

2nd Kings 3: 1-27; “Bring Me a Musician”, Message # 3 in the series – “Elisha and the Prophets”, A Bible Study conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 2nd, 2018, for those gathered at his home.

When you examine the life and ministry of Elisha you find that it is a ministry of miracles which God did through him. The first miracle was his passing through the Jordan river and slapping the waters, saying – “Where is God of Elijah?”. The 2nd miracle was the healing of the waters. The 3rd miracle was the curse of the bears which he placed upon the young people that mocked him. And so we will find as we continue on in our study of Elisha’s life, that there were altogether some 17 miracles that God had him perform. And each of these miracles has spiritual meaning and significance for us who live in New Testament times. He performed these miracles in order that the word and will of God would be confirmed to his people, that they might cease to worship false Gods. And secondly, these miracles were performed in order that that God’s purpose might be fulfilled in the destruction of all of Israel’s enemies; those who were idolaters and worshipers of false gods.

The miracle which our attention is directed to, in this chapter, is related to the defeat of Moab in battle. The way that God did this through Elisha’s prophesying, was to first of all, fill all the of ditches near to the place where Israel was camped, with water, so that they and their cattle would not perish of thirst. And the complementary miracle was the deception and subsequent defeat of the forces of the king of Moab, by God’s allowing the Moabite forces to think that they saw blood in the ditches before them, when they went out to fight against Israel, Judah, and Edom. The Moabites looked at the water in these ditches, and the bright sun was shining on it producing a fiery red reflection on this water near where Israel was camped, and they falsely concluded that Israel, Judah, and Edom had fought with each other and killed one another with their swords, and that the ditches were full of blood. Now, they thought, they could run right over there into their camp, and take the spoil!

Actually, God had ordained that they would be utterly defeated in the battle that day. When Moab came running over, Israel and Judah utterly defeated them in battle, and they punished them greatly, after the battle, by destroying their cities and each man throwing a stone on every good piece of land and filling it. They stopped up all the springs of water and they cut down all the good trees as well. And the slingers, it says in verse 25, surrounded Kir Haraseth and attacked it. The when the king of Moab when he saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, and tried to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not do it. And so 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 Isreal. So Israel broke off destroying them, at that very point, and they returned to their own land; not wanting to precipitate any further in cruel or blasphemous actions like that. We need to understand from this that there is nothing too difficult for the Lord to do in terms of his defending and protecting his own dear people, and soundly defeating all of their enemies, if they will but look to Him in faith and obey His word.

But what I would like to speak to you about this evening is not the national rebellion of Moab, so much as the more subtle rebellion of king Jehoram, the son of Ahab, the man who became king after his brother Ahaziah died. Ahaziah had only reigned for two years when the Lord took him in death when he refused to seek God during the time of his injury and illness. It was this subtle rebellion of Jehoram that troubled the mind and heart of the prophet Elisha. It troubled him so much that he could hardly compose his spirit until he had called for a minstrel musician to play for him. It was only then that he could prophesy and deliver the word of the Lord to the 3 kings who had gone down to see him. I want to open up this passage in terms of

what troubled Elisha. What troubled Elisha is what troubles all of God's called pastors and preachers of His word today as well. What troubles them is when compromise with the truth is made, and subtle rebellion against God's will and His word takes place. Let me give you 3 examples of this as they are seen in Jehoram.

1st of all – It troubled Elisha that Jehoram only believed in a partial and selective repentance from false worship. (verses 2 and 3)

“Jehoram 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.” “Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.” Now, it needs to be understood that sometimes a person may try to reform their own life, or even the practices of a nation if they are a king or a person in authority, because they have been scared into it. This appears to be what happened to Jehoram the king of Judah. He had no doubt seen the way that his father died according to the word of the Lord through Elijah, and he had seen his brother also die according to the stated word of the Lord through Elijah, and it probably created some amount of fear in his heart to think that there was a God who is the Judge of all the earth, and even kings. But this fear that he experienced was not the fear of the Lord.

It says in verse 2 that he did evil in the sight of the Lord. But he did not do evil like his father and mother; for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal that his father had made. Yet, he retained the worship of the golden calves that Jeroboam the son of Nebat had begun years before. Let us understand that partial reformation is not the same as real conversion to Christ. A person may reform parts of their life or change the policies regarding false worship in a nation because they are afraid there might be a God who will judge them. As Thomas Haweis the Commentator says – “To leave the sins that we no longer love, whilst we still indulge those that are pleasing or profitable, shows the insincerity of pretended repentance.” (end of quote) Sometimes, people think that they are Christians when they will not repent of all of their sins. Others profess to know the Lord and yet they are not fully convinced that it is essential to flee immorality or destroy their worship of their false gods and idols. They think that all religions are basically a matter of personal preference, and sin is a matter of one's own personal definition. But the Bible knows nothing of this. It knows of only One true and living God and one Christ.

Look with me over at Psalm 2. “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?” “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us.’” “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision.” “Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: ‘Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.’” “I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’” “Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.” “You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.” “Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed you judges of the earth.” “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” “Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”

You see, it was kings and rulers of the earth that set themselves and took counsel together against the Lord Jesus. They did not want to do the will of God as He had revealed it to them in terms of His sending His only-begotten Son. God has made the Lord Jesus ruler of the nations, and given the ends of the earth to be His possession, and it is He who will judge the world someday, and judge the nations that prevent His kingdom from spiritually coming to rule upon the earth. Kings are instructed to be wise and serve the Lord with fear. In other words, they are to believe in the Son of God, the promised Messiah who was given to the Jewish people and also

to the whole world after Christ broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile at the cross. Jehoram knew nothing about this, but He did know that the God of Israel, the land over which he ruled, did not approve of idolatry, and so in earthly fear, he put Baal in a closet for a while. Kings, here, are instructed to Kiss the Son; that is to place their highest affections on the Promised Son of God whom God would send to them in due time. They were to believe this promise which God had given to David if they were wise. But Jehoram was not wise. Let us remember that Christ died for our sins in order that we might repent of all of them, not just some of them. It will always trouble a preacher of the word when he knows that a person in authority will only part with some sins, and maybe only for a time, like Jehoram, only to bring them back again. Let us pray for grace to repent of every sin, and to counsel others, even people in political office, to do the same.

2nd – It troubled Elisha that Jehoram would not seek for counsel from the right source until he was forced to it. (verses 9-13)

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

So here we see that Jehoram enlisted Jehoshaphat’s aid against the king of Moab. He did not take counsel with the Lord as to whether he ought to go up against Moab at all. He simply thought that if he could get enough other kings and their men, to support him and his men, that he could defeat Mesha, king of Moab. But how important it is to get godly counsel. Look with me over at Proverbs 16: 1 – “The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.” So you can see that a person can prepare all they want to, and they can have great plans in their mind and heart, but unless they take counsel from the Lord, unless they take counsel from the Lord, they may not attain to what they are looking for. Look also at Proverbs 19: 21 – “There are many plans in a man’s heart, nevertheless the Lord’s counsel – that will stand.” Again, another similar verse; a person may have many plans in their heart but the Lord has many ways of diverting him away from that, or establishing those plans, depending upon what His will is. And that should cause us to think that I should be sensitive to the Lord’s will. I really need to commit my way to the Lord, and submit my plans to the Lord, and then I will obtain wisdom from the Lord. Look over at Proverbs 21: 29-31. “A wicked man hardens his face, but as for the upright, he establishes his way.” “There is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the Lord.” “The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the Lord.” A wicked man hardens his face, and Jehoram was not exactly hardening his face, but he wasn’t exactly believing in the Lord, either, was he?

The alliance of the kings ran into trouble because they took the roundabout way to get there and they found there was no water when they did get there. Jehoram at this point recognizes the Lord’s hand in this for he says in verse 10 – “Alas!” “For the Lord has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab.” Thankfully, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, was a man who knew the Lord. He says, “Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?” And one of Jehoram’s servants knew that Elisha was there nearby. And Jehoshaphat said, “The word of the Lord is with him.” So they all went down to talk with him. But when they get there, Elisha said to Jehoram – “What have I to do with you?” “Go to the

prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother.” But Jehoram said to him – “No, for the Lord has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab.”

Here we see the value to a country and its leader if there is a true prophet of the Lord nearby to consult. Why would Elisha have come with them, and positioned himself somewhere near their retinue? Because the Lord had told him to follow along with them. God had a purpose through Elisha’s counsel, to fulfill, in regard to all of these kings. We can now see that there was also a value in Jehoram’s choosing Jehoshaphat, a man who knew the Lord, to come with him. When Jehoram was too weak and sinful to know how to get help from the Lord, Jehoshaphat was right there to be able to recommend to him, doing the right thing. He must go and listen to the prophet as to what he said, even if he was rebuked for his sins, and perhaps even discouraged by Elisha in terms of thinking that he would receive anything from the Lord; being a double-minded man. Nevertheless, he knew that he needed to throw himself upon the mercy of God and to receive the word of the prophet, even if he was initially rebuffed, as Jehoram was.

Elisha knew that Jehoram was a worshiper of false gods and a morally and spiritually compromised man, and he rebuked him outright for it. And yet, because Jehoshaphat was there, also, Elisha would give them both good counsel. See the importance to kings in attempting to ally themselves with other kings who know the Lord? At least some good things might be learned, if God will permit. In this case, God ordained this for the good of both kings and Israel and Judah were delivered from the Moabites. See how good it is for those who know the Lord to recommend to unbelievers that they receive the Biblical counsel; whether it is the gospel of grace, or whether it is the wisdom of the Scriptures? We as Christians ought to be able to be like Jehoshaphat, in this regard, and promote the welfare of kings and their subjects by recommending that they attempt to listen to, and submit to, the truth of the Bible. Much good can be done this way, and a Christian need not ally themselves with any wicked scheme.

3rd – It troubled Elisha so much to look upon Jehoram that he had to call for a minstrel musician. (verses 14-18)

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.’ “But now bring me a musician.” “Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.” “And he said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Make this valley full of ditches,’ “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.’ “And this is a simple matter in the sight of the Lord; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand.”

A.W. Pink in his commentary on these verses says this about why Elisha called for a musician. “Scott and Henry conclude that his interview with Jehoram had perturbed Elisha’s mind and that soothing music was a means to compose his spirit, that he might be prepared to receive the Lord’s mind. Possibly they are correct, yet we believe there is another and more important reason. In the light of such passages as, “Sing unto the LORD with the harp;... and the voice of a psalm” - Psalm 98:5, and “Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD” – 1st Chronicles 25:3, we consider that Elisha was here showing regard for and rendering submission to the order established by God. The Hebrew word for “minstrel” signifies “one who plays on a stringed instrument,” as an accompaniment to the psalm he sang. Thus it was to honor God and instruct these kings that Elisha sent for the minstrel. “And it came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.” “The Lord ever honors those who honor Him.”

Let us understand as we close this study, the importance of instructing others in the music of the Lord, the music which will best teach even kings, the best way to worship the Lord and to receive His word. It was probably one of the inspired Psalms of David that was accompanied by the use of the harp by this minstrel. It is with a serious and reverent spirit that the minstrel

undertook it, so that it might have its due impression, not just upon Elisha's spirit, but also the spirit of the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom. When the music that is played is honoring to the Lord, contributing to a reverential awe being impressed upon the preacher and the people, when the music has contributed to calming and composing the soul, and helps the spirit to seek God so that He might impart to us through the preacher, the words of wisdom, then it is a very good thing. May we all desire to be a part of such worship in our churches and not seek to be led astray by music which is only designed to gratify the flesh, and promote selfish interests.