

=KINGS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 7

Jehoram

AIM: to teach my pupils the sad and tragic mistakes of Jehoram in order that they might avoid the same wrong decisions that he made and the awful sins that he committed.

POINT OF CONTACT: Call the name of each king whom we have studied recently, and have the class members associate the king with his outstanding characteristic. For example, Jeroboam would not listen to the advice of the wise men. This was his great mistake. The mistake of Solomon was having many wicked women. Call the name of each king before the class and have the class give you the one thing that they were to remember about the king. Then give the one thing about a certain king and have the class name the king. Here we have a double check that the class has learned at least one item about each king. It might even be wise to write on the chalkboard a list of the names of the kings. Then write a list of the outstanding thing about each king. Do this without any order and have the class match the king to the outstanding thing about him. Take about five minutes to do this. To repeat is to learn, and repetition is vital, especially when we have only 30-45 minutes a week to teach. If each pupil can simply know at the end of these lessons one thing that describes best the king and his reign, our lessons will not have been in vain.

The main thing about Jehoram that would help us remember the other things about him is that he refused to follow a message from Heaven. More about this is said later in the lesson.

INTRODUCTION: Jehoshaphat is now dead. Three years before his death he took Jehoram, his son, with him much as a co-partner. You recall the sad story of Jehoshaphat. He was a good man—one of the finest men that ever sat on the throne. He made the mistake, as you will recall in last week's lesson, of associating with the wrong crowd. This did not affect his character or his reign as much as it did the character and reign of his son. This is always the case. Do you remember Balaam? Balaam preached the truth, but he led the children into whoredoms. When one generation associates with the bad crowd, the next generation becomes a part of the bad crowd. When bad appears to be good, or even when bad does not appear to be real bad, it enables our children to see our tolerance and then gives them an open door to embrace the evil after we are gone. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 7:13 that sin should be "exceeding sinful." We should stomp our feet when we see something bad. We should be vehement in our opposition to evil. Such was not the case in the life of Jehoshaphat; hence, his son, Jehoram, was not only one who associated with evil men, but he himself became one of the evil men.

- I. IT IS ALWAYS A SERIOUS TIME WHEN A NEW REGIME ENTERS. When a church calls a new pastor, when a church builds a new auditorium, when a Sunday school class gets a new teacher, when a nation elects a new president, when a dictatorship has a new dictator, when a school has a new principal—these are times of importance, decision, and concern. One of the most important times in the life of a class is the first Sunday after promotion day. To get a good start is vitally important. Here we have a new king. Jehoshaphat is dead; Jehoram reigns in his stead. Bear in mind that everything rises or falls on leadership. Israel would rise under a godly king. Revival would come under a Hezekiah or a Josiah, but the nation would fall under a Jeroboam or a Jehoram. Your class will rise or fall on your leadership. Your department will rise or fall on the leadership of the superintendent. It is tremendously important that we realize that in whatever phase God has given us leadership, it will largely be dependent upon our devotion, dedication, and services.
- II. JEHORAM RECEIVED A BAD INHERITANCE. He had other brethren. These other brethren received "great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah," according to II Chronicles 21:3. Jehoram, however, did not receive these things, but he received the kingdom. His inheritance was the kingdom, not the riches received by his brethren. It is vitally important that each of us remembers to leave the proper inheritance to our children and their children. Brother Hyles told us the following story: My mother told me that she was so sorry that she did not have a lot of money to leave me. She was remembering the death of her wealthy sister who had probably left each of her children millionaires. I reminded my mother that there were things that she would leave to me that all of her sister's money could not buy. It is vital that our people realize a good name must be left; the effectual,

fervent prayer of a righteousness man must be left. These and other things are important in the inheritance we leave to our children. Jehoram had a bad inheritance. It would have been better had he received no authority but rather the character that will someday build authority. It is better to receive the character that can bring success than to receive the success without the character. Success without character will crumble; character without success will become success. It is more important to have character than talent. Character seeks talent; talent does not seek character. Character without talent will become talented; talent without character will not obtain character. In fact, talent without character will oftentimes jeopardize the chances of ever having character.

- III. JEHORAM WAS JEALOUS. Read II Chronicles 21:4. He killed his brethren because he was jealous of them. He also killed many of the princes of Israel. What a tragic thing this is! Have you noticed in our lessons how many of the kings were jealous? Do you recall what Jeroboam and others did? Their jealousy caused them to murder their competition (or at least the ones they thought would become their competition). (Teacher, again and again and again we should teach our children the danger of jealousy.) Somebody has said that jealousy is the granddaddy of all other sins. This sin arises in our homes between husband and wife. It shows its ugly head in our churches when people sometimes become jealous of the talent and position of others. It often shows itself in prosperity when one becomes jealous of the fortune of another. It shows itself oftentimes in preachers when one is jealous of another's success. Many times it even shows itself in looks when one becomes jealous of the looks of another. (Warn the class again and again to be sure not to only mourn with those that mourn but to rejoice with those who rejoice.)
- IV. JEHORAM LED IN ROTTEN RELIGION. Read II Chronicles 21:6, 11. We find that "he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab." It is always a dangerous thing to try to do what others do. Teach the boys and girls that they are always to do what Jesus would do, not what the neighbors are doing or what the other kids at school are doing. Jehoram's downfall was aided by his trying to copy others. In so doing, he copied the religion of Ahab and of Israel. He led the Kingdom of Judah to Baalism, the worship of the sun god. This included the kissing of an image, the burning of babies, the practice of sodomy, and even religious prostitution. All of this was in the name of religion! How tragic! How awful! (Teacher, stress again and again to the boys and girls that religion is not enough. It is the religion of Jesus Christ and an inspired Bible that we must follow. Stress this over and over again. Do it kindly. Let them know that we are not to be unkind to people.)
- V. JEHORAM MARRIED THE WRONG PERSON. See II Chronicles 21:6. Now this is one of the most interesting things about the entire story of Jehoram. You will recall in last Sunday's lesson that Jehoshaphat came to Ahab, the King of Israel, and suggested that the two join in trying to regain Ramoth in Gilead. Those of us who know the Bible know that for a godly man like Jehoshaphat and a wicked man like Ahab to join up in any endeavor for God is unscriptural. However, Jehoshaphat was still a good man, and we will not criticize him. We will warn him, we will weep over him, but we will not be critical of him. We need not be surprised, however, that Jehoshaphat's boy got to running with Ahab's girl. We need not be surprised that when we run with the wrong crowd, our children often marry the wrong crowd. Consequently, Jehoram married the daughter of Ahab. It is important that we adults run with the right crowd. That is why young people should build their lives around the church activities. That is why we should be, as Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. used to say, "So busy doing what we ought to do we don't have time left to do what we ought not to do." (Teachers of children's classes, stress again as we do Sunday after Sunday the importance of going with Christian young people, and for that matter, even dedicated Christian young people. Warn the children that children of a godly Jehoshaphat will never marry the children of an ungodly Ahab if Jehoshaphat does not know Ahab and their children do not know each other.) It is vitally important for young people that they limit their scope and sphere of good friends. This does not mean that we are not to be kind to unsaved people. It means we are to speak to them on the street but not walk down the street with them in social activities. You will notice in every case so far, women or a bad marriage was involved with the king who did evil in the sight of God.
- VI. JEHORAM RECEIVED A LETTER FROM ELIJAH. This is found in II Chronicles 21:12-15. Now this is a very interesting point. Some believe that Elijah had foreseen the future and had written the warning

before he died. Others believed that Elijah lived until the reign of Jehoram. If the death of Elijah took place in chronological order as listed in the Bible, he was not alive during Jehoram's reign. If this be true, God gave him a vision of Jehoram's reign, and the letter was written before Elijah's death. The letter was delivered after Elijah's death. On the other hand, it is possible that Elijah was alive during the reign of Jehoram. If this be true, the letter was written during Jehoram's reign.

At any rate, he did receive a letter from Elijah, inspired and prompted by the Holy Spirit. A few people even think this was actually a letter from Heaven, but I doubt it. We, however, do have a letter from Heaven. This letter is our guidebook and rule book. If the Bible says, "Do something," we should do it; if the Bible says, "Do not do something," we should not do it. Elijah did not have the letter we have. Jehoram did not receive as good a letter as we have received. Let us take in faith the teachings of the Word of God and build our lives on them.

VII. HE WAS PUNISHED BY THE HEATHEN. It is very interesting how God often uses heathen people to punish his own children. A godless Russia could be used by God to punish a so-called "Christian America." It is interesting that many times in the Bible a heathen Babylon wins a battle over Israel and Judah. Bear in mind that God chastens His own and oftentimes uses people even more wicked than His own to carry out this purpose. Notice II Chronicles 21:16. Judah was invaded by the Arabians and the Philistines, and they punished Jehoram. (Stress to the class that God punishes sin. Perhaps no other incentive helps a person to live righteously as the realization that sin will be punished. Remind the boys and girls that sin never turns out right; the wages of sin is death; our sin will find us out. Make the punishment for sin seem far greater than the enjoyment of sin.)

VIII. JEHORAM HAD A SAD ENDING TO HIS LIFE. Read II Chronicles 21:18-20. God smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease until his bowels fell out because of his sickness. He died of terrible diseases. How sad! Look back to the time when he took the kingdom. Can you imagine the pomp and ceremony involved? Can you imagine the coronation day? Can you hear the playing of the bands and the shouting of the people? Can you imagine the smile on his face as he received the authority of all the kingdom? Can you feature his dreams, ambitions, and hopes for the future? Can you see the air castles that he has built? Now look at him. He was not even buried in the sepulchres of the kings. He was not even permitted a royal burial. He was not even desired at his death. How tragic! Picture his rotting, dead carcass not even being buried in the cemetery of the kings. Compare that with his early beginning. Would God we could see the ending of others before we make the wrong beginning ourselves! He had so little to show for his life and yet so much opportunity to do good for God.

CONCLUSION: It is interesting how oftentimes a little David watching sheep can do more with a small start than a Jehoram reared in the palace can do with a great start. Teach a little while here to poor children. Tell them that they do not have to have parents who go to church or parents who have good jobs or parents who can afford to give the luxuries in order for them to do something for God. God uses the Gideons, the Davids, the Shamgars, the slave boys like Moses, and others, when usually a man reared as a son of the king does not turn out as he ought.