

Jehosophat

by Ken Baird

The sermon on Jehoshaphat explores his successes and failures as a king, emphasizing the importance of seeking God and the consequences of unholy alliances.

Duration: 35:31

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Victory"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for Christians to be realistic about the enemy they are fighting against. He uses the example of a battle where the enemy destroyed each other, highlighting the victory that Christians have already obtained. The speaker encourages Christians to not relax but to continue striving for spiritual growth and victory. He then focuses on the story of King Jehoshaphat, discussing his successes, failures, and the crisis he faced. The sermon concludes by mentioning the 'after this' in Jehoshaphat's life, referring to the challenges and trials that come after a victory.

Transcript

Whenever I have a lesson like this to teach, I'm reminded of that portion of the scriptures. In Corinthians, these things were written for learning and admonition upon whom the ends of the ages come. God has preserved the successes and the fates of these people and these kings particularly.

And the study of the king is always interesting because they have such tremendous influence. And they demand our attention. It was wonderful when Israel had good kings and it was bad when they didn't because they had such widespread influence.

Now our lesson today is about a very wonderful man called Jehoshaphat. And I want to record about Jehoshaphat, first of all, his successes. Then I want to record his failures.

Then I want to talk about his crisis. And then I want to talk about the after-this in his life. Quote, after, colon, or dash, this, the after-this of his life, unquote, incidentally.

All those quotation marks, you can't hear them when I say them, but they're there. So we want to talk about the after-this of his life. Elliot Van Ryn, and I'm not going to do this, except just to demonstrate.

Elliot Van Ryn, I don't know whether he told you here, about a brother who had a message. And during this message he would do this. He'd say a few words and he'd do this.

And he repeated that. And he'd do this, say a few words, and then he would do this. And they asked him why he did that, and he said, well, that's quote and unquote.

And so, the after-this is quote. It's quote from the scripture. After-this.

You know, there are a few of them in the scripture. I haven't made a study about the after-thises of the scripture, but they're interesting. And it's too bad that he didn't finish in the scripture account as well as he might have.

That was true of Solomon. You know, I think that we as Christians don't need to relax on our vigil at any time in our Christian experience. Every dispensation we've had in the scriptures has started well.

But they haven't finished yet. And that's going to be true even of the Millennium. It just shows the inability of a human being to stay with God's principles.

It shows the inability of the flesh to cope. It just will not cope. The flesh is opposed to God.

And that's true in a very spiritual sense. I think it's true even in some of our assemblies. They say, well, but sometimes there's an after-this.

Well, we'll try to get to that. That's going to be a long way down the road, and I'll try to get there. But let's notice, first of all, his successors.

The successors of this man, Jehoshaphat, have had a godly father. I think that Asa's rule over the children of Israel has to merit the commendation of the Lord, although he did something in his life that was very ill-advised. He relied on the king of Syria instead of the Lord, and he had to be rebuked.

Now, Jehoshaphat comes along, and I'm sorry to say, before we get through with our study this morning, that he will do the same thing that he pointed to. Now, this should make us, indeed, careful that we don't set bad precedents possible to do that. Now, he started out well.

In the 17th chapter of 2 Chronicles, we read, And Jehoshaphat, his son, reigned in his stead and strengthened himself against Israel, which were the enemies of Judah at that time. And he placed forces in all the cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa, his father, had taken. And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the first ways of his father, David, and sought not to fail him.

There was a reason for the Lord's favor. Now, I think that sometimes we get the impression that if things, if circumstances don't go right in our lives, that we haven't been living right. Sometimes I facetiously say, when I get a whole string of thoughts right, and they all turn red just before I get there, I say, well, I must not be living right.

And we're trying to gauge our spiritual condition by circumstances. But let me say this, that when a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies his people, God does indicate by his blessing upon us that we are doing what he wants us to do, and conversely, he indicates by his lack of blessing that we're not following on in the paths of the Lord. Now, Jehoshaphat went on for God.

He walked in the ways that his father, David, and the next verse says, but sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the things of Israel. Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hands, and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat's presence, and he had riches and honor

in abundance. Now, God was able to bless him.

God cannot confirm a wrong pathway of a Christian with his blessing. Now, I know that sometimes we have to take circumstances into account here. Sometimes we are blessed.

And I think of this particularly, if God waited for us to be in a perfect spiritual condition before he blessed us, he'd never have done this. He just wouldn't do it. But, because we're not in that perfect spiritual condition, but we in our overall spiritual condition, we indeed can merit the blessing of the Lord.

But he does not confirm our lives that we're walking away from the Lord. He does not confirm them with blessings. He does confirm them with blessings the Lord showed to Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat, I am pleased with the way you're doing things. Now, the reason was that he walked with the Lord. The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the first ways of his father David.

Now, first of all, what was the secret of his success? Verse 4, taught to the Lord, God of his father. But taught to the Lord, God of his father. He got into the presence of the Lord.

He taught him. He taught the presence of the Lord. For wisdom, for leading, for guidance.

Now, it doesn't say that yet. But I think I know. He was a king.

He had responsibilities. And he wanted to know how that he might serve his people well. He taught to the Lord, God of his father.

And then because of that, he walked in his commandments. Not after the kings of Israel. We will seek the Lord.

We will walk in his commandments. We will fellowship with him. We will indeed walk in his commandments.

Now, this was the policy of Jehoshaphat. He prayed. He got into the presence of the Lord.

He was concerned about the leading and guidance of the Lord in this matter of being king. And what king wouldn't that be? I know when President Lyndon Johnson was, and I think Harry Truman said the same thing. When they were forced into office through the death of their predecessors, they asked for the prayer of a gospel.

I remember that. Both of them did. They asked for the prayer of gospel.

They were concerned about having all this responsibility pressed upon them. They fought. They wanted the Lord to help.

I'm glad I live in a nation like that. They felt the overwhelming responsibility. I am President of the United States.

And I've got some responsibility. This man had responsibility. For he fought for the Lord God of Israel.

You know, it's wonderful to have it. It's sensible, isn't it? Isn't it wonderful in our lives, when our lives are perhaps at a dead end corner, we don't know which way to go, to have the Lord to go to. It's wonderful the guidance that we can get.

When we're asking for it, He wants to guide us. It's wonderful for the peace of mind that we can get when we pray. I may have told you that I had more or less some problems not too long ago.

I had a bunch of mental and character, but they were piling up. And I got into the presence of the Lord, and I had it out. With the Lord, I laid those things out.

I spread them out. And when I got up off my knees, I had a peace that was real. And then I challenged my own mind, why didn't you do this before? And oh, how, how much it would relieve our minds if we just do like Jehoshaphat did.

He fought. He fought. He come out to the Lord.

This was purposely done. He just simply didn't say first. He fought the Lord.

So, the result was He walked in His commandments. Not actually doing, or the kings, or doing with Israel, the kings of Israel. Therefore the Lord established His kingdom in His name.

He wanted that kingdom to be established. That's what He was praying about, I believe. And all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat's presence.

And he had riches and honor and abundance. You know, the people of God can detect, I think, when they're in fellowship with the Lord. I think they can.

I think the people of God are aware of that. Israel was, Judah rather, was aware of the fact that this man was seeking the Lord. And it influenced their attitude toward it.

They brought Him to their presence. And He had riches and honor and abundance. They're back with Him.

You know, people want to be led. They revere, they do revere a good leader. And Jehoshaphat was, he was acting right.

Thank God for that. He was acting right. And they took, they took it into account.

And they were glad. Now, in verse 6, his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. Moreover, he took away the high places and drove Judah.

Now, this was a part of his reform. This was a part of his success. This is a negative thing.

He did some positive things first and then he started on the negative things. He took away the droves and the high places. The high places in those days were used in their idol worship.

I don't know why they chose the high place. Maybe it was breezy up there. And they planted groves so that they could be comfortable in their worship.

And they associated the two together, the high places and the groves. As a matter of fact, even the temple, if you remember, was built on the high place. It was the threshing floor of Ornan and the Jebusite.

And the threshing floors were built on the high places so the wind would get to them. And that's the type of the temple. Now, the heathen followed suit.

And when they worshipped Baal, they followed suit. They established the high places. And they built groves there.

Built trees. You remember, Gideon cut down a grove because that's where they took shelter. Gideon cut down the grove and destroyed the altar of Baal.

Well, Jehoshaphat did the same thing. Now, he says there are some things that need to be changed in my kingdom. So he went to work and he cut down those groves.

And he destroyed those high places. Destroyed them just like Gideon. Now, you know this to me.

This means this. There are things in our lives that need to be changed. There are things in our lives that we need to take away.

Tear down. Cut out. Eliminate.

Now, I know this is negative. This is negative. Not positive.

That's not good. You have to get it. We need to judge ourselves in this respect.

And so that we have to chalk up as one of his successes. He got rid of the high places and the groves. Perhaps we could do well to get rid of some of our idols.

Now, I'm not going to dwell long on that subject because I might tramp on your clothes. I don't dwell on tramping on people's clothes particularly. But you know we can have idols.

Anything that takes the place of God is an idol. We can make idols out of an automobile. Young men, I think, do that particularly.

Teenagers, I think, do that. That car. Old.

I tell you. That automobile. And it can really take the place of a motorcycle.

Or a motorcycle. No, I believe in driving a car that will give you a reasonable expectancy of reaching your destination. But I don't think we ought to make idols out of them.

Or anything for that matter. Anything. Okay.

Okay, they got rid of the idols. They cut down the groves and destroyed the high places. Okay, it's part of it.

Part of it, you say. And it's a part that you and I have to consider in our lives. We need to get rid of some things sometimes in our lives.

Now, next he calls the law to be taught. In verse 7 we read there, And in the third year of his reign he sent his princes, Even to Ben-Hael and Boabediah, and to Zechariah and Nephimeel and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levite, Even to Nehiah, and Nephimeiah, and Zebediah, and Israel, and to Meramoth, and to Xenophon, I'll tell you, some of these are tongue twisters, and Adonijah, and to Phrygia, and told Adonijah, Levi, and with them Elisha, and Jehoram, and they taught him Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about to all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

Isn't that marvelous? Oh, how necessary is this, teaching the people of God. And learning, learning from the law, I mean, this is the only Bible they had. And I'm presuming this refers to the Pentecost.

The Bible for Moses. They needed it. And they taught it.

That same thing happened in every town in the land. Remember. He read the law.

Remember they, I tell you, they didn't stop at an hour. They were there all day. And they read the law.

And he gave it to them. He expounded it, in other words. So here, this has to be taken into consideration.

This returns to the books. Returns to the law. You and I, you and I need to be sure that this word has a real place in our lives.

I don't mean just for a psalmist. I mean to study it. And to read it.

For it is so necessary. That was certainly a huge credit. Now, because of this, in verse 10, read there, And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the land that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against each other.

Isn't that remarkable? The fear of the Lord. The Lord influenced people to leave Jehoshaphat alone. Now God can do that.

He has to. I just quoted it. When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be ashamed of him.

Here is the fulfillment of that. He wouldn't let them make war, Jehoshaphat. You know, God can show this favor.

And it's real. Believe me, it's real. Verse 11, And some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat back.

And tribute silver. And the Arabians brought in false. 7,700 in.

And 7,700 eagles. Jehoshaphat lacked grace exceedingly when he built in Judah castles and cities of war. Now he made provisions for all the cities of war so that they would have food in the right time.

So that they would preserve their food. And he had much business in the cities of Judah and the men of war, men of valor, were in Jerusalem. Now he built up an army.

These are the numbers of them according to the house of their fathers. Judah, the captains of the thousands. Abner, the chief, and with him mighty men of valor.

300,000. Then there was Zephaniah, Jehoshaphat, a man, better. And with him there were 218,000, verse 15.

Amityah, 200,000 with him, verse 16. Uriah, 200,000 with him, verse 17. Jehoshaphat, with him, 180,000 in verse 18.

Now that makes 1,160,000 men. That is quite a family. He knew he had enemies and announced the prevention that with the son of Sheol he would prepare it.

We have enemies too. And we need to prepare for our enemies. The enemies that you and I have are real.

I'm going to talk more about that later. Now I want to notice some of his failures. It was well that he fortified himself and we need fortification too.

Now let's talk about his failures. We have to go to chapter 18 for this. Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor and abundance and joined the synod with Ahab.

Why? What did he need of Ahab? And certain years, after certain years, he went down from Ahab to Samaria and Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance. I should think he would. He had a family that could really come to his rescue when they needed him.

And for the people that he had with him and persuaded him to go up with him to reign with him he did. Now do you know some of these unholy alliances? And this was an unholy alliance. It can really get us in trouble.

It can really get us in trouble. Now I could wax eloquent on this for the rest of the morning about unholy alliances. I'll say this.

I'll say this. And let go of that. I think Satan's greatest victory in the life of a Christian is to link him up to an unfaithful God.

I think more is accomplished in one fell swoop in that area. An unholy alliance. It's beyond our reach.

I don't know why he did this. Oh I suppose that he thought of their beginnings together but Ahab was with him. Very guessable.

He compounded his wickedness. And so because of his alliance he got himself into a war and he almost got himself killed. Because he went up and they fought and they went into this war against his enemies.

He said in verse 3 Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah Wilt thou go up with me to reign with Gilead? And he answered him I am as thou art and my people as thy people. Not quite. And we will be with thee in the war.

Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel Inquire I pray thee unto the king of Israel I pray thee at the word of the Lord today. And therefore the king of Israel gathered together other prophets 400 men and said unto them Shall we go to reign with Gilead the battle? Or shall we prepare? They said go up for the God will deliver it into the king's hands. And they knew that that's what the king wanted to do.

Here. I think I made a statement the last time I was here. When we ask for advice we generally want the advice that we want.

And that's the advice that we want. We really want advice. And we want somebody to confirm that.

And that's what he did. And that's what he got. Now these 400 prophets were not prophets of the Lord.

Jehoshaphat knew that. Jehoshaphat says I want a prophet of the Lord. So they got Micaiah and he was not on good terms incidentally with Ahab.

And did I get his name correctly? Yes, Micaiah. Some of them were. And so he says I want to hear what he has to say.

So Micaiah comes on the scene and he Ahab says now he said to Micaiah before he ever got there this was not what Micaiah said. He said I hate that man. He never prophesied good concerning me.

So when Micaiah came on the scene he said shall we go up to the reign of Gilead? Micaiah says go up. The Lord will prosper you and deliver you from evil. It will be delivered in your name.

And he didn't believe him. He said this can't be true. He said I told you, I told you.

You know you just can't believe some people. And then Micaiah came up on the truth. He said I saw the angels of the Lord, some of them coming into his presence.

Spirits, they're called spirits. And he says now who are we going to get Ahab up to that battle so he can win? It was Ahab's time has run out. So one of the spirits said I'll go and be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophet.

And I'll incite him to go up. And so he said go ahead. That's what he wants to hear.

And then he said this true prophet of the Lord said this is going to be his defeat. He warned him. Absolutely.

And he said, he tells him in verse let's see where did we begin on that. Verse 23 of the 18th chapter then Zedekiah the son of Sinonah came near and spoke to Micaiah the chief and said quick away let the spirit of the Lord speak unto thee. And Micaiah said behold I'll succeed in that day and I'll go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

Then the king of Israel said take thee Micaiah and carry him back to Ammon the governor of the city and to Joach the king's son and say let the king put this fellow in prison and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction until I return in peace. Micaiah said yes I'll certainly return in peace. Then hath not the Lord spoken unto me.

And he said unto Harkon and he said Harkon all ye people. So they went up to this battle and they have said now I'm going to frustrate this man's prophecy. I'm going to disguise myself.

They won't know me from an ordinary soldier. Then Jehoshaphat went up and he kingly robed. Well the enemy, the Moabites, surrounded Jehoshaphat and thought they had the king of Israel.

But God miraculously turned them away. They made it their mind he was not the king of Israel. He was kingly robed.

So it looked like Ahab had frustrated the prophecy of Micaiah. But a man drew a bow and a venture and shot a arrow into the earth and it went through the park and it landed between the join where they had stood on. And inflicted a fatal wound.

That archer could not Micaiah was right. And they had died. You would think that he had learned his lesson.

Now later in chapter 20 he is beset by a crisis. And incidentally this crisis was caused by the fact that he went up with to fight with Ahab because the same people came back. Only they got more with them.

Not only the Moabites at this time but Amnon and the Israelites. Three of them. Three nations came together.

Now the start of this whole thing was when they went up and made an alliance with Ahab. And the ill will that he got from the Moabites at that time caused his crisis. This is what we call your chickens coming home to roost.

Be not deceived, God is not lost. So what were men for? That's what he was for. He was for that particular reason.

Now he doesn't have one nation. The Moabites fight against him. He has Amnon and he has the Israelites.

He got in the presence of the Lord. So it reads in verse 3 of chapter 20. And Jehoshaphat steered and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaim the faith throughout all Judah.

And Judah gathered themselves together and asked help of the Lord. Even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. They saw that now the Lord gave them an instruction.

All right, get your army out and go down there. And incidentally he reassured them through the message of Jehaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Jeneiah, a prophet of the Lord. And he told them you're going to get this victory and you're not even going to fight.

But take your army and go down there. And they left. They went just as the Lord instructed them.

And you know what happened? Those three nations stopped fighting among themselves. And they eliminated each other. Now it's interesting to me to note that there are three nations, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Needomites.

They wanted to fight so they thought each other. We have a three-fold enemy and we need to be on guard and we need to get into the presence of the Lord about that enemy. Our help is in the Lord because we can fail.

We can be defeated if we are not dependent upon the Lord. Our enemies are too strong for us. We have to remember that.

Now they're not too strong for the Lord and I don't mean to infer that we should live our lives in mortal fear of our three-sided enemy. I don't mean that. But I mean we need to be very, very realistic about the enemy that we have fighting against.

All right. They destroyed each other and the spoil was so great they were three days. Now this was an army.

And an army can gather a lot of spoil. They were three days and then Now this has a lovely occasion and I should have saved more time for it. You and I have won a battle.

We're more than conquered because we haven't lost it. We're more than conquered because we haven't fought. And yet the victory is ours.

Christ fought and he fought. He gained the victory single-handed and we are more than conquered just like Jehoshaphat that didn't have a thing to do. He didn't have anything that he needed to do.

You and I have a victory that will never fail because of Christ. A victory that we have gained and we didn't have to fight. Oh, what a story book this is.

Now that after this, verse 35 of chapter 20. And after this did Jehoshaphat say to Judith, join himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who did very wickedly. Oh, Jehoshaphat, will you never learn? Will you never learn? Okay.

He joined himself with him to make ships to go to Carthage and they made ships and Ezekiel gave them. And Eliezer, the son of Godavar, or Morishach, prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying, because I have joined myself with Ahaziah, the Lord has broken my works and the ships were broken that they might not be able to go to Carthage. Unholy alliances for commercial purposes aren't very good either.

And we have to learn that. And just after this we are not to make unholy alliances in any area of our lives. And it says, be ye not on this for the oath together is unbelievable and he did not pardon.

It's the same as it means nothing. And there was an after this and I'm sorry to have to read that about General Knapp. After this he made an alliance with Ahaziah who had done very, very wrong.

You and I need to keep from those encumbering all alliances. And just pretend holy and holy. Father we do thank thee for thy word and for what we have learned from Jehoshaphat today.

We pray, Father, that you might take these things to heart and then make pleas to the Lord and speak to the Lord in his guidance and his leading you ever and always. And be

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