

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.2, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 2 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.2, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture centers on 1 Kings 21-22, specifically examining the story of Micaiah's prophecy. **It explores the alliance between King Ahab and King Jehoshaphat**, highlighting Jehoshaphat's spiritual sensitivity despite his apparent naivety. **The lecture emphasizes God's role in confirming people's choices**, even when those choices are hard-hearted or willful, using the upcoming battle at Ramoth Gilead as a case study. **Oswalt contrasts the king's desire to simply have his plans blessed by God with the need to instead seek God's will**, arguing that God's confirmation of our desires is not always beneficial.

2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.2 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).



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on16_2.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.2, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 2

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 1 Kings 21-22, Part 2, focusing on the story of Micaiah's prophecy.

Briefing Document: Oswalt on 1 Kings 22 – Micaiah's Prophecy

Source: Excerpts from "Oswalt_Kings_EN_Session16_2.pdf" (Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 16, Part 2, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 2, © 2024 John Oswalt and Ted Hildebrandt)

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Main Themes:

- **God's Sovereignty vs. Human Will:** The central theme revolves around the conflict between seeking God's true will and attempting to manipulate God to confirm pre-determined desires. Oswalt emphasizes that God is not a tool for human gratification but the ultimate authority.
- **Discernment and Spiritual Sensitivity:** The passage explores the difficulty of discerning true prophecy from false prophecy, especially when influenced by political agendas and personal desires. Oswalt suggests that spiritual sensitivity, not necessarily intellectual brilliance, is key to recognizing God's voice.
- **Consequences of Disobedience:** Ahab's decision to disregard Micaiah's prophecy highlights the consequences of prioritizing personal will over God's guidance. The story serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of self-deception and the importance of aligning oneself with God's purpose.
- **The Nature of God's Interaction with Humanity:** Oswalt grapples with the challenging concept of God "putting a lying spirit" in the prophets. He clarifies this by stating God doesn't force anyone to act against their will, but instead confirms individuals in their choices.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Context of the Story:** Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, forms an alliance with Ahab, the king of Israel (though Chronicles criticizes this alliance). Ahab desires to reclaim Ramoth Gilead, a strategically important crossroads, from the Arameans.

- "So, there's an alliance between Jehoshaphat and Ahab. And in the book of Chronicles, Jehoshaphat is condemned for making that alliance, not in kings."
- **Ahab's "Prophets":** Ahab assembles 400 prophets who all deliver favorable prophecies, urging him to attack and be victorious. Oswalt connects these prophets to the 400 prophets of Asherah mentioned earlier in Kings. He points out they are likely professionals "in the pay of the king."
- **Jehoshaphat's Discernment:** Jehoshaphat is uneasy with the unanimous positive prophecies and asks if there is another prophet of Yahweh to consult. This demonstrates a level of spiritual sensitivity, even if Jehoshaphat is depicted as not being very bright.
- "But Jehoshaphat asked, is there no longer a prophet of Yahweh here who we can inquire of? Huh, these guys are prophesying in the name of Yahweh. What's going on?"
- **Micaiah's Prophecy:** Micaiah initially echoes the favorable prophecies, possibly sarcastically, but is then compelled to deliver a true prophecy of Israel's defeat and Ahab's death.
- "I saw Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep without a shepherd. I see your army in total disarray because you're gone. They have no shepherd, and they are dead."
- **Ahab's Rejection:** Ahab rejects Micaiah's prophecy because it contradicts his desires. He imprisons Micaiah and proceeds with his plan to attack Ramoth Gilead.
- "The king says, didn't I tell you he never prophesied anything good about me, but only bad. I don't want to know what God wants. I want God to verify what I want."
- **God's Deceptive Action:** Micaiah reveals that God has put a lying spirit in the prophets. Oswalt emphasizes that God doesn't force people to do things against their will, but he may confirm them in their desires, even when those desires are misguided.
- "Micaiah doesn't say, well, they're just all lying. They all believe this. Why? Because God has put a lying spirit in them."

- **The Importance of Seeking God's Will:** Oswalt concludes by emphasizing the importance of genuinely seeking God's will, rather than attempting to manipulate God to endorse pre-determined plans.
- "Do I really want what God wants, or do I want what I want? Do you really want what God wants, or do you want what you want?"

Quotes of Significance:

- "God is not your four-leaf clover. God is not your rabbit's foot. He is God. The question is not what you want. What do I want? The question is, what does he want?"
- "To the faithful, you show yourself faithful to the blameless. You show yourself blameless to the pure. You show yourself pure, but the devious, you show yourself devious."
- "God will confirm us in our hard-hearted ways. God will confirm us in our willfulness. He will not physically stop us."
- "Do you really want God's will or do you want him to confirm your will? Oh, friends, he will, but that won't be a good day."

Implications:

The passage highlights the importance of humility and a genuine desire to seek God's will above personal desires. It serves as a warning against self-deception and the dangers of manipulating religious practices to justify personal agendas. Furthermore, it raises complex questions about the nature of God's interaction with humanity and the extent to which He allows individuals to pursue their own paths, even when those paths lead to negative consequences.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.2, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 2

1 Kings 21-22: Naboth's Vineyard and Micaiah's Prophecy - A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What does the story of Naboth's Vineyard demonstrate?
2. What is significant about Jehoshaphat being condemned for making an alliance with Ahab in the book of Chronicles but not in Kings?
3. Describe the strategic importance of Ramoth Gilead.
4. What does Jehoshaphat suggest before agreeing to attack Ramoth Gilead, and why?
5. What is interesting about the number 400 in the context of Ahab's prophets?
6. Describe the role of prophets in the ancient world.
7. Why does Micaiah initially echo the other prophets' favorable prophecy?
8. What vision does Micaiah ultimately share with Ahab?
9. How does Dr. Oswalt explain the concept of God putting a "lying spirit" in the prophets?
10. What question does Dr. Oswalt pose about seeking the will of God?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The story of Naboth's Vineyard demonstrates that God, not mere human power, ultimately owns the land and determines its use. It shows that power alone cannot override God's will and principles of justice.
2. The differing portrayals of Jehoshaphat highlight the complexities of his character and actions. While Kings portrays him as a good but perhaps naive man, Chronicles condemns his alliance with Ahab, suggesting a more critical perspective on his judgment.
3. Ramoth Gilead was a vital crossroads that controlled the trade routes coming from Damascus and the Gulf of Aqaba. Whoever controlled Ramoth Gilead could control or divert the flow of commerce along these routes.

4. Jehoshaphat suggests consulting a prophet of Yahweh, demonstrating his desire to seek God's guidance before engaging in battle. He seems to recognize the need for divine approval, contrasting with Ahab's reliance on his own judgment and court prophets.
5. The number 400 is interesting because it potentially links these prophets to the 400 prophets of Asherah mentioned earlier in the text. This connection raises questions about their religious loyalties and the true nature of their prophecies.
6. In the ancient world, prophets served as advisors to kings, interpreting omens, stars, birds, and sacrificial animal entrails to determine auspicious times for action. Their role was both religious and political, requiring skill in divination and an understanding of the king's desires.
7. Micaiah initially echoes the other prophets' favorable prophecy, likely sarcastically or to test Ahab's sincerity. This initial conformity allows him to highlight the contrast between true and false prophecy when he ultimately delivers his authentic message.
8. Micaiah shares a vision of Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep without a shepherd, indicating that Ahab will die in battle and the army will be left leaderless. This prophecy directly contradicts the other prophets' assurances of victory.
9. Dr. Oswalt explains that God does not force anyone to act against their will but instead confirms people in their choices. The "lying spirit" represents God allowing individuals to be deceived when they are determined to follow their own desires rather than His.
10. Dr. Oswalt poses the question of whether we truly want what God wants or if we merely seek God's confirmation of our own desires. This question challenges us to examine our motives and to prioritize God's will above our own.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the character of Jehoshaphat as presented in 1 Kings 22. Is he a good king, a naive one, or a combination of both? Support your answer with specific examples from the text.
2. Analyze the role of prophecy in 1 Kings 22. How does the story distinguish between true and false prophets, and what are the implications of these distinctions for understanding God's will?
3. Explore the concept of God confirming people in their choices as presented in the lecture. How does this idea relate to free will, divine sovereignty, and the problem of evil?
4. Compare and contrast Ahab's reaction to Naboth's refusal to sell his vineyard (1 Kings 21) with his reaction to Micaiah's prophecy (1 Kings 22). What do these reactions reveal about Ahab's character and his relationship with God?
5. Discuss the significance of the geographical context of 1 Kings 22, focusing on the importance of Ramoth Gilead. How does understanding the region's strategic value enhance our understanding of the events in the chapter?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Ahab:** King of Israel, son of Omri, known for his wickedness and idolatry.
- **Jehoshaphat:** King of Judah, allied with Ahab, depicted as a good but perhaps naive leader.
- **Micaiah:** A prophet of Yahweh who delivers a true but unfavorable prophecy to Ahab.
- **Ramoth Gilead:** A strategically important crossroads city east of the Jordan River, contested by Israel and Aram (Syria).
- **Prophets of Asherah:** Prophets associated with the worship of the female fertility goddess Asherah.
- **Highway of the Sea:** An important trade route running along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
- **King's Highway:** An important trade route running along the edge of the desert, east of the Jordan River.
- **Lying Spirit:** A concept used to describe how God allows individuals to be deceived when they are determined to follow their own desires rather than His will.
- **Omens:** Signs or portents believed to predict future events.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of the God of Israel.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.2, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text:

FAQ

1. Why is Ahab's daughter-in-law often referred to as the "daughter of Omri" instead of Ahab's daughter?

Hebrew lacks a specific word for "granddaughter." Any female descendant is referred to as a "daughter." However, the repeated emphasis on her being the "daughter of Omri" seems to be a way of highlighting the ongoing legacy and influence of Omri, Ahab's father, on the entire dynasty and their actions. It ties her directly to the path Omri set for the kingdom.

2. What was the strategic importance of Ramoth Gilead?

Ramoth Gilead was a crucial crossroads located east of the Jordan River. It controlled access to two major trade routes: the "highway of the sea" and the "king's highway." Controlling Ramoth Gilead allowed one to regulate trade along these routes, diverting or stopping goods as desired. This made it a strategically valuable location to possess.

3. Why was Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab criticized in the book of Chronicles but not in Kings?

The book of Chronicles condemns Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, while the book of Kings does not. In Kings, Jehoshaphat is presented as a good man, though perhaps not very perceptive. He is depicted as spiritually sensitive, but not necessarily the brightest.

4. Why did Ahab have 400 prophets and what was their role?

Ahab had 400 prophets, possibly remnants of the 400 prophets of Asherah mentioned earlier in the text. In the ancient world, kings commonly maintained a "stable" of prophets. These individuals were employed to interpret omens (from stars, animal entrails, etc.) to determine auspicious times for actions, particularly war. Their role was often political, as they were incentivized to deliver prophecies that aligned with the king's desires.

5. What does the story reveal about the dangers of seeking confirmation rather than God's true will?

The story highlights the danger of seeking God's confirmation of one's own desires instead of genuinely seeking God's will. Ahab wanted God to validate his decision to reclaim Ramoth Gilead, rather than asking God what he should do. God, in a sense, allows people to proceed with their choices, even if they are wrong, and confirms them in their willfulness.

6. How does Micaiah's prophecy contrast with that of the other prophets?

Micaiah's prophecy sharply contrasts with the prophecies of Ahab's 400 prophets. While the 400 prophets unanimously predicted victory for Ahab, Micaiah initially offered a similar prophecy but was pressed to tell the truth, then prophesied Israel's scattering like sheep without a shepherd, signaling Ahab's death and defeat. Micaiah's prophecy was unwelcome because it did not align with Ahab's desires.

7. What does the text mean when it says God put a "lying spirit" in the prophets?

The text explains that God doesn't force anyone to do something against their will. Instead, God has designed the world to confirm us in our choices. The "lying spirit" is not a literal imposition but rather a reflection of how God allows those who are determined to follow their own path to find confirmation in their decisions, even if that means being deceived. God shows Himself devious to the devious.

8. What does Ahab's reaction to Micaiah's prophecy reveal about his character?

Ahab's reaction to Micaiah's prophecy reveals that he is more interested in having his desires validated than in truly seeking God's will. He imprisons Micaiah and orders him to be given limited food and water until he returns, if he returns. He doesn't want to know what God wants, he wants God to verify what he wants. This demonstrates a deep-seated pride and self-centeredness.