

Overwhelmed by Circumstances

Lessons from II Chronicles 20:1-29

"We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you" (v.12^b)

INTRODUCTION

Following the death of Solomon (II Chron. 9), Rehoboam was crowned King of Israel. During the early years of his 17 year reign, Israel split into two kingdoms - Judah and Benjamin (in the South) versus the remaining tribes. It is recorded of Rehoboam (as King of Judah), that he *"did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the Lord"* (II Chron.12:14).

When Rehoboam died, his son, Abijah, reigned over Judah for three years. He, in turn, was succeeded by his son, Asa, who reigned for 41 years. Asa's reign was of two parts – the first of trust and reliance on God and the second of self-determination and brutal oppression of some of the people.

Upon Asa's death, Jehoshaphat, his son, became king, ruling for 25 years. In his younger years he walked faithfully before the Lord carrying out some important religious reforms. It was probably about the middle of his reign that the events of II Chronicles 20 occurred – perhaps 120 years after the death of King David.

JUDAH'S PREDICAMENT (20: 1-4)

Peoples from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir (nations to the south and east of Israel) with a "vast" army came to make war upon Judah. By the time news reached Jehoshaphat, they were already at En Gedi – about 50 km from Jerusalem. Ch. 18:16,17 tells us that Jehoshaphat had a formidable army of at least 1,160,000 fighting men, although it was probably depleted following the military defeat recorded in Ch.18.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S PRAYER (20: 5-12)

1. The Preamble (v.5 – 9). A reflection on:

- **The Character of God** (v6). The focus here is on His omnipotence and power. In itself it is a statement of faith, recognising (a) that God has taken a personal interest in His people (c.f., Matt.28:20), (b) that he rules over nations, and (c) His omnipotence and power.
- **The Grace of God** (v.7). Not only had He driven out the inhabitants of the land giving it forever, to Abraham's descendents (Gen.15:18-21), but He had also called Abraham, "his friend" (c.f., Is.41:8).

The Words of God (v.8,9). Jehoshaphat reminds the Lord of His promise of His blessing upon His people should they obey Him c.f., Deut. 28:7.

The Problem (v.10,11)

The Edomites (descendents of Esau), were the very peoples that 650 years earlier, God had not allowed Israel to invade during their Exodus from Egypt (Num.20:14-21). Despite provocation, Israel had turned away from their land and taken a long and circuitous route through the desert to reach the promised land.

The Plea (v.12). *"O our God, will you not judge them?"* What was the foundation for this plea?

Powerlessness

"For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us". In the face of the circumstances confronting him, Jehoshaphat and all of Judah felt overwhelmed and powerless. They were confronted with invasion of the land and at best slavery and worst death. A modern example occurred in 1948. Within a few hours of Israel being declared an independent nation of 770,000 people, the United Arab League with a combined population of 150 million marched against Israel, determined to, *"push the Jews into the sea"*.

In both cases, delivery could only occur by the power of God.

Do we ever feel overwhelmed by the circumstances confronting us, weak and powerless in the face of a tsunami of the struggles and problems of life?

If you are new or visiting; *a special warm welcome to you.* We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

Today

- Overwhelmed by Circumstances: Speaker John Hannah

Friday

sun 23rd September - school holidays - no youth group

coming up Word of Life volleyball tournament keep Saturday 6th October free

Next Week

Sunday

- Ross Pettigrew

Prayer Requests

Jillian Gow Japan writes: National holidays in September and October are to be used for ministry conferences. Nagano assembly has a seminar schedule for mid September. On September 24th Saku assembly is planning to hold its first ministry conference. I Matsumoto a combined ministry session, with Saku believers, is being planned for October 8th. We will appreciate prayer for these gatherings and the speakers.

We have been saddened to hear of the passing to Glory of Margaret Windsor. Margaret was a long serving mission partner (along with her husband Neal) in Papua New Guinea and family beginning in 1962. Please remember Neal and the family at this time giving thanks for the many lives that Margaret influenced for God both in PNG and in New Zealand.

