



2 Chronicles 18-20

Tape #7136
II Chronicles 18-20
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to II Chronicles, chapter eighteen. In the seventeenth chapter of II Chronicles we had the ascension of Jehoshaphat to the throne of Judah. The son of Asa, who had had a long, and prosperous reign. Jehoshaphat, a good king. Did that which was right in the Lord, in the eyes of the Lord, instituted further spiritual reforms. As the result, had a very strong, powerful, wealthy kingdom. He was prospered and blessed. So chapter eighteen declares now...

Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance, and he joined affinity with Ahab (18:1).

Here is a very strange passage of scripture. For Jehoshaphat was a good king, a righteous man. He did seek the Lord, and he did institute powerful spiritual reforms. Why he would join affinity with Ahab is a problem that you can't really explain. For Ahab was perhaps, one of the most wicked kings who reigned in Israel. Ahab was the one who had married that wicked Jezebel, who had introduced the Baal worship, and made it the worship of Israel. He was about as foul, and wicked king as one could imagine. Ungodly, unrighteous, and yet here is king Jehoshaphat joining affinity.

Now the method by which he joined affinity with him, is that he arranged for his son to marry the daughter of Ahab. So Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Thus there came this sort of political alliance because of the marriage of their children. It is one of those difficult, I, no, it's one of those impossible things to understand, why he would do such a thing.

Now after certain years [Their children were married. In a sense they shared common uh, or will share common grandchildren. Jehoahaz, and Ahab, or Jehoshaphat and Ahab, and uh, so after certain years,] he decided to go to Samaria. [To visit Ahab.] And Ahab [put on a big party for him, he] killed the sheep the oxen in abundance, for the people that had gone with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramothgilead (18:2).

Now Ramothgilead was in the heights of Gilead. It was a city that had been taken by Syria. He is, Ahab is wanting to regain this city for Israel. It was originally an Israeli city. He wants to regain it. So he invites Jehoshaphat to go with him in this battle against Ramothgilead. And a, and Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, well,

Ahab the king of Israel, said to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, Will you go with me to Ramothgilead? And he answered him, I am as you are, my people as your people; we will be with you in the war (18:3).

So here is this confederacy of this righteous king, with the wicked king, in going against Ramothgilead.

So Jehoshaphat said, Let's inquire, I pray thee, the word of Jehovah today. Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of the prophets four hundred men, and he said unto them, Shall we go to Ramothgilead, or shall we forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hands (18:4-5).

Now these four hundred prophets that Ahab called, were not prophets of Jehovah. They were prophets that exercised their ministry in Israel, and in Israel of course, the prophets of Baal had been assassinated by Elijah, just prior to this incidence, but the prophets that were serving there, were prophets of the calf god that was the worship of the northern kingdom. So here were these four hundred prophets of Ahab, who served in the worship of their calf god, and they all said, "Go up. God will deliver it into the king's hands".

But Jehoshaphat said, Don't you have a prophet of Jehovah besides these prophets, that we might inquire of him? ["You've inquired of your god, the calf god, now don't you have a prophet of Jehovah that we can ask him about it?"] And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of Jehovah: but I hate him; for he has never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: it's this Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, ["Oh no"], don't say that. Let's bring him in and see what he has to say. So the king of Israel called for one of his officers, and said, Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla (18:6-8).

Quite obvious that Micaiah had been imprisoned by Ahab, no doubt because of these prophecies against

Ahab. So he was, the officer was sent to the prison to bring him in to prophecy.

And so the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat either of them on his throne, they were clothed in their robes, they sat in a empty place there at the entering in of the gate of Samaria; and all of the prophets were there prophesying before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron, and he said, Thus saith Jehovah, With these you will push Syria until they are consumed. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for Jehovah shall deliver it into the hand of the king (18:9-11).

So here they, they're all encouraging, this one guy even went so far as to make these iron horns, and put em on his head, and rush around, and say, "Thus will you push the king of Syria".

So the messenger that went to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, ["Now look fellow"], The words that the prophets are declaring are good to the king, they're all with one assent; ["They're all in agreement."] so let your word, therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak good. ["Fella if you know what's good for you!"] So Micaiah said, As Jehovah lives, even what my God saith, that will I speak. And when he was come to the king, the king said to Micaiah, shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he said, Just go up and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand (18:12-14).

He no doubt said it in sort of a mocking way. You know like, "Hey, go ahead. Go man, prosper, like these guys that told you". He said it in such a way that the king knew that he wasn't serious.

And so Ahab said to him, How many times shall I adjure thee that you say nothing but the truth to me in the name of Jehovah? And then he said, I did see all of Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and Jehovah said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Didn't I tell you that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil? ["This guy's always against me!"] But the prophet continued, and he said, Therefore hear the word of Jehovah; I saw Jehovah sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. And Jehovah said, Who shall entice Ahab the king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one spoke saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. Then there came out a spirit, and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will entice him. And Jehovah said unto him, How? And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets. And Jehovah said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do even so. Now therefore, behold, Jehovah had put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee (18:15-22).

Here is Micaiah now accusing all of these other prophets of being false prophets, having been filled with a lying spirit.

And Zedekiah [One of these prophets who had prophesied of the victory.] came close, and he smote Micaiah on the cheek, and he said, Which way went the spirit of Jehovah from me to speak unto thee? And Micaiah said, Behold, you shall see on that day when you shall go into the inner chamber to hide yourself (18:23-24).

Now herein is an issue that does raise questions. Micaiah speaks of this vision that he had. The vision of the Lord sitting upon His throne, and the angelic heavenly beings gathered on His right hand, and on His left. God asking the question, "Who will go and entice Ahab to go into battle against Ramothgilead?" And the various angelic beings were offering different suggestions. Then there came forth a spirit and said, "Hey, I'll go forth and entice him!", the Lord said, "How do you propose?". He said, "I'll be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets". The Lord said, "That'll work. Go."

With our understanding and concept of God, it is hard to understand how it is that God would allow a lying spirit, the liberty of entering into and deceiving the prophets of Ahab. There are a lot of things that we don't know about heaven. There are a lot of things that we don't know about God.

In the book of Job, we are given another insight into the heavenly scene. Job tells us that the sons of God were presenting themselves unto God. The sons of God, referring to the angels, were presenting themselves unto God, and Satan also came with them. And, God said to Satan, "Hey where have you been?", he said, "Oh I've been going to and fro upon the earth, up and down in it". God said, "Oh, well have you considered my servant Job? Good man, righteous and upright. He loves good hates evil." "Yes", he said, "I've considered him. But he's a mercenary. You've blessed him so much, any fool would worship you and serve

you, if you bless them like you've blessed Job! Let me strip him of the riches, and he'll curse you to your face!"

Now, here is God conversing with Satan, over one of God's servants upon the earth. But the thing that I want to point out is that Satan does have access to the throne of God. Not only does he have access to the throne of God, but he has conversations with God over God's servants upon the earth.

In the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to John. In the midst of the tribulation period, John sees the scene in heaven. It's in the thirteenth chapter there. Where, twelfth chapter, where Satan is cast out of heaven, the dragon. With him, he draws a third part of the angels. He is cast to the earth, at which time, an angel proclaims, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth! For Satan, the dragon, is cast out. And he knows he has but a short time". He is referred to there, by the angel as the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before the Father day and night.

Now when we get the insight in the book of Job, Satan is accusing Job before God. He's accusing Job of being a mercenary, and of really just seeking after his own welfare, and his own flesh, more than after God. "Skin for skin, all a man has will he give for his life." So that Satan does have access to the throne of God, and it could be that as God is asking, "Who will entice Ahab that he might go to battle at Ramothgilead?", that the angels offering the various suggestions, that this spirit is actually either Satan, or one of Satan's followers. One of the angels, which kept not his first estate, but rebelled with Satan, and that he came offering his services unto the Lord.

I trust that you won't jump to swift conclusions with this remark. But in a technical sense, Satan is a servant of God, in that he is serving God's purposes. Though he is an antagonist too, and violently opposed to God, yet he is allowed to exist, by God, in order that he might fulfill certain purposes of God. He does not reign. God reigns. God reigns supreme, is the sovereign ruler of the universe.

Satan only reigns within a prescribed area that God allows him, in the hearts of those who are disobedient, and adverse to God. God places the limitations upon what Satan can do. In fact, when God brought up the subject of Job, Satan was objecting to God, because he said, "You put a hedge around that guy. You won't let me at him! Take down the hedge, let me at him! When I'm through with him, he'll curse you to your face!" But God had placed this hedge of protection, that Satan could not get to Job. I believe that God places a hedge of protection about us. I believe that, that hedge of protection is really, the blood of Jesus Christ. That it is our power, it is our place of victory over the work of Satan.

In the book of Revelation again, in the tribulation period, when Satan is assaulting against the faithful, it says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their testimony". We are told in Colossians that, "Jesus, through the cross, spoiled the principalities and powers that were against us, making an open display of His victory, as He triumphed over them, in the cross".

So this spirit, that came and suggested that he would be a lying spirit in the mouths of the prophets, was then commissioned by God. He said, "You go. You will prevail." These prophets were not the true prophets of the Lord to begin with. Being the prophets of the calf god, and worship, it would be easy for them to be deceived by that same spirit under which they were operating already. It's a passage of scripture that you're not gonna fully understand. There's a lot of things about it that I have put in my file of, "Wait for further information". Ha, ha!

So, Micaiah, the true prophet of the Lord tells of this vision that he had, of the heavenly scene. And how it came to pass that these four hundred prophets were in agreement, in enticing Ahab to go against Ramothgilead to battle.

So king Ahab said, [verse twenty five] Take Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; ["Take him back where you got him."] And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with the bread of affliction ["Put him in solitary. Feed him with bread of affliction."] and with water of affliction, until I return in peace. Micaiah said, If you certainly return in peace, then Jehovah hasn't spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, all of you people (18:25-27).

"If you know, you return in peace, then the Lord hasn't spoken by me."

So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; so you put on my robes. So the king of

Israel disguised himself; and they went to battle. Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots that were with him, saying, ["Now look"] don't fight with just the small ["Just the common soldiers".] but only let's get the king ["Concentrate on only killing the king."] of Israel. [Ahab. He was the target.] So it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, Oh that must be the king of Israel. Therefore they encircled him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, [Probably to the Lord.] and the Lord helped him; and the Lord moved them to depart from him. For it came to pass, that, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back again from pursuing them (18:28-32).

Now this, could possibly be a diabolical plot on behalf of Ahab, to get Jehoshaphat wiped out. He goes in as a common soldier, disguised as just a chariot driver, and lets Jehoshaphat put on the robes of the king, knowing that the Syrians are gonna be after the king. Figuring, "If they kill Jehoshaphat, then I'll be able to reign over Judah also. We'll combine the kingdoms, and I'll be king over the whole thing!" Very possibly a plot, diabolical plot, on behalf of Ahab, to get rid of Jehoshaphat.

But a certain man drew a bow at a venture, [This is one of those passages of scripture that uh, and it, and it, one of those, "And it was her hap to land in the field of Boaz". I mean, it's one of those coincidences that weren't coincidences. It was one of those divinely ordained kind of a thing. Here's a fellow just taking a (boop!), letting an arrow fly, you know. Just taking a bow at a venture, just left flying with it. Not any particular target, just over towards the enemy you know. And he let fly this arrow at a venture.] and it smote the king of Israel between the joints of his harness: therefore he said to his chariot man, Turn your hand that you may carry me out of the host; for I am wounded (18:33).

So he ordered the chariot out of the battle because he had been hit by this arrow.

And the battle increased that day: howbeit the king of Israel stayed himself up in the chariot against the Syrians until the evening: and about the time that the sun went down he died (18:34-35).

The prophecy came to pass.

Chapter 19

And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. [So Jehoshaphat went home. Been a tragedy, he has seen the death of Ahab.] And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to the king Jehoshaphat, Should you help the ungodly, and love those that hate the Lord? [Here now the prophet is coming to rebuke him for this visit to the king of the north, and going into battle with him. "Should you help the ungodly? and love those that hate the Lord?"] therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord (19:1-2).

"God's angry with you!" Hanani was the prophet that came to the father of Jehoshaphat, king Asa. We had it in our last study if you will remember. Asa had sought a military alliance with Syria to help him when the king was building the fortified city of Ramah, it was a clever bit of strategy that worked. The Syrians attacked Israel from the north, they left off the building of the fortified city, which was then dismantled by Asa. Hanani the prophet, came out to him, and said, "When you were little, when you were weak, and your land was invaded by the huge host of the Ethiopians, the Nubians, and you called upon the Lord, the Lord delivered them into your hand. But now you've trusted in the arm of flesh". He rebuked him for the strategy. That enraged Asa. He was furious, and had Hanani put in prison.

Now here is the son of Hanani prophesying to the son of king Asa. His dad, by prophesying, I mean prophesying to Jehoshaphat, yeah, the sons a son. So as he is prophesying to Jehoshaphat, with the full knowledge that his father was thrown in jail for this very thing, prophesying to the father of Jehoshaphat, but yet he is faithful to the word of the Lord. He declares, "Nevertheless you've done evil in doing this. Loving those that hate God and joining and helping those that who are ungodly".

Nevertheless, there are good things found in you in that you have taken away the Ashorem, out of the land, and you've prepared your heart to seek God (19:3).

So Jehoshaphat, not like his father, accepted the rebuke of the prophet. So he decided himself to go through the land, to sort of reinforce the people's commitment unto Jehovah.

And so Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people from Beersheba to

mount Ephraim, [Now it used to be from Dan to Beersheba. But the kingdom is cut short, and Judah and Benjamin only extend to mount Ephraim to Beersheba, but he went through the cities of Judah.] and he brought them back to Jehovah the God of their fathers (19:4).

He encouraged them in a spiritual revival, spiritual renewal.

And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, And he said to the judges, Now take heed what you do: for you judge not for man, but for Jehovah who is with you in judgement (19:5-6).

So the judges, he charged with the responsibility of realizing that they were standing in God's place to bring judgement. "You are judging for Jehovah". So inculcated was this concept that the judge was representing God, and was to represent the decisions of God in the matter. For God is the true judge, and if I am set in the position of judge, then it is a necessity that I seek God's judgement in the case, because I am there really to represent the true judgement, which comes from God.

So much was this a part of their thought, and the whole process, or the whole idea, of judges, that the word "judges" in Hebrew, is "Elohim", which is the word for gods. That is where the Mormons have made a slip up, for Jesus, when He said, "Has not, have not the scriptures said that ye are gods? Then why are you gonna stone me because I say I'm the son of God?". That ye are gods, ye are Elohim, is there in the book of Deuteronomy, when God was instructing the judges in their responsibilities and duties, He said, "For ye are, Ye judges", or, "Ye are Elohim, ye are the gods", or, "Ye are the judges". It's translated judges in our bible, and properly so.

But they are standing as God's representatives. They are as God, in that they have really the destiny of a man in their hands. They are exercising what is God's prerogative, and that is of judgement in the affairs of man. So it was important that the judges had that respect of God, and that consciousness of God, realizing that, "I am to bring God's determination in this case". Oh would to God that the judges had that kind of an attitude towards their positions today. Realizing, that they are going to be responsible to God, for the judgements that they have made. I wouldn't want to be in a lot of judges seat, when they're gonna have to stand before the judgement seat!

Wherefore [he said to these judges] let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed do it: for there is no iniquity with Jehovah our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of bribes (19:7).

So you judges have an awesome responsibility. You've got to judge righteously. "There's no iniquity with our God. There is no respect of persons. Nor is there any receiving of bribes."

Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set the Levites, and the priests, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, for judgement of Jehovah, for the controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem (19:8).

So he established again the whole judicial system throughout the land.

Charging them, saying, Thus shall you do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart (19:9).

So judges are to judge in the fear of the Lord, faithful with a perfect heart, not taking the respect of persons, nor receiving of bribes.

And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgements, you shall even warn them that today, that they trespass not against Jehovah, so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and you shall not trespass (19:10).

So having been warned of God by the prophet, he does the right thing, he initiates a further reform.

And, behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in the matters of Jehovah; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for the king's matters: [So there were the religious judges, and then there were those judges that dealt in the civil courts, in civil matters.] and also the Levites shall be officers before you. Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good (19:11).

Chapter 20

So it came to pass after this, that the children of Moab, Ammon, and others beside the Ammonites, [Those from mount Seir, the Edomites.] came against Jehoshaphat to battle. And there came some that told

Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea [That would be the Dead sea.] on this side of Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi (20:1-2).

Now they'd already made pretty good progress into the land before the king got word of it. They'd already come over on this side of the Jordan, this side of the Dead sea. They were in the area of Engedi, which is just about due east from Hebron, in the area next to the Dead sea.

Jehoshaphat feared, [Huge host, these three nations now joining together in this invasion. "And Jehoshaphat feared"], and he set himself to seek the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast throughout all of Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: even out of all of the cities of Judah they came to seek Jehovah. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court (20:3-5),

So the nation is being threatened. Probably one of the greatest threats to the survival and the existence of the nation because these three powerful kingdoms to the east have joined together in an invasion. Any one of these nations would be a formidable foe. All three of them combined, there's just no possible physical way that they can go against them in battle, and prevail. So he set, he calls for a fast. The people gather together in Jerusalem. They stand there in the court of the temple, to seek the Lord.

Jehoshaphat prays unto the Lord. Those recorded prayers that are in the bible, always have much for us to learn from. The prayers of Paul, the prayers of the apostles in the book of Acts, the prayers of Jesus, the prayers of David. This prayer of Jehoshaphat, the prayer of Asa. It, it's a good study, it's a profitable study, to go through and study the prayers in the bible. You'll find it an extremely profitable study for you. So he prayed.

And said, O Jehovah God of our fathers, are you not the God in heaven? [The first, and most important thing to your prayer is the address. Who are you addressing in prayer? Here he says, "The God of our fathers, Jehovah, God of our fathers, the God who dwells in heaven". In the book of Acts, we read that as the disciples had been persecuted, they came back and joined the other disciples, shared with them the threats that they had received from the religious council, and they prayed, and they began their prayer saying, "Oh Lord, thou art God. You have created the heavens and the earth, and every thing that is in them". The address of their prayer. Jesus said, "When you pray, say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven...'". The address. Who am I addressing? Our Father in heaven. "You dwell in heaven." Paul said, "Before whom I bow my knees, before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory". That's who I'm addressing my prayer to. So it's important to whom you're addressing your prayer. "God of our fathers, the God who dwells in heaven",] and rules over the kingdoms even of the heathen? [God exercises overall reign of the earth. Now, He does allow Satan, again that liberty of influencing the kingdoms of this world. Jesus called Satan the prince of this world. Paul said, "Our wrestling is against the principalities and powers, the leadership of this world, those who are in high places". Yet, it is God that allows, and raises up, even the wicked leaders of the earth. As we read the book of Daniel, and God was dealing with the pride of Nebuchadnezzar, which you that are in the Monday night class will be getting to this pretty soon now. In fact in our next lesson. As God is dealing with Nebuchadnezzar, because of his pride, He allows him to go insane, until he knows that it is God who places on the throne, and in the kingdoms, those whom He will. When he came out of his insanity, and he made his proclamation concerning God, he acknowledged that, "God raises and sets upon the thrones, those whom He will. He can bring down, He can lift up". And, basically the reason why God did this, you remember he had this dream of the image of the varied metals. The head of gold, chest of silver, the stomach of brass, the legs of iron, which represented the various kingdoms that were gonna rule over the earth. He then built this huge image, ninety feet high, all of gold, and demanded people to worship it. What is he declaring? Babylon will never fall. He is defying the vision, or the dream that God gave him, that his kingdom would be replaced by the Medo-Persian empire. He's defying that. He's saying, "Babylon will stand forever". The whole image of gold, demands that they worship that! "My kingdom's gonna last!" God says, "Look, you can just have this period of insanity, until you come to understand that I'm in control, and I put unto the kingdoms, those whom I will". After the seven seasons of insanity, he came to that acknowledgment. "Those whom He exalts, are exalted. Those whom He abases, He can abase. God sets up." So, God allows, and I believe that sometimes for purposes of judgement God allows people wicked leaders.

That they are instruments of God's judgement. God spoke of Nebuchadnezzar as His instrument of judgement against His people. God often uses wicked kings as His instruments of judgement, or wicked rulers. A little fearful, as we face an election year for President. Ha, ha! And, the choices it seems we're going to be offered. Help us Lord! So, "Lord you are God, God of our fathers. You rule over the kingdoms of the heathen." *and in your hand there's power and might, so that none can withstand you (20:6)?*

"Lord, they're more than we can face, they're more than we can handle, but no one can stand against you! You rule, even over the kingdoms of the heathen, and there are none who can withstand you!"

Are you not our God, [Oh yes!] who did drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and you gave it to the seed of Abraham your friend forever (20:7)?

"You are the God that gave this land to us. You are the God that drove out the inhabitants that were here, because you had promised to Abraham, to give this land to his seed forever. You kept your word, you kept your promise. We are here because of your promise to Abraham, your friend." That's a neat title that was given to Abraham, he is called, "the friend of God". I love that title!

And they dwelt there, and have built here this sanctuary for your name, saying, [And this is what Solomon said, when they built the sanctuary.] If, when evil comes upon us, as the sword, or judgement, or pestilence, or famine, and we stand before this house, and in your presence, (for your name is in this house,) and we cry unto you in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help (20:8-9).

Now, Solomon prayed this in, when he dedicated the temple, where he is now standing. He put together many different scenarios, whereby the people in their problems, and afflictions, and troubles, would be forced to call upon the Lord. "And when they do, then hear from your dwelling place in heaven, and answer". God you remember responded to Solomon, and said, "If there is a sword, if there is a pestilence and famine, if there's a problem in the land, if my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will answer their prayers, and will heal their land". God, God had promised. So he's coming now, "Lord, isn't that what the covenant and agreement was when we built this temple, we dedicated it, you know, and we're in trouble. We're calling now upon your name".

And so now, behold, the children of Ammon and 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 destroyed them not (20:10);

Now when Moses was leading the children of Israel to the promised land, when they came to the borders of Edom, the king came out with his armies and said, "You can't pass here". They wanted to attack them. The Lord said, "No, they're actually relatives of yours". The Edomites were the descendants of Esau. So God said, "Don't attack them". "We wanted to attack them, but we didn't destroy them, because of your word. You told us not to attack them. So we turned from them and did not destroy them."

But now, I say, look how they reward us, to come and to cast us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit (20:11).

"Lord, look what they're doing! They're trying to cast us out of the inheritance that you gave to us."

O our God, will you not judge them? [And now the confession.] for we have no might against this great company that comes against us; neither do we know what to do: but our eyes are upon you (20:12).

"Alright Lord, we don't have the strength, we don't have the military might. We can't do it. There are too many of them, they, they are more than we can handle. We don't know what to do, so we look Lord, to you for the answer. We look to you for the help." It is so important in seeking the help of God, that I confess my own inabilities. "Lord I don't have the might, I don't have the capacity. Lord, I can't do it."

This is such an important principle, that it's been adopted by the Alcoholics Anonymous, that a person who is an alcoholic, must first of all recognize that he is an alcoholic, that he has a problem. That's the first step towards recovery. They won't even talk to a person who won't acknowledge that they've got a problem. The second thing is that they must acknowledge that they are incapable of handling the problem. "I know I've got a problem. I know I can't do anything about it." That leads you to the next step, to seek a higher power to help you. God, as you understand Him, to help you in your problems.

These principles were taken right out of the bible. They're important principles. I have to recognize that the problem is greater than I can cope with. "Lord, I have a problem, I can't handle it. Help me, I seek your

face, I seek your help.” The reason for this is that God wants to work in our behalf. God wants to help you. He wants to help me. God wants to do glorious and mighty things for us. But He wants to do them in such a way, that He will get the credit and the glory for what’s been done.

You remember when Gideon was called by God to lead the armies of Israel against the Midianites? He went out facing a hundred and thirty two thousand Midianites, called a the armies of Israel together, thirty two thousand responded, and here’s he’s facing a hundred and thirty two thousand out there, fully armed men. He’s just got these bunch of volunteers. God said, “Gideon, the men that you have with you are too many. For I know the hearts of these people, and if I would deliver the Midianites into their hands, they would go around boasting as to what they have done, how tough they are. I don’t want that Gideon. So you go out and tell all of those who are afraid to go to battle, to go home.” Gideon went out and faced the troops, and said, “All you guys who are afraid to go to this battle, you can go home”. Twenty thousand of them went home. Twenty two thousand went home, he’s left with ten. God again said, “Gideon, Got too many men. The odds are only thirteen to one at this point. I know the hearts of these people!”.

God knows your heart. God knows my heart. God knows that if He delivers me before I come to that confession, “I can’t do it”, that I’ll begin to take the credit, and take the glory for what God has done. God doesn’t want me taking credit, and glory for what He has done.

I believe that my first seventeen years of ministry, which really were failure, was an important part of God’s training process for me to prepare me for what He was wanting to do. I look at, look at it as a great education. We started out in Corona with, I think around fifty people the first Sunday. After two years hard work, giving it our best, we had seventeen. Five, were my own family. Cheryl wasn’t born yet. I mean that’s not successful ministry friends, let me tell you!

But God allowed us to experience those kinds of defeats, so that we would recognize that, you know, we don’t have magic formulas. We don’t have any magic ways. It isn’t us, it’s God, it’s the work of God. But He brought us to that place of brokenness, where we knew that we couldn’t do it. Looking to Him, and that was an important part of the whole training process of God, because God had this in mind, the whole while. Ha, ha! I sure didn’t know it, I didn’t dream of it! Yet this is what God was wanting to do.

But He had to first of all prepare the vessel, by breaking, crushing, bringing us to that place of giving up in ourselves and knowing that we couldn’t do it. So that when God did do it, we would be careful not to touch the glory. We wouldn’t go around bragging about, “What we have done in building this marvelous large work for God”, it’s what God has done in building His glorious, marvelous work, and we’ve had the privilege of being the spectators and watch God work.

Now the same is true in the personal issues of our life. These problems, these habits that plague us, these issues of our flesh that we wrestle with, and as long as I feel, “Well I can bring it under control. I can do it if I want”, or, as long as I won’t confess that, “I haven’t got the strength”, then God will let me go on in my piddling strength to try and master over the issues of my life. God knows I’ve got a hard head. It took Him seventeen years to break me on the issue of the church, and it takes Him years to break me on other issues. I’ll try, I’ll give it my best, I’ll keep trying. I don’t give up easily. I’ll come back, I’ll try another way, I’ll try another angle. And God lets me to just continue to experience defeat until I say, “God I just can’t do it!”. Then I’m in the place where God can begin His work. He says, “Alright then, step aside and let me have it”. You’d think that after this many years of experience in personal failure, that I’d come to the place where I would recognize that the onset of a situation, “God take over. Help!” But I don’t.

God shows me some new area of the flesh that He wants to clean up, and I say, “Okay God. That’s great. Let me at it! By Friday I should have it under control.” And begin that long, hard process, until I come to the place of saying, “Oh God help me. I can’t do it. I have no might against this enemy. Lord help me!” Then I experience the glorious power of God, but the effect of the result is, I give God then, the glory. Also I don’t judge others, who are going through the same struggle that I went through. Nor do I have success, little patented success formulas that I can give them, on how they can get victory, “For I followed these five steps, and came out on top”, and so I want to sell my success program to everybody.

Not so. So, “God you take care of it. We don’t have any money to get this great company. We don’t know what to you, but we’re looking to you”. Smart place to be.

And all of Judah stood before the Lord, [And here they are, and what a picture! Their little children.] their little ones, and their wives and their children (20:13).

“Hear the nation. Lord we’re, we are, we’re in need of help.” Families standing there together. “Lord, we’re being threatened. Our lives are being threatened. We don’t know where to turn. But we do know. We know to turn to you Lord, but Lord, we don’t know what to do. We look to you.”

And then upon Jahaziel [And we don’t know anything about this fellow. He just comes out of the blue.] the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, [Then he goes back to Asaph. He’s one of the descendants of Asaph.] he came with the spirit of the Lord upon him in the midst of the congregation; And he said, Hearken, all Judah, you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s (20:14-15).

Oh glory! It’s not my battle. I wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. I’m no match. I can’t do it. But the weapons of my warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy. So, “Don’t be afraid, don’t be dismayed by reason of the great multitude. The battle is not yours”.

Tomorrow go down against them: behold, they are coming up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight this battle: just set yourselves, stand, and [watch, or] see the salvation of Jehovah with you, [“You’re not gonna have to even have to fight this. Just go down and watch me do it.”] O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for Jehovah will be with you. And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord (20:16-18).

Oh what words of encouragement! “God has spoken. He has promised to help, He has promised to deliver! He promised to set us free from the enemy. Oh praise God!” The people are worshipping the Lord!

And the Levites, the children of the Kohathites, and the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high. And so they rose early in the morning, they went forth in the wilderness of Tekoa: [About ten miles from Jerusalem, south and east, towards the Dead sea.] and as they went forth, Jehosaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, you inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in Jehovah your God, [“Believe the promises, believe the word of God. Now here’s a test of faith. Just believe what God has promised.”] so shall you be established; believe his prophets, and you shall prosper. [“Believe God’s word. It will establish you. Believe the prophets of God, you’ll be prospered.”] And so when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto Jehovah, that they should praise in the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever (20:19-21).

So quite a uh sight! The army going out against the enemy, and these guys are in front of them singing praises to the Lord. “Praise the Lord; His mercy endureth for ever!”

And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir, which had come against Judah; for they were smitten. The children of Ammon and Moab, stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, to utterly slay and destroy them: [So these three nations that had gotten together to invade, started fighting each other. And the two nations, picked on the one, and utterly wiped them out! Having done that, then they started to fight with each other! Ammon and Moab then began to fight.] and every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came to the watch tower in the wilderness, [That is the area from which they could view down.] they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, there were dead bodies fallen to the earth, none escaped (20:22-24).

I mean they wiped out everybody!

And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, there were precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering the spoil, it was so much (20:25).

So, God’s glorious victory. They’re standing still, and just seeing God work!

And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; [Now that means the valley

of blessing. Berachah.] *and there they blessed the Lord: therefore the name of the same place was called, Berachah, unto this day (20:26).*

The valley got a new name. It was a place of blessing. "Call it Berachah, a place of blessing."

Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, to Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. And they came to Jerusalem with the psalteries, the harps, the trumpets into the house of the Lord. And the fear of God was on all of the kingdoms of those countries, when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about. And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah: thirty five years old when he began his reign, he reigned for twenty five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. And he walked in the way of Asa his father, departed not from it, doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord. Howbeit the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto God of their fathers. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel. And after this Jehoshaphat the king of Judah joined himself with Ahaziah the king of Israel, who did very wickedly (20:27-35):

Now again, when are you gonna learn! Ha, ha. He had joined with Ahab earlier, gotten rebuked by the prophet. "You know should you help those who are so ungodly? Should you love those who hate the Lord?" He received the rebuke, he repented, he went out and initiated some spiritual reforms, but this king of Israel, Ahaziah, is the son of Ahab. He is a very wicked king. He follows in the path of his father, and he joins himself with Ahaziah.

Now Ahaziah was the brother of his daughter-in-law. When he joined affinity with Ahab, his son, Jehoram, married Athaliah. Athaliah was the sister of Amaziah. So it's still sort of a family thing.

And he joins with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Eziongeber (20:36).

So the ships, the Tarshish here could not be the area of England or Spain, but somewhere along Africa. They joined together in this venture to gather gold. Much as did Solomon, sending out the ships down in the African coast to get gold.

Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because you have joined yourself with Ahaziah, Jehovah has broken your works. And the ships were broken, they were not able to go to Tarshish (20:37).

So the ships that they were building for this merchandising got wrecked, in a storm probably, and broken up, and so this alliance didn't last. And Ahaziah only reigns for two years before he gets wiped out. So we'll move along in the story next week, as we get into chapter twenty one.

Important lessons for us to learn in this study tonight, vital lessons for us to learn. Lessons of relationships, those that I join with in ventures. The bible clearly tells us that I'm not to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. Here the king making the affinity with Ahab, the wicked king, helping those who were so wicked, loving those that hated the Lord. Here was the king faced with an overwhelmingly powerful enemy, recognizing that he didn't have the power, confessing his weakness, calling upon the Lord, trusting in the Lord, seeing God's deliverance. Yet, lapsing right back into the same sin, of joining together with a wicked man in a project to send merchant ships down to Africa.

The methods of experiencing God's victory. The way God works, the way God wants to work in our life. The way God wants to receive the glory for the work that He does in our lives. Just so much to be gleaned, and to learn. It would do well to go back over this lesson and meditate upon these things.

May the Lord be with you, and may the Lord bless you, and may the Lord teach us His ways. That He might bring us into His place of victory, those things He longs to do for us, because He loves us. Thus, as the eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the entire earth to shew Himself strong, on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him. May God give us that heart, perfect, completely towards Him. That He can do for us those things that He desires to do. Oh how I long to be the man God wants me to be. How I long that this church become, all that God wants His church to be. That we be the witness to the community, and to the world, that God wants. That we might become everything that God desires. A heart that is perfect towards Him. May God grant that desire in our prayer, in Jesus' name.

