

# WORSHIPING GOD AMID CALAMITY

## GOLDEN TEXT

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. *His love endures Forever*” (Psalm 136:1).

## USEFUL PRACTICE

Our faith in God leads us to worship him amid crises and difficulties.

## SCRIPTURE READING 2 Chronicles 20:1-12

1 - After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to wage war against Jehoshaphat.

2 - Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, “A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazezon Tamar” (that is, En Gedi).

3 - Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah.

4 - The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.

5 - Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord in the front of the new courtyard

6 - and said: “Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you.

7 - Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?

8 - They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying,

9 - 'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.'

10 - "But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them.

11 - See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance.

12 - Our God, will you not judge them? For 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."

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To emphasize that our faith makes us worship God in the midst of crises.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- I. To present** an overview of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms;
- II. To show** who King Jehoshaphat was;
- III. To emphasize** the trajectory of King Jehoshaphat and his enemies

### **INTRODUCTION**

In today's lesson, we will study the worst crisis that King Jehoshaphat had to face. From the story of Jehoshaphat, we learn that in the midst of crises, we must pray and seek the help of God. We will see that the king fasted, prayed and confessed his inability to resolve that situation. Jehoshaphat had faith. Therefore, he was victorious. In a gesture of gratitude, he praises and worships the Lord.

### **I - NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN KINGDOMS**

**1. The division of the kingdom of Israel.** The books of Kings and Chronicles present the story of the division between the tribes of the North

and the South in Israel. The Northern kingdom was formed by ten tribes and the capital was Samaria. The Southern kingdom was made up of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, and the capital was Jerusalem. In the days of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon and Naamah, an Ammonite woman, the kingdom became weak. With the economic weakening of the kingdom of Israel, Rehoboam decides to increase the tax burden, which was already heavy since the time of Solomon. Because of this burden that Rehoboam would not relieve, the tribes of Northern Israel broke with the tribes of the South (2 Chron. 10:1-15).

**2. The Northern Kingdom.** The Northern Kingdom managed to survive for about 200 years. It was ruled by different kings. For the most part, the monarchs are identified by the following expression: "he did evil" in the eyes of God. The evil of the rulers led God's people to experience different crises: political, social and religious.

**3. The Southern Kingdom.** According to the Reader's Guide to the Bible, this kingdom was governed by 19 kings who belonged to the family of David. Judah also faced many crises and had to fight against the same enemies of the Northern Kingdom. Both kingdoms suffered menacing and serious crises.

## II - KING JEHOSHAPHAT

**1. Who Jehoshaphat was (1 Kings 22: 41-43).** He was the fourth king of Judah. At the age of 35 he was a co-regent with his father Asa for three years (1 Kings 22:41-50). Certainly, he had the spirituality of his father as a ruling model. His rule was prosperous. The Scriptures state that God was with him, because "he followed the ways of his father David" (2 Chr. 17: 3). Jehoshaphat tore down the altars to the gods that were erected on the mountains. Unfortunately, the Kingdom of Judah took the path of idolatry, following the bad example of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.

**2. The care of Jehoshaphat in instructing the people (2 Chr 17: 1-19).** In the third year of his reign, Jehoshaphat commanded the Levites and priests to go to the town of Judah to teach the "Book of the law of the Lord." From town to town, those men gathered the people into the streets, since there were no synagogues or temples outside Jerusalem, and there they taught the people.

**3. The instruction and fear.** The princes, the Levites, and the priests taught the people the law of God (2 Chr 17:7,8). The teaching promoted great fear in the hearts of all (2 Chr 17:10). The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. A people who fears God will become prosperous.

### III - JOSEPH AND HIS ENEMIES

#### 1. **The dangerous alliance made with Ahab (2 Chron. 18:1-3).**

Jehoshaphat became rich and prosperous, but he stopped seeking the Lord and began to act for himself, relying only on his ability and his possessions. He made an alliance with Ahab, a wicked king who, together with his wife, established the cult of Baal in the Northern Kingdom. The covenant, sealed by marriage to one of Ahab's daughters, would bring him moral, physical, and spiritual defeat. God used Jehu to rebuke him. The prophet showed King Jehoshaphat how much the alliance he had made with Ahab had angered the Lord (2 Chron. 19: 2). Alliances made without the guidance and consent of God always bring harm.

#### 2. **Jehoshaphat faces threat from his enemies (2 Chronicles 20: 1-12).**

The Ammonites, the Edomites, and the Moabites joined forces to invade Judah, crossing the sea toward En-Gedi. They formed an army with many soldiers, horses and weapons. So Jehoshaphat feared his enemies. His fear led him to seek God by fasting. Unfortunately, many only remember to seek God when they are surrounded by difficulties. Do not decide to seek God only in times of crisis; Look for him all the time.

#### 3. **Jehoshaphat's action.**

He needed to act quickly, because a vast army made up of several enemies was coming toward him. In a moment of distress and despair, Jehoshaphat called on the name of the Lord, and proclaimed a fast (2 Chr 20: 3). Prayer and fast help us overcome crises. It was a whole nation seeking God. No believer should doubt the power of prayer. The people humbled themselves before God, showing their utter dependence on the Lord. The goal was to seek God's help and mercy in the face of the impending onslaught from the enemy. There is no crisis that cannot be overcome when we pray, fast and trust in the Lord. David declared in one of his songs: "Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 20: 7). It is time to call on the name of the Lord on behalf of our nation. We need to pray and fast so that the political and economic crisis can be solved. Jesus declared that certain kind of demon can only be cast out except by "prayer and fasting" (Mt 17:21). God told the prophet to tell the people that they would not need to fight or fear, for He himself would go out and fight for them (2 Chron. 20:17). Jehoshaphat and his subjects believed in the Word of God and worshiped and praised the Lord (2 Chronicles 20:18, 19). There was great joy and certainty about the victory that the Lord would give his people. When the enemy armies approached Jerusalem and heard the sound of praises, the Scriptures say that they fell into ambush and destroyed one another, without anyone from the people needing to

do anything. The enemy armies were destroyed because God confused them (2 Chron. 20:24). We learn that the enemy cannot withstand the people of God when there are prayer, fasting and true worship.

## **CONCLUSION**

The story of Jehoshaphat is a story of prowess. He sought the Lord in fasting, prayer, and worshiping, and God gave him victory in times of crisis. If you are facing a terrible crisis, like King Jehoshaphat, do not be discouraged. Do not surrender to the threats from the enemy. Pray, fast, worship and see the deliverance from the Lord.

