

Kings and Prophets 13-07-12a

This is Friday, the 12th of July, 2013. We continue our study in Kings and Prophets. We'll take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we'll pick up where we left off last time and try to catch back up with Jehoshaphat and Ahab and see what's going on there.

Let's take just a moment to go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we are so grateful for your provision, the blessings that you bestow on us, the challenges that you send our way to help us to grow, to give us occasions for practicing the things that we learn and strengthening our faith, preparing us for service both now and in the kingdoms to come. We thank you for this section of your Word and the portion that we look at this evening, and we ask your blessing on us as we study it together.

May each one find in these portions of your Word encouragement, fruitful truth to think about and realize an application. We pray that we'll gain a better understanding of your plan and program both in the past, in the present, and in the future. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. We had been following the career of the southern kings in Judah, and had come all the way to Jehoshaphat, and we saw him go north to join with Ahab in an attack on Ramoth-Gilead. And having reached that point and seen the prophecy of Micaiah, we backed up a little bit to catch up the history of the northern kings leading up to Ahab being on the throne, because while there has been great stability in the south, there has been quite a bit going on up in the north, and we want to finish up that review because the context of this battle is quite helpful in understanding the outcome.

So we had gone back to 1 Kings and looked at chapter 15 and chapter 16, where after already covering the reign of Baasha and the sinfulness of his reign in the third year of King Asa, he became king over Israel in Tirza. He reigned 24 years. He did evil in the sight of the Lord.

And then the word of the Lord came to Jehu, the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying, Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust, made you rule over my people, you have walked in the ways of Jeroboam and made my people Israel to sin. We talked about that, making them to sin. Judgment is pronounced against him.

And the word of the Lord also came by the prophet Jehu against his house because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord and provoking him to anger with the work of his hands in being like the house of Jeroboam. So in the 26th year of Asa, Elah, his son, becomes king, Baasha's son. He's there two years.

But then Zimri, in sort of a drunken debauch, decides he's going to take over. So he assassinates Elah and declares himself to be king. And this doesn't sit well with the rest of the people, so Zimri comes to the throne.

And Zimri had conspired and killed the king, so Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. He's the popular choice. Zimri had taken the throne in sort of a coup, but he doesn't have the backing of the people.

Omri does, and so they more or less declare Omri to be king. Now this is important because Omri is Ahab's father. This is how Ahab comes to the throne.

It's Omri. Now Omri only reigns 12 years, and he gets pretty short shrift in kings. You look here.

Zimri only reigns a week before the people boot him out and bring in Omri. Omri and all Israel with him went up in verse 17 of chapter 16, from Gibethon, they besieged Tirza, and when Zimri saw the city was taken, he immolates himself in the palace. Well, one of the things that Omri notices is how easy it was to attack and take Tirza, and he says, you know, this is not a very good capital city.

It's not defensible. Look how easy it was for me to march over here and trap Zimri in it. Zimri saw it was hopeless, killed himself, burnt the palace down.

There's no palace here anyway. So he decides he's not going to keep that as the capital city. He's a smart guy.

He's a general. People have recognized him for his wisdom and his capabilities, and so he makes Samaria his capital, and you skip down to after the time of Tibni, the son of Ganath. Apparently, his half of the people trying to rise up and take the throne from Omri, they don't succeed, and Tibni dies, and Omri reigns starting in the 31st year of Asa.

He's going to reign 12 years. Six years he reigned in Tirza, but he decided that that wasn't a good spot, so he moves the capital halfway through to Samaria. He had to live in Tirza long enough to build up Samaria and make that a fit capital, and, of course, the capital of the northern kingdom is going to be in Samaria from then on.

But he bought it. He called it after the guy that he bought it from, Shamer or Samaria. But he is worse than all who were before him in terms of evil.

He walked in all the ways of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the sin by which he had made Israel to sin, provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with idols. Then it just concludes, the rest of the acts of Omri which he did and the might which he showed, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? Omri rested with his fathers. That's all the Bible says.

But quite a lot happens during this 12-year reign of Omri. And I want to give you just a little bit of the rest of the information that we have about him. Once he comes to the throne, it is during his reign that the Syrians attack and take a lot of land and towns on the eastern edge of Israel, the border between Syria and Israel.

Ben-Hadad comes down and attacks and he takes a lot of this. Now Omri is a capable general.

You assume one of the reasons they made him king up there is that they thought, well, this guy has got the military sense to help us with our enemies.

He is the man for the hour. Well, he fails. And the reason we know this is when Ben-Hadad comes down and attacks, he succeeds and that's why Ramoth-Gilead needs attacking.

You know, we got all the way up to where Jehoshaphat and Ahab want to go ally themselves and take that city. Well, what we're going to do is look at the king side. Our study is kings and prophets.

And we've got Elijah the prophet showing up at the point that Omri and Ahab come to the throne. We know quite a lot about Elijah. Most of us have learned those stories and we know about Mount Carmel.

We know about the widow and so on. We're going to, for the moment, bypass Elijah and just look at the king part of this account. So if you're in 1 Kings 16, you see that Omri rested with his fathers and is buried in Samaria.

Then Ahab his son reigned in his place. Well, what they don't tell you is that Ben-Hadad the Syrian took a lot of territory during that time. So in the 38th year of Asa, king of Judah, Ahab, I'm in verse 29.

38th year of Asa, king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri becomes king over Israel. Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria 22 years. Now you add the 12 years of Omri and the 22 years of Ahab and you get 34 years.

And the king after Ahab is going to reign for like another 16 years. So you've got about a 50 year dynasty here of the Omride kings. Omri, Ahab and the son after him.

And so this is the middle part here with Ahab. It came to pass as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians. Now where do the Sidonians live? They live in Sidon.

Where is Sidon? Well now it's in Lebanon. It's up there on the coast. You've got Tyre and Sidon.

Remember that's a pagan area up there. And so he's trying to politically secure his border up to the north. He doesn't want the Sidonians coming down and attacking him.

So of course instead of relying on the Lord, instead of building up his army, instead of fortifying or sending prophets around to teach, what does he do? He goes up there and literally gets in bed with the Sidonians. And so he marries Jezebel the daughter of the Sidonian king. And he went and served Baal and worshipped him.

You know how it is sometimes people say, well you can't marry my daughter unless you convert. She's Jewish, you've got to become Jewish. She's Catholic, you've got to be Catholic.

And we're going to have a mass. And he says, apparently Ethbaal says, well you can't marry my daughter unless you convert to be a Baal worshipper. And Ahab says, oh fine, one more God to worship.

We've got plenty of idols. Happy to, no problem. It's worth it to him for the alliance.

So he becomes a Baal worshipper. And he set up an altar for Baal in a temple of Baal which he built in Samaria. So right there in the capital city of northern Israel is a big Baal temple with a big image of Baal right in the middle of it.

And Ahab made a wooden image. And this was quite common where you wouldn't make a solid stone thing or a solid gold or silver image. You'd make it out of wood and then overlay it so that it looks very expensive.

And from this you get the idea Ahab wasn't really so much a genuine believer in Baal. This is a political religion. And to me, when it says he made a wooden image, it's just like he sort of cheaped out.

He said, yeah, I built the temple and I put in the Baal, but it's a wooden Baal. He didn't really go first class on the Baal image. But Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

You notice this pattern. Each king is a step down the ladder. Each one is worse than all who were before him.

And you think, well, how can you top the ones who were before him? Well, they do. They manage it. And then we have this real interesting note in verse 34.

In his days, Helel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundations with Abiram, his firstborn, and with his youngest son, Segub. He set up its gates according to the word of the Lord, which he had spoken through Joshua, the son of Nun.

When we did our Joshua study and we saw the curse on Jericho, that it should never be rebuilt, well, you see the return of attitudes that disregard the known word of the Lord. This was proverbial knowledge throughout Israel. Everybody around Jericho knew that the reason it was a ruin is that it had been destroyed in the days of Joshua hundreds of years earlier.

Hundreds of years earlier. Joshua comes to the land and destroys it just short of 1400 B.C. And this is 600 years later? What's 600 years ago from now? Columbus and earlier. You know, 600 years ago, Columbus hadn't arrived yet.

The continent had not been discovered by Europeans. I'm learning in my book how populated it was by other people. But this whole new world wasn't a new world.

It was unknown to Europeans 600 years ago. Well, 600 years ago is how long Jericho had laid in ruins. You know, is there anybody that doesn't know that in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean

blue and took Isabella's gold and all of his bread turned to mold.

The whole story about when his men were about to assassinate him before he finally found what he thought was India. And he lands on Hispaniola and immediately disease wipes out all the inhabitants. At any rate, this was well known.

But Heal disregards it. Now, why am I belaboring this? Because in our time, in the current day, things that have been known and taken for granted in our culture, what is wise social policy, what is wise in terms of what society will tolerate, behaviors that have been proscribed and unacceptable for centuries, are now being given a new life and a new twist. And the biblical view is pushed aside.

It is thought to be archaic, mythical, benighted, uneducated, bigoted, impractical. And all of these same things began to be said about the Bible, the Word of God, as it existed in this day. And so Heal says, Oh, rubbish, these old wives' tales.

I don't even know if there was a Joshua. I mean, it was centuries ago. Look at the location.

Why do you think they built Jericho there in the first place? It was a prime location. And he says, There ought to be a city here. And so he goes in against the known Word of God and builds it anyway.

And according to the curse, he loses two of his sons in the building of it. The reason that note is put here is the decline, as wicked as the previous kings were, the decline crosses a certain threshold in the days of Ahab. It sinks to a level it had never sunk to before.

You get the idea that there was something recoverable. It could turn. It could change up to this point.

But this is sort of a Rubicon moment. This is a no-turning-back moment. And it's noted with this little vignette.

It's just a sample. It's a telltale of the lack of regard that the people in the northern kingdom had for the Word of God. So then we begin with the story of Elijah in chapter 17, which we are going to skip.

Why is there a drought in the land? Because God has withdrawn His blessing. Elijah and the widow. Elijah revised the widow's son.

In chapter 18, Elijah is going to give a message to Ahab and tell him that rain is going to return. You move through chapter 18 to Mount Carmel and the end of the drought. Chapter 19, you have the whole thing with Obadiah and preserving the prophets and the word that comes and how viciously Jezebel was trying to find and eliminate all the prophets of God.

In chapter 19, Elijah is fleeing from Jezebel. God speaks to him. Elisha shows up.

But we want to get to chapter 20. We're trying to follow the political, monarchical career of Ahab, the son of Omri. This land had been lost to the Syrians in the days of Omri.

Josephus records this for us. Well, Ahab has a conflict with Ben-Hadad. Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, gathered all his forces together.

Thirty-two kings were with him. Now you think, thirty-two kings. Where are there thirty-two kingdoms that these guys could come from? Remember in these days, many of these kings were city-state kings.

They were what in feudal times or medieval times in England you would call barons or lords of a castle that had a community surrounding them of serfs and vassals and tenant farmers and so on, and these guys are called kings. Well, there's a group of these small, these guys would be county, they would have a territory the size of a county maybe. And so thirty-two of these kings with horses and chariots come with Ben-Hadad and come up and besiege Samaria.

Why can they besiege Samaria? How can they get that far in? You've looked at a map and you can see Samaria right in the east central part of northern Israel. How can they get that far? Because years ago, before Ahab became king, Ben-Hadad had already compromised the border. He's already taken Gilead, the far side of the Jordan, and he's crossed the Jordan and now he's in northern Israel.

And he's laying siege. To lay siege to a place, you can't have to be worried about your flanks or people coming up behind you. He's already conquered everything between Syria and Samaria and he's at the gates of Samaria besieging it.

So this confirms what Josephus tells us, that that land had been lost years earlier. So he's besieging it. He sent messengers into the city to Ahab, king of Israel, and said to him, Thus says Ben-Hadad, Your silver and your gold are mine.

Your loveliest wives and children are mine. Does this sound like familiar language? Remember we've heard this once before. The king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all I have are yours.

So the messengers came back and said, Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, Indeed, I have sent to you, saying, You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children, but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants, and it shall be that whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put in their hands to take it. So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land and said, Notice, please, this is Ahab, this man seeks trouble. Hmm, you think? He sent to me from my wives, my children, my silver, my gold, and I did not deny him.

All the elders of the people said to him, Do not listen or consent. So he sent to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, Tell my lord, the king, all that you sent for your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do. So the messengers departed, brought back word to him.

Ben-Hadad sent to him and said, The gods do so to me and more also, if enough dust is left of Samaria for a handful for each of the people who follow me. So the king of Israel answered and said, Let not the one who puts on his armor boast like one who takes it off. You know, don't boast when you haven't done the battle yet like a guy that's already won.

And this is sort of a, you know, General McAuliffe, you know, nuts reply. So it happened when Ben-Hadad heard the message, he and the kings were drinking at the command post, and he said to his servants, Get ready. So they got ready to attack the city.

Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab, king of Israel saying, Thus says the Lord, Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the Lord. Now just footnote this information with your recollection of the days of Elijah. Ahab has already seen proof twice that the Lord is God in Israel.

Once when Elijah said the drought is going to end. Once when God took the top off Mount Carmel. Ahab should already know this.

This is the third demonstration, unasked for, uncalled for, gratis, free, no charge from God in heaven. God sends a prophet to this king more wicked than all who preceded him, who has married Jezebel, and says, I am going to send you a deliverance so that you will know that I am the Lord. You can't get any more gracious than this.

Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the Lord. So Ahab said, By whom? Thus says the Lord, By the young leaders of the provinces. Now remember, Ben-Hadad has come with the young leaders of his provinces.

These 32 kings, that's his provincial leaders. And God says, your provincial leaders are going to rise up and overcome Ben-Hadad's provincial leaders. So he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were 232.

And after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israel, 7,000. So they went out at noon. Meanwhile, Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings helping him were getting drunk at the command post.

The young leaders of the provinces went out first. Ben-Hadad sent out a patrol, and they told him, saying, Men are coming out of Samaria. So he said, If they've come out for peace, take them alive.

And if they've come out for war, take them alive. To him, it's not a threat. Just capture them and bring them here.

I don't care if they're trying to fight or if they're suing for peace. Just capture them and bring them here. So the young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them, and each one killed his man.

So the Syrians fled. Israel pursued them, and Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, escaped on a horse with the cavalry. Then the king of Israel went out and attacked the horses and chariots and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.

And the prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, Go, strengthen yourself, take note, and see what you should do. For in the spring of the year, the king of Syria will come up against you. Who's the king of Syria? Ben-Hadad.

He says, Look, I've given you this victory, but don't sit on your laurels. Don't relax and get complacent because he's going to return. You need to see what you should do.

Go look and see what you need to do. So the servants of the king of Syria said to him, Well, their gods are the gods of the hills. That's why they were stronger than us.

But if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they. So do this thing. Dismiss the kings, each from his position, and put captains in their places.

And you shall muster an army like the army that you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will fight against them in the plains. Surely we will be stronger than they.

So what's he saying? These kings that had these sort of little hilltop city-states, well, they're hilltop guys. We're going to defeat them in the plains. So he listened to their voice and did so.

So it was, in the spring of the year, Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. The children of Israel were mustered and given provisions, and they went against them. The children of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the countryside.

Now this is intimidating. One of the things about fighting in the plains is you can see everybody. And so you look out there and the armies of the Syrians are ranged.

He's replaced his entire vast army, and Ahab has got two little flocks of goats by comparison. So they look like they're going to be wiped out. Then a man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel and said, and we know this man of God is not Micaiah, because Micaiah has never spoken a good word to the king, and this is a good word.

Thus says the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is the God of the hills, but He is not the God of the valleys, therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord. This is a fourth demonstration, a fourth provision from God. Count them, drought ended, top off of Mount Carmel, the initial victory against Ben-Hadad, and now he's being promised another victory.

This wicked evil king that's never sought God built the temple of Baal, made the wooden altar image of Baal. This is the fourth time. Why does this stuff come to Ahab? What is Ahab the king of? All of the northern kingdom.

When you approach Ahab, he is the federal head, he's the monarch, he's the representative of all of those people. Approaching him is approaching the people. Impressing him is impressing the people.

Demonstrating to him who God is does it for the people. You could do it for some guy, you know, you could raise the widow's son, and that's great for the widow, but that doesn't impress the nation. Every one of these things is kingdom wide.

The famine and the drought is kingdom wide. Sending the rain and replenishing at the word of the man of God is kingdom wide. Everybody sees it, everybody knows it.

The dealing with the prophets of Baal up on Mount Carmel, everybody hears about that. The deliverance from Ben-Hadad the previous year, everybody knows about that. This big battle, everybody knows about it.

It is a witness not strictly to Ahab, but through Ahab to the people. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He has sent one witness, two witnesses, three witnesses, four witnesses, two prophets of God, Elijah followed by Elisha.

Elisha is Elijah squared, double portion of the spirit of God. Why? Why all of this activity in the northern kingdom? God is pleading with his people to return, a point of application for us. God is always ready for us to return.

You look at the denigration and dismissing of God's word with Hea, rebuilding Jericho, with these grotesque false worship practices going on, and each king getting worse and worse. But look at the patience and the long suffering and the compassion of God. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come.

And when He makes these approaches and people don't respond, whose fault is it? Did God sovereignly decide that the northern kingdom was just not to be preserved and not to be protected and not to be provided for? If there is a great distance between the people of Ephraim and God, whose fault is it? It is not God. God has bent down from heaven and done everything possible to woo these people back to Himself, to demonstrate who He is with no redeeming qualities on their part. There may still be a few scattered faithful people up there.

Remember Elijah? There are 7,000 that haven't bowed the knee. Now, who is this army? How large is this army that comes down to fight with Ahab? 7,000. The little flocks of goats.

To whom is God going to give the victory on this day? The 7,000. Who is it that is small compared to the population of northern kingdom, and yet they're going to be delivered on that basis? It's the 7,000. So the man of God comes and speaks and says, Because the Syrians have said, God is the God of the hills, not the God of the valleys, I will deliver this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord.

So they encamped opposite each other. How long? Seven days. What does that hark back to?

What city just got rebuilt? Jericho.

Is God tweaking them a little bit? 7,000. Seven days. Who instituted the seventh day Sabbath in Israel? How many different ways is God tweaking them and encouraging their interest and trying to motivate them to return to Him? Seven days.

So it was, on the seventh day the battle was joined, and the children of Israel killed one hundred elephs of foot soldiers of the Syrians in a single day, and the rest fled to Aphek into the city, and a wall fell on twenty-seven elephs of the men who were left. Bad place to hide. Twenty-seven platoons trying to shelter under this wall.

This is another way that we know that Eleph doesn't mean a literal one thousand guys. There's no... Aphek wasn't a big enough town to have a wall big enough for twenty-seven thousand people to hide behind and for the wall to fall on. The wall would have had to come up, crush a bunch, go up, okay, drag them away.

Now you stand under there, fall on them. These are military units, these elephs. And Ben-Hadad fled and went into the city, into an inner chamber.

Into an inner chamber. He's trying to hide as well. And for some reason the inner chamber does not collapse on him.

Why? Because he's going to be a decision point. So his servants say to Ben-Hadad, Look, we've heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. Let's put sackcloth around our waist, ropes around our heads.

That had to be a sight. I think of them in, you know, burlap bags and they've got these ropes tying around their heads and they come out. They're just extremely strange looking messengers, emissaries.

Perhaps he will spare your life. So they wore sackcloth around their waist, they put ropes around their heads, came to the king of Israel and said, Your servant Ben-Hadad says, Please let me live. And Ahab says, Is he still alive? He is my brother.

He's my fellow king. Well, they said, Your servant Ben-Hadad. He says, Oh, he's not my servant.

He's my brother. And so the men who were watching closely to see whether any sign of mercy would come from him immediately adopt this language. From then on they say, Yes, your brother Ben-Hadad has survived.

They don't say servant anymore. So he says, Go bring him. So Ben-Hadad came out to him.

He had him come up in the chariot. Ben-Hadad says to him, The cities which my father took from your father I will restore. This is back in the days of Omri.

This is the loss of cities like Ramoth-Gilead on the other side of the Jordan, which also, by the

way, was one of the cities of refuge. So he says, My father took them from your father. I'll give them back.

And you can set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus as my father did in Samaria. So we're going to reverse it. You spared my life.

You're going to be what my father used to be in terms of having power over us the way we've had power over you. Ahab says, I will send you away with this treaty. And he made a treaty with him and sent him away.

So a certain man of God, and we reviewed this story not long ago when we were talking about the way God dealt with the prophets, said to his neighbor, Strike me, please. The man refused. He said, Because you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, as soon as you depart from me, a lion will kill you.

And as soon as he left, the lion found him and killed him. Because he didn't heed the word of the Lord through the prophet who said, Smack me. You will never hear me make this request.

Those days are gone, thankfully. No worry about one of the cougars down there by the creek coming up and killing you. So he found another man and said, Strike me, please.

So the man smacked him, inflicting a wound. So the prophet departed, waited for the king, this is Ahab, by the road, disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes. So as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, Your servant went into the midst of the battle, and a man came over and brought a man to me and said, Guard this man.

If by any means he's missing, it's your life or his life, or else you'll pay a talent of silver. While your servant was busy here and there, I lost this prisoner of war. I was supposed to guard him.

I got busy, got distracted, and I lost him. So now I'm in fear for my life. I made this bargain.

The king said, Well, tough. That's your judgment. You yourself have decided it.

So the man of God takes the bandage away from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognizes him as one of the prophets. This is an interesting situation, that Ahab can recognize this guy once he takes off his mask. How? Did these sons of the prophets have tattoos, or did he know them by face? Did Ahab, the most wicked king in northern Israel, know the prophets of God by sight, the faithful ones? Do they have wanted posters? Jezebel has been methodically hunting these guys down and killing them, and so they've been very scarce.

My question is, how does Ahab recognize this guy by sight when Obadiah has been hiding these guys? Jezebel would kill anybody that even knew where one was and wouldn't tell her. But Ahab recognizes this guy instantly. There's been some speculation that maybe they had a mark or some sort of man of God tattoo.

At any rate, he recognizes him instantly, and he says to Ahab, Thus says the Lord, Because you

let him slip out of your hand, this man whom I appointed to utter destruction, your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people. So the king of Israel went to his house, sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria. Then you have the story of Naboth's vineyard, and so on.

But that's the background. Now we're caught up. Now we are back to Jehoshaphat coming up, because what happened? God gave Ahab two victories in a row over the Syrians who had taken these border cities, including Ramoth-Gilead.

Ben-Hadad promised to give these cities back, and he didn't do it. And so, three years passed. Look at chapter 22, verse 1. Three years passed without war between Syria and Israel.

It came to pass in the third year, Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went down to visit the king of Israel. The king of Israel said to his servants, Do you know that Ramoth-Gilead is ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria? So he said to Jehoshaphat, Will you help me go claim this city that Ben-Hadad promised to give back when we whipped him twice? That's why they end up in this situation, going to battle. So we're fully caught up.

We will go back and catch up Elijah and Elisha after we finish this little vignette between the kings. But we want to finish our king's story before we do our prophet's. So let's pause here and take our break.

We'll come back, and as promised a week before last, we're going to pick up with the word of the Lord through Micaiah and see what happens.