

Contrasting Attitudes Toward Truth

Introduction:

1. Refer to lesson on “Why study the Old Testament?”
 - a. We do not now live under the Old Testament! Heb. 7:12; Heb. 8:6; Heb. 1:1; Heb. 9:15-17.
2. So why study the Old Testament?
 - a. In part, because it is written for our learning, Rom. 15:4.
 - b. We cited a number of reasons, including the following:
 - (1) It informs us of the origin of the universe and of man.
 - (2) It informs us of the nature and attributes of God.
 - (3) It strengthens our faith in the Bible as the word of God.
 - (4) It strengthens our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
 - (5) It illustrates what it means to walk by faith.
 - (6) It illustrates the importance of walking by faith.
 - (7) It helps us understand the New Testament.
3. The Old Testament cites many, many examples of the contrasting attitudes toward truth and people’s response to truth, which can be of great benefit to people today – especially with reference to causing them to examine their own attitude toward and response to truth.
4. Title: “Contrasting Attitudes Toward Truth.”
5. Text: I Kings 22. Parallel chapter, 2 Chronicles 18.

Discussion:

I. Background Information.

- A. Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, I Kings 22:2, 874-850 B.C.
 1. Fourth King of Judah, after the division of the Kingdom.
 2. Son of Asa, I Kings 15:24.
 3. Overall, one of the best kings of Judah, 2 Chron. 17:3-5.
- B. Ahab was king of Israel, I Kings 22:2, 875-854 B.C.
 1. Seventh King of Israel, after the division of the Kingdom.
 2. Son of Omri, I Kings 16:28.
 3. One of the worst kings of Israel, I Kings 16:30-33.
- C. Jehoshaphat paid a visit to Ahab, I Kings 22:2.
 1. On the surface, in view of their contrasting character qualities, it seems strange that Jehoshaphat would be visiting Ahab. Cf. I Cor. 15:33
 2. But there were family ties between Jehoshaphat and Ahab.
 - a. Jehoshaphat’s son, Jehoram, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and granddaughter of Omri, 2 Chronicles 21:5-6. cf. 2 Chronicles 22:2.
 - b. Probably a marriage of political expediency, but she became an instrument of almost indescribable evil.

II. The Story as it unfolds, I Kings 22.

- A. Jehoshaphat visited Ahab, I Kings 22:1-2.
- B. Ahab’s proposal regarding Ramoth Gilead, I Kings 22:3.
 1. Ramoth was in Gilead, had been occupied by the tribe of Gad, on the other side of the Jordan, one of the cities of Refuge.
 - a. One of the cities Benhadad, king of Syria, was obligated to restore to Israel, I Kings 20:34.
- C. Jehoshaphat’s Response to Ahab’s proposal.
 1. His immediate response, I Kings 22:4.
 2. Then, perhaps after a pause, he requested that they “*Enquire...at the word of the Lord,*” I Kings 22:5.
- D. Relate the story as recorded in I Kings 22:6-18.
 1. Ahab approached the 400 “*prophets,*” and their reply, vs. 6.
 - a. They were “*his*” prophets, I Kings 22:22,23, ready to do his bidding.
 2. Jehoshaphat’s second request, and Ahab’s response, I Kings 22:7-8.
 3. The demonstration led by Zedekiah and the other “*prophets,*” I Kings 22:10-12.
 4. Micaiah’s words to Ahab, and Ahab’s response, I Kings 22:13-18.
 5. Micaiah was returned to prison for telling the truth, I Kings 22:26-28.

- E. They, Ahab and Jehoshaphat, go to war against Ramoth Gilead, I Kings 22:29-40.
 - 1. Ahab “*disguised*” himself, I Kings 22:30.
 - a. Note the instructions of the king of Syria, I Kings 22:31.
 - 2. An arrow was shot at random and hit Ahab, I Kings 22:34-36.
 - 3. Ahab died that evening, I Kings 22:37.
 - 4. His blood ran onto the floor of the chariot; the chariot was washed, and dogs came and licked up his blood, I Kings 22:37-38.
 - a. In fulfillment of prophecy, I Kings 22:38; I Kings 21:19.

III. The Different Attitudes toward truth as Represented by the characters in the story.

- A. Ahab hated the truth! Evidenced by these facts:
 - 1. He decided what he wanted to do before consulting the will of God, I Kings 22:3.
 - 2. He then consulted men whom he knew would approve of his scheme, I Kings 22:6.
 - 3. He did not want to consult the one who would tell him the truth, I Kings 22:8.
 - 4. He disregarded the warning Micaiah gave him, I Kings 22:17-18.
 - 5. He had the true prophet put in prison, I Kings 22:26-27.
- B. The 400 prophets perverted the truth.
 - 1. They were willing to tell the king what he wanted to hear, I Kings 22:6,11-12.
 - 2. They preferred the approval of the king over the truth; they did not want to “rock the boat.”
- C. Jehoshaphat wanted the truth on his side.
 - 1. He requested that we “*inquire at the word of the Lord,*” I Kings 22:5.
 - 2. But he had already agreed to Ahab’s proposal.
 - 3. After hearing the truth by Micaiah, Jehoshaphat still joined forces with Ahab in this ill-fated venture!
 - 4. He would have been very happy if truth confirmed his practice, but he did not change his practice to conform to the truth. He was later rebuked by Jehu, 2 Chronicles 19:1.
- D. Micaiah wanted to be on the side of truth.
 - 1. “*What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak,*” I Kings 22:14; cf. I Peter 4:11.
 - 2. Note the contrast:
 - a. Ahab hated the truth.
 - b. The 400 prophets perverted the truth.
 - c. Jehoshaphat wanted the truth to be on his side.
 - d. Micaiah wanted to be on the side of truth, even if it resulted in imprisonment.

IV. Application: These four contrasting attitudes toward truth are evidenced today. Cf. Rom. 15:4; Eccl. 1:9.

- A. People who hate the truth!
 - 1. Who decide what they want before ever consulting the word of God.
 - a. Illus. Instrumental music in worship; human organizations to do the work of the church.
 - b. In many instances it was “we like it, we want it, we are going to have it!”
 - 2. Then consulting a preacher who will approve what they want!
- B. People who deliberately pervert the truth.
 - 1. The 400 “*prophets*” were willing to tell the king what he wanted to hear.
 - 2. Like those described in 2 Tim. 4:3-4.
 - 3. Illus. A preacher who asked “what position to you want me to take?”
- C. People who want truth on their side.
 - 1. Willing to do what the Bible says so long as sit it agrees with what they want to do.
 - 2. Illus. a young man who became angry at God when he learned his girl friend was not biblically “*free*” to marry.
- D. People who want to be on the side of truth.
 - 1. Micaiah was such a person; he spoke the truth regardless.
 - 2. He paid a price for so doing; Zedekiah struck him and mocked him, I Kings 22:24, 26-27.

Conclusion:

- 1. In which of these four categories are you? Regardless of your attitude toward truth, truth is still the truth!
 --Bobby Witherington, May 15, 2016
 --Note: Some of the ideas of this lesson came from an article written by Kevin Key, which appeared in Expository Files, Aug. 2010.