

21.02 Jehoram (Joram) ☹ and / Jehoshaphat War Against Moab; Water Miracle (2 Kings 3:1–27)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] Brackets indicate a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. They also indicate answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Note: After printing the pictures found below, color the places that look like water blue on page 14 and red on page 15.
- Optional: flannelgraph (Elisha, 3 kings, Moabite soldiers; a wilderness background; cut strips the same measurement from brown flannel or felt for ditches, blue for water, and red for blood-like water

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *spoil*: the valuable things left by soldiers after losing a battle
- *rams*: male sheep
- *minstrel*: someone who plays on a harp or stringed instrument and sings
- *mercy*: not getting deserved judgment
- *grace*: getting undeserved blessings

Scripture: (KJV)

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 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. 3 Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom. 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. 5 But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

6 And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel. 7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses. 8 And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. 9 So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them. 10 And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! 11 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. 12 And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. 13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. 14 And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. 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. 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. 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.

Introduction/Review:

Last week we learned that God used Elisha to perform miracles. After Elijah went to heaven in a whirlwind with fiery horses and chariot, Elisha took Elijah's mantle and struck the Jordan River. The river parted so that Elisha could walk across it on dry ground. Then he went to Jericho and healed the bad water by putting salt into its spring. To this day, people get good water from "Elisha's Spring."

The next miracle was a scary one. Some young people, who lived in Bethel and ✓ probably worshiped at King Jeroboam's golden calf, harassed Elisha, God's true prophet. What did they say? ["Go up, you bald head! Go up, you bald head!"] What did they mean by this? [1) Elisha was baldheaded; 2) ✓ They had heard about Elijah's going up to heaven; 3) ✓ They wanted Elisha to get out of there and not to tell them they were doing wrong by their false worship.] Elisha cursed this group for basically cursing God and God's man. What happened next? [Two she-bears came out of the woods and destroyed all those who had troubled God's man.]

What lessons could we learn from this story? [Not to make fun of people who can't help how they look; not to ridicule God's man—pastor, Bible teacher, Bible character. Also, know that bears are not teddy bears but dangerous.]

Israel had only bad kings. The worst was who? [Ahab.] His son, Ahaziah, died of injuries when he fell through a lattice. Since Ahaziah had no son, Ahaziah's brother, Jehoram, or Joram, now became king.

Story:

Israel's problem with Moab

Jehoram was a wicked king but not as bad as his father, Ahab, for he tried to get rid of Baal worship. However, he still worshiped the idols as King Jeroboam, the first king of northern Israel, had taught the people, worshiping the golden calves at Bethel and Dan.

Now, Israel had long ago conquered the country of Moab. Every year Moab had to show Israel that they were still servants of Israel. This is how they did it: every single year they gave 100,000 lambs to Israel, and every single year they gave the wool sheared from 100,000 rams (male sheep).

That was a lot of lambs and a lot of wool! But one year, King Mesha of Moab had had enough; he decided to rebel and no longer give the 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams. King Ahaziah hadn't done anything about this rebellion, but King Jehoram would not put up with it. He called his army out of all Israel and declared war against Moab.

Judah's alliance with Israel

Before he actually marched against Moab, however, he asked for help from good King Jehoshaphat of Judah. After all, he had good reason to ask Jehoshaphat for help since 1) Jehoram's sister had married Jehoshaphat's son; 2) Jehoshaphat had helped his father Ahab in the battle that killed Ahab; 3) he had been in a joint ship-building venture with Ahaziah; 4) Jehoshaphat had won a victory over these same Moabites and their brother-country, the Ammonites, just by praising God; 5) Israel was at peace with Judah. Yes, there were plenty of reasons why he could ask Jehoshaphat for help, so he sent a message to Jehoshaphat: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me; will you go with me to battle against Moab?"

Now, before I tell you Jehoshaphat's answer, tell me what you think Jehoshaphat will say. Remember, when he went with Ahab, God's prophet severely scolded him, but then he joined with Ahab's son Ahaizah to build ships. When those ships broke, Jehoshaphat wouldn't build any more. Will "friendly" Jehoshaphat stop helping God's enemies? [Take a straw vote.] How many think friendly Jehoshaphat has learned his lesson and will *not* help Jehoram, God's enemy, because he worships idols and not the God of his forefathers? [Count votes.] How many think friendly Jehoshaphat will help God's enemy? [Count votes.]

Jehoshaphat answered Jehoram. He . . . said . . . the . . . same thing he had said when Ahab had asked him to go to battle: "I will go; I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses"!

What!?! Friendly Jehoshaphat still hadn't learned to stop helping God's enemies!?! Usually, he asked for a prophet to tell them whether or not they really should go, but this time he didn't even ask God. He just asked Jehoram, "Which way shall we march?" Oh, I can't see how God will bless this war, can you?

Jehoram answered Jehoshaphat, "We will go down around the Salt [Dead] Sea, [locate], by Edom. ✓We'll get more help from the King of Edom, and then we'll go on up to Moab."

The army's lack of water

And that's what they did, but something went wrong. After seven days of marching, they ran out of water; there was no water for the soldiers or for the animals to drink.

"Alas!" cried Jehoram. [Teacher: act very distraught and nervous.] "The Lord has called these three kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom to give them into the hand of Moab! Oh, alas! ✓What shall we do?"

Jehoshaphat came to himself a bit and asked, "Isn't there a prophet around here that we might ask the Lord what to do?"

One of Jehoram's servants answered, "Elisha, the prophet who was servant to Elijah, is here."¹

"Aha!" answered Jehoshaphat. "The word of the Lord is with him."

So the three kings went to Elisha. (Notice *kings* went to a *prophet*.)

Elisha didn't greet the three kings cheerfully. "What do I have to do with you, Jehoram? ✓Don't come to me; go to the prophets of your father. Go to the prophets of your mother."

No!" replied Jehoram. "It is the Lord who has called these three kings to give them into the hand of Moab." It is not certain whether Jehoram was blaming God or seeking God, but he certainly recognized the true God of heaven was at work here.

"As surely as the Lord lives, I wouldn't even look at you, Jehoram," continued Elisha, "I wouldn't even see you except that I have respect for Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, who is here. Bring me a minstrel, someone who plays on a harp."

Now, we're not sure why Elisha asked for someone to play a harp, but ✓maybe it was because he needed to calm down a bit and needed to be prayerful in order to know what God wanted him to say.

God's solution through Elisha

At any rate, when the minstrel played, the Bible states, “The power of the Lord came upon him.” He said, “Make this valley full of ditches,² for thus says the Lord, ‘You shall not see wind or rain, but those ditches shall be filled with water so that you—you and your animals—can drink. God can easily do this. He will give the Moabites into your hand. You shall conquer every city and shall cut down every good tree, and shall stop up all springs of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones.’”

Wow! God promised them much more than they asked. Not only would He give them water, but also would He give them victory—a total victory that would involve ruining the cities, trees, water, and land!

That night, Israel’s soldiers dug ditches that were probably like trenches or even pits. [Place brown strips on the board, zigzagging them.] In the morning at about the same time as the morning sacrifice was being offered in Jerusalem, God sent water from the direction of Edom, not by rain but from streams God Himself had made to flow. Every ditch was filled with water. [Place blue strips over the “ditches.”] All the people and animals were able to drink until they were no longer thirsty. Now they were ready for battle.

Faulty understanding of the Moabites

Meanwhile, the Moabites had heard Israel was coming to fight them. They had gotten together every soldier they could find—old and young, anyone who could put on armor—and had marched forward. When they came to the valley where the ditches were filled with water, they viewed the water differently from the way the Israelites saw it: they saw *red* water! [Place red strips.]

Remember how the Moabites and others had fought and slain each other when Jehoshaphat had won the battle by singing? That’s what the Moabites thought had happened to Israel now. They said, “This red liquid is blood. The kings have surely fought against each other and have slain each other. Let’s go, Moab, and take the spoil!” But when they got close to the Israelite camp, the Israelites suddenly and surprisingly rose up and chased them, slaying many on the way.

Israel conquered the cities, filled good land with stones, stopped up water springs, and cut down good trees, just as Elisha had said they would do.

In a “last-ditch” effort, King Mesha of Moab attacked Edom with 700 swordsmen. But he lost even that effort.

[Teacher, you may wish *not* to relate the rest of the story if teaching small children.] ✓King Mesha of Moab was desperate. He made one final, terrible attempt ✓to get his god to turn the battle his way: he sacrificed his oldest son, the heir to his throne. But Moab’s god could not save those people even when offered this terrible sacrifice. Moab lost the war and many resources. ✓For that they were very angry against Israel.

Israel, Judah, and Edom, on the other hand, returned home with the spoil of the battle. *God* had given them water to drink, and *God* had given them the victory.

¹“The prophet ✓ must have followed the army of his own accord, or rather, as Keil suggests, under a Divine impulse, in order that, when the hour of trial came, he might point Jehoram to Jehovah as the only true God” (*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers* found at biblehub.com).

²*Ditches* is translated *pits* or *trenches* and even *pools*. The *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* notes, “The valley was a torrent bed which in the time of rain would become suddenly flooded with the water from the steep sides, and from the watershed above. This would soon run away, and the excavations mentioned here seem to have been meant to dam up the water, and prevent its rapid escape” ([2 Kings 3 Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges \(biblehub.com\)](http://2Kings3CambridgeBibleforSchoolsandColleges(biblehub.com))).

The *Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* states the Hebrew word גְּבִים means “trenches for collecting water” (biblehub.com).

On the other hand, the ESV does not speak of the people’s digging anything at all but states that God Himself

“will make this dry streambed full of pools.”

Our retelling of the story uses the word *ditches* and has the soldiers digging them—trenches or pits that would collect water.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

Jesus is living water. When he spoke to the woman at the well of Sychar, He said, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. . . . Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:10–14).

- In spite of Jehoshaphat’s helping Jehoram, the idol-worshiper, God showed mercy to Jehoshaphat. Sometimes he also does this for us when we sin; however, we must never presume upon God’s mercy and grace by sinning.

Activities:

- Play dough: flatten out a piece of clay and “dig” ditches with the back of a spoon or some other tool.
- Snack: peanut butter in the “ditch” of celery
- Put dirt to the depth of about 2 inches in a flat, plastic container. With spoons “dig” connecting ditches in it, zigzagging back and forth in the dirt. Slowly pour water into a ditch on one side of the container, and watch the water flow into the “ditches.
- Recall Bible stories about water: Elim and the palm trees; crossing the Red Sea and Jordan; Elijah’s prying for rain; Moses’ striking the rock for water and his striking when he was supposed to speak to the rock; Elijah’s brook; *etc.*
- Talk about the marvels of water using the chart found below.
- Role play: Choose a volunteer to be King Jehoram, one to be King Jehoshaphat, and one to be Elisha. Elisha and Jehoram stand facing each other.

Elisha says, without looking at Jerhoram, “I won’t even look at you because you serve idols and not the true and living God.” Jehoshaphat steps beside Jehoram.

Elisha says, “The only reason I can look on you is because I respect Jehoshaphat, and he is here.”

- If plausible, on a day other than the Lord’s Day, provide actual shovels, go outside, and dig a few “ditches.” This can show the hard work involved.
- Let students see and feel sheared lamb’s wool. (Check with 4H or FFA students around early summer or county-fair times for sheared wool.)
- Review Questions: (Game: Have 2 transparent glasses of water, one with one drop of blue food coloring in it and the other with one drop of red food coloring. The student who answers a question correctly may place one drop of either blue or red food coloring in the appropriate glass. Remind students that the viewpoint of the blue water is that of the Israelites, Judaites, and Edomites, and the viewpoint of the red water is that of the Moabites.)

1. What was the name of the king of Israel at the time of this story? [Jehoram.]
2. What was the name of the king of Judah at the time of this story? [Jehoshaphat.]
3. What country was rebelling against Israel? [Moab.]
4. What had Moab ceased giving to Israel every year? [100,000 lambs and wool from 100,000 rams.]
5. Jehoram asked Jehoshaphat and the king of which other country to help him war against Moab?

[Edom.]

6. What problem did the three kings have seven days after they started out to battle? [Ran out of water.]
7. What prophet was able to help them? [Elisha.]
8. What did God do to the ditches that were dug by the soldiers? [Filled them with water.]
9. What did the water look like to the Moabites? [Like blood of the Israelites.]
10. Who won the battle, Israel or Moab? [Israel.]

Memory Verse:

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. 5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. 6 The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. 7 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. 10 “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” 11 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Handwork:

- Have children draw pictures of different uses of water. Label the pictures “God Gives Water to ____.”

spoil

ram

minstrel

mercy

grace



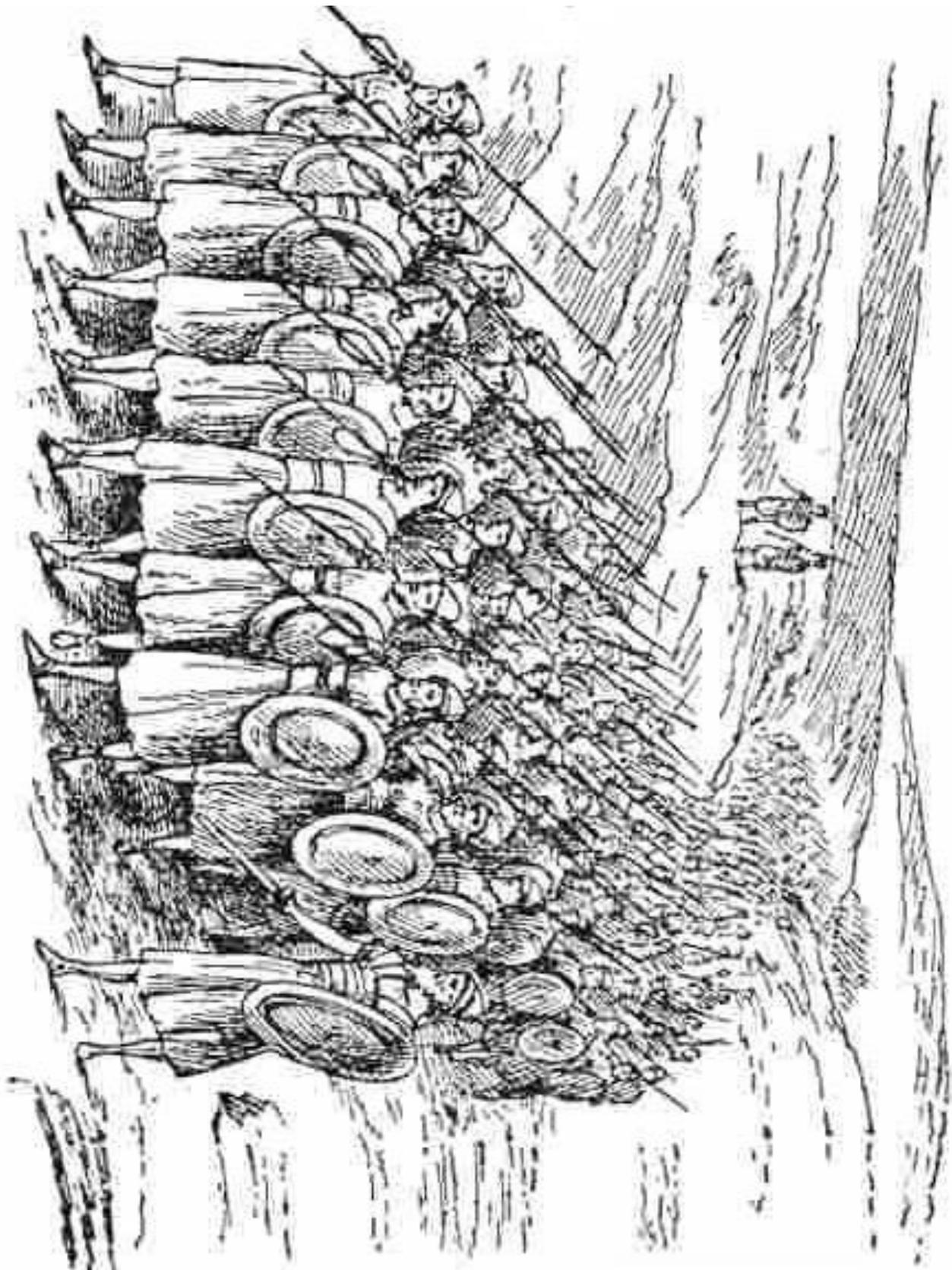
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Arrows show the basic route taken by Jehoram and Jehoshaphat according to [Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament](#) found at biblehub.com.



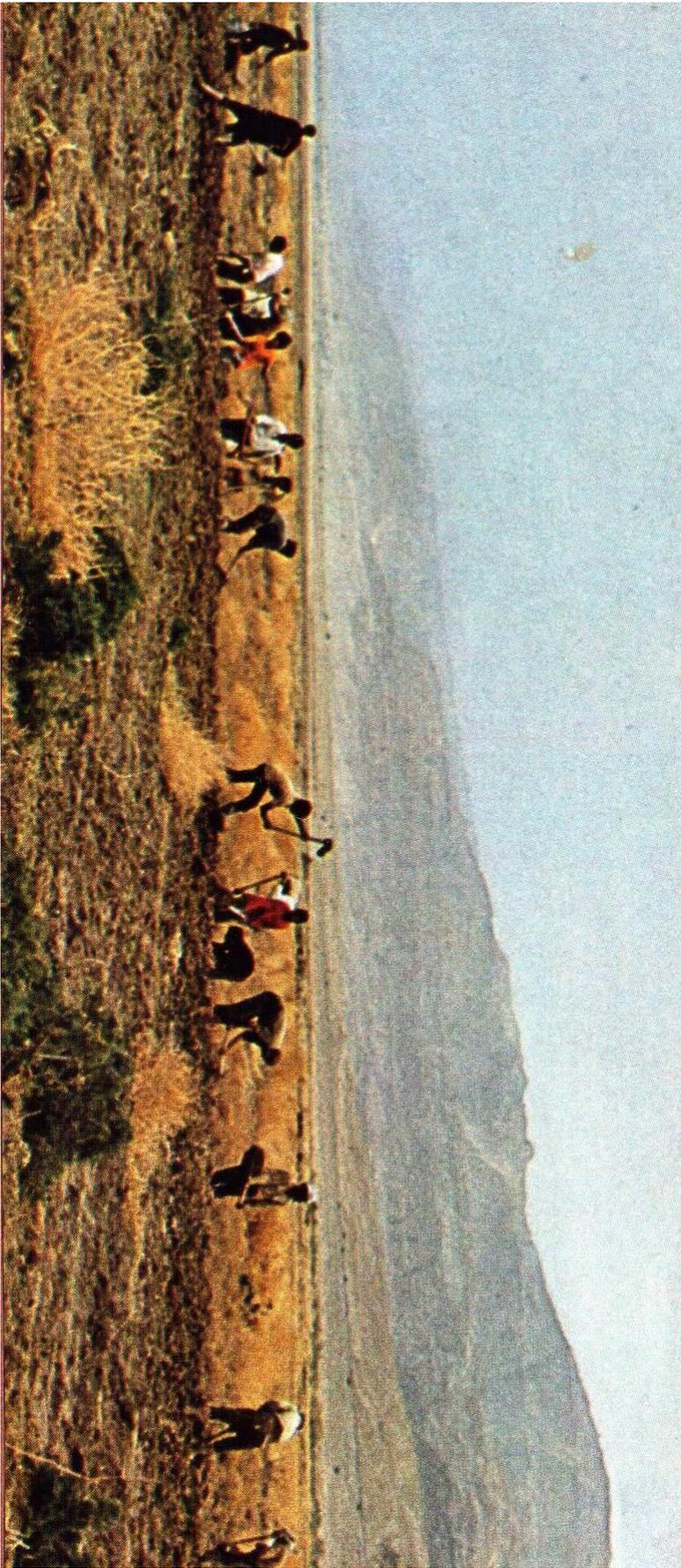
Image: Image: صورة (st-takla.org)



[Image: Bible 142Ch20 20 22 Jehoshaphat Helped of God 7 \(st-takla.org\)](http://st-takla.org)



Image: [Image: صورة \(st-takla.org\)](http://st-takla.org)



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Water (blue) from the view of the Israelites, Judaites, and Edomites

[Image: Bible 142Ch20 20 22 Jehoshaphat Helped of God \(st-takla.org\)](http://st-takla.org)



Water (red) from the view of the Moabites

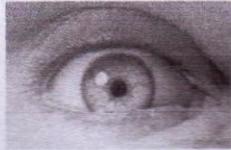
[Image: Bible 142Ch20 20 22 Jehoshaphat Helped of God \(st-takla.org\)](http://st-takla.org)



[Image: Bible 142Ch20 20 22 Jehoshaphat Helped of God 5 \(st-takla.org\)](http://st-takla.org)

WATER

refreshes



wets

dissolves



cleans

empowers



cools

heats



much more