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Old Testament Literature 102 OA

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Character

The story leading to the battle at Ramoth Gilead written in 1 Kings 22 reveals the character of many men at the time and also reveals God's response to the heart posture and actions of these men. There are many lessons to be learned from the displayed actions and revealed character of King Ahab, King Jehoshaphat, Prophet Micaiah and God within this story.

The story begins with King Ahab plotting to war with Syria for Ramoth in Gilead and requesting King Jehoshaphat to fight and claim the land with him. King Jehoshaphat of Judah tells Ahab that they are one people but asks him to acquire God's word on the matter before setting out into battle. Ahab agrees and sends for all the prophets, about 400. All the prophets tell the king to go into battle and that God will deliver Ramoth into the hands of the King. Jehoshaphat insists on hearing from a prophet of the lord and asks if there is one still. Ahab mentions Micaiah but says that he hates him because he always prophesies negatively against him. Micaiah tells the king that God has declared destruction on him and that he will actually be defeated in Ramoth. God had sent a lying spirit to deceive the 400 prophets that told the king he would have victory in battle. Micaiah is thrown in prison waiting for his prophecy to be proven and the King goes off to battle anyway disguising himself so he would not be killed. Jehoshaphat The King is ultimately killed anyway as Micaiah had prophesied.

Within this story Ahab is revealed to have a bad heart posture towards God. When the Kings hear from the many prophets Jehoshaphat still asks for a prophet of the Lord and that is

when Ahab mentions Micaiah. He proclaims to King Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom whom we may inquire of the Lord; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil," (1 Kings 22:8). He hated Micaiah as the messenger because of the words he spoke that were really from God. If he hated Micaiah for his words then he definitely hated God for giving them as he knows Micaiah's words are inquiries from the Lord. The king called all the prophets but Micaiah because he knew Micaiah would not tell him what he wanted to hear but all the others would. Ahab reveals his heart of hatred here and further reveals it when he sends Micaiah to be imprisoned for speaking only the truth. Ahab then goes on to challenge God's word as he goes to battle anyway and disguises himself. He tries to trick God and seems to be a man filled with pride. Ahab's character was prideful and rebellious as he hated the Lord's prophets and still attempted to outrun God's word. Jehoshaphat is depicted differently within this story. Jehoshaphat never seems to go against God's will throughout this story. When the idea to fight for Ramoth is mentioned to him he immediately tells Ahab to inquire the word of the Lord before they set out to battle. This reveals his heart posture towards God as he is unwilling to move before God has willed it. Even after all the other prophets told them to go to battle he asks if there was not still a prophet of the Lord that they could inquire of him. Jehoshaphat is eager on hearing the word of God. He goes to battle with Ahab but only after hearing the prophecy from Micaiah. It was God's will that Ahab go into battle and be destroyed. It does not seem that Jehoshaphat goes against God's will at any moment within the text. He is even seen to be spared on the battlefield. If God was displeased with Jehoshaphat he could have allowed him to be killed in battle too but he was spared. This to me seems that Jehoshaphat was a good man who God was not displeased with even if he did not defend Micaiah or stop the battle. What had happened was in God's will.

Micaiah's character is clear in this text. He is a good man of God. We see this with his boldness and honesty to speak the Lord's words and will. When king Ahab sent for Micaiah a messenger urged him to be in agreement with the other prophets so they may offer encouragement to the king. It is clear here how Micaiah is set apart as he responds saying, "As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, I will speak," (1 Kings 22:14). It is clear that Micaiah is not afraid of standing alone in the name of the Lord. He knows that all the others agreed with one another but he remains confident in what the Lord has spoken to him and is diligent in being honest and speaking it.

God's character is revealed throughout this story as well. Although God sent a lying spirit his character still remains righteous and just. God asks who will go to persuade Ahab to go to Ramoth and the spirit that offers to go says, "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets," (1 Kings 22:22). The prophets were unfaithful and are even called the king's prophets instead of prophets of God. Therefore they could not recognize or discern the voice of God. They could not tell the difference between a lying spirit and the spirit of truth. Prophets are meant to be in close relation to God; being guided by Him. It is revealed how these prophets cared more about pleasing the King than pleasing God and this is why Micaiah was not effected by the lying spirit, because he was faithful to God. Ahab did not want the truth and instead had ticklish ears only desiring what he wanted to hear so God allowed for him to get that. I believe that this reveals the justice of God's character. He exposes the many prophets' unfaithfulness to Him and the truth while also casting judgment on the rebellious king Ahab. God seems fair and just within this story. Micaiah heard the lying spirit too. He knew what the lying spirit said too but he was able to discern and recognize God and that was why God could use him to speak the truth.

The lesson I learned from this story is to remain diligent in hearing God's will. From Jehoshaphat's eagerness to hear from the prophets of God in order to understand God's will before taking action, I learned to first seek the will of God before jumping into decisions. Had king Ahab truly cared about God's will, I wonder if God would not have taken justice on him. It seemed to be a pattern that Ahab continuously challenged God's word as he mentioned how Micaiah always prophesied against him, completely forsaking that it came from God. Another lesson I learned was to be content in standing for God even if it means standing alone in certain situations. Micaiah was content in standing alone among men because he was obedient to God. Reading about how Micaiah was even thrown into prison for remaining faithful to God reminds me that justice is in God's hands.