

MONDAY

Back in Judah, King Jehoshaphat achieved some things, gained military exploits, and removed from Judah the male prostitutes - something even his father had not done. He also built a trading fleet of ships, refused an alliance with Ahab's son, Ahaziah, the new king of Israel, and expanded the kingdom to include Edom as well.

READ: 1 Kings 22:45-50

Altogether, Jehoshaphat reigned for 39 years. For the first 14 years, he co-reigned with his father, King Asa. Of all the accomplishments listed here, re-fusing Ahaziah's request to join forces is the one which catches my attention the most. Doesn't it suggest that Jehoshaphat had learned his lesson? In years past, he had in fact joined forces with Ahaziah's father, wicked King Ahab, but toward the end of his long reign, he stayed clear of alliances with those who rejected God. God never stops giving any of us lessons in godly living, and we are wise indeed to learn those lessons.

TUESDAY

Israel's King Ahaziah reigned only two years. But that was long enough for him to do evil in the sight of the Lord and to walk in the ways of his wicked father and mother, whose wickedness can be traced all the way back to Jereboam. He provoked the Lord to anger, the text says.

READ: 1 Kings 22:51-53

Ahaziah maintained the heritage passed down to him in doing evil before the Lord. That's why a Christian heritage is such a huge blessing - and one we need to speak of and keep alive. Grandparents who are reading these words, and parents, too: talk to your kids and grandkids of the Lord. Tell them the stories of God's goodness to you. Tell them the story of how God brought you to Himself. Forget your old war war stories - tell them of the victory God has given you in life and in death thru Jesus Christ. Keep that heritage alive!

WEDNESDAY

When King Ahaziah was injured and attacked by Moabites, he sent messengers to consult with Baal to see if he would recover enough to do battle. Elijah met those messengers on the way and sent them back to Ahaziah, telling them that the king would not recover and would die in the bed where he lay.

READ: 2 Kings 1:1-4

Can you not hear Elijah as he asks, "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you go to seek out Baal?" Sadly, that question can sometimes be asked of us in various ways: Is that why you tend to trust in riches for your future security? Is that why you get so wrapped up in the business of this world? Is that why you worry so about just about everything, because there is no God caring for you and providing for you? Lord, help us to be warned away from such thinking by Elijah's challenge. Help us to always remember that there is a God who loves and cares for me.

THURSDAY

The messengers return more quickly than expected and explain to Ahaziah about meeting the prophet. They repeat what he had said to them. When the king hears a description of the prophet, he knows that it was Elijah.

READ: 2 Kings 1:5-8

Isn't it interesting that Ahaziah knows by a very simple description that the man who intercepted his messenger is Elijah? He had undoubtedly learned of Elijah's rather peculiar fashion from his father Ahab. Ahab must have identified the prophet to his son, not by what the prophet did or said, but instead, by his strange appearance. That gives us insight into how shallow both father and son were when it came to spiritual things: they didn't get past the clothes! Aren't you glad that God knows our hearts! He searches our hearts and finds that they beat for God. He finds belief there and He claims us as His own.

FRIDAY

The king sends 50 soldiers to bring Elijah to him. Those 50 are consumed by fire. So he sends 50 more men and they are consumed. A third squad is dispatched, but this time, the captain begs Elijah to spare their lives.

READ: 2 Kings 1:9-14

By sending fire down, God is reminding Ahaziah of a previous episode when God sent down fire from Heaven - when Elijah confronted Ahaziah's father, Ahab, and the 400 false prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel. Would Ahaziah think and behave as if he were the supreme authority in Israel, or would he recognize the rule and domain of God Himself? By repeatedly sending troops, it's clear that Ahaziah's thinking has not changed. He continues to deny God's power and to exercise his own. The world will be destroyed by fire one day. That too will be a reminder that God reigns and rules as King of kings

SATURDAY

An angel told Elijah to go with this third group of soldiers back to the palace where Ahaziah awaited him. Elijah went and told the defiant king that he would never leave his sick bed - he would die there. He did die there, and because he had no son, his brother, Jehoram, became the next king of Israel.

READ: 2 Kings 1:15-18

King Ahaziah never said, "There is no God in Israel," but this is the third time in the opening verses of the book that we read the same accusation. Why? Because Ahaziah's actions clearly demonstrated that he did not believe. Our actions speak volumes, do they not, concerning what we do or do not believe. When we worry, in a sense, we are shouting out that there is no God who provides or cares for us. But when we refuse to worry, the message is this: although it may seem there is reason to worry, I will not do so. There is a God who will provide for me and be with me thru the storms of life.