

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

We are going to continue our study through 2 Kings –

We are going to be in 2 Kings 3 – so turn with me there.

A good portion of 2 Kings revolves around the ministry of Elisha –

And I had previously mentioned that Elisha's ministry was one of grace.

He was the prophet of grace – and we see this throughout many of the miracles he performed.

And we will see an example of this in chapter three.

This morning, we are going to be looking at the King of Israel and the King of Judah going to battle against the Moabites.

The problem is that they didn't seek the Lord – they relied on instincts and they get themselves in trouble – it is then that they seek the Lord through the prophet Elisha – and the Lord reveals to them the way to salvation.

**Let's pray...**

[2Ki 3:1-27 NKJV] 1 Now **Jehoram the son of Ahab** became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of **Jehoshaphat king of Judah**, and reigned twelve years.

A couple of weeks ago, in our study through chapter 1, we were introduced to a wicked, clumsy and weak king by the name of Ahaziah.

Ahaziah was the guy who fell through a window and sent for messengers to inquire from pagan gods his fate despite having God's prophet, Elijah in his backyard – And by the end of the chapter, Ahaziah had died from his injuries.

Since Ahaziah didn't leave behind an heir to the throne, his brother, Jehoram became king over Israel.

Now, once again, I have to remind to remind you that all of the kings of Israel were wicked – especially Ahaziah and Jehoram's father - Ahab – as the word of God states that Ahab did more evil in His eyes than any other king before him.

**Jehoshaphath** was the king of the Southern Kingdom – Judah.

Judah had its share of wicked kings but also had a few kings that feared the Lord.

Jehoshaphath was one of those kings – the thing that got Johosaphath in trouble was that he would start making alliances with the wicked kings of the north.

**2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the [sacred] pillar of Baal that his father had made.**

Jehoram was a wicked king, but he wasn't as wicked as his father, Ahab and his mother Jezebel – who had set up an altar for Baal in Israel and encouraged others to do so.

This doesn't mean that Jehoram was good king – even though he didn't worship Baal, there were still other idols that Israel worshipped.

**3 Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.**

After the death of Solomon, Jeroboam leads a rebellion against King Rehoboam – who was Solomon's son, and the kingdom is divided so the people of Israel crown him king over them.

Turn with me to 1 Kings 12 –

We are going to take a look at what Jeroboam did as king.

**[1Ki 12:25-31 NKJV] 25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: 27 "If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam**

king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah." 28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" 29 And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went [to worship] before the one as far as Dan. 31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.

So what Jeroboam did was because the temple was in Jerusalem – he knew that all the tribes had to go worship in Jerusalem – but he was worried that when the people would go back to Jerusalem, they will want to have Rehoboam lead them – so he builds shrines to these golden calves and tells the people that they can worship there in Israel –

Jehoram – was still partaking of the worship of these calves.

Therefore, he still deserves judgment – even though he wasn't as evil as his dad.

Church, we must remember that while a person may not be as bad as they could be, no one is as righteous as they should be.

God's word reveals that the standard of holiness is God, and because of that, we are in great need.

The good news of the gospel is that Christ died for sinners like you and me, and He alone makes us holy and acceptable in God's sight.

The gospel says, "Herb Perez did evil in the sight of the Lord, but then he trusted in Christ, now Herb is accepted in God's sight.

**4 Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheepbreeder, and he regularly paid the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams.**

**5 But it happened, when Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.**

The Moabites, belonged to Israel – and they had to pay a tribute or a tax to Israel every year.

However, after the death of Ahab – the king of Moab saw the opportunity to break away from having to pay the tax to Israel – so they simply stopped paying it.

**6 So King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel. 7**

**Then he went and sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?" And he**

**said, "I will go up; I [am] as you [are], my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 8 Then he said, "Which way shall we go up?" And he answered,**

**"By way of the Wilderness of Edom."**

Jehoram wants to get back at Moab – so he enlists the help of Jehoshaphat and Judah.

Now, Jehoshaphat has been through this before.

Because a few years earlier, King Ahab, had requested that Jehoshaphat and Judah join him in his fight against Syria.

The main difference between that event and this event is that here, Jehoshaphat agrees to join the fight without **first** seeking council from God.

He did it out of impulse – it sounded like the right thing to do.

Even the plan sounds good – Moab would be expecting an attack from the north and west – here they will be going around the Dead Sea and attacking from the south.

Easy win right?

Church, we will be tempted to live by our impulses rather than by God's word.

It sounds right

It feels right

And when we do this – it shouldn't surprise us when we encounter disastrous results.

And that is exactly what is going to happen here.

**9 So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they marched on that roundabout route seven days; and there was no water for the army, nor for the animals that followed them. 10 And the king of Israel said, "Alas! **For the LORD has called** these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab."**

So the three kings – notice they even got the help from the King of Edom.

They haven't even reached Moab and they start to complain.

And then you see the King of Israel start to blame God for the mess they are in.

Jehoram blames God even though he didn't seek God's council in the first place.

**11 But Jehoshaphat said, "[Is there] no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD by him?" So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, "Elisha the son of Shaphat [is] here, **who poured water on the hands of Elijah.**" 12 And Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.**

While Jehoram wanted to blame God for the crisis - Jehoshaphat believed that God should be sought because of the crisis.

And he inquires to see if there were any prophets within the camp and someone brings up the name Elisha.

And right away, Jehoshaphat recognized that Elisha as the prophet of grace.

The phrase – who poured water on the hands of Elijah refers to Elisha being a humble servant of Elijah.

**13 Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother." But the king of Israel said to him, "No, for the LORD has called these three kings [together] to deliver them into the hand of Moab." 14 And Elisha said, "[As] the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you, nor see you.**

Initially, Elisha questions Jehoram coming before him.

In fact, he even suggests that Jehoram get his answers from Baal and Asherah.

And the reason that he does this is because he knows that Jehoram is only seeking the Lord because of the crisis that he is facing – and not out of his wholehearted loyalty to God.

So then Elisha tells them that the only reason he will speak a prophetic word is because of Jehoshaphat.

God knows and cares about Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat may be flawed, but he loves the Lord, and God knows that.

So, God is going to step into this situation because of Jehoshaphat.

**15 "But now bring me a musician." Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. 16 And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.' 17 "For thus says the LORD: 'You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink.' 18 "And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand.**

God promised to send water to the valley, but they had to dig the ditches to catch what God would provide.

They had to dig the ditches before the water was apparent, so they could benefit from it when it came.

In other words God's blessing would be proportional according to how many ditches they dug up – if they only dug up a few ditches – then they would get to drink that little amount of water, if they dug up a lot of ditches – there would be that much water for them and their animals.

Keep in mind that they are in the desert – digging ditches is going to be very hard work.

It is hot

They are thirsty

The ground is hard

And it all had to be done **in faith** because they would not be seeing any evidence of God's provision until it got there.

Turn with me to John 7,

**[Jhn 7:37-39 NKJV] 37 On the last day, that great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

As a believer and as the church, we all have been tasked with digging ditches.

Sometimes we dig ditches through prayer, through bible study, through ministry – and sometimes it may seem like hard work.

But God doesn't ask us to do more than what we can do – digging ditches is something we can all do.

Then God has promised to fill the ditches in His time.

**Not only was God going to sustain them – He was going to give them victory.**

So the prophet of grace, Elisha, was giving a double promise.

Now, I want you to see how God saved Israel in this event.

Jehoram is given the promise of salvation by Elisha.

How will salvation come?

It will come by God's grace alone – remember, Jehoram didn't deserve it – he was a wicked king

Secondly, it will come because of the relationship that Jehoram had with the Davidic king – Jehoshaphat.

Church, we are in the same position as Jehoram.

We are saved by God's grace alone, through our union with the ultimate Davidic king – Jesus Christ.

If we are with Him, then we have received grace upon grace.

**19 "Also you shall attack every fortified city and every choice city, and shall cut down every good tree, and stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones."**

Now, here in verse 19, God provides instructions that seem counterproductive to Israel.

The entire reason that Israel is going to war against Moab is because they stopped paying their tribute.

But God orders them to destroy the land – meaning that Moab is really not going to be able to continue to pay the tribute.

No shade, no water for herding sheep means no tribute.

So Israel would be punishing itself by destroying the land that would be bearing fruit for it.

But for Judah – it is a positive thing because Moab will be less of a threat to them.

So with His order, God saves the coalition of three kings to help Judah and not help Israel.

And this is in harmony to the ministry of Elisha –

To those that turn unto the Lord, he announces grace (Judah) but to those who are indifferent, they are rejected.

**20 Now it happened in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water.**

This is in reference to time –

All the offerings were done back in the temple in Jerusalem.

And one was offered at sunrise and one was offered at twilight.

So at sunrise, water came down into the valley and all of the ditches that were dug up were filled with water, just like the Lord had said through Elisha.

**21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to bear arms and older were gathered; and they stood at the border. 22 Then they rose up early in the morning, and the sun was shining on the water; and the Moabites saw the water on the other side [as] red as blood. 23 And they said, "This is blood; the kings have surely struck swords and have killed one another; now therefore, Moab, to the spoil!"**

The same water that God provided for and saved the armies of the three kings from certain death also became the means of confusion and death to the enemies of God.

Throughout scripture, water is a picture of the Word of God.

And there are many people that view the Word of God as repulsive – they view it as a book of blood.

How could a loving God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah

How could a loving God order the Children of Israel to kill every Canaanite.

But, to those that of us who have not only read the Word of God but tasted it – we see that it is not repulsive but refreshing.

When the Moabites saw the water reflecting from the valley floor at sunrise, they thought it was blood – they thought that the three kings and their armies had turned against each other and destroyed themselves.

Had they only gotten closer to the water and tasted it – they would have realized that it wasn't blood.

Those individuals that are critics of the bible are those that have only seen if from a distance but never truly tasted it.

So one of the things that happened was that the Moabite army let their guard down because they thought that the battle had already been won.

They were going to go down there and collect all the spoils of victory.

**24 So when they came to the camp of Israel, Israel rose up and attacked the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they entered [their] land, killing the Moabites. 25 Then they destroyed the cities, and each man threw a stone on every good piece of land and filled it; and they stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. But they left the stones of Kir Haraseth [intact]. However the slingers surrounded and attacked it.**

So the Moabites actually came to the camp of Israel and they were soundly defeated.

And they chased after them and destroyed the land just as the Lord had spoken through the prophet Elisha.

And then they came to Kir Haraseth –

They didn't destroy the city – but they were able to damage it.

**26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not.**

The king of Moab – he tries to capture the weakest of the three kings – the king of Edom – maybe he felt that by capturing him, he could then use him to barter a peace deal.

But he was unsuccessful.

And as we will see he gets really desperate.

**27 Then he took his eldest son who would have reigned in his place, and offered him [as] a burnt offering upon the wall; and there was great indignation against Israel. So they departed from him and returned to [their own] land.**

King Mesha, sacrifices his son on top of the walls of the city to the pagan god Chemosh.

The Moabites, just like some of the other ites practiced human sacrifice.

The Ammonites worshipped Molech – they would heat up this bronze statue and put their newborn babies in the outstretched arm of this red hot statue.

And this was done to earn favor, or for prosperity.

Chemosh was the Moabite equivalent to Molech.

Now, I had you make a note that there was great indignation against Israel – it doesn't say that the indignation came from God – after all, God had already promised them that they were going to achieve victory over the Moabites.

It is most likely that the armies of Israel and Judah were so disgusted with this human sacrifice, that they decided to leave, figuring that it wasn't worth staying around and watching what Mesha might do to get out of his siege.

Yet God had still given Israel and Judah a great victory over Moab, just as God said would happen.

Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

