

The Kings of Judah and Israel

LESSON #32 | Elisha's "Make This Valley Full of Ditches"

Teacher: Pr. Cornelius Koshy

In our last lesson, we saw how the three kings of Israel, Judah and Edom were stopped in their tracks, enroute to regain Moab which had rebelled against Israel. Because of the scarcity of water in the wilderness of Edom, they had to stop after a seven-day journey. While Jehoram, king of Israel, accused God of bringing all three kings to be defeated by Moab, Jehoshaphat enquired of the Lord. through prophet Elisha. But Elisha was enraged by Jehoram's accusations against God. If not for the presence of Jehoshaphat in that trio, Elisha would have rather sent them away: "were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee." (2 Kings 3:14)

2 Kings 3:15-20

15 But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.

16 And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches.

17 For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.

18 And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.

19 And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.

20 And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

1. What is a "minstrel"?

A minstrel is simply of m _____.

Specifically, a minstrel is one who plays upon the ___ p.

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2. In 2 Kings 3:15, we see a strong connection between the role of music and God's working in his people's lives. Comparing with two other accounts in 1 Samuel, and then read the statements below. Write "True" if the statement is correct, or "False" if the statement is wrong. For wrong

1 Samuel 10:5

5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:

1 Samuel 16:23

23 And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

- a) _____ These accounts show us that music is powerful and the effects of music serve purposes in the listeners. In the case of David, music was instrumental in leading the evil spirit to depart. In the case of the company of prophets (1 Sam 10) and Elisha (2 Kings 3), music was played in conjunction with their prophecy.

- b) _____ Christians can listen to any kind of music regardless of the tune, rhythm, beat, style because good music is about lyrics only and not musical characteristics.

- c) _____ Godly music is about both the musical characteristics and lyrics

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d) _ _ _ _ _ Godly music is able to appease an angry heart, as exemplified in Saul's and Elisha's lives.

e) _ _ _ _ _ Godly music can accompany the Holy Spirit's working in people's lives. The playing of music accompanied the Spirit's revelation through Elisha and the band of prophets. Therefore, we say that while music itself is not the Spirit/God, music certainly has spiritual consequences.

3. What is a ditch?

A ditch is a small hole or _ _ _ in the ground which collects water.



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4. In order for them to receive the water from God, they had to have their "vessels" ready to collect the water. Hence, God instructed them to dig ditches in the valley so that the valley will be full of ditches, sufficient for all of them to drink, including their cattle.

How was God going to fill the ditches with water?

- ☐ God will send a strong wind and rain clouds to shower over the valley - the natural way of replenishing water on the earth through the "water cycle"
- ☐ God will miraculously send water through the way of Edom.

5. God said, "this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand." (2 Kings 3:18). Answer the following questions by ticking the correct option.

"This is but a light thing" means that

- ☐ God will send very 'light' water into the valley. The valley will not be filled with much water
- ☐ God will lighten their load and make their journey to Moab swift and light.
- ☐ God will give them victory which is a small issue, considering God's greatness and miraculous strength.

6. "He will deliver" is in the perfect tense in Hebrew. The perfect tense is

- ☐ The tense of completion; in God's eyes, their victory the next day was as good as completed
- ☐ The tense of incompletion, in God's eyes, their victory was going to happen the next day.

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2 Kings 3:21-25

21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border.

22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood:

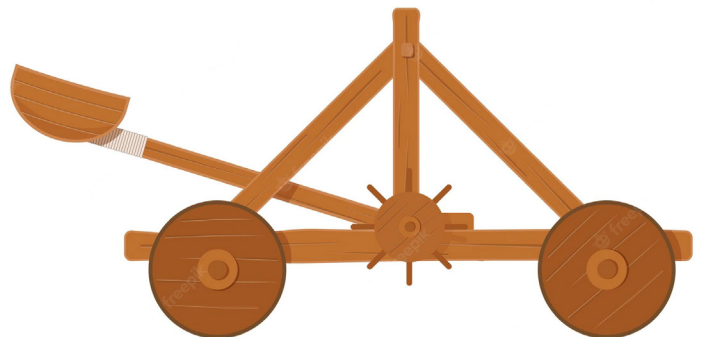
23 And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.

24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country.

25 And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.

7. In the morning, when the crimson rays of dawn reflected from the water, it looked as red as _____. The Moabites perceived that the kings and their men had attacked each other and the red liquid which they saw was blood. The Moabites complacently came to the camp to loot the _____, but the Israelites pounced on them and killed them.

Kirharaseth was a strong, fortified city which could not be destroyed without a stone catapult, which is called "s _____ s" in Scripture. All the good trees were felled, and wells of water stopped.



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2 Kings 3:26-27

26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not.

27 Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.

8. The king of Moab had just lost 700 of his soldiers against the king of Edom. As the last straw, the king of Moab conducted a human sacrifice of his own ____.

This was an affront and offense to Israel because God prohibited human sacrifice in Leviticus 20:1-2. In fact, this was an idolatrous practice which was believed to appease the wrath of God. Scripture records that the three kings ceased the battle and returned to their homes when the king of Moab sacrificed his son. The reason is not recorded, but it seems likely that the three kings thought it unnecessary that more lives be lost than those which had been claimed already. They did not want to drive the king of Edom to take more lives, with the illusion that he could appease God with human sacrifices. In fact, such sacrifices were an abomination to God and the king of Edom's action would anger God further.

9. We conclude today's lesson, read the following extract from Charles Haddon Spurgeon's sermon, "Make This Valley Full of Ditches", and highlight
- (i) what Christians should not do
 - (ii) what Christians should do

God is not tied to this or that mode or form. He may in one district work a revival, and persons may be stricken down, and made to cry aloud; but in another place there may be great crowds, and yet ail may be still and quiet, as though no deep excitement existed at all. ... He can bless as he wills, and he will bless as he wills. Let us not dictate to God. Many a blessing has been lost by Christians not believing it to be a blessing, because it did not come in the particular shape which they had conceived to be proper and right. To some the divine work is nothing, unless it assumes the form which their prejudice has selected. Oh, be thankful if it comes anyhow.