

# *Lessons from a Great Man's Failures (I)*

By Andrew McColl, 24/7/2012

## Introduction:

The Bible tells us that Biblical history is very important for us to learn from. Speaking about the judgments upon the children of Israel under Moses, Paul tells us that “these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall” (I Cor.10:11-12).

The Bible shows us that we are all sinners, and that “we all stumble in many ways” (James 3:2). Because we have such short memories and so readily sin, we are commanded to examine the lives of people who have lived in the past, to learn from their example. It was Hilaire Belloc who said that

*time after time mankind is driven against the rocks of the horrid reality of a fallen creation. And time after time mankind must learn the hard lessons of history; the lessons that for some dangerous and awful reason we can't seem to keep in our collative memory.*

There are four chapters of the Bible detailing the reign of Jehoshaphat in Judah (II Chron.17-20). He came to the throne of Judah around 900 B.C., and the scripture is quite positive about him. It tells us initially that

*the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. So the Lord established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honour (II Chron.17:3-5).*

So Jehoshaphat starts off well, and the Bible acknowledges this. But as Derek Prince used to say, “the greatest test of all, is success.” At the start of chapter 18, the scripture tells us that “Jehoshaphat had great riches and honour, and he allied himself by marriage with Ahab.”

What had happened here?

Three generations earlier, God had judged Solomon's arrogant son Rehoboam and divided his kingdom, so that out of the twelve tribes of Israel, he only retained the oversight of Judah (see II Chron. 10). As a result, Judah was generally governed by godly kings, but Israel was not.

By the time of Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah, Ahab reigned in Israel, but Ahab was both an idol worshipper and a murderer (I Kings 21). God had commanded Israel even before they entered the promised land that in relation to the inhabitants of that land,

*...you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them, and show no favour to them. 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.  
For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods...  
(Deut.7:2-4).*

Why this emphasis on covenant? Because that is how God deals with people. It's not "easy come, easy go" with Him. He chooses the individuals, and signs them up. Forget all this free-will nonsense that the Church has taught for centuries, because man's will is fallen, like every other aspect of his being. God does it all. Jesus said, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you..." (Jn.15:16). From the first, He has always dealt with people on the basis of His covenant. It was the covenant that Adam and Eve transgressed in the garden, bringing them into judgment. It was the covenant that Israel repeatedly transgressed under Moses, also bringing the nation into judgment.

One aspect of God's character we don't speak about much today, is His jealousy. His jealousy is because of His covenant. Heard any sermons on God's jealousy in your time? I haven't, but God's jealousy is mentioned about 30 times in the Bible. Perhaps our lack of understanding of His jealousy today, says something about the state of the Church today.

God doesn't take kindly to it when His people form alliances with ungodly people. He views it as a form of treason, because it is spiritual adultery-unfaithfulness to Him. The First Commandment was "you shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex.20:3), and God will bring His people into judgment for this kind of behaviour. If Christians think they can be believers in Christ and yet sleep around (either literally or spiritually), they should expect God's judgment. This was where Jehoshaphat fell down.

*From the viewpoint of a foreign king seeking to undermine Israel, an alliance through his daughter's marriage to an Israelite king was ideal. This was a low-cost strategy of subversion. The Israelite king's polytheistic example could undermine Israel in all four covenants: personal, ecclesiastical, civil and familial.<sup>1</sup>*

The New Testament reiterates the Old Testament prohibition. We are commanded "do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?" (II Cor.6:14-15)

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<sup>1</sup> North, G., "Inheritance and Dominion," 1999, ch.40.

## *Lessons from a Great Man's Failures (II)*

By Andrew McColl, 31/7/2012

What was Jehoshaphat's first error?

*He failed to understand that his enemy (Ahab) was a deeply religious person.*

This is the predominant mistake we make today. We have failed to grasp that all of life is religious. We have also failed to grasp that education and law are profoundly religious issues, and that the Bible speaks a lot about them.

Let me give you an example. Everyone generally accepts that education is important in society. We also generally accept that education is generally based on values. But whose values are we considering: God's or man's? That is what polarises people.

Western Christians for six generations have ignored this: then they have witnessed the fact that their government confiscates their money through taxation, giving them compulsory but "free" education in return. So Christians say to themselves:

- a) *"My taxes go towards State schools."* True.
- b) *"I'm paying for it, whether I like it or not."* True.
- c) *"My children need educating."* True.
- d) *"I may as well get my monies' worth for my children."* False.
- e) *"I guess I'll put the children in the State system."* False.

Why should points d) and e) be rejected?

They are decisions based on economic expediency, not Biblical conviction. It was expediency that led to Caiaphas directing the chief priests and Pharisees to get rid of Jesus (Jn.11:47-53), and it was Judas' economic expediency to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. But it is moral convictions based on His Word that God requires, not expediency.

Now there will be some who say, "we should try and reform the system." Now doesn't that sound like a good idea? It sounds very laudable, but that's not the answer. It's like trying to reform Baal worship. You will spend a lot of time and money trying to reform an institution that doesn't want to be reformed. The best you will get in any reform attempt, is the equivalent of putting lipstick on a pig.

Most of the church today doesn't want to know about Jehoshaphat's error, when in fact the vast majority of the Church is making the same mistake that he did. We sign up and send our children off to the West's predominant pagan institution-the State school.

The State educational system is self-serving. It is kept afloat by our taxes. It has no time for a sovereign God, the Bible and Jesus Christ. It has no time for a six-day Creation, for absolute moral statements like the Ten Commandments, or for the authority of parents. The children get

twelve years of humanistic indoctrination. Is that what Christian parents are supposed to give their children?

*Money is the Trojan horse that government uses to infiltrate and infect organizations. Funding that, on the outset, is designed to strengthen and support, will bureaucratize and regulate in the end.*<sup>2</sup>

All education is religious, and the State schools do a wonderful job of teaching humanism to their students. Is it any wonder that 80% of the children of Christian families sent to Public Schools in the U.S. deny the faith in their twenties?

But that's not all.

*In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Fabian Society of England came out strongly in favour of state aid to independent Christian schools. When a board member resigned in protest, George Bernard Shaw rebuked him strongly. Nothing, Shaw held, would more quickly destroy these schools than state aid; their freedom and independence would soon be compromised, and, before long, their faith. Events soon proved Shaw to be right.*<sup>3</sup>

The enemies of God know how to compromise Christians. They go for the points where we (like Jehoshaphat) have weak or undeveloped convictions. This has been easy for them of late, because the modern Church overall, has struggled to decide what it really believes about many fundamental issues.

We have to look elsewhere in scripture to find out what Jehoshaphat's marriage alliance actually was. Jehoshaphat's firstborn son Jehoram, married the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Athaliah. It seems that while Jehoshaphat lived Athaliah kept a low profile, but as soon as he died her true colours were really seen. When Jehoram became king, Athaliah conspired with him to kill his six brothers, Jehoshaphat's sons (II Chron.21:4).

Thus Jehoram "walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab did (for Ahab's daughter was his wife), and he did evil in the sight of the Lord" (II Chron.21:6). This was just the start of Athaliah's evil. Her son Ahaziah "also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly" (II Chron.22:3), and when he was subsequently executed by Jehu through the judgment of God, she killed all but one of her grandchildren (v.10).

What led Jehoshaphat to his original error? Perhaps he was influenced by the example of his father Asa who earlier, when Judah was besieged by Israel, had said to Ben-hadad king of Aram, "let there be a treaty between you and me..." (II Chron.16:3).

Or, perhaps he simply deceived himself into thinking, "I know what I'm doing. This is a good idea. Now, Ahab and Israel will be no threat to us."

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<sup>2</sup> Ron Paul, "Freedom from Government," Lew Rockwell website, 10/2/2009.

<sup>3</sup> Rushdoony, R. J., "Roots of Reconstruction," 1991, p.446.

Conclusion:

Undoubtedly, Jehoshaphat was a godly man. But godliness today doesn't mean that tomorrow I am somehow exempted from error. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall" (I Cor.10:12). We're all human and are prone to sin.

Jehoshaphat's frightening error in trying to play power politics while setting up his son with a pagan wife, is a warning of the long-term implications of our choices today. As one man I respect once said, "*if you marry someone who is not a Christian, you get the devil as your father-in-law.*"

Be careful who you marry, who your children choose to marry, who you sign contracts with, and consider carefully the values of those you wish to educate your children.

God commands parents to be responsible for the education of their children: (see Deut.6 and 11). There is no other legitimate option that honours God.

The Bible commands us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, for we have been bought with a price. We do not get a chance to re-wind the tape of life, and God will ultimately face each of us in judgment.

We must learn from Jehoshaphat, because as Solzhenitsyn said,

*If we don't know our own history, we will simply have to endure all the same mistakes, sacrifices, and absurdities all over again.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, quoted in Grant, G., "The Third Time," 1991, p.177.

## *Lessons from a Great Man's Failures (III)*

By Andrew McColl, 7/8/2012

The Bible tells us that after Jehoshaphat had allied himself by marriage with Ahab, "some years later he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria" (II Chron.18:2). Ahab prepared a feast for him and those with him.

What is happening here? It is a foolish person indeed who thinks Ahab is being neighbourly. Ahab is an idolator and political manipulator, giving his godly neighbour a very warm welcome, for a reason. Having taken advantage of Jehoshaphat's naivete once before by shrewdly arranging a political marriage, Ahab now says to himself, "let's go one step further with this dumb bunny."

He puts on a feast for Jehoshaphat, and "slaughtered many sheep and oxen for him and the people who were with him..." This must be understood religiously too. Paul's instruction that "you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons (I Cor.11:21), is a challenge to us that all of life is religious. Jehoshaphat should have known this too. The feast he was participating in may not have seemed to him to be a table of demons, but that only reveals how gullible he was.

Jehoshaphat ignores Solomon's directions:

*When you sit down to dine with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are a man of great appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for it is deceptive food (Prov.23:1-3).*

The modern Church too, is gullible and naive. It doesn't see the scriptural writing on the wall, doesn't take note of the fact that there are many modern political manipulators just like Ahab, and it has ignored Paul's comments about Satan, that "...we are not ignorant of his schemes" (II Cor.2:11). So, the Church wants to "improve" State education with tax-payer funded Chaplains, and today many well-meaning Christians in Australia are fighting a High Court challenge to show that Christians mean business. They want to Christianise things that God never wanted Christianised.

But there's more. When the Federal government decides to fund Moslem education and "Moslem awareness" programs, Christians get upset about this, saying "we don't want this sort of thing happening." But what's good for the goose is good for the gander. If we can put the hard word on the Federal government and get monies for chaplains and for Christian schools, why can't Moslems as well? If we want it, and get it, why can't they? We should never have gone to governments for money in the first place for education, one hundred and fifty years ago.

Jehoshaphat is hooked-line and sinker. Having set him up with a sumptuous feast, Ahab now puts the hard word on him. He invites him to join him in making aggressive war against Ramoth-gilead (II Chron.18:1-3). Jehoshaphat has been softened up by Ahab, and now he is thoroughly seduced. His reply is most illuminating: "*I am as you are, and my people as your people, and we will be with you in the battle.*"

This is the language of covenant and marriage, reflected in Adam's initial description of his relationship with Eve (Gen.2:23-24) and in Ruth's commitment to Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17). Jehoshaphat knows this. He covenants for Judah to go into battle alongside an evil king against a pagan king, failing to realise that "a man who flatters his neighbour is spreading a net for his steps" (Prov.29:5).

Ahab says to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you put on your robes" (II Chron.18:29). It looks as though Ahab had a plan. If he can entice Jehoshaphat into battle and he is killed, Ahab will be able to indirectly control events in Judah through his daughter Athaliah, and his son in law.

Mercifully, Ahab's devious scheme blows up in his face and he is killed, and Jehoshaphat is only saved from battlefield death by a miracle (II Chron.18:30-31). When he returns to Jerusalem, Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him.

*Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord and so bring wrath on yourself from the Lord? But there is some good in you, for you have removed the Asheroth from the land and you have set your heart to seek God (II Chron.19:1-4).*

Now it's no shame to be reproved; we all need reproof from time to time. The Bible tells us that "...reproofs for discipline are the way of life..." (Prov.6:23). But has Jehoshaphat learnt anything?

He goes back to what he does best, and what he is called to: reforming the nation, appointing judges, and turning the people back to the God of their fathers.

But before too long, there is another incident. Jehoshaphat "...allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel. He acted wickedly in so doing" (II Chron.20:35). This seems to have been a commercial proposition that Jehoshaphat was engaging in, and once again he is confronted by a prophet: "because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the Lord has destroyed your works." So, the ships were broken and could not go to Tarshish"(II Chron.20:37).

Jehoshaphat has gone back to his old routine, and once again God sends a prophet to confront him.

His error?

***A propensity to trust in, and make covenant with evil people or institutions.***

God blows on the idea, again.

Conclusion:

*We stand in the midst of many generations. If we are indifferent to those who went before us and actually existed, how can we expect to be concerned for the well-being of those who come after us and only potentially exist?<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> David R. Carlin, Church History, 9:1, February 1990, quoted in Grant, G., "The Third Time," 1991, p.174-5.

Every one of us can be as gullible as Jehoshaphat, and we need to be guided by the scriptures, so that people of a hostile religious faith do not deceive and take advantage of us.

Why could this happen? Because we in the Church have tended to underestimate the religious intentions of our enemies, and it has cost us dearly over the centuries.

The tragic consequences of Jehoshaphat's initial errors were not all evident for at least thirty years in his family. May we learn from his errors, and make better choices based on God's Word, His wisdom and understanding.

## *Lessons from a Great Man's Failures (IV)*

By Andrew McColl, 14/8/2012

*Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned in safety to his house in Jerusalem. Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord and so bring wrath on yourself from the Lord?" (II Chron.19:2)*

One of the mistakes we in the Church have made in the modern era, is that we have tended to view the Bible's teaching in an intensely personal context, without considering the broader implications beyond ourselves and the Church, to the nation.

How do we know there are "broader implications?" The Bible is an "all of life" document, because the God Who created us, is an "all of life" Person. No one can say with any legitimacy, "this area of my life is not important to God."

Jehoshaphat in God's eyes as Judah's lawful king, represented Judah. Jehoshaphat had covenanted himself and Judah to an evil king and people who were in rebellion against God, saying "I am as you are, and my people as your people, and we will be with you in the battle" (II Chron.18:3b).

But this is something God had expressly forbidden:

*Watch that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim—for you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God- otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice... (Ex.34:12-15).*

Let me make an application of this to our present day, beginning with some historical background:

Immediately after the Second World War, it was obvious to Australia's political leaders that Great Britain could no longer be relied on to protect Australia in the event of invasion. The British Empire was essentially closing down, and Britain after two world wars, was broke. So our leaders decided to look around for a suitable ally, and they came up with the United States, who had already come to our aid in 1942-1945.

As a result, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. signed the ANZUS treaty in San Francisco in September 1951. The parties agreed to "*consult together whenever in the opinion of any of*

*them the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened in the Pacific.”<sup>6</sup>*

Because of ANZUS, Australia has been willing to follow the U.S. into Korea, Viet Nam, Iraq and Afghanistan. We have an extensive military relationship. We wanted to be perceived as a faithful ally, willing to do our bit for the sake of the alliance in case our turn came and we needed someone to do some heavy lifting on our behalf. As a result, the lives of many hundreds of Australian soldiers overseas have been lost since 1951, and we’re still losing them.

And what’s been achieved?

In 1966, the U.S. President was Lyndon Baines Johnson, and the Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt emphatically declared that as far as he was concerned, it was “all the way with LBJ.” But this was not a foreign policy of independence. It is one of dependence, but worst of all, subservience. Since then successive Australian governments have not used Holt’s language, but the attitude has generally remained the same.

And now there’s another problem. Increasingly since WW II, the U.S. has used threatening behaviour towards other nations. Furthermore, it has interfered in the internal affairs of other nations which have not attacked the U.S. It has utilised bombings, murders and many other acts of violence, through such groups as the CIA, and others.

Can’t think of any examples?

a) The Me Lai massacre in 1968 of hundreds of Vietnamese civilians. The officer responsible (William Calley), was court-martialled and found guilty of the murder of 109 Vietnamese civilians-mainly women, children and old people. What happened to Calley? When found guilty in a court martial, he was pardoned and released by the US President, Richard Nixon.

b) Between 1969-1973, the United States was not even at war with Cambodia, but on Nixon’s directions 600-800,000 Cambodian civilians were killed by indiscriminate U.S. bombing.

c) The *deliberate* destruction of water and sewerage infrastructure by the U.S. in Iraq, leading to the deaths of around half a million Iraqi children from untreated affluent and water carried diseases.

d) The 2007 helicopter gunship attack in Baghdad, shooting 18 peaceable, unarmed, innocent civilians in broad daylight using a .50 calibre machine-gun. (This can be witnessed on U-tube.) What was this? Not “collateral damage,” or “unintended consequences of war.” It was *State sanctioned murder*.

e) Drone attacks for years in Pakistan and Afghanistan, killing hundreds of innocent people on “suspicion.”

These instances raise a problem for Australians. Do we ignore the murderous behaviour of our ally, the U.S., saying “well, that’s the way they do things sometimes,” or do we say, “that’s

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Wikipedia.

awful and evil. We cannot be associated with that kind of behaviour. We won't continue in this alliance."

The Bible specifically commands that God's people are not to make covenants with ungodly people. Why? Because God's people are bound in covenant to God, through Jesus Christ, and He is a jealous God. He is jealous for the love, affections and the obedience of His people; He wants their hearts. There are many texts dealing with this, such as Deut.7:1-6; 12:1-4; 20:16-18, Num.33:50-56; Judges 2:1-4. Every time God's people disobeyed him in this context in the Bible, God said the results would be disastrous. (Joshua 23:11-13 is a good example.)

Now this has suddenly gotten very serious, hasn't it? That's because God considers covenant to be a very serious issue for His people to contemplate, whether it's for Jehoshaphat in 900 B.C., or for us today. The Australian Constitution's Preamble mentions that we are "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God..."

Now some would say, "*Now Andrew, this is getting a bit too radical for me.*" But then, what would you prefer: taking inconvenient and radical steps of obedience to God Almighty, or have Him send an angry prophet to rebuke you for your disobedience, as happened to Jehoshaphat? Or worse, see your nation overrun by an evil nation, sent by God as a means of His judgment?

You may say, "*I can't see that happening,*" but consider these statistics: the Australian Army has 30,000 soldiers, with 16,900 reservists, while the Chinese Army has 2.25 million soldiers. That's a ratio of one Australian to forty-seven Chinese soldiers. I don't find that to be a particularly reassuring statistic.

The Bible commands us, "do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial..." (II Cor.6:14-15a). George Washington in his farewell address to the Americans, was right in warning his nation of the potential danger of "entangling alliances."

Why? Because alliances are like a rope around your neck; they can take you places you never wanted to go.

Does America take any notice of Washington anymore? Of course not. His wise and godly advice to his fellow Americans has been ignored now for a century.

Conclusion:

*The Christian capital of the West is rapidly disappearing. Unless it is replenished, the West has no future and has nothing to give the nations other than death.*<sup>7</sup>

Let's learn from Jehoshaphat's errors, with all the legitimate applications. If Australia is going to follow Jesus Christ in the future, we will have to think carefully about who we are allied to in future.

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<sup>7</sup> Rousas Rushdoony, "In His Service," 2009, p.12.

Our faithfulness to Jesus Christ means a lot of things, including how we think about the defence of our nation, and the influence we will bring to see change come about, in all the affairs of our nation.

Isn't that what Christians are here for?