

Fear, Seek, Fast, Pray, Obey, Worship, and Praise

By C. Young

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In II Chronicles 7:14, the Lord came to Solomon by night and said to him, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”* Many years later, king Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, found himself in need of putting this verse into practice. This story can be found in Second Chronicles chapter twenty.

As the story opens, king Jehoshaphat finds himself faced with a formidable foe. Ammon and Moab are coming against him to do battle. They are very strong and powerful. Naturally, Jehoshaphat is afraid.

And Jehoshaphat Feared

The first thing Jehoshaphat did was to fear. He saw these people with all their might and power coming toward him, and he was afraid. Jehoshaphat had good reason to be afraid. Israel had sinned against the Lord. The people had been divided into two kingdoms – Israel and Judah. Israel was at that time under a very wicked king -- king Ahab. Jehoshaphat had made an alliance with wicked king Ahab and had gone with him into a battle in which Ahab was killed. In chapter 19, God sent Hanani the seer to deal with Jehoshaphat about his alliance with an ungodly man. Hanani asked him, *“Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.”* (See II Chronicles 19:2)

However, God gave Jehoshaphat a remedy for his sin. Hanani told Jehoshaphat some things he must do, and then he said, *“Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.”* Jehoshaphat listened to Hanani and obeyed the Lord.

Because Jehoshaphat had listened to Hanani and obeyed the Lord, he was ready with the right response when he was faced with danger from a frightening foe. He feared, but he knew to Whom he should take his fear.

Jehoshaphat Set Himself to Seek the Lord

“*And Jehoshaphat... set himself to seek the LORD.*” (See verse 3) If we look back to chapter nineteen verse three, we see that seeking the Lord was not a new thing with Jehoshaphat. He already had a prepared heart. “*Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast... prepared thine heart to seek God.*” Jehoshaphat had prepared his heart to seek the Lord. He had his heart fixed on God. He confirmed that was the way he wanted to go and directed his heart firmly toward God, making provision to meet an expected need. Now the need had arisen, and Jehoshaphat was ready.

Jehoshaphat Proclaimed a Fast

Although Jehoshaphat had prepared his heart to seek the Lord and he was ready when trouble came, he did not try to go into battle alone. He recruited people to help him. First, he asked people to seek the Lord with him. This he did by declaring a fast. “*And Jehoshaphat... proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.*” (See verse 3) As ruler of his people, Jehoshaphat urged all the people of the land to stand behind him. And they did. “*And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.*” (verse 4) People from all the cities came out to fast and to seek the Lord with Jehoshaphat. The king wanted all of them ready to stand and face trouble as well.

Jehoshaphat Prayed

After Jehoshaphat had proclaimed a fast and all Judah had gathered together to seek the Lord, Jehoshaphat stood up in the congregation in the house of the Lord and prayed.

“⁵*And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,* ⁶*And said, O LORD God of our fathers, 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?* ⁷*Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?* ⁸*And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,* ⁹*If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help...* ¹²*O our God, wilt thou not 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. ¹³*And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.”* (verses 5-9 and 12,13)

Jehoshaphat and the inhabitants of Judah understood several very important things:

1. They had no might in themselves to defeat the foe
2. They did not know what to do
3. Their eyes were upon the Lord because He was their only hope

All of Judah stood before the Lord, including their little ones. Everyone came to look to the Lord for His help. Everyone waited expectantly for the Lord's answer to Jehoshaphat's prayer.

Jehoshaphat and Israel Obeyed God

After Jehoshaphat and all Judah humbled themselves before the Lord and sought Him and fasted and prayed, God spoke to them. God told them what would happen and what they must do. Verses 14-17 say, ¹⁴*Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;* ¹⁵*And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.* ¹⁶*To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.* ¹⁷*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.”*

God told Jehoshaphat and all Judah to

1. Hearken (listen)
2. Be not afraid or dismayed because of the enemy
3. The battle is not theirs, it is God's
4. Tomorrow they were to go find the enemy and go out against them. God told them where to find the enemy
5. Stand still. They were not to advance in the battle but to stand still.
6. See the salvation of the LORD with you. Just watch and see how the Lord is going to save you. He will fight the battle for you.
7. Do not be afraid or dismayed because the Lord is with you.

We see from verse twenty that all obeyed and king Jehoshaphat encouraged them in their obedience to the Lord, *“And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 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.”*

Jehoshaphat and Judah Worshipped the Lord

When God told Jehoshaphat and the people what to do and promised them victory, what was their response? *“And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.”* (verse 18)

1. Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground.
2. All Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord.
3. They all worshipped the Lord.

They responded with humble gratefulness and acknowledgement of God and His power and authority. They bowed and fell down before God. They worshipped Him.

Jehoshaphat and all Judah Praised and Sang

Early in the morning Jehoshaphat and the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem went out to obey the Lord and find the enemy. Jehoshaphat encouraged the people, *“Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.”* (verse 20) And they did so.

“²¹And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. ²²And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. ²³For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. ²⁴And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude,

and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.” (verses 21-24)

Jehoshaphat and all the people of Judah believed the Lord. Because they believed the Lord there was great rejoicing. Jehoshaphat appointed singers unto the Lord, to praise the beauty of the Lord’s holiness, to go out before the army, and to say, *“Praise the LORD: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* God heard their singing and their praise, and He set up ambushments against their enemies. The Ammonites and Moabites destroyed the inhabitants of mount Seir; then they destroyed one another. God gave complete victory. The enemy were all dead bodies fallen to the earth. There were none that escaped.

God also gave reward, great reward, *“When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.”* (verse 25)

Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah did not forget to thank God for His deliverance and for the abundance He bestowed upon them. *“And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day.”* (verse 26) The name Berachah means “blessing,” and so this valley of victory and deliverance became the “valley of blessing.”

Conclusion and Application

God has not changed, nor has His way that He provided for His people to have revival and victory. It is no secret our country is in need of revival right now, desperate need. Revival begins with God’s people. Let us examine ourselves and see if we need to follow the example of Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah.

1. Fear

Do we have reason to be afraid? Have we made compromise with the ungodly? Have we been more concerned about pleasing men than pleasing God? Do we have the fear of God?

If we have compromised with the ungodly, we have reason to be afraid. If we have been more concerned about what men think instead of what God thinks, we have reason to be afraid. If we do not have the fear of God, we have reason to be afraid.

First, let us follow the admonition of this verse, “*Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.*” (II Chronicles 19:7) This is the advice that God gave to Jehoshaphat through the prophet Hanani after Jehoshaphat had made an alliance with the ungodly king of Israel, king Ahab. It is good advice for us as well. If we search our hearts and see that we have compromised with the ungodly or ungodliness, let our hearts take hold of the fear of the LORD because with Him is no iniquity. He also does not respect persons for their importance or position. And He does not take gifts. No amount of good works or money will pacify God for the compromises we have made with ungodliness. No, He wants us to fear Him and take heed to what He tells us to do.

2. Seek the LORD

“*Jehoshaphat... set himself to seek the LORD.*” (II Chronicles 20:3) Jehoshaphat set himself, or occupied himself with the goal of seeking the Lord. We saw in chapter nine, verse three, that this was a habit with Jehoshaphat, “*thou hast... prepared thine heart to seek God.*” Since this was a habit in Jehoshaphat’s life, he was ready and knew what to do when trouble came.

What about us. Have we made it our goal to seek the Lord? Have we prepared our hearts to seek Him and occupied ourselves with reaching that goal? If not, what will we do when trouble comes? How will we get help? Colossians 3:1-3 says, “¹*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.* ²*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.* ³*For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*”

If we set our affection on and seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on God’s right hand, we will be in close communion with God. We will feel free to cry out to Him when trouble comes. Let us get busy today occupying ourselves with the goal of seeking the Lord.

3. Fast

Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast for all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem because he wanted their help in the battle. Perhaps we need to ask other people to seek the Lord with us and pray with us. Or perhaps our battles are much too personal. Do we continue to go along with our normal routine here and there and

maybe take time to send up a prayer or two to God as a cry for help? Or do we specifically set aside time to come to the Lord? If we are preoccupied with what we will eat, or with our work, or with entertainment or pleasing ourselves, our prayers will lack fervency and earnestness.

Maybe we need to set aside some of those things – a meal time, a time of fun and games, a time we would normally be working – and specifically choose a time to spend with God acknowledging our need of Him, seeking him, and asking for His help. Remember that during the fast that Jehoshaphat proclaimed, “*Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.*” (verse 4) The people of Judah were in earnest when they prayed and sought the Lord, and we should be too. If anything is more important to us than this – such as food, fun, work, and so on – we need to change our thoughts about these things and set them aside and make our priority one of seeking God and crying out for His help. All those other things are temporary, but the Lord is eternal and His arm is all powerful.

4. Pray

After we have prepared our hearts and set aside time to seek the Lord, then we must do so. We must do so in prayer. Look back at II Chronicles 20:5-9 and 12,13. Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah prayed specifically. They understood three very important things.

a. They had no might in themselves to defeat the foe

We also have no might in ourselves to defeat the foe. Jesus said, “*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*” (Matthew 28:18b) All power belongs to Jesus, not us. Jesus also said, “*Without me ye can do nothing.*” (See John 15:5) Without Jesus we cannot do anything. He has all power. We have no might. But, His might is available to us for the asking, and He promises, “*Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” (Matthew 28:20b)

b. They did not know what to do

We often do not know what to do either. But there is One who does. And this One invites us, “*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*” (James 1:5) All wisdom belongs to God. It is also available to us for the asking. God is ready to give it liberally.

c. Their eyes were upon the Lord because He was their only hope

Do we have our eyes on the Lord, or do we have them fixed on the problems? The problems cannot help us fix the problems. We cannot help ourselves fix the problems. The Lord is our only hope. “*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from*

whence cometh my help. ²My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.” (Psalm 121:1,2)

Let us pray to the Lord today. He is always there and His help is always available for the asking. Thank You, God!

5. Obey

When we pray to God, we expect Him to answer. When God answers, our responsibility is to obey. He has given us wisdom and told us what we must do. Now we must do it.

We saw from II Chronicles 20:14-17 that God gave Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah specific instructions. Some of these applied directly to their situation, but some of them can be applicable for us as well.

- a. Hearken; listen to God and His answer and instructions
- b. Be not afraid or dismayed because of the circumstances or because of the enemy
- c. The battle is not ours; it is God’s
- d. Stand still. We do not need to advance in the battle but to stand still.
- e. See the salvation of the LORD. God will bring the salvation; we just need to watch and see how the Lord is going to save us. He will fight the battle for us.
- f. Do not be afraid or dismayed because the Lord is with us.

Jehoshaphat also gave the people of Judah some other instruction. He said, *“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.”* (II Chronicles 20:20b) Not only should we believe God, we should also believe the spiritual leaders that God has sent to teach us. Sometimes we need to go to these spiritual leaders – pastors, older saints, parents – and seek their advice. Compare the advice with Scripture and believe it if it matches Scripture. We must honor and listen to these spiritual leaders and to the LORD our God, and He will help us to prosper in the way.

6. Worship

“And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.” (verse 18)

As soon as Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah heard God's answer, the first thing they did was worship God. Worship did not include jumping around everywhere and making a lot of noise. Worship including bowing before the Lord, faces to the ground, falling before Him in humility. It was an acknowledging of God's greatness in the face of their weakness. It was an acknowledgement that they believed and trusted God and that He could do what they could not. It was a deep and heartfelt gratefulness.

7. Praise and Sing

This is the most exciting part of revival and victory – the praising and the singing. It can be done before the victory is seen with our eyes.

“²²And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. ²³For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. ²⁴And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.” (verses 21-24)

Victory and God's deliverance are seen when we praise, and singing is an expression of our praise. Psalm 50:23 says, *“Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.”* God loves us and takes care of us; but, when we praise and this praise is mixed with obedience, God will show us His salvation. We will see His mighty hand at work.

God always sends victory and reward when battle is done in His way. We do not always get the same type of reward, but we can be sure that somehow God will turn our valley of battle into the valley of blessing, just like He did for Judah.

Therefore, let us begin to Fear, Seek, Fast, Pray, Obey, Worship, and Praise today.