

Friday, July 26

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2 Chronicles 17:1 - 18:34

17 **1** Then Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, became the next king. He strengthened Judah to stand against any attack from Israel. **2** He stationed troops in all the fortified towns of Judah, and he assigned additional garrisons to the land of Judah and to the towns of Ephraim that his father, Asa, had captured. **3** The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father's early years and did not worship the images of Baal. **4** He sought his father's God and obeyed his commands instead of following the evil practices of the kingdom of Israel. **5** So the LORD established Jehoshaphat's control over the kingdom of Judah. All the people of Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat, so he became very wealthy and highly esteemed. **6** He was deeply committed to the ways of the LORD. He removed the pagan shrines and Asherah poles from Judah. **7** In the third year of his reign Jehoshaphat sent his officials to teach in all the towns of Judah. These officials included Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah. **8** He sent Levites along with them, including Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah. He also sent out the priests Elishama and Jehoram. **9** They took copies of the Book of the Law of the LORD and traveled around through all the towns of Judah, teaching the people. **10** Then the fear of the LORD fell over all the surrounding kingdoms so that none of them wanted to declare war on Jehoshaphat. **11** Some of the Philistines brought him gifts and silver as tribute, and the Arabs brought 7,700 rams and 7,700 male goats. **12** So Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful and built fortresses and storage cities throughout Judah. **13** He stored numerous supplies in Judah's towns and stationed an army of seasoned troops at Jerusalem. **14** His army was enrolled according to ancestral clans. From Judah there were 300,000 troops organized in units of 1,000, under the command of Adnah. **15** Next in command was Jehohanan, who commanded 280,000 troops. **16** Next was Amasiah son of Zicri, who volunteered for the LORD's service, with 200,000 troops under his command. **17** From Benjamin there were 200,000 troops equipped with bows and shields. They were under the command of Eliada, a veteran soldier. **18** Next in command was Jehozabad, who commanded 180,000 armed men. **19** These were the troops stationed in Jerusalem to serve the king, besides those Jehoshaphat stationed in the fortified towns throughout Judah.

18 **1** Jehoshaphat enjoyed great riches and high esteem, and he made an alliance with Ahab of Israel by having his son marry Ahab's daughter. **2** A few years later he went to Samaria to visit Ahab, who prepared a great banquet for him and his officials. They butchered great numbers of sheep, goats, and cattle for the feast. Then Ahab enticed Jehoshaphat to join forces with him to recover Ramoth-gilead. **3** "Will you go with me to Ramoth-gilead?" King Ahab of Israel asked King Jehoshaphat of Judah. Jehoshaphat replied, "Why, of course! You and I are as one, and my troops are your troops. We will certainly join you in battle." **4** Then Jehoshaphat added, "But first let's find out what the LORD says." **5** So the king of Israel summoned the prophets, 400 of them, and asked them, "Should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should I hold back?" They all replied, "Yes, go right ahead! God will give the king victory." **6** But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not also a prophet of the LORD here? We should ask him the same question." **7** The king of Israel replied to Jehoshaphat, "There is one more man who could consult the LORD for us, but I hate him. He never prophesies anything but trouble for me! His name is Micaiah son of Imlah." Jehoshaphat replied, "That's not the way a king should talk! Let's hear what he has to say." **8** So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Quick! Bring Micaiah son of Imlah." **9** King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, dressed in their royal robes, were sitting on thrones at the threshing floor near the gate of Samaria. All of Ahab's prophets were prophesying there in front of them. **10** One of them, Zedekiah son of Kenaanah, made some iron horns and proclaimed, "This is what the LORD says: With these horns you will gore the Arameans to death!" **11** All the other prophets agreed. "Yes," they said, "go up to Ramoth-gilead and be victorious, for the LORD will give the king victory!" **12** Meanwhile, the messenger who went to get Micaiah said to him, "Look, all the prophets are promising victory for the king. Be sure that you agree with them and promise success." **13** But Micaiah replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, I will say only what my God says." **14** When Micaiah arrived before the king, Ahab asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should I hold back?" Micaiah replied sarcastically, "Yes, go up and be victorious, for you will have victory over them!" **15** But the king replied sharply, "How many times must I demand that you speak only the truth to me when you speak for the LORD?" **16** Then Micaiah told him, "In a vision I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD said, 'Their master has been killed. Send them home in peace.'" **17** "Didn't I tell you?" the king of Israel exclaimed to Jehoshaphat. "He never prophesies anything but trouble for me." **18** Then Micaiah continued, "Listen to what the LORD says! I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the armies of heaven around him, on his right and on his left. **19** And the LORD said, 'Who can entice King Ahab of Israel to go into battle against Ramoth-gilead so he can be killed?' 'There were many suggestions, **20** and finally a spirit approached the LORD and said, 'I can do it!' 'How will you do this?' the LORD asked. **21** "And the spirit replied, 'I will go out and inspire all of

Ahab's prophets to speak lies.' "'You will succeed,' said the LORD . 'Go ahead and do it.' **22** "So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of your prophets. For the LORD has pronounced your doom." **23** Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah walked up to Micaiah and slapped him across the face. "Since when did the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you?" he demanded. **24** And Micaiah replied, "You will find out soon enough when you are trying to hide in some secret room!" **25** "Arrest him!" the king of Israel ordered. "Take him back to Amon, the governor of the city, and to my son Joash. **26** Give them this order from the king: 'Put this man in prison, and feed him nothing but bread and water until I return safely from the battle!'" **27** But Micaiah replied, "If you return safely, it will mean that the LORD has not spoken through me!" Then he added to those standing around, "Everyone mark my words!" **28** So King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah led their armies against Ramoth-gilead. **29** The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "As we go into battle, I will disguise myself so no one will recognize me, but you wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle. **30** Meanwhile, the king of Aram had issued these orders to his chariot commanders: "Attack only the king of Israel! Don't bother with anyone else." **31** So when the Aramean chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat in his royal robes, they went after him. "There is the king of Israel!" they shouted. But Jehoshaphat called out, and the LORD saved him. God helped him by turning the attackers away from him. **32** As soon as the chariot commanders realized he was not the king of Israel, they stopped chasing him. **33** An Aramean soldier, however, randomly shot an arrow at the Israelite troops and hit the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. "Turn the horses and get me out of here!" Ahab groaned to the driver of the chariot. "I'm badly wounded!" **34** The battle raged all that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans. In the evening, just as the sun was setting, he died.

Romans 9:25 - 10:13

9 25 Concerning the Gentiles, God says in the prophecy of Hosea, "Those who were not my people, I will now call my people. And I will love those whom I did not love before." **26** And, "Then, at the place where they were told, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'" **27** And concerning Israel, Isaiah the prophet cried out, "Though the people of Israel are as numerous as the sand of the seashore, only a remnant will be saved. **28** For the LORD will carry out his sentence upon the earth quickly and with finality." **29** And Isaiah said the same thing in another place: "If the LORD of Heaven's Armies had not spared a few of our children, we would have been wiped out like Sodom, destroyed like Gomorrah." **30** What does all this mean? Even though the Gentiles were not trying to follow

God's standards, they were made right with God. And it was by faith that this took place. **31** But the people of Israel, who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded. **32** Why not? Because they were trying to get right with God by keeping the law instead of by trusting in him. They stumbled over the great rock in their path. **33** God warned them of this in the Scriptures when he said, "I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that makes people stumble, a rock that makes them fall. But anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."

10 1 Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. **2** I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. **3** For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. **4** For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God. **5** For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. **6** But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (to bring Christ down to earth). **7** And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead?' (to bring Christ back to life again)." **8** In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart." And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: **9** If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. **11** As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." **12** Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. **13** For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."

Psalm 20:1 - 9

20 1 In times of trouble, may the LORD answer your cry. May the name of the God of Jacob keep you safe from all harm. **2** May he send you help from his sanctuary and strengthen you from Jerusalem. **3** May he remember all your gifts and look favorably on your burnt offerings. Interlude **4** May he grant your heart's desires and make all your plans succeed. **5** May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory and raise a victory banner in the name of our God. May the LORD answer all your prayers. **6** Now I know that the LORD rescues his anointed king. He will answer him from his holy heaven and rescue him by his great power. **7** Some nations boast of

their chariots and horses, but we boast in the name of the LORD our God. **8** Those nations will fall down and collapse, but we will rise up and stand firm. **9** Give victory to our king, O LORD ! Answer our cry for help.

Proverbs 20:2 - 3

20 2 The king's fury is like a lion's roar; to rouse his anger is to risk your life. **3** Avoiding a fight is a mark of honor; only fools insist on quarreling.