

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 20 November 2022. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Consequences of Compromise

Matthew 1:8

One hundred years ago, a fierce battle was raging in churches all over the Western world. Churches and seminaries of all professing Christian denominations (including the Baptists) were, by this time, completely infiltrated, and controlled, by theological modernists and liberals. These modernists denied that the Scriptures were divinely inspired by God. They denied a literal, six-day creation, the account of Adam and Eve, and the origin of sin and death; and they embraced Darwinian evolution. They denied the virgin birth of Christ, the miracles of Christ, the deity of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the doctrine of atonement from sin through Christ's shed blood. Yet, though they denied all these things, they continued to "preach" the Bible from the pulpits. They presented the Bible as a book of beautiful myths, which may be spiritualised or allegorised, but not be taken literally. What *is* important, they said, is that we fight poverty and inequality in society, and improving society through political reform.

Now, at this point (in the 1920's and 30's), the real Christians, and the real churches, had a choice to make. Would they remain in conventions (such as the Southern Baptists, or the American Baptists) which were now overwhelmingly apostate? No! How could they? Bible-believing churches everywhere began to separate from the denominations and conventions to which they had formerly belonged. The *real* preachers preached hard against sin, and insisted that Christians must separate from false gospels, and from worldly living, and from so-called churches and ecclesiastical bodies that deny God's Word.

Yet, by the 1940's, a new feeling was in the air. There were many Christians who felt that their separatist stance seemed too "harsh." They needed a "softer" approach, they said. How can we reach the culture if we are viewed as "fundamentalists"? How can we seem "relevant" to the culture if we are always preaching hard against worldly movies, music, and dress, and nightclubs, and drinking? And how will we ever win the theological liberals if we don't hold hands with them (as though they were brothers in Christ), and engage in dialogue, and show them that we are intellectually sophisticated? This was the new feeling; and finally, it was expressed with clarity in Pasadena, California, in 1948, when a pastor named Harold Ockenga got up on the platform at a graduation ceremony and said that we needed a "new evangelicalism"—one which holds to the truth and inerrancy of Scripture, but which also engages in social reform, and (most importantly) *dialogues* with the modernists, instead of separating from them.

How has this "New Evangelicalism" worked out? Disastrously! In the last 75 years, countless preachers who once unashamedly preached the Gospel have given in to the New Evangelical philosophy. They decided to "hold hands" with apostate religious leaders in order to fight for "common moral causes." Instead of calling them to repentance and faith in Christ, they treated them as though they were brothers, with whom they disagreed on minor points. They watered down the Gospel more and more, until some of them even began to hint that people who don't believe on the name of Jesus can somehow get into Heaven, as long as they're sincere! *They* did not reach the *unbelievers*; rather, the unbelievers reached *them*, and changed *them*! Why? Because they compromised!

As you know, we have, in the last several weeks, been studying the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. In **Matthew 1**, Matthew presents his Jewish readers with the royal lineage of Christ, to show them that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah, and the King of Israel. Some of the people in Jesus' lineage were believers, but many others were not; and those who were genuine believers often had deep faults. This morning, we will learn about another righteous ancestor of the Lord, who had a deep love for the Lord—

yet, who *compromised* by uniting himself with God's enemies. We will see how this mistake deeply affected the next several generations, and almost resulted in the wiping out of the bloodline of the Messiah! Yet, we will also see how God, once again, faithfully preserved the bloodline of the Messiah, so that we might be saved. The title of this message is *The Consequences of Compromise*.

Read Matthew 1:1-8.

I. Jehoshaphat—the compromiser

Read 2 Chronicles 17:1-12.

Last week we learned about **Asa**, the great-great-grandson of King David. We learned that King Asa was a righteous man, who had great faith in the LORD earlier in his life. However, toward the end of his life, he made a treaty with King Ben-hadad of Syria in order to achieve a political end; and because of this compromise, his reign did not end well. Nonetheless, Asa did bring up a righteous son to succeed him as king. **Jehoshaphat** (whose name means “Jehovah judges”) had a godly heart. From the time that he came to the throne in 915 B.C., he did everything in his power to bring the hearts of the people of Judah back to God. He didn't merely destroy the idols, the groves, the high places, and the idolatrous priests; he sent godly princes and Levites throughout the land to teach the people the law of the LORD. Because of this, God blessed him abundantly. He gave Jehoshaphat military strength, and great riches.

However, Jehoshaphat had one big weakness: like his father, he compromised, by making political alliances with God's enemies (particularly, with the wicked kings of Northern Israel). Now, it seems that Jehoshaphat had good intentions. Time and time again, he tried to “reach out” to wicked King Ahab of Northern Israel, and to his son Ahaziah, and to his grandson Jehoram, by helping them with military and commercial ventures. Instead of rebuking them for their great wickedness, and calling them to repentance (as he *should* have done), he treated them as though they were brothers. As Jews, they were brothers in the flesh; but they were *not* brothers in the family of God! Ahab was so wicked, that God singled him out among the kings of Israel. God said that *“there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.”* Jezebel, the daughter of the King of Zidon, had a fanatical devotion to the hideous god Baal; and she was up to her eyeballs in sorcery, necromancy, and infant sacrifice. (Today we call it “abortion” or “family planning.”) She also had an insane hatred of the worshippers of Jehovah. She and her husband Ahab rounded up and murdered the prophets of the LORD. In fact, they murdered *anyone* who stood in the way of what they wanted.

In light of all this, it seems almost inconceivable that a righteous king like Jehoshaphat could make an alliance with a man like Ahab: yet, he did! Let's take a look at that alliance.

Read 2 Chronicles 18:1-8, 12-22, 25-28.

You'd *think* that Jehoshaphat would have backed away from this venture. Jehoshaphat surely realised that these 400 so-called “prophets” were nothing but “yes men,” who were bought and paid for by Ahab. He surely knew that Micaiah was the *true* prophet in the room, and that he should heed his warning. Yet, he didn't listen. He joined Ahab in battle, anyway. Now, God mercifully protected Jehoshaphat in the battle. At one point, Jehoshaphat was nearly killed by a Syrian archer, who was aiming at him from point-blank range; but God caused the Syrian to change direction, and not to shoot at him. Yet, *Ahab* did die in that battle. (And the archer who hit him wasn't even *trying* to hit him!) Ahab's judgment had finally come upon him; and it was obvious. Packs of dogs literally licked up his blood from his chariot! Jehoshaphat went

back to Jerusalem in shame; and after he arrived, a prophet named Jehu went out to meet him, and rebuked him for allying himself with Ahab. He said, ***“Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.”***

Now, Jehoshaphat did take this rebuke well. He didn't react in anger: he accepted it as from the LORD. He continued to do right in the Kingdom of Judah, as well. He made sure that righteous judges were placed in the cities of Judah. When Judah was invaded by the huge, combined army of Moab, Ammon, and other nations, he called the people of Judah to prayer and repentance; and God gave them a supernatural victory. Yet, despite all these good things that Jehoshaphat did, he still didn't learn his lesson. He continued to compromise. First, Ahab's wicked son, **King Ahaziah**, offered for Jehoshaphat's men to join his men in building a naval base at Ezion-Geber, and ships to sail to Tarshish; and he accepted. God was angry with Jehoshaphat for this; and He caused the ships to be broken in the Gulf of Aqaba, on their maiden voyage. (God sent the prophet Eliezer to let him know that this would happen, just before it happened!) Now, the good news is that after the destruction of this fleet, Jehoshaphat did learn his lesson—for a time. Ahaziah wanted to build more ships, and to make a *second* attempt at a joint venture with Judah; but this time, Jehoshaphat refused. However, this was not the last of his compromise. Later, he accepted the invitation of wicked **King Jehoram** (the *grandson* of King Ahab) to join him and the king of Edom in a battle against Moab. Once again, God mercifully protected Jehoshaphat in the battle, and granted a victory to Israel, Judah, and Edom, for *Jehoshaphat's* sake. Nevertheless, God sent the prophet Elisha to rebuke Jehoshaphat for making this unholy alliance.

You know what, though? The damage was already done. **Ecclesiastes 10:1** says, ***“Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.”*** Jehoshaphat was a godly man, in most ways; but that little bit of compromise in his life cost him big-time. As we will see shortly, Jehoshaphat married off his own son, Jehoram, to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel; and Athaliah was just as wicked as her parents! This wicked woman brought spiritual and physical death to the family of David, and nearly destroyed them. You see, Jehoshaphat thought that he could cosy around with apostates, and make them his bosom friends. He *thought* that he could treat them as brothers, and in doing so, “win them over.” He *thought* that rebuking them for their wickedness, and separating from them, seemed too “harsh.” However, in the end, his *own family* was infected by the demonic evil of Ahab's house.

Brethren, there is much to learn from this! The Bible says, ***“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?”*** We should befriend the lost, in order to reach them; but we cannot condone their sin, or join them in spiritual activities, as though they were brothers. When our church is offered to join together in religious worship with apostate churches in the area, we must refuse. We aren't abrasive or nasty; but we decline, and we tell them why. When our church is offered to join in a “common moral cause” with those who deny our Lord Jesus, or who preach a false Gospel, we must refuse. On an *individual* level, we must not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. Young people, do *not* marry someone who doesn't know the Lord! Wait as long as you must; but marry a godly believer. When you are invited to go to a place where there will be drinking, or other ungodly activities, don't do it! The Bible says to stay far away from evil, and pass not by it. Christian, don't compromise, as Jehoshaphat did!

II. Jehoram—the murderer

(Read Matthew 1:8 again.) The next man in the lineage of the Lord Jesus is Jehoram. What kind of character did Jehoram have? Did he love the LORD, as his father did? Turn with me to 2 Chronicles, and we'll find out.

Read 2 Chronicles 21:1-7.

The Bible says, *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”* No doubt, Jehoshaphat knew these words well; but he didn't take them seriously enough. He brought the wicked family of Ahab into his own house, and into his own family circle, and made them bosom friends; and as the result, his son, Jehoram, ended up marrying Ahab's wicked daughter, Athaliah. Obviously, Jehoram had no fear of the LORD; and his father's godly life had *no* impact on him. Why? Because of that “fly in the ointment”—that compromise that he saw in his father. By making bosom friends of Ahab's wicked house, and by making unholy alliances with them, Jehoshaphat taught his son that it is O.K. to embrace evil. And embrace evil he did! Ahab and Jezebel's murderous character was fully present in their daughter Athaliah; and Jehoram quickly embraced it. Upon assuming the throne, he murdered his own brothers, as well as many other princes of Israel. As far as we know, none of his ancestors (even his wicked ancestors) had ever done this before. This was an “Ahab-like” act!

Friends, if you think that there are no such things as “generational curses,” you are mistaken! I have dealt with people who were born into families where witchcraft, or other occultic things, were practiced; and I can testify that the demonic bondage in those families is *powerful*. Now, these curses *can* be broken, and *are* broken, whenever an individual chooses to repent and believe on Christ. However, the demonic bondage is so powerful, that it is extremely difficult for people in such homes to believe that they could ever be freed. Oftentimes, the demons afflict them with awful physical pain when they try to go to a church service, or when a Bible-believing Christian comes near them. Even after a person is saved out of this environment, it is often a long, uphill battle for that new Christian, on account of the strong claim that Satan has had upon him and his family in the past. *Every* last portal must be closed, and the sin renounced, and the divining objects destroyed; and a tremendous amount of intercessory prayer must be made. The enemy doesn't just pack up and go away without a fight! When someone opens demonic portals in his life through tarot cards, Ouija boards, hypnosis, seances, yoga, and mantras, or through drug abuse, sexual perversion, or even Harry Potter books and movies, he is bringing a world of sorrow upon himself, and upon his descendants. Young people, don't *ever* mess around with any form of the occult! Parents, be *very* careful about whom your children hang around with, and about whom you invite into your home, and *what* you allow into your home! Surround yourself with brothers and sisters who love the Lord. Consecrate your home to the Lord daily; and give no place to the devil!

So, how did things fare for Jehoram, and for the Kingdom of Judah? Frankly, it couldn't have gone much worse. Edom and Libnah (which, up to this point, had been under Judah's control) revolted. Then, the Arabians and the Philistines invaded Judah, and greatly weakened them. Then, God struck Jehoram with a horrible, incurable bowel disease, with afflicted him for two years, and finally took his life. Not only that, but the Bible says that when he finally died, he *“departed without being desired.”* The people of Judah didn't miss him; and they didn't even bury him in the sepulchres of the kings! The Bible says that *“the wages of sin is death”*; and eternal death in hell was the wage that Jehoram received.

III. The three “deleted” kings

(Read Matthew 1:8 again.) At this point in the genealogy, we come to a strange omission. Matthew says that “*Joram begat Ozias.*” Yet, Ozias was not Jehoram’s actual son: he was his great-grandson. Three generations—**Ahaziah**, **Joash**, and **Amaziah**—are left out. Why?

Well, first of all, it is important to realise that Hebrew genealogies don’t always include every name in the lineage. In Hebrew thinking, a “son” can mean a son, grandson, great-grandson, or a very distant descendant. No Jewish person in Matthew’s audience would have had a problem with the fact that some names are left out. The Old Testament is filled with genealogies which don’t include every name; and Matthew’s Jewish readers knew this well.

The question remains, though: *Why* did Matthew choose to leave out these three names? There are probably a couple reasons. First, **there was a theological point that Matthew was making** by arranging Jesus’ lineage into three groups of 14 names each. The Jewish rabbis often used repeating patterns of letters or numbers in order to help their students remember things (such beginning all the words in a list with the same letter, or arranging the list according to the alphabet). That’s the kind of technique that Matthew is using here. In **verse 17** (where Matthew lists the 3 groups of 14), Matthew counts King David’s name *twice*—once at the end of group 1, and once at the beginning of group 2. Also, Matthew left out a total of four kings. But why? If Matthew had theological reasons for doing this, what are they?

There are probably a couple reasons. First, the name “David” is made up of three Hebrew letters (*dalet, waw, and dalet*); and these letters have the numerical values of 4, 6, and 4. When you add these numbers, you have the number 14. Matthew was strongly emphasising to his Jewish readers that Jesus is the son of *David*! Also, you’ll notice that each of these groups begins with someone with whom God made a covenant, or to whom He swore an important oath. The first group begins with **Abraham**; and God made a covenant with him. The second group begins with **David**; and God made a covenant with him. The third group begins with **Jechonias**; and God swore a solemn oath to him! (We’ll learn about that one in a couple weeks.) Clearly, Matthew *was* reinforcing theological truths by the way he arranged this list.

However, there is (I believe), one more reason why Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah were left out. You see, since Jehoram married into the bloodline of King Ahab, the bloodline of the Messiah was now 50% the blood of righteous David, and 50% the blood of wicked Ahab! I believe that God left out the next three generations after Jehoram in order to “cleanse” the lineage of the memory of Ahab and Jezebel. When God says that he visits the sins of the fathers unto the children of the 3rd and 4th generation, he means it! With this in mind, let’s examine the next man in the lineage of Christ. His name is **Ahaziah**.

Read 2 Chronicles 22:1-9.

In this passage, we find a sad statement about Ahaziah: “*He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab.*” The wicked influence of Ahab was dominant in Ahaziah’s life. By the way, you’ll notice that in **verse 2**, it says that Ahaziah was “*Forty and two years old...when he began to reign.*” Now, in **2 Kings 8**, we are told that Ahaziah was **22 years old** when he began to reign. So, is this an error which we need to “correct”? Do we need to put a footnote in our Bibles that states, “This is a scribal error. The correct reading *should* be ‘Twenty-two years’”? Not on your life! God’s Word is always true! The text clearly says (in *words*, not numerals) that Ahaziah was “*Ben-arba’im w’shetayim shanah*”—“a son of **forty-and two** years.”

Now, to our English ears, it sounds strange to say that someone is “the son of such-and-such years.” What does this mean? It can mean one of two things. First, it can mean that the person is that many *years old*. (That is the meaning in **2 Kings 8**, where we are told that Ahaziah was a “*son of twenty and two years*” when he began to reign.) However, it can also mean that a certain number of years has passed *since an important event which has a direct bearing on that person’s life*. In fact, it can refer to an event that happened before that person was even born. In this case, it had been *exactly* 42 years since Omri (the father of King Ahab), had taken the throne of Northern Israel, and had established his dynasty. What is God saying, then, when He says that Ahaziah was a “*son of forty and two years*”? He is saying is that in His eyes, Ahaziah was more closely associated with the dynasty of *Omri and Ahab* than he was with the house of David. Not only was Ahaziah a blood descendant of Omri and Ahab, but (more importantly) he personally chose to *walk in the ways* of wicked Omri and Ahab!

Like his father Jehoram, Ahaziah also came to a tragic end. He and his cousin, King Jehoram (the grandson of Ahab) went to battle together against the Syrians; but they lost the battle. His cousin was sorely wounded in the battle; and while Ahaziah was visiting his cousin at Jezreel, both of them were slain by a man named Jehu, whom God had commissioned to destroy the house of Ahab. Both the house of Ahab *and* the house of David were judged for their sin.

Now, let’s examine the next man in the lineage of Christ. The next man was **Joash**, the son of Ahaziah. Joash came to the throne at age seven; but it was only by God’s mercy. At this point, the line of the Messiah was *almost* wiped out! Let’s see how it happened.

Read 2 Chronicles 22:10 – 23:3, 10-15.

As you can see, it was only because of the godly priest **Jehoiada** that Joash came to the throne. After Joash’s father died, his own grandma (good old Queen Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab) slew all her children and grandchildren, just so that she could be queen. Joash was the *only* one who wasn’t killed; and it was all because his aunt hid him in a bedchamber for six years. When he turned 7, Jehoiada arranged a coup, and Athaliah was put to death for treason; and little Joash was put on the throne. Once again, God spared the seed of David.

Now, how did Joash turn out? At first, it seemed that he had turned out well. He repaired the Temple, which had fallen into disrepair; and he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD. However, the Bible specifies that he “*did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.*” Jehoiada was a godly man; and he *seemed* to have a profound impact on Joash’s life; but the reality is that Joash never personally knew the LORD. He did right only as long as Jehoiada was alive, and looking over his shoulder. After Jehoiada died, the princes of Judah quickly convinced Joash to forsake the LORD, and to worship idols. Then, when Jehoiada’s son, Zechariah, stood up in the Temple and prophesied that God would judge Judah for their sin, Joash ordered for Zechariah to be stoned to death, right there in the Temple! *That* is how he repaid Jehoiada for his kindness to him as a child!

Beware, my friends: It is very possible to grow up in a Christian home, and to *look* like a Christian, and to *act* like a Christian, yet not be saved. I well remember the story of my brother **David**, when he was 16 years old. Though he had grown up in church all his life, he was not saved; and neither were most of the kids in his church youth group. For years, my brother had struggled with the issue of salvation; and though he had gone to the altar many times, and many parents and others had shown him the Gospel, he still could not understand how he could be sure he was saved. There was a veil of spiritual blindness over his eyes.

Such was the case with most of the other teens. They did “Christian things” because daddy and mommy were around, looking over their shoulders; but they didn’t know the Lord.

Now, for many weeks, the ensemble in our church’s teen group had been practicing a song called “**The Cornerstone**”; and they were supposed to sing that song in a church service in the near future. However, their youth leader, **Pastor Roach**, knew that most of these kids weren’t really saved. He could see the worldliness in their hearts. He could see that they did not know or love the Lord. He could see right through their empty professions of faith; and he told them that they weren’t going to sing that song for church until they repented of their sin, and *personally* placed their faith in Christ. How could they get up and sing “Jesus is the Cornerstone” if they had *not* made Jesus the Cornerstone of their lives? For many weeks, Pastor Roach and his wife Kathy prayed hard for those kids, that they would be saved. Now, in the meantime, a genuine revival was taking place at another area church (the Mansfield Baptist Temple); and this revival spilled over into our church. God was working, and people were praying. Finally, one Sunday morning, during Sunday School, the Holy Spirit got hold of those kids’ hearts; and that morning, *almost the entire teen class* got saved—including my brother David, and the Pastor’s daughter, Robyn. So many kids were wanting to be saved, that they had to call adults from the choir to come and deal with these teens, and lead them to the Lord! Those kids’ lives *really* changed; and it had a profound effect on the whole church. Thank God that He got hold of their hearts before they went out into life *thinking* that they were saved, when they were actually heading straight to hell! (By the way, what would have happened if these kids hadn’t been in Sunday School that morning—or if the adults hadn’t been there to deal with them? God’s Spirit would not have moved, and none of this would have happened. Don’t miss church, folks! God blesses a church only as they are *faithful* to Him! When you miss church, and miss prayer meetings, you are forfeiting God’s blessing!)

Now, what was Joash’s end? Well, soon after he had forsaken the Lord, King Hazael of Syria invaded the land, and slew all the princes of Judah. Soon afterward, Joash himself came down with terrible sickness; and then, he was assassinated. The way of transgressors truly is hard!

Now, before we close this morning, we will examine one more person in the lineage of Christ. His name is **Amaziah**; and he is the last of the three kings who were left out of the list.

Read 2 Chronicles 25:1-5, 14-16, 25.

Once again, we find a descendant of David who *outwardly* did what was right, *for a time*; but not with a complete heart. Why? Because he didn’t know the Lord! Amaziah didn’t merely *allow* idol worship in Judah, because he was being pressured by someone to do so: he *personally* chose to take Edom’s gods, and to bow down and worship them, in the hope that they would help him. He was open to “alternative spirituality” because the worship of Jehovah had been nothing more than “tradition” to him. He did not have a relationship with God by faith. So it is with many Christians today. I know many one-time professing Christians who have gone off into New Age spirituality of some kind; and when a Christian comes along and tries to talk with them about the Lord, they say, “Oh, yeah, I’ve been there, done that, bought the T-shirt.” But the reality is that they never *were* “there,” and never *did* “do” it, and never *did* “buy the T-shirt.” The Bible says, “**Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.**” Amaziah was devoid of true wisdom and understanding, because he never really embraced the truth. In his heart, he had neglected the truth; and when he *thought* he saw “greener pastures,” he went astray, and never returned.

Conclusion: The truly tragic truth about Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah is not that their names were left out of the lineage of Christ in **Matthew 1**; rather, it is that their names were blotted out of the Book of Life! My friend, if *you* would spend eternity with God in Heaven, your name *must* be in the Book of Life! Going to church won't save you. Having godly parents or relatives won't save you. *You* must admit that you are a sinner, and that you can't save yourself; and, by faith and repentance of heart, you must *ask* Jesus to come into your heart, and to be your Saviour and *Lord*. If you have not done this, please do so today! If you are saved already, please take instruction from Jehoshaphat's mistake! Don't compromise the truth. Don't try to "reach" the ungodly by being unequally yoked together with them. Stay separated from the wicked world system, and surround yourself with the fellowship of God's people!