

2 Kings 3

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Date: 14 August 2024

[0 : 00] 2nd Kings chapter 3. If you remember, our historical setting of the book of 2nd Kings was interrupted with the 2nd chapter. In the 2nd chapter, we have the departure of Elijah and the commissioning of Elisha.

Though he'd already been commissioned, now we see him endowed with the power and the spirit of Elisha because Elijah has been caught up into heaven. So we're going to pick up in the historical narrative exactly where we left off in the 1st chapter.

That is, we need to know what transpired there. There was just a small period of time when Ahab died. Ahab, the most wicked king that the nation of Israel had ever seen.

It is a northern tribe, the man who was married to Jezebel. When he dies, his son Ahaziah reigns in his place for a very short period of time. A portion of 2 years in scripture is called 2 years, though it wasn't 2 years in its entirety.

And then you remember he fell through the lattice of his roof and he was sending to a false god to ask if he would survive. And Elijah met the messengers on the way and said, no, you're going to die.

[1 : 06] And surely he died according to the word of the Lord that was given to him. So what we pick up in the 3rd chapter is the rest of that account. That is, Ahaziah died with no children, so his brother ascends to the throne after him.

That is who we will meet, Jehoram, his brother, is on the throne during the reign of Jehoshaphat in the southern kingdom. And I want you just to kind of see what the word of God declares for us here. Now, Jehoram, the son of Ahab, became king over Israel at Samaria in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and reigned 12 years. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, though not like his father and his mother, for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal, which his father had made. Just a side note, he brought it back later on too. Okay, you need to know that. That's found for us in 2 Chronicles. He did put it away, but he brought it back. That has bearing on our text, so let's stay there.

Nevertheless, he clung to the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nabat, which he made Israel sin. He did not depart from them. Now, Mishah, king of Moab, was a sheep breeder and used to pay the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams.

[2 : 18] But when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. And king Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel. Then he went and sent word to Jehoshaphat, the 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. He said, Which way shall we go?

Go up. And he answered, The way of the wilderness of Edom. So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. And they made a circuit of seven days' journey. And there was no water for the army or for the cattle that followed them.

Then the king of Israel said, Alas, for the Lord has called these three kings to be given into the hand of Moab. But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire of the Lord by him?

And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Elisha, the son of Shaphat, is here, who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah. Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him.

[3 : 23] So the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom went down to him. Now Elisha said to the king of Israel, What do I have to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother.

And the king of Israel said to him, No, for the Lord has called these three kings together to give them into the hand of Moab. Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts lives before whom I stand, Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I will not look at you nor see you, but

now bring me a minstrel.

And it came about when the minstrel played that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of trenches. For thus saith the Lord, You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain.

Yet the valley shall be filled with water, so that you shall drink both you and your cattle and your beast. This is but a slight thing in the sight of the Lord. He will also give the Moabites into your hand.

Then you shall strike every fortified city and every choice city and fell every good tree and stop all springs of water and mar every good piece of land with stones. It happened in the morning about the time of offering the sacrifice that behold, water came by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

[4 : 37] Now all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. And all who were able to put on armor and odor were summoned and stood at the border. They rose early in the morning, and a sun shone on the water.

And the Moabites saw the water opposite them as red as blood. Then they said, This is blood. The kings have surely fought together, and they have slain one another. Now therefore Moab to the spoil.

But when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites arose and struck the Moabites, so that they fled before them. And they went forward into the land, slaughtering the Moabites. Thus they destroyed the cities.

And each one threw a stone on every piece of good land and filled it. So they stopped all the springs of water and filled all the good trees, until in Kir Harasheth. Only they left its stones. However, the slingers went about it and struck it. When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him 700 men who drew the swords, to break through to the king of Edom.

[5 : 37] But they could not. Then he took his oldest son, who was to reign in his place, and offered him as a burnt offering on the wall. And there came great wrath against Israel, and they departed from him and returned to their own land.

2 Kings chapter 3. I want you to see this evening, and we won't take a lot of time, we could spend probably a lot more time on this chapter, and if the Lord leads, we'll come back to it.

But I want you to see the byproducts of partial reform. The byproducts of a partial reform. When Ahaziah dies, he dies with no child, and his brother ascends to the throne.

Jehoram comes to the throne as the son of Ahab, not the original descendant who would assume the throne, but rather the younger brother of Ahaziah.

Now you have to remember everything to which he has witnessed. He has seen the sins of Ahab, he has seen the prophecy of Elijah, he has seen the sins of Ahaziah, he has seen Elijah's word come to Ahaziah, and he has seen his death as well.

[6 : 40] Jehoram has seen much of what God had declared to come true. And possibly he learned a little bit from that, because he does make at least some reforms in the northern tribes of Israel.

But it is really a partial reform, and we see the products of that partial reform played out for us in this chapter. The first thing that you see is that it is an insufficient repentance.

It is an insufficient repentance. It says that Jehoram, the son of Ahab, became king over Israel at Samaria. He was reigning at the same time as Jehoshaphat. Now, just so you can reconcile this with the first chapter of 2 Kings, when you do your cross study, you will see there at the end of chapter 1 that Jehoram ascended the throne in Israel while Jehoram was ruling in Judah.

There are two Jehoroms. Jehoram in Judah is the son of Jehoshaphat. He reigned two years as co-regent with his father, Jehoshaphat. So it was at the same time the first year of Jehoram of Judah's reign and the 18th year of Jehoshaphat's reign.

Okay? Just need to understand that because if we don't, then we think the Bible is contradicting itself, and it's not. It is very clear in that because when you start doing cross-references, it can kind of cause you to look at it with some uncertainties.

[8 : 02] But we don't want to let these uncertainties cause doubt upon the passage. But anyway, when the king of Israel is referred to here, it tells us in verse 2, he did evil in the sight of the Lord, but not like Ahab and Jezebel.

So he wasn't quite as bad. As a matter of fact, he did some good. He says that he removed the pillar of Baal that his father had erected. I told you they bring it back later, but at least for this present time, they removed this pillar.

Probably because he has seen that this Baal worship hasn't worked out so well. Right? Ahab has died. Ahaziah has died. Though they're worshiping Baal and seeking all these false gods, there are 400 false prophets that dance before Ahab and make all these great declarations.

Things have not went so well. The word of the Lord has rung true. So Ahaziah, after his death, Jehoram decides, we need to do something about this. And he removes this pillar.

He doesn't go all the way back to true worship though because notice, it says that he went back and he clung to the sins of Jeroboam. Jeroboam is the first king of the northern kingdom.

[9 : 11] He's the one who didn't necessarily replace God. He just wanted to change how they worshiped God. He constructed the two golden calves. He put them in two convenient places.

He said, it's inconvenient for you to go to Jerusalem. Let's put them here, one in Dan and one in Bethel. Let's put them somewhere where they're a little bit closer to us. Let's kind of worship God the way, you know, he wants to, but kind of the way we want to.

It was more of a blended worship instead of a replacement. So he didn't necessarily go all the way back as he should have. He stopped a little short at the time of Jeroboam and decided he would follow in his ways because, you know, we all know it worked out real well for Jeroboam because he died too and his dynasty came to an end.

But according to what Ahab had went through, it looked a little bit better. So he is bringing this repentance, if you will, but it is an insufficient repentance because it is not good enough not to be as evil as some.

We ought to be holy as he is holy, the word of God tells us. It's the same tendency that mankind has. It is, well, I'm not going to be as wicked as they are. I'm not going to do as bad as they did.

[10 : 20] As long as I'm a little bit better, surely God will be pleased with that. But that's not the standard. That's not the calling of a holy God, right?

It's not just to be a little bit better than those who went before us or to do a little bit better than the most wicked of kings Ahab. It is to return to the true and faithful worship the way God has ascribed. It is to walk in holiness and obedience and in simplicity and righteousness as he has declared. It is not just to be a little bit better. It is to repent completely and go all the way back.

And this is not just something that is confined to this time because the reality is is this is a temptation of man, right? To look around us and say, well, I'm not as bad as that person.

Surely God will accept me because I haven't done what they've done. That's not what God asks of us, right? When we stand before him on that judgment day, Christ says that we will be held accountable according to our own life.

[11 : 28] Not in comparison with anyone else. The standard is Christ. It is not what everyone else has done. And we see this reality. It is an insufficient repentance.

This measure of reform and repentance that Jehoram brings about falls woefully short. And we see it in the events that transpire.

Now, not only do we see an insufficient repentance, we see an insecure position. Now, the king of Moab took the political unrest of the Israelite kingdom and decided this is a good time to declare my independence.

Misha decides that when Ahab dies, it's a good time to quit paying tributes. Now, you need to understand something a little bit about the Moabites. The Moabites, David, during his reign, had brought the Moabites into subjection as vassal state sometime after the reign of David.

It's kind of lost to us a little bit, probably when the kingdom was divided during the time of Jeroboam. Then Moab takes their freedom back and says, we're not going to be a vassal of Israel anymore.

[12 : 37] You guys can't even get your own stuff together. So they start living independently. And then, a little bit later, some of the kings of the northern kingdom say, oh, no, wait a minute, you're going to come back. And Ahab defeats him in battle and they bring him down and start paying tribute to him.

By the way, there's some extra biblical evidence for all these things in the Moabite stone which is recorded. Archaeology have found it and you can see the reality of these things. On the Moabite stone, this king declares that he won a great victory against Israel and more than likely it is in this

passage that we see that coming about.

Though he didn't win a complete victory, kings have a way of, you know, tooting their own horn, so to say, making themselves look just a little bit better. So, anyway, we read this reality that now Misha says, you know what, this is a pretty good time to quit paying tribute.

That's a lot of sheep. That's a lot of wool. I'm going to keep that to myself because the plains of Moab are a very fertile plain. This is why there's so much pasture land there. This is why you have so many flocks grazing there.

And they decided they would just assume their own freedom there and they rebel. Now, Jehoram understands that he's not strong enough. So, he musters everybody that he can and he goes and asks Jehoshaphat.

[13:49] Jehoshaphat answered in the same way he had answered Ahab. Some Bible critics will say this is not a repetition of an event. This is something that was lost to scribal, translation, scribal order.

I believe it's a repetition of the event. I believe he agrees to do it the same way. Possibly because he saw a little bit of the reforms that Jehoram had done. I mean, he has torn down the pillar of Baal. And more than likely because Moab is a very close border with the southern tribe of Judah.

And, you know, the enemy of my enemies is my friend. That type of reality. If you're going to fight them, we'll fight them with you. So, decided that, yes, okay, I'll go with you. I am as you are. But they don't go directly to Moab because the Moabites have probably stationed.

So, they go around southern. If you're looking at the map, let's go this way. I've got a mic. I've got to stay to, right? So, you're going this way. You've got Israel. You've got Judah. You've got Moab over here. They go down like around the Salt Sea.

And they, Chinneroth, at the Old Testament, they go into the Negev, which is referred to as the southern portion of that land, desolate land, a land in which you are reliant upon wadis. But it's also a land where Edom was at.

[14:57] And this is where they pick up the Edom king. Some of you are like, this is very technical information. Stay with me. They took the long way around because they didn't want to go head on. Why do you do that? Because you're afraid of your enemy. Right?

You're afraid of your enemy. What does the Word of God tell you? The Word of God tells you that if you follow me, then you will be the head. You will not be the tail. You will go into your enemies and they will run from you. A few of you will run off a multitude of them.

But if you do not follow me, then you will be the tail. You will not be the head. A few of them will run off a multitude of you. You don't sneak up on your enemy when you're walking in righteousness and faithfulness. You're only doing it when you're not certain that you're going to win the battle.

Right? So when Jehoshaphat says, how are we going to go? We shouldn't be surprised that Jehoram says, well, we're going to go around. So they go around. They go the long way. The problem is, is you go on a seven-day journey through the Negev, the desolate region down there, just a little south of Chenaroth or the Salt Sea.

And when the wadis aren't running, that's dry river beds that overflow rain, all of a sudden you don't have any rain. You don't have anything to drink. And what's very telling is that when they get down there, it's the king of Israel that we see him in his insecurity because he says, oh great, the Lord's called the three kings down here to die.

[16:08] He's going to hand us over to Moab. That's his initial answer. When they get there, where they're at, there is a wadi, and they should have found water. As soon as they didn't, his assumption is, we're going to be handed over to Moab.

This is what God has done. He's brought us down here. It is Jehoshaphat. If you remember, historically, he's the one who brought all the reforms into Judah. He's the one that reintroduced the study of the Old Testament or the writings of Moses.

He sent scribes and Levites throughout the land to instruct the people in Judah. He says, is there no prophet that we may hear the word of the Lord? His reaction is far different than the king of Israel.

Why? Because he's walking in relationship with the Lord God. Jehoram assumes they're going to be handed over. Jehoshaphat is looking for a word from God.

A servant of Jehoram knows that Elisha is there. Isn't it odd that a servant of the king who is afraid of his life knows there's a man of God in the place?

[17:16] And even when they find Elisha, Jehoshaphat says, this man knows the word of God. Let's go to him. We'll get a word from God. The repetition of Jehoram is God brought us here so that we would all be handed over to Moab.

What we see is that this king who is walking in a little bit of repentance was not walking in confidence. He's really insecure in his position because he just assumes that God is judging them, that God has brought them to this place.

It is the presence of the faithful Jehoshaphat that changes the entire situation. That should be just a side note. It really matters who you hang out with. It really does.

Because Elisha himself said to Jehoram, as surely as I stand before the Lord, if it was not because I regarded Jehoshaphat, I wouldn't even look at you. Those are pretty harsh words coming from Elisha.

We would expect to come from Elisha, but Elisha's not normally that voice for us. He said, I wouldn't even look at your face. Why? Because he wants nothing to do with God.

[18:22] He said, why don't you go seek the prophets of your mother and your father? Why not go to all those? I mean, you've got 400 prophets that will dance around you and tell you everything you want up there. But he regarded the presence of Jehoshaphat.

For him, put people around you that make it possible for God to speak to you. Without Jehoshaphat's presence, Jehoram would have never heard the word of the Lord.

But he's there. King of Edom is quiet. He's, you need to know because Edom by this time is a vassal state or servant of the people of Israel.

So he doesn't have a whole lot to say, so he's just coming. He was told to come, so he came, right?

There are people. So Elisha gives this word. He gives this great word which leads us to this third and final thing and then we'll get to our business.

There's insufficient repentance. There's an insecure position. And there's an incomplete victory. The great cry of the kings when they came is that we're going, we're going to die because there's no water in this land.

[19:28] The wadi is there but it's dry. Now, if you read the text, the implication is that Elisha commanded them to dig trenches coming off of the wadi so that when the water came down the wadi it would fill up the trenches.

They were to dig multiple trenches that came out of that so that all the people and all the animals, everything that was with them would have water to drink. He said, you're not going to see any rain, you're not going to see any wind, you're not going to see anything but I tell you that the rain will come.

The water will come. The water actually flows out of the Moabite territory through those wadis into that region. So they did. They went out there and they dug trenches in the ground and they waited and the next day they get up and there's all this water.

But Elisha makes this declaration to provide water is an easy thing for the Lord. I mean, God can give water out of a stone, right? Out of a rock. He can provide water in any way. This is a double miracle in that the fact that God provides the water without rain but he also uses the water to bring the very people that Jehoram is fearing to them.

So the water is a provision for their thirst but it's also a way that the Moabite people are literally handed over to them in their own camp. Because the Moabites get up the next morning and they're looking and as the sun rises it's setting just right some people will say there's a lot of red clay in that land and that probably has something to do with it.

[20:56] Clear water, red clay, sun hitting just right. They look down and they assume because last time they looked there it wasn't any trenches this is blood all over the place. And these kings which if you know anything about the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom traditionally they don't get along too well with one another.

So the king of Moab said well they came out here to fight us and they end up fighting one another they've killed each other so they go down to plunder them they don't go down to fight them which means they're just coming down without preparation and all of a sudden all of Israel has their enemy handed to them because God provided victory.

Now the prophecy of Elisha was not only that God would bring them to them but that they should pursue them they should utterly destroy they should stop up all their springs they should throw rocks on all their fields they should cut down every good tree which if you go back and you read in

the book of Deuteronomy it tells you not to cut down all the good fruit bearing trees but this prophetic word is that you should cut down the trees because the Moabites have been in rebellion God is judging this nation and you see just in case you feel sorry for Moab stay until the end of the chapter right?

Don't feel too sorry for them yet God is bringing judgment upon them and so they are they're pursuing them they're going and they're going and they're going they're throwing rocks and you say what does throwing rocks have to do? Well if you're going to make good pasture land the first thing you do is you go through there and you throw all the rocks out right?

So all these rocks are piled up well they're scattering the rocks all back on the pasture land they're stopping up all the springs they're destroying all the cities they're doing everything Elisha said until they came to this one place which is the capital city of Moab and they stopped they stopped right there they besieged this city and they're around it Misha decides he's going to take 700 men and try to break through the siege he fails he tries to break through where the ranks of Edom are at because Edom is seen to be weaker and there are less people and he decided he would break through those ranks but it doesn't happen so in a desperate cry to try to gain some victory or to gain some relief Misha the king of Moab does the most despicable unthankful thing he takes his son that was to ascend his throne and sacrifices him on the wall of the city as an offering to Chemosh his false god and now admittedly we come to a very difficult portion of passage to interpret because it tells us that after he offered that sacrifice and there came great wrath this is verse 27 and there came great wrath against Israel we need to get to our business but we want to kind of hopefully find this application if you read some Bible scholars and I use the word scholars you need to understand that not every Bible scholar is a Bible believer you need to understand that just because they have the word scholar after it doesn't mean they're a believer a lot of Bible scholars have a lot of head knowledge about the things that are happening between the pages of your bound scripture but they have no heart information of it and there's a big difference some Bible scholars will tell you in the wording here that it seems to imply because the word and there came great wrath that word great wrath there is an implication of a divine godly wrath and so they see they will say that the implication is is that the false god of Moab accepted this sacrifice and rained down a divine wrath upon

[24 : 38] Israel because when he offered to sacrifice this divine wrath fell upon them so this sacrifice of his son appeased his god Kemash and all of a sudden this divine wrath rains down now as believers you read that a red flag should go up because you're telling me that a false god has greater power than the true god and god had told the nation of Israel to besiege the cities and destroy the cities through Elisha and there's no way that a false god would ever be able to overpower the true god or the people of the true god walking in obedience so we can't let that I believe a greater interpretation or a more accurate interpretation is this great wrath is one that arose from within them that they were so disturbed by what they saw they were so upset about the reality of it they just threw their hands up and walked away it was so unthinkable it was so unpardonable and so unbelievable that they began to fight among one another and this wrath started building up like I can't believe he just did that I can't believe this happened

I can't believe we we did this and see there what they're doing is they're removing God from the equation of them being the instrument of his judgment because then it tells us and they departed from him and returned to their own land that's an incomplete victory either this battle or one that follows this is where the Moabite stone says the king of Moab won a great battle over the people of Israel God had called them to be as tools of judgment but they stopped short not because of any supernatural intervention of a false God but because of a partial reform we don't want to go all the way let's go home this just got real let's go home they stopped short it got uncomfortable it got difficult it got it went further than they ever thought it would so they got upset at one another and they went home and we know that because that's the character of man when it gets real when it gets difficult when it goes further than they ever thought it would go when the following of God following

God and obeying him begins to be inconvenient or begins to stretch them then all of a sudden it's just easier just to give up and go home and let's forget about it we don't always win the victory over those sins or those things which God is judging in our own lives he doesn't use us as instruments of judgment for other people but he uses us to defeat and push back the forces and the darkness of Satan this is why he tells us in scripture that the gates of hell will not prevail against us because the

church is on the offensive but it's when the church is on the offensive and they're standing at the gate and all of a sudden the gates of hell do something unthinkable on the wall of hell and we look at that and we go that's that's just too ugly and we say well it's easier to go home and we let those things remain we let them stay because we're removing our presence and going back to where we're comfortable that's home and it becomes an incomplete victory and it doesn't fulfill exactly everything

God has called us to do it's the same issues we have today it's the same things we see it's a byproduct of partial reform we'll be a little bit better but we don't want to go all the way there's one question I was in that discussion earlier this afternoon just a few minutes ago about pastor you know how do you study text and get into text there's one question that I ask there's five questions every time I come to a portion of scripture that I ask myself but the most important one is the last question and the last question that I ask myself in any portion of scripture I'm studying in a verse or a chapter or a book it is what can I expect if I do this what can I expect from myself will this make me uncomfortable will this be if this is what God's calling me to do what can I expect from myself is this going to make me give up something am I going to surrender something am I going to you know is there something

I can't do anymore is there something I need to do that I going to respond because I promise you when you take the word of God literally other people will respond to you differently what can I expect from others and the last part of that question is what can I expect from Satan because the moment we walk in obedience we begin to engage in spiritual warfare and unfortunately I didn't ask myself that a lot so that I was setting myself up to be caught when these things happened when I wasn't prepared for the spiritual warfare I wasn't prepared how other people would respond and I really wasn't prepared for the pushback of my own life it's the so what if I do this what will happen and these are questions we need to ask ourselves and not we're just being a little bit better than we used to be we're not as bad as my mom and dad but a little bit better and we see that recorded for us in 2nd

[30 : 28] Kings chapter 3 thank you my brothers I appreciate it so asked I Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.