

II CHRONICLES 19-20

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Chronicles chapter 19 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Tonight we will continue looking at the godly King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Jehoshaphat.

In our last study we saw Jehoshaphat make an alliance with Ahab, the King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and he was wicked, as was his wife, Jezebel.

And the only reason I can figure out why Jehoshaphat made this alliance is that his son married the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Thus, Jehoshaphat agrees to go into battle with Ahab against the Syrians who were occupying Ramoth Gilead.

And prior to this battle the prophets from Ahab spoke and said that the King will be victorious, but Jehoshaphat recognized that there was something wrong and asks Ahab if there are any other prophets, any prophets of God around.

And Ahab says that there is one named Micaiah and Ahab is upset because he always speaks negative about him.

Maybe the reason Micaiah spoke negative about Ahab is because of his idolatry, because he was leading the people away from God.

But Ahab reluctantly gets Micaiah and this prophet tells Ahab that not only will Israel lose this battle, but Ahab will be killed!

Upon hearing this he tells Jehoshaphat, “**... ‘Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?’**” II Chronicles 18:17.

But Ahab does not listen to this prophet; instead, he has him thrown into prison.

Again, what I don't understand is that Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet of God to speak regarding this battle, and Micaiah tells them that they will lose in this battle.

That is very clear, and yet, Jehoshaphat doesn't listen to what the Lord is telling him through this prophet. And that is the problem. God warned him and he did not listen!

And both Ahab and Jehoshaphat go into battle against the Syrians. But before they do we see that Ahab takes off his Kingly garments so he would not be recognized and killed and yet he has Jehoshaphat wear his kingly clothes!

Again, I don't get why Jehoshaphat did that, he was going into this battle with a target on his back! The enemy is looking to kill the King, and he is dressed like a King, since he was, but Ahab is in disguise! Again, a warning from God, but he does not listen!

As we saw in this battle, the Syrians see the King in his kingly garments and they surround him, Jehoshaphat that is, and he cries out and we are told that the Lord helped him and the Syrians turned from killing Jehoshaphat.

Instead, there was a soldier who randomly shot an arrow in the air and it struck Ahab in the chest, and he died that evening just as Micaiah had said.

As we read this, again, we are probably thinking, ***“What in the world was Jehoshaphat doing?”***

The reality is that we often do what Jehoshaphat did.

What do I mean by that?

God warns us not to do something, and we find ways to justify why we should do them. God gives us warnings not to do something, and we just ignore what God is saying to us.

And Jehoshaphat is going to find out that there are consequences in not obeying the Lord, as we will see this evening.

That is where we will pick up our study this evening, on the heels of this defeat as Jehoshaphat is returning home.

Let's begin reading in II Chronicles chapter 19, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

II CHRONICLES 19

VERSES 1-3

How in the world did Jehoshaphat make it through this battle and then make it home when he was dressed in the Kingly garments and the Syrians were looking to take down the King?

Simply, it was the grace and mercy of God that spared his life. He returned home safely and that speaks a lot of what God did!

In fact, Selman wrote this regarding these events in the life of Jehoshaphat, ***“The fact that Jehoshaphat reached home safely is significant. It contrasts his fate with Ahab’s, and testifies to God’s grace given to a person who was almost destroyed by undiscerning folly.”***

Ahab was shot randomly but God directed that arrow and his life was over.

Jehoshaphat was surrounded by the Syrians, and he makes it home safely.

Ahab was at war with God, rebelled against God and died in this battle.

Jehoshaphat loved the Lord, although this is not where God wanted him, and yet God spared his life!

The safest place to be is in the Lord and the most dangerous place to be is apart from the Lord!

As Jehoshaphat is returning home from this battle, from this defeat we see this prophet, Jehu come out to meet him.

Keep in mind that this man, Jehu, is the son of Hanani and it was Hanani that chastised King Asa for depending on the Syrians for protection instead of the Lord!

Now his son has gone out on a similar mission!

So we see that as Jehoshaphat returns home, the prophet Jehu comes out to meet him and rebukes him for his actions.

And notice what he tells Jehoshaphat, **“Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord?”**

Now as you read that it seems confusing, for we are told to love those that hate us, to reach out to the lost.

In fact, Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:43-48, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”**

It sounds like Jesus is saying we are to love our enemies, so is this prophet wrong, is he not speaking for the Lord here?

I think what God is saying here is this.

Jehoshaphat was fellowshiping with Ahab, and light and darkness don't mix.

It is one thing to share Christ with the lost; it is another thing to be one with them.

We are to love our enemies, not love their sin.

We are to love our enemies but not have that close personal fellowship with them.

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 6:14-18, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’ I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”**

Paul is speaking about Christians letting the world influence their thinking, their way of life.

We are not to join together with unbelievers. It is not that we as Christians are to never associate ourselves with unbelievers.

Paul, in I Corinthians 5:9-10 tells us, **“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.”**

We are to be in the world and not of the world.

It is like the illustration of the boat. A boat can function only in the water, it can't function out of the water, it won't go anywhere.

But if that same water gets into the boat it will sink.

The same is true in our Christian lives. We are to be in this world, shinning for Jesus but we are not to let the world get into us or we will be sunk!

I think that is what this prophet Jehu is telling Jehoshaphat and us.

It is as the Psalmist said in Psalm 97:10, "**You who love the Lord, hate evil! . . .**"

You can't love the Lord and love evil, it doesn't work. And thus, don't let the world influence you, for it will conform you into its image! Instead, let the Lord transform you!

Notice that there is not only this rebuke, but words of encouragement for this King.

He removed the evil from the land, and his heart was prepared before the Lord!

And folks, that means his walk with the Lord was a top priority in his life. How about you?

Then why did he disobey the Lord here as he partnered with Ahab?

Because the best of men are men at best!

In other words, we have choices to make. To obey the Lord, to listen to His still small voice or to let the world, let others influence our lives.

In either case there are consequences to our actions, and we need to remember that!

VERSE 4

Now we don't know how long Jehoshaphat was away from his people.

But during the time he had made alliances with Ahab, it caused his people to backslide, they strayed from the Lord.

Folks, like it or not, the way we live out our faith will affect others.

Paul said in I Corinthians 11:1, “**Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**”

May we be able to say that to others because we are following after Jesus!

Paul used his life as an example for the Corinthian believers to follow, one that was other’s-centered instead of self-centered.

The reason Paul could tell them to imitate him is because his life was centered upon Christ.

Today we hear people say, or we may have even said it at times, “*Do as I say, not as I do!*”

That is a cop-out!

Paul lived what he believed and thus he could boldly say, “**Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**” I Corinthians 11:1.

We too need to be examples of Jesus because the only Bible some people will read is your life, how the Lord has impacted you, how you walk!

For Jehoshaphat, he was not where he should have been and thus, without Jehoshaphat around, the people went away from the Lord!

As he has now returned home, we see that he is going around trying to get the people back on track, to bring them back to the Lord.

You have to love a man of God who has that kind of passion for his people. And the reality was this. Without a shepherd, the sheep were scattered and they strayed from the Lord.

May we stay on course and be an example, and be an encourager to others!

VERSES 5-7

What does it take to be successful in public office?

It takes the fear of the Lord to be in your heart and in your life!

Jehoshaphat not only went around bringing people back to the Lord but then he set out judges to oversee the daily lives of the people, to judge in matters with a godly judgment.

If this is how our court systems were run today, we truly would be blessed.

In fact, these verses should be placed in every courtroom and on every desk of judges and in every law school to remind them that they hold a man's life in their hands and need to honestly judge.

And looking at the liberal judges today who don't follow the law of the land, and they surely don't follow the law of God, and thus, they let rapists return to the streets to do the wickedness to others. They let murderers go free to do their wickedness to others. And if we continue in that direction, there will be the death of this nation!

Think about it. When the court system is corrupt, the nation will fall. And we need to be careful here, because, like I have said, we are in danger of falling!

But the only way that will happen, to regain our court system once again, is when there is the fear of the Lord in a person's life and they need to understand that as they are doing their job, they are representing God.

But what we see today is what Solomon spoke of in Proverbs 17:23, "**A wicked man accepts a bribe behind the back To pervert the ways of justice.**"

There is no fear of the Lord and thus, they do as they please, but in the end, they will be judged for their actions!

It is as Clarke wrote, *“A very solemn and very necessary caution: judges should feel themselves in the place of God, and judge as those who know they shall be judged for their judgments.”*

And not only judges, but pastors who pervert the Word of God, who deny the Word of God to justify sinful practices as no longer sinful, they are accountable to God!

And as we read on, we will see Jehoshaphat tell them that very thing, that they are accountable to God and thus, do what is right, fear the Lord!

VERSES 8-11

How important it was to have godly judges in office to deal with civil matters.

When ungodly judges are in office we see anarchy - much like we see in our own country today.

When people feel they can get away with a crime, there is no deterrence to stop them, and again, we see that happening today.

Even in schools, we don't want to hurt the fragile self-esteem of the children, so we let them get away with things, teaching them there are no consequences for their actions.

Again, it is as Clarke wrote, *“WITHOUT good and wholesome laws, no nation can be prosperous; and vain are the best laws if they be not judiciously and conscientiously administered.”*

Jehoshaphat brought the people back to God and brought order to the nation.

Was it easy?

I don't believe so, but as he told his men, **“... ‘Behave courageously, and the Lord will be with the good.’”**

The Living Bible puts it like this, “... **‘Be fearless in your stand for truth and honesty. And may God use you to defend the innocent,’ was his final word to them.**”

May we stand up for truth, may we stand up for what is right, what is good, and the Lord will be with us as we do!

And yes, it is not easy, not at all because society today is fighting against the Lord and thus, they are fighting against us, His servants!

As we move into II Chronicles chapter 20, we are going to see a test of faith for the King as he faces a battle that he is outnumbered, three nations against one!

What will he do?

Let’s read on and see!

II CHRONICLES 20

VERSES 1-2

After this defeat by the Syrians and the death of Ahab.

After Jehoshaphat brought spiritual reform to the nation.

After he brought the people back to God and brought civil order to the nation.

We now see three nations rise up against the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

These nations were; the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Edomites, and they were all blood relatives of Israel, of the Jewish people.

The Moabites and the Ammonites were the children of an incestuous relationship between Lot and his two daughters.

It was right after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah that his daughters thought they were the only ones left, thus, they got their father drunk and had sex with him bringing forth Moab, the father of the Moabites and Ben-Ammi, the father of the Ammonites.

And Esau, the son of Isaac and the brother of Jacob, was the father of the Edomites dwelling in the area of Mount Seir, as we see in verse 10.

Now these three nations gathered together at Hazazon Tamar, which was located around the western shores of the Dead Sea, not far from Qumran.

It is the area of En Gedi, and this massive army is preparing to attack the Southern Kingdom of Judah!

How is King Jehoshaphat going to respond to this situation that is before him?

Last time he was in battle he lost the war against the Syrians and almost was killed!

What is Jehoshaphat going to do?

How will he handle this crisis?

Let's read on and see how he responds.

VERSES 3-4

As Jehoshaphat gets word that these nations are gathered around the western shore of the Dead Sea, he is fearful.

That is a normal human response.

Now when this happens there are only three things that we can do.

We can allow that fear to grow in us to the point where we become incapacitated. We can let this fear paralyze us and keep us away from the Lord, away from the work that He wants to do.

The other thing we can do is go to the world to seek deliverance from this situation. We have seen Kings do that; they look to other nations to deliver them instead of seeking the Lord!

And this is what we need to do. We need to let this fear drive us to the Lord, to seek the Lord, to bring our fears to Him and cast them at His feet and that is what we see Jehoshaphat do here!

Remember what the Lord said in Isaiah 41:10, **“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”**

You see, fear is not wrong; it is how we respond to that fear. To me, this is a good fear. We all need to experience this for it truly gets us to re-focus our lives back on the Lord.

Jehoshaphat set his face to seek the Lord and called for a national fast.

Some may say that the reform that Jehoshaphat brought to the nation was not real, but look at how they responded to this situation. They gathered together from all the **“cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.”**

Granted they were all not completely surrendered to the Lord as we will see as this chapter closes, but they were moving towards the Lord with the reforms that the King had made!

In regard to what Jehoshaphat did, Selman wrote, *“His attitude is summed up by the word ‘seek’, which occurs twice in Hebrew though it is variously translated . . . This is a key word in Jehoshaphat’s reign, where it has the basic sense of ‘worship’, but also means to discover God’s will. It shows that Jehoshaphat has a higher trust in God than in his military resources.”*

You see, if you are going to put your trust in man, put your trust in your might, in your resources, you will be in trouble. You will remain fearful and unable to accomplish what God has for you.

Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 12:1, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”**

As we give our lives to the Lord for His use, Paul tells us it is our **“reasonable service”**, or it really can be translated **“spiritual worship.”**

As we serve the Lord, as we live our lives for Him, it is our worship unto the Lord and I believe that is what the Southern Kingdom of Judah is doing here as they seek the Lord, place their lives in His hands, they are worshiping the King of kings and Lord of lords!

And remember, perspective is everything as Paul reminds us in Romans as he tells us, **“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor**

depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:31-39.

Here’s the thing. If God is for us, and He is, then no one can come against God and win.

Also, there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God.

Don’t forget that!

You see, when you have that perspective, when you truly fear the Lord, you will trust Him because you know that He loves you and wants what is best for your life.

It is these difficult situations that cause us to seek the Lord, to seek His direction, to seek His help, but may we also seek Him in the good times, developing that relationship with Him!

Clarke puts this all into perspective for us as he wrote about what Jehoshaphat did, assembling the people together and calling for a fast.

He wrote, *“To get this assistance, it was necessary to seek it; and to get such extraordinary help, they should seek it in an extraordinary way; whence he proclaimed a universal fast, and all the people came up to Jerusalem to seek the Lord.”*

This was not an ordinary problem, it was serious and thus, they sought the Lord for direction in this situation!

Listen to Jehoshaphat, his prayer to the Lord for the nation and his people.

VERSES 5-6

It is exciting to see that when they needed to, they came together as a nation to seek the Lord.

They knew He was the only one who could truly help.

Now as they are gathered at the Temple, Jehoshaphat begins to pray before the Lord. And truly prayer is not to change the mind of God but to give our requests to Him and allow Him to change our heart, to give us direction in a situation, to help us gain a correct perspective of things.

How important it is to have a proper perspective of God, especially in the midst of battle.

God is in total control; nothing happens without His knowledge and without His permission.

We saw that in the book of Job as Satan told God that the only reason Job was praising Him was because He was blessing Job. But if something bad would happen, Job would surely curse You.

Job's faith was on the line, and God allowed Satan to do to Job what he could, but God put certain boundaries on what could be done.

And Satan could not do anything without God allowing it.

And Job loved the Lord in spite of what came upon his life, the good, the bad and the ugly!

Here we see that God has Jehoshaphat and the Southern Kingdom of Judah in this difficult situation, their backs are up against the wall, and God will stretch their faith, causing them to depend on Him!

That truly is how our faith grows, as we read God's Word and then apply that to our daily lives, it stretches us, causes us to depend more upon Him!

In regard to this prayer by Jehoshaphat, Adam Clarke wrote that this is ***"One of the most sensible, pious, correct, and as to its composition one of the most elegant prayers ever offered under the Old Testament dispensation."***

I agree with that! And we will see this as this prayer continues on.

And in regard to payer, Trapp wrote, *“The late renowned Gustavus, king of Sweden, would pray ashipboard, ashore, in the field, in the midst of the battle; as if prayer alone were the surest piece of his whole armour.”*

Prayer, as well as worship, is more important than any physical weapon we have, and we will see this played out for us shortly here in this story!

VERSES 7-9

I think it is important to look at the past, as I have said. I think it is good to remember what God has done, His faithfulness, which gives us confidence to pray for the situations we find ourselves in now.

God has done all this for them; He is not going to give up on them now!

What a perspective to have. If God has done these great things for His people in the past, we can trust Him to do great things for His people in the time of our need.

And Jehoshaphat is remembering the prayer of Solomon when the Temple was dedicated.

Remember what he was praying for, that God would answer their cry when they were in trouble, as they prayed towards this Temple. And God told Solomon that He would indeed answer his prayer.

Thus, Jehoshaphat is echoing the prayer of Solomon.

VERSES 10-11

I want you to notice here that when Jehoshaphat prayed, he prayed with the knowledge and understanding of God’s Word.

What a great lesson for us.

It is as Spurgeon wrote, ***“I like to plunge my hand into the promises, and then I find myself able to grasp with a grip of determination the mighty faithfulness of God. An omnipotent plea with God is: ‘Do as thou hast said.’”***

And what Jehoshaphat is remembering is that when they came out of Egypt; Ammon, Moab and the Edomites refused Israel passage through their land, and God forbid Israel from destroying them.

And now this is how they were repaying them.

Now they were joining forces to destroy Judah.

And I think his plea goes something like this, ***“Lord, since you did not allow Israel to destroy these nations before, when they would not let us pass through their land, it would be unjust if you let them destroy Your people now!”***

In other words, it would not be fair for Israel to suffer for their prior obedience!

Again, it was a prayer that was based upon the Word of God! (Moab: Judges 11:17-18, Ammon: Deuteronomy 23:3-4, Edom: Numbers 20:18-20)

VERSE 12

Again, a proper perspective of the situation - we have no strength, we can't do it on our own, and so our eyes are upon you Lord!

It speaks of a total dependence upon God. It is as Psalm 46:1-2 says, **“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”**

It is when we lose the consciousness of God in our life that things get out of focus and we become anxious and terrified.

Remember what David said in Psalm 31:24, **“Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the LORD.”**

Have you ever felt that way before, in a situation and you don’t know what to do, you might not even know what to pray in that situation.

All you can do, and I mean that in a good way, not a last resort, is give it to the Lord. We have no power and we don’t know what to do – ***BUT OUR EYES ARE UPON YOU!***

I like the way that Spurgeon saw this situation that they were in and where their eyes were focused.

He wrote, *“They said, ‘Our eyes are upon thee.’ What did they mean by that? They meant, ‘Lord, if help does come, it must come from thee. We are looking to thee for it. It cannot come from anywhere else, so we look to thee. But we believe it will come, men will not look for that which they know will not come. We feel sure it will come, but we do not know how, so we are looking; we do not know when, but we are looking. We do not know what thou wouldest have us to do, but as the servant looks to her mistress, so are we looking to thee, Lord. Lord, we are looking.’”*

May we have that perspective in life, no matter what we are going through!

And truly think about this for a minute. If you place your eyes upon people, guess what, you will be disappointed!

If you place your eyes upon the situation you are facing, the circumstances you find yourself in, you, like Peter, will begin to sink!

Folk's, we need to place our eyes upon God and when we do, we will be stable, He will see us through all that life has thrown our way!

It is as Jehoshaphat said, “**... For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.**”

Selman had this to say regarding what Jehoshaphat said, “*The final phrase, We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you, is one of the most touching expressions of trust in God to be found anywhere in the Bible.*”

Again, I agree with what he has said. May our eyes be upon the Lord and as they are, we can rest in Him instead of being fearful of what is happening around us!

VERSES 13-15

Now, after the prayer, what did they do?

They waited for God's answer - they stood still before the Lord.

How hard that is for us, to just be still and wait upon the Lord, wait for His direction, wait for His answer.

You see, it is during those times we are strengthened and refreshed as Isaiah 40:31 tells us, “**But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.**”

May we not forget that!

In regard to this standing still and waiting upon the Lord, Spurgeon tells us, “*You could have heard the sound even of the wind among the trees at the time, for they were as hushed and as quiet as you were just now. Oh, when you know the Lord means to deliver you, bow your head and just give him the quiet, deep, solemn worship of your spirit.*”

Here we see the prophet Jahaziel speak for the Lord. And the answer that God gives to them through Jahaziel is interesting because God puts things in proper perspective for them.

He tells them not to worry because this is not their battle, it is His battle.

What is God talking about; they were the ones in trouble, not Him?

That is how we feel sometimes, but the reality is, the battle belongs to the Lord and if we can stand still, we will see the salvation that He will bring to a given situation.

Think about it. You can't solve that problem; you can't overcome that obstacle that is in your way by your own strength, your own energy. The Lord is saying to you, to me, ***"Just stand still!"***

And we will see that expounded on more as we read on, the battle plan the Lord has and what the Southern Kingdom is to do.

But again, that is the hardest thing for us to do.

Now, knowing this, we need to bring our requests before Him and ask for guidance, for direction in the situations we find ourselves in.

If we can do that, we have no need to be afraid or dismayed, it is the Lord's battle!

VERSES 16-17

Keep this in mind, it is important. God knew the battle plan of the enemy!

Do not forget that. Nothing catches God by surprise!

Here is the battle plan for the Southern Kingdom of Judah – ***STAND STILL!***

Well, there was more to it – ***STAND STILL AND SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD!***

These were not empty words by the Lord for tomorrow God was going to give them victory over their enemies!

Again, what did the Southern Kingdom of Judah have to do to obtain this victory?

God did not want them just sitting at home doing nothing, but they were to go into this battle, they were to participate, and as they walked in faith, they would see the salvation that the Lord would bring them!

How often does the Lord tell us that He will give us a victory and then He tells us to go into the battle, take that step of faith and that is where we miss it many times. We refuse to walk.

May we learn the lesson and learn to walk by faith!

He also tells them not to fear!

That too is important. Fear can cause us to be paralyzed in our walk and not move forward. We can have a healthy fear and then look up and see that our salvation is in the Lord and not us. He takes that fear away.

Can we rest in the promises of God and understand that God has given us the victory in Christ! We need to!

VERSES 18-19

As they received this Word of God through the prophet Jahaziel, what did the people do?

“When I see it then I will believe it!”

No, they did not say that.

“You have to be kidding me; I have to trust the Word of God?”

No, they did not say that either.

What they did do tells me that they were confident in the victory that God was going to give them in this battle.

The reform that Jehoshaphat brought to the Southern Kingdom of Judah was real and we can see that as they received these Words of God, they began to worship the Lord and that just makes sense.

If they did not believe they would have been murmuring and complaining about this situation!

And as they began to worship the Lord, they began to praise the Lord!

Lord, help us to have that kind of faith!

It is as Spurgeon said, ***“They worshipped, but why did they do it? They were not delivered. No, but they were sure they were going to be delivered. Their enemies were not dead. No, they were all alive, but they were sure they would be dead, so they had worship, and their devotion rose from trustful and grateful hearts.”***

May we learn to do that, just trust what God’s Word has to say and worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness!

VERSES 20-21

Now Tekoa was located approximately 12 miles south of Jerusalem and this was the battle plan, and it was pretty simple.

They were going to put the worship people out in front in this battle and then the army.

I don’t think they like the worship people, right?

No, that was not the issue. But imagine putting a worship team in front of the battle and the Navy seals, the Green Beret’s or whatever special forces you want behind the worship team!

Does that make any sense from a human standpoint?

Absolutely not but with God, it makes perfect sense.

Why is that?

One reason is this. Frances Metcalf once wrote, ***“Satan is allergic to praise, so where there is massive, triumphant praise, Satan is paralyzed, bound, and banished.”***

I believe that they were confident in the victory, and they knew that God inhabits the praises of His people.

But also note that the army was behind them, which tells me they expected a battle, that God had His part and they were ready for their part.

But again, it was the worship team, you might say, that led the army into battle.

Go into this battle with praise and worship and see the salvation that the Lord will bring.

Again, we would call that a foolish military plan, but God will use it to bring about a great victory.

In Hebrews 11:6 Paul tells us, **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**

That just makes sense.

How can you come to God, how can you trust in God if you have no faith in Him, if you do not believe?

You can't and you won't!

Are you the type of person who trusts God's Word, who believes in His promises to you or are you like Eeyore from Winnie the Pooh?

You know, the donkey who sees everything as bad, sees everything is wrong, nothing is right.

Do you say things like, ***“It is never going to work. It is never going to happen. I’m doomed. This will fail.”***

We need to trust in the Lord, believe what He has said in His Word. That is what Jehoshaphat said to the people, ***“Believe in the Lord.”***

May we do just that!

VERSES 22-24

As they came upon the enemy with praise, God put the enemy into confusion and they killed each other, none were left. The enemy hates praise because it throws them into confusion.

Remember the Roberta Flack song, ***“Killing me softly with his song . . .”*** God had that plan already!

Again, people can’t understand how we can praise the Lord in the midst of difficulty.

As we have talked about, that was Job. Satan’s complaint was that Job only praised God because things were going well in his life. What Satan found out is that Job could praise God no matter what.

In fact, he told his wife, **“... ‘You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips.”** Job 2:10.

And yet, how often, instead of praise we complain and that is just where the enemy wants us. He wants us to be weak and defeated because we have taken our eyes off the Lord.

When we do that, we are missing the salvation that He wants to bring to a situation and then we wonder why we are not seeing the victories in our life.

It is because we are not putting our faith in the Lord and we are complaining instead of praising and worshiping the Lord!

God does not inhabit the complaints of His people, but the praises of His people!

VERSES 25-26

The army of Judah was not there to fight but to pick up the spoils of this victory that God had given to them!

And it took them three days to gather together the spoils of their victory, and on the fourth day they assembled in the valley to praise the Lord!

And think about this for a minute. Think about all they went through. You see, this valley was at one time the valley of the shadow of death for them. It was where the enemy was going to destroy them.

But that valley is now the valley of Berachah or the valley of blessing.

You see, it is when you get your eyes on the Lord, pray and praise Him, and as dark and hopeless as a situation may seem, sit back and see the salvation that the Lord will bring as He turns that valley of the shadow of death into the valley of blessing in your life.

Remember what Paul said in Romans 10:17, “**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**”

You see, they heard the Words of God, they believed the Words of God and then they obeyed the Words of God by stepping out in faith and the end result was victory in this battle.

What a great lesson for us as we look for our faith to grow!

VERSES 27-30

Again, they entered the battle with praise and in the victory, they came home singing praises unto the Lord.

And as the other nations saw what the Lord had done, how He fought for Judah, then the fear of the Lord came upon them.

And now God gives the Southern Kingdom of Judah rest.

What I want you to notice is that these other nations were not fearful of Judah because they had a superior army but because they had a superior God!

In fact, Judah was often outnumbered, outgunned but the Lord fought for them and they were victorious.

Never be fearful or afraid because you may be outnumbered or outgunned in a situation, because the Lord is on your side and He will fight for you.

The battle is His all you must do is walk by faith!

One other point and I think I need to say this. This was not the pattern for Judah, to put their worship people in the front of the battle; this was all done in response to what God had told them to do.

God will fight for His people, but He does so in many different ways and thus, we must listen to what He is telling us in each situation we face.

VERSES 31-34

Jehoshaphat followed in the footsteps of his father, Asa.

Yes, he was not perfect, but he loved the Lord and desired to follow the Lord all the days of His life!

Now one of the things he did not do was remove the high places and please understand these were not the pagan high places, but they were places that the Southern Kingdom of Judah used to worship the true and living God.

Then what is wrong with that?

It goes against what the Lord had told them. You see, God placed His name, His presence in Jerusalem and specifically in the Temple and thus, these high places were not to be used any longer, but the people still did.

Poole gives us some insight into this. He wrote, *“The fault was not in Jehoshaphat, but in the people, who, thought they did worship the true God, yet would not be confined to the temple, but for their own conveniency, or from their affection to their ancient customs, chose to worship him in the high places.”*

I do see his point, but Jehoshaphat was their King and he could have had these high places removed, but he didn't.

Now I thought Jehoshaphat brought reform to the nation!

He did, but the people, as much as they did turn to the Lord, there were areas of compromise and in the end, a little compromise, like poison, will kill you!

For Jehoshaphat, there were also some other issues that seemed to plague his life as we will see as we read on.

VERSES 35-36

Jehoshaphat, as I have said, was a godly King.

And even though he was warned by the prophet Jehu not to make alliances with the ungodly and yet, here again we see him do that.

I don't understand why he continues to make these alliances with the ungodly Kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel; I don't fully understand what he was thinking.

All I can think of is that he was trying to bring unity between these two nations, they were brothers, they were family.

The problem was the Northern Kingdom of Israel was wicked, and you don't make alliances with the enemy, those who are walking in darkness!

Here he makes an alliance with Ahaziah, the son of Ahab.

And if you think unity should come about in the church today regardless of truth and righteousness, see what God has to say about that in the following verse.

VERSE 37

We might see this as cruel, that God is being unfair in what He did to Jehoshaphat. But, in reality, God was being merciful. He was preventing Jehoshaphat from making another ungodly alliance.

And the same is true for us; God is not going to bless an endeavor you make with the enemy, with unbelievers.

Here Jehoshaphat makes an alliance with Ahaziah to gather some ships together, some merchant ships, but before it even gets off the ground, God puts an end to it.

Yes, you can do whatever you want, but if you do, don't expect God to bless it.

And so, just as we do in our lives at times, any alliance that compromises our high calling as servants of God is destined for shipwreck just as surely as Jehoshaphat's ships were.

May we remember that and understand that God is not being cruel or unfair; He just loves us too much to let us go down those paths that will hurt us. But if we refuse to listen, we will learn the lesson the hard way.

God will let us go with the hope that we would come to our senses and return to Him!

As you serve the Lord and as I close here this evening, let me leave you with these words.

We are told, “**..Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.**” II Chronicles 20:17.