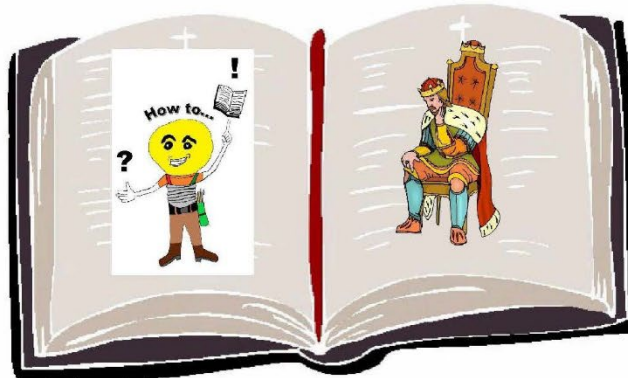


II Chronicles

Chapter 8

From the
Blessing of God
to the
JUDGEMENT OF GOD

A Commentary on
II Chronicles



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Lessons from the Reign of King Jehoshaphat

King Jehoshaphat's Early Foundational Success

II Chronicles 17-20

King Jehoshaphat reigned twenty-five years. See *2 Chronicles*

20:31

God's comment on his life and work is in *2 Chronicles 17:3-6*.

“And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim;

But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.

Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.

And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.”

Jehoshaphat was truly a great king. God delivered him in battle several times, even in a battle he was not supposed to fight (*II Chronicles 18:31*)! His big mistake was that he made friends with the king of Israel. In *II Chronicles 18:1* it says he “**joined affinity with Ahab**”! It became more than friendship because we are told that his son married Ahab’s daughter (*II Chronicles 21:6*)! Like many leaders their mistakes and sins don’t affect them as much as they affect their children! You would think that he would have learned from his mistake, but sadly, as is the case of many great leaders, he

failed to see the results of making bad friends and he makes the same mistake again towards the end of his reign! See *II Chronicles 20:35-37*. God again intervenes by sending a prophet to admonish him; and then, breaks up the ships, and cancel the joint venture, to mess up his alliance!

King Jehoshaphat is a great example of leaders that make mistakes, but because they are seeking God, God corrects them, guides them through the results of their mistakes, and delivers them! Learn these lessons! Try not to make mistakes but learn from them and don't make the same ones again and again!

II Chronicles 17 list the highlights and outstanding leadership accomplishments of King Jehoshaphat. During his early years he lays a good foundation. As a leader of men, use these ideas to build the kingdom, organization, Sunday School, or church you are given the privilege to lead! As God blesses your efforts, be very aware of, and learn from the mistakes of Jehoshaphat.

Lesson 1 – Know and prepare for the enemies that will come.

Notice first, that he recognizes the enemy to his kingdom. It is his neighbors and kinfolk! Before you can win the battles against them, there are some things you must do. Notice that King Jehoshaphat works on himself first. Look at how it is put in the New Testament:

1 Timothy 4:16 “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

1 Timothy 5:8 “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

Before you can help others, you must concentrate on yourself. This is not having a selfish attitude. It is the thinking that God wants

to use you and for Him to use you, a cleansing and closeness are needed. God always calls first and then prepares and enables!

1 Timothy 1:12 “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;”

God wants to use you to help others. He needs for you to “grow” in faith and character. Notice the expression in **1 Timothy 4:16**: “...continue in them...” You do this by making good decisions and by leadership direction.

These are the steps that King Jehoshaphat made:

Lesson 2 - Strengthened himself against Israel.

Often the enemy requires immediate action. Before he could strengthen his kingdom, he needed to protect it. In the sports world,

it is said that a good defense is what is needed first. They get this from the Bible way of doing things!

***II Chronicles 17:1, 2* “And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel.**

And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken.”

As a leader, the first thing to do is to identify the enemy and then strengthen yourself to not allow the enemy in to defeat you before you are ready to attack him!

This idea of preparing your defense first is crucial. We are given more details of his defensive forces in ***II Chronicles 17:13-19***. He had a big, well-prepared army. It was for defense! It is interesting that Jehoshaphat never started any war! War came to him! As a Christian, this is exactly how battles are fought! We are satisfied with what God has given us and done for us. The problem is that

others see our success, get envious, and want to use us, take from us, and use it for their own evil purposes! We need to be ready for the enemy to attack!

Once he got his defenses up, he started working on himself. This work on yourself as a leader is a never-ending process. If you are alive, you need to be improving. When you stop growing you start dying!

Lesson 3 - King Jehoshaphat's personal growth and battles.

“...sought not unto Baalim;” His first move was a negative move. He rejected the gods of the world. That left room for him to make the most important decision of his reign! As a leader it is important to learn to forsake things. It is what you don't seek that first allows you the time and strength to seek the right things!

II Chronicles 17:3 “And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim;”

Notice how this is written. “... walked in the first ways of his father David,”! What made David so special was his focus. It mattered greatly to David what God thought of him! David and Jehoshaphat spent their time learning about and knowing God!

“But sought to the LORD God of his father,” This two-part decision of not going the way of the world, but seeking the one true God, is the main thing that led to his success as a leader!

II Chronicles 17:4 “But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.”

Because of him not seeking the gods of the bad kingdom of Israel, and seeking the God of the Bible, God blessed him and his decisions. In **II Chronicles 17:3** it says, “And the LORD was with

Jehoshaphat,” and in *II Chronicles 17:5* it states, **“Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand;”** When you seek the right God, He joins up with you, and then does stuff for you! Look at the full verse 5!

II Chronicles 17:5 **“Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.”**

All these things happened at the beginning of his reign and were to prepare him to be a good king. God will bless you, not so that you can waste these things on yourself; but to allow you to use these things to bring Him glory!

The lesson to learn is that when God blesses you and benefits you, not to get a big head, or a proud heart! See what it did to Jehoshaphat and learn to handle the blessings! In *II Chronicles 17:6* it is written **“His heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD:”**

II Chronicles 17:6 “And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.”

As he grows in “**the ways of the LORD**”, he continues to make good leadership decisions. This tactic of taking away the high places is expressed in the New Testament as follows:

II Corinthians 10:5 “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”

For the Christian, the idea is not to throw away your imaginations but to let God control them! Any “**high place**” must be “**cast down**” like the crowns are cast down in Revelation 4:10! They are submitted to His control. Instead of them being against God, they are used by God to bring him glory! Notice the result in your life when this is done. Jesus uses the word “**exalteth**” twice.

Luke 14:11 “For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Luke 18:14 “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

The lesson is *“If you submit to Him, He promotes you!”*

It is interesting and informative to know that this getting rid of the high places and groves is a continuous task. At the end of Jehoshaphat’s reign, it is stated that they are not taken away. This shows that they were either rebuilt or not all completely destroyed.

II Chronicles 20:33 “Howbeit the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers.”

Any unfinished task of the leader comes back to hurt the next generation. As a leader, you must make decisions that will help and not hinder the future! The way this verse is written, it indicates that

even though Jehoshaphat was destroying them, the people were not behind it fully.

I recognize this in my life as I get closer to God, others are not that interested in following the God of the Bible!

Below are some of his great leadership accomplishments:

Removed the false idols that the people were using.

***II Chronicles 17:6* “And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.”**

He finds ways to teach the right way. This is imperative. One of the great problems in America is the lousy school system that has been created. A good school system that will teach the Biblical view of science and history is very important for the future prosperity of the nation.

II Chronicles 17:7-9 “Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.

And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests.

And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.”

While the subjects of what they taught are not mentioned, what is mentioned is that they had **“the book of the law of the LORD with them,”**! Anything that was taught was measured against the Standard. Good Christian disciples know the Bible to be the Standard!

Notice the results of bringing the Bible back into education!

II Chronicles 17:10 “And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.”

Do you see how important teaching Bible knowledge is! Do you want peace and prosperity? The way to gain it is to gain knowledge of the Bible and the God of the Bible! Look at the comment on the opposite condition given in **Romans 1:28-32**

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

Who wants to work in an organization or country or church like that? Can you see the results of removing God from the knowledge? Without knowing about the God of the Bible, who is the God of history, science, and mathematics, a lack of purpose is presented in education! This lack of purpose presents error, false conclusions, and eventually failure! It is also the reason leaders make terrible mistakes affecting lots of people! Even though they try to make good decisions, their solutions fail because they have rejected the God of the Bible!

A good leader will see that investing time and money in the education of their followers will lead to success! But be aware that

not just any education will do! It must bring with it purpose! That purpose is to please God!

The results of doing things God's way and God blessing your organization will lead to others noticing your success and wanting to, not only find out what you are doing, but to help you!

II Chronicles 17:11 “Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats.”

These groups of people were not part of the nation of Israel, but could see the benefit of having a godly nation and a godly king as a friend. So they bring gifts. When you make good leadership decisions and God blesses your decisions, others will notice.

This is where King Jehoshaphat shows great leadership skills that are missing in today's leaders. He puts some of the blessings back into savings. Any good student of history will tell you that the

good times don't go on indefinitely. What should be learned is the ability to not spend and waste the blessings. Store them for the time when things are not going well! The leader of today leads based upon a budget. Budgets are fine if one of the items on the budget is savings! In the government, the school I work for, and in many large organizations, every department is given a certain amount of money to spend. This would be a good thing if it was properly evaluated every year, but sadly it is not. The department heads have learned that if you don't spend all that you get, the budget is reduced for the next year! So, instead of saving for hard times, they spend all that they can and need more money for the next year! This eventually leads to a deficit in funds, and in the government's case, much debt! Add to that the "maintenance mistake" of throwing more money at it, and you eventually have a disaster!

The solution for most organizations is not more. It is learning to live on what comes in and saving some for the future.

Whether you are a large organization or just an individual, please learn the great leadership lesson of preparing for future troubles by saving some of the blessings of God!

II Chronicles 17:12 “And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store.”

Besides setting up a savings account, he encouraged business. The prosperity, as well as the defense of an organization or country, is based upon the ability to create wealth. Producing an income is extremely important! The greatest way to create wealth is by working! Work will produce profit and the desire for profit will encourage people to work hard. Please study the advantage of Capitalism over Communism that leads to the prosperity of a country!

II Chronicles 17:13 “And he had much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem.”

With the savings and business prospering, it brings on other people that are not as successful because they haven't learned the value of putting God first. What happens is that envy, jealousy, covetousness, and the desire to obtain what you have without the sacrifices that you have faced develops. This leads to them wanting to steal it! Here is where great leadership continues. As a leader you must prepare men for war. War is inevitable as groups of ignorant people desire to take what you have for their own! They think they deserve it!

This idea of preparing men for war is what good leadership is all about. It is the skill that the crisis leader as well as the servant leader is good at and concentrates on! The main job of the pastor of a church is to develop men to live the Christian life! A good leader will turn boys into men, girls into ladies, and children into fully functioning, independent, lawful adults! He will turn cowards into brave hearts, weaklings into warriors, and fools into wise men!

II Chronicles 17:13-19 “And he had much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem.

And these are the numbers of them according to the house of their fathers: Of Judah, the captains of thousands; Adnah the chief, and with him mighty men of valour three hundred thousand.

And next to him was Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand.

And next him was Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself unto the LORD; and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valour.

And of Benjamin; Eliada a mighty man of valour, and with him armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand.

And next him was Jehozabad, and with him an hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for the war.

These waited on the king, beside those whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah.”

Several things can be learned from these verses.

When you use the Bible for your solution manual, these verses give great insight into how to equip and maintain your defenses! Our leaders should use the time of peace and prosperity to prepare for war! A great defensive army is essential.

The description of these warriors as “**mighty men of valour**” occurs 4 times (*II Chronicles 17:13,14,16,17*). “**Mighty men**” suggest that they were big and strong. “**Valour**” gives the idea that they had proven themselves by showing courage in battle. Since war is not going on at this time, the way to gain valour is by training. Simulated battle is a tremendous way to “*separate the men from the boys*”!

It is also interesting to note that some of them were specialists. **II Chronicles 17:17** states that some were “...armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand.”

Notice also the description of the leaders. One is called a chief (Vs. 14). He and one other is called a captain (Vs.14, 15).

One is said to have “...willingly offered himself unto the LORD;” (Vs. 16). This shows the idea of enlisting as a volunteer. It is not waiting to be asked to serve God, but volunteering to do whatever God wants done! It is the great character trait of availability! “**Here am I, send me!**”

Isaiah 6:8 “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.”

Another example that can be gleaned from these leaders is that they were in Jerusalem, making them not only available but close to the king! Look at **II Chronicles 17:19**. It says that they

“waited on the king”! These men did not just do what they wanted to do. As good leaders, they were good followers! They let the king know what they were doing and did not do anything without his permission! A good leader that has captains like this, men who understand the chain of command, who are willing to follow orders, is a rare phenomenon! As a good leader, Jehoshaphat made the decisions, but he did it based upon the intelligence and knowledge he got from these captains.

Finally, please notice how big this army is. They are just from two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, but total almost 1 million men!

The indication of *II Chronicles 17:19* is that besides this army, there was a trained defensive force in the fenced cities of Judah.

Learn these leadership steps from King Jehoshaphat as you start your endeavor into building and growing the organization you are part of.

A. Work on your sins and strengths.

B. Build up your defense against the enemy.

C. Reject the gods of the world.

D. Seek the God of the Bible.

E. Seek Him with all of your heart.

F. Train others.

G. Save from the blessings for the future.

H. Work on an honest income.

I. Prepare for war.

If you will do these things, as God tests, prepares, and blesses you, you will not be sorry, but will be very successful!



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