

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 KINGS 3

2 KINGS 3:1-3 - REIGN OF JEHOAM, SON OF AHAB

SIN OF JEROBOAM MENTIONED AGAIN

2 KINGS 3:4-6 - MOAB REBELS AGAINST ISRAEL

DURING THE REIGN OF AHAB, MOAB WOULD SEND RESOURCES TO ISRAEL AS A TAX OR TRIBUTE. AFTER HIS DEATH, UNDER THE REIGN OF MESHA, MOAB REBELS. LOSING THAT REVENUE STREAM WOULD HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT AND SO JEHOAM, GATHERS ISRAEL TO SQUASH THE REBELLION.

2 KINGS 3:7-12 — KINGS UNITE AGAINST MOAB

JEHOAM REACHES OUT TO JEHOASHAPHAT (KING OF JUDAH) AND ALSO THE KING OF EDM FOR HELP IN HIS FIGHT AGAINST MOAB. HE ALIGNS WITH THE KING OF EDM AS HE PLANS TO ATTACK MOAB BY TRAVELING THROUGH THE "WILDERNESS OF EDM" (V. 8).



YOU CAN NOTICE ON THE MAP WHAT IT WOULD BE MILITARILY ADVANTAGEOUS FOR JEHOAM TO ALIGN WITH JUDAH AND EDM. THEIR FORCES COULD SNEAK INTO MOAB FROM THE SOUTH, WHICH WAS A MUCH LONGER ROUTE FOR THE TROOPS TO TRAVEL, AND THUS LIKELY PROVIDED MORE OF A SURPRISE ATTACK.

AFTER A 7 DAY JOURNEY, THE ARMY FINDS ITSELF WITHOUT WATER. FACING THIS CRISIS, JEHOAM IMMEDIATELY BLAME THE LORD FOR THIS. (V. 10). JEHOASHAPHAT ON THE OTHER HAND SAYS, "HOLD ON A SECOND, LET'S FIND OUT THROUGH A PROPHET WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON".

REMEMBER, WE HAVE LEARNED FROM 1 KINGS THAT JEHOASHAPHAT WAS NOT LIKE HIS ISRAEL KING COUNTERPARTS BUT ACTUALLY FEARED THE LORD AND OBEYED HIS WORD

1 KINGS 22:43A- HE WALKED IN ALL THE WAY OF ASA HIS FATHER; HE DID NOT TURN ASIDE FROM IT, DOING RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD...

THIS INSTANCES HIGHLIGHTS TWO TYPICAL RESPONSES TO TROUBLE. JEHOAM REPRESENTS THAT COMMON ATTITUDE OF

BLAMING GOD WHEN TROUBLE COMES. HE, WITHOUT MUCH THOUGHT OR PROVOCATION, CRIES OUT "THIS MUST BE THE LORD PUNISHING US!" IN CONTRAST, JEHOSEPHAT SAYS "LET'S SEEK THE LORD FOR CLARITY ON WHAT IS GOING ON". HE OFFERS US A GOOD EXAMPLE TO MODEL. JEHOSEPHAT IS QUICK TO BLAME THE LORD, JEHOSEPHAT IS QUICK TO SEEK HIM.

V. 11 - "IS THERE A PROPHET OF THE LORD HERE?" - NOTICE THAT A SERVANT ANSWERS, WHILE THE KING IS SILENT. ELISHA IS CALLED UPON.

2 KINGS 3:13-19 - 3 KINGS & ELISHA

V. 16-17 - ELISHA COMMANDS THE KINGS TO MAKE TRENCHES IN THE VALLEY. HE SAYS THAT THE LORD WILL CAUSE THESE TRENCHES TO FILL UP WITH WATER, EVEN THOUGH NO RAIN WILL COME. NOT ONLY WOULD THESE TRENCHES BE USED TO QUENCH THE THIRST OF THE SOLDIERS AND THEIR ANIMALS, IT WOULD BE USED TO BRING VICTORY IN THE CONFLICT.

V. 18 - THE MIRACULOUS IS A SIMPLE THING FOR THE LORD. THE RAINLESS WATER FILLED TRENCHES WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE THE HELP FOR THE KINGS. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A REMARKABLE AND MIRACULOUS EVENT. TO THEN HAVE MILITARY VICTORY ON TOP OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE AMAZING. YET ELISHA ALMOST CASUALLY IMPLIES, "OH YEAH, AND GOD WILL BRING VICTORY TOO..." GOD'S POWER IS AWESOME.

2 KINGS 3:20-27 - A MIRACULOUS VICTORY AND A STRANGE CONCLUSION

V. 20 - THE TRENCHES IN THE VALLEY FILLED WITH WATER, JUST AS ELISHA HAD SAID.

NOT ONLY DID GOD USE THE WATER TO REFRESH THE SOLDIERS, HE USED THE WATER TO CONFOUND THEIR ENEMY. WHEN THE MOABITES CAME TO FIGHT AGAINST THE UNITED ARMY OF ISRAEL, JUDAH AND EDM, THE SUN'S REFLECTION ON THE TRENCHES OF WATER MADE IT LOOK LIKE BLOOD. AS A RESULT, MOAB'S ARMY ASSUMED THE THREE NATIONS HAD SLAUGHTERED EACH OTHER! THEY CROSSED INTO THE VALLEY WITH THEIR GUARD DOWN, ASSUMING THEY WOULD SIMPLY BE COLLECTING THE SPOIL (V. 23). THIS SET THEM UP TO BE SOUNDLY DEFEATED.

ISRAEL, JUDAH AND EDM APPEARED AND CHASED MOAB BACK. THEY ENTERED INTO THE BOUNDARY OF MOAB AND DESTROYED MANY CITIES, JUST AS ELISHA HAD COMMANDED (CP V. 19), LEAVING THE LAND IN ROUGH SHAPE TO PRODUCE HEALTHY CROPS.

2 KINGS 3:25A (NLT) - THEY DESTROYED THE TOWNS, COVERED THEIR GOOD LAND WITH STONES, STOPPED UP ALL THE SPRINGS, AND CUT DOWN ALL THE GOOD TREES.

V. 27 - IN A STRANGE CONCLUSION TO THIS RECORD, MESA, THE KING OF MOAB SACRIFICES HIS OLDEST SON, AND HIS KINGDOM'S HEIR AS A BURNT OFFERING. THIS IS LIKELY A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO GAIN THE FAVOR OF CHEMOSH (MOLECH), THE GOD OF THE MOABITES. THE MAIN PRACTICE ASSOCIATED WITH THE WORSHIP OF CHEMOSH/MOLECH WAS CHILD SACRIFICE. FEELING ABANDONED BY HIS GOD AND NEAR TOTAL DEFEAT (AND LIKELY DEATH), THE KING RESPONDS RADICALLY BY OFFERING UP HIS ELDEST SON TO CHEMOSH.

IN TURN, THE PEOPLE OF MOAB HAVING LOST THEIR BATTLE AND NOW LOST THEIR NEXT IN LINE, ARE FURIOUS ABOUT ISRAEL SEEMINGLY CAUSING THIS CRISIS AND TRAGEDY IN THEIR LAND, AND GET SO UNITED IN THEIR ANGER ("GREAT WRATH" USED V. 27) THAT THEY DRIVE ISRAEL BACK TO THEIR OWN LAND. AND WITH THAT THE WAR IS OVER FOR NOW AND STILLNESS (NOT PEACE) RETURNS TO THE REGION.

LET'S CLOSE BY OBSERVING HOW THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THIS CHAPTER DEAL WITH TROUBLE.

1 - JEHOAM OF ISRAEL BLAMES GOD AND NEEDS HELP FROM OTHERS IN ORDER TO LEAD AND PUSH BACK HIS ENEMY. HE IS HESITANT TO LOOK TO THE LORD FOR HELP AND ONLY GOES THAT ROUTE AS A LAST RESORT. WHILE HE HAS SOME VICTORY, BUT ENDS UP RUNNING BACK HOME, UNABLE TO COMPLETELY DEFEAT MOAB.

2 - MESHA OF MOAB RUNS RIGHT TO IDOLS AND FALSE GODS. HE IS DEFEATED BY HIS ENEMY AND KILLS HIS SON.

3 - JEHOASHAPHAT OF JUDAH SEEKS THE LORD AND IS GIVEN FAVOR, IN SPITE OF THE UNBELIEF IDOLATRY AROUND HIM. IN FACT, THE UNBELIEVERS AND IDOLATERS REAP THE BENEFIT OF JEHOASHAPHAT'S FAITH.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHEN OVERWHELMED, TROUBLED, OR TIRED, HOW DO WE RESPOND? IT SEEMS OBVIOUSLY FOOLISH TO ACT LIKE JEHOAM OR MESHA. BUT, LIKE JEHOAM WE DO OFTEN GET MAD AT GOD WHEN THINGS DON'T GO "OUR" WAY. WE THINK WE ARE GOOD AT MANAGING OUR LIVES WITHOUT THE DAILY HELP OF GOD UNTIL LIFE CRUMBLES AROUND US AND WE REMEMBER HOW INCAPABLE WE REALLY ARE.

WE WOULD NEVER SAY THAT WE ARE LIKE MESHA! BUT WHERE DO WE RUN WHEN TROUBLE COMES? WHERE DO WE TURN WHEN WE ARE UNSURE WHAT TO DO? DO WE TRUST IN OUR EXPERIENCE AND WISDOM? DO WE TURN TO A FRIEND OR FAMILY? DO WE TRUST IN OUR MONEY TO BAIL US OUT? OR DO WE RUN TO GOD? DO WE WORSHIP AT THE ALTAR OF OUR ABILITIES, SPIRITUAL PEDIGREE, DENOMINATION, CHURCH ATTENDANCE ETC ETC OR DO WE BOW BEFORE THE LORD.

THE REAL KEY IS NOT WHETHER OR NOT WE ARE LIKE JEHOAM OR MESHA AT TIMES, BUT RATHER ARE WE LIKE JEHOASHAPHAT. DO WE SEE HIS CHARACTER IN US? JEHOASHAPHAT WANTED TO KNOW WHAT THE LORD THOUGHT. JEHOASHAPHAT WANTED TO HEAR THE LORD'S WORD. JEHOASHAPHAT SOUGHT THE LORD WHEN HE WAS IN A DRY LAND. AND THE LORD HEARD HIM AND SPOKE TO HIM AND CARE FOR HIM.

THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE IS THIS:

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-9 - BUT WE HAVE THIS TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS, SO THAT THE SURPASSING GREATNESS OF THE POWER WILL BE OF GOD AND NOT FROM OURSELVES; 8 WE ARE AFFLICTED IN EVERY WAY, BUT NOT CRUSHED; PERPLEXED, BUT NOT DESPAIRING; 9 PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN; STRUCK DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED;

PSALM 30:5B - WEEPING MAY LAST FOR THE NIGHT, BUT A SHOUT OF JOY COMES IN THE MORNING.

GOD'S LOVE FOR US IS NOT DEPENDANT ON OUR CIRCUMSTANCES IN THIS EVIL AGE. BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO THOSE WHO LIVE FOR GOD, AND FOR REASONS OTHER THAN JUST THEIR STAND FOR HIM. BUT THIS CANNOT SHAKE OUR DEPENDANCE ON, FAITH IN, OR WORSHIP OF OUR GOD. AND WHEN MEN AND WOMEN STAND FOR THE LORD, IN SPITE OF THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES AND IN SPITE OF THEIR MINORITY, GOD CAN BRING REFRESHMENT AND VICTORY. IN SOME CASES, HIS GOODNESS TO HIS PEOPLE CAN BE SO PERVASIVE THAT IS SPLASHES UPON THOSE WHO DO NOT YET TRUST IN THE LORD. IT WOULD BE WISE FOR THEM TO RECOGNIZE HIS GOODNESS (AS JEHOAM SHOULD HAVE).

THE TRUE MAN OR WOMAN OF GOD DOESN'T RUN AWAY BECAUSE THINGS GET TOUGH. THEY WAIT FOR GOD TO WORK AND TRUST HIM TO BE WITH THEM IN THE DAYS UNTIL HE DOES.

SO LET US NOT SETTLE FOR ANYTHING LESS THAN THE LORD. LET'S NOT RUN TO ANY OTHER PLACE FOR SAFETY. LET'S NOT RUN TO ANOTHER THING FOR HELP. LET'S NOT RUN TO ANOTHER PLACE TO FIND ANSWERS. IN FACT, LET'S NOT RUN AT ALL. LET'S REMAIN CLOSE TO THE LORD SO THAT HIS PRESENCE CAN COMFORT AND GUIDE IN ANY AND ALL SEASONS WE FACE.