

February 2

Scriptures: Read 2 Chronicles 19 & 20

Key Verse: “You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you...” (2 Chronicles 20:17)

Overview

When Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem, he was boldly rebuked by Jehu, a prophet of the Lord, for compromising and helping the ungodly in their worldly endeavours. This same prophet had earlier condemned the dynasty of Baasha in the Northern Kingdom, as recorded in 1 Kings 16:1-7. Jehu’s father, Hanani, was the prophet who had rebuked Jehoshaphat’s father, Asa (16:7-10). Unlike his father, however, Jehoshaphat accepted the rebuke and respected the prophet as the Lord’s representative, though he was told the wrath of God would be upon him (19:2).

With Jehu’s words, the Lord also commended Jehoshaphat for the good in him, since he had removed much idolatry. With this encouragement, Jehoshaphat continued purifying the land with political and religious reformation. He also appointed godly judges throughout the country (19:5; Moses founded the judicial system, Deuteronomy 16:18-20; Solomon organized it, 1 Chronicles 23:4). They were stationed at the various fortified cities strategically located to serve as centres for civil courts. If any case was too hard, it was to be brought before the priests at the higher court in Jerusalem, where there was a distinction between the judging of civil and religious matters (19:8, II; cf. Deuteronomy 17:8-11).

Jehoshaphat (which means “the Lord judges”) charged them to judge the people on behalf of the Lord. As the Lord’s representatives, they were to be good examples. They were to fear Him, show no partiality, take no bribes, always act faithfully, have a loyal heart to the Lord, and “behave courageously” (19:11; cf. Deuteronomy 1:17; Leviticus 19:15). They were to act in love and mercy, yet administer truth and justice without any perversion. Jehoshaphat also expressed the responsibility of the judges not only to make judgments, but to warn the people so that they might not trespass against the Lord. This included the role of teaching and applying the Law. If they failed in this responsibility, they were warned that guilt would come upon them (19:10).

All this was established to create a righteous nation which looked to the Law of God as their guide for peaceful living, applying it to all areas of life, both civil and religious. We need to pray for our civil leaders, especially those who make judgments, that those judgments would be based on the Law of God. Only in this way will there be peace and order.

Jehoshaphat’s peaceful reign was threatened by the nations of Moab, Ammon, and Edom (Mount Seir) coming to battle against him. Naturally, Jehoshaphat was afraid (20:3), especially after hearing the prophet’s rebuke and learning that the wrath of God was upon him (19:2). It was a test of his faith, but because Jehoshaphat immedi-ately called out to his merciful Lord, he passed that test. The prayers of a righteous man avail much; this is the key to moving the heart of God.

With humble dependence upon God, Jehoshaphat called the whole nation to pray and fast, thus showing their grief and emphasizing the sincerity of their prayers (cf. Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:6; Ezra 8:21; Joel 2:12-17). In his prayer, Jehoshaphat recognized the sovereignty of God over

all nations (20:6). He reminded God of His promise to Abraham concerning the land for his descendants and the promise He gave Solomon to heed the prayers of His people (20:7-9; cf. 6:28-30; 7:12-16).

The Lord's assuring response came through Jahaziel, one of the Levitical Temple musicians from the family of Asaph (20:14; cf. 1 Chronicles 25:2). God told them He would fight for them; they only had to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (20:17). This, however, did not mean to stand idle; they immediately fell prostrate and worshipped God, including singing His praises. They continued to sing and rejoice with faith (as though the battle had already been won) as they marched forward to see the deliverance of God. Interestingly, the leader of the army (the king) became a preacher, and the soldiers became a choir that sang and praised God, as well as rejoicing and thanking Him even before the victory.

Somehow, God sent the enemy into confusion and panic so that they turned on each other (cf. similar circumstance with Gideon, Judges 7:21-22). When the people of Judah arrived to face the enemy, the battle was already over. They reaped the benefits from God's victory by being blessed with an abundance of spoil. After three days of collecting the spoil, they returned with rejoicing to Jerusalem. Similarly, our Lord Jesus has won the victory over the enemy, and we who have faith in Him can enter into the blessings and victories thereafter (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Prayer

Lord God we worship You even before our battles of this new day. Because You're fighting for us, we cannot lose. We're more than conquerors through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.