

Tuesday 8th September 2020.

Exodus 20:16

"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour"

2 Chronicles 18:15-22

"The king said to him, 'How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?'

Then Micaiah answered, 'I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd and the Lord said, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'"

The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad.'

Micaiah continued, 'Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing on his right and on his left. And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab king of Israel into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' One said this and another that. Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him.' 'By what means?' the Lord asked.

'I will go and be a lying spirit in the mouths of the prophets,' he said.

'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the Lord. 'Go and do it'"

Ephesians 4:25 *"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body"*

"It wasn't me, honest." "He did it." We all lie from time to time. As children we fear the wrath of our parents and teachers if we tell the truth about our misdemeanours. Sometimes we lie openly without shame. We can praise and compliment people patronisingly. We can say what we think people want to hear or to curry their favour.

This is what happened to King Ahab in 2 Chronicles. He and Jehoshaphat, King of Judah sought the opinion of their prophets on whether to attack the Arameans in the city of Ramoth Gilead. The prophets, 400 of them, without exception said that they should attack and God would be with them.

But one prophet, Micaiah, summoned reluctantly by King Ahab spoke the truth as given to him by God. Contrary to the opinion of the 400 false prophets Micaiah indicated that the king would be victorious but that because of the king's evil ways he would die. King Ahab was not too pleased to hear this and ordered Micaiah to be put in prison but his prophesy came to pass and Ahab died in the battle.

It may be painful and embarrassing to lie and be caught out doing so but we should heed the 9th Commandment (Exodus 20:16) and Paul's instruction to the church in Ephesus to *'beware falsehoods and speak truthfully...'* We should aim to find favour and grace with God by being truthful rather than deceiving our neighbours.