

John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

### **The Processes of Praise**

Scripture focus: 2 Chronicles 20

The basis of the text is the sacrifice of praise; in concord with the power of perpetual praise.

Introduction: Jehoshaphat- King of Judah (tribe whose name meant praise the Lord). Genesis 29:35. God is with him from a consequence of walking in the ways of David in his early years. He refused to consult the followers of Baal, thus the Lord established the kingdom under his control. He sent teachers throughout the kingdom to teach the Book of the Law. Such was the blessing of God upon his reign that neighboring kingdoms would not attack but instead brought tribute to Judah and Jehoshaphat. At the peak of his greatness with wealth and honor among nations, Jehoshaphat allied himself with wicked King Ahab by marriage (2 Chron. 18:1-3). That mistaken alliance subjected him to the conditions which precipitated the crisis of our text. Ahab was King of Israel. He immediately asked Jehoshaphat to join him in attacking Ramoth Gilead. All the prophets of Israel and the priests of Baal agreed that the battle should be fought. They prophesied total victory (2 Chron. 18:11). Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, joined in with their ill-fated prophecies. Only the faithful prophet, Micaiah, predicted that the battle would go against them. His punishment for telling the truth was a prison cell receiving just bread and water for provisions.

Ahab never returned from the battle; he died from an arrow of an unidentified bowman. Jehoshaphat was spared because he cried out to the Lord in the midst of the battle and God spared him (2 Chron. 18:31). Upon returning to his palace, Jehoshaphat was informed by Jehu that he had made a mistake in helping the wicked and in loving those that hate God. Reprimand and consolation was given to him by the prophet. (2 Chron. 19:1-3). After a lesson learned Jehoshaphat turned to God in devoted action. He appointed judges in the land and commanded them to administer justice in the name of the Lord (2 Chron. 19:7). In Jerusalem, he appointed priests and ordered them to administer the Law of the Lord in settling all disputes. He reminded them that if they sinned against the Lord, his wrath would come upon them. His recovery from backsliding seemed complete.

*Prayer of perspective:* 2 Chron. 20:6-9

- Remembrance of God's exalted position.
- Recitation of God's efficient performance in the past.
- Reliance upon God's enabling power.

## Perfected Worship Characteristics

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November 14, 2018

*Step through the crisis:* 2 Chron. 20:10-11

Began at the point of the problem – No rationalizations or compensating. He faced the reality of the issue. Spare no detail for sake of feelings.

*Cease all trust in the flesh:* 2 Chron. 20:12

The flesh prevents us from looking to God as our sole source. Confession of human impotence and infirmity. Some will tell you never admit weakness; this is insanity. The child who assumes this philosophy will never have a meaningful relationship with parents, and the believer who embraces this approach will never have a meaningful relationship with God (2 Corinthians 12:9). Accepted praise will bring a death blow to the flesh. It is a denial of self-trust, pride, and independence. The one who praises emphasis should rest on “We have no power...we do not know what to do!”

*Continue before God:* 2 Chron. 20:13

Waiting is always a necessary part of the process which brings us through to victory. Waiting is a part of the mood of praise. While you wait, you are praising...if you are standing before God in a time of meditation, time of investigation, time of cleansing, and a time of consecration. We are neither to light our own fire (1 Chron. 21:24-26; 2 Chron. 7:1) nor to manipulate the effects of our own causes.

*Confess the truth of God:* 2 Chron.20:20b

2 Chron. 20:15b...They heard from God; “Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.” God also revealed exactly where the enemy would be as they advanced. Jehoshaphat’s confession, “Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.” Full agreement was had between the people and leadership upon what God said. Their praises were as a loud “Amen” to the words of God. To hear the word of God is one matter, to heed it and do it is quite another (James 1:22). Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Anything God has said we may boldly receive and repeat. Their rejoicing was a sign of confession that the word of God was surely true.

*A commitment to obey:* 2 Chron. 20:17b

“...O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.” This is what they did. Jehoshaphat consulted the people and appointed men to sing to the Lord on the journey. They were assigned a one line

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November 14, 2018

chorus to sing, "Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever." (Psalm 136). A glorious significant fact takes place when the men began to sing and praise the Lord, "... the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." (2 Chron 20:22b) Jehoshaphat and the people had not reached the battlefront, but their praises had released God to act. The result was that the men from Ammon and Moab turned on the men from Mount Seir and slaughtered them. Then without explanation the Ammonites and the Moabites turned upon each other until all the combined armies were dead.

*They collected the riches from the crisis: 2 Chron 20:25*

This is the prize of praise. Praise does more than enable us to survive; it enables us to thrive. It took three days to collect all the plunder and valuables from the victory of the battle. The fourth day, they gathered in the valley of Berachah ("Blessing Valley") where they praised the Lord.

"So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about." (2 Chron. 20:30). Praise was the preface to the process; praise pervaded the process; and praise formed the conclusion to the process.