

The Kings of Judah
Jehoshaphat: Invaded by Moab & Ammon
2 Chronicles 20:1-13
Lesson X

Written: December 31, 1989

1. JEHOSHAPHATS PROBLEM verse 1 and 2

2 Chronicles 20:1 It came to pass after this also, *that* the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them *other* beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

2 Chronicles 20:2 Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they *be* in Hazazontamar, which *is* Engedi.

2 Chronicles 1,2

In 2 Chronicles chapter 19, as we noted that Jehoshaphat had been restored to fellowship with His God. And he shows every evidence that he is now walking with God.

So now, humanly speaking, we would expect that he would be living in the sunshine, without any troubles, without trials, without struggles, just sailing along in smooth waters.

But what do we discover?

The enemies of Israel join their forces against Jehoshaphat and his people. We need to be reminded that it was after the Spirit, in the form of a Dove, had descended upon Jesus, after the voice from Heaven had said, "this is my beloved son" in whom I am well pleased...Mark 1:12 states...immediately, Jesus was driven of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. Jesus was in the centre of the will of God when this took place. Jesus was walking in the paths of righteousness. The Holy Ghost was upon Him, yet He was led to be tempted and tried.

And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

Mark 1:12

And that baffles us!

Sometimes it distresses us. And it is at that moment the Devil tries to tell us we are not very spiritual or this would not happen. When the truth is, often when we are most spiritual we suffer the greatest trials, allowed by the hand of our God.

I have with me a report from W.E.C. missionary Brother Frank Chapman. I read only a part. "On Friday, December 22,89 we had a phone call telling us that our son-in-laws sister Kathy had suffered a severe heart attack, causing irreparable brain damage. Kathy is such a wonderful person. And a totally dedicated Christian and we ask why? Why? WHY?

The lesson is this. Walking with God does not mean absence of trials and testing. Walking with God does not always produce health and wealth. It is when we walk with God, we must be prepared to be attacked by our spiritual enemies. As contradictory as it may seem to be, it is when we have been strengthened by His Spirit that often we are led into real spiritual warfare.

In reading the Old Testament learn: The enemies of God's people are also the enemies of God. Psalm 83:2. Enemies in the O.T. typify our enemies, not Ammorites and Moabites, but principalities and powers as outlined in Ephesians 6.

For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

Psalm 83:2

Like Jehoshaphat, you take your stand for God and for right, and you will stir-up your enemies. When you read the story of Job, remember, the conflict was not between Satan and Job; the conflict was between God and Satan.

And so it is today. Satan is an enemy of God's people because he is the enemy of God.

C.H.M. "We are in far less apprehension for Jehoshaphat when we behold him the object of the enemies hostilities than when we beheld him the subject of Ahab's kindness and hospitality. For in this case, he is about to cast himself on the God of Israel; whereas in the other, he was about to fall into the snare of Satan. What an empty thing it was for Jehoshaphat to ask counsel of the Lord in chapter 18, in a matter he knew was wrong.

When the world smiles we are in danger of being attracted. When it frowns we are driven from it into our stronghold. Such are the ways of God.

11. JEHOSEPHAT'S PLAN. 2 Chronicles 20:3-4

Verse 3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. **Verse 4** And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask *help* of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

2 Chronicles 20:3-4

At first we are told that Jehoshaphat "feared". And that is not always wrong. We must always take care that we do not try to face the powers of darkness in our own strength.

But following his fear, and really because of it: He then, first of all, "set himself to seek the Lord." If you are a leader in any area of service, never require others to do anything, until you have FIRST been willing to do what you want others to do. The king paid attention to himself FIRST. Then he proclaimed a fast in Israel. In other words, in his fear, Jehoshaphat's plan was to turn to the Lord for help. Our re-action and our action, in the time of trouble and turmoil, indicates the spiritual condition of our hearts. If we plan to turn first to men or to the world for help, we reveal that our hearts are not right! But, on the other hand, if the first thing we do is turn to God, our hearts are likely in the right place.

Jehoshaphat's leadership was of such a nature, "that all Judah responded."(2 Chronicles 20:4). "They came to ask help of the Lord." They did not command the Lord to help them. (I fear that.) They came to seek the Lord's help in their troubles. Oh, blessed trouble that turns our hearts in sincerity to our God.

It seems to me that it takes many years of Christian experience, to discover that one basic reason for our troubles is that we might turn our hearts to seek the Lord and to wait with patience on our God.

Psalm 27:14 "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage. He shall strengthen thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord."

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Psalm 27:14

3. JEHOSHAPHAT'S PRAYER 2 CHRONICLES 20:5-13

Verse 5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, **Verse 6** And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? **Verse 7** Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? **Verse 8** And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, **Verse 9** If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. **Verse 10** And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; **Verse 11** Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. **Verse 12** O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. **Verse 13** And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

2 Chronicles 20:5-13

1. He appeals to the Greatness of God (2 Chronicles 20:6)

Here he approaches a Sovereign God. Look again at his words: Art not thou God in Heaven? Do you not rule over all? (Is it not true?) None can withstand Thee?

We can learn something about prayer here.

It is our feeling that ALL prayer should be like this. All praying should be done on this sure foundation. First of all, we acknowledge a Supreme God. We approach a Sovereign God. One who is over and above all Nations, all peoples, all things and in this, we include ourselves. All men certainly must believe in the reality of a Sovereign God in the hour of death. God has continuously and consistently, in all generations shown His Sovereign hand in this matter.

The October Earthquake as reported in TIME magazine, gave testimony that during those very few seconds when the earth began to shake, all both men and women felt utterly helpless.

And so they were. No voice could command God. No human hand could control His power. I sometimes wonder if it will take a severe earthquake to make us realize just how sovereign God really is!

As Proverbs states: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." So reverence for a sovereign God is the basis and beginning of all true praying. To pray is to be reverent or we are not praying.(So much Church praying is not praying ,watch the conduct of people during prayer in our Churches, there is little reverence). To acknowledge the greatness of God, not the greatness of men is the beginning of true prayer. "Our Father who art in Heaven, HALLOWED BE THY NAME".

2. Then he appeals to the goodness of God 2 Chronicles 20:7. He speaks about the goodness of God, not to his generation but to his fathers generation. He goes right back to Abraham and the beginning of the Nation over which he is now the king. How strange it is that we can clearly see the hand of God in the past, more than we often see it in the present.

But here is another lesson about prayer.

First, we approach God reverently. Then we appeal to Him on the basis of that which we know He has done in the past. Read 2 Chronicles 20:7 again, "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before the people of Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever." And notice further, his prayer appeal is based on the promise of God made years before to Abraham. Who he identifies as the friend of God.

When we pray, we can say: "Lord in your kindness you saved our fathers and mothers. And in kindness you have saved us too. Lord, as we look back we can see your hand has been upon our fathers and you have been good to us and to ours. And on that basis we reverently approach thy throne of Grace. Our fathers were not deserving of thy mercies. Nor are we. But we believe in thy Greatness and we believe in thy Goodness.

"Our Father's hand will never cause His child a needless tear."

3. Then he remembers the GLORY of God. 2 Chronicles 20:8-9. Jehoshaphat remembers the days when the temple was dedicated by King Solomon. The day when that great King prayed and said, "when Israel is in trouble and even in the land of their enemies if they look toward the temple and pray, God would hear and help them." And it was on that day of dedication, when Solomon ended his prayer, the fire of God fell, and the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

The GREATNESS of God.

The GOODNESS of God.

The GLORY of God.

These things are always involved when we pray. When we pour out our hearts with our petitions our motive should be one that however and whenever God answers, the answer will glorify and manifest God's glory. "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory."

4. Then he throws himself upon the Grace of God. 2 Chronicles 20:10-12. In 2 Chronicles 20:10,11 Jehoshaphat states the problem. Then he makes three tremendous statements after he makes one request. The request: "Oh our God wilt thou not judge them? The statements:

(1) We have no might against this great company. I think that is good. We should all feel that way. Never feel big in yourself. Never feel big in the presence of the Devil. And above all, never feel big in the presence of God. Man must be small, God alone big!

(2) Neither know we what to do. A helpless feeling in ourselves is a great asset in prayer. Romans 8, tells us that we don't even know how to pray as we ought. How helpless we should feel when we approach God.

(3) But our eyes are upon thee. This is real prayer. This is how to pray. When we are praying we are saying, "Lord we are not trusting ourselves. We are helpless. We know not what to do. But WE ARE trusting you! And we rely on your great grace.

5. What a scene in 2 Chronicles 20:13!

The fathers, the mothers, the husbands and their wives. The children and the babies. All facing the same dangers, and they are all involved in this great prayer-meeting.

I can almost sense the holy hush that came over that assembled group. The king had prayed. And God was there. And they all knew it was His presence.

I have experienced some of this, but never enough. Bob Forseth used to say, "I have an unsatisfied satisfaction." Oh to touch God when we pray. To feel God when we pray (and do not be afraid of that word "feel" for one moment). It is not enough for the parents to recognize God's presence. It is not only for the "old" it is also for the "young."

When I was but a child, I recall some of the prayer-meetings held for the children back in 1928 at camp. I faintly remember, when we were small children at home, we often played church. Lined up the chairs in the house, filled the empty ones with pillows for people. And many times, our play-meetings would become real prayer meetings.

I blush to think that our children and grandchildren, the children of this generation are missing out on such great meetings in the presence of God. Things have become too easy for us. Perhaps some persecution, or battles like Jehoshaphat faced would drive us back to seeking God until we find Him.