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JEHOSHAPHAT'S FAST

2 Chronicles 20 tells us how King Jehoshaphat, when faced with attack from nations that plotted to crush Judah, ended up in great victory. **How did he do it?**

When Jehoshaphat was told that a vast army from three nations was coming to battle against him, he was fearful. It was a time of national threat and potential disaster.

But in his fear, Jehoshaphat did not look for help from other stronger nations. He did not get all his able men to come together for a conference on how to tackle the matter. He feared his enemies, yet in that fear, he did not look at what the enemies were trying to do to him.

Instead, Jehoshaphat turned his eyes to heaven and looked to God. He knew there was no way he could escape the hands of his enemies if God did not intervene. So he turned to the only One who could get him and his nation out of their problems.

It is clear from God's word that any time disaster threatens His nation, God will make provision for His people. In 2 Chronicles 7:13-14, God said that if His people who are called by His name would:

1. humble themselves,
 2. and pray,
 3. and seek God's face,
 4. and turn from their wicked ways,
- then, God will:
1. hear from heaven,
 2. forgive their sin and
 3. heal their land.

Jehoshaphat had an opportunity to obey God's word and to experience the reality of God's promise.

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. (2 Chron 7:15-16)

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

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. (2 Chron 20:3-4)

Not only did he set himself to seek the Lord but he also called for a national fast.

Fasting means humbling oneself before God. It is a desperate prayer of total reliance upon God. **Fasting is a way of telling God that you are serious with God and are willing to put even your daily necessary needs before God.**

What Jehoshaphat did really moved the heart of God. He made the whole nation, all their little ones, their wives and their children, fast and pray and seek the Lord together. They lifted their eyes away from their problems and looked to God (Psalm 121:1-2).

Jehoshaphat took the lead in prayer. He stood in the midst of the people and prayed the Scriptures, telling of the

great things God had done, reminding God of His promises to them. He confessed his helplessness to God.

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. (2 Chron 20:12)

In other words, he was saying that if God did not do something, all His people would perish in the hands of the enemy.

The result (I really like this):

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. (2 Chron 20:15b)

Fasting somehow gets God's attention more quickly. Immediately God acted. He took over.

Even King Jehoshaphat had to seek help from the King of kings. Why? Because earthly kings, or presidents, or prime ministers, - any world ruler - only have power over the nations they rule or have conquered. They are limited. Human resources are limited. No matter how powerful they are, they have no power over the real enemy, Satan, who causes all hardship, distress, wars, deaths and disasters, etc. that are going on.

God revealed to them the enemies' plan and instructed them on what to do (2 Chron 20:16-17).

Jehoshaphat did not doubt what God said. Even before he saw the result, he worshipped God. He led all the people of Judah and Jerusalem in bowing down and worshipping the Lord.

The next thing he did was to follow God's instructions carefully.

He set the worshippers before the army and they began to praise and worship the Lord.

And 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. (2 Chron 20:21)

What happened?

And 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. (2 Chron 20:22)

God caused confusion among the enemy and they began to kill one another. Instead of their being destroyed, God turned things around and their enemies began to destroy one another. There was so much to take back from their enemies, it took them three days just to collect the spoils.

Instead of death and defeat, they experienced great victory and great rejoicing.

And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about. (2 Chron 20:29-30)

We may not have physical enemies like Jehoshaphat did but we have spiritual enemies to combat. Some of you may be in serious problems with seemingly no way out.

Be encouraged to know that you too can receive deliverance if you are willing to fast and pray.