

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Nov.5

MONDAY

Walking along, some delinquents come from a nearby town. (the word translated youth means anyone up to marrying age) They verbally abuse Elisha until he has had enough. Then he calls down a curse upon them all. Two bears come out of the woods and maul 42 of the delinquents. And Elisha heads back to Samaria.

READ: 2 Kings 2:23-25

From these verses, we discover that Elisha was bald, but I wouldn't make fun of that if I were you. The picture here is that of the youth of the city ridiculing a prophet of God, and the punishment, that the ones who did so were attacked and mauled by the two bears, was to demonstrate that God will not tolerate that attitude. To reject His messenger is to reject Him. The picture here says that it is foolish indeed to belittle either the message or the messenger.

TUESDAY

Joram was the second son of Ahab. The elder son was Ahaziah and he reigned only two years and had no heir. Joram was not as evil as Ahab and Jezebel, but he did not follow the Lord and, as king, he failed to lead Israel in the ways of God.

READ: 2 Kings 3:1-3

The best that could be said of Joram is that there were worst kings! How sad is that. Yet, Joram undoubtedly found some satisfaction in that, and because the heart of man is wicked and easily deceived, probably thought that not being as evil as, say, his father Ahab, he was probably OK when it came to his standing before God. We know that the requirement of God which allows us to be truly OK is perfection. Absolute perfection. And because Jesus died to take our sin from us, and then gave us his own righteousness, we are perfect in God's sight. We are perfectly OK.

WEDNESDAY

Facing a rebellion by the Moabites, Joram invites Jehoshaphat to join him in putting down the rebellion. They attack across the desert and after a seven day march with no fresh water, they find themselves without water.

READ: 2 Kings 3:4-9

Previously, God had condemned Jehoshaphat giving military assistance to Ahab. Jehoshaphat seemed to have learned his lesson because later on, he refuses similar aid to Ahab's son Ahaziah. But this time, he apparently relents and agrees to join forces against Moab. It may be that he considered Joram less evil than his older brother or his father. Or maybe he considered the threat of the Moabites rebellion to be a problem for the southern Kingdom, as well. But the word of the Lord stands fast, and Jehoshaphat had heard that word: you shall not help the wicked and you shall not love those whom God hates. So it was wrong for Jehoshaphat to ignore God and to form such an alliance.

THURSDAY

When the combined armies of Israel and Judah and Edom run out of water in the desert, Jehoshaphat asks if there is a prophet living in the area. He is told that Elisha is nearby, so the three kings go to his house. Elisha asks why they have come to him - they have their own gods and their own prophets.

READ: 2 Kings 3:10-13

As soon as Jehoshaphat learned of Elisha's association with Elijah, he knew that he was talking to the right guy - a true prophet - one who spoke the word of the Lord. Our associations are really crucial. They will either help us onto godliness, or they will, in some way, hinder us. I can think of a great host of friends over the years who have blessed me and lifted me. And I can think back to others who did not. In a way, we are known by our friendships, so let us choose well. And then, be really thankful for those God sends our way!

FRIDAY

Elisha tells the kings of Israel and Edom that they will share in the blessing God has planned for Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. Then he gives specific instructions as to what they are to do. Then, with a harpist strumming in the background, he promises them victory, telling them that it's an easy thing for God to do.

READ: 2 Kings 3:14-19

I love verse 18: *It's an easy thing in the eyes of the Lord.* That which they thought would be so difficult if not impossible turns out to be nothing at all for God to do. If we could only remember this! Maybe we wouldn't get so wind-blown by the gusts of trouble and sorrow which blow in our faces. Maybe we should quote this verse more often as we pray, or as we talk of the various "impossible" situations of life.

SATURDAY

The next morning, there was water flowing in the desert! The Moabite army saw the water, too, but because the morning sun was reflected off the surface, it looked more like blood. They thought that the three armies must have turned on each other in the night and that they had, more or less, killed each other off. So they decide to move in to claim the plunder.

READ: 2 Kings 3:20-23

The land was filled with water, the text says. The desert land, we're talking about. The land which was so dry the day before, the gathered troops were near to death. That land. And now, there's water everywhere. This story reminds me that sometimes, in our lives, we feel as if we are in a desert. We dry up spiritually, and we scan the horizon for rain and see no relief. But in the morning, there's water! That's the work of God's Spirit in our hearts, isn't it! He leadeth me by the still waters and restoreth my soul. God refreshes us with His goodness, and it's a glorious thing! You who are thirsty, drink, and be satisfied. #106