

2 Chronicles 19 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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SECOND CHRONICLES					
The Kingdom of Israel					
From Splendor to Disaster					
Splendor			Disaster		
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36		
Kingdom United			Kingdom Divided 2Chr 10:1-19	Rulers of the Southern Kingdom of Judah After the Split	The Exile of Judah 2Chr 36:17-23
Inaugural 2Chr 1:1-17	Solomon's Temple 2Chr 2:1-7:22	Solomon's Glory 2Chr 8:1-9:31			
Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple		Temple Destroyed
~40 Years			~393 Years		

Click chart to enlarge
 Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
 Click Chart from [Charles Swindoll](#)

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES										
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586	
1 Samuel		2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25		
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36			

Legend: B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

SEE ALSO:

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE OFFERED IN AN "AS IS" FORMAT - IF I HAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE, THEY WILL BE UPDATED.

CLICK [2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES

2 Chronicles 19:1 Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned in safety to his house in Jerusalem.

- in peace (KJV): 2Ch 18:31,32
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

2Ch 19:1-11 is unique to Chronicles

Raymond Dillard: These verses represent the key to the Chronicler's use of the Micaiah narrative; the story provided him with a further parallel between Asa and Jehoshaphat and the opportunity to underscore the evil of foreign alliances and the failure to trust Yahweh. (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned in safety to his house in Jerusalem- Despite his foolish actions, God protected him.

Ron Daniel- Jehoshaphat had stumbled and fallen. And yet God was merciful. He allowed the king to return in safety to his house in Jerusalem.

Matthew Henry Notes: 2 Chr 19

We have here a further account of the good reign of Jehoshaphat,

- I. His return in peace to Jerusalem (v. 1).
- II. The reproof given him for his league with Ahab, and his acting in conjunction with him (v. 2, 3).
- III. The great care he took thereupon to reform his kingdom (v. 4).
- IV. The instructions he gave to his judges, both those in the country towns that kept the inferior courts (v. 5-7), and those in Jerusalem that sat in the supreme judicature of the kingdom (v. 8-11).

Verses: 1-4

Here is, I. The great favour God showed to Jehoshaphat,

1. In bringing him back in safety from his dangerous expedition with Ahab, which had like to have cost him dearly (v. 1): He returned to his house in peace. Notice is taken of this to intimate,

(1.) That he fared better than he had expected. He had been in imminent peril, and yet came home in peace. Whenever we return in peace to our houses we ought to acknowledge God's providence in preserving our going out and our coming in. But, if we have been kept through more than ordinary dangers, we are in a special manner bound to be thankful. There was but a step perhaps between us and death, and yet we are alive.

(2.) That he fared better than he deserved. He was out of the way of his duty, had been out upon an expedition which he could not well account for to God and his conscience, and yet he returned in peace; for God is not extreme to mark what we do amiss, nor does he withdraw his protection every time we forfeit it.

(3.) That he fared better than Ahab king of Israel did, who was brought home slain. Though Jehoshaphat had said to Ahab, I am as thou art, God distinguished him; for he knows and owns the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish. Distinguishing mercies are very obliging. here were two kings in the field together, one taken and the other left, one brought home in blood, the other in peace.

2. In sending him a reproof for his affinity with Ahab. It is a great mercy to be made sensible of our faults, and to be told in time wherein we have erred, that we may repent and amend the error before it be too late. The prophet by whom the reproof is sent is Jehu the son of Hanani. The father was an eminent prophet in the last reign, as appeared by Asa's putting him in the stocks for his plain dealing; yet the son was not afraid to reprove another king. Paul would have his son Timothy not only discouraged, but animated by his sufferings, 2 Tim. 3:11, 14.

(1.) The prophet told him plainly that he had done very ill in joining with Ahab: "Shouldst thou, a godly man, help the ungodly, give them a hand of fellowship, and lend them a hand of assistance?" Or, "Shouldst thou love those that hate the Lord; wilt thou lay those in thy bosom whom God beholds afar off?" It is the black character of wicked people that they are haters of God, Rom. 1:30. Idolaters are so reputed in the second commandment; and therefore it is not for those that love God to take delight in them or contract an intimacy with them. Do I not hate those, says David, that hate thee? Ps. 139:21, 11. Those whom the grace of God has dignified ought not to debase themselves. Let God's people be of God's mind.

(2.) That God was displeased with him for doing this: "There is wrath upon thee from before the Lord, and thou must, by repentance, make thy peace with him, or it will be the worse for thee." He did so, and God's anger was turned away. Yet his trouble, as recorded in the next chapter, was a rebuke to him for meddling with strife that belonged not to him. If he be so fond of war, he shall have enough of it. And the great mischief which his seed after him fell into by the house of Ahab was the just punishment of his affinity with that house.

(3.) Yet he took notice of that which was praiseworthy, as it is proper for us to do when we give a reproof (v. 3): "There are good things found in thee; and therefore, though God be displeased with thee, he does not, he will not, cast thee off." His abolishing idolatry with a heart fixed for God and engaged to seek him was a good thing, which God accepted and would have him go on with, notwithstanding the displeasure he had now incurred.

II. The return of duty which Jehoshaphat made to God for this favour. he took the reproof well, was not wroth with the seer as his father was, but submitted. Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness. See what effect the reproof had upon him.

1. He dwelt at Jerusalem (v. 4), minded his own business at home, and would not expose himself by paying any more such visits to Ahab. Rebuke a wise man, and he will be yet wiser, and will take warning, Prov. 9:8, 9. 2. To atone (as I may say) for the visit he had paid to Ahab, he made a pious profitable visitation of his own kingdom: He went out through the people in his own person from Beersheba in the south to Mount Ephraim in the north, and brought them back to the Lord God of their fathers, that is, did all he could towards recovering them.

(1.) By what the prophet said he perceived that his former attempts for reformation were well pleasing to God, and therefore he revived them, and did what was then left undone. It is good when commendations thus quicken us to our duty, and when the more we are praised for doing well the more vigorous we are in well-doing.

(2.) Perhaps he found that his late affinity with the idolatrous house of Ahab and kingdom of Israel had had a bad influence upon his own kingdom. Many, we may suppose, were emboldened to revolt to idolatry when they saw even their reforming king so intimate with idolaters; and therefore he thought himself doubly obliged to do all he could to restore them. If we truly repent of our sin, we shall do our utmost to repair the damage we have any way done by it to religion or the souls of others. We are particularly concerned to recover those that have fallen into sin, or been hardened in it, by our example.

2 Chronicles 19:2 Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD and so bring wrath on yourself from the LORD?"

- And Jehu (KJV): 2Ch 20:34 1Ki 16:1,7,12
- Hanani (KJV): 2Ch 16:7
- the seer (KJV): 1Sa 9:9
- Shouldest (KJV): 2Ch 18:3,28 1Ki 21:25 Ps 15:4 139:21,22 Pr 1:10-19 Ro 1:32 Eph 5:11 2Jn 1:10,11

- hate the Lord (KJV): 2Ch 18:7 Ex 20:5 De 5:9 7:10 32:41 33:11 Ps 21:8 68:1 71:15 Joh 15:18,23 Ro 1:30 8:7 Jas 4:4
- is wrath (KJV): 2Ch 32:25 Ps 90:7,8 Ro 1:18 1Co 11:31,32

PROPHET JEHU REBUKES THE KING

Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD and so bring wrath on yourself from the LORD?”

Ryrie - Jehu had prophesied against Baasha 25 years before (1 Kings 16:1). The predicted wrath came in the form of invasion and commercial reversals (20:1, 37).

Ron Daniel - You may remember Khan-aw-NEE from our previous study. He was the prophet during the days of king Asa. Asa had put him in prison for rebuking the king's actions. Now, the next generation has arisen: Asa's son Jehoshaphat is the king, and Khan-aw-NEE's son Jehu is the prophet. Jehu has been sent by the Lord to rebuke the king. Will history repeat itself with the prophet being thrown in prison?

F B Meyer - This looks back to 2 Chronicles 18:1, where we learn that Jehoshaphat, though he had riches and honor in abundance, joined affinity with Ahab. Riches and abundance are dangerous things. They usually weaken our character, and incline us to worldly alliances; and it was to their subtle and pernicious influences that Jehoshaphat fell a victim. Ah! what a fall it was to hear him saying, “I am as thou art, and my people as thy people.” Well might Jehu take up the rôle which his father had filled before Asa, and protest. But let us seriously question whether, though there are good things found in us, we may not be falling into the same mistake, and sin. Are there not ways in which we say to men of the world, with whom we mix, “I am as thou art”?

There is a great tendency in the present day to boast in the closeness with which we can approach the world without injury. We join in the social life, read the same books, go to the same amusements, talk of the same themes; and it is almost impossible in a drawing-room to tell the difference between the Jehoshaphats and the Ahabs. So also, in our methods of doing good. 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. Love to the Lord Jesus is our only safeguard. The love of Christ must constrain us. Personal attachment to Christ will wean us away from this close identification with the world. But if we persist in identifying ourselves with the world, which God has doomed, we must not be surprised to find that wrath is on us from the Lord: and He will chasten us for love's sake.

Vance Havner - Campaign Against Ramoth-Gilead

Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? II Chronicles 19:2.

Jehoshaphat was a good man, but he allowed himself to be persuaded by Ahab to join him in an expedition against Ramoth-gilead. They called in the prophets after the decision already had been made in order to get their blessing, just as we often make our plans and then ask God to bless them instead of asking God for a plan. All the sycophant prophets concurred, except Micaiah, who told them the truth and was put in prison and fed the bread and water of affliction. The expedition resulted in Ahab's death. Then Jehu reproved Jehoshaphat with the words of our text.

God never wants His people to team up with the ungodly in their ventures. We have a different program and there is no concord between Christ and Belial. Ahab is always going up against some Ramoth-gilead, and all it takes, as in this case, is a big supper to line up unwise Jehoshaphats. Better a Micaiah on bread and water than a Jehoshaphat at a banquet, when a Ramoth-gilead campaign is brewing.

James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - JEHOSHAPHAT, THE OVERCOMER 2 CHRONICLES 19; 20

“Faith needs no staff of flesh, but stoutly can
To Heaven alone both go and lead.”—Herbert.

Although Jehoshaphat, through his affinity with Ahab, fell into the mire, we do not find him wallowing in it. He must have been deeply ashamed on his return to Jerusalem, when Jehu, the son of the seer, met him with that sharp rebuke, “Shouldst thou help the ungodly?” (2Ch 19:2). But this good thing was found in him; he had already “prepared his heart to seek God” (2Ch 19:3), and God had already marked his repentance. As we have noted in our last study his steps down to failure and shame, we shall note now his upward steps of faith to victory and joy. His work of faith is seen in—

I. Seeking the Restoration of Others.

“Jehoshaphat went out again through the people, ... and brought them back unto the Lord God” (2Ch 19:4). If they had been led away from the Lord through his evil example, now that he was restored in heart, he loses no time in using his influence for their good. The best work we can do for our fellowmen is to bring them back to God. In bringing them to Him, we bring them to the source of peace, power, and plenty. We may bring them back to sobriety, and to the Church, without bringing them back to God. Those who seek to bring men to God show their faith in Him.

II. Justifying the Ways of God.

“Now let the fear of the Lord be with you, ... for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts” (2Ch 19:7). These words were spoken to the judges in the land. The basis of their actions was to be the righteousness of God. There is no false dealings with Him, no respect of persons, no taking of bribes. Jehoshaphat found this out to his sorrow and loss when he joined affinity with Ahab, and went to war with him, although Micaiah had warned him in the Name of God about it. But he has learned a lesson, so he now testifies that there is no unrighteousness with God. He will not be bribed to “help the ungodly.” “He is the Rock, His work is perfect, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deut. 32:4).

III. Warning them of the Evils of Backsliding.

“Warn them that they trespass not against the Lord, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren” (2Ch 19:10). “Burnt bairns dread the fire.” The king has learned by bitter experience that there is a vital connection between the trespass of men and the wrath of God. Man cannot sin with impunity. He that goeth over the fence of God’s will, the serpent of sin will surely bite him. Outside the will of God is always forbidden ground; it leads to Doubting Castle and the tortures of Giant Despair.

IV. Seeking the Help of God in the Day of Trouble

“After this the children of Moab and the children of Ammon ... came against Jehoshaphat to battle” (2Ch 20:1). After this—after he had decided to follow the Lord fully—the testing time came. The trial of your faith is more precious than gold. The time was when he might have appealed to Ahab for help, having made a treaty with him, but he looks away from man, and “sets himself to seek the Lord” (2Ch 19:3). His example is followed by the whole nation, for they “gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord” (2Ch 20:4). Nations, as well as individuals, must believe in the Lord to be saved. The man of faith knows no other refuge than God Himself (Psa. 46:1). He appeals to God (1) as the Almighty One (2Ch 20:6); (2) as the Faithful One (2Ch 20:7); (3) as the Trusted One. “Our eyes are upon Thee” (2Ch 20:12). Whatever thy trouble is, seek help from God, and expect it.

V. Answered Prayer.

Jehoshaphat’s faith in God is further evidenced by this sudden answer to his prayer. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, as he stood in the midst of the congregation, with this message, “Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s” (2Ch 20:14, 15). As soon as Jehoshaphat had put his trust in the Lord the battle became His. God takes over the responsibilities of those who cast all their care upon Him. All the man of faith had to do was to “stand still and see the salvation of the Lord” (2Ch 20:17). How this was to be done they knew not; it was enough for him that God had promised to do it (Exod. 14:13, 14). Christ fought for us the battle of sin and death. “Ye shall not need to fight in this battle.”

VI. Humble Acceptance.

In acknowledgment of God’s wondrous grace, he “Bowed his head with his face to the ground, ... worshipping the Lord” (v. 18). The revelation of God’s saving power has always a head-bowing and heart-hallowing effect upon those to whom it comes in answer to faith and prayer. The true attitude of spiritual victors is that of worshippers. The more deeply we drink of the river of His grace, the more readily shall we bow and worship. He who humbled Himself to the Cross for us has given the death-blow to our pride and self-sufficiency.

VII. Faithful Testimony.

“Hear me, O Judah, Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper” (2Ch 20:20). Jehoshaphat has proved for himself the truth of this, he speaks from experience. Faith in God must lead to faith in His prophets. The fruit of faith is not weakness and instability, but strength and prosperity. The Bible affords us many examples of those who have been strengthened and made successful through their faith in God (see Heb. 11). “Therefore be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12).

VIII. Joyful Expectation.

“Faith laughs at impossibilities, and says, It shall be done.” He believed God, and rejoiced in the hope of a glorious victory. This is seen in his “appointing singers unto the Lord, to go out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord” (2Ch 20:21). Happy is that man who can sing praise to God for His bare word of promise, and go on expecting miracles to be wrought. He shall not be disappointed.

“Believe, and thou shalt see.” “When they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the enemy, ... and they were smitten” (2Ch 20:22). “Then they returned with joy” (2Ch 20:27). If the singers had been defeated, then might the enemies of the Bible rejoice; but the God of the Old Testament never fails to fulfil the expectations of all those who trust Him. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

D A Carson - 2 Chronicles 19–20; Revelation 8; Zechariah 4; John 7

EARLIER WE WITNESSED A KING who began well and ended poorly (Asa); still earlier, we witnessed a halfhearted reformer (Rehoboam; see December 11). Now we come across another, King Jehoshaphat, who does not degenerate, nor does he slide along in a gray zone between good and evil, but rather proves to be very good in some areas and not very discerning and even stupid in others—all his life (2 Chron. 19–20).

The two previous chapters (2 Ch 17–18) can be divided into two parts. 2Ch 17 depicts the strengths of Jehoshaphat—the man who diligently seeks the Lord and fortifies the entire southern kingdom. By contrast, chapter 18 depicts foolish Jehoshaphat, enmeshed in a needless and compromised alliance with wicked King Ahab of Israel, almost losing his life in a fight that wasn't his. Now in the chapters before us, the prophet Jehu, son of the prophet Hanani who had been imprisoned by Asa in his old age, confronts Jehoshaphat: “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Because of this, the wrath of the LORD is upon you. There is, however, some good in you, for you have rid the land of the Asherah poles and have set your heart on seeking God” (2Ch 19:2–3).

Then the pattern repeats itself. Jehoshaphat works diligently to rid the judiciary of corruption (2Ch 19:4–11). When he faces another military crisis, this time the nations of Moab and Ammon allied against him, he turns to God for help. The culmination of his prayer is intensely moving: “O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you” (20:12). In his mercy, God sends his Spirit upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, who carries a prophetic word to strengthen and encourage Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah and Jerusalem (2Ch 20:15ff). The victory they win is extravagant, and the Lord graciously imposes “the fear of God” upon the surrounding kingdoms, thereby giving Jehoshaphat and Judah rest.

So what does Jehoshaphat do? He makes another stupid and unnecessary alliance, this time with Ahaziah, the new king of Israel, and is soundly rebuked by another prophetic word (2Ch 20:35–37). Doesn't the man ever learn?

Today we would probably label such deeply disturbing repetitions “character flaws.” They can occur in people whose lives, on so many levels, are entirely praiseworthy. At one level it is entirely right to thank God for the good these people do. But would it not have been far better if Jehoshaphat had learned from his first mistakes?

Would it be impertinent to ask if you and I learn from ours? (BORROW [For the Love of God, Combined Edition, Volumes One and Two](#))

2 Chronicles 19:3 “But there is some good in you, for you have removed the Asheroth from the land and you have set your heart to seek God.”

- good things (KJV): 2Ch 12:12 17:3-6 1Ki 14:13 Ro 7:18
- prepared (KJV): 2Ch 12:14 30:19 Ezr 7:10 Ps 57:7

But there is some good in you, for you have removed the Asheroth from the land and you have set your heart to seek God.”

McConville: A Christian's attachment to God is necessarily expressed in the kind of atmosphere in which he prefers to live and move and have his being. Company, pursuits, ambitions will all bear upon them the mark of a love of God. This is by no means to put an embargo upon normal social intercourse with those who are not basically like-minded. It has to do with the sort of life pattern which one chooses to construct. The task of construction is no easy one, and the temptation is to model oneself upon the 'architects' about us. This was Jehoshaphat's fault, and his error calls us to consistency in exhibiting the characteristics which are truly Christian. (See further Rom. 12:1f.; Gal. 5:16-26.) (BORROW [I & II Chronicles](#))

Ron Daniel - 19:3-11 Jehoshaphat's Realization - Jehoshaphat got right with God again. He rededicated himself, and challenged the leaders to do the same. He told the judges to remember that they were judging for man, not God. Therefore, they must judge in the fear of the Lord without partiality. He charged the Levites with judging in accordance with the Word of God, so that they would not be guilty before the Lord. His final command to them was to "act resolutely." That phrase literally translates, "do strongly," or

"make it firm." There is to be no compromise in their ministry, no weakness as they operate in the Word of God.

The prophet Joel reminds us,

Joel 2:11 ...strong is he who carries out His Word.

And John wrote,

1John 2:14 ...you are strong, (for) the Word of God abides in you...

2 Chronicles 19:4 So Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem and went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brought them back to the LORD, the God of their fathers.

- went out again (KJV): Heb. returned and went out, 1Sa 7:15-17
- Beersheba (KJV): Ge 21:33 Judges 20:1
- mount (KJV): Jos 17:15 Judges 19:1
- brought (KJV): 2Ch 15:8-13 29:10,11 1Sa 7:3,4 Mal 4:6 Lu 1:17

So Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem and went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brought them back to the LORD, the God of their fathers.

Frederick Mabie: The city of Beersheba, located in the Negev, was the administrative seat of the southern region. Beersheba was also the common designation used to refer to the southern extent of Judah, as implied here. Notice that Jehoshaphat's itinerant ministry also includes those situated in part of the northern tribal area of Ephraim.

2 Chronicles 19:5 He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city.

- 2Ch 19:8 De 16:18-20 Ro 13:1-5 1Pe 2:13,14

JEHOSHAPHAT ESTABLISHES A GODLY JUDICIAL SYSTEM IN JUDAH

He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city - The king sees a godly justice system as important for "law and order" in a society (Oh, for this to be true in America 2023 where judicial decisions are rendered too often by ungodly men).

Henry Morris - Jehoshaphat established the system of judges and appeal procedures (2 Chronicles 19:5-11), by which secular appointees of the king judged civil matters and by which the priest, under the chief priest, judged religious matters. This system became a model for later governments in Judaism.

Believer's Study Bible - 2Ch 19:5-11) The chronicler has included this information, which is not found elsewhere in the O.T., in order to carry out his purpose. To underscore the religious and national heritage of Judah, he shows how Jehoshaphat established two systems of jurisdiction in the theocratic kingdom. Under the leadership of Amariah, the Levites, and the priests, all religious matters were handled; under Zebadiah and the lay judges, all civil affairs were administered (2 Chr. 19:8-11).

Raymond Dillard: Some centralization of judicial authority must be presumed during Israel's transition from a tribal confederacy to a centralized monarchy. The practices described could have antedated Jehoshaphat in the ancient Near East by many centuries; there is no compelling reason to deny the historicity of the account. It should also be noted, however, that the judicial reform of Jehoshaphat may not have instituted new or heretofore unseen practices in Israel—transition to a centralized judiciary could well have preceded him—but could be understood simply as a reform to eliminate corruption in judicial practice. The Chronicler may well have been seeking to cite a precedent or to otherwise legitimate practices in his own day, but this does not automatically undercut his use of historically reliable information. (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

August Konkell: The description of judicial reform is composed of two symmetrical paragraphs (vv. 5-7 and 8-11), patterned with an action and admonition. In the second paragraph, some of the reform measures are included in the exhortation, providing balance to the accounts. Local court officials were appointed in the fortified cities, and a central court was established in Jerusalem. The reform is a realization of the law of Deuteronomy (16:18 – 17:13), but in this context only judges are appointed and only in fortified towns. Every citizen had obligations toward the king and toward God; this dual loyalty was fully consistent with covenant obligation. There

may have been a lower and higher court in Jerusalem, one that served as the ordinary jurisdiction for citizens, and an appeals court for all the lower courts. Priests and Levites had some judicial role in the Jerusalem court, but no such role is mentioned for them in the local courts ([Multipart Video Series on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

Matthew Henry Notes: Verses: 5-11

Jehoshaphat, having done what he could to make his people good, is here providing, if possible, to keep them so by the influence of a settled magistracy. He had sent preachers among them, to instruct them (ch. 17:7-9), and that provision did well; but now he saw it further requisite to send judges among them, to see the laws put in execution, and to be a terror to evil-doers. It is probable that there were judges up and down the country before, but either they neglected their business or the people slighted them, so that the end of the institution was not answered; and therefore it was necessary it should be new-modelled, new men employed, and a new charge given them. That is it which is here done.

I. He erected inferior courts of justice in the several cities of the kingdom, v. 5. The judges of these courts were to keep the people in the worship of God, to punish the violations of the law, and to decide controversies between man and man. Here is the charge he gave them (v. 6), in which we have,

1. The means he prescribes to them for the keeping of them closely to their duty; and these are two:-

(1.) Great caution and circumspection: Take heed what you do, v. 6. And again, "Take heed and do it, v. 7. Mind your business; take heed of making any mistakes; be afraid of misunderstanding any point of law, or the matter of fact." Judges, of all men, have need to be cautious, because so much depends upon the correctness of their judgment.

(2.) Great piety and religion: "Let the fear of God be upon you, and that will be a restraint upon you to keep you from doing wrong (Neh. 5:15; Gen. 42:18) and an engagement to you to be active in doing the duty of your place." Let destruction from God be a terror to them, as Job speaks (Job 31:23), and then they will be a terror to none but evil-doers.

2. The motives he would have them consider, to engage them to faithfulness. These are three, all taken from God:-

(1.) That from him they had their commission; his ministers they were. The powers that be are ordained by him and for him: "You judge not for man, but for the Lord; your business is to glorify him, and serve the interests of his kingdom among men."

(2.) That his eye was upon them: "He is with you in the judgment, to take notice what you do and call you to an account if you do amiss."

(3.) That he is the great example of justice to all magistrates: There is no iniquity with him, no bribery, nor respect of persons. Magistrates are called gods, and therefore must endeavour to resemble him.

II. He erected a supreme court at Jerusalem, which was advised with, and appealed to, in all the difficult causes that occurred in the inferior courts, and which gave judgment upon demurrers (to speak in the language of our own law), special verdicts, and writs of error. This court sat in Jerusalem; for there were set the thrones of judgment: there they would be under the inspection of the king himself. Observe,

1. The causes cognizable in this court; and they were of two kinds, as with us:-

(1.) Pleas of the crown, called here the judgment of the Lord, because the law of God was the law of the realm. All criminals were charged with the breach of some part of his law and were said to offend against his peace, his crown and dignity.

(2.) Common pleas, between party and party, called here controversies (v. 8) and causes of their brethren (v. 10), differences between blood and blood (this refers to Deu. 17:8), between the blood of the person slain and the blood of the man-slayer. Since the revolt of the ten tribes all the cities of refuge, except Hebron, belonged to the kingdom of Israel; and therefore, we may suppose, the courts of the temple, or the horns of the altar, were chiefly used as sanctuaries in that case, and hence the trial of homicides was reserved for the court at Jerusalem. If the inferior judges did not agree about the sense of any law or commandment, any statute or judgment, this court must determine the controversy.

2. The judges of this court were some of the Levites and priests that were most learned in the law, eminent for wisdom, and of approved integrity, and some of the chief of the fathers of Israel, peers of the realm, as I may call them, or persons of age and experience, that had been men of business, who would be the most competent judges of matters of fact, as the priests and Levites

were of the sense of the law.

3. The two chiefs, or presidents, of this court. Amariah, the high priest, was to preside in ecclesiastical causes, to direct the court and be the mouth of it, or perhaps to be last consulted in cases which the judges themselves doubted of. Zebadiah, the prime-minister of that state, was to preside in all civil causes, v. 11. Thus there are diversities of gifts and operations, but all from the same Spirit, and for the good of the body. Some best understand the matters of the Lord, others the king's matters; neither can say to the other, I have no need of thee, for God's Israel has need of both; and, as every one has received the gift, so let him minister the same. Blessed be God both for magistrates and ministers, scribes and statesmen, men of books and men of business.

4. The inferior officers of the court. "Some of the Levites (such as had not abilities to qualify them for judges) shall be officers before you," v. 11. They were to bring causes into the court, and to see the sentence of the judges executed. And these hands and feet were as necessary in their places as the eyes and heads (the judges) in theirs.

5. The charge which the king gave them.

(1.) They must see to it that they acted from a good principle; they must do all in the fear of the Lord, setting him always before them, and then they would act faithfully, conscientiously, and with a perfect upright heart, v. 9.

(2.) They must make it their great and constant care to prevent sin, to warn the people that they trespass not against the Lord, inspire them with a dread of sin, not only as hurtful to themselves and the public peace, but as an offence to God, and that which would bring wrath upon the people if they committed it and upon the magistrates if they did not punish it. "This do, and you shall not trespass;" this implies that those who have power in their hands contract the guilt of sin themselves if they do not use their power for the preventing and restraining of sin in others. "You trespass if you do not keep them from trespassing."

(3.) They must act with resolution. "Deal courageously, and fear not the face of man; be bold and daring in the discharge of your duty, and, whoever is against you, God will protect you: The Lord shall be with the good." Wherever he finds a good man, a good magistrate, he will be found a good God.

2 Chronicles 19:6 He said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD who is with you when you render judgment.

- **Consider what you are doing:** Jos 22:5 1Ch 28:10 Lu 12:15 21:8 Ac 5:35 22:26
- **judge:** De 1:17 Ps 82:1-6 Ec 5:8

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 1:17+ 'You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.'

Psalms 82:1-6 A Psalm of Asaph. God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. 2 How long will you judge unjustly And show partiality to the wicked? Selah. 3 Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute. 4 Rescue the weak and needy; Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. 5 They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken. 6 I said, "You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High.

GODLY JUDICIAL ADVICE

He said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD who is with you when you render judgment - What a timeless principle! If judges in America followed this simple prescription, how God glorifying would our justice system be? That's rhetorical of course!

G Campbell Morgan - The story of the affinity which Jehoshaphat made with Ahab is that of a sad lapse in his history. Ahab was perhaps the most evil king who ever occupied the throne of Israel. It was indeed strange company for a man like Jehoshaphat, who was unquestionably a man of God. It imperiled his life, so that he was only delivered from death by the direct intervention of his God. On his return to Jerusalem he was rebuked by Jehu, the son of Hanani, in words full of solemnity, which it would be well for all of us

perpetually to bear in mind: "Shouldst thou help the wicked, and love them that hate Jehovah?" Evidently Jehoshaphat realized his wrong, and his repentance was manifest in this new mission which he undertook, to bring his people back to Jehovah, and to establish the internal administration of the kingdom in righteousness. These words addressed to the judges are full of value, and of perpetual application. Those who are called upon at any time, and in any way, to administer justice are acting for God, and not for man. They are not seeking to serve men, but to maintain the strict cause of justice, which is to be measured only by Divine standards. With God there is no iniquity, no respect of persons, no taking of bribes. So must it be with those who act as judges. Thus, and thus only, are the true interests of men served. To seek to please men is to be unjust to men. To seek to please God is to be just to men.

2 Chronicles 19:7 "Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe."

AMP - So now let the fear (reverent awe) of the Lord be on you [to keep you from making unjust decisions]; be careful in what you do, for there is no injustice with the Lord our God, or partiality, or acceptance of a bribe."

EXB Now let each of you ·fear [respect] the Lord [Prov. 1:7] ·Watch what you do [Judge/Decide carefully/with integrity], because the Lord our God ·wants people to be fair [does not tolerate injustice/unrighteousness...]. ·He wants all people to be treated the same [...or partiality], ·and he doesn't want decisions influenced by money [...or taking of bribes]."

ICB Now let each of you fear the Lord. Be careful in what you do because the Lord our God wants people to be fair. He wants all people to be treated the same. And he doesn't want people to accept money to change their judgments."

MSG And he was diligent in appointing judges in the land—each of the fortress cities had its judge. He charged the judges: "This is serious work; do it carefully. You are not merely judging between men and women; these are God's judgments that you are passing on. Live in the fear of God—be most careful, for God hates dishonesty, partiality, and bribery.

NCV Now let each of you fear the Lord. Watch what you do, because the Lord our God wants people to be fair. He wants all people to be treated the same, and he doesn't want decisions influenced by money."

WYC the dread of the Lord be with you (let the fear of the Lord/let reverence for the Lord be with you), and do ye all things with diligence, *that is, with discretion*; forsooth with the Lord your God (there) is no wickedness, neither taking, *or accepting*, of persons, neither covetousness of gifts.

- let the (KJV): Ge 42:18 Ex 18:21,22,25,26 Ne 5:15 Isa 1:23-26
- no iniquity (KJV): Ge 18:25 De 32:4 Ro 3:5,6 9:14
- respect of persons (KJV): De 10:17,18 Job 34:19 Mt 22:16 Ac 10:34 Ro 2:11 Ga 2:6 Eph 6:9 Col 3:25 1Pe 1:17
- taking of gifts (KJV): Ex 23:8 De 16:18,19 Isa 1:23 33:15 Mic 7:3

THE FIRST PREREQUISITE THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do- This is the first time the phrase "the fear of the LORD" is found in the Bible. Pr 9:10 says "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom," which is crucial for a judge to make godly decisions. If they feared the LORD, they would not fear man and be less likely to be biased or bribed by ungodly men.

Fear of the LORD - 25v - 2 Chr. 19:7; 2 Chr. 19:9; Job 28:28; Ps. 19:9; Ps. 34:11; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; Prov. 1:29; Prov. 2:5; Prov. 8:13; Prov. 9:10; Prov. 10:27; Prov. 14:26; Prov. 14:27; Prov. 15:16; Prov. 15:33; Prov. 16:6; Prov. 19:23; Prov. 22:4; Prov. 23:17; Isa. 11:2; Isa. 11:3; Isa. 33:6; Acts 9:31; 2 Co. 5:11)

for - Term of explanation. Explaining why fear and why be careful.

the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe- This should have put the fear of the LORD in every judge (THEN AND NOW!).

Raymond Dillard: Judicial authority in Israel was not the prerogative of autonomous power; rather it depended upon and expressed the rule of Yahweh and was to reflect his own attributes of righteousness, justice, and fairness. Judges acted in behalf of kings or other men only in a derivative sense—in reality they were the agents of Yahweh who was present at their decisions. Yahweh loves

and is known by his justice (Ps 9:16; 11:7). The frequent biblical injunctions against bribery attest to the extent and persistence of the practice; the poor who could not afford the bribe were in this way the prey of the rich (Exod 23:6–8; Deut 1:17; 16:18–20; 1 Sam 8:3; Ps 15:5; Prov 17:23; Isa 1:21–23; 5:22–23; Mic 3:11; 7:3; Zech 7:9–10). (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

2 Chronicles 19:8 In Jerusalem also Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the heads of the fathers' households of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD and to judge disputes among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

[HCSB](#) Jehoshaphat also appointed in Jerusalem some of the Levites and priests and some of the heads of the Israelite families for deciding the Lord's will and for settling disputes of the residents of Jerusalem.

[MSG](#) In Jerusalem Jehoshaphat also appointed Levites, priests, and family heads to decide on matters that had to do with worship and mediating local differences.

- Levites (KJV): 2Ch 17:8 De 17:8-13 1Ch 23:4 26:29
- the judgment (KJV): Ex 18:19-26 De 21:5 25:1

OTHER JUDGES APPOINTED

In Jerusalem also Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the heads of the fathers' households of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD and to judge disputes among the inhabitants of Jerusalem - Israel is not the northern kingdom but refers to the descendants of Jacob who made up Judah.

2 Chronicles 19:9 Then he charged them saying, "Thus you shall do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and wholeheartedly.

- in the fear (KJV): 2Ch 19:7 De 1:16,17 2Sa 23:3 Isa 11:3-5 32:1

A REPEATED PREREQUISITE FEAR OF THE LORD

Then he charged them saying, "Thus you shall do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and wholeheartedly(blameless heart, perfect heart, complete integrity, undivided heart, with all your heart).

2 Chronicles 19:10 "Whenever any dispute comes to you from your brethren who live in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and ordinances, you shall warn them so that they may not be guilty before the LORD, and wrath may not come on you and your brethren. Thus you shall do and you will not be guilty.

[MSG](#) When a case comes before you involving any of your fellow citizens, whether it seems large (like murder) or small (like matters of interpretation of the law), you are responsible for warning them that they are dealing with God. Make that explicit, otherwise both you and they are going to be dealing with God's wrath. Do your work well or you'll end up being as guilty as they are.

[MEV](#) And any dispute that comes before you all from your brothers who live in their cities, concerning bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or judgments, you will warn them, lest they trespass against the Lord and wrath come upon you and your brothers. Do this, and you will not trespass.

[NABRE](#) And in every dispute that comes to you from your kin living in their cities, whether it concerns bloodguilt or questions of law, command, statutes, or ordinances, warn them lest they incur guilt before the Lord and his wrath come upon you and your kin. Do that and you shall not incur guilt.

[NET](#) Whenever your countrymen who live in the cities bring a case before you (whether it involves a violent crime or other matters related to the law, commandments, rules, and regulations), warn them that they must not sin against the Lord. If you fail to do so, God will be angry with you and your colleagues, but if you obey, you will be free of guilt.

[NIRV](#) Cases will come to you from your people who live in the other cities. The cases might be about murder or other matters dealt with by the law, commands, directions and rules. Warn the people not to sin against the Lord. If you don't warn them, he will be angry with you and your people. Do what I say. Then you won't sin.

[NLT](#) Whenever a case comes to you from fellow citizens in an outlying town, whether a murder case or some other violation of God's laws, commands, decrees, or regulations, you must warn them not to sin against the Lord, so that he will not be angry with you and them. Do this and you will not be guilty.

[TLB](#) Whenever a case is referred to you by the judges out in the provinces, whether murder cases or other violations of the laws and ordinances of God, you are to clarify the evidence for them and help them to decide justly, lest the wrath of God come down upon you and them; if you do this, you will discharge your responsibility."

[TLV](#) When any dispute comes to you from your kinsmen who live in their cities, whether bloodshed, or concerning *Torah, mitzvot*, statutes or ordinances, you must warn them so that they will not be guilty before *Adonai*. Otherwise wrath will come upon you and your kinsmen. Act accordingly and you will not be guilty.

[VOICE](#) instruct your brothers about the various laws (so they and you will be innocent before the Eternal and all of you will avoid His anger) whenever any city dweller brings you *subjective cases where the right decisions are not apparent*, cases where you must choose who is justified in bloodshed or how to interpret the laws and commandments

- between blood (KJV): De 17:8-13
- warn them (KJV): Eze 3:18-21 33:6 Ac 20:31 1Th 5:14
- wrath come (KJV): Nu 16:46 Jos 22:18-20

Whenever any dispute comes to you from your brethren who live in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and ordinances, you shall warn them so that they may not be guilty before the LORD, and wrath may not come on you and your brethren. Thus you shall do and you will not be guilty.

Andrew Hill: In addition to hearing cases and rendering fair verdicts, the judge must also warn (or instruct) the citizenry who come before the bench not to commit further sin against the Lord, lest the "wrath" of God come against them and their family (19:9- 10). This "fear of the Lord" is understood as a deterrent to further criminal activity (19:9); it permits all the citizens of Judah to enjoy the protection afforded by the law. In addition, the just application of the law to everyday life will lead to an equitable society – the ideal social dynamic of the covenant community. (The NIV Application Commentary – 1 & 2 Chronicles.)

Raymond Dillard: The speeches of Jehoshaphat as recorded in Chronicles reflect a large body of biblical teaching regarding the concern of God with justice. Justice will always be subject to perversion, until he who is the Just is also the Judge (Rev 20:11–15; 1 Pet 2:23). (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

Bob Utley - Notice the two things YHWH promises if the judges are faithful.

1. you will not be guilty (i.e., the "they" is ambiguous and could refer to the people or the judge, 2 Chr. 19:10)
2. the Lord will be with the upright (JUSSIVE)
 1. individually (the judges and those who seek YHWH)
 2. collectively Judah will be blessed (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28)

2 Chronicles 19:11 **"Behold, Amariah the chief priest will be over you in all that pertains to the LORD, and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, in all that pertains to the king. Also the Levites shall be officers before you. Act resolutely, and the LORD be with the upright."**

- Amariah (KJV): 1Ch 6:11
- all matters (KJV): 2Ch 19:8 1Ch 26:30 Mal 2:7
- Deal courageously (KJV): Heb. Take courage and do, Jos 1:6,9 1Ch 22:11,16,19 1Co 16:13 2Ti 2:1
- the Lord (KJV): 2Ch 19:6 15:2 Ps 18:25,26 Joh 14:23,24 Ro 2:4-13 Php 4:8,9
- the good (KJV): Ps 37:23 112:5 Pr 2:20 Ec 2:26 Lu 23:50 Ac 11:24

"Behold, Amariah the chief priest will be over you in all that pertains to the LORD, and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the

ruler of the house of Judah, in all that pertains to the king. Also the Levites shall be officers before you. Act resolutely, and the LORD be with the upright.”

Frederick Mabie: The particular appointment of Amariah and Zebadiah implies differing areas of responsibility pertaining to the executive branch (matters concerning the king) and the judicial-legal branch (matters concerning the Lord). The Levites function in a more generic role, perhaps akin to judicial clerks.

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