

JULY 27

2 Chronicles 19-20

2 Chronicles 19

Vs. 1-3 It isn't unusual to see God rebuke a king for doing wrong. What makes this interesting is that Jehoshaphat is rebuked and responds with humility. Now we'll see two further acts of faith and obedience that are not mentioned in Kings. It is good trying to understand God's rebuke of Jehoshaphat. God is not against compassion and reaching out, but the gospel and seeking God should always stand between us and others. Locking arms with those who hate the Lord is not the way to win them to Christ.

Note also the name of this prophet. We saw his dad get thrown into jail on July 25th. Joe responded better than his father Asa had.

Vs. 4-11 This sort of godly organization is "typical" of the Davidic kings who loved the Lord. After the kind of rebuke he received from the Lord, you might think Jehoshaphat would try to "look" repentant. But these acts are very intelligent and sincere, aimed at keeping the heart of Israel focused on the Lord. This would be important for Ezra to show the leaders of Israel, that when rebuked, a godly leader humbles himself and keeps working to lead the people to the Lord.

Vs. 4-7 This was the civil law.

Vs. 8-11 This is what God had always wanted. In disputed cases, the people were to come to the priests and seek God through the Urim and Thummim. It is amazing that Jehoshaphat organized like this.

2 Chronicles 20

This is a very long account of Jehoshaphat's spiritual leadership. Ezra is showing that the heart of a leader of Israel should rely on the promises of God.

Vs. 1-4 What is interesting here is that Jehoshaphat sought the Lord and the Lord only. When he needed help, he didn't run to the northern kingdom or Ahab's house. Ezra is showing that a leader should also lead the people in seeking the Lord. How could a guy this good go so wrong?

Vs. 5-12 This is very godly leadership by Jehoshaphat, and what a great prayer. He focuses the people on the promise that God made to Abraham and then the promise to make the temple the place of His dwelling. Jehoshaphat knew of Solomon's prayer of dedication and God's eternal promise to hear this kind of prayer. What a model to the people and what a man of faith.

Vs. 13-17 So, the life of the nation is on the line. Jehoshaphat has prayed his heart out. Suddenly this guy stands up and says this. Now, Ezra mentions his pedigree, but still, it is just this guy, not a voice or a cloud out of heaven. The response to this prophecy shows great faith.

Vs. 18-19 Jehoshaphat knew that it was the Lord and led the people in obedience and worship. This is faith. Notice that Joe had the singers, the sons of Korah, ready to give praise to God.

Vs. 20-21 So then, under Jehoshaphat's leadership they get ready for battle and go out to the field, and they have a "praise" service. And look what they sing, the "Best of David." *Give thanks to the Lord, for His steadfast love endures forever* is the expression of David's faith that he commanded to be sung in all the worship of Israel. I doubt that they teach this "strategy" at West Point or in any military training facility today.

Vs. 22-23 And "Boom!" the Lord settled the matter for them.

Vs. 24-30 You've got to admit that this is an amazing thing and Jehoshaphat led them in it.

V. 25 Notice that like the battle that Asa fought, they were given the spoils by God. The lesson here for Jehoshaphat is that God can make rich without foul allegiances and chasing gold. He can save without having to waste time amassing a large army. Focusing their energy and endeavor on the spiritual would have saved many of these kings.

V. 26 Notice, too, that Jehoshaphat finished this event with praise to God.

V. 30 Normally this should be a note of blessing; but now that the Lord has given Jehoshaphat peace and he doesn't have a mission, what will he do?

Vs. 35-37 Actually, we know from Kings, that Jehoshaphat also joined together with Ahaziah in a battle and again came under demonic influence. That time the rebuke came from Elisha.

The lesson I see here is that as disciples, we need to make our following simple by doing what our Lord desires in the harvest. We don't need armies or wealth. God can supply what we need. We don't need big churches or a "voice." God gives those too. God never asked Jehoshaphat to build a bridge of unity to the northern kingdom. It might have been a "noble" desire on Jehoshaphat's part, but it appears that he had some other motives too. Being a peacemaker sounds like a "god" thing, but not if it's not God's will, and not if it keeps us from honoring Him in the harvest.

What is interesting in both Asa and Jehoshaphat is that when they were simply honoring God, God brought them respect, and people from the northern kingdom were convicted and came to Jerusalem. Jehoshaphat didn't need to join with Ahab or anyone from the northern kingdom. When Jehoshaphat was honoring God, God put the fear and respect of Judah in the hearts of the surrounding nations. Jehoshaphat never had to build a good-looking army. When Jehoshaphat was building into the lives of his people and honoring God, he never had to do a joint venture thing to get gold and wealth. God just dumped it in his lap.

As disciples, our focus only needs to be on one thing, loving our Lord and following Him in the harvest. That vision and mission are more than enough. Seeing the lost saved and making disciples who make disciples is blessing enough on this earth. Paul's life was a living sacrifice to Christ and he put it like this in 1 Corinthians 9:23, *I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.*

Romans 10:14-11:12

Romans 10:14-21

Vs. 14-17 The question that jumps out to me in reading this section is, "What question or objection was Paul answering?" One other major difference between Judaism and Christianity was that Christians had a mandate and commission to be out and to be preaching and telling. It seems here that Paul is showing that sharing the gospel is not only logical and necessary, but is mentioned in the OT. It was part of the plan of redemption. We are left here on purpose, to proclaim the gospel so that people can believe.

V. 17 is another of those famous verses.

Vs. 18-21 I suppose the unspoken objection would be that Israel never really had a chance to hear and understand the message of faith from the OT.

V. 18 Paul's knowledge of the Word was vast when you think of all the Scripture he quotes and alludes to. This quote is from Psalm 19:4. Wouldn't it be great to have such a close walk with God and such a vast understanding of the Word?

V. 19 This quote will become important in the next chapter. The church is that foolish nation.

V. 20 Again, from Romans 3, no one seeks for God unless God takes the initiative in giving nudges. What happens after "the nudge" is up to us. In the case of Israel, God had given them His truth and promises, and they still didn't seek Him.

V. 21 This is what we know from reading the OT. On the one hand, we'll hear that God gave them a spirit of stupor; but on the other hand, reading the OT, we realize that each person and every king made their own decisions. It isn't the case that God "blinded" them, but rather (as in Rom. 1:18ff) God gave them up to their own desire to sin. There came a point when He would no longer throw pearls before swine. As we'll see, God will work in mercy to get them ready to receive truth.

Romans 11:1-12

This is a good chapter to read fully. If you don't, you could get caught thinking that the "remnant" is the only part of Israel that will be saved. If you read to 11:25 you'll see that there is a future redemption for the entire nation of Israel.

Vs. 1-6 This is an interesting argument by Paul. The remnant in Elijah's time was a small group of people in the northern kingdom God kept from worshipping Baal. After the time of Elijah and after this remnant was gone, there were many prophets who wrote of the nation returning to the Lord. The remnant was preserved by grace during a very dark time for a specific purpose, but it was in no way taking the place of the nation or inheriting the promises of God to the nation of Israel. The present remnant of which Paul was a part, and of which Jewish believers today are a part, in no way takes the place of this future generation of the nation of Israel who will fulfill God's promises to it. This remnant is comprised of Jewish believers, who with God's help, have escaped the national blindness and have embraced their Messiah. And it is all grace and faith, without works.

Vs. 7-12 This is an unfortunate breaking point. I'd suggest reading the rest of the chapter.

What we find here is the description of God's punishment on Israel and His purpose of redemption for the Gentiles and Jews in that punishment. The hardening of heart, as with Pharaoh, was in response to their own hardening of heart. If a person rejects God long enough, God will intensify the blindness to fulfill His own purposes. That blinding will be lifted in the future when God prepares the hearts of the nation to receive His truth. In God's amazing wisdom and foreknowledge, He had already planned to use Israel's sin and rejection of Him to reach Gentiles. That is where we are now, but you can sense from how this is written, Paul is anticipating that the time for the Jews will come. They are being made jealous by the grace being given to those outside of Israel.

Psalm 21

This psalm has an evangelistic tone to it as David proclaimed the secret of his success. And if God will do that for David, we can trust Him too. What do we trust in as we follow Christ in the harvest? What can we be sure to receive from Him? Houses? Cars? Comforts? Verse 7 says it, *the steadfast love of the Most High*.

V. 1 This is David's praise and "boasting" in the Lord.

Vs. 2-7 This is the list of things the Lord had done for David. In giving David the desire of his heart, I wonder if David was referring to the ark of the covenant coming to Jerusalem so that David could dwell in the presence of the Lord.

V. 7 David's real confidence was in the Lord and His *steadfast love*.

Vs. 8-12 In a way, it wasn't just that God was protecting David and removing his enemies. God was furthering His plan of redemption and punishing those who stood against that plan.

V. 13 There is no other person in the Bible who was more committed to giving praise and testimony to God.

Proverbs 20:4-6

If v. 4 is read with the previous three verses, you have a picture of different behaviors.

In v. 5, the man of understanding observes all of this, knows that motives run deep, and he has the patience and wisdom of the farmer to draw out and understand these people.

Words don't show loyal love, but faithfulness does. Think of God's love for David. Verse 6 might belong to the proverb for tomorrow which mentions integrity and it being passed on to children.