

2 Kings 3:1 — “Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.”

2 Kings 3:2 — “And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made.”

2 Kings 3:3 — “Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.”

2 Kings 3:4 — “And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.”

2 Kings 3:5 — “But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.”

INTRODUCTION

- Second Kings opens during a major change in Israel.
 - Ahab is dead.
 - His son Ahaziah has also died without a son.
 - Elijah has been taken up.
 - Elisha has begun his public ministry.
 - Another son of Ahab now sits on Israel's throne.
 - Moab has already broken away from Israel.
 - Jehoram begins his reign with a serious problem waiting for him.
- Bible position:
 - 2 Kings is **Book 12 of 66**.
 - 2 Kings 3 is **chapter 316 of 1,189** in the Bible.
 - It is chapter 3 of 25 in 2 Kings.
- Before this chapter tells us what Jehoram will do about Moab, it tells us:
 - who Jehoram is;
 - how the LORD views his reign.
- These five verses move through:
 - Jehoram taking the throne;
 - God's judgment of his conduct;
 - the tribute Israel was losing when Moab rebelled.
- Jehoram the son of Ahab begins to reign.

I. JEHORAM THE SON OF AHAB BEGAN TO REIGN — VERSE 1

2 Kings 3:1 — “Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.”

- Jehoram is introduced as **“the son of Ahab.”**
 - That connects him immediately with the house that ruled Israel through Ahab and then Ahaziah.
 - Ahab is gone.
 - Ahaziah is gone.
 - Another son of Ahab now sits on the throne.
- Jehoram reigns over Israel from Samaria.
 - Jehoshaphat rules Judah.
 - Jehoram will reign twelve years.
- Verse 1 gives the facts of his reign.
- Verse 2 will give God's judgment of his reign.

- [STRONG] **A throne and twelve years in power could never tell us whether Jehoram was right with God.**

II. HE WROUGHT EVIL; NEVERTHELESS HE CLEAVED UNTO THE SINS OF JEROBOAM — VERSES 2-3

2 Kings 3:2 — “And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made.”

- God's judgment comes first:
 - **“hewrought evil in the sight of the LORD.”**
 - The standard is the LORD's judgment.
- Jehoram will be compared with his parents in the rest of the verse.
 - That comparison never changes the first statement.
 - God says Jehoram did evil.
- Jehoram was different from Ahab and Jezebel in one real way.
 - Ahab had served Baal.
 - Ahab built an altar and house for Baal in Samaria.
 - Ahab promoted Baal worship in Israel.
 - Jehoram **“putaway the image of Baal that his father had made.”**
- Scripture gives Jehoram credit for that change.
- Stay with the exact wording:
 - The verse says **“putaway.”**
 - Jehoram removed the image his father had made.
 - Scripture gives no motive.
 - Scripture does not say he removed every trace of Baal worship from Israel.
- [PAUSE] Jehoram changed something that was wrong.
- **God still said he did evil.**
- Application:
 - Do not grade yourself by somebody worse.
 - A man can say, “I am not as bad as him.”
 - He may be right about the comparison and still be wrong before God.
 - Jehoram was not like Ahab and Jezebel in this matter.
 - God still measured Jehoram **“in the sight of the LORD.”**

2 Kings 3:3 — “Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.”

- **“Nevertheless”** tells us verse 2 was not the whole story.
 - Jehoram put away one evil.
 - He held onto another.
- The verse describes that attachment two ways:
 - **“he cleaved unto”** the sins of Jeroboam;
 - **“he departed not therefrom.”**
- Jehoram remained attached to a sinful course that had been established generations earlier.
- Jeroboam had built an alternative system of worship for the northern kingdom.

1 Kings 12:28-30 — “Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.”

- Jeroboam also:
 - established high places;
 - appointed priests who were not the sons of Levi;

- o created a feast according to what he had devised in his own heart in 1 Kings 12:31-33.
- By Jehoram's day, that system had been in Israel for generations.
- [STRONG] **Age did not make it right. Tradition did not make it right.**
 - o Jehoram did not invent those sins.
 - o He chose to keep walking in them.
- The word "**cleaved**" shows what Jehoram held onto.

Joshua 23:8 — "But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day."

- Jehoram should have cleaved to the LORD.
- Instead, he cleaved to the sins of Jeroboam.
- He knew how to put away the image of Baal.
- There were still sins from which "**he departed not.**"
- Application:
 - o Correcting one wrong thing does not give us permission to keep another wrong thing.
 - o A man may stop one sinful habit while protecting another.
 - o A family may correct one practice while keeping another because it has always been done that way.
 - o A church may reject one false teaching while holding onto another tradition that does not agree with Scripture.
- Verse 3 also says Jeroboam "**made Israel to sin.**"
 - o Jeroboam had been dead for generations.
 - o His choices were still affecting the nation.
- Leadership application:
 - o Leaders teach by what they permit.
 - o Leaders teach by what they establish.
 - o Leaders teach by what they repeat.
 - o Fathers, mothers, pastors, teachers, and other leaders should care about what they make normal for the people who follow them.

III. THE KING OF MOAB REBELLED AGAINST THE KING OF ISRAEL — VERSES 4-5

2 Kings 3:4 — "And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool."

- The passage now turns to Moab.
- Mesha is called a "**sheepmaster.**"
 - o The tribute matches that description.
- Mesha rendered to Israel:
 - o one hundred thousand lambs;
 - o one hundred thousand rams;
 - o with the wool.
- The verse does not tell us the exact payment schedule.
 - o We do not need to guess at it.
- The verse tells us enough to understand the size of the relationship.
 - o Moab had been under Israel's authority.
 - o Israel was receiving an enormous amount of livestock wealth from Moab.
- Israel could receive great tribute while its king was doing evil in the sight of the LORD.
- Application:
 - o Money does not prove God approves of what we are doing.
 - o Growth does not prove God approves of what we are doing.
 - o Power does not prove God approves of what we are doing.
- [STRONG] **Success cannot reverse what God has already said about right and wrong.**

2 Kings 3:5 — “But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.”

- Verse 4 says Mesha “**rendered.**”
- Verse 5 says he “**rebelled.**”
- The tribute and submission in verse 4 gave way to open rebellion in verse 5.
- The timing is tied to Ahab’s death.
- The book had already told us this in its opening verse.

2 Kings 1:1 — “Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.”

- Moab’s rebellion began after Ahab died.
- It was already an unresolved problem when Jehoram came to the throne.
- Chapter 3 repeats that fact because verse 6 will show Jehoram gathering Israel to respond.
- Jehoram inherited this problem.
 - He did not start the rebellion recorded here.
 - We also face problems that began before they reached us.
 - We are still responsible for how we respond once they are ours to face.
- Keep the two facts in the passage straight:
 - Jehoram was doing evil.
 - Jehoram also faced a political crisis.
- The passage places those facts next to each other.
- It never says Jehoram’s sin caused Moab’s rebellion.
- It tells us what kind of king Jehoram was as he prepared to face that rebellion.

CONCLUSION

- Before Jehoram ever marches against Moab, God has already told us how to see the king.
- Jehoram removed the image of Baal.
- Yet he still cleaved to the sins of Jeroboam.
- [SLOW] **One right change did not make the rest of his conduct right.**
- Let God’s Word examine us the same way.
 - Do not ask only whether you are better than somebody else.
 - Do not point to one change you made while protecting something else that Scripture says is wrong.
 - Be willing to leave what is wrong even when it is:
 - ? old;
 - ? familiar;
 - ? accepted by the people around you.
- Israel had:
 - power;
 - tribute;
 - wealth.
- Then Moab rebelled.
 - Those outward things could change quickly.
 - God’s judgment of right and wrong did not change.
- [STRONG] When Moab rebelled, the greatest question was not how much Jehoram had lost.
- **God had already shown us the deeper problem: Jehoram had put something away, but he still would not depart from what was wrong.**