

Jehoshaphat

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[0 : 00] As you take your Bibles, turn over to 2 Chronicles chapter 17. 2 Chronicles chapter 17 is where we're going to be tonight. And we're going to, as we continue looking at the kings and as God established them as they walk through the different two kingdoms now, because as we've journeyed through the kings, we see definitely the contrast between the two kingdoms.

You know, we see the blessing of the right decisions and really the devastation that comes with wrong decisions. You know, how life is destroyed by wrong decisions and that it affects others also. But, you know, we've walked through the different kings here. We began looking there at the kingdom. If you remember, it began with the first king with Saul. And it went from Saul to David and then to David's son Solomon.

And after Solomon, we find the kingdom was divided because of choices that had been made. You know, oftentimes people try to tell you, do your own thing because it doesn't affect anybody else. But when you read the word of God, God makes it clear that it's the same thing in life. Your choices do affect other people. And sometimes the ripple effect is far greater than we realize.

[1 : 18] You know, we understand that the effects of some of Solomon's choices at the end of his time before he died in his kingdom led to the division of the kingdom between the northern kingdom Israel, who was led by a series of kings beginning with Jeroboam, who had an opportunity.

As we've learned, if you remember, Jeroboam had an opportunity to build a kingdom that was going to be pleasing to God. God personally sent a prophet to him to declare that he had a choice to set the stage for what was going to happen.

We know Jeroboam's stage that he set is where we find, as we left off last time, with King Ahab. You know, it progressively got worse and worse and worse and farther away from God, from the decisions that were being made.

And we find here this decline to Ahab. And now they have that wicked king. And we learned last time that he was more wicked than anyone that had come before him as a king.

And so we know that Ahab was a wicked man married to a wicked woman by the name of Jezebel. And we talked about that some last time there in that. But Judah also had a rocky beginning.

[2 : 36] You know, as we considered those things there with the nation there with Judah and Benjamin that became known just as Judah there. And we find here that had kind of a rocky beginning there with Rehoboam and his son Abijim, who didn't do all that evil, but they did allow evil.

You know, sometimes what we permit is sometimes as bad as what we do. Because sometimes we give permission to things, it causes devastation.

And so we have to be careful with those things. And so we know that as they did not lead or direct the people to follow the Lord, they weren't against God. You know, when you study, as we looked at Rehoboam and his son, they weren't against God in that sense.

They weren't counter to, but they weren't for either. You know, they tried to walk that middle ground with everybody. And, you know, that gets us in trouble to try to walk that because it does have an impact.

And we find that then Asa comes on the scene. And he began a revival in the land that would continue here when his son Jehoshaphat takes the throne.

[3 : 46] And so we're going to look tonight at Jehoshaphat. We're going to look at because Jehoshaphat is the one that was leading the kingdom, contrary to the kingdom of Israel, to Ahab.

So we're going to look at these two. We're going to introduce Jehoshaphat. Then we're going to get into the coming weeks of how the interactions between those two, because we'll see how those things interact and the decisions they made and the impact of it.

But we know that Jehoshaphat, the Bible tells us that he was 35 years old and reigned for 25 years. And so we're going to pick up here tonight in 2 Chronicles.

And we'll pick up here right at the end of verse 16, or chapter 16. We'll look at verse 13 here in reading. It says, And Asa slept with his fathers and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. And when he buried him in his own sepulcher, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed, which was filled with sweet odors and diverse kinds of spices prepared by the apocryphal art, and they made him a very great burning for him.

[4 : 51] And Jehoshaphat, his son, reigned in his stead and strengthened himself against Israel. Let's pray. Heavenly Fathers, we just take a few moments here to look at the life of Jehoshaphat, to introduce the decisions and the things and the example that he is.

Lord, the things that we can learn from him even here tonight. Lord, help us to have our minds and our hearts open to the reality of how these things even apply to us. And our lives today, Lord, we pray would you be wise in your eyes that we might seek you in the day in which we live.

And Lord, we ask it all in your precious name. Amen. You know, we see here a great contrast because between Ahab and Jehoshaphat, I don't think you get a greater contrast of leaders. You get one that we're going to see that Ahab, if you remember, he was evil. He said there was none more evil than him. And then you're going to find that Jehoshaphat is exactly the opposite end of the spectrum because God credits him to say he walked in the first ways of David. In other words, he was a man that sought after God's heart. Now, I don't know if you get much greater contrast to one that's totally debunked to evil and another one that's totally wants to sell out to serve the Lord.

[6 : 11] That's as opposite end of the spectrum as you get. And we're going to look at the contrast between these two men as we move through these chapters here a little bit. But they stand an example, though, of the choices you make regarding God and his instructions and that desire in our heart.

Because while wickedness was happening in Israel under Ahab, the righteous actions of Jehoshaphat was guiding Judah in the totally opposite direction. These two nations at this point couldn't be any farther apart in what they were doing and their desire.

And so let's look tonight first at the direction of Jehoshaphat because this thing with Jehoshaphat began with himself. It began by the choices that he made, just like the things in our life it makes by the direction that we make in life.

What direction are we taking towards God? Because Jehoshaphat, remember, had seen, he grew up, he was 35 years old, he had seen the revival under his father.

His father Asa led a revival in the land, and we know that he put out the worship of Baal, but he didn't remove the high places or the groves out of the land either. In other words, he had, you might say, a revival in the right direction, but it wasn't complete.

[7 : 31] They still allowed for some things, and we will look at that a little more as we move through here. But we understand this dynamic that Asa did not end well as he was bitter.

You know, his father Asa, Jehoshaphat's father, was not, didn't end life very well because he ended life bitter and angry. The last few years of his life, you know, you can serve the Lord, and you can allow something that comes about because what he got mad about is God rebuking him for not trusting him.

You know, oftentimes people can serve the Lord a long time and get angry and bitter. But you know, there's something interesting here about Jehoshaphat. He didn't let his dad's bitterness hinder his relationship with God.

He didn't let the decision of somebody else hinder what direction he was taking it. You know, that's important to realize because the decision is not other people can influence you, but you still have a choice to make what direction you're going to go.

You know, today we have a lot of people, well, this happened and that happened. You know, God knows all those things that happen. But you still have a personal choice to say, where am I going from here?

[8 : 47] I cannot control what other people did, what other people's decisions. But you can control what direction you're moving towards God. And you can see tonight, as we're going to look at Jehoshaphat, I want you to realize that, that even though he'd seen his dad serve God, he gets to the end of his life, in the last few years of Asa's life, he even put a prophet in jail because he was mad at him.

But Jehoshaphat, when he takes over, he institutes a whole lot of things. He chose a direction. He didn't allow what his dad had done or what his dad had decided to impact his decision for the Lord. He said, I'm going to serve the Lord. So instead we find here that he turned towards the Lord. And this was, God had delivered him here in this opportunity for this.

Because let's look here back in chapter 17. Look at verse 1. And it says, And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel, and placed forces in all the fenced cities in Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken.

You know, this conflict between Israel and Judah was still present when Jehoshaphat takes the throne. But he says, I'm going to do something, and we're going to see a picture here.

[10:06] Because in our own life, the first thing we need to do, we find that Jehoshaphat did, is he set up the defense. You know, he set a perimeter. He set a reality of, okay, this is where things are going to be in his life.

He set that for the nation. And notice it tells us he strengthened himself against Israel. Now this is a great picture for us, because remember, Israel was doing all sorts of evil.

But we find that Jehoshaphat said, I don't want that evil coming into this kingdom. He said, I don't want to give them opportunity to attack. You know, now we understand that physically, but we're going to look at that a little bit in our sense today, because Jehoshaphat was smart in the sense that he says, if I'm going to leave this nation, I need to make sure things are defensible, that we have things, that an area we can defend, that we have a perimeter, that we have something in place to protect us.

Because it tells us here, the fenced cities were reinforced with troops, along with others strategically placed throughout the land. And he put them in the places that Asa, his father, had taken along the border there with Ephraim.

And this became his first line of defense. You know, and I want you to see tonight that this is a great picture for even us. If you're going to serve the Lord, you better understand where the perimeter is, where things are.

[11:30] You need to set a defense. And we're going to look tonight, because I think as believers, we need to have a defense against the enemy. You know, you need to set a perimeter, you might say.

And we can learn that he set the defense to, number one, keep evil at bay. And if we're going to live godly in this present world, we need to establish some same things. We need to establish some safeguards in our life.

You know, if you're going to make a choice to live godly, the first thing you have to say is, how am I going to live godly? And that comes with setting some safeguards in your life as you grow, and to understand and as you mature.

Because the enemy's looking for an opportunity to attack. Just as Ahab and Israel was looking for an opportunity to attack Judah, the devil's looking for a way to attack you.

The enemy, you know, remember what Peter, turn to 1 Peter. You know, consider that in this context for 1 Peter chapter 5 in verse 8. You know, as Peter here, notice what he tells us, for us today, notice what he says, be sober, be vigilant.

[12:33] Why do we need to be sober and vigilant? Why do we need to be in our right mind and the right thinking, and to be vigilant? What's he say? Because what? Our adversary, the devil.

You know? I want you to understand that you have an adversary. It says, as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

I want you to understand that one thing he did is he, when Jehoshaphat took over, he set the perimeter. We need to set a perimeter in our life if we're going to live for the Lord.

To say, here's some things that we're going to put in place. He set his direction towards the Lord. To resist, we need a good defense in place. You know, the primary way we do that is, oftentimes, what we call standards.

You know? Standards are what help us defend against the enemy's attack. You know, that seems to be a bad word in some things, but you know, the funny part is, everybody has standards. Now, some people have high standards and some people might have low standards, but everybody has a standard.

[13 : 43] You know? You might have standards of all different directions, but there's nobody who doesn't set a standard in their life. The question is, where are you getting your standards? Where are you establishing those things?

That's an important question. of where those things come from in our life because standards are not the foundation of our defense, but it's what is the product of those things that we defend because they are the walls that defend us, but they're established by those things in which they're based. You know, a wall is no better or a fence is no better than the foundation underneath it. You know? And I want you to understand our standards ought to be put on something that's not movable upon the Word of God because our standards in our lives must have the right foundation, a biblical foundation.

You know? To grab a hold of a biblical foundation of what God would have and when we establish a defense, we must build it on one or more principle from God's Word.

The foundation of a standard, a perimeter in your life needs to be built upon the Word of God. Needs to be built upon what God has said because, you know, oftentimes, the problem with standards and a problem that's been even amongst Christians is sometimes people adopt somebody else's standard and never adopt the principle or the conviction behind the standard because you can hold a good standard and not have any conviction about it.

[15 : 08] Your conviction comes from a principle from God's Word. If you're going to live for God, you better grab a hold of some principles of God's Word to say, where am I going to put these? How am I going to use these?

How do I establish them in this perimeter to defend my life, to defend those things? And when we form convictions, we believe what we believe because what God has said and when we know what God has said and agree with it, then we can establish a standard that will enable us to do or to protect from the evil around us.

You know, that's really what a standard is for. It's for your protection. It's okay. If I'm going to do this, if I'm going to live for God, these are things I need to make a decision to say this is what I'm going to do to make sure I can fulfill what I believe God has called and commanded me to do.

You need both of those in place. And we see here that as Jehoshaphat gives us a good example of this because the first thing he did is said we need to set the perimeter.

You know, we need to protect from evil. We need to protect from the onslaught so we can focus upon the right things. We need an outward defense but we also need inward ones because you know what?

[16 : 22] Sometimes you need to have standards inside yourself. Sometimes your standard is not outward. Sometimes your standard needs to be inward of saying what am I just not going to think about? What am I not going to focus on? Because sometimes your mind is your worst enemy.

You know? Your mind is a place that the devil loves to get into if we allow those opportunities. You know, think about turn to 2 Corinthians for a moment.

2 Corinthians chapter 10. 2 Corinthians chapter 10 because notice what the apostle here tells the church and the members there at Corinth. He tells them this in verse 4.

1 Corinthians chapter 10 in verse 4. He says, For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

How many of you ever considered your own thought life can be your worst enemy? Have you ever noticed what you begin and if you take a lot of time thinking upon something it begins to consume? You know, there's an old saying that said if what you have is a hammer everything looks like a nail.

[17 : 34] You know? If you're bitter everybody looks angry and bitter. You start looking at it through that lens. You start looking at things through the lens of what you're thinking. So the Bible tells us what we ought to think on those things that are pure and just and honest.

Those things are the things of God. Why? Because it adjusts how you look and how your mind operates. It keeps your mind full of the right things. I want you to understand that he wanted to put the right defense.

But I want you to see also next that he walked in the way of the Lord. He walked in the way of the Lord. Look here in our text back in chapter 17 and it says this in verse 3 and the Lord was with Jehoshaphat.

Now notice here it doesn't say because he was a good guy. Notice what it says. Why was God with him? Because he walked in the first ways of his father David and sought not after Balaam but sought to the Lord God of his father and walked in his commandments and not after the doings of Israel.

Now there's quite a contrast in both those verses. It has to do with the decision that Jehoshaphat made because Jehoshaphat could have said well look what happened to dad or look how these things were turning out but instead he said no I'm going to set my course to follow the Lord.

[18 : 56] I'm going to set my course in the right direction the direction that Jehoshaphat decided was to follow the Lord to serve the Lord. You know I wonder as he was growing up if he didn't hear Joshua get read to him where it says choose this day whom you will serve and he made a decision to say I'm going to be as Joshua I'm going to serve the Lord.

It wasn't built on somebody else it was on his decision he chose to follow the Lord. You know he was compared to David this is an interesting thing David seems to be you might say is the standard that God measures the kings against.

you'll find that he either walked in the ways of David when it mentions a king or he didn't but Jehoshaphat has an interesting context because he says this about Jehoshaphat he walked in the first ways of David consider what he's saying there it says Jehoshaphat walked in the first ways of David what's the first ways of David?

Go to 1 Kings chapter 15 for a moment because in David's life you'll see a division because I want you to understand look at verse 5 it says this in 1 Kings chapter 15 because David did that which is right in the eyes of the Lord and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life that's the first ways of David and then you have a little issue with David save only the matter of Uriah the Hittite David got his eyes on the wrong thing and it impacted the rest of his life now I want you to understand David was forgiven David asked God to forgive him but it still had ramifications that affected the rest of his life there are certain things in life that you can be forgiven you can walk through but you cannot change you'll find that David's choice there impacted his life it was a point different he says that's the reason the first ways prior to David doing that because if you read Psalm 51 you'll find a unique statement that David asked God to return on me the joy of thy salvation you know what sometimes sin has an impact it's hard to get your joy back because there's a difference between knowing it up here and actually having it function doesn't it and so we're going to see here that he says to walk as David did with all his heart the standard was not

David himself but the direction of David's heart I want you to see that also because today we also have a problem with people following people you'll hear all the time people get caught up following preachers and following some personality but we ought to have our eyes on the Lord have our eyes on the Lord look over to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 for a moment because I imagine that as you read through Paul and the things and he makes this statement here in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 to the church at Corinth he says be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ that's a key statement right there because you know what I imagine in Paul's day a lot of people looked at the things Paul did and the thing how God used him and the great miracles the things that took place I mean Paul had a lot of amazing things come about in his life and people would look at him and say ooh you know what Paul said get your eyes off me and get your eyes on Christ because if your eyes on Christ you're all looking the same direction keep your eyes on the right things to follow

[22 : 28] Christ is the direction not that of a person others are not the standard nor the direction but Christ is his walk was directed toward the Lord and not towards Balaam now notice here in verse 3 what it tells us here because he contrasts this he says in the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the first ways of his father David and sought not unto Balaam in other words there's a clear distinction in the direction he was going in that there's this clear distinction his walk was directed towards the Lord and not towards Balaam he never sought direction from Balaam now the thing is this this word here that we find here sought is very key because we find here that as he seeks after those things we seek after things that word sought means to seek or desire or to ask you know sometimes we can be mixed up in our ideology we can say we love the

Lord want to serve the Lord but then we seek for other things go back to when you think back into chapter 16 at the end of Asa Jehoshaphat fought dad's life one of the things that said he trusted the physicians more than he trusted God you know that's a decision he made to seek after help from someplace else often times today you'll read through the scripture here even as you read through the Old Testament there's amazing how many people would worship God and then go out and

worship other gods that was the problem in Israel that they were dealing with it wasn't that God wasn't there God was just one of many you know today God can be one of many to you when we see what's happening here in other words he didn't participate in false worship of an idol the problem that drew Rehoboam was a split mindset about Baal they could have promoted the things of God but also enabled a false worship you know consider look over back in the Old Testament go to Jeremiah chapter 6 for a moment

Jeremiah chapter 6 because you know we're just as susceptible today to this as the children of Israel were the Bible tells us all this was written for what our learning and for our instruction we can see the reality of what's how easy it is and we need to be looking and seeking the right things notice here in Jeremiah 6 and verse 16 it says thus saith the Lord stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths there is a good way and walk therein and ye shall find rest for your souls but they said we will not walk therein you know I want you to understand what God said about Jehoshaphat is Jehoshaphat said I'm going to walk in the ways of the first ways of David I want to keep my eyes on the right things and we're going to see here Jehoshaphat starts his kingship his reign that way he sought to the

Lord the same way that David had followed the Lord look at verse 4 it says but sought to the Lord God of his father and walked in the commandments and not after the doings of Israel in other words it's a matter of focus and it's a matter of action he made a decision in the direction that he was going to travel and how he was going to travel he sought to the Lord the same way that David did this word implies following in doing that so let me get some help tonight you'll get some verses here need a volunteer for Psalm 119 and verse 10 who's got that one Lance you can catch that one for me I need Deuteronomy 4:29 Lou you got that one I need Micah 6:8 Ethan got that one and then Deuteronomy 12:30 Deuteronomy 12:30 who's got that one James you got that one alright Psalms 119 verse 10 okay so this is that same context in there to be sought after what he seek after he sought with him with whole heart to not wander from God's commandments

Deuteronomy 4:29 okay that word there seek is a very clear that second one if thou seek him with all thy heart that is the exact same word that talks about what Jehoshaphat sought after that idea of seeking after God with our whole heart how about Micah 6:8 okay so very familiar but there's a word in there require that's translated require that's the same Hebrew word translated here sought in other words seeking God involves a course or an action of things associated with it there's some things that are identifiable along the path you might say to say this is the direction it is how about Deuteronomy 12:30 yeah here's

[28:07] Deuteronomy 12 that word require is the same word again this idea of seeking after other gods and to see well how did they serve them you know we live in a polytheistic ideology today of saying well we can just worship whatever god we want to worship however we want to worship let me try yours out for a while you know that's what God's warning Israel about because he says I'm driving them out because of the evil don't follow and don't fall into those things don't seek after or inquire about them to try to say well how do they do this you know the most important thing is to know how you're supposed to serve God not how does somebody else worship their God to keep our eyes on the right things so we're not drawn away so we see here the contrast between the worship of Baal and the and of Israel of how they had changed worship completely was relevant here because remember up in Israel we talked about Ahab where had they gone

I mean they basically had almost pushed God completely out to the side and followed Baal because Jezebel was a priestess to Baal the focus and you'll see and we'll talk about that here in coming weeks we'll talk about very famous events you know up on Mount Carmel that's what led to that with Elijah the prophet and the prophets of Baal that's where all that conflict came about was because of that you know we'll look at that in a little more detail there you know that you know the famous showdown on Mount Carmel you know it's like we all can relate and know that story but sometimes we don't think about why did that happen because God was trying to get Israel's attention off what they were worshipping and back on him to look for the way that they ought to go Jehoshaphat's direction though was totally opposite of Ahab it was towards the Lord and away from evil it resulted in a renewed focus in Judah even though his father had brought about a revival among the people one thing still plagued them was the high places in the groves and we talked a little bit about the high places because if you remember when the children of Israel first went into the land before Solomon built the temple many of them would go and actually worship God offer their offerings on the high places which is very similar to what you find with

Abraham Isaac and Jacob because they didn't have a set place that they offered there were some places like Bethel and other places that they would return to but when the temple was set up and the tabernacle was set up all that changed it's what they had once done didn't mean that's what they should continue to do because there was a difference that was made and we're going to see here as we walk through this that they had to deal with the high places and the groves he had not removed them but look down at verse 6 because one of the things about Jehoshaphat's revival is it was at a point where Jehoshaphat I'm going to follow the Lord and I'm going to get rid of these look at verse 6 it says and his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah in other words Jehoshaphat didn't ask if it was going to make people upset he said this is what was needed if we're going to walk with the Lord you know sometimes truth and God's ways make people upset because it rubs against them you know some of the best analogy you can have you know it's kind of like the cat doesn't like being rubbed the wrong way maybe the cat needs to turn around you know if you turn around you don't get so ruffled so I want you to see here that Jehoshaphat is a great example for us today the need to seek the Lord and obey his commandments is essential if we're to walk as he walked you know I'll tell you look into the New Testament for a moment go to 1st John chapter 2 1st John chapter 2 as you find something here in 1st John chapter 2 look down in verse 4 look at verse 4 it says he that saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him but whosoever keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected whereby we know we that are we are in him he that saith he abideth in him himself also to walk even as he walked in other words the Lord is our example that we ought to keep our eyes on to walk that way have you thought about all the areas that the Bible tells us as a New Testament believer that we're supposed to walk I encourage you to do a search we've got electronics today and it's real easy to do look up those two words walk in especially in the New Testament you consider in Romans 6 we should walk in newness of life 2nd Corinthians 5 7 we should walk by faith and not sight Galatians 5 we should walk in the spirit not fulfilling the lust of the flesh Ephesians 5 we should walk in love Ephesians 5 we ought to walk circumspectly the list could go on there's a lot more our walk and the decision and the things we do is important and we see it started with Jehoshaphat personally but I want you to see it impacted next the direction of Judah as a nation and how did he do that and the impact that it had the direction of Judah Jehoshaphat also fulfilled his responsibility to guide and direct the nation because what did he do we're going to see here what he did take a look here in verse 7 it says and also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes even to [34 : 16] Ben-Hale and to Obadiah and to Zechariah and to Nathiel and to Micaiah to teach in the cities of Judah and with them he sent Levites even Shema and Nethamai and Zebediah and Asiel and Sheremoth and Jeneroth and the other guys here on the list and then he has the two priests and with them Elishma and Haroam priests and they taught in Judah and the book of the law of the Lord with them and went throughout all the cities and Judah and taught the people now this is important because the first thing he did is he started a teaching campaign he took the groves he took the high places away and then he sends out the priests and the Levites to say we need to teach the people the word of God not just don't do this is what you should do and this is why you should do it you know that's important because if you try to take something out of your life that's bad you better fill it in with something else that's good that's a very basic principle because you know what happens to vacuums vacuum is a space unoccupied and something will get sucked into it something will fill that space so just removing evil out of your life is not the only thing you need to do you also need to put in the right things because the thing is you can control what goes in that's walking in the right path is back filling it with the right stuff to put the right things in that teaching you know because it's impossible also to follow something you're not familiar with you know you can't expect people to do something they don't know that they haven't been instructed to do you know have you ever been frustrated with somebody well they should know the problem is you better make sure they know because it's hard to keep somebody accountable for something that they don't know that causes a lot of problems sometimes that's a whole other lesson you know expectations on people that you assume that they know what they ought to do and that's not necessarily the case but we see here what they needed was the word of

God while every family was commanded to be teaching the word of God Deuteronomy chapter 6 we find the teaching of the word of God is also essential for all and the need was great for the word of

God you know God tells us something about his word if his word goes forth it's going to do what he's told us it's going to do it'll have an impact on people consider Isaiah 55 in verse 11 it says so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth it shall not return unto me void but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the things whereunto I sent it you know I want you to understand the word of God makes a difference and the same is true today we need the teaching of the word of God you know a lot of people don't like the teaching of God's word you know I see some of the stuff that comes across for teaching of God's word and most of it's modern psychology they're preaching commandments of men for the things of God but you know why there was a problem and why he saw it was so important to send out teaching priests and Levites turn back to 2nd Chronicles chapter 15 2nd Chronicles chapter 15 look at verse 3 it tells us this for a long season Israel had been without the true God and without a teaching priest and without law you know why everybody was in the mess they were the word of God stopped getting preached and taught you need it before you in order to keep things where they ought to be because even the parents consider a parent can't teach a child something that they don't already know you know how did he accomplish this task it tells us he sent those out the princes the Levites and the priests this is quite a crew that he sends out because as I was reading this I'm thinking why did he send those three types of people out to go do this and he sends them out together well if you think about it he sends the princes out which means basically those of his court those with royal authority and they would show up with royal authority and say hey the king says now listen now does that make a difference to people how they pay attention in other words he didn't just send them out he sent them out with authority attached to them to say this is what the king desires this is what the king wants the princes would have been in the royal court and would have carried with him the authority of the king to carry out his instruction the Levites would have offered instruction in the temple service and the rituals that were involved in it you know

Deuteronomy chapter 33 verse 10 says and they shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy law and they shall put incense before thee and the whole burnt sacrifice upon thy altar you know sometimes when it comes to the Old Testament I'm glad we don't have to try to memorize all the stuff the Old Testament people had to memorize I mean you got to bring this for that this over here and this over here and you got to have if you can't do that you got to do this and you got to have this at this time and I mean I'm thankful that we're under the blood not under law I'm glad the law has been fulfilled that we don't have to be concerned with the details of that because Christ took care of the details you know but while the priest would have instructed the people on their responsibility to God and the necessity of obedience it makes a difference when those in authority have a fear of God because it promotes you know think about turn to

Ecclesiastes chapter 12 Ecclesiastes chapter 12 look down in verse 9 it says and moreover because the preacher was wise he still taught the people knowledge yea he gave good heed and sought out and set in order many proverbs the preacher sought to find out acceptable words and that which was written was upright even words of truth you know the fact is those things need to be constantly before us you know it was the wisest and best policy a security conscious king of Judah could promote was to get the word of God before the people because God sent fear not only among the people but also the kingdoms around them notice here something that took place when all this happened look at verse 10 and it says in the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah so that there were no war against Jehoshaphat and some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and tribute silver and the Arabians brought him flocks and 7,700 rams and 7,700 he goats and

[41 : 22] Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly and he built in Judah castles and cities of store and so we see two things here the first one he produced tranquility he had peace with his neighbors about you know that happened because they got their eyes on the things of God consider Proverbs 16 7 because how can that happen you have enemies that suddenly just don't decide they're not going to cause a problem I want you to know something it didn't say they weren't still enemies they just didn't cause a problem you know they didn't change who they were but God was you know look at here in Proverbs 16 7 it says when a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him I think this is Proverbs 16 7 being played out because the enemies were still there but they chose to respond differently they made no war against them last we find the enemies brought tribute to

Jehoshaphat the tributes that were associated you know that brought tribute because who's the group in here that looks like the oddest group to bring tribute to Jehoshaphat what's that yeah the Philistines I mean you think about the Philistines were a constant conflict weren't they and here when Jehoshaphat got his ways with the Lord and you'll notice the same thing when David walked in the first ways his enemies were at peace with him didn't mean they weren't still enemies and they weren't still there but they God held back those things God kept them at bay you know it might have been possibly that some of the fear that God allowed Jehoshaphat to build up his army and you can read on through the rest of chapter 17 there and you'll find that Jehoshaphat had quite a little army attached to him when you read through there you'll come to a little over 1.1 million men in his army that's a pretty good chunk of people especially when you look over there in Israel today on the map a million armed men in that small space you pretty much got control but we see here through the leadership of Jehoshaphat the nation is going to grow strong but it was not by the!

king's might that it happened the Lord the key we can find from Jehoshaphat as we contrast Jehoshaphat with Ahab because we're going to find out that Jehoshaphat wasn't perfect matter of fact we're going to find that he made some decisions that got him in some trouble and we'll look at some of those in the weeks to come but the thing that made a difference that said about Jehoshaphat as he said his heart to seek the Lord if you're going to serve the Lord you better have your heart set the right thing you know we talked about this verse on Sunday you know consider Ezra 7 in verse 10 it says for Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach Israel in Israel statutes and judgments says this it says hear O Lord when I cry with my voice have mercy upon me and answer me when thou said seek ye my face my heart said unto thee thy face Lord will I seek hide not thy face far from me put not thy servant away in anger thou hast been my help leave me not neither forsake me oh God my salvation you know that ought to be our plea to say God I want to be focused upon you just as Jehoshaphat and our desire to walk in his ways Jehoshaphat is a good example and reminder of the importance of walking in God's ways and we're going to look at those things here in the weeks to come so I encourage you with that and let's go ahead and!