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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2327 ~ Ditches of Water for Warriors.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

When Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and to the Promised Land, the shortest route was through Philistine territory where the people were fierce fighters. So God directed Moses to take the Israelites the long way around. This meant that they passed under the southern end of the Dead or Salt Sea to travel north on the east side of the Jordan River. The people asked for passage through Edomite territory but they were refused. The Edomites were descendants of Jacob's brother, Esau. So the Israelites moved further north outside of the Edomite territory.

Then they came to the land of Moab, where the descendants of Lot's son lived. Permission to cross Moabite territory was also refused and Moses didn't want to go to war with them. So the Israelites kept moving north again until they came to the northern end of the Dead Sea. Nearly 400 years after the people moved there, Ahab's father, Omri, became king of the northern kingdom of Israel. He was an army general and subdued the Moabites into paying the Israelites tributes and royalties. King Ahab continued this situation and he expected to be paid tribute in the form of lambs and wool each year. When he was killed, Ahab's son, Ahaziah, ruled for two years before he died of his injuries after a serious fall in his palace in Samaria. He was succeeded by his brother, Jehoram, who like his father, expected to receive Moabite tributes too. As listed in 2nd Kings, Chapter 3, Moab thought it was now a good time to rebel against Israel.

When the ditches were filled with water, the soldiers, their cattle and animals could drink to their fill. Elisha also prophesied that the Moabites would be defeated. When the Moabite king, King Mesha, saw the water in the distance, it looked like blood to him and his officers. They mistakenly assumed that there'd been a great slaughter among the armies of King Jehoram, Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom. So the army of Moab raced down to the valley to capture as much spoil as they could.

What a surprise they were in for! The soldiers of the three kings had hidden themselves so that when Mesha's men arrived, they were trapped in a close combat situation and they became confused about what to do. While suffering from their indecision, they were overwhelmed by the Israelites and their allies from Judah and Edom. Those who fled back to Moab were chased all the way by the armies of these three kings.

As instructed by the Lord through Elisha, the conquering soldiers of the three kings each put a stone on each piece of good Moabite land, stopped up all the springs of water, cut down all the fruit trees and destroyed all the cities except Mesha's city. When King Mesha saw that the battle wasn't going well for him, he took a small group of 700 soldiers and tried to break through the lines to reach the king of Edom, who was presumably at the back of the fighting men. Mesha's hope was to talk to the king of Edom and get him to change sides in the battle. The king of Edom was subject to King Jehoshaphat of Judah, just as King Mesha of Moab was subject to the northern kingdom of Israel. It would have been in the king of Edom's best interests to try to throw off Judah's yoke of bondage as well. But it didn't work! The Mesha army couldn't get through the enemy lines of soldiers.

In deep desperation, King Mesha of Moab sacrificed his own crown prince, his son, to the Moabites chief god on the city wall for all to see, in an effort to get their false god to help them. While this resulted in a renewed effort by the Moabites to keep fighting, the Israelites were disgusted that the king would kill his own son. The Israelites had been instructed by the Lord not to do such an evil practice as offering their children to God as a burnt sacrifice for as far back as Moses' time.

The horrific practice of sacrificing children to pagan idols has been committed for thousands of years throughout the world. Generally, the sacrifice of a child is part of the worship of a pagan god to obtain a blessing from the dark spirit world. The Bible contains the heart-breaking record of child sacrifice that was practiced in the name of Molech, a god of the Ammonites who were descendants of Lot. People believed that the practice of killing their sons was a most effective ritual that pleased their god and dispelled adversity. Therefore, the terrible practice usually came after a nation's defeat or great disaster.

God prohibited Israel from engaging in child sacrifice and Molech worship in particular. In Leviticus, Chapter 20, the Lord says: "Say to the Israelites: 'Any Israelite or any foreigner residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his children to Molek is to be put to death. The members of the community are to stone him. I myself will set my face against him and will cut him off from his people; for by sacrificing his children to Molek, he has defiled my sanctuary and brought shame on my holy name." Many other Old Testament passages affirm God's zero-tolerance for child sacrifice.

Today, child sacrifice is still being practiced throughout the world in an effort to bring good fortune and wealth to those who are willing to pay for it. There is a link between child sacrifice and modern-day abortion. The motive is the same – adults wanting a better life at the expense of their own innocent children. Untold numbers of children have been 'sacrificed' at the hands of abortionists for the sake of convenience, immorality, selfishness or pride. Millions of babies have been killed so that their parents can maintain a certain lifestyle. God hates "hands that shed innocent blood," as listed in Proverbs, Chapter 6, and we can be sure that God will judge this terrible sin. Human life is sacred to God because He made us in His likeness and we're set apart to be like Him and participate in God's ongoing work.

When we ask God in sorrow to forgive us all of our sins in Christ's Name, even if we have practiced abortion, God will hear our prayers and He will set us apart as His new creation as we trust Him. Each person who repents before God will be set free from our evil ways so that we can learn from the Scriptures how to walk closely with Him day by day.

Following King Mesha's sacrifice of his own son, the Israelites withdrew from fighting and they returned to their homes. The soldiers of Judah and Edom were so disgusted that they left the area in great anger against the Israelites for ever getting them involved. When you join forces with those who don't love God, you'll never know what will happen to embarrass or offend you, or to disgrace the Lord's Name. However, Israel's mission had been accomplished: Moab, having almost been destroyed, was once more subject to Israel.

What can we learn from this chapter? King Jehoshaphat of Judah had been rebuked once before for joining with King Ahab of Israel, a Baal worshipper, and going into battle with him. That time, the kings at least consulted with God to see if they should go or not (and they went anyway). This time, however, they didn't even ask God if going to war was the right thing to do. They simply went ahead and they got themselves into trouble. Then they looked to God for His help. Isn't this like so many people today? They want to live to please themselves until some disaster strikes; and then they ask God to help them out of the trouble.

Elisha was a servant of the Lord; he didn't want to help King Jehoram, because Jehoram too, was an idol worshipper like his parents. Elisha wanted to send him to ask for help from the pagan Baal, if this could be possible. But Jehoram knew in his heart that doing so was useless. Jehoram then suggested that the Lord had planned to give the three kings defeat and so would allow them to be captured by the Moabites. In other words, when troubles came, claim that it is the Lord's will. But when there's no one else but yourself to blame, blame God! What utter disrespect to assume that Jehoram knew the mind of God on any matter! Elisha made it quite clear that if Jehoshaphat hadn't been in the particular group, Elisha wouldn't have even spoken to Jehoram. But God remains merciful, and so Elisha enquired of God what was to be done.

Elisha's unwillingness to help Jehoram came from Jehoram's unwillingness to trust God. After Jehoram saw the miracles of the ditches of water and the defeat of the Moabites, did he turn away from the useless idols he worshipped and put his faith in God? Although Jehoram saw many great miracles worked by the prophet Elisha, no, he never fully trusted the Lord. In fact, because of Jehoram's sins, his time of 12 years as king was plagued with a number of multi-year famines. These were all wake-up calls from God, to which Jehoram never heeded or responded to.

But there's still an opportunity for you, if you've never called on God before to forgive your sins or believed that Jesus paid your sin debt so that you can be born spiritually anew by God's Holy Spirit. As we approach the end of the Church Age in this particular time period, the signs are showing that the return of the Lord Jesus will come very soon. In Revelation, Chapter 3, Verse 20, the Lord Jesus promises: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me." Don't make the mistake of waiting to make this decision later in your life, or you may never have another opportunity to do so!

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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