

# Wanted: A Liar

1 Kings 22:1-14

This is an exceedingly human story. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, is paying a visit to Ahab who is King of Israel. Ahab has made up his mind that this visit is a good opportunity for him to enlist the aid of the King of Judah in the capture of Ramoth - Gilead. Jehoshaphat is not averse to joining in this endeavor, but being a religious man, he desires to know the will of God in the matter before setting out.

Ahab makes no objection ... In fact, I think he has expected it and even prepared for it ahead of time. He then calls his prophets and puts to them the question of the hour: Vs. 6. The answer is prompt and unanimous. "Go up; but the Lord shall deliver it into the hands of the King."

For some reason, they were more eager to speak the popular thing than to speak the truth. Therefore, Jehoshaphat asked this very pointed question: Vs. 7.

You would think that the unbelief implied in this question would have offended Ahab... but such is not the case... Instead, he answered him with surprising frankness: Vs. 8. This answer is a clear confession on the part of Ahab of at least 3 facts:

1. First, it is a confession that he does not believe in his own profits... He would like to, but he does not.
2. Second, this answer is a confession of his faith in Micaiah... Although he hates.
3. Third, he prefers those who are false to one who is true.

In fact, his supreme requirement of the prophet is not that he speak the truth, but that he speaks what the King wants to have spoken, even though it is a lie.

- I. Vs. 8, notice, Ahab wanted a liar
  1. Now it so happens that Ahab is not the only man that likes to be lied too... That trait belongs to all of us.
  2. There is that within us to which truth appeals... If that were not true, preaching would be a hopeless task.
  3. But despite this, the lie has its appeal... From generation to generation, multitudes listen to it with eagerness and enthusiasm.
  4. One reason for the popularity of the liar is that he flatters us... He compliments us and we like to be complimented.

5. If you say you don't like it... The only difference between you and me is that I'm telling the truth about it.
6. Illustration: Julius Kubena, did not like to be complemented, so a man sold him books by telling him he admired his version to all flattery.
7. Next, the liar appeals to us by strengthening us in our decisions to do as we please.
  - a. Ahab had already made up his mind that he was going up to Ramoth - Gilead regardless of the Lord.
  - b. Still he enjoyed having somebody tell him that his decision was wise and well chosen.
  - c. It is always comforting to talk with a friend who is wise enough to tell us that we are right.
8. Not only does the liar strengthen us in our decision to do as we please, but he helps us to be comfortable while we're doing it.
  - a. You cannot be entirely comfortable while doing what you know is wrong. Isaiah 57: 21
  - b. But we like someone who can make us feel good about doing what we know is wrong.
9. Of course, the liar is a menace, he makes it easy for us to continue in sin without the thought of judgment.

II. Notice the position the prophet of God took.

1. Though Ahab preferred a prophet who was a liar to one who told the truth, he did not refuse the request of his friend, the King.
2. Verse 13 notice the words of the servant to Miciah!
3. What was he to do in this situation, what is the prophet of today to do, what is my business with you?
4. First, I'm not here to abuse you, not here to say unkind or critical things about you.
5. Neither is it my primary purpose to entertain you, however, I must be interesting if my message is to be of any real help.
  - a. If nobody is listening, I might as well be making mud pies.
  - b. If nobody is listening, I am wasting my time and yours.
6. I must hold your attention and that is not always easy. The preacher today is preaching to about the most difficult audience the world has ever known.
  - a. You have had all the thrills.
  - b. You have engaged in almost every sensational amusement.
  - c. Through the media, you have seen about all that there is to be seen.
  - d. I must speak in such a way that will bring to you the truth of the word of God.

7. Neither is it my business to compel you to accept my message. Compelling is beyond the preacher's power. Even Jesus did not compel. They were meant to accept the truth.
8. Christ simply stands at the door and knocks. If you will not open the door, he remains outside.
9. What then is the business of the preacher? This prophet of old stated it in a sentence: Vs. 14
10. The preacher is to speak the truth. That is my business. Isaiah 58: 1; 2 Timothy 4: 1-5, 1 Timothy 5: 20-21.
11. I am not here to say the popular thing. I am here as God's messenger. I am here to speak the truth as he gives it to me. Galatians 1: 10 -12, Galatians 4: 16

III. Now, notice the response of Ahab. Vs. 15-28

1. Micaiah told the King that the Lord was not with him in his undertaking. Ahab became angry at the prophet and put him in prison.
2. Now that was foolish. That did not change the truth.
  - a. He is assuming that the profit made it the truth by just speaking it.
  - b. If what Micaiah said was not true before, his saying it now would not make it so.
3. Galileo said the world moved around the sun.
  - a. His saying it did not set the earth in motion.
  - b. Neither did his later retraction cause it to stop.
4. Columbus said the world was round. That did not make it so.
5. Newton discovered the law of gravity. That law was in effect before he discovered it and stated it.
6. Galatians 6: 7 – 8, Paul was simply declaring a truth that was from the beginning.
7. This Kings course was foolish because he assumed, he could change the truth into a lie by locking up the man who said it.
8. Like supposing you can fix your car by breaking the old gauge.
9. You cannot cure burning fever by throwing the thermometer out the window. You can't lose weight by wrecking the scales.
10. Illustration Police officer stopped me for speeding. I could have broken my speedometer but that wouldn't have changed anything.
11. If the thing is true, it remains true no matter what you do.
12. Illustration Naaman comes to Elisha to be cured of leprosy.
  - a. He had already made up his mind how it should be done.
  - b. When Elisha gave a different remedy, he got mad.
  - c. His anger did not cure his leprosy.

13. And, when I preach to you from the word of God and tell you the truth, it remains truth whether you accept it or not, whether you rejoice or get mad.
  - a. God says you should be saved, baptized, be a member of the church.
  - b. God says you should be faithful, pray, read your Bible.
  - c. God says you should tithe, live separated lives, witness, win souls, believe it or not. James 4: 17
14. Not only did the King resent the profit, lock him in prison, but he went on in his pre-determined way.
15. He tried hard to believe in the lies that had been told him by his false prophets, but he could not fully believe them.
  - a. Fear dogged him; Evil foreboding began to make him wretched.
  - b. Finally, he decided that it would be wise for him to disguise himself before he entered battle.
  - c. He did, no one who saw him suspected that he was a king.
16. But even his disguise could not change the truth that Micaiah had spoken into a lie. Look at Vs. 34-38.
17. The career of this lover of lies ended in ruin just as God had said.
18. Listen my friend... You had better heed the word of God. You had better listen to "Thus sayeth the Lord". God always tells you the truth.