

## 2 Chronicles 21:1-6

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[ 0 : 00 ]     2 Chronicles chapter 21. That's a very rich text. Really, we could look at the entirety of that chapter, and there's just so much in there. But I'm going to restrain myself just a little bit.

So I'm going to keep us, restrict us to the first six verses, which really, if I had to just be honest with you, was the first point of the sermon I had originally laid out.

So we're going to break it down and look at the first point. And so we're looking at the first six verses. Hopefully dig a little deeper into that. And the reason we'll do so is because it is business meeting tonight, and I want to also make sure that we have time to pray and go over our prayer list.

So let's open up with a word of prayer before we get right into our text with one another. And let's go before the Lord. Father, we thank you so much. So thankful that we have the opportunity to gather here with you.

Thankful for the grand privilege it is of fellowshiping with brothers and sisters in midweek. And we pray, Lord, that you would lead and guide us this evening as we open up the word of God.

[ 1 : 00 ]     We ask that you would give us clarity and certainty in the truthfulness of it. Lord, and as we come to an understanding of what your word declares, that it would conform us and mold us to become more like you.

Our aim is not to gain information, but rather our aim is to progress in sanctification and holiness for the glory of the King of Kings.

We desire to know you in a greater way. We desire to follow you in greater obedience. And we desire to be used by you in greater works. May you be magnified through all that takes place with our children, our youth, and even here as we open up the word of God with one another.

And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. 2 Chronicles 21. We will restrict ourselves to the first six verses. I will tell you that this 21st chapter really elaborates on an account that is recorded for us in the book of 2 Kings, and that is the reign of Jehoram.

And really, the account in 2 Kings, I believe it's somewhere around the 8th chapter, is very brief. So much of our background information that we find of this king, we gather from this chapter.

[ 2 : 20 ]     So, it again is written to the people who came out of the Babylonian captivity. So, it's post-Babylonian captivity. It is after the disciplinarian act of God because of the unfaithfulness of his people.

The focus of 1 and 2 Chronicles, I know we keep repeating this, but we want to make sure that we have it in context, is not upon the divided kingdom, but rather it primarily focuses on the southern kingdom of Judah.

Not so much so to the neglect of the northern kingdom. Really, it does it really for the establishment of the people of Israel. Because over and over again, the kingdom of Judah is referred to as the people of Israel, as one.

Reasoning is because coming out of Babylonian captivity, they were trying to identify themselves as who they were as the people of God. And God didn't see a divided nation. God saw a united people, a people for his glory, a people for his proclamation to the world.

And rather than focusing on that which divided them, the author, the chronicler as we refer to him, is focusing on that which unites them. And that would be primarily the Davidic lineage of King David.

[ 3 : 30 ] So, the king that would reign above them all. And the worship of Yahweh in line with the word of God in the temple. And the practice of the Levites. So, those are the three things that really are the focus of the chronicler.

The temple, the priest, and the king. That's coming from the lineage of David. And we know that the king that is according to the lineage of David would be a king that would set upon the throne of all of Israel.

And eventually be the one who reigns over all the world. We see this over and over again. So, not to the neglect of what is going on to the northern kingdom. But really, just to show us God's preservation of his covenant.

Now, I say all that because this 21st chapter really elaborates that. We won't get into it tonight. But it really just highlights God's faithfulness to his word.

God's goodness towards his promises. But until we really get to that part, the good part of it, we need to see kind of the bad part. So, I want you to see this evening in the first six verses the destructive influence of wickedness.

[ 4 : 34 ] The destructive influence of wickedness. The word of God says, It says, Now, there's much good that follows this.

But I want you to see there's some bad stuff there. It really focuses on man. But there's so much good as we see the faithfulness of God. But I want you to see this evening the destructive influence of wickedness.

Really, the influence that it continues on. In this, we will begin to see the dependability of the word of God. We'll see how God delivers a warning. And how we see the display of his wrath.

But this evening, we're just focusing on the destructive influence of wickedness. This comes on the hills of the reign of King Jehoshaphat.

Now, we've been reading of Jehoshaphat since 2 Chronicles chapter 18. Actually, 17. And we've seen some wonderful things, which he did. We make no mistake about it. This king is the king that repairs and restores the temple.

[ 6 : 22 ] He restocks and resupplies it. He's used mildly of the Lord God to renew the worship and dedication of the people. He makes a couple of mistakes. We'll get to that in just a moment. But he also is one who sends teachers and instructors of the law and overseers from the king's court to make sure that the people are hearing the word.

So he is credited as being one of those who instructs the people in the things of the word of God. And he calls the people back to righteous judgments, to walking as they should.

And his life ends. And really, in these first six verses, the focus is on the transition between the two kingdoms. But what you need to understand, and we get at this a little bit in context, is that actually he was co-regent with his son for the last two years of his life.

So Jehoshaphat made his son Jehoram king two years before he died. So of his eight years of reigning, two of them he reigned alongside of his father as co-regent. Jehoshaphat knew his days were coming to an end.

He died, and then he reigned six more years independently. Now, by the time we get to the end of the 21st chapter, we will find that Jehoram dies to no one's regret. What a sad testimony.

[ 7 : 33 ] That he dies and is buried, not with the kings, but he dies to no one's regret. He only reigned eight years, and they're ready to see him go. So, in contrast to that, it's Jehoshaphat's reign in which they make this great fire, they make this great scene, they give this great honor at his death.

And really, how you handle the body of a dead person in Jewish culture really is of utmost importance. And we see that even in the book of Deuteronomy, how you shouldn't leave a person out overnight, and you ought to be able to bury them.

This is one of the reasonings for Christ being taken off the cross and laid into the tomb so early. But we see this reality here that Jehoshaphat did things right, but there's something that endures beyond his life.

And that's kind of what we want to focus on this evening. That destructive influence of wickedness that was permitted because of Jehoshaphat's choice.

For all the right that he did. The first thing I want you to notice is that the influence of wickedness extends beyond our lives. It extends beyond our lives.

[ 8 : 48 ] The chronicler wants us to understand. Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram, his son, became king in his place. He is dead, right?

He's not there anymore. His reign has ended. This is not during the time of his co-reign with his son. This is after the fact that Jehoshaphat passes on.

That he is dead and he's buried and he's laid in the ground. He's there with his fathers in the city of David, which would be Zion, not Bethlehem. So he is there in the old part of Jerusalem.

He is given an honorable burial. He is lamented over and mourned over. He is esteemed in his departure because God used him in a powerful way. But yet there's something more than just the testimony of the good, which he did, that extends beyond the realm of his life.

Because we know that his son Jehoram becomes king. And then we see the wickedness in which he does. But there's this one little caveat that tells us why he did that. Why he did these things.

[ 9 : 51 ] And it's found there at the end of that. It's found in that chapter in verse 6 there. It says he walked in the ways of the king of Israel. Now that's really speaking of the northern kingdom. Why did he walk in the ways of the kings of Israel?

Just as the house of Ahab did. Now we don't need anyone to tell us about Ahab. Ahab is the most wicked king that ever reigned. One of the most wicked kings that reigned over the people of God. But we know that by this time, by the time that Jehoram is reigning in Israel, Ahab is dead.

He's already, you know, there's already been that warrior who drew his bow at random and shot at random. And it went through the link in the armor of Ahab and he died in his chariot. And so Ahab's son is reigning during this time.

But what we find is that some years later now, the son of Jehoshaphat is reigning. And we see that he does this for Ahab's daughter was his wife.

That is, the reason he did the things he did. Now we're not trying to excuse Jehoram's actions. But the question begs itself, how does the offspring of one who did so much good and so righteous go so wrong?

[ 11 : 09 ] Especially when he's given the privilege of reigning for two years with his dad. And the answer to that is found in 2 Chronicles chapter 18.

And I think when we went through there, I said pay attention to this because this affects things moving forward. And in 2 Chronicles chapter 18, verse 1, it tells us that Jehoshaphat is reigning, that he's wealthy, that his kingdom is expanding, that he's established.

But then it says, but he united himself with the house of Ahab by way of marriage. Jehoshaphat made a decision to unite his house with Ahab's house by marrying his son to Ahab's daughter.

Now, surely there were immediate consequences to that decision. And the immediate consequences were some days after he went to go see Ahab. And Ahab said, won't you go to battle with me?

And they went to battle together. And, you know, Ahab had this prophet who said, don't go, you're going to die. You know, the Lord's going to kill you in battle. So Ahab, a great schemer that he is, said, I tell you what, Jehoshaphat, you dress in your royal attire.

[ 12 : 20 ] And I'll dress in my common clothes. So Jehoshaphat went to the battle dressed like a king, was pursued by the warriors. And it tells us, but God spared him. So the immediate consequences is he almost lost his life in a battle he shouldn't have been in.

And then he was chastised by the messenger of the Lord, the prophet who came to him, declaring the word of God. And we find Jehoshaphat repenting. And it is then, after that repentance, that he begins to send the teachers and instructors around Judah, instructing people to thank the Lord.

So we think, wow, okay, he escaped any lasting consequences for this. You know, I mean, God disciplined him. He repented. He moved on. Praise be to God. But when we get to the 21st chapter, what we do is we find his son doing horrible things.

And he's doing them because he's married to Ahab's daughter. Now that's not to excuse Jehoram. But the question begs itself.

It was Jehoshaphat who aligned the two families. Friend, make no mistake about it. The introduction or the allowance of wickedness will often extend beyond our lives.

[ 13 : 43 ] It is not that God is disciplining the sons for the sins of the father. Jehoram dies as a result of his own sin. God holds him accountable for these choices.

I mean, he dies because his intestines come out. After two years of miserable living, his intestines spill out and he dies a horrible death, it tells us, to no one's regret. He is held accountable for his actions.

Yet, the one who began those actions was Jehoshaphat who united the two families.

Careful how we walk. Because the destructive influence of wickedness, though we may think we moved beyond it because of the immediate consequences of that sin, and we believe that it is behind us, it is a destructive influence that if allowed to remain unchecked and unaccounted for, will extend beyond our lives.

Secondly, it endangers those we love. Jehoram wasn't the only son of Jehoshaphat. He just happened to be the oldest son of Jehoshaphat.

[ 14 : 54 ] And it tells us in our text that when he died, Jehoshaphat blessed his children. It names his children. He had other sons. Jehoram had brothers. And it tells us that Jehoshaphat evidently cared for these sons, and he loved them because it tells us that their father gave them many gifts of silver and gold and precious things with fortified cities.

So he made a choice because he was rich. Remember chapter 18, verse 1. He was rich. He was well-established, and his kingdom was secure. By the time he dies, the nation of Judah's kingdom is very secure.

God has put the fear of the Lord upon the nations around them. There's no one challenging them. So Jehoshaphat is leaving behind a very, very secure kingdom. And in that security, he chooses to bless his children.

He blesses his sons. But he does the right thing. He made Jehoram king. He gave him the kingdom for he was the oldest one. He was the firstborn. He did what was acceptable to do.

But he didn't forget nor neglect the other children because evidently he was a father who cared about his children, and he blessed them. Now, they were not a threat to Jehoram because, think about it, Jehoram was not made king when Jehoshaphat died.

[16:02] He was made king for the last two years of his life, much like when David made Solomon king at the end of his life while David was still alive. So if there were going to be any quarrels or any conflicts, it would have taken place at that time.

So while Dad is still alive, he makes the oldest son king. He blesses the other ones, and he leaves everyone pretty secure. They were not a threat to Jehoram. As a matter of fact, I believe they probably would have brought greater security to him.

When we get into the text, we'll see why I think that in just a little bit. But we won't see it this evening because these were men who were given fortified cities. And fortified cities are always of great benefit to small kingdoms.

And there are princes and brothers of the king now who are living and residing in these fortified cities throughout the kingdom, probably bringing greater security to the nation.

But yet, because of the influence of Ahab's daughter on Jehoram's life, he kills his brothers. As soon as he gets to the kingdom and establishes himself, that is, after his dad dies, he kills his brothers and some of the leaders in Israel.

[17:14] Why? It's because one of the destructive aspects of wickedness is it endangers those we love.

It does great detriment and harm to those we care about. Jehoshaphat did not neglect his children, but yet even the security and the blessings he gave them could not keep them from the influence of the wickedness which he permitted prior to his blessing of them.

So you're saying this is Jehoshaphat's fault? No, I'm not saying that. Jehoram is the one who is held accountable for this, but we cannot neglect the reality that it came into being because of what Jehoshaphat did in the 18th chapter.

He allowed wickedness to have an influence in his life. So how do we answer this? What exactly is going on? And that leads us to the third and final thing.

And not only does it extend beyond our lives, not only is it in danger of those we love, here's a third reason why wickedness has such a destructive influence. It is employed by the enemy for his purposes.

[18:27] The wickedness we allow to exist in our lives is often employed by the enemy for his purposes. And by enemy, I do not mean flesh and blood.

Notice that it was no external enemy that is really bringing this destruction upon the reign of Jehoram. We don't read.

We'll read in just a little bit that God raises up some outside forces, but the destruction has already happened before they are raised up to be disciplinarians in the hand of God.

The nation, the northern kingdom of Israel is not attacking them as before. There are no great million man armies from Ethiopia coming the way Jehoshaphat had to face. There are no magnificent number of chariots coming up to him the way the people of God had faced.

Nothing is happening. And as a matter of fact, the destruction takes place internally. Why? Because wickedness brought in an opportunity for the enemy. And by the enemy, we mean namely Satan himself.

[ 19 : 31 ] Something magnificent happened and not magnificent in a good way. Magnificent in its magnitude happened in chapter 18 when Jehoshaphat made a choice to align his family with the family of Ahab and therefore married his son to Ahab's daughter.

And it tells us in 2 Kings, one of the passing things it tells us is that it was because King Omri's influence. Now Omri was not the king of the northern kingdom.

Omri was the father-in-law of Ahab outside of the people of God. That's Jezebel's dad. And what this choice of Jehoshaphat did was give the enemy an opportunity to try to fulfill his purpose.

I'll give you a little bit of what that purpose is. Jehoram kills every one of his brothers which are all descendants of David.

Therefore aligning it where he is the only rightful heir of the Davidic lineage. One of the judgments we'll get to in just a little bit in this chapter and I'll kind of give you a little precursor to it that is brought against Jehoram is that every one of his sons except the youngest one also dies.

[ 20 : 56 ] And then when that youngest one becomes king when he dies his mother, Ahab's daughter takes the throne and kills every one of his brothers and his children except for the one that's hid by his sister inside the temple.

So what is the enemy trying to do? The enemy is trying to wipe out the Davidic lineage. If you trace the war that's going on in scripture the battle that's not against flesh and blood but against the powers and principalities of the air and the spiritual forces of darkness the true battle that is raging with every further revelation of God to the proto-evangelium the proto-evangelium would be the first declaration of the good news.

That's in Genesis 3, right? For the seed of a woman will crush the head of Satan and Satan will bruise his heel. For the seed of a woman will crush the head of the serpent and the serpent will bruise his heel. That's a proto-evangelium.

There's good news. Man has fallen. Man took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and because they took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and they did their eat of they deserve to die. They introduced death by their willing choice into the lineage of mankind.

And the seed of man would inherit that death curse that is upon them. They would inherit the sin nature and they would live in sin. But the good news is that God would bring the seed of a woman that would crush the head of the serpent.

[ 22 : 24 ] The serpent will bruise his heel. He'll be hurt but the seed of the woman will crush the head. Now the battle has begun because God has an answer to the problem. He always has had an answer because he is the lamb slain before the foundation of the world, right?

And when the battle began then Satan began to fight against that because the news is that he will be crushed. So in order not to be crushed he tried to let the seed of man kill themselves.

Cain slew Abel. But then there was righteous Seth that was born. And so the lineage continues on through the lineage of Seth.

But there was one in the days of the Nephilim who was Noah. And God preserved that seed through Noah. And the destruction of the flood was to wipe out all of that.

And Jehoshaphat made a choice that allowed the enemy a way in and the enemy had the opportunity to wreak havoc in the family of David.

But yet friend if we're not careful when we allow wickedness into our life really what we're doing is we're given the enemy an opportunity to use it for his purposes.

[ 26 : 06 ] We've permitted the enemy to come in. Jesus will say in Mark chapter 3 though strong man has his way until a stronger man comes in and binds him.

He'll try to use the temptation in the wilderness and yet Jesus will go through unscathed. He tries to use the plotting and scheming of Judas Iscariot and yet that is still a part of God's plan. We can get caught up in the unfaithfulness of man but there are times when we need to look at the faithfulness of God but we ought to be careful how we walk because of the destructive influence of wickedness that we find in 2 Chronicles 21 verses 1-6.

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