

DIGGING TRENCHES FOR THE LORD TO FILL

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2 Kings 3:13-20

1. This is an instructive passage of Scripture even though it is historical in nature.
2. One of the mysterious aspects of God's word is the relationship between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.
3. Numerous attempts have been made to try and reconcile the apparent contradiction between the two doctrines; both of which are clearly taught in the Scriptures.
4. For instance it is clear that God calls on all men everywhere to repent, yet apart from God no man can or will repent.
5. I am willing to leave the whole matter to those who have a greater intellect than I do and simply preach both doctrines to the best of my ability.
6. This passage sheds some helpful light on the issue so let's see what we can learn.

I. The participants.

A. Jehoram, king of Israel.

1. The son of Ahab and Jezebel (Ahab held the distinction of doing more evil in the sight of the Lord than any of his predecessors 1 Kings 16:30).
2. Jehoram did evil in the sight of the Lord but not to the degree his parents did.

B. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

1. Was a godly king according to 2 Chron 17:3-6

The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, 4 but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. 5 So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. 6 He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.

2. Made an unfortunate alliance with Ahab. 2 Chron 18:1

Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor; and he allied himself by marriage with Ahab.

3. Was influenced by Jehoram to join him in going to war against the king of Moab.

C. Mesha, the king of Moab.

1. The Moabites were descendents of Lot's oldest daughter.
2. They were enemies of the Jews and had been previously subjugated by the Jews.
3. Were led by Mesha, their king, to rebel against Israel.

D. The king of Edom.

1. The Edomites were descendents of Esau.
2. Traditionally at odds with the Jews, but in this instance allied with Jehoram and Jehoshaphat.

E. Elisha, the prophet of God.

II. The plan.

A. Appeared to be a good one.

B. Jehoram and Jehoshaphat would go through Edom, picking up the support of the Edomite king on the way, and attack Mesha and his army. 8

NOTE: Unholy alliances may appear to be advantageous, but they rarely turn out well.
2 Cor 6:14-18

14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 " Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 " And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

III. The problem.

A. Was obvious; there was no water for the army and its livestock.

B. Was urgent; unless water could be found all would be lost.

C. Was responded to differently by those involved.

1. Jehoram, with his guilty conscience before God, believed that God had called them all together to give them into the hand of Moab.

NOTE: Many people know they deserve judgment but continue to resist God anyway.

2. Jehoshaphat, a man of God, understood that they needed to inquire of the Lord.

NOTE: Jehoshaphat never should have allowed himself to get into this situation, but, being in it, he knew enough to turn to God for a way out.

3. Elisha:

a. Bluntly said to Jehoram, "What do I have to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and your mother."

NOTE: The gods of this world, whatever form they take, are of no help when it really matters.

b. Stated that were it not for the respect he had for Jehoshaphat he would not even acknowledge Jehoram's presence.

NOTE: There are times when we can say more by saying nothing. Jesus said, "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

(Matthew 7:6) If we are sensitive to Him the Holy Spirit will identify those Jesus was talking about.

IV. The partnership.

A. God's part.

1. God would supernaturally fill the valley with water.

NOTE: "This is but a slight thing in the sight of the Lord."

2. God would give the coalition victory over the Moabites.

B. Man's part.

1. They were to manifest the obedience of faith by digging trenches to hold the promised water.

2. They were to carry out God's judgment on the Moabites.

NOTE: We need to understand that the obedience of faith is a necessary part of God's divine plan. Most of us want to see God's power manifested, but we are not willing to dig the needed trenches. For instance, are we devoted to prayer like the Bible says we should be? Are we sharing the gospel with the lost? God will do what we cannot do if we will do what He has told us to do.

V. The provision.

A. The water came just as God said it would.

B. Men could dig the trenches, but they had no power to fill them with water.

APPLICATION

1. Growing as a Christian is a divine/human partnership. Phil 2:12-13

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; **13 for it is God who is at work in you**, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

2. So is prayer. John 14:12-15

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. **13** "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **14** "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. **15** "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

3. Also we are dependent upon God in the areas of preaching, teaching, and witnessing.

1 Cor 2:1-5

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. **2** For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. **3** I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, **4** and **my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.**

4. Jesus emphasized our dependency on God in every area of life when He declared,

"Apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

5. Paul stated the same truth from the human perspective when he wrote, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13