

Kings and Prophets 13-09-20b

We pick up our study now. We're looking in particular at the details of Jehoshaphat's reign in the Southern Kingdom, the Kingdom of Judah. Do you remember what his name means? Shaphat, Shaphat in Hebrew means judge.

The Shoftim were the judges and the first part of his name, of course, is taken from the Tetragrammaton, the name Yahweh, which the Germans sort of amalgamated or mashed together with the vowels from Adonai to make Jehovah, but Yehoshaphat, the Lord is judge. This is God's personal name, his covenant name with Israel. He is judge.

This is a wonderful reminder for us as we look at the way Jehoshaphat structured the justice system in particular in Judah. His very name is a reflection of these policies that it needs to be done with an eye on heaven, with the fear of the Lord to please God, to ensure that God's blessing can continue to flow to the Southern Kingdom. And as goes the nation in the Old Testament, so goes the heart of the individual believer.

This is a wonderful inspiration for us, as I said at the beginning of the first lesson. Now, we began chapter 20, it happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon and others with them beside the Ammonites came to battle against Jehoshaphat. So, here's the internal situation squared away, but now there is this attack from the outside.

Isn't this always the way? Peace on the outside, you got problems on the inside. Get the inside squared away, there's problems on the outside. We can't ever seem to get all of it going at the same time in this life.

So, Jehoshaphat has a wonderful recovery and renewal and revival going in Judah, but now the Moabites and the Ammonites come to battle against him. So, some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, a great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria. And they are in Hazazon Tamar, which is in Gedi.

Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to do what? Go to the north and say, ally yourself with me and help me fight these guys. I came up and helped you when you wanted to go get those cities in Gilead back. So, won't you come down and help me? Is that what he does? He does exactly the right thing, doesn't he? He is afraid, so he set himself to seek the Lord and proclaim to fast throughout all Judah.

Now, I just want you to note verse 3 and the link back to chapter 19, verse 3. 19.3, right next to 23. Jehoshaphat prepared his heart to seek the Lord. Now, in a time when he needs the Lord, he knows exactly how to seek Him.

And he is able to do it because he has prepared his heart. He set himself to seek the Lord. He prepared his heart to seek the Lord.

Now, he purposes to do so. Proclaim to fast throughout all Judah. Judah gathered together to ask help of the Lord and from the cities of Judah, they came to seek the Lord.

His leadership means that all of the people are now seeking the Lord. Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the Lord before the new court and said, O Lord God of our fathers, notice this is a public prayer spoken out loud in the hearing of the people. They together corporately are being led in prayer by their king.

What a great picture this must have been. What a great sight. O Lord God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? And do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? And in your hand is there not power and might so that no one is able to withstand you? Are you not our God who drove out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and gave it to the descendants of Abraham, your friend, forever? And they dwell in it and have built you a sanctuary in it for your name.

What is he doing here? He is facing a current threat. There is the potential for future calamity. What is he doing? He is drawing on the past.

He is remembering what God has done. This is what we do. What is the Bible if not a record of what God has done? And in our time of need, in our time of distress, when we're not sure how to proceed, what can we do? We rehearse in prayer to God the things that we know that he has done.

You are the God. You notice that a lot of this is in italics. There is some question about whether this is even a question.

These seem to my eye to be statements. He says, you are the God that has done these things. Verse 9, if disaster comes upon us, this is what they said when they built the sanctuary.

If disaster comes upon us, sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this temple, and in your presence, for your name is in this temple, we will cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and deliver. Now here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. Where is Mount Seir? What nation is that? It's Edom.

These are the Edomites. Seir is Edom. Remember our note over in 1 Kings that there was no king in Edom.

There was a kind of a governor type, sort of an agent. Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir, Edom, whom you not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them. Here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit.

Does it sound familiar at all? Well, by the way, any of you that get the Plano paper, isn't that where we had that article that you read me, Patty, from that flame? Oh, yes. Look in the Plano paper. Yesterday, I think it was, or the day before, there's a box in there from flame stating

myth and then fact about the Middle East.

Very concise summary of the facts of the case with regard to Israel, the Palestinian question, the history of what's gone on over there, what is and is not true. If you don't have that, I'll try to make copies and make them available on Sunday. You need to have that information for your own sanity when it comes to thinking about questions related to our foreign policy in the Middle East.

But I say again, verse 10, Here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, the surrounding nations, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them. Here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us, nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.

Have you ever felt this way facing a situation? Might be economic, might be social, might be family, might be job-wise, might be school-wise. All of us at some point or another come up against it and we're, they're just, it seems like we are wrapped in cotton and stuffed in a closet and there's just no way out, there's no human solution. We can't necessarily figure out how we got there.

We certainly can't figure out how to get out of it. We don't know what's going to happen. This is your prayer.

Leave off your prayer of Jabez. Leave off your, you know, footprints in the sand and come here. This is your prayer.

O our God, will you not judge? We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us, nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon you. Our eyes are upon you. This is faith.

This is reliance. This is trust. This is how we accrue righteousness.

This is how we produce the fruit of the Spirit. When we're at the end of our resources, and if you think about it, we're pretty much always at the end of our resources, no matter what the situation. There dwelleth in us no good thing.

Any good that's in us comes from God. Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives and their children, stood before the Lord. This is family worship.

They brought the little ones. Everyone stood before the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jehaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jael, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.

And he said, Listen, all you of Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King

Jehoshaphat. Thus says the Lord to you. Didn't have to wait long for an answer, did he? Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's.

Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the ascent of Zeez. You will find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of Jeruel.

You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord who is with you. This is such a great guide for problem solving of all shapes, sizes, and descriptions.

Go to God. Acknowledge that we can't save ourselves. We don't know the right thing to do.

Stand before Him together and wait for God's deliverance. We position ourselves. God lets us know what the direction of attack is, and we just stand there and wait and watch and let Him deliver.

Now, I want to point something out here, if you'll bear with me. Do you notice anything unusual, sort of out of the ordinary, in what we've read so far? Look at verse 14. Remember when we had Micaiah? Sometimes you just have a man of God.

He's got no name. Here, we've got this guy. We've got his father.

We've got his grandfather. We've got his great-grandfather. We've got his great-great-grandfather.

We go all the way back to Levi and Asaph, for crying out loud. Now, why is that? I ask myself. So, I go look at these names to see what they mean.

The man's name is Jahaziel. Jahaziel. This, as you can tell, is a compound name made of two Hebrew words.

The last part is the name of God, which is El. And the first part is Yahaz, or Yahazi. This means seen by God.

God sees. But Jahaz, there's lots of words for seeing in Hebrew. Ra'ah is one of the most common.

This means to look, but it's occasionally even translated to prophesy. This is not just any old kind of looking. You can look this up in your Strong's, and it says something like God beholds, or some such thing.

But that doesn't really capture it. Yahaz, in Hebrew, has the idea of looking, but you look with intention, and you're looking forward. You're looking ahead.

This is almost in the realm of foresight. And it's actually translated prophesy in a couple of places. He looked ahead and said, this is what's going to happen.

He prophesied and said. So this means what? God, let's just, for our purposes, God looks ahead. Okay? That's our working translation here.

He is the son of Zechariah. What does Zechariah mean? You may remember this. There's lots of Zechariahs in the Bible, Old Testament and New.

John the Baptist's father's name is Zechariah. Zechar, in Hebrew, means to remember. Yah, of course, is Yahweh.

So you've got God, the formal, official name of God, looking forward. Zechar, the Lord Yahweh, remembers. He looks back.

Interesting, no? Jehaziel, God looks ahead. God foresees. Zechariah, the Lord God, remembers.

He looks back. You've got kind of an Omega Alpha idea here. He sees the end from the beginning.

He remembers the past. He looks forward to the future. He sees the whole thing.

Both of these are sort of visual ideas related to God. Looking forward, looking back. Zechariah was the son of Benaiah.

Benaiah, one of the great names. It wouldn't weird a kid out if he had a son. You could name him Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, one of the great heroes of the Old Testament.

Benaiah. Well, once again, you've got the Yahweh suffix there. He's not really a suffix, but you've got that name, personal name of God, covenant name of God on the end.

The first part means to build. Banah, to build. You know your creative words.

You've got Barah, you've got Asah, you've got Banah. Barah, to create. Asah, to manufacture.

Banah, to build. The Lord builds. Well, he is the son of Jael.

Jael, the verb, and of course you've got El there. Do you see kind of a chiasm here? El, Yah, Yah, El. We had seeing forward, seeing backward, building.

What do you think Jael is going to mean just without even looking it up? This is a destroying word. The verb is only used once in Scripture. It's over in Isaiah 25, I think, and it has the idea, it's talking about the hail coming down and destroying the refuge of the wicked.

The hail comes down and wipes it out, sweeps it away. God sweeps away. God demolishes.

God builds. Banah, God builds. The Lord builds.

Jael, God, in his official Elohim name, sweeps clean, drives out, demolishes. He, in turn, is the son of Mataniah. Those with the name of Matthew or anything related to this probably know

what the first part of this means.

You've got Yahweh suffix to a word that means to give. It means gift of the Lord. Mataniah, gift of the Lord.

He is a Levite of the sons of Asaph. If you go back to the story of the birth of Jacob's sons and how you've got Leah and Bilhah and Zilpah all popping out sons every so often and figuring out ways to name them and you've got different reasons for why they're named. When it comes to Levi, who is third in the sequence, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and he's the third son of Leah in which he names him.

His name means to join, to join together. Join together. And of the descendants of Levi, remember you've got the various divisions in the priesthood.

You've got the Korahites, you've got the Aaronites, you've got the, did I already say Kohathites? Asaph is one of the divisions of the Levites, one of the clans, if you will. And Asaph means to gather. Notice both Levi and Asaph have no pronoun and they have no part of God's name.

This is not Leviyah or Elevi or Yalavi or anything like that. This is not Asaphiah or Asaphel or anything like that. They don't have a divine name attached.

So these two also sort of cling together. And so if you start, this is another sort of story told backwards. If you start in the order that the names are given and work backwards, Asaph is gather or gatherer.

Levi is join. So what has God done? God has gathered the people. He has joined them together.

That's the nation. Then you have Mataniah. This is gift of the Lord.

And this is where the Lord's name comes in. They've been gathered and joined. Then the Lord, covenant name of God, blesses.

He gifts. He grants grace. And what happens? He clears out.

You could think of this in terms of the land. He clears out the Canaanites. And then what does He do? He builds.

God clears out the old and builds the new. Think about our souls. Think about our salvation.

We are gathered. Coming to faith is coming to the brotherhood in Christ in this age. In the Old Testament age it was coming to the people of Israel.

We are gathered and joined to God and to the people of God. And the grace of God is the first thing we encounter. It is His gift.

Mataniah. Then He clears out a space. And then He builds.

And then He superintends. He remembers what's happened in the past. He looks ahead to what's going to happen in the future.

The genealogy of this prophet is a Bible class in itself. All you have to do is think about this man and his paternal ancestors. And you get a picture of God's dealing with the nation of Israel in general.

With Judah in particular. With the individual believer. It's God's grace from beginning to end.

And it's orderly and it's sequential. This is the man who stands up. Why are all of these names given? What difference does it make? You just say a man of God stood up under the inspiration of the Spirit and said, but we have these names.

It's important. It matters. So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jehaziel.

God looks ahead. The son of Zechariah the Lord remembers. The son of Benaiah the Lord builds.

The son of Jael God demolishes. God clears. God sweeps clean.

The son of Mataniah, gift of the Lord. A Levite joined together. Of the sons of Asaph gathered.

In the midst of the assembly. Who would better appreciate this man and his lineage and his heritage? I don't doubt that when he first stood up he said, I am. And then he stated these names.

And everyone heard them. And he said, listen all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem and you King Jehoshaphat. Thus says the Lord to you.

Do not be afraid. Do not be dismayed. How many times are these the first words of the Lord? Fear thou not.

For I am with thee. Be not dismayed. For I am thy God.

I will strengthen thee. I will help thee. I will uphold thee.

What would Jesus say to the disciples? Fear not. It is I. Be not afraid. Be not afraid.

Our natural gut reaction, our instinct is to fear. And the first thing we have to do is concentrate on the perfect love of God. Because perfect love casts out fear.

God has not given us a spirit of fear. But a power of love. And a sound mind.

Sobriety. The ability to think. Fear cannot think.

Fear is an emotional reaction. It is an impulse. It has no logic.

It can't be reasoned with. Fear not. We have to set it aside.

We have to consciously turn from fear to faith. From fear to the word of God. And we have to think.

We have to process it. We have to push it through our mind, our heart, our soul. Fear not.

How many times? You can't count the number of times God says this. It's his opening remark. Fear not.

This is what the angel said to Mary. What he said to Zachariah before the coming of the Messiah. It's everywhere.

Fear not. Don't be dismayed. Because of this great multitude.

The battle is not yours but God's. Go down. Position yourself.

Here's where they're going to come. Verse 17. Do not fear or be dismayed.

Tomorrow go out against them for the Lord is with you. Every Catholic remembers Gabriel saying this to Mary, right? He remembers Elizabeth saying this to Mary. The Lord is with you.

It's not just wrote. It's not just a ritualistic saying. How do you say God with us in Hebrew? Emmanuel.

Emmanuel. Who is our Lord and Savior? Who is our link to God the Father? Who is the way, the truth, and the life? Who are we uniquely in this age united with and in and abiding in as the vine and branches? It's the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord is with us as he was never with these people in the Old Testament.

So how much more should we not be afraid? How much more should we not be intimidated when a multitude of troubles opposes us? I always think of that little soliloquy in Hamlet. Take up arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them. Do not fear.

The Lord is with you. Joshua bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. This wasn't an overnight conversion.

You remember earlier, several weeks ago, we talked about how Jehoshaphat had sent teachers throughout the land, had sent priests, and those who could instruct the people in the word of the Lord as it existed in that day? These people, this is not a new thing for them. This is the response of people who have prepared their hearts to seek the Lord. They're already able to take this pronouncement as the object of their faith.

They believe it. They trust it. They bow themselves before God, and they are ready to obey.

This isn't a fly-by-night, overnight, knee-jerk response with no background and no preparation. This is the conditioned response of people who have been trained, who have spent time, who

know God, who understand what it is when the Spirit of God speaks through a prophet. They know exactly what this is.

That's why they bow. That's why they are calm. That's why they are obedient.

The Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high. This is musical response. We are going to see this later on.

The prophet of God is going to call for a musician. Music is no incidental thing. It is integral.

The book of Psalms is the hymnal for Old Testament Israel, and music is no small part of worship. That's why we are privileged to have it as a part of every one of our gatherings, because it's important. It makes a difference.

What does it do? Why is it there? Is it just enjoyable? Is it just fun? It is a lot more than that. Notice, the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high. It doesn't say they were good.

It doesn't even say they were on key. They were loud and they were high. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands.

They rose early in the morning. This is reinforcement. It is inspiration.

It is distillation of biblical truths. These people don't carry around scrolls of the books of Moses. How do they remember promises and principles and doctrines of the Word of God? They are encapsulated in the hymnals, in the lyrics, in the words to these songs.

Even when you're listening to an instrumental performance, it calls to mind the words. We've had wonderful hymn writers, Fanny Crosby, Isaac Watts, and many others, that have been gifted by God with the ability to distill these great truths. Augustus Toplady, our special music at the break.

Rock of Ages is one of the most doctrinally dense sets of hymn lyrics you will ever find. I could do two Bible classes on each stanza of that hymn and not exhaust what he has condensed into it. It's a beautiful, beautiful set of words.

And if you think about that, it blows my mind every time I see it. Let the water and the blood from my wounded side which flowed be of sin the double cure. That is advanced doctrinal understanding.

Save from wrath and make me pure. It is retrospective. It goes back to redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation, and experiential sanctification, ongoing cleansing, claiming 1 John 1.7 and 1 John 1.9. It's all condensed into two beautiful little short lines.

Be of sin the double cure. It cures the permanent Adamic problem that we have, and it is the

remedy for our daily progress in faith. It's just tremendous.

Music is a gift from the Lord, and it's no accident that the Korahites and the Kohathites are here singing on this occasion. These people need encouragement. They need strengthening.

They need reinforcement. They need reminders. And that's what this music does.

It is no accident. So they rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa. And as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established. Believe His prophets, and you shall prosper. When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness.

As they went out before the army, they were saying, Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever. He consulted with the people. He found people that could continue this musical support as they march forward to enliven and hearten them as they march into this situation where they are vastly outnumbered, where there is a triple coalition aligned against them.

Praise the Lord, His mercy is forever. When they began to sing and to praise, that's when the Lord set ambushes. Kind of reminds you of the seven-fold marching around Jericho, doesn't it? When they blew the trumpets? That's when God brought the walls down.

These people use their voices to praise God in obedience and in genuine faith. And when God hears that praise coming up from the voices of the people, He sets these enemies against themselves. Ammon Moab and Mount Seir who had come against Judah, they're called Mount Seir because we got the note from Kings that they're not a kingdom of Edom, they're just a rabble.

And this is one part of that group. Come against Judah and they were defeated. The people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them.

And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped destroy one another. They just started fighting themselves. Same thing happened.

Remember when Gideon broke the lamps and broke the pitchers and held the lamps and gave the shout and blew the trumpets? And the enemy defeated themselves. If we will be patient, if we will wait on the Lord, when we have people testing, when we have opposition from people, take your position, trust God, praise Him, lift up your voice in song and stand by. God will cause these people to defeat themselves.

Just leave them alone. This, by the way, is political advice that's been bantered around in recent days. Just let things sink of their own weight, whether it's overseas or domestic.

And there's some biblical support for this approach. Let the thing destroy itself. Concentrate on your priorities.

Remember who you are, who you belong to. The Lord is with us. God's mercy endures forever.

Think about Jehaziel's lineage. Just revolve that in your mind. Wouldn't it be great if you could figure out a tune and just put that lineage to music or something like they do in the books of the Bible? So they defeated them, they destroyed one another.

When Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude and there were their dead bodies fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies.

This attack that seemed like such a disaster and such a portent of destruction ends up being a blessing. They come away with booty. They come away with spoil.

They are enriched. They are blessed. They come away better than before.

Valuables, precious jewelry, more than they could carry away. They were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. Another one of those three days passages.

It took them three days to collect the spoil. When the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the victory on the cross, it took them three days, three full days, to collect the reward and the victory. On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Baraka, for there they blessed the Lord.

Therefore the name of that place was called the Valley of Baraka until this day. Then they returned. Every man of Judah and Jerusalem didn't lose a man.

Nobody got heat stroke. Nobody got a stray arrow. Didn't lose a single man.

All the men of Judah and Jerusalem with Jehoshaphat in front of them, notice in front, not in the rear, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. They came to Jerusalem, once again, stringed instruments and harps and trumpets to the house of the Lord. The fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries.

When they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel, the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around. You contrast that with the dismal situation up north, where nothing goes right, where there is destruction and evil and kings falling through their own toilet seats and all kinds of problems that we'll see next time. It's night and day difference.

Who do you want to serve? Whose glory do you want to reflect? The God who sees the past, who sees the future, who sweeps clean and builds up, who gathers and joins together, who gives us the gift of his grace, or shall we just strike out on our own and take the path of the northern kingdom? It's such a beautiful contrast, and the Word of God spends two chapters

describing this wonderful spiritual environment in Judah in the days of Jehoshaphat. It's a rare and precious thing, but it is an example, and it's a goal that we can set for ourselves. Kingdom in the Old Testament, heart of the believer in the new.

This can be us. This can be we. Praising God with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord for His grace, His goodness, His provision.

If we will trust Him, if we will listen to His Word and be obedient, position ourselves, prepare our hearts to seek the Lord. We'll pick up our study next time and close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

It inspires us. It challenges us. It reveals to us the way, the truth, and the life perfectly summed up and fulfilled in Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior.

We thank You for Him. We thank You for our relationship to You through Him. We thank You for our position in Him.

We pray that Your Holy Spirit will keep us ever mindful of the wonderful privileges and blessings that we enjoy, the resources that are at our disposal, the confidence that we can have if we rely on Your promises and Your provision, no matter how dire our circumstances may seem at the moment. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.