

2 Chronicles 20 – Thursday, February 2nd, 2017

2 Chronicles 20 -- 1 It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 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 En Gedi).

- In order to really appreciate the magnitude of this threat against Jehoshaphat one need remember what happened the last time.
- Namely, that of how close he came to losing his life when he went into battle because of his alliance with a wicked king Ahab.
- To his credit as we're about to see next, prayer and fasting becomes his first response instead of his last resort like he did prior.

3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

- There is some question here related to the fear on the part of Jehoshaphat being a fear of his enemies, or his fear of the Lord.
- I'm personally of the belief that it was supremely his fear of the Lord in the face of this threat as evidenced by his response to it.
- This because he seems at least for now, to have learned his lesson from last time. This is what's known as a successful failure.

- It's interesting to note that Jehoshaphat not only fasts and prays himself he proclaims a fast throughout all of Judah as well.
- To me, this speaks to the power of both prayer and fasting, which is always the best thing to do when in an impossible situation.
- Jesus spoke to this when the disciples couldn't cast out demons from a young boy because it required both prayer and fasting.

Mark 9:20-29 (NKJV) —20 Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. 21 So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." 23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" 25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" 26 Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. 28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" 29 So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, 6 and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? 7 Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 8 And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9 'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, 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.' 10 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—11 here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. 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."

- It's important to understand that Jehoshaphat is not reminding God of all this, he's reminding and recounting all this for himself.
- In other words, he's recounting that which God has done in the past, so as to reassure himself that God will do this again now.
- This reminds me of a young David recounting to Saul regarding Goliath that God had delivered a bear and a lion into his hands.

1 Samuel 17:34-37 (NKJV) — 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, 35 I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

- There's something else here I want to point out about Jehoshaphat's prayer and it has to do with what he prays in verse twelve.
- Notice he says we have no power against this great multitude against us, nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You.
- I would suggest this is the best way to pray, such that we don't know how, when, or the way God will do it, but we do know that.

Charles Spurgeon - "They said, 'Our eyes are upon thee.' What did they mean by that? They meant, 'Lord, if help does come, it must come from thee. We are looking to thee for it. It cannot come from anywhere else, so we look to thee. But we believe it will come, men will not look for that which they know will not come. We feel sure it will come, but we do not know how, so we are looking; we do not know when, but we are looking. We do not know what thou wouldest have us to do, but as the servant looks to her mistress, so are we looking to thee, Lord. Lord, we are looking.'"

13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD. 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.

- Perhaps it goes without saying but this is one of those passages where we get that saying of, "the battle belongs to the Lord."
- While I very much appreciate sayings like this, we often times can become sort of desensitized to the powerful reality of them.
- By that I mean, they can become cliché' and as such, lose their powerful meaning and application in our lives as Christians.

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. 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." 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.

- What they do here is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is they believe, by faith, that they are victorious.
- Please know that I in no way wish to lend credence to what's known as the word faith teaching, but there's an important truth here.
- Namely, that of trusting God by faith to do that which He has promised to do and believing that when God says it, that settles it.

Charles Spurgeon - "They worshipped, but why did they do it? They were not delivered. No, but they were sure they were going to be delivered. Their enemies were not dead. No, they were all alive, but they were sure they would be dead, so they had worship, and their devotion rose from trustful and grateful hearts."

20 So they rose early in the morning 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."

- There's something here that can be easily missed at first read, and it has to do with faith on the part of those on the front lines.
- Notice how that those appointed to sing to the Lord went out before the army first. This would have required an absolute faith.
- We do err greatly when we underestimate the faith of those with this kind of unflinching fearlessness who are on the front lines.

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. 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. 25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, 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 until this day. 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.

- I have to say that I'm as impressed as I am blessed by their expression of gratitude and thanksgiving to God for what He did.
- It's no small thing when someone says two simple words, "thank you," and I would suggest God takes notice of it when we do.
- Actually I'm of the belief that it's for this reason God had this detail included in the Chroniclers narrative. Also, consider Luke 17.

Luke 17:11-19 - 11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

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. 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. 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. 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.

- The chapter ends with what I would argue is unthinkable on the part of Jehoshaphat, such that he repeats his folly from before.
- One would think that after almost losing his life when he allied with Ahab, that he would never again make such an evil alliance.
- But here we're told here that he allies himself with Ahaziah, and it's to his own peril, because God destroyed all of the ships.

- However, according to the details in 1 Kings 22, it does seem in all fairness to Jehoshaphat, that he received Eliezer's rebuke.

1 Kings 22:44-50 -- 44 Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. 45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, the might that he showed, and how he made war, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 46 And the rest of the perverted persons, who remained in the days of his father Asa, he banished from the land. 47 There was then no king in Edom, only a deputy of the king. 48 Jehoshaphat made merchant ships to go to Ophir for gold; but they never sailed, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber. 49 Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat would not. 50 And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.