

Good King Jehoshaphat and Wicked King Ahaziah

1 Kings 22:41-53

1 Kings 22:41-50 – *“Jehoshaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the LORD. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.*

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, the might that he showed, and how he made war, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ⁴⁶ And the rest of the perverted persons, who remained in the days of his father Asa, he banished from the land. There was then no king in Edom, only a deputy of the king.

Jehoshaphat made merchant ships to go to Ophir for gold; but they never sailed, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber. Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Let my servants go with your servants in the ships.” But Jehoshaphat would not.

And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.”

Background Notes:

In these verses, we have a record of the reign of good King Jehoshaphat of Judah.

The timeframe for these events was the middle of the 9th century BC. The 25 years of Jehoshaphat’s reign (v42) were approximately 875BC to 850BC.

At this time there was a divided kingdom - the northern kingdom of Israel with Samaria as its capital, and the southern kingdom of Judah with Jerusalem as its capital. Nineteen kings reigned in the northern kingdom, and they were all bad kings. The biblical record says they *“did evil in the sight of the Lord.”* King Ahab was one of those evil kings. Twenty kings reigned in the southern kingdom. Although most of them were bad kings, eight of them are listed in the biblical record as good kings.

King Jehoshaphat was one of those good kings of the southern kingdom. Verse 43: *“And he [Jehoshaphat] walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord.”* Good King Asa, Jehoshaphat’s father, was mentioned back in verse 14. Although Jehoshaphat was a good king, he was not a

perfect king - because the middle of verse 43 modifies the account of his good record with the words “Nevertheless” or “However.” So his record wasn’t perfect.

Doctrinal Point for 1 Kings 22:41-50

There is a difference between a good record and a perfect record.

The Bible certainly teaches this truth when it comes to the record of a believer’s life. Jehoshaphat was a good king - but he wasn’t perfect. The beginning of verse 43 says that Jehoshaphat did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and verse 46 says that he banished the “perverted persons” from the land. This is a reference to the homosexual shrine prostitutes associated with the pagan fertility practices that had infiltrated Judah.

He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and Jehoshaphat is commended for his good record. However, it’s not a perfect record. Three items are listed that mar Jehoshaphat’s good record.

1. *“Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places”(v42).* The high places were those hilltop areas where people offered sacrifices and burned incense to idols. In some cases, the people offered sacrifices and burned incense to the Lord in these high places, but this also was wrong because sacrifices were **only** to be offered to the Lord in the Temple in Jerusalem.

2. *“Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel”(v44).* The king of Israel mentioned here was wicked King Ahab. Not only did Jehoshaphat go to war as an ally of Ahab, he also formed an alliance with Ahab by marrying his son Jehoram to Ahab’s daughter. Athaliah was the daughter of wicked King Ahab and wicked Queen Jezebel. We read about this political marriage in 2 Kings 8.

3. *“After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly... to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber”(2 Chronicles 20:35).* Jehoshaphat made an alliance with wicked King Ahaziah, Ahab’s son (v48-49). They went into a commercial shipping venture together at Ezion Geber (where the Israeli city of Eilat is located today, at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba, which is part of the Red Sea). But this business venture failed. The ships were wrecked, probably because of a storm. And I dare say that God sent that storm because of the improper alliance that Jehoshaphat had made with wicked King Ahaziah.

2 Chronicles 20:35-36 definitely indicates that this alliance with Ahaziah was made before the business fleet was shipwrecked, even though it’s not as clear here in 1 Kings 22. But 2 Chronicles 20 makes it quite clear that this alliance with Ahaziah was made before the ships were even built. 2 Chronicles 20:35: *“After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber.”* In verse 37 a prophet came to Jehoshaphat and prophesied:

“Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the Lord has destroyed your works. Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.”

So Jehoshaphat was a good king - but he wasn't a perfect king. There is a difference between a good record and a perfect record. We might say, “Well, nobody's perfect! It's impossible for a believer to be perfect.” And that's true - but the point is that we should try to **strive to be better than good!**

What kind of grade did you get on the last temptation or test that God allowed to come into your life? Did you just pass with a “C”? It's good that you passed with a “C,” but an “A” or a “B” is a lot better than just passing with a “C”! Let's strive to have a better record as a believer. There is a difference between a good record and a perfect record.

Practical Application for 1 Kings 22:41-50

How many times does God have to speak before we listen?

The alliance that Jehoshaphat made with wicked King Ahaziah was near the end of his reign. Wouldn't you think that Jehoshaphat would have learned by experience that it's not a good idea to make alliances with wicked kings? Remember the fiasco that resulted when he joined forces with wicked King Ahab? Only by the mercy of God was Jehoshaphat's life preserved!

But Jehoshaphat blindly went along with another bad alliance. I wonder if it was his desire for the gold of Ophir that blinded Jehoshaphat to what he was doing (v48). Do you see the practical application here? So often it is our strong desire for material things that blinds us to the bad decisions we make. As Jehoshaphat ended up with business shipwreck, so we risk spiritual shipwreck if we will not listen to what God is trying to tell us. How many times does God have to speak before we'll listen?

From verse 49, it looks like Jehoshaphat finally learned his lesson. When Ahaziah wanted to re-negotiate this merchant marine deal, Jehoshaphat finally said “No.” He should have said no sooner.

What about us? How many times does God have to speak before we'll listen?

1 Kings 22:51-53 – *“In these three verses we have a summary of the reign of wicked King Ahaziah over the northern kingdom of Israel: “Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; for he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done.”*

Background Notes for 1 Kings 22:51-53

Ahaziah reigned for only two years, but in those two years he *“provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger.”* No wonder God was against the shipping alliance that Jehoshaphat made with this evil king.

Doctrinal Point for 1 Kings 22:51-53

Christening is not a ticket to Heaven.

“Christening” is the religious ceremony of baptizing and naming a newborn child, but contrary to what some people think, christening is confer on that child a ticket to Heaven! Where is that biblical truth taught here?

The name Ahaziah means “the Lord holds” or “the Lord sustains.” Wicked King Ahaziah was given that God-honoring name at birth by, of all people, his wicked parents, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. It’s true, by the way, that most of the wicked kings of Israel and Judah were given names that contain the name of God, but that meant nothing to them. They did not come to faith in the God of Israel. Ahaziah did not come to faith.

And so it is today. A person must come to faith in Christ to get into Heaven. Sadly, many people today believe they have salvation through being “christened” in infancy. But this is not a biblical doctrine. Christening is not a ticket to Heaven.

Practical Application for 1 Kings 22:51-53

Don’t be a mother like Ahaziah’s mother!

Verse 52 says that Ahaziah did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father and his mother. Often in 1 Kings the reign of a king, whether good or bad, is attributed to a father or a forefather (example: verse 43). However, Ahaziah’s evil ways are attributed to the influence of **both** his parents - King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.

Mothers have a great influence on the moral character of their children. A mother’s training can make or break the moral fiber of a child. Jezebel, probably even more than Ahab, taught Ahaziah the finer points of idolatry. Most Christian mothers would say, “That doesn’t apply to me. I would never be a mother like Jezebel!” But listen! By their words, their actions, their attitudes, and their examples, mothers teach can teach their children that God is not their #1 priority - and that is idolatry. When God is not #1 in our lives, things other than God are #1 – and that is a form of idolatry. So - don’t be a mother like Ahaziah’s mother!