

JUNE 22

2 Kings 3:1-4:17

2 Kings 3

Vs. 1-8 The most significant thing about this part of the story is that a good man like Jehoshaphat was making another very foolish mistake. If he had asked the Lord, the Lord would have told him to stay home.

V. 2 Notice that Jehoram seems better than Ahab. If Jehoshaphat was hoping to be a good influence on Israel, this is as far as it went. Actually, the only thing that Jehoram did was remove that single image. As we'll see later, Jezebel was really still in charge and Baal worship was alive and well in Israel. Actually, it looks like Jehoram's reforms, if you can call them that, were for the eyes of Jehoshaphat.

V. 4 Yesterday in 2 Kings 1:1 we read about the king of Moab breaking away from the control of Israel. Today we see the significance of that passing remark.

V. 7 What was Jehoshaphat thinking to say something like this? Soon, it would be true spiritually too, darkly.

Vs. 9-20 The Word of the Lord through Elisha would become public knowledge. You would think that with a man like Elisha at your disposal you could build a country. Unfortunately Elisha was ignored by the northern kingdom and also by the southern kingdom. Again, God's grace is shining through all of this to attract the disobedient and move them to repentance.

It was unprecedented that these three kings should work together and that probably looked like a good thing, but it wasn't God's will. Notice too that Jehoram is a real glum kind of guy. He is assuming that because the way is hard that it is Yahweh's fault and that God is leading them to disaster. He wasn't a man of faith, to say the least. Actually, the way being hard will lead them to God and His deliverance.

V. 11 Jehoshaphat's question is very ironic. If he himself had consulted a prophet, he wouldn't have been there. But here, it seems he was trying to have a fatherly influence on Jehoram. Ironically, as well known as Elisha was, neither king had a clue. It was an ordinary guy who pointed the way to the prophet.

V. 15 It is interesting that Elisha needed some music to get into the mood.

Vs. 21-27 The king of Moab thought that the combination of Judah, Israel and Edom would be a sure recipe for them to kill each other. God's flooding of the land and then having the sun rise on it gave the Moabites the impression that the kings had killed themselves.

V. 26 The king of Moab took 700 skilled swordsmen and went after the weakest king but couldn't break through.

So how do you explain v. 27? Apparently the human sacrifice called down a valid demonic wrath upon the army of Israel. So then, why were they affected by this? Why didn't God's protection ward this off? It was because they themselves were not truly worshiping or following God. And Jehoshaphat was out of bounds here, associating with the godless. As disciples, although we might be walking with the Lord, if we choose to associate with the ungodly, "yoked together" with them, we incur the same judgment they do. This is now the second time Jehoshaphat has been subject to demonic influence by associating with the family of Ahab. Though this "unity" and the "common sense" reasons for doing this together must have seemed like good ideas, Jehoshaphat, a godly man, will totally and completely destroy all the good he had built. And, his choices will throw Judah into darkness.

2 Kings 4:1-17

Vs. 1-7 This story is similar to the story of Elijah and the widow who had the vase of flour and the oil. This was not only another story of God's power among the people, but it also shows that these things happened on an ongoing basis. Generally, there was no real interest in worshiping Yahweh or checking in with Elisha, but I'm sure there were some people who were seeking God as a result of these signs.

Vs. 8-17 What is notable is the faith of the *wealthy woman*. She recognized that God was with Elisha. I wonder too if she knew the story of Elijah and the widow with whom he stayed in Zarephath. There, Elijah had stayed in an upper room. This rich woman built an upper room for Elisha. She was willing to serve the Lord by serving him. Here, we have one person in Israel who responded in faith. This portion also introduces us to Elisha's servant, Gehazi, who himself becomes a symbol of Israel's unbelief.

Acts 14:8-28

Just as in the reading about Elijah and Elisha, where you see Elisha almost duplicating the miracles of Elijah, we'll see this with Peter and Paul. In many places it seems that Paul does the same miracles Peter did, only more of them. They both must have been working for the same God and were both being led by the same Spirit.

Vs. 8-18 There are two things of note here. First, the healing of the man who had been crippled from birth is similar to Peter and John healing the man at the beautiful gate of the temple who was also lame from birth. Being lame from birth would have made him a well-known beggar in the market.

Second, notice that the people gave Barnabas first billing, as the older and more mature man, but Paul was clearly the preacher.

V. 14 Notice that Barnabas is called an apostle.

Finally, notice that this crowd was so overcome by what they are doing that they almost worshiped Barnabas and Paul. Isn't emotion a great thing and true indicator of commitment? Not.

Vs. 19-23 So here is that same devoted crowd killing Paul. Some suggest that Paul was dead and this is where he ascended into the third heaven. We'll have to ask Paul when we get to heaven.

In that crowd, observing, was a teenager or young man who Paul had led to Christ. Later Paul will tell him to remember this time as an encouragement to be willing to trust God and suffer for Christ:

2 Timothy 3:10-17 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹²Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4:1-2 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

V. 21 Can you believe that the next day they were preaching again, and leading many to Christ? Notice that conversion to Christ was the same as becoming a disciple. This is exactly what Jesus said in the Great Commission. Looking at the challenges Paul and Barnabas were facing, it is safe to say that when people came to Christ in the harvest they understood that following as

cross-bearing disciples was a part of their salvation in Christ. Notice what these new disciples were taught in v. 22.

Notice that Barnabas and Paul went back through all the churches, encouraging them and structuring the leadership. Praying and fasting was much more real to them, because they were on the cutting edge of working in the harvest as disciples, and God was giving them fruit.

V. 22 They gave the disciples a realistic view of following Christ in the harvest. This is similar to 2 Timothy 3:12 above.

V. 23 Because Paul began in the synagogues and led many Jews to Christ, they naturally had men who knew how to organize a group and understood the concept of being an elder.

Vs. 24-28 This was the first "missionary on furlough" slide show report. According to the Bible Knowledge Commentary-NT, p. 393, Barnabas and Paul had been away somewhere for one to two years. They had traveled over 700 miles by land and 500 miles by sea. Although this missionary journey opened the gospel to *the ends of the world*, it had also raised a lot of Jewish hostility, not just among the unsaved, but also from the true-blue Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.

As disciples in the harvest, we should always expect opposition, especially from those who should be on our side.

Psalm 140

Can you believe you've read 140 psalms?

Vs. 1-5 I would guess this was written as David was running from Saul. Not only was Saul driven by his hatred and fear of David; but it is implied that many of Saul's men, like Abner, were filling his ear with lies and inciting him to go after David. I think it was the lying against David that created the desperation behind the psalm.

There is hardly anything on earth that shakes us like having an aggressive enemy, a stalker who is bent on lies and harm. You feel powerless and totally harassed. But in all things, there is only one real source of strength and hope: the Lord. In Psalm 27:3 David writes, *Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.* Those are some pretty confident words, but God trains us to depend on Him by bringing us to the place where we must depend on Him.

V. 3 Notice that Paul quotes a part of this in Romans 3.

Notice that David makes at least three pleas for himself: *deliver me, preserve me, and guard me.*

Vs. 6-8 After describing his desperation, now David pleads for God's deliverance.

Vs. 9-11 The judgment that David asks for here is basically that what these men have wished for him should happen to them.

V. 10 I don't know where the *burning coals* thing originated, but here you have it.

Vs. 12-13 David hasn't yet been delivered, but this is where David has his hope set, in the character of God.

As disciples, the Lord leads us through all of what David mentions above. He allows lies and complications to hinder our way and harass us. But He does this to train us to fill our minds with the truth of Him and this life. The point isn't to get something "out of our minds," but to keep our minds filled with what is true about Him. Our lives are in the hands of a loving, faithful Father, who, in all that is happening, works for (the) good (of His sovereign plan) with those who love Him. We're already secure with Christ and will live with Him forever and know the riches of His glory. This life on earth isn't about us anymore; we're safe. And still, He blesses us.

Proverbs 17:22

Amen. I was reading in Romans 14:17 this morning, *for the kingdom of God is... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*. That peace only comes from God, being led and influenced, not by the flesh, but by the Holy Spirit. If we remember we are safe and have a place in His coming kingdom, then we have peace and joy.