

# A Random Arrow?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the second book of Chronicles, 2 Chronicles and chapter 18, page 442 and 443 in the Pew Bible, 2 Chronicles chapter 18.

I want us to go through the whole chapter, but if we just read again at verse 33, but a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, turn round and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded. And the battle continued that day, and the king of Israel was propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians until evening, then at sunset he died.

Have you ever read through a chapter in the Bible and thought to yourself afterwards, I'd love to hear a sermon on that. I'd love someone to explain and expand upon that passage.

I'd love to understand the meaning and the message of that chapter I've just read. Well, that actually happened to me the other day. I was lying in bed, reading through 2 Chronicles chapter 18. And when I came to the end of that chapter, I don't know if you had it when you read it this evening, but when I came to the end of that chapter, I thought, well, that's an interesting and a very intriguing chapter. I'd love to hear a sermon on that. And then I thought to him, oh yeah, I'm a preacher. I suppose I should do it myself. So I thought I'd give it a go. So here we are this evening, 2 Chronicles chapter 18. Now, although our English Bibles have two books, 1 and 2 Chronicles, the Hebrew Bible, which is the language that the Old Testament was written in, it only had one book of Chronicles. There was only one book of Chronicles. And the book of Chronicles, it was written as a book of remembrance. It was written to record and to recount this chronological history of the Lord's covenant people and how the Lord had been faithful to his covenant people, the Israelites, and how he had been faithful to all his covenant promises down throughout the generations. And, you know, we're reminded of the Lord's faithfulness even in this chapter, in 2 Chronicles chapter 18. Because in 2 Chronicles chapter 18, we see three things. So three headings this evening. We see a problematic promise, a powerful preacher, and a perfect providence.

So in 2 Chronicles 18, there's a problematic promise, a powerful preacher, and a perfect providence. Okay? So first of all, we're looking at a problematic promise.

[ 3 : 09 ] Look at verse 1. It says, Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor, and he made a marriage alliance with Ahab. After some years, he went down to Ahab in Samaria. And Ahab killed an abundance of sheep and oxen for him and for the people who were with him and induced him to go up against Ramoth Gilead. Ahab, king of Israel, said to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, will you go with me to Ramoth Gilead? He answered him, I am as you are, my people as your people. We will be with you in the war. 2 Chronicles chapter 18, it highlights the history, boys and girls, the history of two kings, king Ahab and king Jehoshaphat. King Ahab and king Jehoshaphat. What's interesting is that this narrative of 2 Chronicles 18, it's actually repeated in 1 Kings chapter 22. So you can read it later on. And what you'll notice if you read it, it's the chapter in 1 Kings 22. It's almost word for word.

But the reason there was 2 Kings here is because at the time there were 2 kingdoms. Under the rule and the reign of King David and King Solomon, Israel had been 1 United Kingdom.

The nation of Israel was 1 United Kingdom. But when Solomon died, his 2 sons, Jeroboam and Rehoboam, they divided the nation of Israel into 2 kingdoms. And so by this point in the history of God's covenant people, Ahab, boys and girls, Ahab was king in the northern kingdom of Israel. So Ahab was king in the northern kingdom of Israel, and Jehoshaphat was king in the southern kingdom of Judah. But what distinguished these kings from one another was not just their reign. They were reigning in different kingdoms. What distinguished them most was their religion.

Because King Ahab, we're told repeatedly in Scripture, he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

Whereas King Jehoshaphat in the south, he feared the Lord, and he walked in his ways. In fact, when we're introduced to King Ahab, who was the king in the northern kingdom of Israel, when we're introduced to him, we're told that King Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all the kings who were before him.

And Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord because the role and the responsibility of the king, it's very interesting in Israel, the role and responsibility of the king was not only to rule and to reign over the people. It was much more than that. The responsibility and the role of the king was to lead the Lord's people to love and serve the Lord. The king had a great responsibility to make sure the people were worshiping the Lord. But Ahab didn't do that because Ahab, he married a woman who wasn't an Israelite. He married, as the Bible describes, he married outside the covenant, outside the covenant people of Israel. He married evil Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbal, the king of the Sidonians. And what's fascinating is that the Bible actually says, that's amazing when you read it, the Bible actually says, if that hadn't been bad enough, if it hadn't been bad enough that King Ahab made evil Jezebel his queen, what was worse was that Ahab worshipped Jezebel's God.

[ 7 : 00 ] Ahab worshipped the idol Baal. Baal was said to be the god of fertility and growth. You worshipped Baal if you wanted a child or if you wanted a good harvest. You always went to Baal for fertility and growth. In fact, Ahab, he built altars for Baal all over the northern kingdom of Israel, and he encouraged the Lord's people. He was meant to encourage them to worship the Lord, but he encouraged the Lord's people to bow down and worship Baal. And you know, it's no wonder when the Bible says, it's no wonder that when you read in the Bible, it says, King Ahab did more to provoke the Lord to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. But the thing about this king, King Ahab, he had many warnings. He had many warnings in his life because not long after marrying evil Jezebel and allowing all her idols to move into the kingdom, there was a famine in the land. Not long after the wedding, there was this great famine in the kingdom of Israel that lasted three and a half years. And that's when, you remember, that's when the prophet Elijah appeared.

So that's the context we're working in. The prophet Elijah appears on the scene, and he preaches God's word, and he proclaims God's warning. But Ahab, he didn't listen to the Lord's prophet. Instead, he only saw Elijah as this troubler and terrorist in Israel. Because Elijah was, you remember, he was the man of God. He was the one who stood firm and called down fire from heaven and slaughtered all the prophets of Baal. Elijah was the man of God who confronted and challenged King Ahab, even when King Ahab took old Naboth's vineyard without asking. My friend, Ahab was a godless and greedy king. And as the Bible affirms, there was no one who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like King Ahab.

And you know, what a thing to be written and remembered about you. To be remembered in Holy Scripture, to get your name into the Bible, and to be remembered in Holy Scripture as the most evil king in history. What a title to have, King Ahab, the most evil king in history. What's amazing is that King Jehoshaphat, the king in the southern kingdom of Judah, King Jehoshaphat was the complete opposite.

We're told that Jehoshaphat feared the Lord. He walked in his ways. He did not seek the Baals. Jehoshaphat was someone who was committed to the Lord. He was courageous for the Lord. If we had read the previous chapter, chapter 17, we would have seen that Jehoshaphat, he removed idol worship from the kingdom of Judah. He encouraged all these men to go out into the kingdom and read the law of God to the people. And Jehoshaphat was someone who brought peace. He rested from war. Jehoshaphat had his great wealth, and he had great weapons. He was a gracious and godly man. He was very, very different to King Ahab. But in this chapter, we see that Jehoshaphat made a mistake.

As a gracious and godly man, he made a mistake. He wasn't perfect. No gracious and godly man is. And his mistake, though, was a problematic promise with King Ahab. And it was a problematic promise because Jehoshaphat, as we're told in verse 1, he made a marriage alliance, this marriage covenant with King Ahab, where Jehoshaphat's son, who was called Jehoram, he married Ahab's daughter, Athaliah. So here's these two kingdoms being brought together because of one family, because of this marriage. And as you can imagine, Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, and Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, they would have been brought up in very different homes. Because in the northern kingdom, they only worshipped Baal. In the southern kingdom of Judah, they only worshipped the Lord.

[ 11 : 27 ] Jehoshaphat's home, King Jehoshaphat was one who feared the Lord. He was faithful to the Lord. But Ahab's home was a place where they worshipped Baal continually. And sadly, when Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, when he married Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, their marriage had an impact and an influence. An impact and an influence not only upon Jehoshaphat's son, but also the family. In fact, we're told that Jehoram, when he became king in Judah, after his father, Jehoshaphat, he followed in the footsteps of his wife. His wife led him to worship Baal. He followed in the footsteps of his wife because we're told that Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, he didn't fear the Lord. He walked, and he didn't walk in the ways of the Lord. Instead, he walked in the ways of the King of Israel and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

And you know, you look at this marriage alliance, and there's a lesson for us. The lesson is very simply, be careful who you marry, because it can be dangerous and detrimental to your faith. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians, it can be dangerous and detrimental to your faith to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever. But also, he's saying more than that. There's more than that here. Be careful of the company you keep. Jehoshaphat had the company of King Ahab.

And he's saying, we're being taught here in the passage, be careful of the company you keep. And this is important for the young people, the boys and girls, as well as the old people, because as the saying goes, you are the company you keep. You are the company you keep.

But you know, you look at Jehoshaphat. You enter into Jehoshaphat's shoes. Here's his son. He marries this woman from the northern kingdom who worships Baal. And as a parent, as a parent, Jehoshaphat was someone he couldn't monitor his children 24-7. He couldn't control who they went out with or who they married. He couldn't control the company that his son kept. He might have tried to curtail it, but he couldn't control it. And you know, even for us as parents or Christian parents, we can't control who our children go out with or who they marry. We can't control the company they keep. We might try and curtail it, but we cannot control it. And especially in the 21st century, because so much of the company that children keep, nowadays it's online. It's through social media.

It's through online gaming. That's the company they keep. And it's hard to control. It's hard to curtail. But you know, Spurgeon, he always had that helpful illustration. I'm sure you've heard it before.

[ 14 : 33 ] The helpful illustration to remind us that as Christians, we're to be in the world, but not off the world. Spurgeon told one of his church members when they came to him, she wanted to know whether she should marry this man who wasn't a Christian. And the Spurgeon said, well, stand on my desk. What a thing to say. Stand on my desk. So she got up onto his desk and with one tug pulled her down. And he said to her, it's easier for me to pull you down than it is for you to pull me up. It's easier for me to pull you down than it is for you to pull me up. And that's why, you know, that's why the Bible teaches us. That's why the Bible tells us the importance as Christians to be wise as serpents, to be harmless as doves, to be separate from the world, to come out from among them. But always to remember that separation is not isolation.

It's contact without contamination. And what happened here with Jehoshaphat, there was contact, but there was contamination too. And so we see a problematic promise.

But then we see a powerful preacher, a problematic promise, and then a powerful preacher. Now look at verse 2. We're told that after some years she went down to Ahab in Samaria, and Ahab killed an abundance of sheep and oxen for him and for the people who were with him, and induced him to go up against Ramoth Gilead. And Ahab, king of Israel, said to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, will you go with me to Ramoth Gilead? He answered him, I am as you are, my people as your people. We will be with you in the war. And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, inquire first for the word of the Lord. If we were to read 1 Kings 22, we'd be told there that the marriage alliance between Jehoshaphat's son and Ahab's daughter, it was just about three years after that marriage alliance that the graceless and godless king Ahab sought to now take advantage of the gracious and godly king Jehoshaphat. And he does so by entangling him in his worldly war.

And the worldly war was about Ramoth Gilead. Ramoth Gilead was a land that was just a region of land that was on the border of the northern kingdom of Israel. It was bordering Syria. The land belonged to the kingdom of Israel. But Ahab had lost that land. He had lost it to the Syrian king. He had lost it a few years earlier. But now he wants it back. And he wants King Jehoshaphat from the south to help him. And so he makes this request to Jehoshaphat, this king with great weapons, great wealth. And he says to King Jehoshaphat, remember your son is married to my daughter, so

will you go with me to battle at Ramoth Gilead? Will you come with me? And because of this new marriage alliance that Jehoshaphat had ended up in, Jehoshaphat doesn't want to rock the boat. He wants to keep things smooth. He wants to keep things sweet between the two of them. Doesn't want to affect his son's marriage. And so Jehoshaphat, he compromises. He compromises and confesses to Ahab. He says, I am as you are. My people as your people. My horses as your horses. But of course, that wasn't true. Jehoshaphat wasn't like Ahab. They were completely different. Jehoshaphat was the gracious and godly king. Ahab was the graceless and godless king.

[ 18 : 16 ] But what we see is that the marriage alliance between Ahab and Jehoshaphat, this problematic promise that had taken place, that was only the thin end of the wedge. Because Ahab, he now wants another thing from him. Not only your son. I want your army too. That was the thin end of the wedge.

And now as time has gone on, something else he wants. He wants his army. Will you go with me to Ramoth Gilead to battle? And you know, that's the way the world always works, isn't it? The world always wants the Christian to concede and to compromise and to conform. The world always wants the Christian to divert course just one degree. Just this once. Do it just this once? You know, it should always be a warning to us. Because as Christians, as we saw on Wednesday evening, we're saved, sanctified, and set apart. We're saved, sanctified, and set apart. We're called to be godly, gracious, and good living. And of course, that doesn't mean we're perfect.

Doesn't mean we should be easily persuaded either. Doesn't mean we should be a pushover in order to be popular. Do you know, Jehoshaphat's a warning to us not to be a doormat and walked all over just because you're a Christian. We're not to be a doormat in order to be loved and liked. You know, we're to be in the world, but not of the world. Separation is not isolation. It's contact without contamination. And you know, you look at Jehoshaphat here. He's in a sticky situation. It's a difficult line to walk. Here is a gracious and godly man, and he doesn't want to rock the boat.

So he concedes. He compromises. He doesn't stand firm. He concedes and he compromises. But notice, even though he concedes and compromises a little bit, he's very wise in the way he deals with Ahab's desires and demands. He says to Ahab in verse 4, he says, inquire first for the word of the Lord. In other words, he says to Ahab, graceless and godless King Ahab, he says to him, before we do anything, Ahab, let's pray about this first. You know what a thing to say. Before we do anything, Ahab, let's pray about this first. You know, even though Jehoshaphat, he had conceded and compromised his position only slightly, at this point he wasn't willing. He wasn't willing to surrender or to submit to the whims and wants of King Ahab. Before we do anything, King Ahab, let's pray about this first. And you know, thinking about it, you know, we do well to have Jehoshaphat's wisdom there. Walking that narrow path that the Christian often finds difficult in the workplace, in the home, the narrow path. It's a thin line and it's difficult. No one's denying it's not difficult. But you know, we need wisdom because rather than responding to the demands and rushing the decisions before we do anything, Jehoshaphat's reminding us, pray about it first. Before we do anything, King Ahab, let's pray about it first. We should seek God's wisdom, God's will, God's way from God's word. Because you know, the amazing thing is Jehoshaphat, and we see that in the previous chapter, Jehoshaphat knew for himself the word of God is the only rule to direct us on how we may glorify God and enjoy him forever. But you know, what King Ahab did, the graceless and godless King Ahab, what he did next showed just how evil he really was. Because Ahab, we're told, he calls together his 400 faithful prophets. But these prophets were faithful to him, but false to the Lord. They were faithful to him, but false to the Lord. In fact, Ahab's prophets were actually paid prophets.

[ 22 : 33 ] They were hired to prophesy in favor of the king because they served Ahab's government. They didn't serve God. You could say that these 400 prophets, they were yes men. And yes men are always dangerous.

Ahab's prophets, they had no confidence. They had no conviction themselves. They had no standing on the word. They had no thought about what God's word had to say to them. They were just yes men. Yes, Ahab.

Yes, Ahab. Which is why we read that they unanimously prophesied in favor of their king. Verse 5, Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, 400 men, and said to them, Shall we go to battle against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain? And they said, Go up, for God will give it into the hand of the king. But again, in his wisdom, Jehoshaphat asks, he asks another question. He said, first of all, will we pray about it? Then he asks, second, is there someone else to speak to this?

Is there not another prophet of the Lord of whom we may inquire? Is there not another prophet of the Lord of whom we may inquire? Verse 7, And the king of Israel sent to Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord. Micaiah the son of Imla, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. And of course, Ahab hated Micaiah because he didn't do as Ahab dictated and demanded. Micaiah didn't go with the flow of Ahab's rule and reign. And yet you look at it, and you think, you look at the narrative, and you think, well, this isn't the first time that Ahab has encountered and experienced a faithful prophet of the Lord speaking into his life. Because Ahab had met Elijah. I'd love to have met Elijah. We'll meet him one day in heaven. But you know, imagine him meeting

Elijah. And for long enough, Ahab hated Elijah, especially after this man of God had declared and demonstrated that the Lord is God. He had declared and demonstrated that the Lord is God on Mount Carmel when he called down fire from heaven. And then afterwards, after the fire from heaven, after the Lord had demonstrated that he is God, we saw Elijah, or we see him, we see him killing nearly a thousand prophets, false prophets. And as Ahab discovered with Elijah, one man with God is always the majority. One man with God is always the majority. It doesn't matter if we have 400 men telling you what you want to hear. The man of God will always tell you what you need to hear.

[ 25 : 34 ] And my friend, never forget that. The man of God will always tell you what you need to hear. And you read this passage, and we see Micaiah. He was someone, maybe he knew Elijah. Maybe he learned from Elijah. But he certainly followed in the footsteps of Elijah. Because here's a man who powerfully preached and prophesied to the face of King Ahab. And he tells him that all his faithful prophets, they're false prophets. They're all speaking lies. They're not telling you the truth.

Look at verse 18. Micaiah says, Therefore, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the hosts of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who will entice Ahab, the king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said one thing, and another said another.

Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, I will entice him. And the Lord said to him, By what means? And he said, I will go out and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.

And he said, You are to entice him, and you shall succeed. Go out and do so. Now, therefore, behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these your prophets Ahab. The Lord has declared disaster concerning you. I don't understand some of those verses and the conversation that he saw in heaven. I'm not going to try and unpack that because I don't understand it. But what I do understand is that Micaiah received a word from the Lord, and he fearlessly and faithfully preached it.

He powerfully preached and prophesied his message, even though his message wasn't popular, even though his message wasn't progressive like all the other prophets, even though his message wouldn't be well received by the government of the day. And yet he knew. Micaiah was someone who knew that his message may have not been what Ahab wanted to hear, but it was what Ahab needed to hear.

[ 27 : 54 ] Micaiah was a faithful and fearless preacher. And we read in the narrative, like the Apostle Paul, Micaiah, he's put in prison. He's punished for preaching the truth. He's put in prison. He's given rations and water. And like Paul, the amazing thing is Micaiah was not ashamed of the gospel.

He wasn't ashamed of God's message. Like Paul, Micaiah was not ashamed of the gospel. And for those of you who were there on Wednesday evening, this is something we were looking at in our study of 2 Timothy. And I'd encourage you to come along. There's no reason why you shouldn't come on Wednesday evening to the midweek meeting if you can, because it's for everyone, for absolutely everyone. It's not just for Christians or members or good people. I've heard all these excuses. They've passed through my ears. They're absolute nonsense. The midweek meeting is for everyone. Church is for everyone. And last Wednesday evening, we were considering Paul's exhortation to Timothy, do not be ashamed of the gospel. Do not be ashamed of this great and glorious message, the gospel of Jesus Christ. And if you remember, we were asking the question, we were asking the question, what's happened to the church in Scotland today? What's happened to the church? Are we asleep? Most likely. Are we apathetic? Most certainly. Are we ashamed? Most definitely. And you know, I keep coming back to that William Booth, what William Booth said

about the dangers the church faces in the future. William Booth, we mentioned on Wednesday, he's the founder, was the founder of the Salvation Army in the 19th century. And this is what he said about the church in the future. I consider that the chief dangers that confront the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, and heaven without hell. And he wasn't wrong. Because in the day and age we live in, where it's so easy to concede and to compromise and to conform to the standards and shouts of the world, these words are as relevant as ever. Which is why we need to be willing to stay focused and stand firm on our convictions as Christians. We need to be fearless in our faith.

The world will mock, they will ridicule, they will resent us, but we need to stay focused and stand firm on our convictions as Christians. You know, we need, like Micaiah, we need powerful preachers in our day and age. We need to be able to preach the truth of God's Word without fear or favor of any man.

That's what we need. Because the Word of God is the power of God unto salvation to those who believe. And so in 2 Chronicles 18, we see a problematic promise, a powerful preacher, and lastly and briefly, a perfect providence. A perfect providence. Look at verse 29. I know I'm rushing through this chapter, but you can go over it again tonight when you go home. You can read it in bed tonight. Okay? So verse 29, and the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you wear your robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle. Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of his chariots, fight with neither small nor great, but only with the king of Israel. As soon as the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, it is the king of Israel.

So they turned to fight against him. And Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him. God drew them away from him. For as soon as the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. But a certain man threw his bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, turn round and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded. And the battle continued that day, and the king of Israel was propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians until evening. Then at sunset he died. And you know, in these last closing, the closing verses of this chapter, we see that despite the plea of that powerful preacher Micaiah, despite his plea, King Ahab, the godless and graceless King Ahab, and the gracious and godly King Jehoshaphat, they go into battle. They go up to Ramoth Gilead against Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria. But you know, all the time we're reading this, we should be asking, why is Jehoshaphat doing it? Why is this gracious and godly King fighting Ahab's battles for him?

[ 33 : 15 ] To the point that Jehoshaphat's life, his life is now in danger. That's where Ahab has led him. He moved one inch, he followed the thin end of the wedge, and it's led right into battle, putting his life in danger. And Jehoshaphat's life's in danger, while Ahab selfishly disguises himself. He doesn't dress like a king in his great robes.

Obviously, there's doubt in Ahab's mind as to what Micaiah has just said to him, that he's going to die in battle. So he disguises himself on the battlefield. But for Jehoshaphat, sitting in his royal chariot with his royal robes, he's in the middle of a battlefield, and well, it wouldn't have been the best camouflage. Jehoshaphat would have been, he would have stuck out like a sore thumb. He would have been sitting there as a sitting duck with a target on his back. And yet you read the passage, and what we see is the sovereignty of the Lord. Because the Syrian army, they have no interest in Jehoshaphat. They realize that it's not him. They don't have a clue where King Ahab is. They don't want Jehoshaphat. It's not his battle to fight. And as soon as they saw that the man in the royal robes wasn't King Ahab, they just turned back. But, but, and this is what's fascinating, verse 33, but a certain man threw his bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the scale of the royal armor and the breastplate. A certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel. He struck King Ahab. Evil King Ahab is killed, not by the strength and skill of the Syrian army, but by a random man firing a random bow and being struck by a random arrow in the only place, the only place where there was a chink in Ahab's armor. You know, it's amazing.

You'd love to see it on a film, how it all played out. This random man and the random bow and the random arrow hitting Ahab where it hurts. And you know, the way it's worded in Hebrew, verse 33, the way it's worded, it suggests that the archer, he was actually aiming for something else.

[ 35 : 41 ] He was aiming in a different direction. He wasn't aiming at Ahab. He wasn't aiming at that disguised king. That's why it says it was random. The only word they could use for it was random.

But of course, neither the archer nor the arrow were in control because the Lord was sovereignly directing the archer and the Lord was sovereignly determining the arrow. The Lord was in control. And you know, the amazing thing here is that King Ahab, he may have disguised himself. He may have tried to hide himself from the Syrian army, but he couldn't hide from God. And that's why it wasn't a random arrow. It was too perfect to be random. Far too perfect to be random. It was a perfect providence. That's what it was. It was a perfect providence. As you know, my friend, I don't like using the word luck or chance or fluke because everything is all according to the Lord's providence.

And nothing happens in our lives at random. It's not an accident. We're in church tonight. It's all ordained. Nothing happens by fluke or luck or chance or fate or fortune or karma.

No, it's all providence. The word providence means seen beforehand. God saw it all before the world began, which means that like it was for Jehoshaphat, this king who made a mistake, it means that all our meetings, all our mistakes, all our mishaps, it's all part of God's providence. All our stresses, sickness, and sorrows, they're all part of the providence of God. They're all ordered and ordained.

[ 37 : 27 ] They're all appointed and assigned. They're all governed and guided by the Lord according to His perfect plan, path, purpose, and providence in our lives. And as we know, that's sometimes hard to understand. Because sometimes His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts.

And as the hymn or the poet says, and I always go back to it, sometimes He weaveth sorrow. And I in foolish pride forget that He sees the upper, and I the underside. And not till the loom is silent or the shuttle cease to fly, shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why. The dark threads are as needful in the weaver's skillful hand as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned. It's all according to His perfect providence. But for King Ahab, the random arrow was an arrow of judgment. An arrow of judgment because he continually refused and rejected the Lord in his life. But for King Jehoshaphat, the arrow was an arrow of salvation that protected and preserved his life. And he goes on to experience the blessing of the Lord, if you read through the narrative. It was a perfect providence. A perfect providence. And so that's 2 Chronicles 18. I've taken up too much time this evening, but it's a fascinating chapter, isn't it? It's a chapter all about a problematic promise, a powerful preacher, and a perfect providence. A problematic promise, powerful preacher, perfect providence. But you know, just in conclusion, you know, what this chapter ought to remind us as we go into a new week is that the Lord not only wrote this narrative in 2 Chronicles 18, which is hidden in the pages of the Old Testament, probably hard to find, and yet the Lord, He's not only written this narrative, He's also written our narrative too. He's written the narrative and the story of our lives because He's the author of the story. He's the director in the drama of our lives. We might not understand our storyline. We might not foresee all the twists and turns in the chapters of our life, but He's the one who turns the pages. He turns the pages of our providence. And His promise to us, and this is what I want to leave you with this evening, His promise to us, whatever our circumstance, whatever our situation this evening, whatever is going on at home, or in our family, or in our community, whatever is in the week before us, His promise remains true. He is working all things together by His grace for our good and to His glory.

He is working all things together by His grace for our good and to His glory. That's what King Jehoshaphat discovered on the battlefield. And my friend, that's what you'll discover on the battlefield too. The Lord is working, and He's working it all together for good, by His grace for our good and to His glory. Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us, and let us pray.

O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee for Thy Word. Thy Word that reminds us and reassures us that there are a God who is with us on the battlefield, and that even when we make mistakes in life, when we go our own way and follow our own footsteps, we pray, Lord, that we would learn, we would learn to listen to the Lord and follow Him and serve Him. Lord, we thank Thee for even this passage in 2 Chronicles 18, a passage that teaches us so much and reminds us that the Lord is sovereign, He is in control, and that He is working all things together for good to those who are the called according to His purpose. Bless us, Lord, we pray, even in the week that lies ahead, a week that is unknown to any of us. But Lord, we give thanks that this is where we are this evening, committing and commending ourselves into Thy care and keeping. Do us good, we

pray, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.

[ 42 : 05 ] Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening. We're going to sing in Psalm 64. Psalm 64, again in the Scottish Psalter, page 297.

Psalm 64, page 297. We're singing from verse 7 down to the end of the psalm. Psalm 64, page 297, singing verse 7 to 10. Now, before we sing, I'll ask the questions because I usually forget.

So, question one, boys and girls. You ready? Good to go? Yep. Awake? Yeah. Who are the two kings?

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hang on, hang on, hang on. Go for it. King? King Ahab, that's one. So, was he good or bad? Bad. Bad. He was the evil king, graceless and godless. Yep. The other one? King? Jehoshaphat. Well done for pronouncing that. Jehoshaphat. I had to practice a lot so I wouldn't get it wrong. And was he good or bad? Good. He was a gracious and godly king. What are the two kingdoms?

[ 43 : 29 ] So, King Ahab was king over which kingdom? The northern kingdom of Israel. Yeah, well done. And King Jehoshaphat was king over the southern kingdom of Judah. Well done.

And what happened to one of the kings? He got shot by an arrow. And was the arrow random?

Well, that's what the Bible says. It was random. Perfect port. Perfect providence of God.

That it went straight through his armor. Isn't that amazing? So, well done. You're very good at answering your questions. It's good you listen. I think the adults are terrified. If you don't have the answers, they'll have to answer them. So, we're singing Psalm 64 and verse 7.

God shall shoot. God shall an arrow shoot at them and wound them suddenly. So, their own tongue shall them confound. All who them see shall fly. And on all men a fear shall fall. God's works they shall declare. For they shall wisely notice take what these his doings are. In God the righteous shall rejoice and thrust upon his might. Yea, they shall greatly glory all in heart that are upright. These verses of Psalm 64 mouth and co-53 these verses andiary of god. So, prayer Ricketen to his ears. Excellent please.

Then suddenly So there, O tongue, Shall then confound All who that sea shall fly And all, O man, A fear shall fall God's words they shall declare For they shall wisely know Tested what these is to its hour

[ 46 : 14 ] In God the righteous Shall rejoice And trust upon his might Yea, they shall greatly glory All in heart that are upright The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen.