

An Ordinary Hero 2 Chronicles 17 – 20

An Ordinary Hero Introduction

- The Bible is very realistic about its heroes and villains.
- The human characters are very human – people we can usually identify with.

- King Jehoshaphat is one of those.
- Jehoshaphat goes down as a good king, but one whose legacy was imperfect.

- The Bible presents him as good man who made a few big mistakes that somewhat tarnished his legacy.
- Still, overall, he gets good reviews.

- Two big lessons from the life of Jehoshaphat (I was trying to make it just one, but couldn't decide):
 1. A generally good life can be seriously tarnished by terrible mistakes if we aren't careful.
 2. Even if we've made some terrible mistakes, persistently trying to please the Lord can lead to some serious blessing.

- One thing we don't see in the Bible:
- Jehoshaphat never seems to jump. Sorry. ☹️
- Wikipedia says the phrase "Jumpin' Jehoshaphat!" first appears in an 1866 novel set in Texas. (I had to check.)

An Ordinary Hero Chapter 17

- 17:3-4 He did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father ... not according to the practices of Israel.
- Jehoshaphat's faithfulness in Judah is highlighted by the unfaithfulness of Ahab and Israel at this time.
- Jehoshaphat's rejection of idolatry went against the current of his time.

- 17:6 he took the high places and the Asherim out of Judah.
- Jehoshaphat's father Asa did the same thing in 14:3-5.
- It only takes one generation for a nation to fall away.

- 17:7-9 he sent his officials ... And they taught in Judah, having the Book of the Law of the Lord with them.
- This is one of the best things Jehoshaphat ever did.
- He found teachers to give instruction in God's Word and sent them to all the cities in his kingdom.
 - *The study of the Word would prepare them and inspire them to true worship, and true worship is always the answer to idolatry.*
 - Chuck Smith (1927 – 2013)

- *Here is the secret for a revival, viz.: the instruction of the people in the Bible by the best men of the church. This is worth tons of sermons on civic righteousness and reforms, and no end of so-called evangelistic campaigns and religious “movements,” which have so much of man in them and so little of God.*
 - James M. Gray (1851 – 1935)

An Ordinary Hero Chapter 18

- 18:1 Jehoshaphat ... made a marriage alliance with Ahab.
- This may have been J.’s biggest mistake – one which had lasting consequences.
- 18:2-3 This chapter recounts Jehoshaphat’s alliance with Ahab and Ahab’s death in battle.
- We went over this when we looked at 1 Kings 22.
- Find it online at horizoncentral.net or dckoso.wordpress.com

An Ordinary Hero Chapter 19

- 19:1-3 Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord?
- J. no doubt felt committed because of that marriage alliance.
- He now felt a personal obligation to fight Ahab’s enemies.

- 19:1-3 We may be reminded of what Paul said to the Corinthian church,
- 1 Corinthians 15:33-34 ³³Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” ³⁴Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.
 - *There is a great tendency in the present day to boast in the closeness with which we can approach the world without injury ... The real difficulty lies away back in our want of engagedness with Christ. It is of little use to find fault with the outward, as long as the heart is wayward.*
 - F. B. Meyer (1847 – 1929)

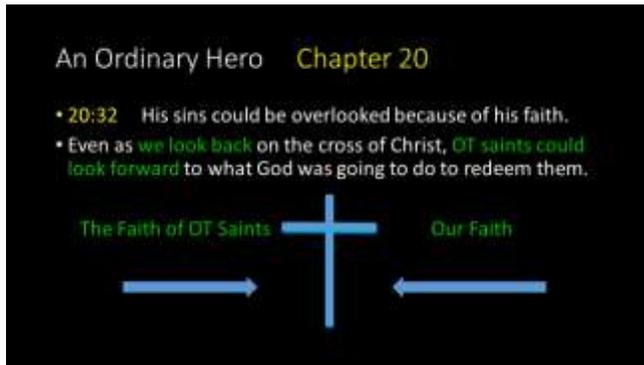
- 19:4-11 J. reminds the judges that they are standing in God’s place and doing God’s work.
- A fair and just legal system is serious business. It was a huge responsibility and J. took it seriously.

An Ordinary Hero Chapter 20

- 20:2 “the sea” would be the Dead Sea in this case.
- 20:3-4 Everything J. does here is perfect.
- 20:5-12 He then leads his people in a humble prayer, praying God’s promises back to him.
 - *I like to plunge my hand into the promises – then I find myself able to grasp with a grip of determination the mighty faithfulness of God!*
 - Charles Spurgeon (1834 – 1892)

 - *When I am overwhelmed and outnumbered by the enemy, when it looks like I am going down in certain defeat, it is great to know that God is fighting for me. I don’t need to strive or panic. I don’t need to turn and run. I just stand in my position of my relationship with Jesus Christ and He will fight for me and He will win.*
 - Chuck Smith (1927 – 2013)

- 20:15 This may be J.'s life verse – key to his whole life story.
- 20:27-30 There is a remarkably happy ending for J. and the Kingdom of Judah.
- 20:31-32 And here is the summary of his life, he “did not turn aside ... doing what was right in the sight of the Lord.”
- By God’s grace, Jehoshaphat gets good reviews.



- 20:33 The high places, however, were not taken away.
- Wait, I thought they were! What about 17:6?
- It only takes one generation for a nation to fall away.
- 20:35-37 Because you have joined with Ahaziah...
- Ahab’s son was almost as a big a jerk as his father.
- There was no blessing to be found associating with him.
 - *May we have grace to-day, in the remembrance of this text, to bless the Lord for ships broken at Ezion-geber ... let us not envy the more successful, nor murmur at our losses as though we were singularly and specially tried. Like Jehoshaphat, we may be precious in the Lord's sight, although our schemes end in disappointment.*
 - Charles Spurgeon (1834 – 1892)

An Ordinary Hero Conclusions

- Jehoshaphat’s Failures:
 - Marriage alliance with Ahab
 - Uniting with Ahab to fight Ahab’s enemies
 - Alliance with Ahaziah son of Ahab.
- Notice the pattern. All of these involve Ahab.
- Jehoshaphat’s Successes:
 - He rejected idolatry and sought the Lord.
 - He sent out teachers to teach the Book of the Law.
 - He reminded judges to judge righteously.
 - He prayed God’s promises.
 - He encouraged trust in and the worship of the Lord.
- Notice the pattern. All of these express his deep faith in the God of Israel.

- To highlight one failure: Marriage Alliance with Ahab
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 ¹⁴Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?
¹⁵What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God...
- In Jehoshaphat's case this unequal yoking exhibited itself in three different ways:
 - In the marriage of his son.
 - In battle, fighting alongside Ahab.
 - In business, building ships to engage in trade.
- We will be wise to avoid similar circumstances:
 - In marriage – perhaps the most obvious.
 - In battle – or taking up causes that are popular, but not dear to the heart of God.
 - In business – where partnerships and alliances can lead us into compromising situations.
- To highlight two successes:
 - He sent out teachers to teach the Book of the Law.
 - He prayed God's promises.
- To quote our friend, Dr. Nupanga Weanzana,
 - *Jesus' final command to his disciples was not only that they should 'make disciples of all nations', but also that they should be involved in 'teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' (Matt 28:20). The ... church preaches, but too often does not teach.*
 - *There is much talk of revival and sometimes the impression is given that revival comes suddenly like a roll of thunder. But the Bible, and the example of Jehoshaphat's teachers who took with them the Book of the Law of the Lord (17:9), show that teaching is the best way to bring revival to a nation.*
- Also, God's promises are found in God's Word, the Bible.
- We will not be able to pray God's promises as J. did if we are unfamiliar with them from Scripture.
- How will we learn them?
- Through diligent study of God's Word.
- Two big lessons from the life of Jehoshaphat:
 1. A generally good life can be seriously tarnished by terrible mistakes if we aren't careful.
 2. Even if we've made some terrible mistakes, persistently trying to please the Lord can lead to some serious blessing.
- Faithfulness to the Lord and faithfulness to his Word are pretty much the same thing.