

Sermon: Only What God Says

Text: 2 Chronicles 18

Introduction:

We talk a lot here at King Street about the Upper Story and the Lower Story. The Upper Story is the God's divine plan that is being accomplished far above the things that we can see as we live out our lives in space and time. The Lower Story is life as we experience it in real time. We live lower story lives. We have no idea what is going to happen tomorrow, because we can't see into the future...and we are subject to the laws and cause/effect principles that God put into place on earth.

There are times, as we read Scripture, that God gives us a glimpse into the Upper Story as we read the accounts of people living in the Lower Story (things that the people involved in the story couldn't see). A great example of this is in the book of Job. Job experienced incredible tragedy in his Lower Story life. Things happened that caused him enormous grief and sorrow. However—as we read the story of Job's life, we are told things in chapter 1 that Job didn't have the privilege of knowing. We get to see the Upper Story. Unbeknownst to Job, God was terrifically pleased by Job...so much so that he "bragged" about him to Satan. One thing led to another, and God allowed Satan to "test" Job—knowing that Job would ultimately prove to be a man of great faith. I suspect that Job would have had a completely different view of things if he knew in real time the things that we as readers get to see.

Another example of this takes place in our text today—2 Chronicles chapter 18. We've spent several weeks looking at King Jehoshaphat. We've seen that he was a very good king, and that he loved God with all his heart. Last Sunday we saw how he went on a campaign against the Asherah poles that people would worship as idols, and he sent a team of 16 men to go into all of the villages in Judah to teach the Word of God. All of this resulted in the Lord's great blessing on Jehoshaphat and the entire country.

HOWEVER (Ugh...I hate to write that). The many blessings in Jehoshaphat's life seem to have caused him to let his guard down. In his foolishness, he made a very foolish decision. He allowed his son, Jehoram, to be given in marriage to a young woman named Athaliah. The problem was that Athaliah was the daughter of King Ahab of Israel, and his wicked wife Jezebel. These were NOT good people. In fact, they were downright wicked. And by marrying off his son to their daughter meant that he entered into an alliance with them.

As the curtain goes up on chapter 18, Jehoshaphat is visiting Ahab in Samaria (the capital city of Israel), where Ahab is trying to convince him to join forces against the people of Ramoth Gilead (modern-day Jordan). Jehoshaphat agrees, but counsels Ahab to first ask the advice of a Godly prophet (in order hear the Voice of God!). What happens next is one of the craziest stories in the entire Bible...

Examination:

- **Read 2 Chronicles 18**

- What terrible thing did Jehoshaphat do in verse 1? Do you think his great wealth and honor had any impact on his decision-making?
- Read the story of Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18-19...and discuss what you learn and Ahab and his evil wife.
- What did Jehoshaphat do, that was even worse than joining affinity with Ahab?
- What did Ahab do in Jehoshaphat's honor?
- What did Ahab ask Jehoshaphat to do?
- How did Jehoshaphat answer him?
- Who did Jehoshaphat want to consult before going to battle?
- How many prophets came to speak?
- Who were these prophets?
- What would these prophets say?
- Was Jehoshaphat satisfied with the 400 prophets?
- Why had Ahab not called Micaiah already?
- Where did Ahab receive the prophets?
- Who seemed to be the leader of the 400 prophets?
- What had he made of iron?
- What message did the prophets give Ahab?
- What did the messenger, that went for Micaiah, try to get him to say?
- In verse 16, Micaiah saw what?
- What did that mean?
- How do verses 18-23 give us a glimpse into the Upper Story?
- What did Ahab do to Micaiah?
- What are the "host of heaven" spoken of here? Who are they?
- Whose mouth will the lie come from?
- What was meant by slapping Micaiah?
- What will determine which prophecy is true?
- What happens to Ahab?

- **Read 2 Chronicles 19:1-3**

- What does this tell us about God's view on the decisions that Jehoshaphat was making?

Application:

Do you think that God still allows false prophets to tell lies to people? What are those lies? Why do you think that God allows this to happen? What are some lies that you might be tempted to listen to? What are you doing to keep this from happening?