

Read Through the Bible

Week 23: June 7th – 12th

Readings: II Chronicles 17-36 and John 15-19:22

Reflections and Questions for Thought
By Cindy Emery

Chronicles covers the same time span as Samuel and Kings. The writer of Chronicles evaluates the kings on their faithfulness to God. The sin and negative actions of these kings are omitted. Chronicles was written for Jewish exiles living in captivity in Babylon. Chronicles reminds them that they are still God's chosen people and that God's covenant promises still have meaning for them.

This week's Old Testament reading begins in II Chronicles 17 with Jehoshaphat King of Judah. Samuel and Kings give very little information on his reign. The Chronicler devotes four chapters to Jehoshaphat (II Chronicles 17-20). In chapter 20 we read the prayer of Jehoshaphat and learn of his miraculous victory over the Moabites and the Ammonites.

A military threat arises. Moabites, Ammonites and Meunites are advancing on Judah. Jehoshaphat calls all the people to fast, and to come together to seek God's help. Jehoshaphat leads his nation in prayer (Chapter 20:6-12). Jehoshaphat praises God as the only God, the God of their ancestors and the ruler of all nations. He recalls how God has conquered their enemies in the past. Now in this crisis, Jehoshaphat acknowledges their helplessness and appeals to God to save them.

The Lord's answer comes through Jahaziel, one of the Levites. He tells Jehoshaphat and all the people. "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of

this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you." (II Chronicles 20: 15b-17)

In the morning, they march out with the praises of God on their lips. While the people of Judah praise God, their enemies are overtaken by ambushes and infighting. By the time Jehoshaphat and his army arrive, there is nothing to be seen but dead bodies. It takes them three days to collect the plunder.

In the New Testament readings for this week we see once again that "the battle is the Lord's". Here Jesus is accomplishing what He came to earth to do (the Father's will). His battle includes being questioned by Annas, Caiaphas (the high priest) and Pilate (the Roman governor). He is slapped, spit on, flogged, crucified and experiences separation from God the Father. Jesus Christ does all this to pay the price that my sin demands. Truly the battle is the Lord's.

Do I really believe that the battle is the Lord's? Do my actions reflect that? When faced with problems do I turn to the Lord for council or do I seek advice from a friend? Is prayer my last desperate act? Am I willing to submit my will to God's will for me?