

# CHAPTER 18

The story of this chapter we had just as it is here related in the story of the reign of Ahab king of Israel, 1 Kings 22. There it looks more creditable to Ahab than any thing else recorded of him that he was in league with so good a man as Jehoshaphat; here it is a great blemish in the reign of Jehoshaphat that he thus connected himself with so bad a man as Ahab. Here is,

- I.** The alliance he contracted himself with Ahab (v. 1).
- II.** His consent to join with him in his expedition for the recovery of Remoth-Gilead out of the hands of the Syrians (v. 2, 3).
- III.** Their consulting with the prophets, false and true, before they went (v. 4-27).
- IV.** The success of their expedition. Jehoshaphat hardly escaped (v. 28-32) and Ahab received his death's wound (v. 33, 34).

## <4180> 2 CHRONICLES 18:1-3

### JEHOSHAPHAT'S ALLIANCE WITH AHAB

Here is,

- I.** Jehoshaphat growing greater. It was said before (<4175> 2 Chronicles 17:5) that he had *riches and honour in abundance*; and here it is said again that his wealth and honour increased upon him by piety and good management.
- II.** Not growing wiser, else he would not have joined with Ahab, that degenerate Israelite, who had sold himself to work wickedness. What good could he get by a man that was so bad? What good could he do to a man that was so obstinately wicked — an idolater, a persecutor? With him he joined in affinity, that is, married his son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter Athaliah.
- 1.** This was the worst match that ever was made by any of the house of David. I wonder what Jehoshaphat could promise himself by it.

(1.) Perhaps pride made the match, as it does many a one, which speeds accordingly. His religion forbade him to marry his son to a daughter of any of the heathen princes that were about him — *Thou shalt not take their daughters to thy sons*; and, having riches and honour in abundance, he thought it a disparagement to marry him to a subject. A king's daughter it must be, and therefore Ahab's, little considering that Jezebel was her mother.

(2.) Some think he did it in policy, hoping by this expedient to unite the kingdoms in his son, Ahab perhaps flattering him with hopes that he would make him his heir, when he intended no such thing.

2. This match drew Jehoshaphat,

(1.) Into an intimate familiarity with Ahab. He paid him a visit at Samaria, and Ahab, proud of the honour which Jehoshaphat did him, gave him a very splendid entertainment, according to the splendour of those times: He *killed sheep and oxen for him, plain meat, in abundance*, v. 2. In this Jehoshaphat did not walk so closely as he should have done in the ways of his father David, who *hated the congregation of evil-doers and would not sit with the wicked* (~~1215~~ Psalm 26:5), nor desired to *eat of their dainties*, ~~1204~~ Psalm 141:4.

(2.) Into a league with Ahab against the Syrians. Ahab persuaded him to join forces with him in an expedition for the recovery of Ramoth-Gilead, a city in the tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan. Did not Ahab know that that, and all the other cities of Israel, did of right belong to Jehoshaphat, as heir of the house of David? With what face then could he ask Jehoshaphat to assist him in recovering it for himself, whose title to the crown was usurped and precarious? Yet Jehoshaphat, an easy man, yields to go with him: *I am as thou art*, v. 3. Some men's kindnesses are dangerous, as well as their society infectious. The feast Ahab made for Jehoshaphat was designed only to wheedle him into the expedition. The *kisses of an enemy are deceitful*.

## ~~<480>~~ 2 CHRONICLES 18:4-27

### THE PROPHETS ARE CONSULTED

This is almost word for word the same with what we had, 1 Kings 22. We will not repeat what was there said, nor have we much to add, but may take occasion to think,

- 1.** Of the great duty of acknowledging God in all our ways *and enquiring at his word*, whatever we undertake. Jehoshaphat was not willing to proceed till he had done this, v. 4. By particular believing prayer, by an unbiased consultation of the scripture and our own consciences, and by an observant regard to the hints of providence, we may make such enquiries and very much to our satisfaction.
- 2.** Of the great danger of bad company even to good men. Those that have more wisdom, grace, and resolution, cannot be sure that they can converse familiarly with wicked people and get no hurt by them. Jehoshaphat here, in complaisance to Ahab, sits in his robes, patiently hearing the false prophets speaking lies in the name of the Lord (v. 9), can scarcely find in his heart to give him a too mild and gentle reproof for hating a prophet of the Lord (v. 7), and dares not rebuke that false prophet who basely abused the faithful seer nor oppose Ahab who committed him to prison. Those who venture among the seats of the scornful cannot come off without a great deal of the guilt attaching to at least the omission of their duty, unless they have such measures of wisdom and courage as few can pretend to.
- 3.** Of the unhappiness of those who are surrounded with flatterers, especially flattering prophets, who cry peace to them and prophesy nothing but smooth things. Thus was Ahab cheated into his ruin, and justly; for he hearkened to such, and preferred those that humoured him before a good prophet that gave him fair warning of his danger. Those do best for themselves that give their friends leave, and particularly their ministers, to deal plainly and faithfully with them, and take their reproofs not only patiently, but kindly. That counsel is not always best for us that is most pleasing to us.
- 4.** Of the power of Satan, by the divine permission, *in the children of disobedience*. One lying spirit can make 400 lying prophets and make use

of them to deceive Ahab, v. 21. The devil becomes a murderer by being a liar and destroys men by deceiving them.

**5.** Of the justice of God in giving those up to strong delusions, to believe a lie, who will not receive the love of the truth, but rebel against it, v. 21. Let the *lying spirit prevail* to entice those to their ruin that will not be persuaded to their duty and happiness.

**6.** Of the hard case of faithful ministers, whose lot it has often been to be hated, and persecuted, and ill-treated, for being true to their God and just and kind to the souls of men. Micaiah, for discharging a good conscience, was buffeted, imprisoned, and condemned to the bread and water of affliction. But he could with assurance appeal to the issue, as all those may do who are persecuted for their faithfulness, v. 27. The day will declare who is in the right and who in the wrong, when Christ will appear, to the unspeakable consolation of his persecuted people and the everlasting confusion of their persecutors, who will be made *to see in that day* (v. 24) what they will not now believe.

## ~~<41838>~~ 2 CHRONICLES 18:28-34

### AHAB SLAIN IN BATTLE

We have here,

**1.** Good Jehoshaphat exposing himself in his robes, thereby endangered, and yet delivered. We have reason to think that Ahab, while he pretended friendship, really aimed at Jehoshaphat's life, to take him off, that he might have the management of his successor, who was his son-in-law, else he would never have advised him to enter into the battle with his robes on, which was but to make himself an easy mark to the enemy: and, if really he intended that, it was as unprincipled a piece of treachery as ever man was guilty of, and justly was he himself taken in the pit he digged for his friend. The enemy had soon an eye upon the robes, and vigorously attacked the unwary prince who now, when it was too late, wished himself in the habit of the poorest soldier, rather than in his princely raiment. he cried out, either to his friends to relieve him (but Ahab took no care of that), or to his enemies, to rectify their mistake, and let them know that he was not the king of Israel. Or perhaps he cried to God for succour and deliverance (to

whom else should he cry?) and he found it was not in vain: *The Lord helped him out of his distress, by moving the captains to depart from him*, v. 31. God has all men's hearts in his hand, and turns them as he pleases, contrary to their own first intentions, to serve his purposes. Many are moved unaccountably both to themselves and others, but an invisible power moves them.

**2.** Wicked Ahab disguising himself, arming himself thereby as he thought securing himself, and yet slain, v. 33. No art, no arms, can save those whom God has appointed to ruin. What can hurt those whom God will protect? And what can shelter those whom God will destroy? Jehoshaphat is safe in his robes, Ahab killed in his armour; for the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong.