

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

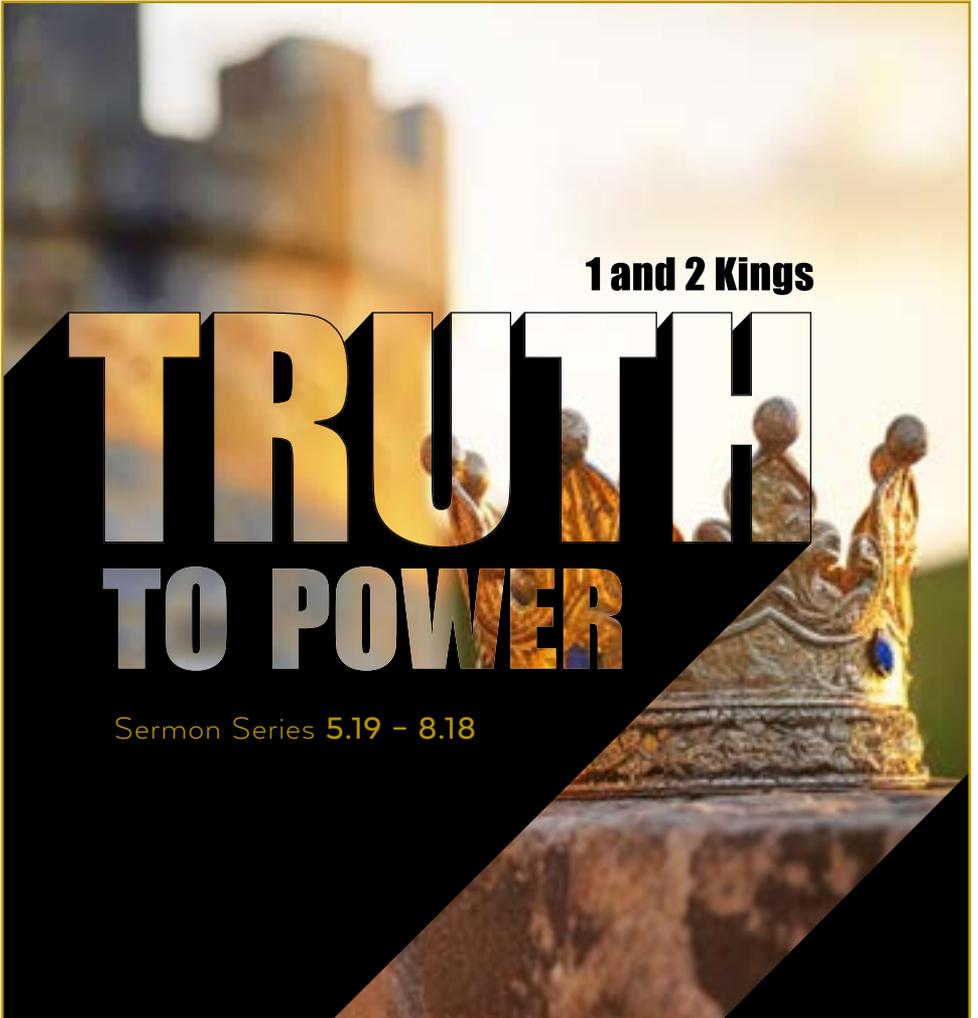
# DEVO

JULY 1 - 5, 2024

**1 and 2 Kings**

# TRUTH TO POWER

Sermon Series 5.19 - 8.18





# MONDAY

Read **1 Kings 22:1-4; Mark 14:53-72; 1 Corinthians 15:33-34**

Jehosaphat was one of Judah's generally godly kings, ruling five generations after David. *"The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David ... [He] sought ... God ... and walked in His commandments, ... courageous in the ways of the LORD"* (2 Chronicles 17:3-6). In today's 1 Kings 22 story, however, we see him initiating an alliance with one of Israel's wickedest kings, Ahab.

Jehosaphat, like great-great grandfather Solomon, would have benefitted from Paul's later advice, *"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers"* (1 Corinthians 6:14). This principle applies to believers not only romantically, but also in business and everyday activities. Such guidance does not mean "avoid non-Christians, never mixing with them." If so, how would we fulfill Jesus' "Great Commission," to *"Go ... and make disciples of all nations"* (Matthew 28:19)? But we need to take it to heart, reminded that *"Bad company ruins good morals. ... For some have no knowledge of God"* (1 Corinthians 15:33-34).

Peter learned this lesson, like many, the hard way. After Jesus' arrest and amidst His false trial, Scripture indicates that *"Peter ... followed [Christ] at a distance, ... into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire"* (Mark 14:54).

Subsequently, Peter denied Jesus three times, upon which *"he broke down and wept"* (Mark 14:72).

Jehosaphat's biblical epitaph includes this sad note: *"[Under Jehosaphat] ... the high places [of idol worship] were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed [there]"* (1 Kings 22:44). Unlike Paul's autobiographical account of *"[fighting] the good fight, ... [finishing] the race, ... [and keeping] the faith"* (2 Timothy 4:7), Jehosaphat's track record was mixed.

How will you finish? If you are older, this might be top-of-mind. However, even younger believers should be intentional regarding their Christian legacy. Do you perilously *"follow [Jesus] at a distance ... [regularly] warming [yourself] at the [enemy's] fire"* or walk closely in His strength and love? Each moment, each action has consequences. You are either drawing closer to Christ and setting a good example or not.

## QUESTIONS

What were the problems with Judah's King Jehosaphat seeking an alliance with Israel's King Ahab? How does Paul's admonition, *"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers"* (1 Corinthians 6:14) apply to Christian living? How did Peter fall prey to that which stumbled Jehosaphat?

## PRAYER

[World Vision, Baba, Ecuador](#)

We are encouraged and praise God for the recent report that 81% of the youth trained by World Vision have been taught about life skills and how to make healthy choices for their well-being. Continue to pray for increased safe opportunities for these vulnerable youth as they are the next generation of leaders for the country of Ecuador.



# TUESDAY

Read **1 Kings 22:1-7, 19-28; Joshua 9:3-21**

Yesterday we considered where Jehosaphat erred, a symptom of other prevailing issues during his reign. Today we'll see one area where he got things right while also considering the challenges that Micaiah—like many of God's ancient prophets—faced in staying true to God's call.

In engaging Israel's wicked King Ahab and his offer that Judah join them militarily against Syria, Jehosaphat wisely insisted, *"Inquire first for the word of the LORD"* (1 Kings 22:5). Following such advice continually would benefit each of us, whether regarding matters large or small. Ahab's prophets—politically motivated to please him—predicted victory for their joined forces. But this did not stop Jehosaphat from discerningly pressing, *"Is there not here another prophet of the LORD of whom we may inquire?"* (v. 7).

God's true prophet Michaiah—summoned by hostile King Ahab—initially taunted the king and his court, mimicking what Ahab's politically correct counsellors predicted with obvious mockery. Upon then truly prophesying the disaster that God decreed for Ahab's troops, Michaiah was struck and then imprisoned.

None of us is immune from discounting God's interest in our decisions, then experiencing the consequences of not seeking Him

in all things. Moses' successor in leading the Jews, Joshua, had a nearly spotless record. However, after the Hebrews' military conquests terrified other local pagans, the Gibeonites deceived Joshua into making a peace treaty with them. The telling verse: *"[Israel's leaders inspected] their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD"* (Joshua 9:14, emphasis added). King Jehosaphat wisely avoided this error.

Being a believer does not assure an easy life—in fact, it is often the opposite as prophets Micaiah, Hosea, and others experienced. Moreover, God's children should never forget nor discount their spiritual lineage. Our Father cares about every aspect of our lives, wanting to hear from us continually.

Joshua's related carelessness precluded Israel from purging the Gibeonites from Canaan. We do well when lifting everything up to God prayerfully, exemplified by King Jehosaphat as he considered allying with Ahab. How about your prayer life? In challenges or decision-making, is God your "first stop" or sometimes a "last resort"?

## QUESTIONS

What did Jehosaphat get right in his dealings with Ahab? Are there "minor details" of your life that you do not lift up to God prayerfully? Do you have any regrets here?

## PRAYER

**World Vision, Baba, Ecuador**

The spiritual nurture of children is a central priority of World Vision's work in Baba, Ecuador. Pray for continued growth in the community partnerships with local churches.



Read **1 Kings 22:6-12; Jeremiah 23:16-18; 2 Peter 2:1-3**

God-given free will is a great blessing. It enables choices, foundational to love itself. Free will is one way in which we are “*created ... in the image of God*” (Genesis 1:23). But such freedom has a downside: God honors it, allowing us to live with the consequences of our choices, even giving some over to self-destruction if they are set that way (Romans 1:24).

One might complain, “Why does God allow rampant evil? Why doesn’t He judge and eradicate it instantly?” The problem: if God judged all sin as it happened, no one would survive long—there would be no Bride for the Savior to claim. Accordingly, He may permit false teachers to spread deception, at least temporarily. Should any be exploited by such “[*wolves*] in sheep’s clothing” (Matthew 7:15), it is due to the misguided ones’ own inclinations.

Michaiah opposed Ahab’s false prophets, ironically being viewed as one of these himself by Israel’s sinful king. Ahab, like so many today, preferred those who would satisfy his “*itching ears*” (2 Timothy 4:3), telling him what he wanted to hear. Unfortunately, Judah’s King Jehosaphat dismissed Michaiah’s warning, joining Ahab against Syria. The battle cost Ahab his life and nearly ended Jehosaphat’s (2 Chronicles 18:28-34).

Jesus grappled with false teachers throughout His ministry. Upon cleansing the temple, He declared, “*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations ... But you have made it a den of robbers*” (Mark 11:17). Unfortunately, that “*den*” remains occupied. Some preachers and evangelists, prioritizing popularity and numbers over fidelity, push the Gospel’s “*happy truths*”—“*God loves you,*” “*in Christ you receive eternal life,*” etc.—while avoiding its hard aspects—a holy God must judge sin, “*wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it*” (Matthew 7:13), etc.

Do you know anyone subject to sentimentality versus biblical truth? Draw alongside them, affirming the challenges that can come with grasping the ways of a transcendent God. Help them see that while “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8), He is also “[*holy and*] righteous in all His ways” (Psalm 145:17).

## QUESTIONS

What are the upsides and downsides of our God-given free will? Why doesn’t God judge and eradicate evil instantly, as it happens? What are some of the symptoms of contemporary false teachers and prophets?

## PRAYER

World Vision, Baba, Ecuador

The local faith community has been in Baba, Ecuador, long before World Vision’s presence, and it will continue to be there for years to come. This faith community is key for sustaining progress. Continue to pray for their growing role in supporting the development of children and youth.



# THURSDAY

Read **1 Kings 22:13-23; 1 Samuel 16:14; James 1:12-15**

The exchange between the prophet Micaiah and King Ahab in today's 1 Kings passage is fascinating. Ahab reluctantly called Micaiah to foretell what would happen in the envisioned battle with Syria. Micaiah sarcastically declared, *"Go up and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."* (1 Kings 22:15) Ahab responded with false piety, *"How many times shall I make you swear that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"* (v. 16).

The prophet then gave a glimpse into heaven's ways, revealing that God allowed a *"lying spirit"* (v. 22) to deceive the king to his demise. Despite such complete transparency via Micaiah, Ahab proceeded into the life-ending combat, his forewarning notwithstanding.

A righteous objector to this incident's related implications might argue, *"Wait—God does not author evil (James 1:13)! 'God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all' (1 John 1:5)!"* God does not need to initiate oppression by evil agents, merely needing to remove His protection from their targets. The enemy aims to destroy all humankind (1 Peter 5:8), but he can do only what Yahweh allows—see Job 1-2 for related reference.

"God had [earlier] pronounced a death sentence upon Ahab (1 Kings 20:42, 21:19), but had given him opportunity to repent ... With this final rejection of God's counsel, God ... [carried] out

the death sentence. Since Ahab ... [preferred] the lies of his false prophets over the truth given by God's prophets, God chose to use the false prophets to carry out His plan, ... [deploying] a lying spirit because Ahab [had] rejected God's rebukes and warnings all through his life ... Since God is sovereign over all of creation, He is not restricted in what or whom He can use to accomplish His holy purposes." (GotQuestions.org)

Do you know people who seemingly committed to self-destruction despite others' help and repeated warnings? Aren't these like Ahab, while also like you and me when we sin? God will do everything short of violating our free will to prevent such things. Father, please keep me from temptation and deliver me from the evil one!

## QUESTIONS

Why do you think Micaiah initially mocked King Ahab in responding to his demand for prophecy regarding the Syrian conflict? What did Ahab do upon hearing the fullness of God's approach to his inquiry? Why would God use a *"lying spirit"* in His dealings with Ahab?

## PRAYER

World Vision, Baba, Ecuador

Praise God for the recent report of 1,053 girls and boys in Grades 1 through 3 taking part in the World Vision literacy program to help improve their reading skills and learning ability. Pray for these seeds planted and the education foundation that will create new opportunities for their future.



# FRIDAY

Read **1 Kings 22: 24-27; Luke 9:22-25; James 1:2-4**

Upon accurately foretelling the disaster awaiting King Ahab in battling Syria, Micaiah was assaulted by Ahab's false prophet, Zedekiah, and subsequently imprisoned. Like many of God's true prophets both before and after him, Micaiah suffered for his faithfulness. Persecution of God's faithful for truth-telling and serving Him is a recurring biblical pattern.

Abel's virtuous offering prompted his murder by envious brother Cain. "*Blameless and upright [Job]*" (Job 1:8) lost everything to God-regulated attacks by Satan. Joseph's righteousness got him enslaved and then imprisoned. King David was hunted by his predecessor Saul and then by his son Absalom in an attempted coup. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego endured Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. Daniel's piety led him into and out of the lion's den. Righteous John the Baptizer was executed by Rome.

The sinless Savior was falsely tried, persecuted and crucified for representing God. Jesus' closest disciples—except John and suicidal Judas—were martyred for their faith as was Jesus' half-brother, James. Stephen was stoned for faithfully representing Jesus and His Gospel. The Apostle Paul was hounded and attacked first by Jews, then Judaizers within the church and finally Rome, which executed him.

GotQuestions.org characterizes the recurring dynamic experienced by God's faithful as follows: "By closely adhering to the teachings

of the Bible, we set ourselves up for rejection, mockery, loneliness, or betrayal. Often, the cruelest persecution comes from those who consider themselves spiritual but have defined God according to their own ideas. ... In whatever form suffering [for Christ's glory] comes, we should embrace it as a badge of honor and a privilege that we, like the apostles, have '*been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name*' [Acts 4:41]."

The attacks of the enemy and those cooperating with him (whether intentionally or not) can make you either better (if you persevere faithfully) or bitter. They are one means by which Jesus "*separates the sheep (regenerate) from the goats (unsaved)*" (Matthew 25:32). Trials are God's "gym equipment" to strengthen and prove our faith both to ourselves and others. Believers are either in a trial, have just exited one, or have one looming "*because the LORD disciplines those He loves*" (Proverbs 3:11).

## QUESTIONS

Why have God's faithful often been persecuted over the ages for faithfulness to the LORD? Other than Jesus' crucifixion, which of the other biblical examples of persecution seem most "unfair" to you? Why should believers embrace godly trials as "a badge of honor and a privilege"?

## PRAYER

World Vision, Baba, Ecuador

Thank and praise God for the relationship that Glenkirk has with World Vision and the community in Baba, Ecuador. God has connected families across the world. Pray for the continued transformational work that God will do in and through the families of Glenkirk and the communities that World Vision serves in Baba.



## Sources

- GotQuestions.org's quotes can be found at <https://www.gotquestions.org/lying-spirit.html> and <https://www.gotquestions.org/suffering-for-Christ.html>

*These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at [KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org](mailto:KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org). If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.*

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