

2 Chronicles 20-God Saves His People from Their Enemies

II Chronicles 20:1-20

NLT 2004

Introduction:

Before the time of this story, the country had divided into two countries, each with a king. At this time, the king of the Southern Kingdom which included Jerusalem was a good king who tried to lead his people to worship God and obey God's laws.

II Chronicles 20:1-4

...several armies declared war on the king. Messengers came and told the king, "A vast army from the south is marching against you...they have already reached the border. The king was terrified by this news and begged God for guidance. He also ordered everyone in the kingdom to begin fasting. So people from all the towns...came to Jerusalem to seek the God's help.*

***Transition:** The king gathered the people in the House of Worship*. He stood before them and prayed. He reminded God of all that He had done for His people. Then he said,*

II Chronicles 20:11-12

"...they have come to throw us out of your land, which you gave us as an inheritance. O our God, won't you stop them? We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help."

II Chronicles 20:13-18

As all the men of the country stood before God with their little ones, wives, and children, God's Spirit took control of the men standing there...He said, "Listen... This is what God says: Do not be afraid... for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow, march out against them...But*

you will not even need to fight. Take your positions; then stand still and watch God's victory...Go out against them tomorrow, for God is with you!"

II Chronicles 20:18-19

Then the king bowed low with his face to the ground. And all the people...did the same, worshiping God. Then worship leaders stood to praise God with a very loud shout.

II Chronicles 20:20-25

Early the next morning the army...went out...On the way the king stopped and said, "Listen to me, all you people...! Believe in ...God, and you will be able to stand firm..." The king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to God...*

"Give thanks to God; his faithful love endures forever!"

At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, God caused the attacking armies...to start fighting among themselves. So when the army of the king arrived at the lookout point in the wilderness, all they saw were dead bodies lying on the ground as far as they could see. Not a single one of the enemy had escaped. The king and his men went out to gather the plunder...There was so much plunder that it took them three days just to collect it all!

II Chronicles 20:26-30

On the fourth day they...praised and thanked God there. Then all the men returned to Jerusalem, with the king leading them, overjoyed God had given them victory over their enemies. They marched into Jerusalem to the music of harps, lyres, and trumpets and they proceeded to the House of Worship. When all the surrounding kingdoms heard that God himself had fought against the enemies of the king, the fear of God came over them. So the kingdom was at peace...

Why This Story?

These fear stories as a set have been used effectively as part of an orientation course for new field personnel.

Story Crafting

The Two Kingdoms

The introduction gives a suggested way to introduce that the people had divided into two kingdoms. If your people are confused by this, you may need an additional explanation.

The King

Jehoshaphat is a difficult and foreign name. You don't need to use it unless you are doing a study on the different kings.

Jerusalem

If the name of the city of Jerusalem has not been, and will not be, introduced in your story set, you may want to simply replace it with "the capital." However, if you are planning several stories where Jerusalem appears, you may want to use the city's name. If this is the story in which you are introducing the city, you may want to add a phrase like "the capital city."

The King's Prayer

You will want to read the entire prayer and note how many times the king repeats things for emphasis. If repetition is a story-telling device for your people, you will want to include these repetitions in the king's prayer. Keep in mind that you want your listener to be able to learn and repeat the prayer to others.

God

We have replaced the references to LORD (Yahweh) with *God*, to avoid confusion. If your audience has a name for God like the descendants of Abraham did (Yahweh, meaning "I am that I am"), you may use it in

place of LORD (Yahweh), but be careful that your audience understands that there is only one true God.

God's Spirit took control of one of the men standing there

The original text says that the Spirit of God "came upon" one of the men. This is a phrase which may not translate well literally into another language. When God's Spirit "comes on" someone, it takes control of that person.

King Jehoshaphat...and all the people...worshiped God

The text states that the king and all the people bowed low with their face to the ground. This was a form of worship. You can describe the worship or just say they worshiped God.

Harps, lyres, and trumpets

If these musical instruments do not exist in your culture, instead of trying to describe them and adding too many details to the story, you may want to simply say "musical instruments." The specific instruments that they were playing are not as important as the fact that the people were worshipping God.

Fear of God refers to someone who has respect for God's power and holiness. If the phrase "fear God" does not translate well literally into your language, you may need to simply say "respect for God."

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the master glossary for a full explanation of these words.

Place of Worship*/House of Worship*

The temple was the unique Jewish place of worship. If the word for 'temple' in your language only refers to a specific religion's place of worship, you may choose to change the word to something more general, like

‘place of worship.’ Even the word ‘temple’ in English has such religious connotations that few people truly understand what it means.

Fast*

Most references to fasting in the Bible refer to going without food and drink in order to worship God, or as part of one’s worship to God. In some cases, fasting may refer to changing the kinds of food one eats. (We’ve indicated in each story which kind of fasting is referred to in that story.) In the Bible, there are three main reasons to fast:
to show grief and penitence
to show humility
to ask for help and guidance from God.

Although many religions practice this, you may find that the word in your language only refers to fasting for a particular god or in a particular religion. If that is the case, you may need to explain the concept in the story rather than use a specific term.

God’s Spirit*

You can translate this term directly as ‘God’s Spirit.’ The meaning here specifically is that this man was suddenly and fully possessed by God’s Spirit. The Hebrew *ruach* [spirit] can have the physical meanings ‘wind’ or ‘breath.’ It also can mean ‘power’ or ‘authority’ that God gives to someone to do extraordinary things.

Believe*

This describes man’s response to God’s promise. It probably implies more than mental agreement, but putting one’s faith/confidence in God.

Worldview

Different cultures and religions place different values on fasting. In this story, the people fasted in order to ask for guidance from God. Include that the people fasted in

order to seek guidance from God if it adds credibility or value to the story. If not, you may simply say that the people came to Jerusalem to seek God. Some peoples believe that fasting means no intake of anything into the body. Biblical fasts took many different forms. You might want to discuss this with your people if they have fasting as a religious practice.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words for **place of worship** and **fast** that you have used in previous stories. Refer to Jerusalem in the same way that you have in previous stories.

Story Set Themes

Fear

Worship

Relationship

Victory