

The second good king of Judah—Jehoshaphat

II Chronicles 17:1—19

Week 3

Asa's son Jehoshaphat was the next king of Judah. He started out by working on his defense system against Israel. He put troops in all the fortress cities of Judah and deployed garrisons throughout Judah and in the towns of Ephraim that his father Asa had captured. God was on Jehoshaphat's side because he stuck to the ways of his father Asa's early years. He didn't fool around with the popular Baal religion—he was a follower of the God of his father and was obedient to him, he wasn't like Israel. And God secured the kingdom under his rule, gave him a firm grip on it. And everyone in Judah showed their appreciation by bringing gifts.

Jehoshaphat ended up very rich and much honored. He was single minded in following God and he got rid of the high places and wooden images for Judah.

In the third year of his reign he sent his officials—excellent men, every one of them—Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah on a teaching mission to the cities of Judah. They were accompanied by Levites—Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-Adonijah; the priests Elishama and Jehoram were also in the company. They made a circuit of the towns of Judah, teaching the people and using the Book of the Law of the Lord as their text.

There was a strong sense of the fear of God in all the kingdoms around Judah—they didn't dare go to war against Jehoshaphat. Some Philistines even brought gifts and a load of silver to Jehoshaphat, and the desert Bedouins brought flocks—7,700 rams and 7,700 goats. So Jehoshaphat became stronger by the day, and constructed more and more forts and store cities—an age of prosperity for Judah!

He also had excellent fighting men stationed in Jerusalem. The captains of the military units of Judah, classified according to families, were: Captain Adnah with 300,000 soldiers; his associate Captain Jehohanan with 280,000; his associate Amasiah son of Zicri, a volunteer for God, with 200,000. Officer Eliada represented Benjamin with 200,000 fully equipped with bow and shield and his associate was Jehozabad with 180,000 armed and ready for battle. These were under the direct command of the king; in addition, there were troops assigned to the fortress cities spread all over Judah.

II Chronicles 17:1—19, The Message Bible

Pastor Phil has reminded us that when things are going well we need to be careful because it will be at those times that we don't depend on God. We think we don't need Him and that we can decide for ourselves what we will do

When things are falling apart we are quick to turn to God calling out to Him beseeching him to help us. Pastor Phil has reminded us that we pursue God when things are not going well because we desperately need him to supply our needs and comfort us.

Things were obviously not going well for Jehoshaphat. It was obviously one of these times for Jehoshaphat. He makes a marriage alliance with the house of Ahab. *Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram becomes king of Judah when he is thirty -two years old. And was king for eight years in Jerusalem. He copied the way of life of the kings of Israel, marrying into the Ahab family and continuing the Ahab line of sin—from God's point of view Jehoram was an evil man living an evil life.*

II Kings 8:18 The Message Bible

Results of a Marriage Alliance

Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, was married to Jehoram, and became the mother of Ahaziah king of Judah. When she saw that her son was dead she took over. She began by massacring what was left of the entire royal family. But Jehosheba daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah took Ahaziah 'son Joash and kidnapped him from among the king's sons slated for slaughter. She hid him and his nurse in a private room away from Athaliah. He didn't get killed. He was there with Jehosheba, hidden away for six years in The Temple of God. Athaliah, oblivious to his existence ruled the country.

II Kings 11:1—4 The Message

In the seventh year Jehoiada sent for the captains of the bodyguards and the Palace Security Force. They met Jehoiada in The Temple of God. He made a covenant with them, swore them to secrecy, and only then showed them the young prince. With the bodyguards and the security force surrounding the young prince he was crowned King Joash.

Athaliah heard the shouting of the crowd gathered at The Temple of God. Astonished she saw the king standing beside the throne. He was flanked by the captains and heralds, the trumpets were blaring and everybody in attendance were beside themselves with joy.

Athaliah ripped her robes in anger and dismay and shouted "Treason, Treason!" Jehoiada the priest ordered the military officers, "Drag her outside and kill anyone who tries to follow her." The priest also said, "Don't kill her inside The Temple of God." So they dragged her out to the palace's horse corral, there they killed her.

II Kings 11:5-17; The Message Bible

Results of a Military Alliance

Several years after the marital alliance was formed between Judah and Israel Jehoshaphat went down to visit Ahab. He paid a visit to Ahab's home in Samaria.

Ahab celebrated His visit with a feast—a huge barbeque with all the lamb and beef you could eat. But Ahab had a hidden agenda he wanted Jehoshaphat's support in attacking Ramoth Gilead. Ahab brought it into the open. Will you join me in attacking Ramoth Gilead? "You bet, I'm with you all the way, you can count on me and my troops." ("I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will be with you in the war." New King James)

The Jehoshaphat said. "But before you do anything ask God for guidance."

Read Scripture: II Chronicles 18: 5—27

Results of a Personal Alliance: II Chronicles 18: 28--34

So the King of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah went ahead and attacked Ramoth Gilead. The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Wear my kingly robe, I'm going into the battle disguised." So the king of Israel entered the battle disguised.

Meanwhile the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders (there were thirty-two of them), "Don't bother with any one whether small or great, go after the King of Israel and him only."

When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they said "There he is! The king of Israel!" Jehoshaphat yelled out, and the chariot commanders realized they had the wrong man—it wasn't the king of Israel after all. God intervened and they let him go.

Just then someone without aiming, shot an arrow into the crowd and hit the king of Israel in the chink of his armor. The king told his charioteer, "Turn back! Get me out of here—I'm wounded."

All day the fighting continued, hot and heavy. Propped up in his chariot Ahab, the king of Israel, watched from the sidelines. He died that evening.

Jehoshaphat got home safe and sound. Jehu son of Hanani the seer confronted King Jehoshaphat. "You have no business helping evil, cozying up to God-haters. Because you did this, God is good and angry with you. But you are not all bad—you made a clean sweep of the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God."

Jehoshaphat kept his residence in Jerusalem but made a regular round of visits among the people from Beersheba in the south to Mount Ephraim in the north, urging them to return to God, the God of their ancestors.

He appointed judges in the land each of the fortress cities had its judge. He charged the judges: "This is a serious work; do it carefully you are not merely judging between men and women these are God's judgements that you passing on. Live in the fear of God—be most careful, God hates dishonesty, partiality and bribery." He also appointed Levites, priests, and family heads to decide on matters that had to do with worship and mediating local differences.

A Great Multitude

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 in En Gedi). And Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgement, 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. "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.

Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, the son of Beniah...And he said, "listen, all of you 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 Gods." "Tomorrow go down against them... 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."

So they rose early in the morning and went put into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Believe in the Lord your God and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who could sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

"Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever."

So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped

And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

Another personal alliance

After this Jehoshaphat King of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. He allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying, “Because you allied yourself with Ahaziah, the Lord has destroyed your works.” Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the City of David.

II Chronicles 20: 9—11; 14—15, 17, 20, 21, 24, 29, 30, 36—21:1