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**What My
God Saith...
That Will
I Speak**

#1108-A

Series: Living Legends - Part 3

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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What My God Saith... That Will I Speak

Perhaps you have heard the story of Jay and Abe and Mike. Perhaps you haven't. Perhaps you heard the story of Jay and Abe and Mike and didn't realize you had heard it. Perhaps you didn't. Perhaps.

Today the suspense will vanish from that potentially unfulfilled part of your life. Today you will hear the story of Jay and Abe and Mike. Ready? Here goes.

Once upon a time in a kingdom far, far away there lived a king named Jay. On second thought, why not let the Holy Spirit tell the story the way it was intended to be told? He has recorded it for us in II Chronicles, chapters 17 and 18. It is a tale I trust you won't soon forget.

The setting is the end of the reign of King Asa of Judah. He will be followed in office by his son, Jehoshophat. We could call him Phatty or Hosh, but somehow Jay seems more appropriate. In power at the moment in neighboring Israel is King Ahab. We could call him a lot of things, but we'll settle for Abe for short. Soon to enter the picture is one of God's fearless prophets who lived quite unappreciated, and almost in exile, in Israel. His name is Micaiah, and we'll naturally refer to him as Mike, just to keep the names from getting in the way of the story. The story begins with the funeral of Asa, which was in itself, quite an elaborate affair, as elaborate as such an occasion can be. We'll begin reading in II Chronicles 16:13.

Our title: "What My God Saith...That Will I Speak."

Our outline:

- I- A Good Defense (II Chronicles 17:1-2)
- II- A Sensible Ministry (II Chronicles 17:3-10)
- III- A Bad Alliance (II Chronicles 18:1-6)
- IV- A Brave Prophet (II Chronicles 18:7-27)
- V- An Expected End (II Chronicles 18:28-34)

Our Scripture begins, as we noted, at the conclusion of

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II Chronicles 16, which just happens to coincide with the conclusion of an era.

And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art; and they made a very great burning for him. (II Chronicles 16:13,14)

Asa is dead. Into the history books and between the pages of the parchment of God's Holy Word goes this man's life. What has been done is done. His mistakes live on as a part of the epitaph the world will engrave by his name. His acts of obedience and the accompanying blessings become monuments to the Glory of God. But regardless, it is over. He cannot rewrite history. In his case, that's just as well. King Asa did "what was good and right in the sight of the Lord." But for so many, that just isn't so. And so many of us live as though we can make those choices to flagrantly disobey the known will of God, and somehow at the end of our lives, God will rewrite the last chapter in such a way that it will obliterate our rebellion. We live as though, with one great sweep of the pen, as we breathe our last breath, God will use one of those "search and replace" features found on all good computer software today, and everywhere the word "disobeyed" is found, He'll change it to "obeyed". Not so, beloved. If reading the Scriptures has taught us nothing else, it should have taught us that God writes it just as it is. No embellishments (like some of us). Just facts.

Why then, don't we live as though *every thought we think, and every deed we do is being recorded for posterity, to be played back on the laser disk of eternity for all mankind to see?* I'll tell you why. We've been sold a lie. The lie is that God is going to turn the truth into some kind of paperback novel that will make us look like the saints we weren't. The truth is the truth hurts. But the truth is also that God is Truth; therefore, He will only tell it like it is. God help us to live accordingly.

At any rate, Asa died and was buried, and the chapter titled "Asa's Reign as King" now is etched in eternal concrete. He did, however, go out in style. He apparently planned his own funeral, and boy, did he do it right. He had more than one sepulchre set aside for himself, and he was not only elaborately adorned, he

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apparently had them bathe him in a hottub of Chanel No. 5 on the way out. I mean, you could smell this funeral all the way to Egypt. And wow! What a ceremony. At any rate, “vanity, vanity, all is vanity”. And fancy funeral or not, his next move was to face the Eternal God, and life went on, on planet earth. And as expected, Asa’s son, Jehoshophat, or Jay as we choose to call him, rises to the throne, and the next generation moves into the palace once again.

So we read, as the curtain rises on Chapter 17, these words:

And Jehoshophat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel.

And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken. (II Chronicles 17:1,2)

I- A GOOD DEFENSE

Isn’t it interesting how many Scriptural biographies begin with capsulized explanations of whether or not a man or woman walked with God? ...Not how great was their influence; not how magnificent their treasures, but how faithful their walk with God. And isn’t it also interesting how many times the first words we read about a ruler or a leader in the Kingdom of God have to do with whether or not he established a *good defense*. We read in God’s tribute to King Asa,

And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest.

Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars... (II Chronicles 14:6,7)

Now we read of his son, Jay, that “he strengthened himself against Israel, and placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah...” (II Chronicles 17:1,2).

We live in a world that longs for peace. So we live in a world that talks of disarmament, because the enemy has sold us a lie that the two are one and the same. It is not so spiritually and it is not so nationally. Physical wars were given to us to allow us to see the realities of spiritual warfare and, likewise, the reverse is true. Whatever you can see of one realm helps to amplify the other. And the believer is never to lay down the armor and pretend the

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enemy loves him. He is to recognize the enemy, arm himself to stand against the enemy, and not be at all surprised at anything the enemy does.

You don't sit down and negotiate with Satan. And you don't agree to lay aside the whole armor of God in exchange for Satan's promising to be a nice boy. It isn't in him to be a nice boy. He was a liar from the beginning and the father of lies.

And likewise, whether you're for "star wars" or not, don't ever forget that throughout all of Scripture that God's plans for national security were always based on the building of a sound defense. You usually let the enemy make the first move, but you prepare to protect yourself. Once you did that, God intervened, and the enemy had no chance. This is not intended to be in any way a political statement, but a Scriptural statement of fact. A nation who stands for what God stands for, arms itself against any nation whose avowed goal is its destruction, and the establishment of an atheistic, anti-God regime.

So the first thing Jay did was to strengthen himself against Israel and fortify the cities round about in case of an enemy invasion. He did it God's way, and God honored what he did.

II- A SENSIBLE MINISTRY

Now the fortresses are renewed, and the cities protected. Should the enemy attack, Jay was ready. His next move as king further endeared him to the heart of God, for he had discovered the key for "keeping the peace"...the Word of God. The Word of God is the only thing the enemy fears. It is life's only absolute; it is life's only constant; it is life's only anchor. It is the first thing Satan attacked in the garden; he questioned the Word of God. It was his chief target in his onslaught against Job, and it was the only thing Jesus used as a defensive weapon in the wilderness... the Word of God. It is your one key weapon in spiritual warfare. Jay understood that to be armed and ready is to no avail if you have no final authority. You can't win the battle if you don't have clear marching orders. So the next move our new Monarch made was to send the Living Word into the highways and byways of the countryside and teach the people the Truth. Look at the next few verses of II Chronicles 17:

And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim.

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But sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.

Therefore, the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshophat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.

And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD; moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.

Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.

And with them he sent Levites... [He names them] and priests...

And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshophat. (II Chronicles 17:3-10)

If you'll pardon the analogy, the next thing Jay did was to send out his pastoral staff to establish satellite churches. He began by setting up Sunday Schools or home Bible studies in every village and nook and cranny in the land. And the Gideons must have been around then, because they took copies of the Word with them and saw to it that the people had the Scriptures to stand on. He gave the Word of God its proper place in the land. First place. And look what happened: "the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshophat." Why? What was the enemy afraid of? The Word of God. When God speaks, mountains quake. When God speaks, clouds form in the heavens, the sun closes its eyes and darkens the earth, the lightning flashes from shore to shore. When God speaks, waters part. When God speaks, worlds are formed, nations bow down, the mightiest of kings and princes fall from power. When God speaks, the enemy cringes in fear. And, Beloved, one day soon, God will but speak a word, and this world as we know it will cease to be. He will speak, and those who know His Son will be caught up together into the heavens in the arms of a waiting Father. After a season, He will speak again, and from out of the east thunder will roll; trumpets will blast; and down from the heavenlies, his saints by his side, the King of Glory will ride triumphantly into history again. The nations

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who have gathered themselves against Israel will, in a moment, be no more. The King will have come. God will have spoken his final word to the nations. Beloved, when God speaks, the enemy quakes with fear.

So never underestimate the Word of God. "It is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edge sword, dividing asunder the soul from the spirit, the joints from the marrow." The Word of God. King Jay knew that. And he knew his kingdom would only be as strong as the people's knowledge of that Word. So in total contradiction to the normal priorities of a new king, he sent out teachers to teach the Word before he did virtually anything else.

III- A BAD ALLIANCE

It was, however, King Jay's next move that set the stage for the warfare that finally took place, and the ensuing confrontation between the Word of God and the word of men. It is that story, found in chapter 18 of II Chronicles, that we were referring to at the outset of the lesson. It is the story of Jay and Abe and Mike. In a nutshell, Jay became very successful and prosperous at the hand of God, and his counterpart in Israel, King Abe, decided to enlist Jay's support in a mutual offensive at Ramothgilead. Suddenly our supposed enemies, the ones we just built fenced cities to protect us from, are friends, because they need us to help fight their battles. It seemed to Jay a charitable thing to do, but he wanted to be sure God felt the same way. So he asked for some of God's men for counsel. What happened next crystallized a very important Scriptural principle. Let's listen from God's Word to the story thus far:

Now Jehoshophat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab.

And after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that he had with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramothgilead.

And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshophat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramothgilead? And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war.

And Jehoshophat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD today.

Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets

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four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle. or shall we forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand.

But Jehoshophat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?

(II Chronicles 18:1-5)

Do you get the picture thus far? Abe invites Jay and his cabinet in for a weekend of festivities and fellowship. He wines and dines the gang in royal form, and in the midst of this regal treatment, he persuades Jay and his buddies that even though they may not look at spiritual things in *exactly the same way*, they are, in fact, all Jews, and all God's chosen ones, and after all, they need each other. So Jay agrees on one condition. And it's a good one. He agrees to go, provided that someone who speaks with clarity for Jehovah gives him the green light. In other words, he's willing if God's willing.

"No problem," Abe responds. And he calls out four hundred "so-called prophets" who supposedly speak for God, but who are more interested in keeping the king's approval than they are in speaking the truth. Sure enough, all four hundred of them agree with Abe. "Saddle up the horses, gang," they cry out in unison, "God has guaranteed you the victory." Pretty good odds, wouldn't you say? Four hundred to zero? But something inside of Jay didn't feel comfortable with this unanimous vote of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the day, so he asked Abe if there wasn't a real live prophet around who seemed to have credentials that might better qualify him to put God's seal of approval on this battle plan. "I was afraid you would ask" might be one way of paraphrasing the king's answer. Let's listen:

And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshophat, There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshophat said, Let not the king say so.

And the king of Israel called for one of his officers, and said Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla.

And the king of Israel and Jehoshophat king of Judah sat either of them on his throne, clothed in their robes, and they sat in a void place at the entering in of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.

And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns

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of iron, and said, Thus saith the LORD, With these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed.

And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one assent; let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good.

And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak. (II Chronicles 18:7-13)

IV- A BRAVE PROPHET

Jay wasn't satisfied with the performance of these 400 religious "yes" men. He could see that, to one man, they were more interested in speaking *to men*, than they were in speaking for God. So he asked Abe if there wasn't somebody else, somebody who clearly spoke the truth and whose prophecies *always* came true. Abe didn't want to admit it, but there was such a man. His name was Mike. In fact, Abe's testimony was, "I hate the man; he never tells me what I want to hear." "That's our man", Jay answered. If he says go, we go.

So a reluctant King Abe sent for Mike. The troops arrive, and they apply a little arm-twisting routine just in case Mike planned to tell the king something different than what they had. They had literally had a praise gathering and a pep rally at the gate of Samaria. They got all worked up into a lather, and Zedekiah, Chen's boy, got up with his homemade visual aid, a pair of horns made out of iron, and shouted, "With these horns we'll push Syria into never-never land." And all the people said, "Amen". It isn't hard to get all the people to say amen if you tell all the people what they want to hear. So fresh from this all-day prophecy conference, they went to Mike and said, "Guess what, for some strange reason, the king wants you to tell him that it's okay to go to war against Ramothgilead, and to join forces with Jay's guys to fight the battle. Incidentally, we've all, *to the man*, told him to go. If I were you, I'd just go and tell them we're right on."

You can almost see the fire in Mike's eyes. In essence, he answered, "Don't tell me what to say. I'll tell you what I'm going to say." There must have been a hush in the crowd at that point. Mike went on, "I'll say just exactly what God tells me to...no more;

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no less."

As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith; that will I speak.

(II Chronicles 17:13)

So Mike goes up to Samaria and, after a bit of holy sarcasm, tells the king that if they go, Israel will return as sheep with no shepherd. In other words, "You can go if you like, Abe, but say good-bye to all the folks before you leave. You won't be coming home." Abe, needless to say, was furious. He had his heavy handed heroes take Mike back to the governor and said, "Tell them to throw this guy into prison and put him on bread and water till I get home from the war." Did that scare Mike? No! His answer was, "If you come home, King, then God has not spoken through me. May all the nation hear what I've just said."

In other words, what Mike was saying was this: "Go ahead, pal, and do what you want to. But may all the nation understand, that when God speaks, *it always comes to pass*. So if, by chance, I'm wrong now or anytime, I'm not a true prophet of God." Well, if you've read ahead, by now you know that Jay goes into the fray and the enemy tries to kill him, thinking he's Abe. He cries to God, and God intervenes. Then the enemy finds Abe, shoots him, wounds him, and by sundown he goes nighty-night for the last time. Just exactly as Mike, the fearless prophet had prophesied. And that is where our story will resume in the next lesson.

V- AN EXPECTED END

So the story ended just the way Mike had said it would. No matter what shenanigans the two kings tried to pull, God protected His somewhat naive Jay, and the enemy got to the crafty Abe and killed him. End of chapter one in the reign of King Jehoshophat. It leaves us with a good foundation for understanding the rest of his life, and it leaves us with a glimpse at some spiritual principles that we are ever so prone to violate as believers. Look at them in closing:

1- It is always God's will for His children to have on the whole armor of God. Jehoshophat did the right thing in fortifying the cities. He did the wrong thing when he forgot who the enemy was. So do we.

2- When you have a decision to make, never underestimate the power of the Word of God. It says of itself it will *lead* you, it will *teach* you, it will *direct* you, and it will *correct* you. Therefore, any

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counsel, no matter how plausible it may sound, that contradicts that Word, must be rejected.

3- When you are looking for godly counsel, numbers mean nothing. Four hundred men who tell you what you want to hear will not be as meaningful as one man who tells you what God wants you to hear. Christianity is simply not a numbers game. It is a case where, generally, the minority rules.

4- When you are seeking counsel, don't just go to those who will agree with you. Find men and women who will hold up the Word as it is, regardless of the consequences. Find yourself a Micaiah!

5- Never underestimate the cunningness of Satan and align yourself with his purposes. He's a deceiver, a liar, and a thief. His one goal is to "roam to and fro throughout the whole earth, seeking whom he may devour." And he can make a lie seem like the thing to do.

6- If you get advice that you know is from God, take it. It doesn't matter what everyone else is saying. Jehoshaphat asked for God's man to speak. God's man spoke. Jay went ahead anyway, and it was only a miracle of grace that God bailed him out. He was presumptuous with God by ignoring the very counsel he had asked for.

7- Regardless of the odds, whether you are witnessing or counseling, or preaching or teaching, never forget the words of Micaiah, the prophet. When confronted with an opportunity to agree with the theologians of his day, and guarantee his own popularity, or tell the truth and risk his life, he answered:

What my God saith, that will I speak.

He could do that with confidence; and so can you, because the Word of God is its own defense. It always proves itself to be true. Always. It didn't matter that 400 religious cheerleaders had stirred the people with words that had no substance, but sounded great. They had promised the people what they wanted to hear. Instant victory. Immediate prosperity. Whether it was God's will or not. Whether they had been obedient to God's principles or not. Micaiah didn't care about the odds. He only cared about the Word of His God. And so he answered simply, "that will I speak".

Thousands of years have come and gone; and generation after generation has faced the same inevitable dilemma. Do you

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join forces with those who claim the same God, but deny the authority of His Word? Or do you lovingly respect them, but seek your counsel from and seek to minister alongside those who view the Word for what it is? In other words, do you compromise your convictions in the name of peace? The answer is no. No matter the numbers; no matter the political pressure; no matter the potential consequences (for Mike it meant imprisonment), you simply, quietly but firmly respond, “What my God saith, that, *and that alone*, will I speak. I have no other word.”

The world may not understand. The religious establishment may not understand. But those “who have ears to hear” will hear. If you have been compromising, in any way, what you know is the clear word of the Living God, whether at work, in your marriage, or in your ministry, I beg you this day, to go back and take your stand, *regardless of the cost*, on the Word of God. It may not be popular. It usually isn't. We weren't put here to win contests; we were put here to win a lost world. And that lost world is looking for absolutes.

And we were put here to be salt and light in that world. Therefore, we must not vacillate in our commitment to this Book. Whenever others look to us for counsel or instruction, whatever the circumstance, whatever the pressure, we have but one reply... “What my God saith; that will I speak.” Amen.

Project for the Week

Take a hard look at any compromises you have accepted as normal, at work, in relationships, in convictions, in thought patterns. Write them down. Purpose this week with Micaiah to “only speak what God has said...”.

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