

## **THE KING WHO LOST HIS DISCERNMENT.**

So far in our series we have covered four Kings

- Absalom—the King who lost his destiny.
- Jeroboam – the king who lost his promise.
- Jehoash – the King who lost his trainer wheels.
- Uzziah – The King who lost his perspective.

This morning I want to talk about a King who lost his discernment.

We are going to talk about Jehoshaphat.

When you come to this man Jehoshaphat, I could just as easily include him in a series called, “How to live like a godly King.”

He was in so many respects, in almost all respects, an excellent King and a Godly man.

There was really only one aspect of his life that he ‘stumbled’ in.

I think most of us would be quite happy for someone to say of us, “He only had one small failing.”

**2 Chronicles 17:3-10.**

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**GOD was on Jehoshaphat's side because he stuck to the ways of his father Asa's early years. He didn't fool around with the popular Baal religion-- he was a seeker and follower of the God of his father and was obedient to him; he wasn't like Israel. And GOD secured the kingdom under his rule, gave him a firm grip on it. And everyone in Judah showed their appreciation by bringing gifts. Jehoshaphat ended up very rich and much honored. He was single-minded in following GOD; and he got rid of the local sex-and-religion shrines. In the third year of his reign he sent his officials--excellent men, every one of them...on a teaching mission to the cities of Judah. They made a circuit of the towns of Judah, teaching the people and using the Book of the Revelation of GOD as their text. There was a strong sense of the fear of GOD in all the kingdoms around Judah--they didn't dare go to war against Jehoshaphat.**

### **Verse 4:**

**“But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.”**

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The result of his seeking God diligently is recorded in **verse 5**

**“Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.”**

Remember Uzziah – who was mightily blessed and helped by God until he was strong – then his heart was lifted up in pride to his own destruction.

Jehoshaphat’s heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord.  
**Verse 6**

**“And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.”**

**Verse 10**

**“The fear of God fell on the surrounding nations and they refused to make war on Jehoshaphat.”**

This reminds me of a verse in the Book of **Proverbs**  
**{16:7}**

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**“When a man’s ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.”**

There are many other stories we could tell about this man Jehoshaphat. The battle of **2 Chronicles 20** is famous and has been the topic of many a sermon.

**2 Chronicles 18:1** introduces us to the one area in which he seemed to have a ‘blind spot.’ That ‘blind spot’ was to cost him and his offspring dearly.

**“By marriage he allied himself with Ahab ... “**

Ahab was the King of the Northern Tribes. He was a disaster in every sense of the word.

**1Kings 16:30-33** gives us some background to Ahab.

**Ahab son of Omri did even more open evil before GOD than anyone yet--a new champion in evil! It wasn't enough for him to copy the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat; no, he went all out, first by marrying Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and then by serving and worshiping the god Baal. He built a temple for Baal in Samaria, and then furnished it with an altar for Baal. Worse, he went on and built a shrine to the**

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**sacred whore Asherah. He made the GOD of Israel angrier than all the previous kings of Israel put together.**

It's to this man that Jehoshaphat allied himself in marriage.

The means of making an alliance in these times varied. The following factors were usually involved --

- Oral agreement of mutual protection.
- Oaths exchanged.
- An exchange of gifts.
- Eating together.
- Intermarriage.

He seems to lose his discernment in entering into an alliance with this wicked man.

In **2 Chronicles 18** these two Kings come together for a council.

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Ahab wants to go to war against Ramoth-Gilead and he wants Jehoshaphat to join with him in this military venture.

Jehoshaphat's response is surprising.

**2 Chronicles 18:3.** Jehoshaphat replied,

**"I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will join you in the war."**

This is a travesty of judgment and discernment.

The two Kings and the two Kingdoms were 'poles apart.'

Jehoshaphat went to war on the basis of this alliance.

Chapter 18 is a very interesting chapter.

Jehoshaphat wants to hear the Word of the Lord about this venture. **{Verse 4}**

Ahab brings in all his so-called prophets ---- 400 men.

All of them with one voice prophesy victory.

Jehoshaphat has been around the true long enough to be able to detect the counterfeit.

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### **Verse 6**

**“Isn’t there a real prophet?”**

Ahab says, “There’s Micaiah, but he always brings bad words to me.”

They send for this man. On the way the guard tells the prophet what all the others are saying and tells him “to go along with it.

Micaiah says, “Whatever – go and prosper.”

The Kings both know he’s hedging and press him to tell it all.

He gives it to them ‘both barrels.’

“God showed me Israel defeated. Ahab you will be killed. God showed me a heavenly council meeting and the decree was that you, Ahab, would be deceived into going into battle by lying spirits in the mouths of your prophets.”

In spite of recognizing the genuine, authentic prophetic voice, Ahab and Jehoshaphat go off to battle against the Syrians at Ramoth-Gilead.

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Ahab is killed, Israel is defeated and Jehoshaphat escapes only after Divine intervention on his behalf. **[Vs 31]**

On his return Jehoshaphat is met by Jehu the Seer.

### **2 Chronicles 19:2**

**“Jehu the seer, the son of Hanani, went out to meet him and said to the king, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Because of this, the wrath of the LORD is upon you.”**

Jehoshaphat responds well to this rebuke and seems to get back on track quickly.

God continues to honour and bless him.

Then comes another stumble.

### **2 Chronicles 20:35-37**

**Later, Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an alliance with Ahaziah king of Israel, who was guilty of wickedness. He agreed with him to construct a fleet of trading ships. After these were built at Ezion Geber, Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, “Because you have made an**

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**alliance with Ahaziah, the LORD will destroy what you have made.” The ships were wrecked and were not able to set sail to trade.**

Ahaziah is Ahab’s son.

He is drawn into another very unwise alliance, another very poor relationship.

You’d think he would have known better. The last foolish alliance, with this man’s Father, nearly cost him his life. Now he’s doing it again.

**Psalm 94:20** states,

**“Shall the throne of iniquity which devises evil by law have fellowship with you?”**

It’s a question he should have asked himself.

The New Testament puts it this way ...

**2 Corinthians 6:14-16.**

**“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers {Moffatt has translated that phrase “Keep out of all incongruous ties with unbelievers.”}**

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**For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?”**

In spite of his better judgment he is drawn into the alliance, and pays for it again.

I was interested to discover that the word used in this passage for, ‘**alliance**,’ comes from a Hebrew root word which has the idea of ‘**to fascinate**,’ ‘**a charmer**’ – as in an occult practice.

It would seem there is an element of demonic drawing involved in this situation.

His alliance with Ahab had introduced a ‘demonic hook’ that wasn’t easily shaken off. He was ‘charmed and fascinated’ back into an alliance with Ahab’s son.

He was drawn by a demonic alluring.

This isn’t that strange. It’s an often recognized fact that people who have been abused as Children are often drawn into relationships that continue to be abusive.

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The daughters of alcoholic Fathers often end up marrying alcoholics.

People who have been sexually abused seem to be targets for further abuse.

Why does this happen?

Can the explanations be purely psychological or sociological?

Psychological or sociological explanations may be true as far as they go, but I don't believe they are the full and final explanation.

Spiritual reasons are rarely delved into.

Who you make deep alliances/friendships with are far more telling than we often realize.

Let me give you another Scriptural illustration of this principle.

### **Numbers 25:1-3**

**“While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people**

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**ate and bowed down before these gods. So Israel joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor. And the LORD'S anger burned against them."**

The word **"joined,"** in the Hebrew has the idea of 'to link,' 'to adhere,' 'to fasten or frame.'

**Psalm 106:28** commenting on this incident says,

**"They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods."**

Joshua spoke about the same incident many years after it happened, saying,

**Joshua 22:17**

**"Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin even though a plague fell on the community of the LORD!"**

He was saying that the 'hook' from that unwise alliance was still present and causing Israel to stumble into further idolatry.

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In fact it kept plaguing Israel down through the centuries until God, once and for all, dealt with it during the Babylonian captivity.

Look at Jehoshaphat's legacy. Remember that he was, for the most part, a very godly man.

### **2 Chronicles 21:1.**

**“Then Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. And Jehoram his son succeeded him as king.”**

### **Verse 6**

**“He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD.”**

Jehoshaphat's unwise alliance is now bearing its bitter fruit in his offspring.

Jehoram dies – under God's judgment [**Vs 18.**]

His Son Ahaziah comes to the throne. .

### **2 Chronicles 22:2-4**

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**“Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother’s name was Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri. He too walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for after his father’s death they became his advisers, to his undoing.”**

Jehoshaphat, so memorable in so many ways, failed to be discerning in the alliances he entered into, with devastating results for himself and for his household.

Let me make this very practical in finishing.

The kind of alliances or friendships you enter into will make you or break you.

Close friends are more closely connected than we think. Though we view ourselves as independent individuals, we are joined to our close friends by something like permeable membranes, those ultra-thin walls which allow tiny particles to pass back and forth. What passes between close friends are values, convictions, morals, habits and goals.

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Despite our cherished illusions of individuality we end up by being deeply affected by, either the wisdom and godliness or the foolishness and godlessness, of our friends.

### **Proverbs 12:26**

**“The righteous should chose his friends carefully. For the way of the wicked leads them astray.”**

Look at **Proverbs 13:20.**

**“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”**

### **Proverbs 22:24-25**

**“Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.”**

The friendships you enter into will fashion you.

Be with the wise – become wise.

Be with the foolish – become foolish.

Foolish alliances can ruin you.

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The folly of your friends can seep into your life and taint your goals and desires.

Their faulty moral compasses can steer you off course.

### **1 Corinthians 15:33**

**“Do not be misled: Bad Company corrupts good character.”**

It's uncanny how often people whose lives are a mess can trace their downfall back to a choice they made to forge a questionable friendship.

People who search around diligently for the right Doctor, Dentist, Accountant, Lawyer and even Golf Professional or Tennis coach, don't seem to show any care for the friends they chose.

In this arena of life they are passive and unmotivated, completely lacking discernment.

I'm obviously not talking about withdrawing our friendship from everybody who isn't a Christian.

Lost people matter to God. Often these lost people will only be reached by a friendship that we forge with them.

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We should use every opportunity we have to touch their lives in a positive way – be kind to them, serve them, love them, and point them to the love of God in Jesus.

What I'm talking about are those deep alliances and friendships that we enter into that are much more than for the purpose of evangelism.

These are the friendships – possibly only a few in a lifetime – that we enter into and we know will be the 'shaping' relationships of our lives.

These relationships had better be well thought through because they will shape you and change you.

How they change you – for better or for worse -- will depend on the kind of people you chose to share your life with.

It's important for Kings that they chose wisely.