



Second Chronicles - Chapter Nineteen

- III [2 Chronicles 10:1-36:23 - The Kingdom of Judah Down to the Exile \(continues\)](#)
- III.d [2 Chronicles 17:1-20:37 - Jehoshaphat \(continues\)](#)
- III.d.iii [2 Chronicles 18:28-19:3 - Defeat and Death of Ahab \(continues/concludes\)](#)

Summary of Chapter Nineteen

Following the battle with Ahab against the Aramæans, Jehoshaphat returns to Jerusalem to face criticism from the Lord for joining with a pagan worshipping king rather than following the ways of the Lord in his own land. Therefore, Jehoshaphat goes throughout Judah, encouraging people to turn to the Lord. He also sets up honourable judges to deal with civil matters fairly and justly.

¹ King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned in safety to his house in Jerusalem. ² Jehu son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, 'Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, wrath has gone out against you from the Lord. ³ Nevertheless, some good is found in you, for you destroyed the sacred poles out of the land, and have set your heart to seek God.'

2 Chronicles 19:1-3

King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned in safety to his house in Jerusalem. This is the Chronicler's own addition to 1 Kings Chapter 22. This was the mercy of God. Jehoshaphat, clothed in the robes of the king targeted for death by the army of Aram, should have been killed in battle. Yet he cried out to the Lord and was preserved, returning safely to his house in Jerusalem. The fact that Jehoshaphat

reached home safely is significant. It contrasts his fate with Ahab's, and testifies to God's grace given to a person who was almost destroyed by undiscerning folly.

Jehu the son of Hanani had ministered in the days of Baasha, king of Israel; refer to 1 Kings 16:1-3. His denunciation of Jehoshaphat for his alliance with the ungodly Ahab echoes his criticism of the wicked Baasha: *<<Moreover, the word of the Lord came by the prophet Jehu son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, both because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and also because he destroyed it>>* (1 Kings 16:7). His father was also a brave prophet, speaking to king Asa and paying the price for doing so: *<<At that time the seer Hanani came to King Asa of Judah, and said to him, 'Because you relied on the king of Aram, and did not rely on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped you. Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with exceedingly many chariots and cavalry? Yet because you relied on the Lord, he gave them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the entire earth, to strengthen those whose heart is true to him. You have done foolishly in this; for from now on you will have wars.' Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in the stocks, in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this. And Asa inflicted cruelties on some of the people at the same time>>* (2 Chronicles 16:7-10).

Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Jehu exposed the sin of too much love in Jehoshaphat. He professed to love God, but he also demonstrated love to those who hate the Lord. He should never have entered his personal and military alliances with Ahab and the kingdom of Israel. Jehoshaphat should perhaps have read and considered: *<<Let those who love the Lord hate evil>>* (Psalm 97:10a NIV). Love here denotes not emotion but the commitment to support a treaty. God's wrath is a matter of immense seriousness, yet may be averted or mitigated by repentance; refer to 2 Chronicles 12:7 and 32:25-26.

Jehu's acknowledgment that some good is found in Jehoshaphat recognises his basic commitment to seek God and looks forward to his subsequent actions of repentance and reform; refer to 2 Chronicles 19:4-11. God did not want Jehoshaphat to be crushed by the rebuke through the words of Jehu, so he included a word of encouragement.

For you destroyed the sacred poles out of the land. God knew that Jehoshaphat did not approve of *all* evil, so he encouraged the king in the places where he did hate evil and refuse compromise.

III.d.iv 2 Chronicles 19:4-11 - The Reforms of Jehoshaphat

Jehoshaphat, whose name means 'Yahweh judges,' institutes a judicial reform that embraces both religious and civil matters. Jehoshaphat's primary concern is to

appoint judges of integrity and impartiality, who are exhorted to perform their office in the fear of the Lord.

⁴ Jehoshaphat resided at Jerusalem; then he went out again among the people, from Beer-sheba to the hill country of Ephraim, and brought them back to the Lord, the God of their ancestors.

2 Chronicles 19:4

Jehoshaphat resided at Jerusalem. This means that he restricted his foreign movements and did not again go into the northern kingdom either as a friend or as an adversary.

He went out again personally to conduct a continuation of the religious teaching mission described in 2 Chronicles 17:7-9, this time involving the king himself.

From Beer-sheba to the hill country of Ephraim describes the limits of Judah from south to north.

And brought them back to the Lord, the God of their ancestors. The wording implies that Jehoshaphat did this personally, i.e. he went out again. This was wonderful personal work in the cause of godliness on behalf of the king of Judah.

These itinerant campaigns have no real equivalent in the OT, and the prophets, even though they travelled about, were not involved in systematic teaching of the Word of God. The nearest parallel is in the NT, in Jesus' own itinerant ministry, which lasted for three years.

⁵ He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, ⁶ and said to the judges, 'Consider what you are doing, for you judge not on behalf of human beings but on the Lord's behalf; he is with you in giving judgement. ⁷ Now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take care what you do, for there is no perversion of justice with the Lord our God, or partiality, or taking of bribes.'

2 Chronicles 19:5-7

Jehoshaphat's action in appointing judges in the fortified cities of Judah and his words of admonition to them are inspired by the instructions in Deuteronomy 16:18-17:13. Israel's judges must act out of a sense of sacred duty, i.e. you judge not on behalf of human beings but on the Lord's behalf, and must reflect the Lord's concern for justice and impartiality.

You judge not on behalf of human beings but on the Lord's behalf. This was a high and appropriate charge to the judges of Judah. The reader can understand the interest the Chronicler had in including this material not recorded in 1 or 2

Kings, using the example of Jehoshaphat as an encouragement to the leaders of the rebuilding community of Jerusalem and Judah after the exile.

⁸ Moreover, in Jerusalem Jehoshaphat appointed certain Levites and priests and heads of families of Israel, to give judgement for the Lord and to decide disputed cases. They had their seat at Jerusalem. ⁹ He charged them: 'This is how you shall act: in the fear of the Lord, in faithfulness, and with your whole heart; ¹⁰ whenever a case comes to you from your kindred who live in their cities, concerning bloodshed, law or commandment, statutes or ordinances, then you shall instruct them, so that they may not incur guilt before the Lord and wrath may not come on you and your kindred. Do so, and you will not incur guilt. ¹¹ See, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the Lord; and Zebadiah son of Ishmael, the governor of the house of Judah, in all the king's matters; and the Levites will serve you as officers. Deal courageously, and may the Lord be with the good!'

2 Chronicles 19:8-11

To give judgement for the Lord. These are legal reforms for Jerusalem involving certain priests, Levites, and heads of families as judges. The Jerusalem court would have supplemented the existing local courts in the land and probably dealt with the more difficult disputed cases.

The presiding justices Amariah the chief priest and Zebadiah the governor were responsible for the interests of the temple and the crown, respectively. The Chronicler is careful to show through Jehoshaphat's reforms that, along with inculcating personal faith and obedience to the Lord (v.4), the judicial system has a vital role in ensuring that the nation's life is righteous and just, so that the people do not incur guilt and wrath.

Deal courageously, and may the Lord be with the good! The prominent theme of courageous obedience is repeated again in Chronicles. It was the job of the judges to courageously do what was good and right, and to then trust that the Lord will be with the good.