

JEHOSHAPHAT—A Good King Who Compromised

1 Kings 22:41–43; 2 Chronicles 17–20

Jehoshaphat was the fourth king of Judah and one of Judah's better kings. He had his shortcomings and failures, but overall God's estimation of Jehoshaphat was favorable. He basically followed in the ways of his father Asa, who was generally a good king most of his reign.

What happens when an otherwise good man compromises for reasons that sound good? What happens when he loves ungodly people too much to offend them? These questions are illustrated in the life of Jehoshaphat.

➡ There are four chapters in 2 Chronicles each describing a certain aspect of the reign of Jehoshaphat:

I. 2 Chron. 17:1-19—His WALK.

- A. He FORTIFIED the kingdom militarily (17:1-2, 13-19). A strong national defense is never inconsistent with godliness if the military is in place for the proper reasons. In the previous chapter we are told of war between Judah and Israel (16:1, 9). Jehoshaphat is taking precautions to protect his kingdom.
 - During the reign of his grandfather Abijah, the armies of Judah numbered 400,000 (13:3). Now, as God prospered Jehoshaphat, Judah's armies had increased to 1,160,000 men.
- B. He FOLLOWED the ways of the Lord (vs. 4-6). The ways of God were a priority in Jehoshaphat's heart (v. 6). This resulted in:
 1. He was honored in abundance (v. 5 cf. 1 Sam. 2:30). As we are "*lifted up in the ways of God*," God lifts us up (cf. 2 Chron. 26:16)
 2. The places of idolatry were removed (v. 6).
 3. The Word of God was taught throughout the land (vs. 7-9). While Jehoshaphat armed his military, he also sent out Levites to teach the people God's Word. [NOTE: This was without the modern means communication we have today.]

- Instruction in the Word of God should be a priority in all our lives. Sunday School, Bible studies are important.
 - Think of what our country would be like if the President made sure Americans were being taught the Word of God by qualified teachers!
 - If a nation wants peace, it must turn to God (v. 10). If a nation is continually at war, it is because that nation is not following God. Dr. Ruckman said, “Hell is God’s judgment on sin in eternity. War is God’s judgment on sin now.”
4. Economic prosperity (vs. 11-13). In the Old Testament a sign of God's approval was material prosperity. Proverbs 16:7 says that when a man’s ways please the the Lord, God makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

II. 2 Chron. 18:1-34 (1 Kings 22:1-32)— **His WEAKNESS**

Jehoshaphat was a good man, but a compromiser¹. Jehoshaphat was one of those kinds of people who had a hard time saying “no” to certain things. While I was on staff at Open Door, a lady who was having problems came to me for advise. Most of her problems were the result of her taking on people’s problems she should have said “no” to. She told me, “Pastor, I just cannot say ‘no’ when people ask me.” I told her, “That’s not true. Of course you can say ‘no.’ Let me prove it. Do you want to have cancer?” She quickly said, “NO!” Then I said, “See, you *can* say ‘no’ if you really want to.”

Jehoshaphat needed to learn to say “no” to compromise. But instead, he wanted to “get along,” and please everyone... even those who hated God.

A. Affinity with Ahab (v. 1).

- v. 3— It was COMPROMISE. Apart from the fact they were both Israelites, what did Jehoshaphat have in common with Ahab? It was an unequal yoke (cf. Dt. 22:10). Just because two

¹ The details of Jehoshaphat’s compromises was covered in Lessons #37 and #38 (1/4/15 & 1/16/15).

people are preachers... or church members... or even Baptists, doesn't make them the same.

- The Bible commands us to be separate from those who don't follow the Lord (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 2 Thess. 3:6; Ps. 1:1; Prov. 4:14).
- B. Partnership with Ahaziah, the wicked son of Ahab (1 Kings 22:48-49; 2 Chron. 20:35-37). Jehoshaphat makes the same mistake twice by making an alliance with another wicked King—First with Ahab, and now with Ahab's son, Ahaziah.
- C. Alliance with wicked Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1-14). Elisha still respected Jehoshaphat in spite of his compromise.

III. 2 Chron. 19:1-11— **His WORKS.**

- A. The **REBUKE** of compromise (vs. 1-2). Jehoshaphat is rebuked for his affinity with Ahab (vs. 1-2).
1. Hanani also rebuked Jehoshaphat's father, Asa, for seeking the help of Syria (16:7).
 2. Yet, God also acknowledges the good Jehoshaphat had done (v. 3 cf. 1 Kings 14:13).
- B. The **RESTORING** of citizens (vs. 3-4). Would that America's leaders would seek to bring people back to God!
- The most rewarding work we can do is to bring people to God (either for redemption or reclaiming).
- C. The **RULINGS** of the courts (vs. 5-11 cf. Dt. 16:18-20). Establishing a legal system of appellate courts (court of final appeal).
- God-fearing judges are for the good and welfare of the nation.
1. Judge **faithfully** in the fear of the Lord (vs. 6-7, 9). This is the problem of our court system today—Judges don't fear God and fail to recognize they will stand before the Supreme Judge of the universe and give account of their judgments.
 2. Judge **fairly** — impartially (v. 7).
 3. Judge **forcefully** issuing warnings that deter sin (v. 10).

4. Judge **fearlessly** (v. 11).

IV. 2 Chron. 20:1-30 — **His WARFARE.**

➤ What prompted these nations to move against Judah? Jealousy? This war could be the “*wrath*” that was pronounced by Hanani in 19:2.

- A. PERCEIVE the enemy (vs. 1-2). First thing to do in a crisis is identify the enemy.
- Many people do not know who their real enemy is. Often people suspect the enemy is some other person – even a family member. The real enemy may be the person who looks at you in the mirror!
- B. PRAYER for help (vs. 3-13). **When you don’t know what to do, do what Jehoshaphat did:**
1. **Assemble** others to pray with you (vs. 4-5). Notice children also were part of this prayer meeting.
 2. **Affirm** the Lord is the only true and living God and is all powerful (vs. 6-7). He recognized God was bigger than his problem.
 3. **Appeal** to the promises of God (vs. 8-9). Jehoshaphat recalls Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple. The stated purpose for the temple was so God’s people could seek the Lord in times of distress (6:16-42).
 4. **Acknowledge** the problem (vs. 10-11). They were being confronted unjustly by the three-nation alliance. Jehoshaphat mentioned the fact that Israel had spared these very same nations centuries before, refusing to attack them (Dt. 2:5, 9, 19). But now they were seeking to conquer God’s people, to drive them out of the promised land, the inheritance given to them by the Lord Himself.
 5. **Admit** his inadequacy (v. 12). Admitted his problem was bigger than he could handle. They had no power to face such an enormous army, and they did not know what to do to defend themselves. Jehoshaphat then expressed a total trust

and reliance upon the Lord, stating that their eyes were looking to Him and Him alone for deliverance. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

➡ “*Our eyes are upon thee.*” “*Looking unto Jesus.*” We know not what to do, but He knows.

➡ **Where are your eyes?** If your eyes are on people, you'll be *disappointed*. If your eyes are on circumstances, you'll be *distressed*. But if your eyes are on the Lord, you'll be *delivered*.

- If you're in a financial crisis, spread out your bills before the Lord and pray, "Lord, help me. Where have I erred? Give me wisdom."
- If your marriage is failing, get on your face with your spouse and pray, "God, have mercy. We're hurting. We need Your help."
- If your kids are rebelling, humble yourself before God on behalf of your kids and pray, "God, show me how to lead my children back to You."

6. **Anticipate** God to answer (v. 13).

C. **PROCLAMATION** to believe (vs. 13-20).

1. **Assurance** the battle was the Lord's (vs 15-17 cf. 32:8; 1 Sam. 17:47).

- Some of our battles are the result of bad decisions we have made. We cannot blame the Lord for those battles. They are our battles. However, some battles come as no fault of our own. They are a trial sent from God to try our faith. These battles are the Lord's to fight for us when we trust Him.

2. **Admonition** to trust God (v. 20). As we sing, “*Faith is the Victory*” (cf. Heb. 11:33).

D. **POWER** of praise (vs. 21-25). “*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*” (2 Cor. 10:4).

1. Praise BEFORE the battle (vs. 18-19). Praise by faith! Praising God for the victory before the victory was won.
 2. Praise IN the battle (vs. 21-23).
 - *“But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”* (Ps. 22:3)
 3. Praise AFTER the battle (vs. 26-28). Great victory celebration.
- E. PEACE of God (vs. 29-32). God brought fear on the world and left Jehoshaphat and his kingdom in peace (cf. Prov.16:7).

SUMMATION: Compromise leads to failure—Trusting God brings His favor.