

* These notes are provided for personal devotional and study purposes only. They may not be published, distributed, or disseminated to others without the permission of the author.

Warfare Praying
Kings and Chronicles
Series: In the Days of Elijah
Rev. Andrew Hawkins, Ph.D.
The Village Church
September 28, 2025

I. Introduction

- A. 2 Chronicles 20 – one of the most glorious battle stories in the OT
 - 1. Jehoshaphat is confronted with an insurmountable enemy
 - a. Responds with a bunch of singers
 - b. God wins the battle
 - c. Judah rakes in the spoils
 - 2. At first glance, it appears that all we have to do to win such battles is to sing
 - a. Probably a little misleading
 - b. There is a lot more to learn about how to respond to adversity from this account
- B. One of the most important reasons to study it – we are faced with warfare as Christians
 - 1. May not be against people like Judah was
 - 2. But it's war nonetheless
 - 3. One of our problems is that as Christians we don't realize we're in a war
 - a. We're comfortable in the world; don't see the conflict which rages around us
 - b. We're asleep in the midst of battle
- C. Piper: Could it be that many of our problems with prayer and much of our weakness in prayer come from the fact that we are not all on active duty, and yet we still try to use the transmitter? We have taken a wartime walkie-talkie and tried to turn it into a civilian intercom to call the servants for another cushion in the den.
- D. When we do find out we're in a war, we are unprepared for the battle
 - 1. There is much to learn about how to be prepared for such occasions from this passage
- E. **2 Chronicles 20:1–2** (ESV) —
 - 1. 1 After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle.
 - 2. 2 Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar" (that is, Engedi).
- F. So the enemy has mustered its forces
 - 1. The intelligence report has come back to Jehoshaphat

- a. What had been a peaceful Judah now seems poised on the brink of war, even destruction, at the hands of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites
- G. Before we examine this chapter, need some background

II. Background

- A. This was not Jehoshaphat's first battle
 - 1. 2 Chronicles 18 – coaxed into an alliance with Ahab who wanted to attack Ramoth-Gilead
 - a. Military alliance was natural – Jehoshaphat had married into Ahab's family
 - 2. Ahab's prophets assured victory
 - a. Jehoshaphat wanted a second opinion – from a prophet of God
 - b. Micaiah prophesies that Israel would be scattered
 - (1) Lord put a deceiving spirit in mouths of Ahab's false prophets to coax him into the battle
 - c. Ahab puts him in prison
 - 3. Jehoshaphat doesn't get to hear from Micaiah himself
 - a. Ends up joining with Ahab in the battle
- B. Battle was a disaster for Israel and Judah
 - 1. Resulted in Ahab's death
 - a. "Random" arrow killed him in spite of how he disguised himself
 - 2. God protected Jehoshaphat
 - a. After Jehoshaphat had recognized his danger and cried out to God
- C. Important because of how Jehoshaphat responded to this defeat
 - 1. Jehu came and reprimanded Jehoshaphat for this alliance
 - a. Indicated that he was helping the wicked; loving those who hate the Lord
 - b. That he was bringing the wrath of God on himself
 - 2. Jehoshaphat responded by doing what he should have been doing all along
 - a. Traveled the countryside preaching repentance, bringing people back to the Lord
 - b. Appointed godly judges; admonishing them to judge rightly, for the Lord, and not for themselves
 - 3. In short, did what a godly king of Judah should do
 - a. Protect his subjects
 - b. Teach them about God
 - c. Appoint godly men to judge disputes
 - d. Assure measure of godliness
 - 4. Jehoshaphat was a reformer
 - a. Always a need for reform
 - (1) Tendency of God's people is toward apostasy
 - (2) Godly leaders need always to be tending toward reform for that very reason
- D. It is in this context that the next challenge to Jehoshaphat takes place

1. Impending war with Moab, Ammon, Edom
2. Need to see how Jehoshaphat deals with it

III. Preparation for warfare praying

A. Faithful to duties

1. This challenge comes, not when Jehoshaphat is sinning, but when he is doing what he is called to do as king
2. We are often under the false impression that bad things don't happen to us when we are behaving ourselves
 - a. Not true
 - b. In this case, Jehoshaphat is doing what is right, and he's still faced with an impending battle by overwhelming forces
3. One of the serious errors of the word of faith movement (prosperity gospel) is that we are always blest if we are doing what we're supposed to be doing
 - a. That wasn't the case with Jehoshaphat and it isn't the case with us
4. There are times when we are challenged, disturbed, even afflicted, when we are doing what we're supposed to
 - a. Most Christians are shocked by that
 - b. "How could this happen to me?"
 - c. You need to read your Bible
 - (1) All kinds of nasty stuff happens to godly people
 - (2) This is one example
 - (3) Job is another
 - (4) How about Christ?
5. But the important thing is that Jehoshaphat is more prepared for this onslaught when it takes place while he's doing his duty than he would have been if he were spiritually asleep, unproductive, lazy or whatever
 - a. Compare it with David
 - (1) What was David's greatest sin?
 - (a) Adultery and murder with Bathsheba and Uriah
 - (2) When did that take place?
 - (a) When his army was out in battle; he wasn't with them
 - (b) He had time on his hands
 - (c) He was basically doing nothing
 - b. Here Jehoshaphat is fulfilling his duties; he is in a strong position to respond to adversity effectively
6. Don't wait for the war to manifest itself before you go about the work of the Lord
 - a. Do your duty; fulfill your ministry
 - b. If you don't have a ministry, get with it!
7. When the battle rages, you'll be more prepared to respond effectively

B. Responds properly to fear

1. 2 Chronicles 20:3-4 (ESV) —

- a. 3 Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.
- b. 4 And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.
- 2. Yes, Jehoshaphat is afraid
 - a. It's ok to be afraid; natural response in the face of danger
 - b. We can be honest with God about our emotions in such occasions
- 3. But the difference is that Jehoshaphat doesn't let fear paralyze him
 - a. He doesn't make an appointment with his psychiatrist
 - (1) That's not to say psychiatrists aren't useful
 - (2) But when we're going along through life fairly normally, and a significant life event disturbs us, we shouldn't immediately run to the therapist
 - (3) We should run to God instead
 - b. Now if we're in a constant state of depression even when things are going well, psychiatrists can be useful
 - c. But under these circumstances, when a disastrous life event occurs, you need the Lord a lot more than a professional
- 4. That's what Jehoshaphat does – doesn't let fear paralyze him
 - a. So what is it that he does?

C. **Seeks the Lord first**

- 1. **2 Chronicles 20.3** – “set his face to seek the LORD”
 - a. What was an afterthought, and what he never followed through on with Ahab, became his first response in this circumstance
- 2. Ought to be our first response to adversity also
 - a. That's the case with any type of anxiety
 - b. Sermon on the Mount – Jesus' teaching on anxiety
- 3. **Matthew 6:31–33** (ESV) —
 - a. 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’
 - b. 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.
 - c. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

D. **Doesn't go it alone**

- 1. **2 Chronicles 20.3-4** – proclaimed a fast through all Judah; gathered Judah together to seek the Lord
- 2. Most of life's problems don't need to be addressed by ourselves acting alone
 - a. That's why God didn't just save us
 - (1) He saved us and put us in a community – the church
 - b. That's why “community” is built into our mission at TVC: Building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ
- 3. Jehoshaphat sought the Lord but not by himself

- a. When the going gets rough – you don't have to deal with it by yourself
- E. **Confession and repentance**
 - 1. **2 Chronicles 20:3-4** – proclaimed a fast
 - a. Fasting in scripture is often associated with self-examination, confession and repentance
 - b. Surely Judah is not without sin; Jehoshaphat himself was not without sin
 - c. It is an important early response to adversity that we examine ourselves
 - 2. **James 5:13-16** (ESV) —
 - a. 13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.
 - b. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.
 - c. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.
 - d. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.
 - 3. Here is instruction on how to pray when the going is tough – particularly in times of sickness
 - a. Confession is an important part of that activity
- F. That's what Jehoshaphat does in preparation
 - 1. Fulfills his duties
 - 2. Responds properly to fear
 - 3. Seeks the Lord first
 - 4. Doesn't go it alone
 - 5. Engages in confession and repentance – before he ever asks God for anything
- G. When Jehoshaphat does pray, how does he do it?

IV. **Content of warfare praying**

- A. **Knows Who to address**
 - 1. **2 Chronicles 20:5-6** (ESV) —
 - a. 5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,
 - b. 6 and said, "O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.
 - 2. **God Almighty**
 - a. **Psalms 115:3** (ESV) — 3 Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

- b. **Psalm 135:6** (ESV) — 6 Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.
 - 3. He addresses a sovereign, powerful God
 - a. Who sits in the throne room of the universe with every capacity under his control
 - 4. He addresses a God that is in control of the nations – they can do nothing apart from Him
 - a. **Proverbs 21:1** (ESV) — 1 The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.
 - 5. We would do well to remind ourselves, when we go to God, who it is that we are speaking to
 - a. He’s not impotent, like the idols of our day
 - b. He’s the One who spoke the universe into existence
 - (1) On whom we all depend for every breath that we take
 - 6. We would do better talking more to this God Almighty about our politics than to others about our politics!
- B. **Roots prayer in covenant relationship**
 - 1. **2 Chronicles 20:7–9** (ESV) —
 - a. 7 Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?
 - b. 8 And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying,
 - c. 9 ‘If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.’
 - 2. God has a special relationship with these people
 - a. Not because they are any better than any other people
 - b. But because they have a relationship with God
 - c. A relationship rooted in a covenant relationship
 - (1) In which God promises to provide for His people when they cry out to Him
 - d. God has responded in the past – He’s demonstrated His faithfulness
 - e. Once again, His covenant people God on the basis of His promises to them as a result of the Abrahamic covenant
 - 3. We too must root our prayers in our covenant relationship
 - a. We only come to God through Christ
 - b. It is the New Covenant that is the basis for our ability to approach God at all
 - (1) The finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross secured our right of passage into the very throne room of the universe
 - c. That’s why we pray in the name of Jesus
 - (1) Not just a formula

- (2) It's a recognition that we cannot come to God any other way than through the covenant we have with Him
 - d. God has promised, in Christ, to make us more than conquerors
 - (1) He has promised us to protect us and provide for us
 - (2) He has promised that nothing can separate us from His love
- 4. That's why we can come to Him with such confidence; indeed, why we are commanded to come to Him with confidence
 - a. **Hebrews 10:19–22** (ESV) —
 - (1) 19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,
 - (2) 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,
 - (3) 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
 - (4) 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
 - b. **Hebrews 4:16** (ESV) —
 - (1) 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

C. **Maintains innocence in relation to enemies**

- 1. **2 Chronicles 20:10–11** (ESV) —
 - a. 10 And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy—
 - b. 11 behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit.
- 2. Important to recognize that Jehoshaphat can say these things because they have gone through the time of confession and repentance
 - a. Sometimes when we engage in confession and repentance, we discover that we actually deserve the very affliction that we are experiencing
 - b. When that happens, our prayer would be different
 - (1) We would cast ourselves on God's mercy
 - (2) We would ask His forgiveness
 - (3) We would tell God to do with us as He sees fit
 - (4) We would entrust ourselves into His care entirely – even if it would mean discipline for us
- 3. But in this case, Judah is the oppressed; Moab and Ammon are the oppressors
 - a. In fact, a little history is recounted
 - (1) Israel passed through these territories when they were on their way to the promised land
 - (2) They did nothing to afflict them; God had not given them the land to the East of the Dead Sea

- b. But now, those who were treated kindly have risen up to deprive Israel of the land that God had given to them
 - (1) And it's not their land really – it's God's land
 - (a) Only given to Israel as a trustee, a steward
 - 4. So this makes God the One who is really oppressed
 - a. "This is Your land God, that they are seeking to take!"
 - 5. We would do well to remember that
 - a. In every battle, as long as we belong to God, all that we have really belongs to God
 - (1) It is His battle to fight
 - b. As long as we have been faithful in caring for His possessions, we can claim relative innocence with respect to our enemies and entrust ourselves into His care

D. **Recognizes his own impotence**

- 1. **2 Chronicles 20:12** (ESV) —
 - a. 12 O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."
- 2. Not only does he recognize his lack of power
 - a. He also indicates he is clueless about what to do about it
- 3. So often we realize we are out of our league, but we think we can reason our way out of it
 - a. Not so with Jehoshaphat – he knows he's overwhelmed and he makes no pretense about have a human strategy to solve his problem
- 4. We need to do the same
 - a. We need to recognize that we are impotent against our enemies
 - (1) World
 - (2) Flesh
 - (3) Devil (especially!)
- 5. Two errors Christians often commit with respect to the Devil
 - a. Deny his existence or involvement
 - b. Make too much of his ability
 - (1) Act as if he's equal with God and that somehow the ultimate outcome of the battle hangs in the balance and we don't know if God can pull it off
- 6. Solution to that error
 - a. Recognize the power of God
 - (1) Which Jehoshaphat has already done in identifying who he's addressing – Almighty God
 - b. Recognize that against Satan, we are dead meat
 - (1) Completely vulnerable
- 7. Advantage is then that
 - a. We don't try to engage the battle in the flesh
 - b. We rely totally on God for deliverance

V. **God's answer to warfare praying**

A. **God answers quickly when we pray like that**

1. Jahaziel, a Levite, is given the prophetic gift
 - a. Provides a message from God that is encouraging
2. **2 Chronicles 20:13–15** (ESV) —
 - a. 13 Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.
 - b. 14 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.
 - c. 15 And he said, “Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, ‘Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God’s.

B. **Fear not!**

1. Just like Jesus loved to say!
2. When we go to God, praying like this, there is no basis for fear
 - a. **Psalm 118:6** (ESV) —
 - (1) 6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

C. **Assurance – the battle is God's**

1. “Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but Gods.”
2. Again, since Jehoshaphat has taken his nation through confession and repentance, has sought God first, has determined that Judah is innocent before their enemies...
3. He has put himself clearly on God's side
 - a. And the battle is God's
4. What a great relief that is when God gives us that assurance, that's He's in this for us, that He will fight this for us!

D. **2 Chronicles 20:16–17** (ESV) —

1. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel.
2. 17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you.”

E. **Follow directions**

1. Jahaziel tells Jehoshaphat what to do
 - a. Go down, station yourselves at a certain location
 - b. Then watch
2. The important thing in this section is not to just sit and watch, but to follow directions

- a. Sometimes God gives other directions which make us more active participants
- 3. So listen to God after you've voiced your predicament and your fears
 - a. Do what He tells you!
- 4. If He tells you what to do through one of His godly leaders, follow their instructions
 - a. There's great safety in that
- 5. Many times people come to pastors in midst of great difficulty, receive godly advice and counsel, and then don't act on it
 - a. Rather voice the complaint and expect everything to work out
- 6. Don't do that
 - a. Follow directions – do what God tells you!

VI. The rest of the story

- A. **2 Chronicles 20:18–19** (ESV) —
 - 1. 18 Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD.
 - 2. 19 And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.
- B. **2 Chronicles 20:20–25** (ESV) —
 - 1. 20 And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed."
 - 2. 21 And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever."
 - 3. 22 And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.
 - 4. 23 For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.
 - 5. 24 When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped.
 - 6. 25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much.
- C. Judah worships God, follows directions, God destroys the enemies without Judah lifting a hand

- D. But all of that was rooted in the way Jehoshaphat approached God with his predicament
 - 1. Prepared properly by fulfilling his duties as a godly king
 - 2. Responds properly to his fear
 - 3. Seeks the Lord first
 - 4. Doesn't do it alone
 - 5. Engages in confession and repentance
 - a. Makes sure they are in right relationship to God
- E. Then he prays
 - 1. Knows who he is praying to
 - 2. Roots his prayer in a covenant relationship
 - 3. Maintains innocence with respect to his enemies
 - 4. Recognizes his own impotence
- F. Then he follows directions
 - 1. And God does the rest!

VII. Application

- A. Is that the way you normally respond to difficulty?
 - 1. I trust that this will help you find your way through such difficulty