

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 19

Jehoshaphat returning from the battle at Ramothgilead, was met by a prophet, who reproved him for helping the ungodly, (^{<4490>}2 Chronicles 19:1-3), which quickened him to a greater regard for the reformation of his kingdom, (^{<4490>}2 Chronicles 19:4), and he set judges in all the cities of Judah, and exhorted them to do justice, (^{<4490>}2 Chronicles 19:5-7), and in the city of Jerusalem he appointed priests and Levites for the same purpose, and gave them a strict charge, and animated and encouraged them to perform their office faithfully, (^{<4490>}2 Chronicles 19:8-11).

Ver. 1. *And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned*, etc.] From Ramothgilead, after Ahab was slain:

to his house in peace in Jerusalem; to his palace there in safety, having narrowly escaped losing his life in the battle.

Ver. 2. *And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer*, etc.] The son of him that reproved Asa, for which he put him in prison, (^{<4470>}2 Chronicles 17:7,10), but that did not deter this his son from reproving Jehoshaphat:

went out to meet him; as he was returning:

and said to King Jehoshaphat, shouldest thou help the ungodly; such an one as Ahab, an idolater, murderer, and persecutor:

and love them that hate the Lord? his laws, worship, and ordinances, as he had; intimating, that he had done wrong, by entering into alliance and affinity with him, by showing him friendship, and assisting him in his war against the Syrians:

therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord; which appeared in the war of the Ammonites and Moabites with him, related in the next chapter, and in the calamities that came upon his family, his sons being slain by Jehoram that succeeded him, and his grandsons by Jehu.

Ver. 3. *Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee*, etc.] Principles of grace, righteousness, and holiness, faith, love, zeal, and other graces, true and genuine, from whence sprung many good works done by him:

in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land; cut down the groves of trees, and destroyed the idols and images in them:

and hast prepared thine heart to seek God; through the grace of God his heart was disposed to serve and worship the Lord, and to seek his honour and glory.

Ver. 4. *And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem*, etc.] And went out no more to Samaria, nor concerned himself about the affairs of Israel, but attended to his own:

and he went out again through the people; took a tour throughout his dominions now, in his own person, as before by his princes, with the priests and Levites:

from Beersheba to Mount Ephraim; Beersheba was the southern boundary of the land of Judah, and Mount Ephraim lay to the north, and was the northern boundary of it since the division of the kingdom:

and brought them back to the Lord God of their fathers; from idolatry to the pure worship of God, such who had relapsed since the first reformation, or had not been influenced by it.

Ver. 5. *And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city*, etc.] Inferior judges in lesser courts of judicature than that at Jerusalem, and that in every city, that judgment and justice might be executed everywhere; such were appointed by David, but had been neglected, and now restored, (see ¹³⁹1 Chronicles 26:29,32).

Ver. 6. *And said to the judges, take heed what you do*, etc.] In judgment, that they judged righteous judgment according to the law of God, without partiality and respect of persons:

for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord; not for man only, but for the Lord; and not so much for man as for the Lord, whom they represented in judgment; whose law was the rule of their judgment, and whose glory their end, and to whom they were accountable:

who is with you in the judgment: as to guide and direct you, so to observe how they behaved, and be a witness for or against them; the Targum is,

“ye judge not before men, but before the Word of the Lord, whose Shechinah dwells with you in the affair of judgment.”

Ver. 7. *Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you*, etc.] And act as having that before your eyes, and on your hearts:

take heed and do it; do the commands enjoined them by him, and do judgment according to the law of God:

for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God; none in his nature, nor in his law; none commanded nor approved of by him, and therefore none should be done by his representatives in judgment:

nor respect of persons; whether high or low, rich or poor:

nor taking of gifts; he accepts not the faces of men, nor receives bribes, nor should his judges; this is forbidden by him, (⁴⁵¹⁶⁹Deuteronomy 16:19).

Ver. 8. *Moreover, in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel*, etc.] This was the great court of judicature, consisting of princes, priests, and Levites, of ecclesiastics and political persons; for causes of both sorts were brought thither:

for the judgment of the Lord; in things sacred, which related to the worship of God, and the support of it:

and for controversies; of a civil kind between man and man, whether pecuniary or capital, of a more private or public kind:

when they returned to Jerusalem; that is, this court was set up at Jerusalem, when Jehoshaphat, the priests, Levites, and chief men that went with him, returned thither.

Ver. 9. *And he charged them*, etc.] The members of the court at Jerusalem:

saying, thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart; judge righteously and impartially, as men fearing God, true to the trust reposed in them, and sincere and upright in heart and actions, having nothing else in view but the glory of God, and the good of men.

Ver. 10. *And what cause soever shall come unto you of your brethren that dwell in their cities*, etc.] Whether sacred or civil, that should come before them by way of appeal from, inferior courts in the country, where they could not be determined:

between blood and blood; one relation and another, or with respect to shedding of blood, whether ignorantly or purposely:

between law and commandment, statutes and judgments; not rightly understood, and so pleaded on both sides:

ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord; the persons engaged in controversy, that they take no false oath, nor bear false testimony, and act not stubbornly against any of the laws, when explained in court unto them:

and so wrath come upon you and your children; upon judges for the neglect of their duty in giving due warning, and upon the people for not taking it when given:

this do, and ye shall not trespass; if the above charge in all its parts is strictly attended to.

Ver. 11. *And, behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the Lord*, etc.] He being high priest, presided in this court in all things sacred, or which respected the worship of God; and was present to give his advice, and direct in the determination of all such matters that should come before them, according to the laws and statutes provided in such cases; though it may be he was only a common priest that was chief over them, or the president of this court:

and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah; the prince of the tribe of Judah:

for all the king's matters; such as related to civil government, and which were not so clearly determined by positive laws:

also the Levites shall be officers before you; to execute the sentences that should be passed by them:

deal courageously; fear not the faces of any, but judge righteously and faithfully:

and the Lord shall be with the good; with good men that do good, to bestow all needful good upon them, to protect and defend them; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord shall be for your help, who is good.”