

=KINGS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 6

Jehoshaphat

AIM: to teach my pupils the tragedy of running with the wrong crowd.

POINT OF CONTACT: Bring two different kinds of seeds to class—maybe a flower seed and a vegetable seed, or two different kinds of vegetable seeds. Then you might bring a picture of a donkey and an ox to class. Then you might ask the class how many have two different kinds of materials in their clothing. This would certainly stir their curiosity. Then take them to Deuteronomy 22:9-11 and show them that in the law of Israel they could not sow their vineyard with diverse seeds, they could not plow with an ox and a donkey together, and they could not wear garments of diverse sorts, as of wool and linen together in the same garment. All of this was to show Israel that they were to be separated people. They were not to be mixed and mingled with the world. God had chosen them to be separate from the world.

INTRODUCTION: Jehoshaphat would have been a successful king had he run with the right crowd. He was a good man and a good king, but he chose to run with the wrong crowd. He was the son and successor of King Asa on the throne of Judah. He appears to have been associated with his father in the latter years of his father's reign, and shortly after his father's death, he became the king of Judah (that is, the Southern Kingdom, or the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah). He was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned about twenty-five years. Let us notice many things about Jehoshaphat.

- I. JEHOSHAPHAT WAS PLACED AS KING BY GOD. He was a descendant of King David and therefore was in the holy line to whom God had promised the kingdom of Judah forever. Look at II Samuel 7:16, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." So, he was placed on the throne by God. Because this was true, many temptations were going to come. The higher a man rises, the more dangerous the fall, the more far-reaching the fall, and the more careful a man ought to be. Just because one is in the will of God does not give him immunity to temptation. Just because one is greatly used of God does not give him such immunization.
- II. THE LORD WAS WITH JEHOSHAPHAT, AND JEHOSHAPHAT WALKED IN THE WAYS OF THE LORD. Notice II Chronicles 17:1-5.
  1. The Lord was with him. Read II Chronicles 17:3a. The fact that God is with us means that oftentimes we will be objects of Satan's temptation even more. The one who is doing something for God is the one that Satan wants to attack. Be careful, dear friends, when God begins to use you. Satan will make you the object of his fiercest attacks.
  2. Jehoshaphat walked in the ways of the Lord. This is a wonderful thing for a king to do. In other words, he was in the will of God.
- III. JEHOSHAPHAT LED JUDAH IN A GREAT REVIVAL. It is a wonderful thing to read how Jehoshaphat decided to teach the people of Judah the ways of the Lord, to do away with idolatry, and to turn the nation away from sin. Read II Chronicles 17:6-9. You will find here that in the third year of his reign he sent princes and Levites with the Book of the Law in their hands to teach in the cities of Judah. This caused the fear of God to fall upon the Philistines and the Arabians. A wonderful revival is prevailing. When revival is prevailing and when peace is reigning, look out for the Devil. He is about to cause some trouble. When a church is going nicely, look out for the Devil. When a home is peaceful and smooth, look out for the Devil. When a life is being blessed of God, look out for the Devil. When revival is in progress, look out for the Devil. The Devil begins to attack Jehoshaphat. Let us notice how he does it.
- IV. JEHOSHAPHAT TOOK THE DAUGHTER OF AHAB AS A WIFE FOR HIS SON. This is a great step downward. He wanted his son to have a wife of royalty. Influence and prestige for his son meant more to him than to have his son walk with God and become the best that he could possibly be for God. What a tragic thing it is when young people marry the wrong type person! (Teacher, stress this strongly again and again.)

- V. JEHOSHAPHAT RAN WITH THE WRONG CROWD AND MADE ALLIANCES WITH THE WRONG PEOPLE. At the time of his reign, Ahab was the king of Israel (which was the Northern Kingdom adjacent to Judah.) Jehoshaphat joined Ahab to battle against the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead. In other words, he yoked up with Ahab. Later he joined in a business partnership with King Ahaziah, the wicked son of Ahab. After Ahab died, Jehoshaphat kept company with wicked men. Among them was Ahaziah, Ahab's son.

Then Jehoshaphat yoked up with Jehoram. After the death of Ahaziah, Jehoram reigned in his stead. He, too, was a wicked king; and Jehoshaphat made an alliance with him. Read II Kings 3:7. Now Jehoshaphat continues his slide downward. Bad company and unholy alliances became his downfall. Some vital lessons should be stressed:

1. Stay in the right crowd. Almost every time someone comes to a pastor confessing a sin, he says, "I got in the wrong crowd." (Teacher, stress the importance of running with the right crowd.)
2. Marry the right kind of person. See II Corinthians 6:14. In this Scripture we are warned against yoking together with unbelievers. We should stress again and again to our young people the importance of dating only Christians and, especially, marrying only Christians.
3. We should not belong to any organization that is a religious one where unbelievers are permitted. In other words, we should join a church where people must profess faith in Jesus Christ to join. We should not belong to a denomination which is not loyal to the Word of God and the deity of Christ. We should not participate in a council of churches, etc. where the deity of Christ and the verbal inspiration of the Bible are not believed.

- VI. JEHOSHAPHAT REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE ADVICE OF HIS PASTOR. Jehu came to Jehoshaphat in II Chronicles 19:1-3 and warned him about having fraternized with such a king as Ahab. Jehu said, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD?" Jehu constantly warned Jehoshaphat against his unholy alliances, but he refused to accept the warnings and the counsel of the man of God. Here is a vital point. Almost everyone who has ever gone into sin has had a warning. Certainly we ought to be careful that we consider carefully the warning of the man of God. Our pastors are here to help us, and the right kind of pastor will not do it selfishly but for the good of God's people.

Later on, the prophet Eliezer rebuked him for joining himself with Ahaziah; but once again Jehoshaphat refused to heed the warning. How sad!

- VII. JEHOSHAPHAT REAPED WHAT HE SOWED.

1. His son, Jehoram, was wicked. Notice II Chronicles 21:1, 4-6. David reaped his sins in his sons Absalom, Amnon, and Adonijah. Solomon reaped his sins in his son, Rehoboam. Eli reaped his sins in his sons. Now Jehoshaphat reaps his sins in a wicked son. One of the most important reasons that we should live for God is for the children's sake.
2. His grandson also was a wicked man. See II Chronicles 22:3, 4. In other words, the curse on Jehoshaphat continued to the third generation. Again, God is punishing his sin.
3. Many other things came upon Jehoshaphat because of his sin. The nation suffered for years to come because of the compromise of Jehoshaphat.

CONCLUSION: Jehoshaphat was not an idolater such as Solomon. He was not a wicked man such as Jeroboam. He was not a selfish man such as Rehoboam. He was simply a man who tried to live a righteous life and run with the wrong crowd. It never works! God forbids it!