

**Godliness**

**2 Kings 3**

# What is godliness?

- **Godliness is:**
  - When we are taking God seriously and not just when we feel like it or when it is convenient to us.
  - This means abiding, living, thinking, speaking, deciding or choosing everything and all things by the application of the teachings of His Word.
- **Godliness is NOT:**
  - When things are getting difficult or situation is hopeless for us, we are forced to turn to God in desperation.
  - When we do not take Him at His word and conveniently refused to apply His teachings in our life. During the week, by our actions, priorities and language used, we act as though God were not even involved in our lives. On Sunday we just put 'Christian shirt/dress,' but for the rest of the week it is business as usual.

# king Jehoram/Joram (Israel)

- **2Kings 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.**
- **2Kings 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.**
- **2Kings 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.**

- He was not as evil as Ahab (his father) or Jezebel (his mother) or Ahaziah (his brother), as he did not worship Baal. However, verse 3 tells us, he persisted (NKJV) in the sins of Jeroboam. “The ‘sins of Jeroboam’ were not related to the worship of Baal but to the false worship of Yahweh under the calf images that Jeroboam set up in Dan ( North) and Bethel (South). This was primarily a **political** strategy rather than a religious one.”
- The Hebrew word for “persist (NKJV)/cleave (NIV)” is *dabaq*. *It means* “to cleave, cling, stick to, follow closely.” “It carries the sense of clinging to someone or something in affection and loyalty. The same Hebrew word is used in Genesis 2:24 when a man is to cleave/join to his wife. Clearly, the point is though Jehoram turned away from Baal worship, he continued to be loyal to the worship of the golden calf and continued to perpetuate its idolatry and apostasy in Israel (1 Kings 12:24-33). **This falls short of God’s standard.**

# Moab's rebellion against Israel

- **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.

- After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel and refused to render tribute and taxes to Israel. However, Ahab's son, Ahaziah did not take any action ( 2 Kings 1:1).
- Jehoram was highly motivated to find a way to recapture Moab and regain the domination and tribute because:
  - Moab was supposed to pay Israel 100,000 lambs and wool of 100,000 rams represented a significant loss of income for Israel.
  - Secondly, other subject nations might also try to break away from Israel's domination.

# Jehoram planned to attack Moab

- 2 Kings 3:6:
  - **So King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel.**
    - Jehoram wanted to know his military strength.
    - A great deal of effort was involved in the recruitment of army for the war against Moab.
    - This effort shows how important Jehoram considered the recapture of Moab.

- 2 Kings 3:7:
  - **Then he (Jehoram) 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 (Jehoshaphat) said, "I will go up; I [am] as you [are], my people as your people, my horses as your horses."**
    - The rebellion of Moab against Israel and according to the Moabite Stone, which was discovered in 1868 it revealed that Moab had ambitious plan to expand their territories and were apparently threatening Judah.
    - ADDITIONALLY, Judah had also been previously attacked by Moab in 2 Chronicles 20.
    - Jehoshaphat was very concerned about the matter. So it was natural for Jehoshaphat to agree to an alliance with Israel against a common enemy. When Jehoshaphat committed Judah to this battle, he was as good as committing Edom also since Edom was the subject nation to Judah at that time. Anyway, Edom joined them for a good reason, because besides being a subject nation, Moab was a serious threat to the security and future of all three nations.

# The Result of not remembering God before the battle

- **2 Kings 3:8:**
  - **Then he (Jehoram) said, "Which way shall we go up?" And he (Jehoshaphat) answered, "By way of the Wilderness of Edom."**
    - According to the Moabite Stone, it revealed that Moab's military power and expansion was toward the north – that was toward Ammon, Israel and Judah. Thus king Jehoram thought the king of Moab would expect the 3 nations to attack them from the north.
    - Therefore, king Jehoram decided that by attacking the Moab from the south would be a “wise” strategy and would warrant them a great victory. He wanted to capture Moab by surprise. so the combined army of the three-nation alliance marched south from Judah through the wilderness and the southern end of the Dead Sea through Edom into Moab from the south.



- **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 verse seems to describe that as they journeyed down into the wilderness, the 3 armies were wandering around in the wilderness, as though they had lost their way. We were then told that they ran out of water while still in the desert. There must be some water in the desert. Otherwise, how could the Edomites survive there. It must have been dried out at this time. The water holes they had counted on were not there and instead of bringing the Moabites back under submission, they were faced with the possibility of their own defeat and death in the desert.
    - This crisis sets the stage for the real action in 2 Kings chapter 3:10 onwards

- **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."**
    - Initially, Jehoram was confident, decisive and positive :
      - His leadership ability had been demonstrated by the mustering of all Israel
      - He was able to convince Jehoshaphat to join in an alliance with him.
      - He was also the one who agreed that the “wise strategy” to attack Moab was from the rear.
    - Suddenly his worldly wisdom evaporated, and the decisive leader collapsed in despair. His mental attitude became negative:
      - ‘Alas’ is translated in most versions, as a strong interjection of despair. Our word “ah” is practically a transliteration of the Hebrew word. Interestingly, it is often used with “Lord” or “Lord God.” Here it is an expression showing hopelessness and defeat.
      - Though he recognized God’s hand in this adversity, he did not respond in faith and repentance, or seek the Lord. All he could do was to cry out in defeat as a man without hope.

- **In contrast, king Jehoshaphat turned to God for deliverance and help.**
- **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."**
    - In verse 11a we see a contrast in the response of Jehoshaphat.
      - **Jehoshaphat** knew what to do in desperate circumstances. Thus it is not surprising that he would call for a prophet.
      - **What a different mental attitude and perspective from Jehoram!** We see an attitude that not only recognizes the Lord's involvement in their lives, but one which is willing to call on the Lord for instruction, wisdom, aid and deliverance. Such a mental attitude sees the purposeful hand of God in this war. He knew that God has resources that is not known to men nor available to men.

- In verse 11b we see God’s gracious deliverance.
  - He also knew the person that was much needed in such a desperate moment was not a secular king, regardless of how decisive and worldly-wise that king might be. What is needed is **a man of God**, a **prophet**, who can connect between God and Israel.
  - One of the king’s servants mentioned was Elisha.
  - This reminds me of the words of the prophet who wrote: “Before they call I will answer and while they are yet speaking I will hear” (**Isa. 65:24**). So we read: “And one of the kings of Israel’s servants answered and said, ‘Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah.’”

# 2Kings 3:12-27

- The 3 kings went down to consult Elisha
- Elisha was angry with Jehoram, but for the sake of king Jehoshaphat he agreed to help them
- Elisha called for a musician.
- Elisha required them to make the valley full of ditches

- The next morning, the land was full of water without any rainfall.
- The Moabites saw the water as blood.
- They came out and expected to take the spoil
- Instead they were attacked by the Israelites.
- The Israelites destroyed their cities except the fortified city at Kir Hareseth.
- In order to salvage the situation, the Moabite king offered his eldest son as a burnt sacrifice to their god, Chemosh.
- There was great indignation against Israel, probably due to the burnt offering. Therefore, without fully destroying Moab the 3 kings decided to return home.

# Lessons we can learned

## 1. All earthly kings are subject to God

- God's timely help reminds us that the 3 earthly kings still need to rely solely on God who is the Almighty King. All earthly kings are subject to our Mighty King who is in control of all things and circumstances.

## 2. The Character of Jehoram

- He appears to be an undecided character, who never seem to know himself where he stands, or belongs. He put away the Baal statue made by his father Ahab, but **NEVER became a true believer in Jehovah.**
- Jehoram put away Baal worship out of bad motives - either because he was frightened when he remembered the judgment that came against his father Ahab and his brother Ahaziah, or because he wanted to impress Jehoshaphat so the king of Judah would agree to an alliance. Elisha wasn't impressed with Jehoram for putting away the Baal worship (2 Kings 3:13).
- Though there are degrees of right and wrong, we are never justified in comparing our sins to the greater sins of others. Nor can we think that the guilt of our lesser sins stops short of being guilty of God's wrath.

### 3. **Jehoram blamed God. Why should he blame God ? Was he able to recognize his own mistakes?**

- God did not call him to have war with the Moabites. Before the war, he did not seek the Lord He did not call a prophet of God or even pray. He relied on his human wisdom, instead of relying on God. He leaned upon human alliances, military strength and strategy that seemed so natural and right to men. By this human wisdom, he thought they could surprise the Moabites and defeat them.
- When his “wise” strategy failed, instead of responding in faith and repentance, or seeking the Lord, all he could do was to cry out in defeat as a man without hope
- **Jeremiah 10:23:**
  - O LORD, I know the way of man [is] not in himself; [It is] not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

– **Psalm 33:16-20**

- No king [is] saved by the multitude of an army; A mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse [is] a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver [any] by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD [is] on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; He [is] our help and our shield.
- From the verses above, it is not within man's ability and wisdom to direct, prepare, plan and establish his ways.

- If we're honest with ourselves, don't we often do things the same manner king Jehoram did?
- When we got into trouble do we blamed God for failing us? Why have You let this happen? Do we let God be the potter and we, the clay?
- In Philippians 4:6-7, Paul's advice to us is:
  - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
  - Taking matters to prayers instead of taking them into our own hands is a good way to keep bad situations from getting worse.
- Our everyday activities have significant implications--they either promote godliness as we spend time with the Lord or they distance us from God when we continue to ignore Him. Our heart and mental attitudes must have the right spiritual diet to live on and that's a choice we each are faced with every day. I am reminded of David's cry in **Psalm 5**. There he declared his determination, "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct [it] to You, And I will look up." (**Ps. 5:3**).

#### 4. Why did Jehoshaphat not seek God's guidance before he go into battle with Jehoram?

- I wonder why Jehoshaphat failed to ask God for advice again before he went to battle with Jehoram?
- He committed the same mistake as he had done earlier on in 1 Kings 22.
  - Let's recall what he did during king Ahab's time
    - 1 Kings 22:4b & 5:
    - .....Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel (Ahab), "I [am] as you [are], my people as your people, my horses as your horses." Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."
    - First, he promised Ahab that he would go into battle with him, **then** he asked God for guidance. In that battle, Ahab was killed and later in 2 Chronicles 19, he was rebuked by Jehu, a God's prophet.

- Here with Jehoram in 2 Kings 3:7 he made the same promise to Ahab's son, Jehoram:
  - ..... And he said, "I will go up; I [am] as you [are], my people as your people, my horses as your horses."
- Again , he acted on his own initiative and then when things were not going right, then he sought for God.
- We are reminded of the following verses:
  - Proverbs 3: 5,6 :
    - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.
  - Psalms 37: 4,5:
    - Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring [it] to pass.

**Lastly**

## 4. Why did Jehoshaphat as a godly man agree to help Jehoram?

- In fact, he agreed INSTANTEOUSLY to help Jehoram without consideration!
- Due to his close association with Ahab (Jehoram's father) and Ahaziah (Jehoram's brother), his relationship with God has weakened considerably. That was why he did not learn the lessons from his previous encounters. This resulted in him trusting in his own military strength instead of trusting in God.
- 1 Corinthians 15:33:
  - Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

# A Real Family Life Example