

God Blesses Those Who Honor His Word

2 Chron 17:3-6

3 Now the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, 4 but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel. 5 Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance. 6 And his heart took delight in the ways of the Lord; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah. NKJV

We are happy to recognize our graduates this morning. This is an important achievement for them as they continue to mature into adults. Before they know it they will be in the adult world that will challenge all that they have heard within these walls. They will have to decide who will they follow. Will they follow the world's best practices or will they follow the Word of God.

Now I know that that Christianity got a black eye yesterday, May 21, 2011. Because a good number of people were telling others that the world would come to an end, but it didn't. I can assure you that no where in here does it say anything about the very day of Christ's return except that Jesus said no knows the hour, not even the angels in heaven.

But just because one doctor is a quack, does not mean that the rest are. As a matter of fact, what happened yesterday will only help fulfill what Peter said.

2 Peter 3:1-14

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements

will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

But let us get back to the message. The Bible plainly teaches that those who honor God and His Word will be blessed by Him. And Jehoshaphat is a Biblical example of that.

- I. Who was Jehoshaphat?
 - A. He is the fourth king of the divided kingdom of Judah.
 - B. He had a godly father, Asa.
 - C. He was one of the best Kings of Judah.
 - D. He was a godly man who sought to do what God wanted, his story in the Bible is inspiring.
- II. What did he do that brought about God's blessings?
 - A. He strengthened himself against his enemies.
 1. 2 Chron 17:1-2 Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place, and strengthened himself against Israel. 2 And he placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had taken. NKJV
 - B. He destroyed idolatry.
 1. 2 Chron 17:6 And his heart took delight in the ways of the Lord; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah. NKJV
 - C. He taught people the Word of God.
 1. 2 Chron 17:7-9 7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. 8 And with them he sent Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shem-i-ram-oth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah — the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests. 9 So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people. NKJV
 - D. He set up a justice system that feared the Lord.
 1. 2 Chron 19:5-10 5 Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, 6 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. 7 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." 8 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. 9 And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act in the fear of the Lord, faithfully and with a loyal heart: 10 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. NKJV

III. How did God bless him and his kingdom.

A. He gave him security with all the nations around him.

1. 2 Chron 17:10-11,10 And the fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat. 11 Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver as tribute; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred male goats. NKJV

IV. Even though he made mistakes, God protected him.

A. To make an alliance with Israel, he married his son to Ahab and Jezebel's daughter.

1. The danger of this.

a. First it displeased God, for Israel was a nation totally given over to the worship of idols.

b. 2 Chron 19:2-3 2 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. NKJV

c. The woman who he married his son to would later try to kill all the decedents of Jehoshaphat and almost succeeded. She made herself Queen and tried to destroy the kingdom of Judah. Had it not been for some faithful men who saved the youngest son, she would have won.

B. It also allied him with Ahab and brought him into a battle where he would have been killed had not the Lord intervened.

C. Later he once again became involved with Israel when he went to war against Syria. This led to a battle against Jehoshaphat that they could not possibly win.

1. 2 Chron 20:5-12 5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, 6 and said: "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? 7 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? 8 And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9 '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.' 10 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 — 11 here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. 12 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." NKJV

2. But the Lord was again with him.
3. 2 Chron 20:15-18 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. 16 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. 17 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." 18 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. NKJV