

# BIBLE BRIEFING

## *“We Three Kings Disoriented Are”*

Second Kings 3:1-27

**2 Kings 3:16** And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.'

**2 Kings 3:17** 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.'

**2 Kings 3:18** And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand.

### Introduction

The Moabites rebelled against Israel. King Jehoram of Israel formed an alliance with Judah and Edom to fight their mutual enemy. They hadn't sought the Lord! When their troops ran low on water, they turned to the Lord by calling upon Elisha to pray for them.

Elisha instructed them to dig ditches, anticipating them being filled with water. God filled the valley with water. The water brought victory to God's people and their allies; the same water vanquished God's enemies.

Notice the writer's commentary, in verse eighteen, where he says,

**2 Kings 3:18** And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand.

I apply that to mean that God can do the same thing today, or something else very similar. God can still bring victory to His people and their allies; He can still vanquish His enemies.

Before God filled the valley, the people were called upon to "make [the] valley full of ditches." They had to believe and expect God to send the water. But beyond their faith, they had to work. They had to dig ditches - ditches for water that hadn't yet appeared.

God can send water; first you must work. There are at least three examples of spiritual work in our text. Two are individual matters; one is a corporate matter.

The two individual examples of spiritual work are Elisha pouring water on Elijah's hands, and Elisha taking time to praise God. The corporate work is the congregation pitching in together as one to dig the ditches.

The first section, verses one through twelve, builds up to the search for Elisha, and his description as the man who **poured water on the hands of Elijah**.

**2 Kings 3:1** Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.

**2 Kings 3:2** And he 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.

**2 Kings 3:3** Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.

Jehoram made a partial reformation. He is a type of everyone and anyone who seeks to reform their life apart from true repentance and faith in Jesus that brings regeneration.

**2 Kings 3:4** Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheepbreeder, and he regularly paid the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams.

**2 Kings 3:5** But it happened, when Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

The Moabites were the descendants of the son which Lot had by incest with his eldest daughter. They occupied a territory southeast of Judah and east of the Red Sea. They were a strong, fierce, and immoral people. For at least 150 years they had paid a heavy annual tribute, but now they rebelled.

**2 Kings 3:6** So King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel.

**2 Kings 3:7** Then he went and sent to Jehoshaphat 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."

Jehoshaphat allied himself with Jehoram against their mutual enemy. He did it for the sake of unity.

There is a word you might have heard used with regards to Christian groups cooperating with each other: Ecumenism. Ecumenism is "a movement promoting unity among Christian groups or denominations." It can also mean "a movement promoting worldwide unity among religions through greater cooperation and improved understanding." We have no problem with ecumenism in the first sense - with promoting unity among true Christians. Indeed, the Bible encourages all true believers to [endeavor] to **keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace** (Ephesians 4:3).

But ecumenism of the second kind - the unity of believers with heretics and unbelievers - must always be resisted. Essential doctrine cannot be ignored for the sake of unity.

**2 Kings 3:8** Then he said, "Which way shall we go up?" And he answered, "By way of the Wilderness of Edom."

**2 Kings 3:9** So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they marched on that roundabout route seven days; and there was no water for the army, nor for the animals that followed them.

The kings do not seek the Lord. They make their own plans, which turn out to be disastrous. You can expect dearth and drought anytime you make your own plans without seeking the Lord!

**2 Kings 3:10** And the king of Israel said, "Alas! For the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab."

**2 Kings 3:11** 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."

**2 Kings 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.

Elisha is described as the man who **poured water on the hands of Elijah**. In the margin notes of my Bible this phrase is said to mean that Elisha was the personal servant of Elijah. If you follow the

chronology, you see that Elisha was Elijah's personal servant for some ten years after he was first called to follow.

For ten years Elisha washed his master's hands... And did whatever else a personal servant was expected to do.

Pouring out water on Elijah's hands is symbolic of Elisha pouring out his life as a servant. **Before the valley is ever filled with water you must be pouring yourself out as a servant.**

They sent for Elisha, and here was his reply:

**2 Kings 3:13** 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." But the king of Israel said to him, "No, for the LORD has called these three kings *together* to deliver them into the hand of Moab."

**2 Kings 3:14** 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."

Notice the differences: Jehoram accused God, and lost hope. Jehoshaphat acknowledged God and found hope; Jehoram thought of God's cruelty; Jehoshaphat thought of God's comfort.

**2 Kings 3:15** But now bring me a musician." Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.

With the crisis growing worse every moment, Elisha could think of nothing more appropriate than to praise the Lord through music! He called for the local Calvary Chapel praise band and lifted up his heart before the Lord in song.

Before the valley is ever filled with water you must be praising the Lord - and praising Him in all things, not just the good.

God spoke to them, through Elisha, as they worshipped:

**2 Kings 3:16** And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.'

**2 Kings 3:17** 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.'

**2 Kings 3:18** And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand.

**2 Kings 3:19** Also you shall attack every fortified city and every choice city, and shall cut down every good tree, and stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones."

I don't have dimensions on the acreage of the valley floor, but this was obviously a sizable excavation. By its very nature, digging ditches is understood to be difficult, tiring labor. By faith the people were called upon to work hard at preparing for the blessing the Lord had promised.

I wonder how much blessing God's people have forfeited because they refused to labor long at digging ditches to receive the blessing when it came? God has promised you water; He has promised you spiritual blessings. You must persevere in your work in order to be there when they come.

Isn't this just like Galatians 6:9, which says,

**Galatians 6:9** And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Jesus commends the saints at Ephesus when, in Revelation 2:3, He tells them they have **not become weary**.

You don't work to earn God's blessings; they are received by faith. But you can forfeit them when you grow weary, faint, and quit in your ministry.

God will bless you with victory; God will vanquish your enemies. Just look at what He did for Israel and Judah:

**2 Kings 3:20** Now it happened in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water.

**2 Kings 3:21** And when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to bear arms and older were gathered; and they stood at the border.

**2 Kings 3:22** Then they rose up early in the morning, and the sun was shining on the water; and the Moabites saw the water on the other side *as* red as blood.

**2 Kings 3:23** And they said, "This is blood; the kings have surely struck swords and have killed one another; now therefore, Moab, to the spoil!"

**2 Kings 3:24** So when they came to the camp of Israel, Israel rose up and attacked the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they entered *their* land, killing the Moabites.

**2 Kings 3:25** Then they destroyed the cities, and each man threw a stone on every good piece of land and filled it; and they stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. But they left the stones of Kir Haraseth *intact*. However the slingers surrounded and attacked it.

The timing of the miracle is notable. It was **in the morning, when the grain offering was offered** back in the Temple at Jerusalem. God's blessing upon His people is tied in to His sacrifice on their behalf. The Moabites saw the water as if it were blood; they thought that blood was covering the people of God. In a spiritual sense, blood was covering them - the blood of Jesus, Whom the grain offering and the other offerings always pointed to.

You can be assured of God's blessing because it is tied in to His sacrifice on your behalf. The blessings of God flow into your life because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for you on Calvary's cross. His blood covers you.

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

**2 Kings 3:27** Then 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 Israel. So they departed from him and returned to *their own* land.

In a remarkable discovery, archeologists have found what is called the Moabite Stone, containing Mesha's own account of this battle. On this stone the Moabite king claimed to have been delivered from the Israelites by his god Chemosh on this day. Though it is true that he was not captured and killed and the Israelites withdrew, Israel and her allies were obviously the true victors in this battle.<sup>1</sup>

Mesha burned his eldest son to death on the wall in plain sight of all the people. It apparently enraged the Moabites so much against

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<sup>1</sup>*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 542.

Israel that only a long, costly siege could have caused Kir Haraseth to fall. God's armies broke off the attack.

The people of God were victorious because God had sent water into the valley. To God be the glory! Yet in order to receive the promised water, the people had to dig ditches. Digging ditches required a faith that worked.

Here are some lessons for us:

1. There must be a corporate effort at digging ditches... The whole congregation was involved. Many hands made for light work!
2. There must be a coordinated effort at digging ditches... There must have been different assignments, different tasks. Surveying... measuring... staking... digging... hauling... None were more or less important than others.
3. There must be a continued effort at digging ditches... Quitting wasn't an option. The people had to see the task through to the end; they had to finish what they had begun.

## Conclusion

Are we making our valley **full of ditches**? Are we engaged in a corporate, coordinated, continued effort at digging ditches by establishing and maintaining the ministries God has raised-up in and through our fellowship?

The answers to those questions will be "Yes" when we each individually are pouring ourselves out and praising ourselves up; and when we all corporately are pitching ourselves in.