

June 8

2 Kings 3, 2 Chronicles 20-21

Hey, I'm Dave Irwin. Thanks for joining me for the Project 4:4 Daily Accelerator for June 8. Today we're mainly covering 2 Kings 3 and 2 Chronicles 20-21.

Though today's reading is fairly short, there are several points we should pause to explore. First, is God's miraculous provision of water for the Israelite army. They have run out of water and God says He will provide it without any wind or rain. He instructs the Israelites to prepare the valley they are in with ditches to collect the water He would send. Did you catch that? Dig a bunch of ditches and then I'll send the water. They were already thirsty and God wants them to dig in the hot Edom desert? Sometimes, God asks us to do hard preparation work in order to receive the gifts He has for us. God uses that water to not only quench their thirst, but to also give them victory over the Moabite army.

Second, is the conclusion of the battle between the Israelites and Moab. The king and army of Moab are facing certain defeat and so the king sacrifices his oldest son and heir to the throne of Moab. While this is unthinkable to us, it was not all that uncommon in pagan cultures of the time. What is interesting here is the impact on the battle. The Israelites quit and go home because "the fury against Israel was great." What happened that caused the Israelites to back down rather than finish the battle and complete their victory? What was this fury against Israel? We do not know the source or the manifestation of this fury, but whatever it was, it caused the Israelites to lose faith in God's ability to finish the battle. The fury may have been a tangible response from the spiritual being that the king of Moab sacrificed his son to. Micaiah's prophecy from our reading on June 5 illustrates for us that there were often very real spiritual beings behind the gods and idols the nations were worshipping. But the fury may have also been as simple as the Moabites rallying together at the loss of the heir to the throne. That may have been the fuse that lit their reserve of determination. Whatever the cause of this fury, it was enough to make the Israelites doubt themselves and God's ability to complete the victory.

Third, is the letter from Elijah to Jehoram. This is especially noteworthy because Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind in yesterday's reading. So, where did this letter come from? One possible answer is that Elijah wrote the letter from heaven and God had it delivered to Jehoram by an angel or some other means. I admit this sounds farfetched, but remember that God just sucked Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind. Would it really be that difficult for him to deliver a letter from Elijah? A more mundane answer is that Elijah wrote the letter some time before his exit to heaven and left it with someone he trusted with instruction to deliver it at a later date. Wherever it came from, it was not exactly a warm and fuzzy note. It highlights the final thought I want to point out: Jehoram brought a significant spiritual drift to the nation of Judah.

This spiritual drift is evident from the very beginnings of his reign as co-regent with his father Jehoshaphat. One of the first things he did was eliminate the competition to his throne. He had his own brothers killed. If Jehoram had ambitions to follow in his father's footsteps and do right in the eyes of the LORD, then he definitely got off on the wrong foot. Rather, his early decisions set the stage for him to follow the examples of Ahab and

the other Israelite kings who did evil in the eyes of the LORD. What caused this spiritual drift in Jehoram? The Bible gives us one definite cause in his marriage to a daughter of Ahab. This relationship brought poison to Jehoram's heart. We cannot lay all the blame on Jehoram's wife. Surely there was already a degree of evil in Jehoram's heart. His choice of bride merely served to deepen that evil and take him further away from the LORD. The impact that his wife had on Jehoram is a caution to us all. For those who want to walk in the ways of the LORD, we must be very cautious of who we let into our inner circle. The friends and relationships that we develop can have a profound impact on the condition of our heart and our ability to follow after God.

Well, we have bounced around between topics today. I hope you have been encouraged to hold fast to your faith in light of God's great power and reminded of the importance of protecting yourself from spiritual drift by being selective about who you allow into your inner circle.

Thanks for joining me today.