

The Victory of Jehoshaphat!

The story we're contemplating this morning is one of my favorite stories in the Bible. It brings great encouragement to my own heart. When I preached from this chapter before, I entitled the message, "What Do You Do When You Don't Know What to Do," based on II Chronicles 20:12: "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee." This story exemplifies the saying, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Before we launch into the 20th chapter of II Chronicles, the last words spoken by King Jehoshaphat in II Chronicles 19 set the stage for the great victory: "And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart...Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good" (II Chronicles 19:9, 11c). Please notice these observations in my introduction:

- The resistance of Moab and Ammon (II Chronicles 20:1). Who were the Moabites and Ammonites? The answer is found in Genesis 19:33-38. Their birth was the result of the Lot's two daughters, who did not trust God, but rather, in a fearful state of mind, they got their father drunk and their two sons were the result of wicked incestuous fornication. We see the long term effect involved in the consequences of sin. The Moabites and Ammonites' goal was the removal of the chosen people of God from their God-given inheritance.
- The recognition of Jehoshaphat's trial. II Chronicles 19:2 points out that because of Jehosophat's alignment with wicked Ahab, God allows Jehoshaphat to be under siege of the enemy (II Chronicles 18:1-3). Proverbs 13:20 reminds us, "He that walketh with wise *men* shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." We see that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat fell into the same problem as shown to us in II Chronicles 21:6: "And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought *that which* was evil in the eyes of the LORD." The wise Solomon was not exempt from being influenced into wicked activity when he married many heathen women (I Kings 11: 1-11). I Corinthians 15:33 declares, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." The word "manners" comes to us from the Greek word *ethos*. This is where we get our English word "ethics" which carries the same meaning, i.e., the body of moral principles or values governing or distinctive of a particular culture or group, as depicted in the phrase, "the Christian ethic."
- The reason of the raging wicked. II Chronicles 20:3-11 reveals God has allowed these enemies of God and His people to remain in the land. Psalm 2:1: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Although we cannot begin to give all the reasons why God does what He does, we see in these nine verses three goals God seems to

have in permitting the Moabites and the Ammonites to be this ominous threat to Judah.

(1) To draw us close to God. II Chronicles 20:3-7; James 4:8a, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you...."

(2) To teach us to pray. II Chronicles 20:8, 9. Just a little over one hundred years earlier, Solomon laid down a prayer that shows us that God is willing to hear the prayer of a repentant heart in times of crisis (I Kings 8:44-50).

(3) To finish His work in us. II Chronicles 20:10, 11; Judges 3:1-4; Psalm 60:8a, "Moab *is* my washpot...;" Psalm 108:9a "Moab *is* my washpot..." God uses wicked Moab to clean up Israel and in this case specifically, Judah.

There are four elements we observe in the victory of Jehoshaphat:

I. NO MIGHT

II Chronicles 20:12. God declared in Zechariah 4:6 that it was not by the might or power of man, but by God's Spirit that we accomplish His plans. I Corinthians 1:27 tells us, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." Why? I Corinthians 1:29: "That no flesh should glory in his presence."

II. NO FIGHT

II Chronicles 20:15-17a. One of the most difficult things to do is to hand over the battle to God and obey the words of II Chronicles 20:17a, "Ye shall not *need* to fight in this *battle*: set yourselves, stand ye *still*, and see the salvation of the LORD...."

One of the greatest turning points of modern history was the D-Day invasion planned by General Dwight David Eisenhower that forever stopped the advancement of Hitler's murderous Third Reich. It should arrest our attention that it was this same man who became president of the United States and passed into the law "In God We Trust" as our national motto that would be inscribed upon our currency. It was this same man who brought "One nation under God" as part of our pledge of allegiance that every school child recites every morning in public school. Is it any wonder that this president was named after America's most famous evangelist of the 19th century, Dwight L. Moody? President Eisenhower said in the induction of the phrase, "One nation under God," "In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource, in peace or in war."

III. NO FRIGHT

II Chronicles 20:17b: "...fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD *will be* with you." When the command to not fear

comes from a fearless person, we are far less likely to fear. Look who is telling us not to fear - Isaiah 41:10: "Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Deuteronomy 31:6, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:6: "So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

IV. NO RIGHT

II Chronicles 20:18, 19. The king bowed his face to the ground and all of Judah followed him. The great key to understanding the timing of God is when we run out of our resources and we clearly see we have no right to claim God's help, only His mercy. Paul explained it in I Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

V. NO SIGHT

II Chronicles 20:20. The blessing comes when we believe God. Faith is the turnstile that opens the passageway to victory. Manley Beasley said, "Faith is believing it's so, when it's not so, because God said so, so that it will be so." Romans 4:17b informs that God, "...calleth those things which be not as though they were." Amen and Amen!

VI. NO STRIKE

II Chronicles 20:21-30. Praise ushers in the manifested presence of God (Psalm 22:3). And when God is present in power, we discover it is not our strength of strike, but God's hand that orchestrates the strike. Thus, God alone receives the glory. In Ezekiel 7:9b God declares, "...I *am* the LORD that smiteth."

-Pastor Pope-