

Survey of the Bible part 44 **2 Chronicles 21 - 22**

Last week we saw how Jehoshaphat was described by God as one who did right in the sight of God and yet at the end of his life the Holy Spirit noted something about his life that was not so right, in fact it was outright wicked, according to the Holy Spirit.

2 Chronicles 20:32 ³² He walked in the way of his father Asa and did not depart from it, doing right in the sight of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 20:35 ³⁵ After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel. He acted wickedly in so doing.

In light of these two statements how is it possible to know where Jehoshaphat actually stood with the Lord?

What does it mean to do right in the sight of the Lord?

A couple things could be noted about this and it has to do with actions as well as faith. We know for example that James speaks of faith without works being dead, but works without faith is also dead, no matter how noble those works may be.

What we see with Jehoshaphat is a man who had faith. It was his faith in the covenant promises of God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, including the promises made to David, that Jehoshaphat clung to that allowed him to do right in the sight of God. In this way, doing right in the sight of God is also another way of saying that he was right or righteous in the sight of God.

Romans 3:21-23 ²¹ But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

How many people are excluded when Paul says, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God?

But how many of those sinners are allowed access to God according to this same passage?

For all those who believe in Christ Jesus.

Now, for all of those who believe in Christ Jesus how many of those are declared righteous before God?

Every single one.

John 6:39-40 ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of *all that He has given Me I lose nothing*, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him *will have eternal life*, and *I Myself will raise him up on the last day.*"

Of everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and has been declared righteous in God's sight, how many of those continue to sin?

All believers.

Romans 7:19-25 ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

So, in light of this was it possible for a man to be declared by God Himself as one who did right in the sight of the Lord and yet sinned by forming an alliance with Israel, the northern Kingdom, that was declared a wicked act?

And so, when we see these things in Scripture where someone like Jehoshaphat can seemingly spend his life seeking after the things of God and yet can do something wicked, we need not say, how could he do something like that?, we simply need to look at our own lives and conclude that even though we have the righteousness of Christ put to my account there is that law of sin in our flesh that still wants to rear its ugly head, and against which we must fight, as Paul alludes to.

But this should never be an excuse to justify our sin which is also why Paul encourages us to pursue right living in light of our righteous standing before God.

Romans 6:12-14 ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 6:19 ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

Jehoshaphat was also dealing with the weakness of his flesh and found that some of his decisions were not deemed right by God.

2 Chronicles 21:1-3 ^{NAU} Then Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Jehoram his son became king in his place. ² He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael and Shephatiah. All these *were* the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. ³ Their father gave them many gifts of silver, gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was the firstborn.

And so, Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's first born son, becomes king in his place. And apparently, all of the sons of Jehoshaphat lived luxuriously all of their lives. Their father gave them many gifts of silver, gold and precious things, including, not just land, but fortified cities over which they would rule.

And so, all of Jehoshaphat's sons were doing pretty well, at least for now. Because what is about to happen is something that can only be described as heinous and treacherous.

2 Chronicles 21:4-6 ⁴ Now when Jehoram had taken over the kingdom of his father and made himself secure, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and some of the rulers of Israel also. ⁵ Jehoram *was* thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. ⁶ He walked in the way of the

kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab did (for Ahab's daughter was his wife), and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

No mention is made of Jehoram doing right in the sight of the Lord with an occasional doing something wicked. No, his entire life was characterized as doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

And note too, that he marries a daughter of Ahab, and continues to follow the way of the kings of Israel, where Ahab once ruled, which suggests that this daughter was more like her father and mother, Jezebel, than like her father's counterpart to the south, Jehoshaphat. And evidently it affects the way in which Jehoram rules.

Was Jehoram unequally yoked?

Not at all. They were both wicked.

But what I find interesting about all of the wickedness we see taking place, not just here in chapter 21 of Chronicles, but in all of Scripture as it relates to Israel, is how even though many of the chosen people of God prove themselves not to be the remnant of God, God still continues to be faithful to Himself and the covenant He made with Israel.

2 Chronicles 21:7 ⁷ Yet the LORD was not willing to destroy the house of David because of the covenant which He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever.

By the way, who is the lamp that He gives to the sons of David forever?

John 1:1-5 ^{NAU} In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

How is it possible that the light can shine in the darkness and yet the darkness did not comprehend it?

John 3:1-3 ^{NAU} Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; ² this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God

as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." ³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, *unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"

By the way, it's not a coincidence that Jesus spends much of His time in healing the blind. This particular act was not just to show forth His power and grace and kindness toward those individuals, but was a sign of the very ministry of Jesus Christ to lift the spiritual blindness from those He came to save.

In fact, when John the Baptist questioned whether or not Jesus was the one promised through the prophets, he was given a message by Jesus as He quotes from Isaiah, who was explaining the works of the coming Messiah.

Matthew 11:4-6 ⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ *the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.* ⁶ "And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me."

Notice the context here. All of these miracles at the hands of Jesus, the blind receiving sight, the lame walking, the lepers being cleansed and the deaf hearing. What is the context in which Jesus places all of these miracles?

The poor having the gospel preached to them, and blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.

Is the gospel simply about giving sight to the blind, or healing lepers?

No. It's about giving eternal life to those who place their faith in Christ Jesus. In fact, the entire gospel of John is summed up in this way. And John puts it into context through the miracles of physical healings Jesus did among the people.

John 20:30-31 ³⁰ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

All of the physical healings were mere signs of an eternal healing wherein is eternal life, found only in believing in Jesus as the Christ.

And so, the covenant God made with David would not allow Him to destroy the house of David, which is to say, no man can destroy the kingdom of God and the promises of God that lead to that kingdom.

2 Chronicles 21:7 ⁷ Yet the LORD was not willing to destroy the house of David because of the covenant which He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever.

And who are the sons of David?

The same sons as the sons of Abraham.

Galatians 3:6-9 ⁶ Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. ⁷

Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." ⁹ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

Not Abraham the progenitor of a physical nation, but Abraham the believer. All who believe, Jew and Gentile, are sons of Abraham if they believe in the same promises of God Abraham believed in, that is the promise of the Messiah promised to Adam and Eve, found in the seed of the woman, the very Son of God and son of man, born of a virgin whom we celebrate this time of year.

Jehoram would not be the ruin of God's plan for His people, but would prove to be one more example of how man cannot ruin the salvation God promised for all who believe.

And interestingly enough the same Elijah who prophesied against King Ahab was going to be called upon by God to prophesy against Jehoram.

2 Chronicles 21:12-15 ¹² Then a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet saying, "Thus says the LORD God of your father David, 'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father and the ways of Asa king of Judah, ¹³ but have walked

in the way of the kings of Israel, and have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot as the house of Ahab played the harlot, and you have also killed your brothers, your own family, who were better than you, ¹⁴ behold, the LORD is going to strike your people, your sons, your wives and all your possessions with a great calamity; ¹⁵ and you will suffer severe sickness, a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the sickness, day by day."

And this is exactly what happened to Jehoram. We're told in the text that he suffered with this disease for 2 years in great pain every day. And at the end of 2 years his bowels literally came out of his body and he died in great pain.

What is amazing to me is not that Elijah's prophecy came true or that God Himself killed Jehoram with this particular disease, but that in all of this two year period, Jehoram didn't seek the Lord for forgiveness and humble himself before the Lord.

Evidently, no one in Judah cared for this guy.

2 Chronicles 21:20 ²⁰ He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years; and he departed with no one's regret, and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Chapter 22 continues to demonstrate how evil still persists in Judah. The only remaining son of Jehoram, (because the enemies of Judah killed the rest of his sons off), was Ahaziah.

2 Chronicles 22:2-3 ² Ahaziah *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri. ³ He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly.

Because of his wickedness the Lord anoints Jehu to rise up and kill Ahaziah, which he does. Well, mother Athaliah doesn't take this well and she has the royal offspring put to death.

2 Chronicles 22:10 ¹⁰ Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring of the house of Judah.

By the way, who would all the royal offspring be?

Athaliah's sons, her grandsons.

Why would she do this?

So she could rule. But one of Ahaziah's daughters rescues one of her younger brothers and hides him from crazy grandma.

2 Chronicles 22:11-12 ¹¹ But Jehoshabeath the king's daughter took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she would not put him to death. ¹² He was hidden with them in the house of God six years while Athaliah reigned over the land.

You couldn't make this stuff up. And yet the depravity of man is seen clearly even as God enters the picture to make Himself known without any humbling on the part of these people.

Jeremiah 17:9 ⁹ "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

Praise God He has taken out our hearts of stone and replaced them with hearts of flesh that now seek to walk after Christ. He has truly given us ears to hear and eyes to see. Salvation is of the Lord.