

2 Kings Lesson 3

2 Kings Chapter 3

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

e-Mail: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Memory verses for this week: *Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

Introduction: In this week's lesson, we study about the details of the reign of Jehoram, the son of Ahab. Record is made of Moab's rebellion against Israel and we find Elisha rebuking the alliance of Jehoshaphat with Jehoram. Then the chapter concludes with Elisha's promise of water and victory over Moab which came to pass.

I. Accession of Jehoram over Israel

2Ki 3:1 Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.

2Ki 3:2 And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made.

2Ki 3:3 Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

The focus shifts from the ministry of Elisha back to the politics of the northern kingdom. Jehoram, Ahab's son, had ascended his father's throne. While he was not a godly king, to his credit, he did get rid of his father's image of Baal.

1Ki 16:31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

1Ki 16:32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

Though departing from official Baal worship, Jehoram still adhered to the golden calves that Jeroboam had erected.

2Ki 3:4 And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.

2Ki 3:5 But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

Mesha, the king of Moab rebels against Israel. Since the time of David, Moab had been in subjection to Israel, paying substantial annual tribute tax in sheep and wool. After the death of Ahab, Mesha saw an opportunity to revolt against young Jehoram. He ceased paying tribute to the northern kingdom of Israel.

2Ki 3:6 And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel.

2Ki 3:7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.

King Jehoram quickly numbered all Israel. The idea is that he took a census to determine his potential military resources. In the past, God was displeased when kings chose to number the people. Jehoram sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah a message. "The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle?"

Jehoshaphat agreed to join together with Jehoram to war against their common enemy Moab. One would think that Jehoshaphat had learned his lesson some years earlier when he entered into a alliance with Jehoram's father Ahab against the Syrians. (See I Kings 22)

This is when Micaiah the prophet prophesied for Israel to not go up, but they ignored the warning of the Lord to their failure. Ahab was killed and Israel defeated.

1Ki 22:35 And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.

1Ki 22:36 And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

1Ki 22:37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.

1Ki 22:38 And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake.

2Ki 3:8 And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom.

2Ki 3:9 So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them.

Jehoram sought advice of Jehoshaphat as to the best route for attack against Moab. Jehoshaphat then counseled that they attack Moab from Edom which was to the south. They would march down the west side of the Dead Sea and assault Moab by a surprise attack from the south. The armies of Judah and Israel evidently joined together with the king of Edom for a joint attack against Moab.

The region around the Dead Sea on either side is arid and mostly desert. They marched in an indirect route down around the Dead Sea and up the other

side into Edom. During the seven-day march, they came to realize that they had no water.

2Ki 3:10 And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!

2Ki 3:11 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

2Ki 3:12 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.

In verse 10 King Jehoram begins to murmur. "And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!" Ironically, it was the king of Israel (Jehoram) who had instigated this whole campaign. Now it was he who complained the loudest.

Jehoshaphat asks about a prophet to enquire of the LORD. A servant presents Elisha who is numbered among them or close by. The whole scene is remarkably similar to the disaster recorded in I Kings 22 wherein Jehoshaphat asked the same question when they sought out Micaiah.

1Ki 22:7 And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?

Of interest is that it was Jehoram, the king of the apostate north, which recommended Elisha to Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat certainly had heard of Elisha and knew he was a man of God. Therefore, both he and Jehoram went to see the prophet rather than the other way around.

II. Elisha Reproves the Alliance Between Jehoshaphat and Jehoram

2Ki 3:13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

2Ki 3:14 And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.

2Ki 3:15 But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.

Upon being confronted by Jehoram, Elisha had nothing good to say to him. Elisha, knowing of the apostasy of Jehoram, told him to go and inquire of his own pagan gods. His willingness to seek counsel from a prophet of Jehovah in time of crisis revealed his own spiritual bankruptcy.

Elisha therefore delivered bad news. He announced that the Lord had indeed called these three kings to be chastened by Moab. It seems that this initial pronouncement was made without consultation of the Lord. Elisha apparently

was sharing his own sentiments in the matter.

Though Jehoshaphat was basically a godly king, his willingness to compromise with first Ahab and now Jehoram put him in a place where he was rebuked by God. A lesson remains of spiritual compromise for expediency and God's displeasure therewith. Elisha let Jehoram know that he would have had nothing to do with him whatsoever except that he had some respect for Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. It seems that some Old Testament prophets were stirred to prophesy when inspired by music.

John Gill in his commentary said this about the minstrel.

2 Kings 3:15

But now bring me a minstrel,.... A piper, a man that knows how to play upon the harp, as the Targum; according to Procopius Gazaeus, this was one of the Levites he ordered to be fetched, who was used to the spiritual melody of David, and could play on musical instruments as he directed. This he did to allay his passion, and compose his spirits, ruffled at the sight of Jehoram, and to fit him to receive prophetic inspiration, which sometimes came upon the Lord's prophets when thus employed, see 1Sa 10:5. Some think the music the prophet called for is that sort the Greeks call "harmony", which is the gravest and saddest, and settles the affections:

and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him; the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum, which came by the power of God, and as a gift from his hand.

2Ki 3:16 And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches.

2Ki 3:17 For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.

Elisha makes a promise of water and victory in verses 16 and 17. Though Elisha had initially predicted doom, now as God spoke through him, he rather had good news. First, God would miraculously provide water for the assembled armies.

He directed them to dig ditches throughout the valley where they were. Though there would be no rainstorm, nevertheless, they soon would have more than enough water.

2Ki 3:18 And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.

2Ki 3:19 And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.

We have an all powerful God, and providing water for them was as nothing for

the Lord. Furthermore, Elisha foretold that the Lord will deliver the Moabites also into their hands. Not only would God give them an overwhelming victory over the Moabites, Israel and Judah were to utterly destroy that wicked nation.

They were to destroy every fortified city and cut down every substantial tree. They were to plug up every well they found and fill farm land with stones.

2Ki 3:20 And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

In verse 20, apparently, even out in the battlefield, Jehoshaphat's men observed the morning sacrifice prescribed by the law. At that time, water flowed down from the highlands of Edom to the south. The valley where they were soon was flowing with water and the ditches which had been dug were now filled with water.

III. The Defeat of the Moabites

2Ki 3:21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border.

2Ki 3:22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood:

2Ki 3:23 And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.

The Moabites became aware of the armies invading from the south. The nation of Moab mobilized militarily and marched to the border with Edom. As they looked down into the valley whence were the invading armies, the water in the ditches looked red as blood to them. Of interest is that the name Edom literally means red.

It may be that God caused minerals in the water from Edom to cause reflected light to appear red. They interpreted what they saw as blood from an internecine fight between the invading armies. They then ordered their forces to go down and loot the camps of their foes.

I had no idea what that word internecine meant, so I looked it up in the dictionary.

Internecine:

1. of or pertaining to conflict or struggle within a group: an internecine feud among proxy holders.
2. mutually destructive.

3. characterized by great slaughter; deadly.

This was that exact thing.

2Ki 3:24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country.

2Ki 3:25 And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.

The Moabites advanced to loot and not to fight. Their entire mind set was changed. They may also have laid aside their cumbersome armor to better loot the camps. Israel and its allies were waiting for them and attacked.

The Moabites were turned to a total rout and were chased back into Moab. As directed by God, they set about to destroy the land. Their only difficulty was at the chief city of Moab, Kirharaseth, for which they brought up their combat engineers to break down the city walls to conquer it.

2Ki 3:26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not.

Seeing that the battle was lost, the king of Moab with seven hundred of his men attempted a breakout against the forces of Edom thinking they would be easier to fight. However, they were thwarted even there.

Adam Clarke in his commentary said this about verse 26.

2 Kings 3:26

Seven hundred men - These were no doubt the choice of all his troops, and being afraid of being hemmed up and perhaps taken by his enemies, whom he found on the eve of gaining possession of the city, he made a desperate sortie in order to regain the open country; and supposing that the quarter of the Edomites was weakest, or less carefully guarded, he endeavored to make his impression there; but they were so warmly received by the king of Edom that they failed in the attempt, and were driven back into the city. Hence he was led to that desperate act mentioned in the following verse.

2Ki 3:27 Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.

In desperation, the king of Moab offered his eldest son upon the wall of the city, perhaps hoping to appease his pagan gods. Or, it may be that he hoped to evoke sympathy from his enemies.

It seems that though utterly victorious, Israel and allies allowed the king of Moab to live. He in turn harbored great indignation against Israel. Israel, meanwhile, packed up and went home victorious.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.