphat of Judah (873-848 BC)

Jehoshaphat was a God-fearing king. He took even stronger measures than his father Asa to get rid of the idolatry in the land. The Bible says of him: **"Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals"** (2 Chronicles 17:3). He was careful to listen to and trust in the words of God's prophets: Micaiah, Jehu, Jahaziel, Eliezer, and Elisha. The high point of his reign was the great victory God gave him over the combined forces of Moab, Ammon, and Edom.

There are four psalms that reflect this victory and were possibly written at this time:

- Psalm 46 – the basis for Martin Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress"
- Psalm 47
- Psalm 48
- Psalm 83

The one tragic weakness of Jehoshaphat's life was his alliance with the ungodly kings of Israel, specifically Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram. His own son, Jehoram, married Ahab's daughter, Athaliah. This eventually led to Baal worship in Judah. He went on a campaign with Ahab against Syria, and the prophet Jehu rebuked him for this. Nevertheless, Jehoshaphat also joined forces with Ahaziah of Israel, and because of this, his ships were broken and he could not use them. Later, Jehoshaphat joined Jehoram of Israel and the king of Edom against the Moabites. This combination of the godly with the

ungodly is against God's will. So also today our Lord does not want us to join forces with false-teaching churches. Rather He tells us: **"Avoid them"** (Romans 16:17).

Read as many of the chapters in this section as you can along with the events listed below, but read at least 1 Kings chapters 17, 18, 19, 21, 22; 2 Chronicles 20; Psalm 46. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

### **Ahab of Israel** (874-853 BC)

1. Ahab marries Jezebel of Sidon and introduces Baal worship into Israel (1 Kings 16:29-34).
2. The prophet Elijah announces to Ahab a great drought (1 Kings 17:1).
3. God miraculously feeds Elijah at the brook Cherith through birds (1 Kings 17:2-7).
4. God miraculously feeds Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-16).  
**"The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry"** (v. \_\_\_\_)
5. Elijah is given power to raise the widow's son to life again (1 Kings 17:17-24).
6. Elijah tells the God-fearing governor Obadiah that he wants to see Ahab (1 Kings 18:1-16).
7. Elijah meets Ahab and proposes a contest between God and Baal on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:17-24).  
**"If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him"** (v. \_\_\_\_)
8. The prophets of Baal seek an answer from their god (1 Kings 18:25-29).
9. God consumes Elijah's sacrifice by fire and wins the contest (1 Kings 18:30-40).
10. God sends a great rain in answer to Elijah's prayer (1 Kings 18:41-46).
11. Elijah escapes from Jezebel to Mt. Sinai (Mt. Horeb), with an angel feeding him (1 Kings 19:1-8).  
**"It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life; for I am no better than my fathers"** (v. \_\_\_\_)
12. The Lord appears to Elijah in **"a still small voice"** (v. \_\_\_\_ and gives him work to do (1 Kings 19:9-18).  
The LORD was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the quiet voice.  
Elijah: **"I alone am left; and they seek to take my life"** (v. \_\_\_\_)  
God: **"Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel"** (v. \_\_\_\_)  
Elijah's work:  
    anointing Hazael to be king of Syria;  
    anointing Jehu to be king of Israel;  
    anointing Elisha to be prophet in Elijah's place.
13. Elisha is called to be Elijah's assistant (1 Kings 19:19-21).
14. Benhadad I of Syria prepares for war against Ahab of Israel (1 Kings 20:1-12).
15. "A prophet" encourages Ahab to fight, and he wins a great victory (1 Kings 20:13-21).
16. A year later the prophet encourages Ahab to fight again, and again he wins a great victory (1 Kings 20:22-30).
17. Instead of punishing Benhadad I Ahab makes a treaty with him (1 Kings 20:31-34).
18. A prophet announces God's displeasure at Ahab's treaty (1 Kings 20:35-43).
19. Ahab covets the vineyard of Naboth in Jezreel (1 Kings 21:1-4).
20. Through false witness and murder Jezebel acquires Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:5-16).
21. Elijah announces the near end of Ahab's dynasty (1 Kings 21:17-26).
22. Ahab humbles himself, and God delays judgment until after Ahab's death (1 Kings 21:27-29).
23. Ahab and Jehoshaphat prepare to fight against Syria (1 Kings 22:1-12; 2 Chronicles 18:1-11).

24. The prophet Micaiah prophesies disaster and is persecuted (1 Kings 22:13-18; 2 Chronicles 18:12-27).
25. Ahab disguises himself, but is killed in battle anyway (1 Kings 22:29-40; 2 Chronicles 18:28-34).

Note: According to the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (discovered in 1846), Ahab and Benhadad I of Syria joined ten other kings in fighting against Shalmaneser III. The main battle was fought at Qarqar in 853 B.C. Benhadad I of Syria ruled from 890-841 B.C. Kings of Assyria during this time were Ashurnasirpal II (883-859) and Shalmaneser III (859-824).

Note: The statement of the Bible that the Moabites rebelled against Israel after Ahab's death (see 2 Kings 1:1) is corroborated by the Moabite Stone (the Mesha Stele), recovered in 1868. This stone credits the victories of Moab to the Moabite god, Chemosh.

### **Jehoshaphat of Judah** (873-848 BC)

26. Jehoshaphat in the fear of the LORD gets rid of open idolatry (1 Kings 22:41-46; 2 Chronicles 17:1-9).
27. Jehoshaphat strengthens his kingdom with God's blessing (2 Chronicles 17:10-19).
28. Jehoshaphat makes peace with Ahab and campaigns with him against Syria (1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 18). See points #23-25 in the section above on Ahab of Israel.
29. The prophet Jehu rebukes Jehoshaphat for his "unionism" (2 Chronicles 19:1-3).  
**"Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD?"** (v. \_\_\_\_)
30. Jehoshaphat improves the justice system in his kingdom (2 Chronicles 19:4-11).
31. Moab, Ammon, and Edom unite to destroy the kingdom of Judah (2 Chronicles 20:1-4).
32. Jehoshaphat and all Judah pray a great prayer to the LORD (2 Chronicles 20:5-13).  
**"We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us"** (v. \_\_\_\_)
33. The prophet Jahaziel assures Judah of victory (2 Chronicles 20:14-19).  
**"The battle is not yours, but God's... Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD"** (vv. \_\_\_\_)
34. Jehoshaphat and Judah win a great victory and rejoice with music (2 Chronicles 20:20-30).  
 Jehoshaphat: **"Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper"** (v. \_\_\_\_)  
**"They were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much"** (v. \_\_\_\_)
35. Jehoshaphat joins Ahaziah of Israel in a business venture (2 Chronicles 20:35-36).
36. The prophet Eliezer prophesies failure, and so it happens (2 Chronicles 20:37; 1 Kings 22:47-48).
37. Jehoshaphat refuses to join Ahaziah of Israel a second time (1 Kings 22:49).
38. Jehoshaphat joins Jehoram of Israel in a campaign against Moab (2 Kings 3).
39. Jehoshaphat concludes his reign and dies (1 Kings 22:50; 2 Chronicles 20:31-34).

### A Table of Prophets and Kings

<u>Prophets</u>	<u>Kings of Israel</u>	<u>Kings of Judah</u>	<u>2 Chron.</u>	<u>1 Kings</u>
Elijah	5) Omri (885-874)	<u>Asa</u> (911-870)	16	17
<b>"a prophet"</b>	5) Ahab (874-853)	<u>Jehoshaphat</u> (873-848)	17-20	17-21
a disciple of the prophets				22
Micaiah				
Jehu				
Jahaziel				
Eliezer				
Elisha	5) Ahaziah (853-852)	<u>Jehoram</u> (853-841)	21	
	5) Jehoram (852-841)	<u>Ahaziah</u> (841)	22	

Note: The numbers besides the kings of Israel refer to their various dynasties. The underlined kings of Judah (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah) are those who are described in the Bible as God-fearing kings. They were far from perfect in their loyalty to God, but it seems that they trusted in God's promises concerning the coming Christ (**JESUS**) and tried to walk in the ways of the Lord.

#### Questions

1. How was Jezebel a bad influence on her husband, King Ahab?
2. How did God show the people of Israel that Baal had no power at all?
3. Why did Elijah run away after God showed Himself to be the only true God?
4. What did God demonstrate when He was not found in wind, earthquake, and fire?
5. What was especially remarkable about the powers given to Elijah and Elisha?
6. Why was God dissatisfied with Ahab's treatment of Benhadad I of Syria?
7. Why did Naboth refuse to sell his vineyard to Ahab?
8. How did Ahab think he could prevent his own predicted death from happening?
9. What are some good things to remember about King Jehoshaphat?
10. What was the weakness in Jehoshaphat that proved disastrous for his descendants?
11. What is the main lesson we can learn from Psalm 46?