

## THE GLORY OF GOD

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Week 12 – How Does This Matter to God?

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In any study of Scripture, I'm suggesting that we first need to ask, "How does this matter to God? Why is what I'm reading in Scripture to Him? How does this glorify Him? How can I glorify Him?" The "ME" comes in when we ask, "God, how can I glorify you?" How does all this revealing and responding matter to God? *A great multitude* came against King Jehoshaphat. Did this occur? Yes, historically it occurred. Do you feel at times as if a great multitude is coming against you? Have you known spiritual warfare? Pray (II Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18). Put on the armor of God (Eph. 6:10-17). Grab the truth of God's word, ask God how you should respond, and ask God what you are to learn.

In the flesh, a great multitude was coming against Jehoshaphat and they were closing in quickly. How did King Jehoshaphat of Judah respond?

II Chronicles focuses on the 20 Kings of Judah (the southern kingdom). Of the 20 Kings, only 8 were righteous: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoash (Joash), Amaziah, Azariah (Uzziah), Jotham, Hezekiah, Josiah. Some of these kings didn't end well, however.

When Jehoshaphat became King, the LORD was with him because he, Jehoshaphat, walked in the former ways of his father, King David. Jehoshaphat did not seek the Baals, the false gods, but sought the God of his father and did not walk according to the ways/acts of the Kingdom of Israel (II Chron. 17:3-4). Jehoshaphat's heart took delight in the way of the LORD and he removed the idols, the wooden images from Judah (II Chron. 17:6).

II Chron. 17:10 - *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. The Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents. The Arabians brought the King flocks, rams, and goats.*

II Chron. 17:12 - *So Jehoshaphat became increasingly powerful....*

II Chron. 18:1 - *Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and by marriage he allied himself with Ahab. Jehoshaphat arranged for his son to marry Athaliah, the daughter of wicked Ahab, and made a military alliance with him. This drew the wrath of God (II Chron. 19:2).*

II Chronicles 20:1-4

*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. <sup>2</sup> 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” (which is En Gedi). <sup>3</sup> And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. <sup>4</sup> So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.*

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“It” happened after “what”? “What” - King Jehoshaphat of Judah aligned himself with wicked King Ahab who was over the Kingdom of Israel. After nearly dying in battle, Jehoshaphat then returned to seeking the Lord. But then “it” happened – enemies were advancing against Judah. Jehoshaphat was in Jerusalem (II Chron. 19:4, 8; II Chron. 20:5). This great multitude was *from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar” (which is En Gedi)*. En Gedi is located west of the Dead Sea, near Masada and the Qumran Caves. It would take about an hour by car today to travel from En Gedi to Jerusalem where Jehoshaphat was positioned. This great multitude was closing in fast!

*<sup>3</sup> And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. <sup>4</sup> So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.* “Feared” – to be terrified (over 300X in OT) to stand in awe of! (3X in OT). What was Jehoshaphat was feeling? Dread or reverence...or both? A great multitude was coming against Jehoshaphat. He must have had a sense of dread, heart-pounding fear. Yet, Jehoshaphat feared the LORD in that he was more awed at the power and majesty of God than at the destructive force of his enemies. The dread that he felt drove him to seek the LORD whom he revered. Seeking the LORD, seeking His face, being in His presence - because HE is MIGHTIER than humans. Seeking the LORD embraces exalting Him – giving Him glory and honor that is due HIM! And, “seeking His face” – means to discover God’s will. In discovering God’s will, what does Scripture tell us? Prov. 1:33 - *But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.* Do we listen to the LORD, or do we talk over Him? Are we consumed with what matters to God? Are we consumed with glorifying Him? Or, are we consumed with us – with our agenda? What’s foremost in our mind and heart?

And this King of Judah set the example for his people. He proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And, his people gathered together, in unity, to ask help from the LORD. And the people came to seek the LORD, following Jehoshaphat’s example. Jehoshaphat called the nation to express their humility and total dependence upon God through a public fast. We do find several instances of fasting with prayer in the OT during times of intense need and helplessness in the face of anticipated calamity.

Neh. 1:4 tells us that Nehemiah, a Jewish man in Persia during the captivity of Judah, engaged in prayer and fasting when he heard of the condition of Jerusalem following the destruction by the Babylonians. The of Jerusalem was broken down and its gates had been burned with fire (Neh. 1:4).

Daniel, while in captivity in Babylon, in confessing the sins of Israel, *set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes* (Dan. 9:3).

David fasted and prayed over his sick child (II Sam. 12:16).

It has been explained that fasting reflects priorities. Fasting speaks to an undivided and intensive devotion to the Lord for a specific time – to enjoy a time of uninterrupted communion with God. BUT, whether fasting or not fasting, we are told...

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Heb. 4:16 - *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Heb. 10:22, 23 - *...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...<sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

Regarding fasting, we might understand fasting as a powerful expression of our TOTAL dependence upon God.

*So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.* The Spirit of God was at work prompting the people of Judah to *respond* to the call from their king.

#### II Chronicles 20:5-12

*<sup>5</sup> Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, <sup>6</sup> 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? <sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, <sup>9</sup> '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.' <sup>10</sup> And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir (Edom) — 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— <sup>11</sup> here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. <sup>12</sup> 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."*

Here in Jehoshaphat's powerful prayer we come face-to-face with God revealing Himself. What we believe about God because of what God has REVEALED about Himself directly impacts our response.

Jehoshaphat remembers... *Are you not God in heaven....* Of course You are, God. You have told us so. We have seen You work on our behalf. Jehoshaphat is proclaiming Who God is! He is indeed God in heaven! Do you, do I have **“Are you not” moments** in our times with God? And in those moments we find Him to be TRULY Whom He says He is. Do we realize the glory of God?

*Do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations* OF COURSE! Do we not have **“Do You not” moments** about God? How can I be fearful, God, when You are completely sovereign – You are in CONTROL of everything! Jehoshaphat recognized the power of God over all the kingdoms of the nations – over the nations that were coming to attack the kingdom of Judah.

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*in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? <sup>7</sup> 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?*

Jehoshaphat called to mind God’s power and might that would squash the enemies coming closer and closer. And, You God, You are the One Who drove out the Canaanites in the Promised Land... the land that You have already given to the descendants of Abraham – YOUR FRIEND FOREVER!!!

Jehoshaphat, in his prayer to God concluded that since God had done great things for His people in the past, surely we are guaranteed that this great God of ours will do marvelous works for His people at their moment of great need.

*And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, <sup>9</sup> ‘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.’* Your people now dwell in this land You have given us and have constructed a dwelling place for You. King Solomon dedicated the sanctuary, the Temple in Jerusalem (II Chron. 7:12-16; II Chron. 6:20-25).

*<sup>10</sup> 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— <sup>11</sup> here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. <sup>12</sup> O our God, will You not judge them?* Jehoshaphat remembered that God did not allow Israel to invade these peoples when they came from Egypt to the Promised Land (Dt. 2, 4, 9, 19). And, now these nations are coming against us? They are intending to throw us out of the land You have given us!?!

*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.* Jehoshaphat is openly confessing that he did not have the answer. Their only answer was to trust in God and look unto Him.

*Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.* The people who gathered stood before the LORD waiting upon Him for direction. AND, God answered....

*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. 15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, 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. The battle was God's battle. GOD would fight for Judah.*

*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*

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*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.* "TOMORROW GO DOWN AGAINST THEM"?? Didn't God tell them they didn't have to fight? But God is telling them to show up!

God knows the route of the attacking armies and He relays this information to Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah. The Ascent of Ziz is a steep ascent in a pass in the Judean wilderness near En-gedi.

*You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves. Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD.* What a significant step of faith there was to stand still and to believe that you would see the salvation of the LORD in the face of a large attacking army. What is our inclination? To do something! To take matters into our own hands. Then – in whom are we relying? In whom do we boast? God told the people of Judah to show up and exercise faith.

*And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed (kā·dad – to bow down) before the LORD, worshipping (sha kha – bowing in humility) the LORD.* Consider: they worshipped before they were delivered. They knew they were going to be delivered; they were confident in their God. They worshipped God and their enemies were not yet dead. Their enemies were very

much alive and marching their way. But, the people of Judah were sure they would be dead.

*19 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. They had worshipped with hearts and bodies humbly bowing prostrate before God. Surrendering to Him. And now the Spirit of God ignited their very beings to stand up and “praise” with voices loud and high. “Praise” – to shine, to make a show of, to flash forth, to be boastful in God... “Loud” voices – with great intensity. “High” – lifting their voices up to God. Kohathites – the descendants of the second son of Levi. (Levi: Kohathites, Gershonites, Merarites – Num. 26:57). The Kohathites cared for the objects in the sanctuary. The Korahites were the descendants of Korah (who was swallowed up by the earth because of his rebellion against God) What exuberance! What confidence was theirs!*

*20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; They professed their faith within their assembly the night before and now they actually walked out to meet the enemy armies.*

*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.” Jehoshaphat recognized that God Himself had given His word to the prophet.*

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*21 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.” Jehoshaphat consulted with his people. This King was sensitive to those he ruled; he was cognizant of their needs. And, instead of appointing warriors, Jehoshaphat appointed singers. Consider: these singers truly stepped out in faith. If God did not intervene, they would be the first ones slaughtered by a violent army. Of course Jehoshaphat consulted with the people about who would be appointed as singers/worshippers. But, from what we’ve read in the text, there were no “if’s” in their thinking. Who would be hearing the singing? How would the singers praise the beauty of holiness? They praised God as being “set-apart.” God is God and not man. God’s holiness is beautiful. It is perfect. God is everything we are not. Mankind falls short of the glory of God! And, the singers*

went out before the army. The singers and worshippers *led* the army into this battle. It was clear that Judah expected a battle, because they brought the army. Yet it was also clear that they expected a supernatural battle because they let the singers and worshippers go before the army. The singers did not sing of their own merits or even the merits of Abraham, Moses, or David. They trusted and rested on the enduring mercy of God!

*22 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. And, as God had promised, GOD won the victory on behalf of Judah. What can we say of Judah participating? They showed up with their faith in God. Regarding God setting *ambushes* against the attacking armies, the word in Hebrew is ambushers/ambushments – those who would lie in wait.*

*23 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. God prompted them to fight amongst themselves so that they defeated one another, and all Judah had to do was to collect the spoil.*

*24 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. No one had escaped.*

It seems that the army of Judah, led by the singing worshippers, never actually engaged the enemy armies..

*25 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. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. They had assembled together to cry out to God for His deliverance; it was appropriate that they also assemble together to thank God and to bless His name,*

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*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. 28 So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. 29 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. 30 Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.*

The victory itself was a warning against the neighboring nations. How so? Is there an underlying principle in Scripture that this battle is teaching? After God declared that He formed/created Israel (Isa. 43:1), He stated that He created the nation for His glory (Isa. 43:7). *This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise* (Isa. 43:21). Isa. 44:23 - *the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.* Isa. 46:13 – God has declared, *And I will place salvation in Zion, for Israel My glory.* Israel's existence is dependent upon God! God's faithfulness is displayed in Israel and in God delivering His promises to this small nation. (More information will be shared on this aspect)

This gave King Jehoshaphat and his kingdom rest all around.

What we've read in this passage did not become a pattern for warfare in Judah. This action on the part of Judah was in direct response to a specific revelation from God. To disobey would have been sin. How God wanted His people to participate in the battle would differ from circumstance to circumstance according to God's revelation.

#### QUESTIONS:

How did this victory matter to God?

What did God reveal?

How did Judah respond?

What does it teach you?

#### SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Read the handout.

Continue journaling re: God's revelation and your response.

Share this passage with someone.

Read Week 9's handout when you receive it.