

# Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.3, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 3 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 16.3, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture examines 1 Kings 21-22, focusing on Ahab's death and Jehoshaphat's reign. He highlights how these chapters demonstrate the two books of Kings function as one narrative. **Oswalt analyzes Ahab's final courageous act and contrasts it with the Bible's honesty about its heroes and anti-heroes.** He refutes the notion of the Bible as mere Israelite propaganda. **The lecture further explores Jehoshaphat's reign, noting his shortcomings despite his good intentions and warning against spiritual double-mindedness.** Oswalt urges listeners to measure themselves against Jesus, not flawed individuals, and to fully commit to God in their everyday lives.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.3 – 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).**



**Oswalt\_Kings\_Sessi  
on16\_3.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.3, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 3

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 1 Kings 21-22, specifically Part 3, Session 16.

#### Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 1 Kings 21-22 (Part 3)

**Source:** Excerpts from "Oswalt\_Kings\_EN\_Session16\_3.pdf"

#### Main Themes:

- **God's Providence:** Even seemingly random events are under God's control.
- **The Complexity of Biblical Characters:** The Bible presents figures like Ahab realistically, showing both their flaws and strengths, avoiding simplistic "good vs. evil" portrayals. The Bible isn't just propaganda for Israel.
- **The Importance of a Singular Standard:** Christians should measure themselves against Jesus Christ, not other (fallible) individuals.
- **The Dangers of Double-Mindedness:** Half-hearted commitment to God leads to problems.
- **The Significance of Paying Attention to Patterns:** Deviations from established patterns in the biblical text often highlight important points.

#### Detailed Summary of Key Ideas and Facts:

1. **Ahab's Death and God's Providence:** Oswalt discusses Ahab's death in battle, focusing on the seemingly random arrow that struck him in the one unprotected spot in his armor. He emphasizes that this "random" event illustrates God's providence. "But someone, this is verse 34, someone drew his bow at random. And it hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor... Just accidentally. There are three or four places like that in the Bible where clearly we are to understand this is the providence of God. But again, it just happened. It just so happened. Friends, nothing just so happens." Oswalt highlights that there's no hiding from God and one shouldn't fight against God.
2. **Ahab's Character and Biblical Realism:** Oswalt challenges the notion that the Bible whitewashes heroes or demonizes anti-heroes. He acknowledges Ahab's wickedness but also notes his courage and leadership on the battlefield even

while dying. "But neither does the Bible tar its anti-heroes. If, on this last day of his life, Ahab stood up courageously and bled his life away, the Bible is going to report it. If an Ahab repents, the Bible is going to report it." He explicitly rejects the idea that the Bible is simply Israelite propaganda. "The Bible is not Israelite propaganda." The example of Ahab is used to support this point.

3. **Jehoshaphat's Reign and Comparison to Asa/David:** Oswalt explains that while Jehoshaphat reigned for 25 years, the book of Kings focuses more on the Northern Kingdom and the struggle between Baal and Yahweh. Therefore, Jehoshaphat only gets a small amount of verses. He then contrasts Jehoshaphat with Asa, highlighting that Asa measured himself by David's standard, while Jehoshaphat measured himself by Asa's standard. Oswalt uses the analogy of building shelves to illustrate how small errors compound when not measuring against the true standard. "Asa measured himself by the standard, David. Asa was a good man... And Jehoshaphat measured himself by his dad. Was Asa a 16th of an inch off from David? I think that's the point." He emphasizes the need to measure oneself against Jesus Christ: "Don't you dare measure yourself by me. Don't you dare measure yourself by the person who led you to Christ... Measure yourself by the single standard, Jesus Christ."
4. **Jehoshaphat's Double-Mindedness and Incomplete Reform:** Oswalt notes the insertion of verses about Jehoshaphat's actions between the typical concluding statements about his reign. These verses describe how Jehoshaphat "rid the land of the rest of the male shrine prostitutes" and his failed attempt to build trading ships. He highlights Jehoshaphat's refusal to let Ahaziah's men sail with his, even after they helped build the ships, as evidence of Jehoshaphat's double-mindedness. "I think what we see here again is this double-mindedness. He did some really good things, but he was playing around with the enemy. And in the end, even when he says, okay, enemy, thus far and no farther, it still didn't work out." He connects this to the general principle that Christians must fully commit to God.
5. **The Importance of Pattern Recognition:** Oswalt emphasizes that the author of Kings intentionally broke the typical pattern when describing the end of Jehoshaphat's reign. The normal pattern is broken and filled in with Jehoshaphat's other exploits. This indicates that something is being highlighted. "But I simply want to say to you in your Bible study, be alert for things that break the pattern. Because if they do, I think we can say the author is calling attention to something. He's making a point."

**Quotes:**

- "But someone, this is verse 34, someone drew his bow at random... Friends, nothing just so happens."
- "But neither does the Bible tar its anti-heroes...the Bible is going to report it."
- "The Bible is not Israelite propaganda."
- "Asa measured himself by the standard, David...I think that's the point."
- "Don't you dare measure yourself by me...Measure yourself by the single standard, Jesus Christ."
- "I think what we see here again is this double-mindedness...it still didn't work out."
- "Be alert for things that break the pattern. Because if they do, I think we can say the author is calling attention to something."

**Implications:**

- This lecture encourages a nuanced reading of the Old Testament, avoiding simplistic judgments of characters and recognizing God's hand in all events.
- It stresses the importance of grounding one's faith in Christ alone and avoiding the temptation to compromise with the world.
- It provides a framework for interpreting biblical narratives by paying close attention to textual details and structural patterns.

## 4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.3, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 3

### The Kings Narrative: A Study Guide for 1 Kings 21-22

#### I. Key Concepts and Themes

- **The Providence of God:** The idea that seemingly random events are actually orchestrated by God's will.
- **The Nature of Biblical Narrative:** The Bible presents flawed characters, both heroes and anti-heroes, with honesty and nuance.
- **Idolatry vs. Monotheism:** The ongoing struggle in the Northern Kingdom of Israel between the worship of Baal and the worship of Yahweh.
- **Measuring Righteousness:** The importance of having a true standard (Jesus Christ) and not comparing oneself to imperfect individuals.
- **Double-Mindedness:** The danger of trying to serve both God and the world, and the need for complete commitment to God.
- **The Importance of Context:** Understanding the different focuses of Kings (political and theological struggles) versus Chronicles (spiritual life and temple worship).
- **Recognizing Patterns and Deviations:** Paying attention to when biblical narratives follow a formulaic pattern and when they deviate, as deviations often highlight important points.

#### II. Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. How does the story of Ahab's death illustrate the concept of God's providence?
2. According to the text, why does the Bible present both the strengths and weaknesses of its characters like Ahab and David?
3. Why does the book of Kings focus more on the Northern Kingdom (Israel) during this period?
4. What mistake did Jehoshaphat make regarding his standard, and what does this teach us about our own spiritual lives?
5. What does the text suggest about becoming a "professional Christian" versus living as an ordinary Christian?

6. What made Ahab a competent king despite his flaws?
7. What is Oswalt's assessment of the argument that the Bible is just another piece of propaganda?
8. According to the text, what evidence is there that 1 and 2 Kings may be a single book?
9. According to the text, why was Ahab's chariot washed where the prostitutes bathed?
10. What does the text mean by the phrase, "Don't fight with God"?

**Answer Key:**

1. Ahab attempts to disguise himself, yet a random arrow finds the only unprotected spot in his armor. This is seen as God's hand at work, ensuring the fulfillment of prophecy and divine judgment.
2. The Bible aims to present truth, not propaganda. By showing the complexities of individuals, it demonstrates God's grace and the reality of human fallibility.
3. The Northern Kingdom was the center of the conflict between Baal worship and the worship of Yahweh during this time. Elijah and Elisha's ministries were primarily focused there as well.
4. Jehoshaphat measured himself by the standard of Asa, his father, rather than directly by David. This highlights the need to measure ourselves by the ultimate standard, Jesus Christ, rather than flawed human examples.
5. Selling out for God does not necessarily mean becoming a pastor or missionary, it means being a dedicated Christian in your ordinary life, whether at work, at home, or elsewhere.
6. The text describes Ahab as having ruled for some 20 years and being a competent king.
7. Oswalt firmly rejects the idea that the Bible is just propaganda, arguing that it speaks truthfully about its subjects, even its anti-heroes.
8. The text claims that the story of Ahaziah, Ahab's successor, begins in 1 Kings but ends in 2 Kings.
9. It is suggested that prostitutes bathed in the pool in Samaria as a temple business and priestesses of Baal may have washed there.

10. To "fight with God" suggests living in opposition to His will and commands. It's a futile endeavor, as there is no place to hide from His reach or judgment, so it is better to live for Him, rather than against Him.

### **III. Essay Questions**

1. Discuss the significance of Ahab's actions on the last day of his life and how it challenges simplistic views of good and evil in the Bible.
2. Analyze the contrast between the presentations of Jehoshaphat in Kings and Chronicles, and explain why these differences exist.
3. Explain how the text argues that it is important to find your own, ordinary role as a Christian.
4. Explore the theme of divine providence in 1 Kings 21-22, using specific examples to illustrate how God's will is accomplished.
5. Discuss the dangers of "double-mindedness" as presented in the text and provide practical examples of how ordinary Christians might fall into this trap.

## IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Providence:** God's active involvement in the world, guiding events to fulfill his purposes.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible.
- **Baal:** A Canaanite god, often associated with fertility, rain, and storms, whose worship was a constant temptation for the Israelites.
- **Samaria:** The capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Annals of the Kings:** Official court records that documented the reigns of kings, often cited in the Bible as sources of information.
- **Ophir:** A place known for its gold, often mentioned in the Old Testament. Its exact location is unknown.
- **Ezion Geber:** An ancient port city on the Red Sea, used by Solomon for trade.
- **Double-Mindedness:** Divided loyalty or commitment, often referring to trying to serve both God and the world simultaneously.
- **Kerf:** The width of the cut made by a saw blade.
- **Monotheism:** The belief in one God.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or false gods.



## **5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 16.3, 1 Kings 21-22, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions on 1 Kings 21-22**

#### **1. How does the story of Ahab's death illustrate the providence of God, even in seemingly random events?**

The passage highlights the seemingly accidental nature of Ahab's death. An archer "drew his bow at random," and the arrow struck Ahab in the one unprotected spot in his armor. Dr. Oswalt argues that this isn't merely chance but an example of God's providence. Even though it appears coincidental, the Bible suggests that God orchestrated the circumstances leading to Ahab's demise, emphasizing the futility of fighting against God. There's no place to hide.

#### **2. How does the Bible portray Ahab, and why is this significant?**

The Bible presents a balanced, nuanced portrayal of Ahab, avoiding both whitewashing and demonizing him. Despite his wickedness and idolatry, Ahab displays courage and leadership on the final day of his life. He directs the battle while mortally wounded. This nuanced depiction reinforces the idea that the Bible isn't simply Israelite propaganda and reports accurately. It's willing to acknowledge even the positive traits or actions of those who are otherwise portrayed negatively.

#### **3. Why does the narrative focus more on the Northern Kingdom (Israel) than the Southern Kingdom (Judah) during this period?**

The primary focus is on the Northern Kingdom because it was the epicenter of the conflict between Baal worship and Yahweh worship. The ministries of Elijah and Elisha were primarily in the North, where the battle against Baal was most intense. While Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, was a good man, his reign was less directly involved in this central struggle.

**4. How does Jehoshaphat's reign compare to that of Asa, and what lesson can we draw from this comparison?**

Jehoshaphat is compared to his father, Asa, who was considered a righteous king. Asa, in turn, was compared to David. However, Dr. Oswalt suggests that measuring oneself against someone other than the ultimate standard (Jesus Christ) can lead to a gradual drift from righteousness. Each generation may become slightly less committed to God's standard. The key lesson is to measure ourselves against Jesus Christ, the ultimate standard, rather than any human figure, no matter how admirable.

**5. What is the significance of the disruption in the normal concluding formula for Jehoshaphat's reign, and what does it highlight?**

The typical pattern of concluding a king's reign is broken in Jehoshaphat's case. There are extra verses that explain he rid the land of the male shrine prostitutes and built a fleet of trading ships. The interruption highlights key aspects of Jehoshaphat's reign: his efforts to remove idolatrous practices, his attempt to emulate Solomon's success with a trading fleet, and his refusal to allow Ahab's son to sail with him due to his double-mindedness.

**6. How did Jehoshaphat demonstrate double-mindedness, and what were the consequences of this?**

Jehoshaphat, although a good king, exhibited spiritual compromise by maintaining alliances with the wicked kings of Israel, such as Ahab. He tried to balance serving God with maintaining political alliances with those who didn't. Even when he tried to set limits ("thus far and no farther"), his entanglement with the enemy led to negative consequences. He built ships with Ahaziah that ended up being wrecked.

**7. What practical application can be derived from the message of not keeping "one foot in both camps"?**

The message urges ordinary Christians to make a complete and unwavering commitment to God. It discourages half-hearted devotion or trying to balance faith with worldly pursuits. True commitment involves living as a genuine Christian in all aspects of life—at work, at home, and in the community.

**8. What does Ahab's chariot being washed where prostitutes bathed symbolize?**

The washing of Ahab's chariot in a pool where prostitutes bathed, and where dogs licked up the blood, highlights the complete defilement and utter shame associated with Ahab's reign and his association with Baal worship. It represents the intersection of royal power, idolatrous worship, and moral corruption. It also suggests that God's judgment and justice eventually prevail, even over powerful rulers.