

Jahaziel, a one-time prophet

2 Chr. 20:2-4, 13-18

20:2 Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi. **20:3** And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. **20:4** And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

20:13 And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. **20:14** Then upon **Jahaziel** the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation; **20:15** And **he** said, **Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat,** Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. **20:16** Tomorrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. **20:17** Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you. **20:18** And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

2 Chr. 20:19-22

20:19 And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high. **20:20** And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. **20:21** And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. **20:22** And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

a one-time prophet

As the huge enemy army approached (20:1-2), godly King Jehoshaphat called upon the nation to fast (20:3). This led to a great gathering in Jerusalem (20:4), undoubtedly at the temple. Naturally, many Levites were there to pray and assist in various ways. Jahaziel was one of them (20:14).

There were no prophets present as far as we know. So the Lord used Jahaziel—the right person (a Levite) in the right place (the temple) at the right time (a time of national crisis)—to deliver a great message of deliverance. He was probably just a one-time prophet, however.

negatives

The most difficult line in this worksheet may be the first one. Since there are various ways to evaluate Jahaziel, there is more than one possible conclusion about his importance. Therefore it is helpful to answer lines A-1 through A-7 before judging his importance in general.

Line A-7 is especially significant. Those who view the message Jahaziel gave as primarily God's message rather than the prophet's are more likely to conclude that Jahaziel himself was not very important. Others, however, will object to saying that God's spokesman was insignificant.

Was Jahaziel "just preaching to the choir?" As a Levite and a descendant of Aseph (20:14), he might have been a member of a choral group that sang during regular worship services and on special occasions. Notice that nobody opposed his message (20:18, 20).

How did Jahaziel's audience know from the beginning that his message was from God? (C-5) False prophets often predicted victory over national enemies. (Cf Jer. 28:1-17.) Maybe it was because they already knew Jahaziel as a godly man. It does not directly say that he was, however.

Mark the points below as correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).

A	() Jahaziel was not very important.
A-1	() He is only in one chapter.
A-2	() He is not famous like Isaiah (32:20).
A-3	() We do not know why God chose Jahaziel.
A-4	() God could have chosen to use someone else.
A-5	() He never prophesied again, as far as we know.
A-6	() Jehoshaphat said more (20:6-12, 20) than Jahaziel.
A-7	() The message was God's message more than Jahaziel's.
B	() Jahaziel was an unusual prophet.
B-1	() He did not confront the people's sin.
B-2	() His message was popular (20:18-19).
B-3	() His introduction is unusually long (20:14).
B-4	() He is introduced as a Levite but spoke as a prophet.
B-5	() He opposed raising an army to fight the enemy (20:15-17, 21).

positives

There are two great positives in today's study which at first seem to contradict one another. On the one hand, God chose to use and enable an individual Levite, Jahaziel, as his spokesman. (Most of the C lines below are about Jahaziel as an individual.)

We do not know exactly where Jahaziel was standing, but it was probably not at the rear of the great crowd. As a Levite with a genealogy going back to Asaph, Jahaziel may have been near the front. And he must have been fairly close to the king.

Yet, at the same time the entire nation was involved, beginning with the proclamation of a national fast in verse three. In line with this, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel as he stood among the people (20:13-14). (Most of the D lines are about Jahaziel's associations.)

Worksheet lines stimulate thought and discussion. So some of them may sound strange. For instance, it may not seem right to compare Jahaziel with others as in C-4 and several other lines or to speculate like in A-4, D-3, and D-4. Yet, doing so helps us understand the passage.

Mark the points below as correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).

C	() God enabled and used Jahaziel.
C-1	() God's Spirit came upon him during a prayer meeting (20:13-14).
C-2	() He was not afraid to speak to King Jehoshaphat (20:15).
C-3	() Jahaziel was not afraid of the enemy army (20:3-4, 15).
C-4	() Jahaziel's ministry was bigger than Eliezer's (20:37).
C-5	() Jahaziel's prediction came true (20:22-24).
C-6	() He was like Peter in Acts chapter two.
C-7	() He sounded like Moses in Ex. 14:13.
D	() Jahaziel was part of God's team.
D-1	() His message came in answer to prayer (20:5-14).
D-2	() His message encouraged the people (20:15, 18-19).
D-3	() He may have been one of the many musicians (20:28).
D-4	() He may have been one of the singers (20:14, 21).
D-5	() Jehoshaphat praised and honored him (20:18).

conclusions

worksheet answers

We can never fully understand God. Yet, one obvious reason why the Lord used Jahaziel was because he was at the temple and involved in the national prayer gathering (A-3). If he had stayed home that day, we would now probably be discussing someone else (A-4). (See Esther 4:13-14.)

There is more about national worship in chapter 20 than there is about any individual other than the king. Jahaziel and Eliezer are both only mentioned briefly, though there is more recorded about Jahaziel (C-4). This is probably because of his connections with the temple.

The message in 20:15-17 was more God's message than Jahaziel's (A-7). And compared to God, Jahaziel was, of course, not very important. That said, it is wrong to claim that Jahaziel's life and ministry were unimportant in an absolute sense. Thus line A can be marked various ways.

Jahaziel's message—and it really was his message in a way—was well received rather than popular (B-2). Jehoshaphat praised the Lord rather than Jahaziel (D-5). Even so, in some ways, his message was a lot like the one Moses' gave at the Red Sea (C-7).

So what?

The core of the Lord's message to Judah was the command to not be afraid (20:15). Naturally, they were fearful at first (20:2), but they were not so after Jahaziel spoke (C-3). It would have been sinful for them to not trust the Lord (20:20). So this sin was confronted (B-1).

As with Moses and the people at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:13) and David facing Goliath (1 Sam. 17:47), salvation was from the Lord. Jahaziel did not oppose the raising of an army, for one already existed (20:21). Rather he said that this time Israel's soldiers would not need to fight (20:17).

The army was still to "go down against" the enemy (20:16). Yet since the Lord would fight for them (20:29), singers took the lead (20:21-22). Later the people returned to the house of the Lord with joyful music (20:28). The focus in chapter 20 is more on praising than fighting.

What happened to Jahaziel? He disappeared, probably by taking his place among the singers (D-4) or musicians (D-3). At first, he spoke as an individual, but it must have also been a great blessing for him to simply be in the choir at the end (D). May each of us be so blessed as well.

applications

Apply the points which you believe are most important or seem most needful.
