CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
MARCH30 2024

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 17–21.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 15.

life sentence



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flashlight

"If the teachings of God's Word were made the controlling influence in the life of every man and woman, if mind and heart were brought under its restraining power, the evils that now exist in national and in social life would find no place" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 192).

keytext

"In everything he followed the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. The high places, however, were not removed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there."

(1 Kings 22:43, NIV)

what do you think?

Which do you think are characteristics of God's inspired leadership? Rank the following according to how crucial they are for good government—mark (1) for most crucial and (6) for least crucial.

___ Civil peace and security
___ Spiritual teaching and wisdom
___ Military strength and protection
___ Charismatic leadership
___ Clear sense of right and wrong
___ Abundance of wealth

Explain your reasons for ranking these the way you did.

did you know?

The path of men who are placed as leaders is not an easy one. But they are to see in every difficulty a call to prayer. Never are they to fail of consulting the great Source of all wisdom. Strengthened and enlightened by the Master Worker, they will be enabled to stand firm against unholy influences and to discern right from wrong, good from evil. They will approve that which God approves, and will strive earnestly against the introduction of wrong principles into His cause."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 31

INTO THE STORY

"After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to wage war against Jehoshaphat.

"Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, 'A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazezon Tamar' (that is, En Gedi). Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.

"Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the LORD in the front of the new courtyard and said:

" 'LORD, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, "If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us." '

" 'But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. 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 on you.'

"All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the LORD.

"Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly.

"He said: 'Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's." ' "

(2 Chronicles 20:1–15, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

In verse 1 of 2 Chronicles 20 the Bible sets the stage for this week's story of Jehoshaphat with "After this . . ." Survey the following snapshots of his reign and note the various aspects of Jehoshaphat's leadership.

2 Chronicles 17:1–6: General summary
2 Chronicles 17:7–10: Jehoshaphat sends out teachers to instruct the people about God
2 Chronicles 17:11–19: Wealth and security
2 Chronicles 18:1–34: Debacle with Ahab against Ramoth Gilead
2 Chronicles 19:1–2: Jehu's rebuke and affirmation
2 Chronicles 19:4–11: Organized judges for civil order
2 Chronicles 20:16–29: Battle victory through singing

What do you think is the key verse in this week's story?

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_____
_____
_____

What other people in Scripture does Jehoshaphat remind you of? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What leadership qualities do you see in Jehoshaphat that are most noble?

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What might be one of Jehoshaphat's weaknesses as a leader?

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punch lines

"Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God" **(Psalm 86:2, NIV).**

"Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him" **(Psalm 32:10, NIV).**

"As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more" **(1 Thessalonians 4:1, NIV).**

"You must distinguish between what is sacred and what is common, between what is ceremonially unclean and what is clean. And you must teach the Israelites all the decrees that the LORD has given them through Moses" **(Leviticus 10:10, 11, NLT).**

"And you will find happiness by worshiping him. God will answer your prayers, and you will keep the promises you made to him" **(Job 22:26, 27, CEV).**

further insight

"Position does not give holiness of character. It is by honoring God and obeying His commands that a man is made truly great."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 30

Sabbath

Read 2 Chronicles 20:12.

The ranking exercise in the *What Do You Think?* section of this lesson challenges you to identify the leadership qualities you think are most important as well as least important. We often think leaders always have a clear sense of what to do in times of crisis; but note what Jehoshaphat said to God as the enemies of Israel were approaching in today's Bible verse. How would you describe this act as an attribute of a good leader?

Sunday

Read John 20:30, 31 and 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

The *Into the Story* section contains a portion of a battle that demonstrates the God-inspired leadership of Jehoshaphat. Answer the questions in the *Out of the Story* section, including the snapshots of Jehoshaphat's reign. How would you compare Jehoshaphat's leadership style with other leaders in the Bible? According to our Bible readings for today, all stories of Scripture have the power to speak to us. As you learn more about this great king, what message do you think God has for you in this passage?

Monday

Read 1 Kings 22:43.

King Jehoshaphat's great qualities are summed up in one sentence in today's Bible verse and this week's *Key Text*; in the following sentence the Bible admits a shortcoming that also marked his life. Read this passage in a few different translations, if available, and think about what close friends might say about you, in a sentence. In the space given below, write a sentence about the life of someone you admire:

Tuesday

Read Psalm 86:2.

While there are many things that influence your outlook and your behavior, there are a few basic ideas that influence most of your decisions. Read the quote from *Prophets and Kings* about the controlling influences in your life. To what degree do you think the evil in the world would diminish if people allowed God's will to become the "controlling influence" in their lives? What laws or principles of God's way of life would make the most significant change for the better?

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* listed in this week's lesson and identify the verse that speaks to you the most. In what way is this passage most relevant to your life today?

Think of a friend or someone you know that has the ability to influence others but does not often seize those moments for good. Say a prayer today for that person and pray for an opportunity to encourage their leadership potential. Sometimes a little positive encouragement can awaken a more earnest desire to make a positive impact on the world around us. Sometimes affirming words can remind people of previous commitments they had made that need to be renewed.

Thursday

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1.

It may be that the great things that are ultimately remembered about your life are built on the practical things you do from day to day. Make a list of three "great" things you want to do today that will have eternal significance. Perhaps it is an act of generosity or a secret deed of kindness. Maybe you could extend grace for those who are struggling or forgiveness for someone who has wronged you. Make your list specific enough so that you can know that you have done a "great thing" today. It will also be helpful for you to share this with a supporting friend or two, which will strengthen your resolve to implement it. (Go to www.cornerstoneconnections.net to find resources for choosing a support/accountability partner.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Friday

Read Leviticus 10:10, 11.

Take time to reflect on Jehoshaphat's storied journey of devotion, mistakes, and uncompromising faithfulness to God's plan for Israel. His story holds up a high standard of loyalty to God and courageous leadership for Israel. But his life has mistakes and moments that exposed his flaws as well. Ruminate on how we can be great leaders and people of influence for God even though we are not always perfect. Write down a few thoughts you have on the tension between greatness and making mistakes, as it appears in your life. (You can use the Notes pages in the back of your study guide.)

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 15.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.