

1. Meanwhile, “back at the ranch” in Jerusalem:
 - a. One dynasty - the house of David - because of God’s promise to King David that the Messiah would come through his line
 - b. Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, was the first King of Judah after the division of Israel.
 - c. Abijah, his son, reigned for just 2 years.
 - d. He was followed by his son Asa, the good king who had a long reign.
 - e. His son, Jehoshaphat, was also a good king.

(The Northern Kingdom: A-A-J-J...Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram, Jehu and during the same period -
The Southern Kingdom: J-J-A-A...Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah)

2. Good people can sometimes make really bad choices.
 - a. Jehoshaphat was a good king; he did love the Lord and walk in the way of his father Asa; he handled a national crisis righteously; Beracah - the valley of praise where God honored his faith
 - b. He made one terrible decision - the alliance with Ahab. The alliance married Ahab’s daughter Athaliah to Jehoshaphat’s son Jehoram. It had disastrous consequences.

3. The instructions that Jehoshaphat gave to the men he appointed as judges over the people of Israel:

- a. All civil authority is based upon and is an extension of the authority of God.
- b. When judges pass down verdicts, they need to always remember that they are accountable to a God whose laws constitute a higher authority.
- c. “Right” and “wrong” are God’s choice, not the choice of the 51% majority.
- d. If the judges do not warn the people not to sin against the Lord, they will bring God’s wrath upon themselves because of their silence. (We will see this again in the famous “watchman” passage in the Book of Ezekiel).

4. Jehoshaphat did not keep making bad choices - his handling of the attack by Moab and Ammon is a textbook example of good decision-making. (Chapter 20)

- a. He did not panic - he prayed.
- b. He did not call for his northern allies to come help - he prayed.
- c. He confessed the power of God; he acknowledged his own powerlessness; he recalled God’s past help; he pled the promises of God; he waited for an answer.
 - 1) The answer came from Jahaziel: “Stand firm and see the deliverance of the Lord.”
 - 2) They went to battle singing perhaps the 136th Psalm and just watched while God won the battle.
 - 3) Then they named the place “Beracah” which means “prays” and had a service of Thanksgiving.

5. 2 Chronicles 20:12 should be memorized: “... 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.”

6. The marriage of Jehoram to Athaliah:

- a. She brought all the evil of her parents, Ahab and Jezebel, with her.
- b. Jehoram adopted all of Ahab’s ways. He was a very bad king: He murdered all of his brothers and all other challengers to the throne, he was an idolater, and his sin lost the nation the blessing of God. “He passed away to no one’s regret and was buried in the city of David but not in the tomb of the kings.”

1. Ahaziah, Jehoram's youngest son, took the throne after he died. Raiding Arabs had killed all his other sons. Ahaziah was as evil as his parents, Jehoram and Athaliah.

2. Ahaziah was 22 when he became king - a "primitive error" in the making of the Hebrew number 22 resulted in the Masoretic text saying he was 42, which would have made him older than his father.

3. Ahaziah's reign was very short - he is the one killed by Jehu's archers after Jehu had dispatched with King Joram. God brought about Ahaziah's downfall - He did not want the kings of Judah to mix with the family of Ahab.

4. Athaliah moves to seize power when her son dies and kills everyone in his family - including her own grandchildren! Ahaziah's sister, Jehosheba, managed to escape with Joash, his son, and they hid in the Temple for 6 years.

5. For 6 long years, it looked like Athaliah had succeeded in wiping out the line of David. There were only 4 people in the nation who knew that was not true - Joash, Jehosheba, Jehoiada the priest and a nursemaid. But God's plan can never be defeated or overthrown, even when it looks like it has been.

6. When Joash became king, he started out very well; he kept going for a long time; but he did not finish well. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall."
 - a. He did well under the care of Jehoiada.
 - b. He received a copy of God's Law when he was crowned king. He knew God was in charge.
 - c. 23 years into his reign, he took steps to refurbish the Temple and make sure it was repaired. The people gave gladly to this.
 - d. Jehoiada died at the age of 130 and was buried with the kings because of all the good he had done. But that's when things came apart for Joash spiritually. He turned from believing that he was king but God was in charge, to believing that he was king and that he was in charge.
 - 1) He had Jehoiada's son stoned for challenging him.
 - 2) When Hazael, King of Damascus, threatened Jerusalem, he bribed him with precious items from the Temple instead of praying to God.
 - 3) He died from a wound inflicted by that same Syrian army.
 - 4) He ended so badly that he was buried in Jerusalem, but not with the kings.

1. The Books of Kings seem to tell us more about the Northern Kingdom and the Books of Chronicles, more about the Southern Kingdom.

2. Why would God allow an unrighteous King of Israel to defeat a righteous King of Judah in battle?
 - a. Amaziah of Judah waged war against Jehoash of Israel.
 - b. It says Jehoash was an evil king - and Amaziah was a good king.
 - c. Principle: God fights with and for the righteous and against the unrighteous.
 - d. Explanation:
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 25: Amaziah hires 100,000 mercenaries from Israel to fight against Edom.
 - 2) God's prophet shows up and tells Amaziah that if he takes the mercenaries into battle, he will lose.
 - 3) He obeys, goes into battle with a much smaller army and wins.
 - 4) But he returns with booty that includes the idols of the Edomites and sets them up as his own idols.
 - 5) God is angry - his idolatry takes him out from under the protection of God.
 - 6) He then declares war on Jehoash of Israel and loses badly - but it is perfectly understandable in light of the whole story.

3. Two important things to learn from all this:
 - a. Cross referencing is important - you need a good study Bible so you can see where to discover the entire story.
 - b. When you encounter difficult passages that seem to pose a problem or an inconsistency, remember that when more information is available, most of those "difficulties" fade away.

4. Failure to remove the 'high places'
 - a. The good kings of Judah walked in the ways of their fathers, even David, but failed to completely remove the 'high places'
 - b. Why?
 - 1) They did not want to be accused of having "a corner on truth".
 - 2) People get offended if you say there is only way to worship God.
 - 3) They lived with the same tension we do in our pluralistic society.

5. As Isaac life was "ditto" marks of Abraham's life, so Amaziah's life was "ditto" marks of Joash's - same characteristics, same experiences, same failures.

6. The death of Elisha: Perhaps the story of the bones is to show that though he was not translated into heaven as Elijah was, he still did have a double portion of his blessing.

1. Obadiah was one of the “writing” prophets.
 - a. We do not know exactly when he lived, but his writing “fits” with the period of time during or just before the reign of Amaziah of Judah.

2. Obadiah prophesied that Edom would be destroyed for failing to assist Judah her brother in his time of need. They had gloated over Judah’s destruction. They seized Judah’s wealth. They waited to cut down Judah’s fugitives. (This could also have happened after Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of Jerusalem.)

3. The Edomites and the people of Judah were ancient enemies - it goes all the way back to the story of Esau and Jacob. Esau is the father of the Edomites. Edom would now be a part of the nation of Jordan. (Petra is in Edom)

4. At the point at which Obadiah wrote his book, it looked like the people of Edom had triumphed and the people of Judah had been deserted by their God. The Edomites thought their land was impregnable.

5. The Edomites felt secure and self-sufficient. They were near every major trade route and knew what was happening in the world. They were an indifferent and aloof people. It sounds like the society in which we live.

6. Obadiah’s message to the Edomites: A day is coming when the Lord will see that justice is done. You will not get away with the evil you have done.

7. God always has the last word. Verse 21: “The kingdom will be the Lord’s.”

1. Jonah, the book for runaways, is one to which we can all relate.

2. There are great themes in this book:
 - a. The character and attributes of God
 - 1) Chapter 1 - an omnipotent God - all-powerful, able to control nature, the casting of the lot and the actions of a great fish
 - 2) Chapter 1 - an omnipresent God - you cannot run away from Him (Psalm 139)
 - 3) The grace of God
 - a) He wants to save the wicked city of Ninevah.
 - b) He deals in grace with his stubborn prophet, Jonah - "And the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time saying..."
 - 4) The wrath of God - Jonah's message to Ninevah is one of judgment

3. Is the story of Jonah really true?
 - a. Jonah was a real person - we met him 2 days ago as the prophet that brought the word of the Lord to King Jeroboam II.
 - b. Jesus believed that Jonah had actually spent 3 days in the belly of the fish. (Matthew 12:39, 40)
 - c. In 1891, a sailor was swallowed by a whale and survived - with his skin bleached white. Jonah was a walking object lesson for the people of Ninevah!

4. Jonah's experience was an Old Testament "type" of Christ's experience.

5. When the people of Ninevah repented, God relented and did bring judgment on them. Does God change His mind? Can God change His mind?
 - a. Numbers 23:19 - God never changes His mind.
 - b. Moses: "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should change His mind. Does He speak and not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?"
 - c. If Ninevah's repentance did not surprise Him and if He does not change His mind, what happened at Ninevah?
 - 1) Jeremiah 18:6-10: What we do in response to His warnings is decisive in terms of the outcome. God announces judgment ahead of time to give people a chance to repent. If they do, He always forgives.
 - 2) It was not God, but actually the people of Ninevah, who changed their minds. He knew they would; Jonah knew they would and that is why he did not want to go!

6. It took Jonah 3 days to walk through Ninevah:
 - a. It was only 8 miles around.
 - b. It was part of a larger city complex - like "greater" New York.

