

## 2 Chron 20-23

Good evening and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles 20? Last week we ended in a cliffhanger, as we saw Jehoshaphat and the nation of Judah in an impossible situation. Their enemies have outnumbered and surrounded them, and that's when Jehoshaphat prays "Lord we don't know what we're doing, but our eyes are upon you". That was in verse 12, so tonight we'll begin in verse 13 and study through chapter 23 as we study the life of Jehoshaphat, and consequences of his decisions.

The title of tonight's message is The rightful King  
Let's pray

Let's read verses 12-13

12 "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."13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD. Everyone was desperately seeking God's deliverance.

14-15

14 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. 15 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. As you look back on your Christian walk have you noticed our tendency to

overestimate the part God expects us to play in His plans? The battle is never really ours – but God's.

But that doesn't mean we can be inactive...

**16 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.** Notice, God knew the enemy's plan, He knows exactly where and when they'll arrive. We're shocked by Russia's invasion, and Hamas' invasion. God is not.

The Ascent of Ziz was a wilderness pass that led from En Gedi to Jerusalem. It was a wadi – or a water run-off. Evidently, the wadi was dry at the time.

Finally, notice in verse 16... the nation had to go down against the enemies. You might think that because of the promise of victory in verse 15 that Judah wouldn't even have to show up at the battle and perhaps God wanted them to stay in Jerusalem and pray. Yet, God wanted them to go out against the enemy and He would use their participation in the battle. We have our part, and God has His part.

Did you know there are 23,214 verses in the Old Testament? 1 Chronicles 1:25 is the shortest. Esther 8:9 is the longest. But 2 Chronicles 20:17 is the middle verse. At the heart of the OT are the words in verse

**17 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." What a strange order. This battle is not about skill or strategy - but trust. This is about faith – not fighting ability.

Judah didn't need to fight in this battle, yet it didn't mean there was nothing for them to do. It was a significant step of faith to position themselves, to stand still, and to believe they would see the salvation of the LORD in the face of a large attacking army.  
18-19

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. 19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high. Its amazing, they worshiped God while their enemies still surrounded them. While their enemies were still alive. They worshiped because they fully trusted in God's word.

20 So they rose early in the morning. Pause here. It's one thing to get caught up in the excitement of the emotion with everyone, but when it's time to put feet to faith, we can waver a little. These guys didn't.

...20 and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." 21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should 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.”<sup>[fn]</sup> Most armies position the archers in the front. They would launch large numbers of arrows at the enemy to weaken their resolve and create holes in their line.

But Jehoshaphat comes up with an odd configuration. He places singers and worship leaders ahead of the infantry. This would be like putting our worship team in front of Army Rangers and the Navy Seals.

And what was the focus of their worship-the mercy of God.

22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. Jehoshaphat's strategy so confused and discombobulated the enemy they ended up turning on themselves. The enemy died from friendly fire.

24 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. Can you imagine what this must've been like?

25-27

25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies,[fn] and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah[fn] until this day. Berachah means blessing

27-30

27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. 28 So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. 29 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. 30 Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around. Pretty incredible stuff. But this is so much more than just a history lesson. There's a picture of us here. Today you and I can praise God that Jesus has fought the battle for our salvation and has rescued us from the judgment of God that we so rightly deserved, and we didn't have to lift a finger.

Jesus fights the battle and defeats our foe, and we share in the spoil **Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**

31-33

31 So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

32 And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD. 33

Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their

fathers. Jehoshaphat was a reformer, but the people refused to be thoroughly reformed.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

Now last week we saw how Jehoshaphat aligned himself with Ahab early on, and the devastation that caused. You would think this godly king learned his lesson right?

35-37

35 After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. 36 And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. 37

But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have 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. Jehoshaphat was a good, godly king who exercised tremendous faith. But Jehoshaphat also tried to make alliances with those whom he shouldn't have.

Chapter 21 a new king takes the reigns in Judah

1-6

1 And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place. 2 He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. 3 Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn.

4 Now when Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also others of the princes of Israel.

5 Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the **LORD**. The daughter of Ahab was named "Athaliah". This was a very wicked woman who will try to usurp the throne of Judah and become queen.

So don't miss what's happened. When Jehoshaphat arranged a marriage by joining Ahab's daughter to his son - Jehoshaphat invited the enemy into his camp. And we'll learn that this Athaliah nearly destroys the house of David.

Yes unity is important, but more important than unity – is truth. We should never sacrifice an enduring truth for a momentary truce. Tragically, Ahab's daughter corrupted the king of Judah.

7 Yet the **LORD** would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that He had made with David, and since He had

promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever. The implication is that Jehoram's evil was great enough to justify judgment, but God withheld it out of faithfulness to his ancestor David.

8-11

8 In his days Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves 9 So Jehoram went out with his officers, and all his chariots with him. And he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots. 10 Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. At that time Libnah revolted against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. 11 Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah astray. Both his father Jehoshaphat and his grandfather Asa tore these high places down, yet Jehoram promoted them instead. Clearly this was a wicked king.

In verse 12 Jehoram receives a letter from Elijah the prophet. Elijah was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel, but here he has a message for the king of the southern kingdom.

12-15

12 And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying,

Thus says the LORD God of your father David:

Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13 but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot like the harlotry of the house of Ahab, and also have killed your brothers, those of your



father's household, who were better than yourself, 14 behold, the LORD will strike your people with a serious affliction—your children, your wives, and all your possessions; 15 and you will become very sick with a disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day. This was not a Hallmark greeting card.

Elijah was taken to heaven in Jehoshaphat's reign. Thus, his judgment on Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, was written before Elijah was caught up to heaven. It was prophetic.

16-20

16 Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who were near the Ethiopians. 17 And they came up into Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house, and also his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz, [fn] the youngest of his sons. (also called Ahaziah) 18 After all this the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease. 19 Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning for his fathers. 20 He was thirty-two years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eight years and, to no one's sorrow, departed. However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings. Jehoram dies in agony... and in infamy. He died "to no one's sorrow." Jehoram was such a wicked king that when he died no one missed him.

Chapter 22 a new king, who verse 17 called Jehoahaz is also called Ahaziah- he reigns in Judah

1-3

1 Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place, for the raiders who came with the Arabians into the camp had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned. 2 Ahaziah was forty-two[fn] years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri. 3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly. How sad, when his own mother advised him to do wicked things!

4-5

4 Therefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction. 5 He also followed their advice, and went with Jehoram[fn] the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. This is where the names confuse you. Another Jehoram became king of the northern kingdom of Israel.

6-7

6 Then he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah[fn] the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

7 His going to Joram was God's occasion for Ahaziah's downfall; for when he arrived, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the

son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. This is another danger of being unequally yoked. God wants to judge the kings of Israel - and since the kings of Judah insist on an alliance, they end up in the path of God's wrath.

8-10

8 And it happened, when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who served Ahaziah, that he killed them. 9 Then he searched for Ahaziah; and they caught him (he was hiding in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu. When they had killed him, they buried him, "because," they said, "he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart."

So the house of Ahaziah had no one to assume power over the kingdom. The king is dead

10 Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs of the house of Judah. "The evil Athaliah kills the heirs and calls herself queen so she can rule. In fact 2 Kings tells us she reigned over the land for 6 years!

11-12

11 But Jehoshabeath,[fn] the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered, and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she did not kill him. 12 And he was hidden with them in the house of God for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land. For the sake of David, God remembered

His promise and spared this one young survivor to the massacre of Athaliah named Joash. The line of David was almost extinguished and continued only in the presence of a small boy named Joash, but God preserved that flickering flame.

Chapter 23 the wicked queen is about to meet her demise  
1-3

1 In the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and made a covenant with the captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri.

2 And they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the chief fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

3 Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said to them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has said of the sons of David. Jehoiada was a godly priest who wanted to restore the throne of David to the line of David, and take it away from the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. So here's the plan...

4-6

4 This is what you shall do: One-third of you entering on the Sabbath, of the priests and the Levites, shall be keeping watch over the doors; 5 one-third shall be at the king's house; and one-third at the Gate of the Foundation. All the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD. 6 But let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and those of the Levites

who serve. They may go in, for they are holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. They'll divide into three flanks. When the king is revealed he'll be surrounded with protection.

7-8

7 And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes into the house, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out.”

8 So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed the divisions. Jehoiada synchronized the moment of action with a shift change. This doubled the number of priests without drawing undue attention to their gathering.

9-10

9 And Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which had belonged to King David, that were in the temple of God. 10 Then he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and by the temple, all around the king. In the house of God were trophies from the victories David had won. Now, years later, those swords, shields, and spears were distributed in order that another generation could be victorious.

We are also the temple of the Lord and we must display the trophies of the battles the Lord fights for us. That's why it's so important to share testimonies. They're trophies, shields, spears, and swords, that will encourage others in battle.

11 And they brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, gave him the Testimony,[fn] and made him king. Then Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, "Long live the king!" At the coronation of the kings of Judah the king was given both a crown and a copy of the Scriptures. Deuteronomy 17:18 "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites

The king had his own Bible. That meant he had no excuse for not obeying God's Word.

This is the basis of a long-running British custom. At the coronation the newly crowned queen or king is presented with a copy of the Bible

12-15

12 Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people in the temple of the LORD. 13 When she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, also the singers with musical instruments, and those who led in praise. So Athaliah tore her clothes and said, "Treason! Treason!" The queen knows what just happened

14 And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were set over the army, and said to them, "Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not kill her in the house of the LORD."

15 So they seized her; and she went by way of the entrance of the Horse Gate into the king's house, and they killed her there. In America we would've housed her on death row – and allowed her to criticize her successors for the next 20 years. But in Judah, everyone knew she was guilty, and executed her.

16 Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the people, and the king, that they should be the LORD's people. When the right king is restored to the throne, revival returns to Judah. The same is true in us. Remove any Athaliah's – any usurper in our lives and return Jesus to the throne of our hearts and He'll bring renewal.

17-19

17 And all the people went to the temple<sup>[fn]</sup> of Baal, and tore it down. They broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. 18 Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the LORD to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was established by David. 19 And he set the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one who was in any way unclean should enter. Worship was treated seriously again.

20 Then he took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD; and they went through the Upper Gate to the king's house, and set the king on the throne of the kingdom. 21 So all the people of the land

rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword. Who is the new king? We'll find out next week!

This story paints a picture of our present situation. Athaliah was a usurper. For six years, she was on the throne. For six years, wickedness was in the land. But in the seventh year, everything changed when the king took the throne

There is a usurper on the throne of this world. Satan is the ruler of this world, the prince of this world. That's why there is rebellion and hurt, sorrow, sickness, and disease. But our King is coming!

Whatever is bothering or burdening you now won't be for long.  
**Luke 12:32 "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."**

Time here is short. The return of Christ is soon. And rejoicing will fill the land.