

2 Chronicles 18:28-29:11 – Thursday, January 12th, 2017

28 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 29 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

- If you're anything like me and I suspect you are you're having considerable difficulty understanding why he still allies with Ahab.
- You would think after this whole episode with the prophet Micaiah, Jehoshaphat would immediately end his alliance with Ahab.
- Actually, the reasons as to why he doesn't are the very lessons that we can learn from the life of this good king, Jehoshaphat.

- The first lesson we learn from his life is don't jump every time the Ahab's of this world snap their fingers for us to join with them.
- It's important to note how that Ahab approached Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat did not approach Ahab to join in this evil alliance.
- This is where Jehoshaphat made a terrible mistake by allowing himself to be unduly influenced and even easily manipulated.

- This sort of ties into the second lesson we can learn from him. In addition to being manipulated by Ahab he's attractive to Ahab.
- When we live our lives righteous before the Lord, we become magnets that attract the steel of the wicked Ahab's of this world.
- This is true when it comes to young people who know the Lord, they become very attractive to those who don't know the Lord.

- Another lesson that we can learn from Jehoshaphat is saying no to those Ahab's of this world who are usually very persuasive.
- Were Jehoshaphat to have refused to join with Ahab, his life would have been very different, as we'll see in our study yet future.
- Sadly, this leads an otherwise good king, who did good things down the path to a bad end such that he just doesn't finish well.

- This brings us to the next lesson we can learn from his life and it has to do with the Ahab's of this world taking advantage of us.
- I can't get over how shrewd this whole setup was to, in effect remove Jehoshaphat's ability to be firm and go against the crowd.
- The Ahab's of this world come on strong to take advantage of us, which often times requires us to be firm and blunt with them.

- Another very important lesson to learn from him is to never ever go against the check that God places in your heart to stop you.
- Jehoshaphat even had a word from the Lord that this was wrong on every level, yet he pushes that aside and does it anyway.
- I'm of the belief that deep down in his heart, Jehoshaphat knew this wasn't the Lord's will but that he wanted to be liked by man.

- Another equally important if not more important lesson to learn from Jehoshaphat is to be honest and say that you are wrong.
- What's really striking to me in all of this is that were he to simply admit that he had made a mistake, he could have got out of it.
- Not only doesn't he do this, he doesn't have the backbone to stand up to Ahab and his 400 false prophets concerning their evil.

- This last one is the most interesting to me personally because he allowed his son Jehoram to marry Ahab's daughter Athaliah.
- In other words, at the root of this was an unequal yoke of sorts in the sense that he had already formed an unrighteous alliance.
- It's for this reason that Christians should never yoke ourselves with non-Christians, which is what we're told in 2nd Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 6:14–15 - 14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

30 Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots who were with him, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel." 31 So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It is the king of Israel!" Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him. 32 For so it was, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.

- I have to say that I don't quite understand how Ahab was able to convince Jehoshaphat to allow him to disguise himself as king.
- Moreover, I don't really quite understand why Jehoshaphat would agree to not disguise himself and where his robe as the king.
- Truly, he must've known that this was going to happen. Perhaps it's due to the aforementioned principle of wanting to be liked.

One commentator had some additional insight into this, "Going into the battle, Ahab did not want to be identified as a king and therefore be a special target. He thought this would help protect him against Micaiah's prophecy of doom. It is more difficult to explain why Jehoshaphat agreed to go into the battle as the only clearly identified king. Perhaps he was either not very smart or he had very great faith."

33 Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." 34 The battle increased that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Syrians until evening; and about the time of sunset he died.

- Notice the details we have woven into the fabric of the narrative, first, that it was a "certain man," who "drew a bow at random."
- Clearly this man and his bow have the fingerprints of God's judgment all over them, such that, He metes out Ahab's judgment.
- I find it rather interesting that Ahab thought he could outsmart God by disguising himself in battle to prove Micaiah was wrong.

- The fact of the matter is, not only was Micaiah right, so too was Elijah when he prophesied exactly how Ahab would be killed.
- More specifically, that he would die in battle this way, and that every man would flee to his city and every man to his country.
- Here's the bottom line, no plan will ever prevail against the Lord Who knows the beginning from the end and the end of man.

Adam Clarke - "It appears that the Israelites and Jews maintained the fight the whole of the day; but when at evening the king died, and this was known, there was a proclamation made, probably with the consent of both Syrians and Israelites, that the war was over."

2 Chronicles 19 -- 1 Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. 2 And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD is upon you. 3 Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God."

- So the chapter begins with Jehoshaphat being on the receiving end of God's mercy and grace in spite of his alliance with Ahab.
- This because, the Lord found "good things" in him such as removing the wooden images and preparing his heart to seek God.
- It's interesting to note the contrast in verse two between hate and love, such that he's rebuked for loving those who hate God.

Psalm 97:10 (NKJV) — 10 You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.

4 So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers. 5 Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, 6 and said to the judges, "Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. 7 Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes."

- Here we're told that Jehoshaphat responded in a godly way after having been the recipient of God's mercy in sparing his life.
- To me, this is a textbook case of the kindness of God leading a man to repentance, which is thankfully what Jehoshaphat did.
- As we'll see next, not only does he bring the people back to the Lord, he sets up righteous judges who would fear the Lord.

8 Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, when they returned to Jerusalem. 9 And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart: 10 Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the LORD and wrath come upon you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty. 11 And take notice: Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters; also the Levites will be officials before you. Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good."

- The chapter ends with Jehoshaphat's appointing of judges and priests to the courts to judge justly and behave courageously.
- It's interesting to note that the Chronicler included this detail here that was not included in the books of first and second Kings.
- The reason I point this out is because it would seem to indicate that God wanted this record to be in the narrative for a reason.

- The question becomes why? Why is this detail of court appointments important enough to include in the pages of scripture?
- I believe the answer is in verses ten and eleven where we're told that if they were unjust God's wrath would come upon them.
- Conversely in verse eleven we're told if they behaved courageously taking a stand for righteousness, God would be with them.

Psalm 5:12 (NKJV) — 12 For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield.

Psalm 24:4-5 (NKJV) — 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Proverbs 3:33 (NKJV) — 33 The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the home of the just.

Proverbs 10:6-7 (NKJV) — 6 Blessings are on the head of the righteous, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked. 7 The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.