

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

2 CHRONICLES 18-22

The children's series VeggieTales has sold over 52 million DVD and VHS copies. *Bob the Tomato* and *Larry the Cucumber* teach biblical values to kids.

The series became so popular it was sold to NBC and added to its Saturday morning kids programming. But it didn't take long for NBC editors to go to work.

Non-historical references to God and the Bible were sliced - even Bob and Larry's trademark ending - "Remember kids, God made you special, and loves you very much..." - is gone. The vitamins were cooked out of VeggieTales.

The series' creator, Phil Vischer confessed, had he known how much the shows would change he wouldn't have signed on to the network deal.

Vischer sums it up this way, "VeggieTales is religious – NBC is not."

It's a classic case of what the Bible calls being "unequally yoked." 2 Corinthians 6:14 says it best, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

This is a farming analogy... Different species of animals, with diverse natures, harnessed together will struggle to cooperate. They'll pull in opposite directions.

And when a Christian becomes entangled with a non-Christian in a legally binding relationship some kind of compromise is the inevitable outcome.

It happens when a believer and an unbeliever go into business.

It happens when a believer and an unbeliever get married.
It happens when NBC and VeggieTales partner together.
And it happened when Jehoshaphat joined forces with Israel.

2 Chronicles 18, “Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and by marriage he allied himself with Ahab.”
Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, married the daughter of his northern rival, King Ahab. It ratified their peace treaty.

But this was an unequal yoke. Jehoshaphat was a good king and a godly man. Ahab was an idolater – a Baal worshipper. He was a man God intended to judge.

“After some years he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria; and Ahab killed sheep and oxen in abundance for him and the people who were with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth Gilead.” He was recruiting Judah’s military assistance. “So Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, “Will you go with me against Ramoth Gilead?” And he answered him, “I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will be with you in the war.”

As here is the problem with being unequally yoked with an unbeliever. If God has his sites set on judging your wicked colleague you end up in the line of fire.

Jehoshaphat may’ve been having second thoughts, because in verse 4 he says, “to the king of Israel, “Please inquire for the word of the LORD today.”

Jehoshaphat wants to ask God for direction, but it's a too little too late.

“Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, 400 men, and said to them, "Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?" And they said, "Go up, for God will deliver it into the king's hand." There's one problem – these were the wrong prophets. They were prophets of Baal – not Jehovah.

“But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?" So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. He is Micaiah the son of Imla."

And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!"

Micaiah was a true prophet of God. He wasn't on Ahab's payroll. He wasn't for sale. Micaiah told the king God's truth – not just what he wanted to hear.

“Then the king of Israel (and I'm sure he did so reluctantly) called one of his officers and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imla quickly!"

The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, clothed in their robes, sat each on his throne; and they sat at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.” Imagine the prophet made prisoner in tattered garments - before two kings sitting in splendor on their thrones.

Micaiah might've been intimidated, had it not been for the fact he'd recently seen another king on His throne. He'll tell us about his vision in verse 18.

Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" This false prophet, Zedekiah, had a flare for the dramatic.

He added a little theatrics to his lie. He adorned some horns, and acted like a charging bull as he shouted, "Gore the enemy." *His words were a bunch of bull.*

"And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver it into the king's hand." Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Therefore please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement." *Cooperate for once!*

"And Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever my God says, that I will speak." Forget about any compromise on Micaiah's part. He was not for hire. Micaiah was a representative – not a mercenary. He speaks only for God.

"Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?" And he said, "Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!" Micaiah tries to cut corners... He lies.

He knows God wants to judge Ahab. But he's afraid if he tells him the truth Ahab will retreat and escape from God. He tries to lure him into battle with a promise of victory. Micaiah tries to *manipulate* rather than *communicate*...

And Ahab smells a rat. "So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?" Ahab knew there was no way Micaiah would pronounce a blessing on an evil king.

In verse 16 Micaiah tells him the truth, "Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'" The vision implies the king died in battle. "And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

Then Micaiah (*recounts a wild story about conversations in heaven that have provocative implications on earth*), "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left. And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab king of Israel to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' The LORD said to him, 'In what way?'

"So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him and also prevail; go out and do so.'

"Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

Today, God's throneroom in heaven receives visitors from both sides. Angels *and* demons have access. Recall in Job 1 even Satan appeared before God.

Here a demon volunteers to be a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets.

And God allows the ruse... Understand, God never causes evil, but sometimes He'll use it to accomplish His purposes. **Case in point... Jesus' crucifixion...** it was at the same time evil's most hideous crime and good's most glorious triumph.

Remember, the false prophet with a flare for the theatrics. Benny Hinn... a.k.a. Zedekiah... Verse 23 **"Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?"** He's being sarcastic. He's mocking God's true prophet.

"And Micaiah said, "Indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!" Ahab will fall and his false prophets will be hunted and killed.

"Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction until I return in peace." A proud Ahab refused to believe Micaiah.

“Then Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

“So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.” It was common for ancient armies to post snipers. Take out the opposing king early in the battle, and it could break the morale of the enemy.

Ahab wants Jehoshaphat to wear the target on his back. He fights incognito.

“Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots who were with him, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel."

So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It is the king of Israel!" Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him.” Here’s why it’s foolish to get entangled with an unbeliever – when God judges your evil partner - if you’re close by - you can end up collateral damage.

God had mercy on Jehoshaphat, but there’s no guarantee for you.

“For so it was, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.” Jehoshaphat barely escaped.

Ahab isn't so blessed. "Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor." **A random shot** – the archer wasn't even aiming in the direction the arrow landed. **A perfect shot** – it struck Ahab between the plates of his armor. Obviously, God was guiding the arrow.

The rabbis have a saying, "Coincidence is not a kosher word." What appeared "random" was actually very deliberate. God was behind the curtain pulling strings.

"So (Ahab) said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." The battle increased that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Syrians until evening; and about the time of sunset he died." The wicked Ahab bled to death in his chariot.

The sun went down on Ahab's reign just as Micaiah had prophesied.

Chapter 19 "Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD is upon you." Guys, beware...

Your intentions may be noble - you're just loving a sinner - but you can end up on the wrong side of the ball. *Get in the path of God's wrath* - and you'll get hurt.

“Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God.”

So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers.” Jehoshaphat’s near miss must’ve lit a revival fire in his heart.

“Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, “Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment.”

Oh, how judges need to take this verse to heart. God ordained government to keep the peace and settle civil disputes. Our courts are the means by which God accomplishes justice. When a judge rules in harmony with God’s Laws, God is literally *with the judge in the judgment*. In modern times that’s become a rarity.

The tragedy today is that God’s Law has become *inadmissible evidence*.

Judges today use arbitrary standards. For 200 years American jurisprudence was based on the Bible and Ten Commandments. We forsake it at our own peril.

“Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.”

“Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites

and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, when they returned to Jerusalem.” The king aired Judge Judy.

Jehoshaphat did all he could to establish justice and fairness in Israel.

“And he commanded them, saying, “Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart: Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the LORD and wrath come upon you and your brethren.”

Do this, and you will not be guilty.

And take notice: Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters; also the Levites will be officials before you.” There was a religious and a civil court. “Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good.”

Chapter 20 could be entitled **“How to Handle a Crisis”**. A coalition of southern nations launch a surprise attack against Jehoshaphat, and immediately the king of Judah calls a prayer meeting – a whole day of fasting, and seeking the Lord.

“It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.

Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, “A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from

Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar (or “pruning of the palm”)” (which is En Gedi (or “spring of the goats”).”

En Gedi is one of my favorite places in Israel – it’s an oasis by the Dead Sea – a place to relax. But in the mid-9th century BC it was used as a gathering ground for a massive army of southern nations that were a dangerous threat to Judah.

“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.” Everyone came up to Jerusalem to pray at the Temple. It was a national day of prayer.

“Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court...” Notice when the enemy is on the attack everyone is a little less concerned about separation of Church and State.

Here the king stands up in the Temple and leads the nation in prayer.

Remember, in the days after September 11 American politicians sought God’s help openly and publicly. But once the immediate crisis subsided, any reference to God became taboo again. It’s so hypocritical. We only seek God in a crisis?

Jehoshaphat is facing a crisis, and he prays, "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? Are You not our God, who drove out the

inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?" Notice the king calls Abraham *"God's forever friend."*

And remember Abraham's distinguishing trait – he had faith. Abe made plenty of mistakes – he was afraid, he lied – but through it all he learned to trust God.

If you want to be a friend of God learn to walk by faith in God's promises.

"And they dwell in (the land), and have built You a sanctuary (or Temple) in it for Your name, saying, 'If disaster comes upon us - sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine - we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.'

"And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir - whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them - here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit.

O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." What words of faith. Jehoshaphat knows he's no match for the enemy. But he says to God *"our eyes are upon You."* Jehovah is Judah's only hope.

It's been said of the final words to Jehoshaphat's prayer, *"This is one of the most touching expressions of trust in God to be found anywhere in the Bible."*

Jehoshaphat knows he can't beat them. So he wants God to judge them.

“Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.” Everyone was desperately seeking God's deliverance.

Verse 14 “Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.” Jahaziel was a descendent of Asaph – a Temple musician. Here a man of praise speaks out a prophecy.

God gives to Jahaziel a message, “And he said, “Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, (Judah's leader) King Jehoshaphat!

Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.” Too often we over-estimate the part God expects us to play in His plans... Hey, *God's shoulders are big enough to carry the load*. The battle is never really ours – but God's...

Most of the time, our efforts only get in God's way...

And here's God's battle plan... “Tomorrow go down against them.

They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel.” Notice, God knew the enemy's plan.

He knows exactly where and when they'll arrive. God steals their signals...

The Ascent of Ziz was a wilderness pass that led from En Gedi to Jerusalem. It was a wadi – or a water run-off. Evidently, the wadi was dry at the time.

God continues, **“You will not need to fight in this battle.”** What a strange order. This battle is not about skill or strategy - but trust. This is about faith – not fight.

“Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!” Judah's calling was to stand its ground not gain ground. God will fight the battle, but Judah's job was to stand still - stay put.

The same is true for us. It's all about realizing our position in Christ. Standing on what Jesus has done and will do. It's a *confidence* in Jesus – not *combat*.

Spiritual warfare is not a course in self-defense, but a course in faith.

The prophecy continues, **“Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.”**
Position yourselves – stand still – don't fear...

Did you know there're 23,214 verses in the Old Testament? **1 Chronicles 1:25** is the shortest. **Esther 8:9** is the longest. But **2 Chronicles 20:17** is the middle verse. At the heart of the OT are the words in verse 20, **“You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.”**

Be positioned – be still – don't be afraid. “For the LORD is with you.”

“And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD.

Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.”

Verse 20 “So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: “Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever.” Most armies position the archers in the front. They launch volleys of arrows at the enemy to weaken their resolve and create holes in their line.

But Jehoshaphat comes up with an odd configuration. He places singers and worship leaders ahead of the infantry. Hey, as muscle-bound and strong a man as Josh is, I'd never think to put him in front of the Army Rangers and the Navy Seals.

Yet that's exactly what Jehoshaphat does. Rather than *raise* a ruckus, Judah *praises* the Lord. **And praise packs a punch.** God's enemies shutter when they hear God praised. Worship drives the demons crazy, and thwarts their plans.

Frances Metcalf once wrote, "Satan is allergic to praise, so where there is massive, triumphant praise, Satan is paralyzed, bound, and banished."

Jehoshaphat's tactic confused his enemy, and look at what happens...

"Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another."

Jehoshaphat's strategy so confused and discombobulated the enemy they ended up turning on themselves. Most of the enemy died from friendly fire.

"So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth."

They stumbled on the victorious battlefield. "No one had escaped."

Recall the tune Roberta Flack sang, "Killing me softly with his song..." (clip) She may've got her inspiration from this story. God killed them with his song.

“When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much.” What a victory!

“And on the 4th day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah (or blessing), for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day.” God blessed His people with great victory.

Verse 27 “Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD.

And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. He was 35 years old when he became king, and he reigned 25 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD.

Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their

fathers. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

“After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber.” - a port on the Red Sea.

“But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, “Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works.” Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.” Here’s what Jehoshaphat refused to see – after you become a believer *your relatives become relative*. You’re now in God’s family.

Spirit is thicker than blood. Don’t yoke with a person just because you have the same last name – if you don’t have the same nature. Do so, and the yoke is on you. Relatives are relative. Family is now a matter of new birth – not birthright.

Jehoshaphat kept trying to forge relationships with his brothers to the north, but they were idolaters. His kin was in sin. His association with them sunk his ship.

Jehoshaphat needed to cut all ties - his downfall was he didn’t!

Chapter 21, “And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.

He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn.” Sometimes the consequences of sin don’t show up until much later.

Such was the case with Jehoshaphat’s association with Ahab. Evidently, evil Ahab had more influence on Jehoshaphat’s son and successor, Jehoram, than his dad. Jehoram married Ahab’s daughter, and walked in his wicked ways.

Verse 4 “Now when Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword. And also others of the princes of Israel...” Jehoram wiped out any potential rivals to the throne.

Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king, and he reigned 8 years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.” The daughter of Ahab was named “Athaliah”. This was the wicked woman who will try to usurp the throne of Judah and become queen.

This was another of Jehoshaphat’s attempts to create unity between Israel and Judah. He arranged a marriage. He joined Ahab’s daughter to his son - and invited the enemy into the camp. *And this Athaliah nearly destroys the house of David.*

Jehoshaphat never learned the lesson - the only one thing more important than *unity* – is **truth**. Never sacrifice an *enduring truth* for a *momentary truce*.

Tragically, Ahab's daughter corrupted his son. Jehoram adopted her idols.

Verse 7 “Yet the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.” God's patience was on display.

“In his days the Edomites revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. So Jehoram went out with his officers, and all his chariots with him. And he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots.” He fought them off, but failed to defeat them.

“Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day.

At that time Libnah revolted against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah **astray.**” In verse 12 Jehoram receives a letter from Elijah the prophet.

Elijah was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel, but here he has a message for the monarch of the southern kingdom. He rebukes Jehoram.

“And 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, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot like the harlotry of the house of Ahab -

And also have killed your brothers, those of your father's household, who were better than yourself, behold, the LORD will strike your people with a serious affliction - your children, your wives, and all your possessions –

And you will become very sick with a disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day.” This was not a Hallmark greeting card. Jehoram's intestines will inflame and protrude.

And what made this letter even more forceful was the time it was penned. Elijah was taken to heaven in Jehoshaphat's reign. Thus, his judgment on Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, was written before he died. It was prophetic.

“Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who were near the Ethiopians. And they came up into Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house, and also his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.” God hated Jehoram's idolatry.

“After all this the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease.

Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain.

And his people made no burning for him, like the burning for his fathers.” He was buried, but there was no memorial bonfire. No one mourned at his death.

“He was 32 years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem 8 years and, to no one's sorrow, departed. However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.” Jehoram dies in *agony*... and in *infamy*.

Notice, he died “to no one's sorrow.” Jehoram was such a crumb when he died no one missed him. His life counted for nada. It was a total waste.

I did a funeral once for a man who drunk himself to death. He rotted out his liver with alcohol. Three people showed up for his funeral – his mom, sis, and nephew – and I'm sure the nephew was forced to attend. He died “to no one's sorrow.” Nobody mourned his passing. No one bother to pay his final respects.

What a warning to us! We should always, “Live in such a way so that when you die people will shed tears – not shout cheers.” I want to live so that I'll be missed.

Chapter 22 “Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place, for the raiders who came with the Arabians into the camp had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned.

Ahaziah was 42 years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri.

He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly.” How sad, when your own mother advises her child to do wickedly!

Athaliah was Jezebel’s girl before she married Jehoram – and she must’ve taken after her mother. She was wicked to the core – *the wicked witch*.

“Therefore (Ahaziah) did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction.”

Ahaziah reigned just one year. He’s destroyed by ungodly counsel. Be careful who you seek for advice. Many a person has been destroyed by wicked counsel.

Remember, Judah is still paying for Jehoshaphat’s compromise. He invited the wicked counsel of the kings of Israel when he yoked his son to an unbeliever.

“He also followed their advice, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel (This is where the names confuse you. Another Jehoram became king of the northern kingdom of Israel) to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. Then he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.”

His going to Joram was God's occasion for Ahaziah's downfall; for when he arrived, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.” Again, this is the danger of being unequally yoked. God wants to judge the kings of Israel - and since the kings of Judah insist on an alliance they end up in the path of God’s wrath.

“And it happened, when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who served Ahaziah, that he killed them. Then he searched for Ahaziah; and they caught him (he was hiding in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu.

When they had killed him, they buried him, "because," they said, "he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart."

So the house of Ahaziah had no one to assume power over the kingdom.”

The southern kingdom of Judah had no successor to Ahaziah... and here’s why... “Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs of the house of Judah.” The evil Athaliah tries to steal the throne. She kills the heirs and calls herself *queen*.

Verse 11, “But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah (he was still an infant), and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered, and put him and his nurse in a 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 did not kill him. And he was hidden with them in the house of God for 6 years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.” But he doesn’t stay hidden forever...