

Lessons from the Kings #5: God Against the Multitude

The last two lessons from the Hebrew kings were about king Asa, and how God can and will fight for his people, even against overwhelming odds. The odds are only overwhelming when we compare the enemy against our own strength and numbers – they are certainly not overwhelming to God. We need to see our battles from God's perspective, and not to lean on our own strength. A similar situation occurred later with another king ...

Story #2: King Jehoshaphat and the Ammonite/Moabite/Edomite Coalition - 2 Chr. 20:1-30

A great coalition of nations east of the Jordan came against Judah. This caused immediate fear, but the king **"set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah"** (v. 3). People came from all around to seek God, and this was the king's response (vv. 5-13): **"O Lord God of our fathers"** (stressing the historical connection of the nation to God through the covenant given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) **"art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?"** This was to acknowledge God's transcendence over all – He is in heaven and we are on earth - and his sovereign rulership over the whole world. He is the Creator of all, and is the King of all the earth. He is omnipotent in power and if the whole world and all the powers of Satan were confederate against him, they could do nothing to effectively resist him or prevent him from doing exactly as he pleases.

In v. 7 the king confesses that God is their God and that he had driven out the inhabitants of the land, because of his eternal covenant promises to "Abraham thy friend". In vv. 8-9 he reminds God of the promises made at the dedication of Solomon's temple, that God's people could cry unto God in times of affliction, and that God would hear out of his holy temple, and give help.

In vv. 10-11 he gets down to specifics, how those from Ammon, Moab, and Mt. Seir (whom God would not allow Israel to invade, when Moses was leading them in the wilderness) were now attempting to cast them out of God's inheritance. Then the actual request is made in v. 12 – **"O our God, wilt not thou judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee."** This is an acknowledgment of their own helplessness and inability, and even their consternation as not knowing even how to fight the battle, yet their faith was in God ("our eyes are upon thee").

This was not merely the prayer of Jehoshaphat on his own, but was representative of the whole nation, including their wives and children (v. 13).

What was God's response? The Spirit of God came upon Jahaziel, who prophesied. vv. 15-17 – **"Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. ... Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you."**

How then did the king and people respond to this prophetic direction? vv. 18-21 – they bowed before God and worshipped with faces to the ground. Then the Levites rose up and praised God with a loud voice. Jehoshaphat's last words and actions in the morning of the battle was **"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."** Then he appointed singers unto the Lord to praise the beauty of holiness, and set them in front of the army, to say, **"Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever."**

To the natural mind, this would be suicidal, but v.22 – **"when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir"**. They were smitten, as God caused the Ammonites and Moabites to fight against Mount Seir, and then against each other. The armies of Judah only had to take away the spoil, and there was so much it took three days to haul it all away. The fourth day they blessed God in the valley of Berachah and then came up to Jerusalem in great joy with psalteries, harps, and trumpets.

Another result was that other countries were afraid to attack Judah, when they heard how God had fought for them, so the nation was at peace (vv.29-30).

Application from Hezekiah:

1. When faced with overwhelming odds, seek God, even with fasting.
2. Recognize and confess your position, as being in covenant with God. (we are not asking something “as a favor”, but as a benefit of our covenantal relationship to God)
3. Confess God’s sovereignty in the earth, and his omnipotent power.
4. Remind God of his past promises of blessing and protection upon a repentant and submitted people.
5. Be specific in fervent prayer, not just speaking in generalities and hem-hawing.
6. Acknowledge your own inability apart from God, but ask and expect him to work on your behalf.
7. When God shows you what to do, do it without fear or hesitation.
8. Confront your own crisis with praise to God, in songs, in worship.

2 Chr. 20:15 – “Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.”

This lesson and almost all previous, including audio recordings, can be found at <https://hnslack.wixsite.com/mysite>, now made readable on cell phones.