

Sermon: The Letter

Text: 2 Chronicles 21

Introduction:

As we've seen these past several weeks, King Jehoshaphat was a good king over the nation of Judah. He had a heart for God—and aspired to rule in the ways of his Great Great Great Grandfather David. He made significant efforts to rid the land of the worship of idols (for example—the worship of Asherah Poles that people would erect in the back yards and bow down to worship). He sent teams of people around the country to teach the Word of God—and hold people accountable to the law of God. When he found himself in deep trouble (such as being attacked by the armies of three surrounding nations), King Jehoshaphat gathered the entire nation in Jerusalem and prayed what I find to be a very inspiring prayer: “God, I don't know what to do, but my eyes are on you!”

However—despite Jehoshaphat's righteousness, his successors (sadly!) have no interest in the things of God. Jehoshaphat's oldest son, Jehoram, murders his six younger brothers and champions idolatry. You read that right—he murdered all six of his brothers. Awful.

We saw last Sunday that Jehoram was given in marriage to Athaliah the daughter of King Ahab (king of Israel) and Queen Jezebel. This is where everything went sideways. Ahab and Jezebel were downright wicked people. And they raised a godless and wicked daughter.

Jehoram reigned over Judah for 8 years (taking over the kingdom at age 32, and dying at the age of 40). Six years into his reign—Jehoram received a letter from the prophet Elijah. It wasn't a good letter—at least not for Jehoram. The letter held him responsible for his actions. It was the Voice of God—and it was the voice of accountability.

Accountability for our actions isn't something we like to think about.

Examination:

- Read **2 Chronicles 21**
 - Who reigned in Jehoshaphat's place?
 - Who had Jehoram married? How did this marriage change the course of his life?
 - What were her parents' names? What do you know about them?
 - Jehoram is the opposite of his father Jehoshaphat. I think we would all agree that this isn't the first time that a child thinks and behaves completely opposite of their parents. Why do you think this is? What might have led Jehoram for completely turning away from the faith and righteousness of his father?
 - Who were the sons of Jehoshaphat?
 - What had Jehoshaphat given the other sons, besides Jehoram?
 - What did Jehoram do to all of his brothers? Why do you think he did this?
 - How old was Jehoram, when he began to reign?
 - How many years did he reign?
 - Jehoram followed in whose ways?
 - Why did God not destroy Judah for these sins?

- Who revolted from the rule of Judah at this time?
- Jehoram built high places, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit what sin?
- How did Elijah contact Jehoram (keep in mind that Elijah was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel)? Why do you think he used this method to express the Voice of God?
- What was the message God sent him through Elijah?
- What were the charges against Jehoram?
- What can a plague be?
- Do you think there are any modern-day examples of plagues?
- What was the terrible disease that came upon them?
- What spirit did the Lord stir up against Jehoram?
- What happened to Jehoram's sons?
- Which was the only survivor of his sons?
- What happened to Jehoram? How old was he, when he died?

Application:

This isn't a pleasant chapter to read. Some might say that it isn't inspiring either. I disagree. Inspiration comes from many different places. One of those places can certainly be the voice of accountability and possible judgment. We know that God loves us deeply—and that Jesus is our friend. But we also know that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Proverbs 9:10). The TRUTH is—we will all stand before God to give an account of the things we do in this life—whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10) Take some time this week to meditate on this truth. What if the prophet Elijah wrote you a letter this week? What would he say?