

Choices: Jehoshaphat

His choice

I suppose that you would like me to solve the idiom “jumping Jehoshaphat.” Well I can’t because nobody knows where it comes from definitively. I can tell you where the name Jehoshaphat came from: The Bible. It’s in 2 chronicles 17. I find it hard enough to say his name let alone spell it. He just might be the most famous king outside David and his son Solomon. This man had choices right from the start. His father Asa began as a good king. It says he walked with the Lord and tried to bring down the rampant idol worship. Jehoshaphat began by doing the very same thing.

It’s interesting because Jehoshaphat didn’t have to follow his father’s foot steps. There is a long list of bad kings. I suppose it’s lucky that this man had a good father. Yet, Asa fell away from God as his reign continued. Jehoshaphat was strong in his belief. I wonder if his mother followed God, yet she is never mentioned in any regard. Jehoshaphat chose to fight the idol worship and install the Bible all over the land. This king saw good in God’s word. I bet that was his father’s mistake in the end. It says King Asa never talked to God about the disease he had. I bet that was a sign about the relationship that king had with God. Jehoshaphat made a different choice.

There were generally two kings in the Jewish land. The Judah king and Israel king. Jehoshaphat made a bad choice in making an alliance with Ahab (bad king) of Israel. Ahab wanted to take a certain kingdom so he called on the seers and prophets to ask about God’s wisdom. Jehoshaphat chose to ask the Lord first. This is where a funny satire evolves between the prophet Micaiah and Ahab. The king of Israel does not want to use this prophet because he always brought him bad news.

Jehoshaphat probably was younger than King Ahab. This is where choices are so important. This younger king had to choose alliances, who to listen to, and who to war against. These are tough choices for a king. Jehoshaphat has confidence in God. He decided to listen to God through Micaiah the prophet. The other seers said go to war but Micaiah said “yes you will win, but there will be consequences.” Ahab says “see he always brings bad news.” Jehoshaphat went to war because God said it was ok to do so. King Ahab went because he wanted to win and refused to listen to God. What is your choice today and for whom do you make them?

Our choice

2 Chronicles 19 has King Jehoshaphat returning from a battle he probably did not need to fight. It's a funny place when it feels right but it's clearly wrong. King Ahab went out into battle for the wrong reasons. He was willing to put Jehoshaphat in harms way to save himself. In the end Ahab died and King Jehoshaphat barely made it back intact. A seer named Jehu went out to meet the returning king. He said **“Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, the wrath of the Lord is on you.”** Maybe Jehoshaphat got lucky this time with not so good choices.

We make choices all the time. I think the problem is we make them too fast sometimes. It looks good so we say “what the hell.” Maybe that saying tells it all. Friends can give us advice and so can God. I think most of the time God wants an answer to rest for a bit. Maybe it's so that the reality of the choice will become clear. I think happy feelings on a choice might be a deception. Let time bring clarity rather than euphoria.

Jehoshaphat was confronted with a new choice in this chapter 19. If a friend approaches you and gives you an earful, how do you react? You could have a fight, or argument. Nobody

likes to be told their wrong. I'm sure Jehoshaphat was surprised because he had talked with God first. The problem was that God was not hot on the idea of war. Jehoshaphat was warned that King Ahab might die in battle, yet he chose to fight anyways. Jehu just pointed out the obvious that Jehoshaphat made a risky choice not sanctioned by God. How often do our desires skew the way we look at our prayers? Were usually looking for an in rather than an out.

Our choices come in funny ways. Who are our friends and allies? What do we really want to accomplish with prayer. We want a favorable outcome that makes us look smart. The best choices might look conservative or chicken. Maybe we need to let God soften our hearts more than our enemies. Jehoshaphat is about to be taught a valuable lesson on inquiring of God. Choices are not always easy. Be sure to take the time to let them rest before you act. What choices in prayer are before you today?

Lesson learned

Jumping Jehoshaphat there are so many choices in life. I just wanted to say that. This king got scolded by Jehu the seer. God said you can go to war, but should you. I think it means that God will be on our side in battle, yet why are we in battle. Maybe a battle is not a safe place to be. Jehoshaphat learned that day to consider Gods point of view first over friends, family, and even seers. The choices this king made afterwards are amazing.

It says in 2 Chronicles 19 beginning at verse 4 that Jehoshaphat changed the way they did kingdom work. This man could have killed the seer Jehu for scolding him. However, he chose a different path. He chose to learn. The king proceeded to appoint judges all over the land. In many cases it was men of God. He commanded them to consider God in all they do. Sound familiar? It

the very end of this chapter it says **“Deal courageously, and may the Lord be with the good.”** Jehoshaphat’s choices provided this great wisdom.

Do we wish to make something happen? Do we want it so bad that other things get pushed aside? Can we ignore the small things to accomplish the bigger goals? There was a lady I knew who said every morning “Where are we going today God”? I have been reminded to do that. Maybe I need to make better choices first thing in the morning. I bet much of our trouble comes from human going over human being. Maybe the saying “stop and smell the roses” is great advice.

There is a famous Prayer beginning in 2 chronicles 5. Jehoshaphat found out that a terrible army is advancing upon them quickly. The king goes before the people and prays in the name of all of them. He humbles himself before God and boldly says “with God we can win.” Still, there is humbleness and nervousness mixed together in this prayer. I find that all Jehoshaphat went through to understand his place with God came through his good and bad choices. In the end, he chose to say this **“Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” 2 chronicles 20:12.** What are your choices today?