



OHBC MEMORY VERSE WEEK #17

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE: ESTHER 4:14

"... and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Why Esther 4:14b?

Because not only is this statement a powerful concisement of God's plan for Esther's rise to the queenship of Ahasuerus' kingdom, it is a powerful statement regarding God's plan for

bringing us into His kingdom.

Each of us are on this planet to fulfill a unique, God-given role that only we can accomplish. It is a "certain something" for which God was specifically shaping us, even in our mother's womb (Psalm 139:13-17). Our ultimate success in life, as will be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ, will not be measured by our financial successes, material possessions, or worldly accomplishments, but by whether we fulfilled God's purpose in bringing us into His kingdom.

May Esther's example challenge each of us to BE what God has called us to BE, so we are prepared to DO what God has called us to DO.

DAY 81

TODAY'S READING: I KINGS 20-22

OVERVIEW:

Syria attacks Israel twice; Ahab spares the Syrian king; Ahab's "purchase" of Naboth's vineyard; Israel and Judah unite against Syria; the death of Ahab.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The Syrians, led by Ben-hadad, come against Israel during Ahab's reign. Ahab agrees to Syria's demands, but then Syria simply requests more. Ahab cannot accept the second request and war follows. Sometimes it seems easier to give in to little things because "it's not that big of a deal." However, as we've seen before, the world, sin, and the flesh always want more. Sooner or later we realize the price is too high and we must fight. God reveals He will deliver the victory to Israel. It is amazing that even when we're walking in the flesh, like Ahab, God is still willing to work in our life to bring us back to Himself. Syria is defeated, but comes against Ahab and Israel a second time. God once again enables Israel to gain the victory. However, despite God proving Himself and giving Israel the victory, Ahab still rebels against God and does not kill Ben-hadad, the Syrian king. This will cost Ahab his life. We see the same thing today in believers and unbelievers alike. God proves Himself in their life, but they're still not willing to obey God. Ultimately, it will result in death as well.

Ahab is a bewildering character. He is king, and as we have seen, he is a very wicked king. However, when his offer for Naboth's vineyard is rejected, he doesn't do anything other than sulk about it. It is his wife Jezebel that schemes Naboth's death, and then gives the vineyard to her husband. He's excited about the vineyard until Elijah meets him and pronounces God's judgment upon him for his deeds. Ahab then humbles himself before God, though he never truly repents.

In Chapter 22, Jehoshaphat is king of Judah and makes an ally of Ahab so they can join in battle against Syria. Ahab's prophets prophesy great victory, but Jehoshaphat can see these are not prophets of God. Ahab doesn't want to hear from the true prophet of God because he never likes what the prophet says – because it's never good things concerning him. We, too, live in a time where most people (saved and unsaved) do not want to hear the truth, especially about themselves. They would rather hear a positive, uplifting message. They want it to be spiritual, just not negative (II Timothy 4:1-5). That's why God says we live in a time of famine of hearing the Word of God (Amos 8:11). Sadly, like the false prophets Ahab liked, most of God's prophets today would rather be liked by the people, than obey God and preach His Word. Ahab is killed in this battle and the prophecies against him in chapters 21 & 22 are fulfilled.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As MICAIAH, the prophet of the Lord, speaking whatever the Lord (Father) wants him to speak. I Kings 22:14 (John 3:34; 14:10).

DAY 82

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 1-4

OVERVIEW:

Ahaziah sends 102 men to their death; Elijah is taken up; Elisha established as prophet; Moab revolts; the miracles of Elisha.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The stubbornness and rebellion of man has no better example than Israel's King Ahaziah. He has seen and heard Elijah and the condemnation of Baal. He knows of the fire falling from heaven in judgment of Baal. And now, when he has a need in his life, he turns to Baal, the god of Ekron. Even when confronted by Elijah, he sends two captains and their 50 men to their death, pursuing "wisdom" from Baal. How could a man be so blind? Could we ever be so blind?

An interesting insight into the mind of Elijah is shown in verse 15. After calling down fire from heaven, the Lord tells Elijah "Don't be afraid of this man." Elijah, the Prophet of Fire that confronted kings and religious leaders with the Word of the Lord, was a man with thoughts and passions like us. James 5:16-18 reveals that his greatness wasn't the confrontation and the fire; it was the effective prayer of a righteous man.

In Chapter 2, Elisha follows and serves his leader to the end. Elisha had seen the fire, but he wanted the spirit! He wanted what was inside! Zechariah 4:6 proclaims: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The Lord Jesus Christ gave us the promise of the Holy Spirit living and abiding in us in John, chapters 14, 15 and 16. Paul writes that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30), we have the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23), we are led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14), taught by the Spirit (I Cor. 2:10) and strengthened by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:16). We have already been promised what Elisha asked to receive.

Elijah is taken into heaven. Elijah's mantle is left to Elisha and the Spirit of the Lord works through Elisha now. The miracles and the work of the Lord will continue, because Elisha will be doing the work of God, not the work of Elijah. God's work continues as He brings another man into His place of service. In the last part of chapter 2, Elisha is confirmed by God in the sight of other men. Interestingly, Elisha asks for a double portion, and the number of his recorded miracles is double that of Elijah!

Chapter 3 details the deliverance of a good king (King Jehoshaphat of Judah) that gets involved with other evil kings. After the death of Ahaziah in chapter 1, his brother Jehoram begins to reign over Israel. He put away the image of Baal, but kept the golden calf of Jeroboam (I Kings 12:28). Moab revolts from the rule of Israel and Jehoram calls on Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom to help. Soon, the three kings are in a desert with no water and no hope. Jehoshaphat is in the wrong place with the wrong people. Only then, does Jehoshaphat ask for counsel from the Lord. Elisha comes in and the Lord brings deliverance with the reflection of the sun on water. In a place of no water, the Lord brings victory through water.

Elisha miraculously helps individuals in chapter 4. After Elisha gives a widow instruction, the Lord multiplies her only possession (a pot of oil) to pay her debts and meet her future needs. A woman, who takes care of Elisha, is given a son. When the son later dies in the field, the Lord brings him back to life through Elisha. A poisonous meal is purified and given to hungry men. First fruit offerings are multiplied to meet the needs of many people. In the Old Testament and New Testament, the Spirit of God abiding in and controlling a person, brings blessing, joy and hope to men and glory to God! God abiding in and controlling a person, brings blessing, joy and hope to men and glory to God!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As JUDGE OF THE UNBELIEVERS – II Kings 1 (Revelation 19:11-20:15). As GIVER OF THE SPIRIT – II Kings 2:9 (John 14:16-17). As THE ASCENDED SAVIOR – II Kings 2:11 (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9). As THE GIVER OF LIFE – II Kings 4:17 (John 6:33, 10:28; I John 5:11). As THE MULTIPLIER OF FOOD – II Kings 4:42-44 (Matthew 14:16-21; 15:32-38).

DAY 83

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 5-8

OVERVIEW:

Healing of Naaman; miracles of Elisha; a great famine and deliverance; further decline of Israel and Judah.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The healing of a leprous Gentile is one of the best known stories of the Old Testament. All of the great things about Naaman in verse one mean nothing after reading the last phrase of the verse: "but he was a leper." None of these things could overcome or heal leprosy, the picture of sin. None of our accomplishments or greatness can overcome sin, either. The cure is a gift from God, revealed by a servant of God.

After Naaman is told of healing in Israel, he packed up his great possessions, assembled his entourage and departed for the places of power and influence. But there was no remedy there. If Elisha had not called Naaman to his house, Naaman would have had no hope. Though Naaman's pride initially rejected the remedy offered to him, his obedience brought healing. Naaman went home in peace. Romans 5:1 tells us: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The rest of the story reveals the heart of the servant Gehazi. Compare two words in chapter 5 and verse 20: "But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him." His heart is revealed when he says he will take it from him.

After the deception and lies of Gehazi, the judgment of God came on him. The Word and Work of the Lord are still today tarnished by greed, deception and lies of some "servants" of the Lord. II Corinthians 4:18 reminds us that if you can see something, it is temporary. Eternal things are seen through spiritual eyes. Though we often only think in terms of the things we see, we are in the middle of a real, eternal spiritual battle. Spiritual beings live and work on this earth. Job chapter one tells how they can cause physical effects and influence people. But I John 4:4 assures us: "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." The Lord Jesus Christ has conquered all. Now in II Kings chapter 6, Elisha and a young servant are in a city surrounded by bands of Syrians. Elisha had previously warned King Jehoram of the locations of the Syrians multiple times. The Syrians had now compassed the city, terrifying the young man. Without fear, Elisha tells him, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." With his eyes opened, the young man saw the reality of the battle that Elisha had already seen. The attackers are drawn into the city, blinded, and led to the middle of Samaria.

The Syrian bands are surrounded by Israel, given provisions, and sent back to Syria. A famine comes to the kingdom of Israel and is blamed on Elisha. King Jehoram blamed Elisha, just as his father Ahab blamed Elijah for the troubles in Israel. But in chapter 7, the Lord will cause the Syrians to hear noises of a great army and flee, leaving a surplus of food and provisions. God provides plenty for all the people of a nation, but judges the one man who rejects Elisha's prophecy in unbelief. Note that the Lord can deal with groups and individuals simultaneously.

Chapter 8 continues with the decline of both Israel and Judah. Benhadad, the king of Syria, is murdered by Hazael. Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, begins a short, evil reign. The chapter ends with Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram, over Judah; and Joram, the son of Ahab, over Israel. As promised in I Kings 19:15-17, judgment is coming! The wicked house of Ahab will soon be destroyed. God's judgment is sure.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As ONE SENT TO THE GENTILES – II Kings 5:1-14 (Luke 4:27).

As HEALER OF LEPROSY – II Kings 5:10 (Matthew 8:2, 3; Mark 1:40, 41).

As POWERFUL PROTECTOR – II Kings 6:16 (Luke 12:7; I John 4:4).

DAY 84

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 9-12

OVERVIEW:

Jehu executes judgment; Joash is spared and becomes king; Joash repairs the temple.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Two chapters of today's reading deal with Jehu and two deal with Joash. Both men will do God's work, but neither with a pure heart for God. The results will be short-lived and self-promoting; the Lord won't get the glory and praise.

Jehu was prophesied by name years earlier by Elijah (I Kings 19:16) to completely remove the lineage of the wicked Ahab. The promised avenger could have given great glory to God to show the trustworthiness of God's promises, but did not because of extreme cruelty and pride. In chapter 9, Jehu executes judgment on Joram, the king of Israel, Ahaziah, the king of Judah and Jezebel, the wife of Ahab. In chapter 10, Jehu continues with all of the descendants of Ahab and all of the Baal worshippers in Israel. He accomplishes the tasks with intimidation (II Kings 10:3, 4), ruthlessness (II Kings 10:14), pride (II Kings 10:16) and trickery (II Kings 10:18, 19). Jehu is rewarded for removing Baal and the house of Ahab, but because he continued with the worship of the golden calves and disregarded the law of the Lord, Israel moves closer to captivity (II Kings 10:32).

Chapters 11 and 12 take us to the other kingdom, Judah. When Ahaziah is killed by Jehu, his mother, Athaliah, kills all of her grandsons, in order to take the throne. The Lord hides one baby boy, Joash, from the slaughter. A faithful priest, Jehoiada, raises the boy for six years and then orchestrates his coronation as the king of Judah at the age of seven. Athaliah is removed and Joash (also called Jehoash) is a good king all of the days of Jehoiada. But the demise of Joash is explained in II Chronicles 24:17. Joash followed the Lord while Jehoiada lived, but after his death, Joash listened to the wrong counsel. His spiritual discernment and commitment to the Lord, came from another man. Sadly, Joash didn't have that personally and it led to the severe judgment of God, not just in Joash's life, but in the entire land of Judah.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE AVENGER – II Kings 9:7 (Revelation 6:9).

As THE INTERCESSOR – II Kings 11:17 (I Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34).

DAY 85

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 13-16

OVERVIEW:

Israel delivered into hand of Syria; Death of Elisha; Three good kings in Judah; Final kings of Israel

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

During this period of time, it is tricky to keep the kings of Judah and Israel straight. Both kingdoms have a king named Ahaziah. And, both kingdoms have a king named Joash, whose name is sometimes spelled Jehoash. They can be identified by carefully reading the name of their kingdom or their father. King Joash of Judah, the son of Ahaziah, began his reign in chapter 12 and did right in the sight of the Lord. King Joash of Israel, the son of Jehoahaz, began his reign in II Kings 13:9 – 11 and did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. Another awkward aspect to our mind is that the stories of two kingdoms are being told in parallel. Everything cannot be recorded in chronological order. The history of one king may overlap one or more kings in the other kingdom. The death of Joash, king of Israel is told in both II Kings 13:13 and II Kings 14:16, because chapter 13 is telling the story in Israel and chapter 14 is telling the story in Judah. Careful reading of the context is required.

At the end of chapter 13, we have an example of the enduring faithfulness of the Lord. Though Israel has worshipped Baal repeatedly and the golden calves continually, the Lord is gracious and has compassion on them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The beginning of chapter 14 gives an interesting insight into the effect of a father on his son. Joash had started his reign as a good king, through the influence of the priest Jehoiada. Evidently, the teaching of Jehoiada not only affected Joash, but was also given to his son Amaziah. Verse 3 says he did as his father did and in verse 6, he followed the commandment of the Lord from the book of Deuteronomy.

Chapter 15 continues with two more good kings of Judah: Azariah, also called Uzziah and Jotham. Both did right in the sight of the Lord as his father had done. II Chronicles 26 tells us that as long as Uzziah

sought the Lord, God made him to prosper, but warns that after much success, Uzziah's heart was lifted up to his destruction.

Though Judah has a series of good kings, Israel is spiraling downward. Though Jeroboam has outward success, he did that which was evil and never departed from idol worship. Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah and Pekah continue in the evil and bring Israel near captivity. Most of these kings are murdered, one after only one month on the throne. Menahem is a ruthless and cruel leader. Pekah and his army kill 120,000 men in one day of battle. Yet, in such a dark time, Isaiah prophesies that a virgin will conceive and bear a son, Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). Isaiah 9 is written at this time to a people in darkness that have seen a great light. "A son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As SAVIOUR – II Kings 13:5 (Luke 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23)

As THE RESURRECTION – II Kings 13:21 (John 11:25)

As THE BRASEN ALTAR – II Kings 16:14 (Hebrews 9:14)