

Both Ends of the Book Don't Know What To Do?

Look at where you're looking

דרש

dârash to resort to, seek, seek with care, enquire, require

“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set his face to seek (*dârash*) to Yehovah, and proclaimed a fast over all Judah.” 2 Chronicles 20:3

We know him as Jehoshaphat but his real name is יהושפט *yehôshâphât*. How would you like a name like “Yah has judged”? In his case, he did live up to his name. Not will judge but has judged.

In 2 Chronicles 20, as king of Judah, he found himself faced with a huge army coming against him. Moab and Ammon, enemies of the people of God, were coming against them to do battle against Yehoshaphat - “God has judged” - and the nation. Moab and Ammon were not nice people, and they had a goal to destroy Judah and with them Jerusalem.

The king was also faced with a problem he had created for himself. In Chapter 17 we find him coming to reign as the son of king Asa who is noted as becoming “diseased in his feet” in Chapter 16, and not seeking Yehovah but seeking instead “the healers.” Then he died and Yehoshaphat came to the throne.

So Yehoshaphat has a heritage from his father Asa, who was so angered by a prophet who opposed him that he put him in prison. (Ch. 16:10) Asa also made a covenant with Syria, using silver and gold from the Temple to buy the covenant with Syria. And now his son, Yehoshaphat, is king. Will he walk in the ways of his father or will he choose differently?

In Chapter 17 we learn that “Yehovah was with Yehoshaphat, for he walked in the first ways of his father David; and he did not seek to the Baals.” (v. 3) He has a focus brought about by seeking “the God of his father, and he walked in His commands, and not according to the deeds of Israel.” (v.4) It says of him that “his heart was exalted in the ways of Yehovah. And he again removed the high places and the Asherahs out of Judah.” (v. 6) The word for exalted is גבה *gâbahh* and it means simply to be high, exalted, lofty or tall. This word is context driven and in a bad sense it means to be haughty but in a good sense to be lifted up in the ways of Yehovah.

Yehoshaphat also sent out Levites and others to go through the land and teach people the ways of their god Yehovah. “And they taught in Judah; and with them was the book of the Torah of Yehovah. And they went around to all the cities of Judah, and taught among the people.(v. 9)

But then, years later in 2 Chronicles 18, he goes to Ahab the king of Israel and it is there Yehoshaphat encounters Micaiah, the true prophet who gives us a glimpse into the Council of Yehovah and how Ahab is to be destroyed.

In 2 Chronicles 18:18 - 22 we get to see into the throne room of Yehovah and the what will become of Ahab. Even though Yehoshaphat was there to hear all that the prophet spoke, he aligns with Ahab to go up to battle and in that battle Yehovah saves Yehoshaphat. (v. 31)

Then in Chapter 19 Yehoshaphat returns to Jerusalem and “Jehu son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Yehoshaphat, ‘Should you help the wicked and love those who hate Yehovah? Because of this, wrath from before Yehovah is against you.’” (v. 2) What stands out with Yehoshaphat is that he learns from his errors in judgment.

He begins reforms in Judah following his sin of aligning with Ahab and the rebuke from the prophet. He sends out judges throughout the land “and he charged them, saying, ‘So shall you do in the fear of Yehovah, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.’” (v. 9)

Overcoming our past including the way we were raised when it does not line up with the ways of Yehovah is one of the most difficult things any of us will ever accomplish. Those patterns learned as children run deep within our souls, and the experiences that shaped who we are today often are unseen influencers of the choices we make. As the Torah says, they are passed down to the third and fourth generation but then God does “kindness to thousands, to those loving Me, and to those keeping My commandments.” Exo 20:6 LITV

What Yehoshaphat found is what we know as Romans 8:28 “Now we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose.” Yehoshaphat repurposed his life by changing where he looked and what he kept. He had imitated his father Asa and went to Ahab to make an alliance. He was rebuked by the prophet and took those words to heart and this started his reforms throughout all of Judah.

Now when he is faced with what appears to be an insurmountable challenge, he looks where he has now learned to look.

In Chapter 20:6 he says “O Yehovah, the God of our fathers, are not You the God in Heaven?”; then in verse 7 “Are You not our God who drove out the inhabitants of this land”; then in v 12 “O our God, shall You not execute judgment upon them?”

Yehoshaphat recognized him as the God who is (v.6), who was (v. 7) and who is to come (v. 12). He recognized the God who never changes, whose way of life is consistent throughout Scripture from cover to cover.

And then he sums this up: “and we do not know what we shall do; but our eyes are on You.” (v. 12).

Take a lesson from Yehoshaphat and check in with your eyes - where are you looking?