

## 2 Chronicles 20:1–13

- <sup>1</sup> It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.
- <sup>2</sup> Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, “A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar” (which is En Gedi).
- <sup>3</sup> And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.
- <sup>4</sup> So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.
- <sup>5</sup> Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,
- <sup>6</sup> and said: “O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?
- <sup>7</sup> Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?
- <sup>8</sup> And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying,
- <sup>9</sup> ‘If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.’
- <sup>10</sup> And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—
- <sup>11</sup> here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit.
- <sup>12</sup> O our God, will You not judge them? 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.”
- <sup>13</sup> Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.

## **“Jehoshaphat’s Prayer”**

### **2 Chronicles 20:1-13**

INTRO:

Several years ago I had the privilege of preaching at a church in Terre Haute, Indiana. The people of the church were taught the word sovereignty was a dirty word. When I said the word sovereignty that evening little ice cycles formed on their noses. It got very cold in there. At that time in my spiritual growth, I did not fully embrace the theological position that I hold today. However, God was at work in me. Somehow in the providence of God I came across the account we are going to look at here in **2 Chronicles 20** and I was amazed at how Jehoshaphat found great strength in the unrivaled sovereignty of God in an incredibly difficult situation.

When we find ourselves in a crisis time, a time when the bottom seems to be falling out of our life, the only thing we can hold on to is that God is sovereign over His world and that He is in control. Let us then learn from King Jehoshaphat’s experience as he faced the greatest crisis of his life.

*I. Jehoshaphat’s Problem (v. 1-2)*

*II. Jehoshaphat’s Prayer (v. 3-13)*

*III. Jehovah’s Provision (v. 14-17)*

*I. Jehoshaphat’s Problem (v. 1-2)*

*“It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, ‘A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar’ (which is En Gedi).”*

**2 Chronicles 20:1-3**

A. When we read the accounts in the Old Testament, many times we do not understand how real the situations were. We are not told what Jehoshaphat was doing when this news came, nor are we told how the news arrived and who carried it to the King. Out of nowhere in the middle of a normal day, Jehoshaphat is suddenly confronted with a crisis.

*“Some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, ‘A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar’ (which is En Gedi).”*

1. King Jehoshaphat did some very good things in the sight of God. He was faithful in setting up godly judges throughout the land. He appointed the Levites who were responsible to lead the worship of God and he challenged them to act in the fear of God.

2. Right when Jehoshaphat was doing all of this good, trouble burst into Israel’s life. This happens often. Right when we think we are doing well spiritually and, therefore, God should be right there to bless us, that is the moment trials shove their way into our lives.

This is when we must remember what the writer to the Hebrews said in **Hebrews 10:35-36**

***“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.”***

B. The crisis burst into Jehoshaphat’s life in the form of a horde of invaders gathering to destroy Judah. Jehoshaphat’s life was rolling along peacefully. Now without warning it fell apart. Notice how Jehoshaphat reacted. He was terrified. This meant he was human. Still, he knew how to respond to his fear. He immediately sought the LORD.

## ***II. Jehoshaphat’s Prayer (v. 3-13)***

A. So, all of Judah gathered together to join Jehoshaphat in seeking God’s help. The situation is hopeless, they are helpless, yet, God is able to deliver them.

***“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.” (vs.3-4)***

Then Jehoshaphat stood before the people in the court of the Temple and he prayed. Jehoshaphat faced an impossible situation, to what does he cling?

B. First, Jehoshaphat takes hold of God’s unrivaled sovereignty to find hope.

***“O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations?”***

Jehoshaphat did not ask these questions because he did not know the answers. He asked because he knew God was the God of his fathers, and the God in heaven, and most importantly, the God who rules over the kingdoms of the earth.

1. When the bottom falls out of our lives, it does not help to pray to a God who is learning as He goes along. Some think this is the way God acts. Nor does it help to plead with a God who depends on us to get His will done. Praise God, this is not the God of the Bible.

2. Do you remember a king named Nebuchadnezzar? God decided to teach Nebby a lesson about who runs the Universe. We read the account in **Daniel 4**. Listen to Nebuchadnezzar’s graduate thesis in **verse 34 and 35**.

***“And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”***

3. Because God is in heaven and in control Jehoshaphat knew this crisis was not news to God. God already knew it was coming. Indeed, God allowed it to come through His loving hands and God already knew what He was going to do about it.

C. Not only did Jehoshaphat take hold of God's unrivaled sovereignty, he also held fast to God's unlimited power.

***"O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?"***

When we list the attributes of God, we often begin by listing the *"omni's."* God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. We can let these theological terms roll off our tongues without really recognizing what we are saying. Do we really believe God is all powerful? In **Ephesians 3:20** the Apostle Paul attempted to put the infinity of God's power in human language. He wrote,

***"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."***

This is wonderful stuff, but do we really believe it? When we face the impossible, are we sure our God is able to deliver us? How real is God to us? Because God was real to Jehoshaphat, he could cling to God's sovereignty and to His incredible power.

D. There is one more aspect of God's nature Jehoshaphat took hold of to find comfort in this situation. It was God's providence. Providence is God's sovereignty in action. Look at what God did for Judah in the past.

***"Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.'" (vs. 7-9)***

1. Do you remember what Samuel did in **1 Samuel 7:12**?

***"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the Lord has helped us.'"***

God brought us this far and He will not drop us now. This is a fact Israel forgot when they sent out the spies at Kadesh Barnea. Joshua forgot it before Ai. Do we also forget it?

2. Jehoshaphat reminded himself and the people of Judah what the LORD did for them. He brought them this far, and He was not going to fail them now. We need to remember our rock piles. So, we have confidence His Providence is still working for us today.

E. Finally, after clinging to God's sovereignty, His power, and His providence, Jehoshaphat gets to his request.

***"And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. O our God, will You not judge them? 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."***

1. Jehoshaphat simply stated the situation. Here is the invading army. By the way, LORD, these are the same nations that you would not let us wipe out before and now they are after us.

2. Will you not judge them? You have to do something because we can't do anything. We have no idea what we should do, but our eyes are upon You and not upon our meager resources.

### ***III. Jehovah's Provision (v. 14-17)***

***"Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you." 2 Chronicles 20:14-17***

A. God answered by giving them a victory in a battle that they never had to fight. This was unusual. Many times we are the tools through which God works and gets His victory. But He is still the One who has done the work.

B. Now what do we learn from all of this?

1. We need to learn how to take hold of the LORD when the bottom falls out of our lives. Before we can do this, we need to be convinced our God is really absolutely sovereign over the affairs of humankind.

2. We also need to believe He is really able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think.

3. Finally, we need to recognize that everything that happens in this world happens as a part of the Providence of the living God. Then we need to remember what He has done for us in the past to encourage us that "God is not done with us yet."

C. Crises are never fun, but they always come to the child of God from the hand of our heavenly Father who is "too wise to ever make a mistake and too loving to ever be unkind."

### **Hymn #44 *Children of the Heavenly Father***