

“Jumpin’ Jehoshaphat”

You’ve heard that phrase right?

In preparing for this, it lead me to an article that sorta talked about the meaning and potential beginnings of that phrase, it might be loosely tied to our king that we are talking about today: Jehoshaphat. But loosely tied is as best as we get with that.

What do people know about your God when you’re in a crisis?

Is it evident that there is a God in your life when dealing with a crisis?

Or do you rely on your self?

What is the evidence of the fear of God in your life?

Today we will be talking about a King named Jehoshaphat and we will see how those questions are played out in his life.

The life and times of Jehoshaphat are mainly chronicled in 2 Chronicles 17-20. There are some talks and references to him in other spots, most notably in 1 Kings. But most of our time will be spent in 2 Chronicles 17-20. Today might feel like somewhat of a Bible drill if you try to follow to every scripture that is referenced today, but I would recommend just staying in 2 Chronicles and if you want to know the other references, either write them down or I can post my manuscript later today. So if you have your bibles, please turn there. We will look at a few different passages throughout this time, so keep it close if you’re wanting to read along.

Steve preached on Asa last week, Asa is the father of Jehoshaphat. That means Jehoshaphat is the great, great grandson of Solomon. He never lived under a united monarchy, but probably heard stories of it and how great his family line was. He reigned for 25 years and a few of those years were during the last years of Asa’s reign because he Asa was unable to reign but was still alive. Matthew Henry described Jehoshaphat as a good, wise, useful, and happy

man. 2 Chronicles 17:3-4 say this about Jehoshaphat: “The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his Father David. He did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the practices of Israel.”

Steve mentioned last week what a big deal it is to be associated with David and for it to be said of you that you walk in the ways of David. David was the pinnacle of kingdom for these people. It was a big deal. More importantly it meant that he served the Lord. As 2 Chron 17:5 put it about Jehoshaphat, “his heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord.”

Reading through this account of Jehoshaphat got me thinking about the importance of this account. Why are these the stories that we have regarding his life? Can you imagine the details of your life being narrowed down to 4 relatively short chapters? Think about the times that we are living in now. Think about our election cycles. We have presidents that serve for either 4 or 8 years. Can the details of their presidency be summed up in something this concise? Now think about a King that ruled for 25 years. Not just any king though. This is a good king. One that is not that far removed from David. This is one that helped to turn the hearts of the people towards the Lord. He got about 90 verses.

So there must be a reason that these are the stories we have of Jehoshaphat. We are going to examine these tellings of this good King that was quite the reformer and see how the life and times of an imperfect human from more than 2500 years ago can help point us to and Glorify the Lord in the trying times of 2020.

Last week Steve looked at things chronologically, today we are going to look at things topically. The three main things we are going to look at in Jehoshaphat's life are that he:

1. He Feared (Valued the Law)

2. He Fell (Made Mistakes)
3. He Fell on his face (Worshipped the Lord)

Pray

1. He Feared (He valued the Law)

2 Chronicles 17:7-10

[7 In the third year of his reign he sent his officials, Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah; **8** and with them the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah; and with these Levites, the priests Elishama and Jehoram. **9** And they taught in Judah, having the Book of the Law of the Lord with them. They went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people.

10 And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat.]

And then sometime later in his life **2 Chronicles 19:5-7:**

[5 He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, **6** and said to the judges, “Consider what you do, for you judge not for man but for the Lord. He is with you in giving judgment. **7** Now then, let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Be careful what you do, for there is no injustice with the Lord our God, or partiality or taking bribes.”]

Wow. Two powerful passages in one mans life pointing to the importance of knowing, studying, and keeping the Law. What is something that is in common for both those passages?

The Fear of the Lord.

I am sure if you try real hard you can think of a couple verses that deal with the fear of the Lord. Honestly, you probably don't even have to think that hard to think of one, or two, or three. For example

Proverbs 1:7 says:

[The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.]

How did the fear of the Lord fall upon the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah?

They taught the book of the law.

At this point the book of the law was more than likely the Pentateuch. That is the first five books of the our current Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It could have included as much as 1 and 2 Samuel and even much of Psalms and Proverbs.

There is an interesting passage from Deuteronomy that speaks to this idea as well.

Deuteronomy 31:9-13

[**9** Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. **10** And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, **11** when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. **12** Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, **13** and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."]

The Law of the Lord brings the fear of the Lord to those that know it. In one of these passages it even went one step further than that though. Verse 10 of Chapter 17 says that the fear of the Lord fell upon the Kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah and that there was peace.

What has to happen for the fear of the Lord to fall on those around you? How different does your life have to look for that to happen? How evident does the work of the Lord in your life need to be for that to happen?

I think the truth that is evident here is the importance of studying and knowing the word of the Lord.

Simply, does your study of the Word increase your fear of the Lord?

Is that a connection that is made in your life? There are a couple examples here of that being the process. Is that something that should be happening?

In this second passage the fear of the Lord is stressed as being important. Meaning, they would be unable to do their jobs well or do the capabilities that were needed from them if they did not fear the Lord in the process. If Jehoshaphat didn't know if before, after seeing the fear of the Lord fall on those that were around him, he understood the importance of it now and stressed that importance to his newly appointed judges.

The study of God's word makes it impossible to not fear the Lord and to see His Glory.

John Piper describes the fear of the Lord as this:
"That God is in your mind and heart, so powerful, so holy, and so awesome that you would not dare to run away from him but only to run to

him...Tremble if you ever feel any inclination to leave this God. There is only destruction away from him.”

R.C Sproul put it this way in talking about how Luther put it:

“In this regard, Luther is thinking of a child who has tremendous respect and love for his father or mother and who dearly wants to please them. He has a fear or an anxiety of offending the one he loves, not because he’s afraid of torture or even of punishment, but rather because he’s afraid of displeasing the one who is, in that child’s world, the source or security and love.”

The idea is an awe, a respect for the creator of all things that holds everything in his hands.

Matthew 10:28 puts it this way:

[And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.]

He is God. He is Lord. We are not. He is an awesome God.

The fear of the Lord is essential to Jehoshaphat’s reign. People and the surrounding kingdoms turned to it and he stressed the importance of it, while reading the law and living out the law. Without the teaching of the Law, the fear of the Lord doesn’t fall on the kingdom in his early years. Without the fear of the Lord being stressed later, the kingdom would not have been able to deal with a trial that came their way.

Working on an understanding of the fear of the Lord helps us to see that works in which Jehoshaphat missed the mark. The second point:

2. He fell-He made mistakes.

What I should really say is that he made one very massive mistake that led to other issues and then made a smaller mistake in his later life that is

really just a blurb on the story of Jehoshaphat that doesn't really get much treatment at all. We can probably say his mistakes are similar to Asa's in that it really seemed to be focused on self-reliance.

That is probably the most evident in Chapter 18. The very first verse gives a great example of that:

2 Chronicles 18:1

[Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor, and he made a marriage alliance with Ahab.]

His son married Ahab's daughter.

This is the only sentence this marriage receives until 2 Chronicles 21:6 [And he(Jehoram) walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife. And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.]

Chapter 18 deals with Jehoshaphat going to battle as an ally with the king of Israel. The king of Israel was Ahab. What do we know about this king of Israel? Do you know who Ahab's wife was?

Have you ever met someone that you had already learned much about and said something to the effect of "your reputation precedes you."?

That is what you should be thinking through right now, because Ahab's wife, was Jezebel. Here is a quick description of this reign:

1 Kings 17:30-33

30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. **31** And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him. **32** He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. **33** And Ahab made an Asherah. Ahab did more to

provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.]

Can you imagine that epitaph for your life: “Ahab did more...”

I would imagine most hear have heard the name Jezebel before. That was Ahab’s wife. That is the family, this is the family that Jehoshaphat married his son into. I do not have kids, I am hoping that one day we will, but I cannot imagine pushing for a marriage into a family like this. We could describe them as pure evil.

Some in that day probably called it a shrewd, logical move. Why would you not make an alliance with your enemy that is geographically closest to you? It protects you and keeps you from having to worry about them. It is a way in which Jehoshaphat lost his way.

At the beginning of his reign, he strengthened himself against Israel and fortified the cities and set garrisons in the land of Judah. It would have been good for him to continue to do that.

Deuteronomy 17 warned about Kings making alliances where none needed to be made. And this is one that did not need to be made. It happens when seeking the approval of man over fearing the Lord.

This one alliance he made because he was being “kingly” led to the destruction of his family. The son that he married off was named Jehoram. His story only takes up a few verses in chapter 21 because of how evil he was. Here is a glimpse:

21:4

[When Jehoram had ascended the throne of his father and was established, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and also some of the princes of Israel.]

And 21:20

[He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he departed with no one's regret. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.]

These two passages read like a punch to the gut. It speaks to the consequences there are for actions that we take. It speaks to the necessity of seeking and trusting God in every decision.

Just because you do something that “seems” right and logical, doesn’t mean that it is right and logical or that it needs to be done.

It speaks to the importance of good parenting. You have a responsibility as a parent to not lead your children astray. We do not know all the conditions surrounding this union. But we know it was a political move. One that seemingly poisoned the mind of his child that led to mass destruction.

Ultimately, this also is just one verse in Chapter 18, the rest of the chapter deals with how Jehoshaphat got roped into going and fighting a battle with Ahab that he didn’t really need to be in or at.

During this chapter Ahab has 400 “prophets” prophecy about this battle to convince Jehoshaphat to go. Jehoshaphat asks for one prophet of the Lord to come and one does. He prophecies that Ahab will die.

Ahab in his great wisdom thought that he could hide from the Lord, he could not. He went to battle dressed as a common soldier because he knew the syrian army would be looking for the King. He was accidentally shot by an arrow and died. It literally reads like the arrow was let go as an accident.

He could not hide from God.

Jehoshaphat's mistake was agreeing to this whole charade in the first place. In his defense, you still see the marks of his character and his bent towards the Lord during the process.

He is the one that asked for the prophet.

When in trouble in the battle, he cried out for the Lord.

He was confronted with the error of his ways at the beginning of Chapter 19 but Jehu the son of Hanani the seer.

Something that seems to separate Jehoshaphat from other Kings, is that when he made a mistake, he didn't run from it. He was called out by a prophet and instead of putting him in chains or something equally bad, he turned to the Lord and tried to turn the people to the Lord. He stressed the importance of the fear of the Lord.

There is something that should be said for remedial or final judgement from the Lord. Do we know why in some circumstances judgement for one person isn't final and in some circumstances it is remedial?

It is a question that only the Lord can answer. We normally have tells of it in the text, and it normally has something to do with the heart of the person and whether or not they have set their minds on the Lord. But not always. The sermon on the mount points towards the importance of intent. Ultimately God's judgement might not seem fair to us in our lifetimes. And truthfully, no matter what happens to us in this life, if we do not end up in hell, it isn't fair to us.

We can praise and thank the Lord greatly for that.

Know this, if you have been disciplined it is because the Lord loves you. It is for your own good and growth. It is not because the Lord hates you. Praise the Lord for his discipline. Praise the Lord for his Judgement. And if you are still alive, there is a reason for it.

But also know, that you cannot escape God. Ahab could not hide from him and it resulted in his death on a battlefield. It might not look that way for you in this life and you might have everyone fooled into thinking who you are or that you are something that you are not, but you cannot fool God.

If judgement doesn't come for you while you're living, rest assured that it will when you are not.

Towards the end of Chapter 20 we get this strange telling of Jehoshaphat making another poor decision and joining the King of Israel in a scheme of building ships to send to Tarshish. There was nothing redeeming about this and it was an act that was probably based upon finances.

The Lord destroyed those ships before they could even move.

Things built in sin do not last. Things built in rebellion do not last. The only things that last are those that are built upon the foundation of our Lord.

Learn from Jehoshaphat in this time of your life. Learn from your own mistakes.

Do you think that you will not make mistakes?

A marriage alliance might not ever be in the cards for you, but that does not mean that you do not seek the Lord in every decision.

Nothing is too small. Nothing requires you to rely on only yourself.

A great way to realize your smallness and insignificance in the world but significance to the Father is through the Third thing that Jehoshaphat can be known for:

3. He Fell on his face->He Worshipped

When thinking about King David (and we have a king here that is compared to David) one of the many things he is known for, one of the

ones that stands out the most is the way in which he worshipped. I mean, we even had a worship song that we sang a ton back in the early 2000s about it. It wasn't a very good song, but it quoted scripture.

But what we have here is a King that is realizing his need to fully depend on the Lord and this is probably a good way to look at worship. It shows you the significance of God next to your insignificance. "I exalt thee" A great test came the way of Jehoshaphat in chapter 20.

A great multitude formed to against the King. It was a force that was vastly larger than anything they would be able to combat. Jehoshaphat had a great response in the situation and there is much we can learn from it.

Do you know what his response was?

1. He set his face to seek the Lord
2. He declared a fast.
3. He prayed.

This response is actually pretty remarkable, and should and could be an example.

Lets read this prayer

2 Chron 20:6-12

["O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. **7** Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? **8** And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, **9** 'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment,^[c] or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.' **10** And now

behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy— **11** behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. **12** O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”]

There is something for us to learn from the pattern of this prayer. He starts by talking about the greatness of God and continues to talk about the good things that He has done. He then makes an appeal. And then confesses to their total reliance on the Lord.

Do your prayers ever follow this pattern?

Do you pray enough to ever think about a pattern for your prayers?

Does your prayer life ever reveal your total reliance on God?

The last verse is a great reminder for our place in this universe.

We are created beings. There are not many things that we can control.

But we can appeal to the creator. We can realize our utter and complete dependence on Him.

We can look to him. That is something that you can control. You can control your response. In times of trouble, look to him. Fast. Pray. Worship.

This passage continues on with another person prophesying and all gathered worshipping the Lord that night and Jehoshaphat started it by bowing with his face to the ground. Then they rose early the next day and worshipped some more.

When was the last time you were desperate enough for God to seek him and worship him completely?

Has There ever been a time?

This pattern that Jehoshaphat sets here is a great pattern to follow when in times of crisis. But it is also a pattern that we should follow when not in crisis. We should not need the world falling down around us to have to seek the Lord.

That is something that set Jehoshaphat apart. Yes, this was a time of trouble that he did and led the nation to do that. But he also helped to instill the fear of the Lord in the people in calm times.

If you are only seeking the Lord when you are in trouble, you are just wanting a genie or santa or a fairy. That is not the God we serve. Seek him at all times. Worship is an every single day adventure. Worship the Lord with the way in which you live.

What have we learned from all of this?

We saw a King that was a good King. He did many great things.
But ultimately here he

1. Feared
2. Fell
3. Fell on his face

Do these things for yourself.

Study the Law and the whole scripture and fear the Lord.
Know that you will make mistakes. It's inevitable. But seek the Lord.
Repent. Do not rely on yourself. Seek him in every decision.
Worship and fall down on your face before the King of Kings. Getting prostrate before the Lord will clear some things up for you.

Ultimately we see a King that had his heart set on the Lord. He made a terrible mistake in the middle of his reign, but it was not something that defined him. He was known as a King that brought reforms to the kingdom of Judah and was a great King in the line of David. He knew the importance of the Fear of the Lord and knew the importance of seeking after the Lord fully.

While being royalty is very likely never in the future for anyone here, those are still great life lessons that will lead one to peace in the King of Kings. They are life lessons that will lead to one wanting and seeking and trying to glorify the Lord in all their actions.

So I will ask again, what do people know about your God when you're in a crisis?

But maybe you aren't in a crisis right now?

Then maybe more importantly, what do people know about your God right now?

Do you live a life that would lead others to fear and seek the Lord? Do you lead a life that responds in times of crisis with worship?

Is that something that you are doing?

Do you need to spend time in the word and let it develop a fear and respect of the Lord? Do you need to repent of any sins? Do you need to worship the Lord in Spirit and Truth?

Friends, I have good news for you. You can start that now. Repent and worship now. Start studying. Fear the Lord. Fall face down before Him. Be fully reliant on this King of Kings.

Pray

