

Sunday 20th November 22

Folly upon Folly

1 Kings 22:41-53

Jehoshaphat King of Judah

⁴¹ Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king of Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. ⁴² Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³ In everything he followed the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. The high places, however, were not removed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there. ⁴⁴ Jehoshaphat was also at peace with the king of Israel.

⁴⁵ As for the other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, the things he achieved and his military exploits, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ⁴⁶ He rid the land of the rest of the male shrine prostitutes who remained there even after the reign of his father Asa. ⁴⁷ There was then no king in Edom; a provincial governor ruled.

⁴⁸ Now Jehoshaphat built a fleet of trading ships to go to Ophir for gold, but they never set sail—they were wrecked at Ezion Geber. ⁴⁹ At that time Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my men sail with yours," but Jehoshaphat refused.

⁵⁰ Then Jehoshaphat rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the city of David his father. And Jehoram his son succeeded him as king.

Ahaziah King of Israel

⁵¹ Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. ⁵² He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, because he followed the ways of his father and mother and of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to

sin. ⁵³ He served and worshiped Baal and aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, just as his father had done.

Hebrews 10:26-31

²⁶ If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ²⁸ Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Sermon: Folly upon Folly

[It would be good to have your Bibles opened at 1 Kings chapter 22 – let me pray before we begin]

Intro/Context

So, our **title** today is **folly upon folly**

[Slide 1 – Folly Definition]

Folly definition – Dictionary: *lack of good sense; foolishness.*

In Bible terms: *folly or foolishness refers to someone who lacks the proper fear or respect for God. He or she is therefore prone to go in the wrong direction in life.*

In the last few weeks, we saw how **foolish King Ahab** was – and even though God showed Ahab grace and gave him many chances to repent – and even though God sent several prophets to warn Ahab – in particular the prophets: **Elijah and Micaiah** – **Ahab**

chose **folly** – and **foolishly ignored God’s words** – and **came to a sticky end** – as we saw last week!

In this week’s reading - we have a **few verses on two other kings**

[Slide 2 – 2 Kings]



The first king – is King **Jehoshaphat** – whom we met last week – who is the King of the Southern Kingdom of Israel (**Judah**)

And the second king – is King **Ahaziah** son of the late King **Ahab** – King of the Northern Kingdom (**Israel**)

What we will see is **both these kings show folly** – folly upon folly.

Jehoshaphat shows folly – because he compromises

Ahaziah shows folly – because he rebels against God

1st then King **Jehoshaphat** of Judah – and the **Folly of Compromise** – that’s in verses 41 to 50

Folly of Compromise (1 Kings 22:41-50)

- We'd better define compromise

[Slide 3 – Compromise]

Compromise Definition - Dictionary: *The acceptance of standards that are lower than is desirable.*

In Bible terms: *The acceptance of standards that are lower than or go against God's standards and rules.*

[Slide 4-Jehoshaphat]



- Looking at v41 – we have King **Jehoshaphat** – King of Judah – and he's the **son of Asa**
- We last came across **Asa** – in chapter 15 – and he was a **godly king** – he **modelled himself on King David** – he **expelled male shrine prostitutes** from the land and **got rid of the idols** his ancestors made (1 Kings 15:11-12ff)
- And his son **Jehoshaphat** we see in v43 – **followed the ways of his father Asa**
- And in v46 – we see **Jehoshaphat** also got rid of the male shrine prostitutes that remained there – even after his father's reign
- We also know from last week that **Jehoshaphat** was a **godly man** – because he told Ahab to **seek God's guidance** before starting a war with the city of Ramoth Gilead (v5) – and **Jehoshaphat** was also **godly** enough and **wise** enough to

recognise that **Ahab's 400 prophets were false prophets** and that they ought to **inquire of a true prophet** of the Lord (v7)

- BUT...

[Slide 5 - Heading - Compromise]

- We also know from last week that **Jehoshaphat made some compromises**

[Slide 5a – battle]

- Jehoshaphat **agreed to go into battle with King Ahab** – even though he knew Ahab's **false prophets were wrong** about Ahab winning the battle – even though he knew the **true prophet Micaiah** had **said the battle would be lost** and Ahab would be killed

[Slide 5b-Micaiah]

- Also, **Jehoshaphat didn't stick up for the prophet Micaiah** when he was **sent to prison** for speaking the truth about God

[Slide 5c-robos]

- And **Jehoshaphat raised no objection** – to wearing his **royal robes** in battle – whilst **Ahab** went into battle in **disguise**

[Slide 5d-people pleasing]

- Basically, **Jehoshaphat was weak and wanted to please Ahab more than pleasing God!**
- We read in 2 Chronicles 19:1-3 – that **God was angry with Jehoshaphat** for having anything to do with such an ungodly king as Ahab!

- Jehoshaphat's **compromises continue this week** too

[Slide 6-Heading Compromises]

[Slide 6a-high places]

- See the end of v43 – **Jehoshaphat did not remove the high-places in Judah** and the **people continued to offer sacrifices** and burn incense there

In the parallel story in 2 Chronicles 17:6, it specifically says, that **Jehoshaphat did take away the high places**. To reconcile how 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles can be both be correct – one explanation is that: there were **two kinds of high places in the land**:

1. Those used for **idolatrous purposes**.
2. And those that were **consecrated to God**, and were used before the temple was built.

It seems Jehoshaphat took down the idolatrous high places but not those being used to sacrifice to the Lord!

However, by Jehoshaphat's time - temple has been built – and there **should be no sacrifices anywhere else – another compromise!**

- Then in v47 – we read there's **no king in Edom** – which means **Edom is controlled by Jehoshaphat**

[Slide 6b-ships/gold]

- Which enables **Jehoshaphat to build ships** at the port of **Ezion-Geber (v48)** – and **sail to Ophir (Yemen/Arabia) for gold**.
- If this sounds familiar – it should – because the great **King Solomon** had done the **same thing** back in 1 Kings 9:26-28 – even though Deut 17:17 – said a **king was not to accumulate large amounts of gold** – again another compromise
- We're meant to see that **Jehoshaphat is trying to rekindle the glory days of Solomon** – when Israel was a unified nation and at its most glorious
- We also see in v49 – that when **Ahaziah** – King of Israel – **asks for his men to sail with Jehoshaphat's men** – **Jehoshaphat refuses**

The parallel story from **2 Chronicles 20:35-37** tells us:

³⁵ ... Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an **alliance** with Ahaziah king of Israel, whose ways were wicked. ³⁶ He agreed with him to construct a fleet of trading ships. After these were built at Ezion Geber, ³⁷ Eliezer son of Do-dav-ahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, “Because you have made an alliance with Ahaziah, the LORD will destroy what you have made.” The ships were wrecked and were not able to set sail to trade.

From this parallel story, we see **Jehoshaphat’s alliance with Ahaziah** (son of Ahab) the King of Israel is **deemed an ungodly one** by the Lord God; and so, the **Lord destroyed Jehoshaphat’s fleet** of trading ships!

It may be that **Jehoshaphat naively thought** this **alliance would reunite the two kingdoms** – but God had said that the two kingdoms would be divided (1 Kings 11:31)

And **God won’t let the godly unite with the ungodly!**

[Slide 6c-Alliance]

- You see – a **rather innocuous verse like v44** – which says – Jehoshaphat was also at peace with the King of Israel – **has a lot more to it.**
- This **peace** – is **actually an alliance** – between Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah
- And this **alliance has very serious consequences** – which we don’t find out about until later in 2 Kings 8 and 2 Kings 11
- In 2 Kings 8:16-19 – **Jehoshaphat’s son Jehoram marries Ahab’s daughter** – and instead of Jehoshaphat’s son Jehoram following his father’s godly ways – his **son follows Ahab’s daughter’s ungodly ways** – and she’s learnt from the masters of wickedness – **Ahab and Jezebel**
- Then in 2 Kings 8:26-27 – we found out **Jehoram’s son (also Ahaziah) also followed the ways of wicked King Ahab**

- So, this compromising alliance – is leading the Kingdom of Judah – **down the Ahab track** – **rather than the godly track**
- And by the time we get to 2 Kings 11 – we found out the **daughter of Ahab, Athaliah planned to destroy the whole royal family of Judah**
- And if it hadn't been for the divine intervention of one woman – **who hid Joash** – **a royal prince of Judah** – the whole royal line of Judah – would have been wiped out – and **God's promise to David of an everlasting kingdom** – leading to Jesus – would have failed.
- **Praise God** - He **always** keeps His promises
- And the **big lessons for Jehoshaphat** are: you **can't serve two masters** – and you **can't make compromises which go against God's will**
- But there are **big lessons for us** here too

Folly of Compromise (For us...)

[Slide 7-Heading-Compromise]

- Application – what are some of the ways that we can compromise – in our walk with the Lord?

[Slide 7a-Media]

- 1st [way we can compromise is] - **Media** – if we watch the **news, certain tv shows and movies** – or if we use **social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter** – we can be bombarded with **disturbing scenes, wars, anger, violence, sexualised images and coarse language**

Can we join King David when he writes in **Psalm 101:3** - *I will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it.*

We have to **guard our hearts** by being selective about what goes in our eyes and in our ears. What we see and what we hear – are **not harmless** because they begin to permeate our soul. That's why the **Apostle Paul** tells us in **Romans 12:2**: the *only way to not be conformed to this world is to renew our minds with the Word of God.* If we fill ourselves up with the wickedness found in the media, we're compromising God's Word

[Slide 7b-Politics]

- 2nd [way we can compromise is] - **Politics** – When our politicians come up with policies and laws that are against God's Word – we may be **afraid to stand up for God's Word** – because we don't want to be labelled "hateful" or "bigoted" or "not inclusive" or even "self-righteous" – so **we clam up and remain silent** – instead of being bold as a lion!
Jesus told us we can expect persecution and troubles in this world when we follow Him (Matt 10:22; 1 Peter 4:12). If we never face any persecution – **there's a good chance we are already compromising because we staying silent** – so we don't cop any harsh words against us.

[Slide 7c-Forgiveness]

- 3rd [way we can compromise is] **Forgiveness** – The world says it's **okay to hold a grudge if someone really did us wrong** – and the world says **treating someone badly because they treated us badly is perfectly fine; they deserve it!** This is what the world subscribes to – and if we're not careful – we subscribe to it too!
Forgiveness is tough – but it's **not optional** – the Bible says so – in Matthew 6:14-15 - ¹⁴ *"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."*

Holding a grudge against any person or group of people is sin. And it **blocks every blessing God has in store for us.** While the devil will tempt us in this area, we don't have to take the bait. While every area of compromise is dangerous, this one will block good things in our life from every direction – Jesus says in Mark 11:25 – *“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”*

Perhaps there's someone we hold a grudge against this morning – today's the day to put that right – and forgive!

[Slide 7d-Words]

- 4th way [we can compromise is] Our words – I grew up with the saying *“sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me”*. **What a load of rubbish! Words hurt very much. Words matter** – and it's easy for example to justify our harsh and angry words by saying: “I'm just calling it as it is” but the Bible says - in Ephesians 4:15 *“speak the truth in love”* - and in Ephesians 4:29 *“do not let unwholesome talk come out of your mouths but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that he may benefit those who listen”*

And it's not just our words that are a problem – it's **other people's words.**

If we hang around people who use foul language and curse – we may start doing the same.

If we hang around people who gossip – we may join in!

If we hang around people who use crude words or innuendo – it can rub off on us

We need to be mindful of the words we say and hear – and not compromise on God's holy standards!

[Slide 7e-Relationships]

- 5th way [we can compromise is] **Our relationships** – this is a tricky one. We saw in our story of Jehoshaphat that the relationships he made with the house of King Ahab – **were spiritually and socially problematic**.
For us – we have to live in this world – and we're meant to be a light for Jesus in people's lives – so we are going to have relationships with unbelievers and ungodly people.

However, **those relationships should not compromise us**

If the relationship is with a person who is an unbeliever, we must be careful that they don't influence us away from our relationship with Jesus.

If the relationship is with a person of another religion or faith, we must not allow their beliefs in false gods to corrupt our relationship with God and His Son.

This can happen when we want to please them more than wanting to please God.

As the **Apostle Paul** tells us in **Galatians 1:10** - *Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

And Jesus Himself tells us in **John 15:19** that - *we are not to belong to the world – and that He has called us out of the world.*

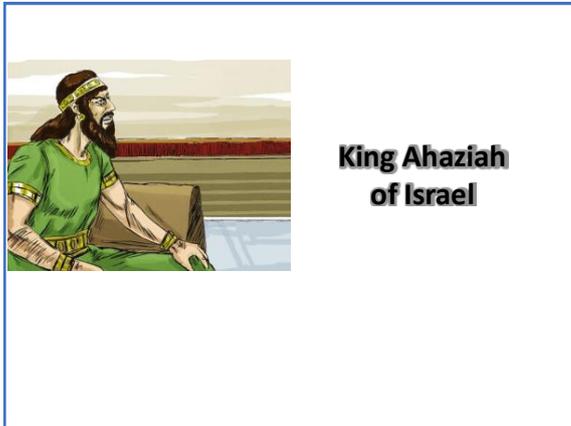
To counter these potentially harmful relationships – both the Apostles **Peter and Paul** tell us to **be like-minded** – in other words **spend plenty of time with fellow Christians** (1 Peter 3:8; Romans 15:5) – because *iron sharpens iron* (Proverbs 27:17)

- And notice how **all of these compromises** – are **subtle** – **they creep up on us gradually** – don't they?

(pause)

Folly of Rebellion against God (1 Kings 22:51-53 and Hebrews 10:26-31)

[Slide 8-King Ahaziah]



2nd then we have King **Ahaziah** of Israel – and **the Folly of Rebellion against God** – that’s in verses 51 to 53

- **Ahaziah’s folly is not so subtle** – it’s sheer undiluted wickedness

[Slide 9-Heading]

[Slide 9a-unholy trinity]

- V52 – **Ahaziah did evil in the eyes of the Lord** because he **followed** the ways of his **father** (Ahab) and **mother** (Jezebel) and of **Jeroboam**, who caused Israel to sin.
- What an **unholy trinity!**

[Slide 9b-angered God]

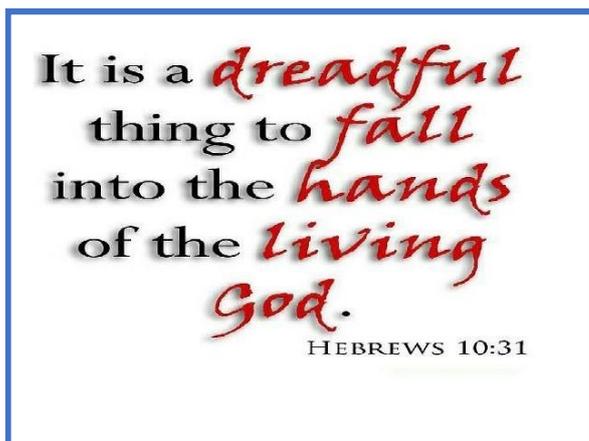
- And V53 – **Ahaziah served and worshipped the false god Baal** and **aroused the anger of the Lord**, the God of Israel, just as his father had done.
- Like father, like son.
- The **consequence of this continual rebellion** was **severe judgment by God**
- **God’s judgment is described in our NT passage from Hebrews 10:26-31** [**Please turn there now**]– which **warns of the consequences of deliberately keeping on sinning and rebelling against God**

[Slide 9c-trample]

- Ahaziah (like his father Ahab):
- V26 – **kept on deliberately sinning** – despite the truth given to them by the true prophets of God like Elijah and Micaiah.
- V27 – All who keep on deliberately sinning - will **face judgment and raging fire that consumes all enemies of God** – that’s a picture of Hell
- V28-29 –The writer of Hebrews explains - people who rejected the Law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses; **how much more severely** will the Ahab’s and Ahaziah’s of this world be treated **for trampling on the Son of God** – which is Jesus – who IS - God’s word!
- And V30 – The Ahab’s and Ahaziah’s of this world need to understand that God will not stand for this continual and blatant sin and rebellion against Him – and He will repay people for their evil wicked ways.

[Slide 10-Dreadful Thing!]

- And – as V31 - it’s a **dreadful thing for ANYONE** to fall into the hands of the living God.



Our Response

I don't want to frighten us all this morning – but one day we will all have to face the One whom God the Father has appointed to judge everyone (Acts 10:42) – that is Jesus

What will Jesus say about us?

How have we gone with these two follies of compromise and rebellion?

How have we compromised? How have we rebelled?

What will our response be this morning – especially as Hebrews 10:31 tells us *God's judgment is certain – and it's a dreadful thing for someone unrepentant to fall into the hands of the Lord.*

Well - the Bible gives us a two-fold response

[Slide 11-1 John 1:19]



The first response is to **repent!**

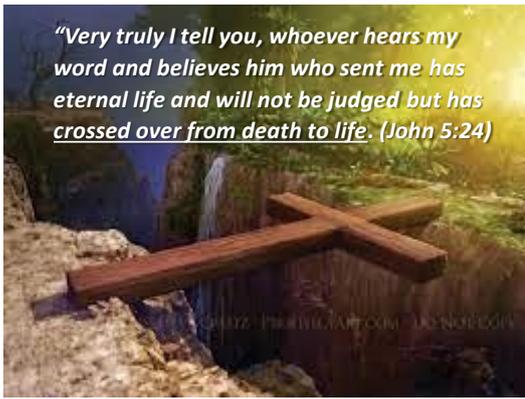
1 John 1:19 says: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*

And the second response is to **believe** –

So let me leave us with this promise from Jesus Himself – from **John 5:24** – I call it the

BRIDGE VERSE

[Slide 12-John 5:24]



“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24)

²⁴ “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

Let’s pray...

Father God, through your Spirit and your Word

Help us not to compromise on your holy standards – help us not to conform to the patterns of this world – help us not to keep on deliberately sinning

Help us to repent and believe in your Son Jesus – who allows us to be seen by you – as righteous – right with you and approved by you.

Thank you that because of Jesus – we have crossed over from death into eternal life.

Thank you for the amazing gift of Jesus – in His name, we pray. Amen.

Benediction (1 John 1:8-10)

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. Amen.