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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1897 ~ Elijah Prophecies About Ahab.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

After King Ahab of Israel had stolen Naboth's vineyard for his palace garden, God's prophet Elijah met Ahab there and pronounced God's punishment on him, his wife Jezebel and their family. Despite being Israel's most evil king, Ahab humbled himself before the Lord at that point and so his punishment was delayed.

In the southern kingdom of Judah, King Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, had become king in the 4th year of King Ahab's reign in the northern kingdom of Israel. Jehoshaphat was a good king, who worshipped the Lord wholeheartedly and destroyed the worship of idols throughout the land of Judah. He also stopped the warfare between Israel and Judah from continuing. As a result, God blessed Jehoshaphat and the people honoured him. He organised his army well and his enemies round Judah were afraid to attack him.

Jehoshaphat sent a team of his officials, with nine Levites and two priests, with the book of God's law throughout the land to teach the people from it. He himself travelled throughout Judah and urged the people to follow the Lord. He also encouraged the judges he appointed in each district and in Jerusalem to honour the Lord by judging fairly.

But Jehoshaphat did some things which almost brought the Davidic dynasty to an end as well. After all the teaching of his own people to love and serve the Lord, Jehoshaphat allowed his crown prince son to marry a daughter of wicked Ahab and Jezebel. This alliance with the king of Israel undid much of the good work Jehoshaphat had done over the years, for Athaliah, much like her mother Jezebel, was a Baal worshipper.

Parents are to teach their children right from wrong, provide for them and lay a godly foundation in their lives. Most importantly, parents are to lead their children to Jesus Christ and help them develop a biblical worldview for themselves. Parents are to lovingly teach the Word of God while they live by the example and truths and commands within it. They are to help their children to see things as God sees things whenever the right opportunity avails.

In 1st Kings, Chapter 22, Jehoshaphat went to visit Ahab. Ahab cornered him and pressured him into putting the Judean army alongside Ahab's Israelite army for going out on a dangerous mission to retake the city of Israel that the Syrians had captured quite some time beforehand.

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Ahab had already made an alliance between himself and Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, for three years. Ahab now wanted to get back the city of Ramoth Gilead, which had been captured by Ben-Hadad's father. Although it had been promised to be returned, it hadn't been.

Jehoshaphat was requested by Ahab to go into battle in his royal robes, while he himself hid in a soldier's uniform to not draw attention to himself. Jehoshaphat couldn't have failed to see that Ahab had no real friendship with him and was indifferent to the preservation of Jehoshaphat's life. But all Ahab's precautions to save himself were to no avail. While in battle, he was badly wounded and died at sunset, while Jehoshaphat, despite his greater exposure to danger, survived unharmed. When Jehoshaphat returned home to Jerusalem, a prophet called Jehu, the son of Hanani, rebuked Jehoshaphat for helping those who hated the Lord and did what was evil.

King Ahab of Israel was succeeded by his son, Ahaziah, an ungodly king who ruled for only two years. Jehoshaphat decided to build a fleet of ships for the purpose of bringing gold back from overseas, just as King Solomon had done. However, because Jehoshaphat had made a new alliance with Ahaziah of Israel, the Lord was displeased with him and caused all the ships to be destroyed. Even Jehoshaphat's refusal to let Ahaziah's men sail on his ships wasn't enough to save his fleet.

What can we learn from the lives and actions of these kings of Judah and Israel? We can't cease to be amazed at how very merciful God was to Ahab. Although a good army leader, Ahab was dominated by his wicked wife Jezebel for all his reign. Although Ahab had seen on Mount Carmel the convincing display of God's power in burning up the drenched offering set up by Elijah, Ahab slipped back into worshipping idols and doing so more wickedly in the sight of the Lord.

We can rely totally on God's prophecies and predictions. The predictions for Ahab by both the prophets of Micaiah and Elijah came to pass. Jezebel lived on for nearly another 10 years before Elijah's prediction of her death came true. With short-term predictions from the Lord like this always coming true, why do people have trouble believing that those predictions from God's prophets made over 2,500 years ago will also come to pass? God has always known the end of the world from the beginning of time and that's why He gave us these prophecies for us to put our confidence in Him.

In this Chapter 22 of 1st Kings, there's a warning for us not to make alliances with people who don't worship the One True God. Jehoshaphat made this mistake a number of times in his rule of Judah. In 2nd Corinthians, Chapter 6, it says: "Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? Can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil?"

Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, became king after his death. Under the influence of his evil Baal-worshipping wife, Athaliah, Jehoram killed his brothers and some of his other officials. He followed the ways of the kings of Israel and built heathen places of worship, leading the people of Judah astray from the Lord their God. Elijah sent Jehoram a letter, which is recorded in 2nd Chronicles, Chapter 21. It spoke of God's judgment against King Jehoram, who only reigned for 8 years. Enemies from around Judah came and took away from Jehoram's palace all his possessions, his sons and his wives. Only his youngest son was left to remain with him. We have to ask ourselves: would things have turned out differently for Jehoram if he'd married some godly woman of Judah instead of the wicked Princess Athaliah of Israel? How much responsibility should Jehoshaphat bear for the failure of Jehoram to follow in his footsteps?

We can ask further: how much do we control our own destiny? When must we take responsibility for our own shortcomings and failures and stop blaming our mistakes on our parents? The choices we make in life start us out on a road that takes us away from where the Lord would have us walk. Children are to be cared for, supported, trained and brought up in the ways of the Lord. For parents, teaching their children God's instructions and loving nature is a daily task. Seeking the Lord's face is a lifestyle of learning how to love and pray for one another in spite of the troubles and difficulties that come along.

Another great lesson that comes out of this passage is that death comes quickly and unexpectedly to some people. While Jehoshaphat lived to the age of 60, his son Jehoram only lived to 40, while his grandson Ahaziah of Judah lived to only 23. Death came into the world as the result of Adam's and Eve's sin of disobedience in the Garden of Eden and was a merciful judgment of God. Many people fear death and think of it as evil, but just consider the alternative: living forever with all the sins we've ever committed held against us and without any remedy from God to ever fix the situation.

God, in His mercy, provided a way of escape for all those who are born into sin on earth and want to be saved from their sinful natures and the consequences of being sinners. The Bible says it's not right to think that everyone goes to heaven in the next life. At some funeral services, the mourners are told that the dead person, who never had anything to do with Christ while living on earth, is now in heaven. This simply isn't true, for the Bible is clear that the wages of any sin is death and eternal destruction in the next life.

So how can anyone plan ahead to be with God in heaven after death here on earth? Again, Jesus' message was that it is only those who have admitted their sin, believed in God's provision of salvation through Himself, God's sinless son, and declared to the world that they belong to Him. This isn't just a one-time declaration but a way of life lived by doing everything, both in public and alone, to the glory of God and through the power of the Holy Spirit living in them. Anything done by human effort to win God's approval and get to heaven is unacceptable to God, and will never count towards a ticket into heaven.

Just who is Jesus Christ, that He should hold the key to heaven? In John's Gospel, Chapter 1, it says: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Christ is the Creator, not a created person. And in Chapter 14 it says: "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one can come to the Father, except through me.'" Don't be deceived by any other teaching about getting to heaven, for it will be only lies. Jesus is God and eternal life only comes through faith in Him and by the new life that the Holy Spirit implants into a forgiven person's soul.

What do the Scriptures say? The Apostle Paul says in Philippians, Chapter 1: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." In Psalm 116, the Bible says: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." And in 1st John, Chapter 5, Verse 12, it says: "Whoever has the Son (that's Jesus) has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life."

Have you ever made a commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ? If not, call on Him today. No one, not even the kings of Judah, could count on having tomorrow to do anything in saving themselves!

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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