

## **JULY 28**

### **2 Chronicles 21-23**

These are very dark chapters. They are dark not just because bad stuff happens, but because all of this was launched by a godly king, Jehoshaphat. As you read all of this, think of it as the result of his desire to unify Israel by uniting with those who didn't love God. Ezra is also including this history as a lesson to the returned exiles. No matter what they build in devotion to the Lord, they can plant the seeds of destruction by becoming "unequally yoked" with the ungodly.

#### **2 Chronicles 21**

Vs 1-7 Jehoshaphat had actually made it so that his other sons would be blessed and honored with their own cities and wealth. They would not have been a problem or threat to Jehoram. It should have been a big happy family. But alas, Jehoram's wife was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel through a marriage alliance.

V. 4 When Jehoram was established, he killed all of his brothers. This would have included their families and anyone who might have had a claim to the throne. This was unprecedented in Israel and it was fueled by his wife, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, who Jehoshaphat made sure Jehoram married.

Vs. 8-10 Under Jehoshaphat the Edomites were allies. Now they were enemies.

Vs. 11-15 There is possibly a small problem here with this letter being from Elijah. We don't know when Elijah was taken into heaven, but it appears that it was before Elisha was in active ministry. In 2 Kings 3:13, Elisha spoke with Jehoshaphat. It may be that a copyist made the mistake of writing Elijah instead of Elisha. I get them mixed up all the time when I preach. When we see the original writings, I'm sure this will make sense. Another possibility is that Elijah was led by the Spirit to write the letter before he was taken.

This sickness sounds like how God took Herod out in Acts 12:23. Whatever it was, it looks like a nasty, painful way to die; but he deserved it. It is interesting that God didn't do this to the other ungodly kings who reigned in Israel, Ahab for example. Sometimes God judges quickly and sometimes not-so-quickly. But He judges.

Vs. 16-17 And in the middle of this wonderful illness, the country was weak and was being terrorized by the neighboring countries.

Vs. 18-20 What a statement against this man. Everyone was happy to see him go. In light of the fact that he killed his brothers and had a godly grandfather and a godly father, he was really a bad guy. It is interesting that God allowed Jehoram to reign so long, but made sure he died in agony.

As a result of all of this, and probably something that Ezra mentioned when he taught this, the Davidic line was now threatened, not only with ungodliness, but with extinction. All of Jehoshaphat's other sons and their families were killed; and all of Jehoram's kids, but one, were killed.

#### **2 Chronicles 22**

V. 1 The people must have hoped to find a godly king, but Athaliah, Jezebel's daughter, was still spewing poison into the land. This now is the second generation diseased by Jehoshaphat's poor decision.

Vs. 2-9 What's interesting is that Ahaziah was killed as a part of the judgment against Ahab. God said that all who were related to Ahab would die. Ahaziah was a grandson of Ahab. Unwittingly, Jehoshaphat had brought his family under God's curse on Ahab. Jehu, though not a

real follower of God, knew of Jehoshaphat's godliness and therefore respected the burial of Ahaziah.

Vs. 10-12 This would have meant the extinction of the line of David, except for the actions of the godly priest Jehoiada. Jehoshaphat's misled actions now have brought the house of David down to (almost) the last man. Jehoshaphat's sin will now extend to three generations.

### 2 Chronicles 23

Vs. 1-7 You might wonder why all of this is given in such detail. Ezra was a priest and leader of the people, and maybe Jehoiada was his hero. More likely, the importance is that the line of David was almost extinct and it took great personal courage by many, especially the priests and Levites, to protect the line of David and the work of God. Notice that Jehoiada gathered the Levites so that there would be support for following God and for fighting to maintain the line of David. Both Ezra and Nehemiah fought hard to have the Levites live around Jerusalem to help teach the people and hold up a godly example for the nation. When you read Nehemiah, you'll see that this wasn't easy.

Vs. 8-11 Once the Levites were in place and the people of the city recognized that an heir of David had been placed on the throne, the tide turned in the city.

Vs. 12-15 Athaliah apparently thought she had support in the city.

Vs. 16-21 In the coronation of the king, notice the mentions of the Levitical priests and King David. This was the expression of putting Israel back in order. The promise to Abraham was manifested in the people learning the Word of God and being devoted to Him. David was the extension of the promise to Abraham; in that, from David would come the "Son of David."

The lessons here for those returning from exile would be obvious. It is worth giving your life in order to serve God and His people, leading them in the way of God's promised blessing. That is a good lesson for us too, to be making disciples in the harvest who will make disciples.

### **Romans 11:13-36**

As you read this section, it is helpful to think of Gentiles and Jews as racial entities being addressed. Rather than speaking to individuals, Paul is speaking to groupings of people. Paul says here, and will say again in chapter 15, that he was an apostle to that group of people called Gentiles. So he is talking about a group, not individuals.

V. 13 This is one of those verses that tells you that the Roman church was a mixed church.

Vs. 13-16 The key here is in v. 15, when Paul talks about "their" acceptance. This refers to "the nation of Israel" during the time when that particular group is on earth and turns their hearts to Christ. It is not as if the church doesn't "need" the redemption of Israel. The working of God through the church is just one aspect of His plan. This has nothing to do with the equality of believers, Jew or Greek. Israel will still play a role. It is the redemption of Israel that will bring the plan of God for mankind to completion.

Vs. 17-24 Now, as with most illustrations, they make a point or two, but are not meant to be carried on to infinity. What is the cultivated olive tree? It appears to be Israel or maybe even the promise to Abraham. The line of the promise from Adam and Eve, through Abraham, through David was one continuous lineage. The wild olive tree is definitely the Gentiles. According to this illustration, we Gentiles have been grafted into this promise. Remember that when Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman in John 4, He told her in a way that was very matter-of-fact, that *salvation is from the Jews*. Later in Romans 15 Paul will say that the Gentiles have become partakers of Israel's spiritual blessings. They are partakers, not owners.

V. 22 is a little problematic if you see this as individuals and not as groups. God has power to graft the believing Jewish nation into the promise. And if the Gentiles reject God's salvation,

they will be excluded. On this note, it is interesting to think that in the Tribulation, the Jews will comprise the largest missionary force that has ever worked at one time on earth. (In the Olivet Discourse Jesus said the gospel would be preached to all nations.) If you count up all the members of all the mission organizations (not churches) today, you won't come up with a total of 144,000 missionaries. If I understand the dynamics of the time of "Jacob's Trouble," the nation of Israel will turn to Christ, and the Gentile world will be, for the most part, chasing a delusion.

Vs. 25-32 This is the conclusion of chapters 9-11. I find it hard to understand how people don't see a distinction between the church and Israel, holding that the promises to Israel will not be literally fulfilled.

So, which verses seem to put the plan of God together for you? How would you explain this to someone else?

Vs. 33-36 Benedictions are full of theology, and usually, every word is intentional. Notice that it isn't God's power and elective determination that are praised here, but rather His wisdom and knowledge and how unsearchable His judgments are. This was God's argument to Job. Paul's conclusion is that God does all of this righteously; and though it is so intricate that we could never understand it, we know and trust that His way is righteous and good, because we know Him through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Psalm 22:1-18**

I was reading this morning how difficult it was for the disciples to understand that Jesus should suffer, be treated with contempt, die and on the third day be raised. For them, He had become the Holy One of God, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the Son of Man. To hear then that, *so also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands*, was utterly impossible.

This is a prophetic psalm talking about the suffering of the Messiah. David's experience mirrored what was to be felt by Jesus. Read this psalm from that perspective.

Vs. 1-2 If this psalm is what David experienced at the beginning of his decade of running from Saul, it makes perfect sense. David had been anointed by Samuel to be king of Israel. David was a hero. Everything David did had been blessed by God. Suddenly David lost everything.

Vs. 3-5 Here David is remembering the history of redemption and men like Abraham and Moses. He was now standing with them.

Vs. 6-8 David's reputation was ruined in a night. This was also the experience of Jesus on the cross. Compare verses 7 & 8 with Matthew 27:39 & 43. That's pretty interesting. I wonder later while hearing Psalm 22 read, if some of these guys said, "Wait, I actually said that."

Vs. 9-11 David held on to God's calling of him. This faith in the promise also made Abraham strong. Jesus, too, knew that He was the chosen, beloved and anointed Son of God.

Vs. 12-13 This seems to describe the power of the foes that faced David.

Vs. 14-15 This was the emotional effect on David, and I'm sure this mirrors some of what the Lord experienced in the garden.

Vs. 16-18 We clearly know what happened to the Lord. Here, David experienced something similar. When David ran from Saul he had to leave his house and possessions behind. Verse 18 might be how his former friends divided his possessions and decided who got the cappuccino maker.

### **Proverbs 20:7**

If you put this with the verse before, it basically says that talk, even Christian talk, is cheap. Integrity by definition means that everything this person does is in keeping with his or her expressed love for God. Reality is seen in action, and in our case that means in the harvest.