

A year ago today our nation was stunned by the attacks of terrorists on our own soil. War was declared. We felt helpless in many ways, vulnerable. It was hard to fathom what had just transpired. Some individuals were willing to take their own lives in order to turn passenger planes into bombs which would kill men, women, and children.

So much has happened since then. This past year has been one of ups and downs. The Middle East remains a time bomb to this day. The Stock market continues to be volatile. Even the national pastime of our country, baseball, caused frustration as a strike loomed until a last minute settlement. These are precarious times.

We need to pray for our nation—and for the nations. And we will pray this evening. But first, we need a model for how to pray in a time of crisis. And for how to respond when God answers. We have such a model in 2 Chronicles 20. In 2 Chronicles, a nation responds to a crisis.

Let’s walk through the episode step by step—and learn from it.

I. The Crisis (1-2)

Q: What was the crisis? It was a national crisis
Read verses 1-2.

II. The Response to the Crisis (3-13).

Three things happened. It started with the leadership.

A. The king proclaimed a national fast (3).

Q: Why did they fast?

B. The people sought help from the Lord (4).

Q: Why is it significant that they came from “every” town?

C. The king led the people in prayer (5-13).

The king led in prayer, but the people were engaged (look at verse 13). This is an amazing prayer in light of the desperate situation. Notice six elements...

1. *He acknowledged God’s sovereignty (6).*

Q: Why is it important to begin prayer with this truth?

2. *He recalled God’s past victories (7).*

Q: What had God done in the past?

3. *He reviewed the purpose of the sanctuary (8-9).*

The sanctuary was the place Solomon built for the worship of God. God’s reputation was linked to that building. If that building went down, so did God’s honor—or at least so Jehoshaphat thought. This perception got the people into trouble later (remember Stephen’s speech in Acts 7). But for now it fit perfectly. Indeed, if God didn’t do something the temple was in danger. And without a temple, there was no sacrifice. And without sacrifice there is no approach to a holy God.

4. *He described the present crisis (10-11).*

Q: What piece of historical info did the king mention here?

5. *He asked God for help (12a).*

Q: What did he want God to do?

6. *He expressed absolute dependence (12b).*

This is a great prayer admission. “We don’t know what to do.”

Discuss: Why don’t we pray those words more often?

III. The Answer from God (14-17)

It came from Jahaziel, a descendant of Asaph (an important connection; he’s the one who wrote Psalm 73). Here’s what God said through him...

A. Don’t be afraid.

B. The battle isn’t yours, but mine.

Wow! How we need that reminder!

C. Just do what I tell you to do, even if it doesn’t make sense.

Q: What did God ask His people to do?

IV. The Response of the People (18-21)

Please notice they did this *before* God intervened. The crisis is still at hand.

A. They worshiped the Lord (18).

Notice the posture...

B. Some Levites praised the Lord (19).

Singing has an important part in this whole story.

C. They obeyed the Lord’s instructions (20a).

Q: What step of obedience did they take?

D. The king called for faith in the Lord (20b).

Notice how the leader called his people to take action, the action of faith.

Q: What did he call them to believe in? Note two things...

E. A men’s ensemble sang praise to the Lord (21).

Q: What did they sing about in their song? The Lord’s character!

V. The Outcome (22-30)

What happened next is awesome...

A. The Lord set ambushes (22).

Q: When did God take action? As the people *began* to sing.

Q: What lesson can we learn from this?

B. The enemy self-destructed (23).

C. There was too much plunder to carry (24-25).

D. The people assembled to praise the Lord (26-28).

Q: What do we learn about praise from this account?

E. The fear of God came upon the surrounding countries (29).

F. God gave His people rest (30).

Implications: Let’s discuss...

1. What do we learn about God from this account?

2. What do we learn about what God wants from us?

We are a nation in crisis, a moral crisis. Let’s pray...