



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 1679

2 Chronicles 21:20 *“He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years; and he departed with no one's regret, and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.”*

Our verse today is about Jehoram, one of the kings of Judah. He was not a good king, and not a good person. When he became king, he ordered the assassination of all of his brothers and some of the rulers of Judah. He married Ahab's daughter, the king of Israel, which influenced him further into idolatry. God wasn't pleased with this king. His own people revolted. He was stricken with a deadly disease that God had prophesied was coming. For two years he suffered. At the end, his bowels came out and he died in great pain. When he died, he wasn't given the honor like other kings. He died, as our verse states, with no one's regret. This reminds me of the scene from the Wizard of Oz, when the wicked witch melts away and her guardsmen sing, "Ding, dong, the witch is dead, which o' witch, the wicked witch." They rejoiced at her departure.

There are a few things to notice about King Jehoram.

He lived forty years, but wasted the time that God gave him. He was in the position to help others. He was in a role of leadership. He could have, but he didn't. He helped the nation spiral downward. A forty year old dying, seems young, but he had eight years to do something. In those eight years he bowed to false gods and killed his own family. God had enough. Give this man a dozen years, and things would not have turned around. There are those all around us who walk in the shadows of Jehoram. They waste a lifetime doing nothing. Their world is spent on doing what they want to do, ignoring others, and not being a participant in the greatest work on earth, God's kingdom. How sad to witness a life wasted.

He hurt his family. Jehoram killed his brothers so that they would not be rivals to the throne. Instead of reigning in goodness, his was a reign of terror and fear. What Jehoram did to his family others are doing today verbally and mentally. They are destroying their families. The criticism, ridicule, tension, abuse is crippling their families and setting the young hearts and minds on a course to continue this destructive dysfunction.

(OVER)

He left no positive legacy for others to follow. All of us leave footprints for others to follow. My fellow preachers need to realize this. Someday, another preacher will be replacing them. That's the nature of things. How you conduct yourself can make it easier or harder on the next guy. Some come in with great demands and leave in such a hurry or leave in a mess that it makes things difficult for those who follow. Some churches have a sour taste about young preachers because they have had bad experiences with one after another. Young children will grow up and you may be the first preacher that they remember. What impression are you leaving, Mr. Preacher? For Jehoram, when he died, no one regretted it. They found relief when he was out of the picture. What a terrible way to live. If people can't wait for you to die, you are not doing something right.

He ignored the opportunities for good. Jehoram received a letter from Elijah, God's prophet. THE ELIJAH. Can you imagine getting a letter from Elijah. The letter contained word of coming bad news. Elijah was in the area. Jehoram could have sat down with Elijah and learned. He could have changed his ways had he allowed God's prophet in his life. Isn't this scene repeated today? We don't have prophets, but we have men and women of God. A godly, faithful grandpa in the family. Does anyone allow him to influence them? Is the family falling apart, with miserable marriages, overcome with worry and materialism, and there sits grandpa with his Bible opened in his lap, and everyone ignores his godly influence. Week after week, that old man of God will assemble with God's people, yet the rest of the family is too busy and too selfish to think about God. Then grandpa dies. The family gathers for a funeral. They call the preacher that grandpa knew and loved. They hear about a godly man and a godly life, but as soon as they leave the cemetery, the family is finished with grandpa, and his faith. How sad to see so many families like this. Right among them is a living example. They close their eyes to it. They don't want anything to do with it, never realizing, like King Jehoram, their ways could change and even be better if they listened and followed the ways of God. I have preached these kinds of funerals. I look at all those family members and think why haven't you ever come to worship? Why is all of this talk about death, Heaven and the Bible so foreign to you? And when one of them dies, they have no idea who to call to preach the funeral. They have no one in their circle of friends that is a Christian. They start calling churches, any church, just to find an available preacher, so he can preach them into Heaven. So, so sad. Elijah sent a letter to Jehoram. For eight years he could have sat at the feet of Elijah. He didn't.

His choices put him in trouble with God. That's the same for all of us. Our choices-whether to follow God or to ignore God, will determine where we spend eternity. It doesn't matter whether you are a king, or a servant, we all have a choice with God. It doesn't matter what education opportunities you have. It doesn't matter what history you have. We each have a choice with God. Follow Him or ignore Him-but those choices come with consequences both now and later. You can't live like a sinner and die like a saint. No one is preaching you into Heaven. You have chosen Heaven by following God and glorifying Him.

Jehoram died and no one regretted it, not even God. What a sad commentary on a selfish and empty life. Isn't it time that you started making some wise choices in your life? Isn't it time for you to make a spiritual difference for others? Isn't it time for you to walk with the Lord and do what He wants you to do?

Roger Shouse

