

“Unequally Yoked”
2 Kings 8:16-18
(Preached at Trinity, April 17, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Typical of the narrative passages in 2 Kings, the author suddenly transfers our attention from one scene to another. We are now taken back to the Southern Kingdom; the first reference to Judah since the final verses of 1 Kings where our focus was upon Jehoshaphat. Now we are told about the son of Jehoshaphat, Joram (Jehoram). He is not to be confused with the Jehoram of the Northern Kingdom who succeeded Ahaziah after he fell through the lattice of the upper chamber of his palace.
2 Kings 1:17 NAU - "So Ahaziah died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And because he had no son, Jehoram became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah."
2. While Jehoshaphat may have been a good king who sought to honor God, his son did not follow in his footsteps. The author quickly tells us part of the reason:
2 Kings 8:18 NAU - "He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab became his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD."
3. One has to wonder why Jehoshaphat would take Ahab's daughter as a wife for his son. Alliances have always been desired among kings, but at what cost? An ecumenical movement most often demands compromise and accommodation. Such was the case with the alliance between Jehoshaphat and Ahab.
 - A. Surely, Joram would have been raised in righteousness, but his heart remained unchanged. His marriage set him on a course to destruction.
 - B. We should also notice that Joram was made king while Jehoshaphat was still alive. They served as coregents for a season. Like many parents, Jehoshaphat was blind in the appraisal of his children. How often do you hear the mother of a murderous son say before the news cameras, "He is such a good boy." How prone we are to dote upon our children, refusing to correct them.
 1. Eli doted upon his sons, Hophni and Phinehas. God judged Eli and his sons.
1 Samuel 3:13 NAU - "For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them."
 2. David never held Absalom accountable for his sin. David's style of parenting can be summarized as we read about Adonijah, David's son after Absalom:
1 Kings 1:6 NAU - "His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, "Why have you done so?"
 - C. Jehoshaphat was a good king, yet was at times lacking in discernment. And so, he allowed Joram to marry Ahab's daughter.

4. The point of the author is clear. Marrying a wicked wife (or husband) can have a disastrous ending. We've already seen it with Ahab. He married Jezebel, a pagan princess full of wickedness, and her idolatry soon seized the heart of Ahab.
- 1 Kings 16:31 NAU** - "It came about, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went to serve Baal and worshiped him."
- 1 Kings 21:25 NAU** - "Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife incited him."
- A. Ahab and Jezebel had a daughter they named Athaliah. They taught her the ways of their defiled hearts. We'll read more of her wickedness later. Joram married her and soon succumbed to the Ahab family wickedness. They must have been pleased with their son-in-law.
- 2 Kings 8:18 NAU** - "He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done,"
- Matthew Henry: "The degeneracy of the old world took rise from the unequal yoking of professors with profane. Those that are ill-matched are already half-ruined."¹
- B. It would seem that the Joram family was set on evil. His wickedness knew no bounds and his wife was following in the footsteps of her mother, Jezebel. The two of them were ruthless and conniving.
- 2 Chronicles 21:4 NAU** - "Now when Jehoram had taken over the kingdom of his father and made himself secure, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and some of the rulers of Israel also."
- C. **Verses 20-22** imply God's displeasure upon his reign. The Edomites had been subdued under Jehoshaphat. Now we find them rebelling and breaking free. Joram attacks but finds himself surrounded. By mounting a counterattack in the middle of the night he barely escapes and his army runs home in defeat.
- And then we are told Libnah revolted at the same time. Libnah was a Levitical city in southwest Judah. It demonstrated the extent of the spiritual decline in Judah.
- D. To seal God's judgment upon Joram, his life ended in great suffering. He was afflicted with some form of disease that affected his bowels. He suffered for two years and then died an excruciating death. This was from the hand of God.
- 2 Chronicles 21:12-15 NAU** - "Then a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet saying, "Thus says the LORD God of your father David, 'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father and the ways of Asa king of Judah, ¹³ but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot as the house of Ahab played the harlot, and you have also killed your brothers, your own family, who were better than you, ¹⁴ behold, the LORD is going to strike your people, your sons, your wives and all your possessions with a great calamity; ¹⁵ and you will suffer severe sickness, a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the sickness, day by day."

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 535.

2 Chronicles 21:18-19 NAU - "So after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable sickness. ¹⁹ Now it came about in the course of time, at the end of two years, that his bowels came out because of his sickness and he died in great pain."

5. We can see in **Verses 26-27** the family tradition of evil would continue. When Joram died his son, Ahaziah succeeded him to the throne. The author makes a point of telling us who his mother is – Athaliah.
 - A. And then we're told of his wickedness. He followed the path of his grandpa. **2 Kings 8:27 NAU** - "He walked in the way of the house of Ahab and did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab *had done*, because he was a son-in-law of the house of Ahab."
 - B. Notice in **Verse 27** the "house of Ahab" is mentioned three times. Ahaziah was related to the Ahab dynasty by marriage and continued the tradition of wickedness. The plague of wickedness that infected the Northern kingdom had now made its way into the Southern kingdom.
 - C. The rest of the chapter serves to set up the scene of God's judgement that will take place in the next chapter. The only thing that stops God from destroying Judah was the covenant promise He made with David. **2 Kings 8:19 NAU** - "However, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David His servant, since He had promised him to give a lamp to him through his sons always."
6. Bad marriages have been the downfall of many. By bad marriages, I mean the unholy union between a believer and unbeliever, between the God fearer and the infidel. God's people must be careful to remain pure. God's charge is always, "Be holy for I am holy." "Come out from among them." Forsaking these charges always ends in disaster. **1 Kings 11:1-4 NAU** - "Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, *for* they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. ⁴ For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father *had been*."
7. It was one of the sins that led to the Great Flood in Noah's day. At the end of **Genesis 4** we read: **Genesis 4:26 NAU** - "To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then *men* began to call upon the name of the LORD." **Genesis 5** describes a Godly lineage beginning with Seth and ending with Noah. They were men who called upon the name of the Lord. Men who walked with God, worshipped and served God. But **Chapter 6** opens with a serious problem. The sons of God were intermarrying with the daughters of men. In other words, they were taking ungodly wives. There was intermarriage between believers and unbelievers. This resulted in the corruption that would end with the great flood that would destroy life from the face of the earth. **Genesis 6:1-2 NAU** - "Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose."

- A. They were more concerned about the outward appearance than upon true inner beauty.
Genesis 6:5-6 NAU - "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart."
- B. Augustine wrote, "When they were captivated by the daughters of men, they adopted the manners of the earthly to win them as their brides, and forsook the godly ways they had followed in their own society."
8. When God made His covenant with Abraham to raise up a people and grant them a land He charged them:
Deuteronomy 7:2-4 NAU - "and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them. ³ "Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. ⁴ "For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you."
9. While dwelling in Babylon many of the Israelites intermarried with the foreign women of that land.
1. These women were once again leading God's people into idolatry
 2. They were commanded to put away their pagan wives
See Ezra 9:1-3; 10:1-3, 11-12, 44
Ezra 9:2 NAU - "For they have taken some of their daughters as *wives* for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has intermingled with the peoples of the lands; indeed, the hands of the princes and the rulers have been foremost in this unfaithfulness."
Ezra 10:10-11 NAU - "Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have been unfaithful and have married foreign wives adding to the guilt of Israel. ¹¹ "Now therefore, make confession to the LORD God of your fathers and do His will; and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives."
10. We too dwell in a land where the inhabitants must be avoided
1. We owe them the Gospel
 2. We owe them compassion and mercy
 3. But God forbids us to have close relationships with them.
 4. A believer must not be united with an unbeliever, especially in marriage. This is clearly taught in the Bible
1 Corinthians 7:39 – "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."
11. In **2 Cor. 6** Paul described the utter absurdity of entering into close relationships with the people of this world. He puts it in the form of a comparison/contrast.
1. **Verse 14** - "Do not be bound together with unbelievers"
 KJV - "Be ye not unequally yoked together"
 2. What partnership have righteousness and lawlessness
 3. What fellowship has light with darkness?
 4. What harmony has Christ with Belial

5. What has a believer in common with an unbeliever?
 6. What agreement has the temple of God with idols?
- B. There is only one solution to such a strange companionship
 "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord.
 "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you."

Conclusion:

1. This is the nature of Christianity, the nature of God's redeeming grace. We have been saved unto holiness. We are God's holy people, set apart for His own glory.
 Peter wrote:
1 Peter 2:9 NAS - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"
2. We are to marry consistent with our position as God's people. Our children are to be holy, dedicated to God.
1 Corinthians 7:12-14 NAU - "But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³ And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy."
 - A. What does this mean? Does it mean that an unbeliever is saved by marrying a believer? Or children are saved because they have believing parents.
 Paedobaptists imply this when they baptize their infants and add them to the church.
 - B. It means the believing spouse will have a positive effect upon the marriage –
 1. The unbelieving spouse is sanctified - ἁγιαζῶ - sanctify, hallow, be holy - to separate from profane things and dedicate to God, to consecrate to God.
 2. The unbelieving spouse is not sanctified in the sense of salvation or righteousness but of being set apart.
 3. The blessings of God are upon the home because of the believer – the home is set apart. God spared many wicked people in Sodom for the sake of one righteous man.
 The home is blessed by the continuing prayers of the believer.
 4. The righteousness of the believer is a continual testimony to the lost mate.
1 Corinthians 7:16 NAU - "For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?"
1 Peter 3:1-2 NAU - "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ² as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."

- C. Likewise the children are set apart - ἅγιος
1. The children of lost parents are unclean in the sense of being exposed to continual moral filth – There are consequences.
Exodus 20:5-6 – visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; ⁶ And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
 2. The children of believers are blessed by being continually exposed to Biblical precepts.