

*My Yoke Is Easy,  
My Burden Is Light*

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*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Historically, yokes were designed to harness the strength of animals to be used for and by men. The yoke is designed to manage the power of two or more untamed beasts of burden that would not normally work together. But when the yoke is placed on them properly, the animals will develop a sense of ease and security with each other and their master. In time, a gentle nudge, a word, and a slight pull of the reins will keep them in the way they should go.

But there are cruel masters who treat their beasts harshly. By reaction, their animals are particularly difficult to entreat and can become nearly impossible to handle. An unequal yoke, then, speaks not only of the size and kind of the animals but also of their experience. An unequal yoke is more than inefficient; it is destructive.

In some ancient cultures, yokes became implements of torture and enslavement of human beings. Every one of us has witnessed the effects

of a harsh task master who would break a person's spirit to control the will.

Satan is such a one, and we were all in his unrelenting grip until the Savior set us free. Today, Jesus still beckons to us:

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

## *Chapter One*

# **“TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU...”**

Second Kings chapter three gives an account of Jehoram, king of Israel; Jehoshaphat, king of Judah; and the king of Edom: three kings who went to battle against Mesha, the rebellious king of Moab who had threatened Israel.

Often, we have considered this portion of Scripture in the light of the miracles of God who gave water in the dry valley and confounded the enemies of His people. There is, however, another aspect to consider as we view the subject of yokes and relationships. Right away we can see a problem.

Jehoshaphat was a king who kept the commandments of God as he reigned on David's throne. Yet because of sentimentality, he went along with Jehoram, the son of Ahab, and his backslidden kingdom of Israel who rallied his support. As a result, we see a godly king compromising with two ungodly kings to go against

another ungodly king. The problem? Jehoshaphat had entered into an *unequal yoke*.

### ***The Root of the Problem***

This is the trouble with sentimentality: It always supports an unequal yoke. *Sentimentality* is when a person is operating in natural affections instead of the mind of Christ. The sentimental person will make decisions based on feelings that come from thoughts clouded by emotions rather than by reason or reality.

When people forego the integrity of God's love, they often enter into sentimentality instead of entering into *tough love*. Tough love is just as valid as any other expression of the love of God. The Lord has commanded us to love our enemies and pray for them, but He also commanded us not to eat with brothers who are fornicators and adulterers. Although Jehoram had destroyed the pillar of Baal, the kingdom of Israel was living in spiritual adultery against God (2 Kings 3:1-3). Therefore Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, had no business yoking up with the leaders of Israel and Edom—two ungodly kings.

### ***The Purpose of a Proper Yoke***

The unequal yoke of 2 Corinthians 6:14

through 7:1 speaks of a believer being yoked up with an unbeliever. We are the temple of the living God, “and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?”

Jesus said with so much love and compassion, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and learn of me; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Jesus Christ wants every individual to yoke up with Him. When I hear that people cannot trust God completely and consistently for the worst trial of their life, I must say solemnly and by the authority of Jesus Christ, *they are not yoked up with God*. Matthew 11:28-30 ends by saying, “My yoke is easy. My burden is light.”

What if a believer does not purpose to yoke up with Jesus Christ? Depending on the type of personality involved, there may be a variety of reactions. One person may end up crying, stressed out by the problems at hand and internalizing the circumstances. Another person may become yoked up with his circumstances, but in fact he is yoked up with his old sin nature. Life itself becomes an adversary to his existence, but Isaiah 10:26-27 says the anointing breaks that yoke.\*

## ***What Yoke Are You Wearing?***

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

What is the yoke? The yoke with the old sin nature and the yoke with Satan come through circumstances, through supernatural projections in the air, through sight, through cumulative experiences, and through natural reasoning.

Most Christians only consider an unequal yoke with regard to a believer and an unbeliever becoming partners, whether in business or in marriage. But we need to realize that when a Spirit-filled believer yokes up with a *carnal* Christian, that also is an unequal yoke. This is so serious. “Be ye *not* unequally yoked....”

There are many precious people who love God with all their hearts who may have married carnal believers. Those people should never feel condemned; they would be the first to say not to do that because it's not fun. It's a *finished* work, and God is in the business of redeeming lives.

To be yoked up with the Lord Jesus Christ is unique. His yoke is strong, solidified, and validated. It breaks the yoke of the old sin nature,

the yoke of the world system, and the yoke with demons. If you want to know how to overcome the demonic world and all of its strongholds in your life, it's by yoking up with Jesus. It is not what certain people do to you; yoking up with Jesus is the answer to everything!

### ***Lose the Weight of a Heavy Yoke***

A thorough study of Scripture reveals so much about yokes. Since ancient times, yokes have been used with animals such as oxen to help farmers manage the tasks of plowing and pulling loads. What is not so obvious is that when two oxen are yoked together, even though they are side by side, one is always leading the other. This is *always* the case. And when we are yoked up with Jesus, He is always leading us while we are very close to His side. He speaks as we go forward, "*My yoke is easy.*"

His yoke is easy. Has your yoke been easy this week? Has your burden been light? Jesus, being so close, knows every weakness, each problem we face. He speaks again: "You shall find rest unto your soul."

There is rest for the weary soul. When you want to ask the question, "What can I do in my marriage?" the answer is very simple. You yoke

up with Christ, and He leads you in any kind of situation, whatever that means. It is between the Lord and you.

Jehoshaphat, in 2 Kings 3:11-12a said, "Is there not a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him?..." This passage reveals where the godly king compromised. Having made an alliance with the world, he was not able to discern the voice of God. "...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. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him."

It is very interesting that when we go up against evil, our first response is to go to *someone else* who has the Word of God. But this is the beautiful thing about men and women who are Spirit-filled. The Spirit of the Lord is with men and women who walk in the light; definition doesn't have to come through Elisha or the head pastor. The Word of God says we are to walk in the light (Psalm 89:15, 1 John 1:7), and the entrance of His words gives us light and understanding (Psalm 119:130). Yet, Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD is with *him*."

*\*See From Chains to Freedom through God's Anointing, Grace Publications, 1997.*

## Chapter Two

### “...FOR I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART...”

“So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom *went down* to him” (2 Kings 3:12). The words in this verse create a wonderful picture. They had to go *down* to meet the prophet Elisha, which speaks of condescension in an act of humility. (Geographically, it is questionable if the direction they traveled was down!) But the choice of words here is very deliberate. These kings, including the godly king Jehoshaphat, went *down* to see God’s prophet; but more than that, the analogy reveals that the man of God had already condescended to a position of low estate.

“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. 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” (2 Kings 3:13-14).

Quite plainly, Elisha was saying, “I would not give you the time of day if there were not a godly king with you. I wouldn’t waste my time.”

### ***An Invisible Yoke—the Weight of Oppression***

First Kings chapters 11-13 tells the story of the divided kingdom of Israel. During Solomon’s reign, because he allowed his emotions to overrule his excellent gift of wisdom, his heart was turned from God to wicked idolatry. After his son Rehoboam became king, secret covetousness and independence among the tribes of Israel flared up in rebellious accusations against his leadership: “Thy father hath made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee” (1 Kings 12:4).

It is so important to discern the yoke and to

allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts so that God can deal with it (Psalm 139:23-24). Unfortunately, the rebellion continued through many battles, within and without, but God's people repeated the sins of their fathers and refused to turn to God. The kingdom was divided, but ultimately all of Israel was led into captivity—in the plan of God.

### ***Keeping Order in the Operations***

Elisha, a prophet of God, agreed to serve the three kings (if somewhat reluctantly) to honor the throne of David, saying, “But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.”

This is why, in our church, we love to have the music early in the service. We encourage people to come to church early, to be ready when the praise and worship begins. In many cases, God has ordained that His Spirit will come over people through the anointing that comes with the music.

Worshipping God ushers in the presence of God. When people deliberately come in late, time and time again, they show no respect for the order of the service or the time of the ser-

vants who spend hours in preparation. Most importantly, they show no respect for Jesus Christ. Of course there may be times when being late is unavoidable, but otherwise it is a willful act of disobedience.

So, God's Spirit came upon Elisha through the playing of music. (In another example, the evil spirit departed from Saul when David played upon the harp, in 1 Samuel 16:14-23.)

"And [Elisha] said, Thus saith the LORD, make this valley full of ditches. 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. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand" (2 Kings 3:16-18).

Elisha entered into worship, and through his worship God spoke to him and told him what to say to the kings. In an area that was historically arid and without natural resources—the Arabian Desert—God told them to make the valley full of ditches. God was saying, "Get on your knees, dig out the dirt until the ditches are deep so they can hold the resources of water." These kings were being told to take on a task that was impossible by sight. And they obeyed the words of

the prophet.

### ***Humbled in the Valley***

It's a very humbling thing to dig ditches. For every person who knows Jesus Christ, being yoked with Him is a wonderful provision. But when a person does not understand the analogy in this process of 'digging ditches', he will not experience that Christ's yoke is easy and His burden is light.

"Digging ditches" means to make a place for God's presence, God's power, and God's provision to supply what is absolutely needed for victory. For example, if a person cannot love his spouse, then he needs to dig ditches—on his knees—and let God fill the ditches with a provision to love his spouse.

The measure and the depth that we dig is the measure and depth the water will come in to the ditches. The measure that we condescend in the sight of Jesus Christ will be the measure that He fills us for the situation we are facing.

### ***The Way Up Is Down***

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39). The way up is down. The way

to achieve is to lose. And *the way to gain is to admit that you have lost your self.*

There are men of God who continually convey a spirit of defensiveness in their messages. Their reactions reveal their insecurity. A man like this is refusing to dig ditches in his own soul. God didn't say, "I will dig ditches for you." No. He said, "You do it. You use your own volition and your own faculties to develop a capacity for Me to work."

There are great walls that divide thousands of Christians. Many don't have a capacity for truth. Though they hear the Word of God, they don't receive a capacity, because along with the Word of God comes the individual process of digging ditches—digging places where God can make a person new with His water of life.

He said, "You will not see wind, *neither* shall you see rain." Water will pour into all the ditches you dig, but you won't see it happening—you are not going to see it at all!

How can that be? How can water fill ditches without rain? They didn't hit ground water, or the men would have seen the ditches begin to fill. *It was a miracle.* You may not see God fill your soul. He doesn't come to you visibly or audibly. "For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see

the 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.”

That is the invisible, inaudible work of God.

### *Chapter Three*

## **“...AND YE SHALL FIND REST”**

When the Bible says in James 4:10, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up,” it is speaking of digging ditches. This verse also teaches us that we are not to walk by sight. Much of the time, God will not allow us to see anything, though He is doing a great work. And the Word is teaching us not to go by our feelings. You will not feel the rain, but you do have a promise that the ditches will be filled with water for you, your beasts and your cattle.

“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. And when the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on the armour, and upward, and stood in the border” (2 Kings 3:20-21).

Notice that when these armies were making a meat offering to God, water came *by the way of Edom*. Edom represents the flesh; it was the place where Esau fled in anger after he sold his birthright to Jacob. Water, the miraculous refreshing streams of God, poured into the area of the flesh to control it and to give victory—not *by* the flesh but *through* it!

### ***The Battle Is the Lord's***

“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: And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. 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*, and beat down the cities” (2 Kings 3:22-25a).

Can you picture how God fights spiritual battles? In this case, *He deceived the enemy*. That's right: God Almighty deceived the enemy. By the reflection of the early morning sun on the water-filled ditches in the place where the three kings were encamped, God made it appear as though

there was blood flowing everywhere. When the Moabites saw it, they must have thought there had been a civil war. As they went in to gather up the spoils, they were ambushed by Israel, and Moab was sorely defeated.

As an analogy regarding the lives of believers, our victory is in the *Sun* of God's righteousness rising up on our behalf (Malachi 4:2), through the precious blood of Jesus being revealed toward our enemies. A godly king was yoked up in an ungodly alliance. But this king understood well the mercy of God (2 Chronicles 20:13-32).

Today, even when we are suffering the effects of taking on a grievous yoke, we need only look to the Son. When the devil saw the blood of Christ, he was deceived into thinking he had won the victory. But the victory is the Lord's! It came through the S-O-N and the literal blood of Christ.

At another time, the Moabites came against Judah while Jehoshaphat was king (2 Chronicles 20:10-22). The Lord instructed him clearly when He said in verse 17, "*Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you.*" When Jehoshaphat sent forth singers who were praising

God in front of the army, the tribes of the enemy were confounded and ended up killing each other. Judah simply went in to gather up the spoil! “So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.”

Ezekiel 44:18 describes the attire to be worn by the children of Israel when they ministered to the Lord. They were to be clothed in linen and not to gird themselves in anything that would cause sweat. Warring in the works of the flesh causes sweat (not to mention, an odor). But God desires an attitude of rest and the sacrifices of praise that rise as a sweet smelling savor.

Jehoshaphat was the son of another godly king, Asa. The Bible says that he walked in the way of his father and did not depart from doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord. His experience clearly reflects Lamentations 3:26-28: “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. *It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.* He sitteth alone and keepeth silence because he hath borne it upon him.”

Although Jehoshaphat was removed for a time in an unequal yoke, he was easily entreated by the Lord. Because of the overruling yoke of God, he found rest for his soul. God’s yoke *is*

easy, and His burden is light. Won't you come  
unto Him?

## CONCLUSION

There are many points we can glean from the message in this booklet. To begin with, for the victory to be established it took a man of God. Even though Jehoshaphat compromised by taking on an unequal yoke, the ungodly king Jehoram recognized to whom he should go. Second, it required seeking out a prophet of God who requested a musician—Elisha understood the importance of praise in true worship. Third, the Word of God came forth with definition. Fourth, God Himself fought for them (“the battle is not yours, but God’s,” 2 Chronicles 20:15*b*). Fifth, the enemy was deceived.

In Luke 14:19, the parable of the great supper, a man who received an invitation used his purchase of five yoke of oxen as an excuse to stay home. Although parables are not given to impart doctrine, they do offer illustrations for practical application. Here, the yoke is an application of being yoked up with the animal nature.

According to this parable, such a yoke will hinder individuals in their walk with God and cause them to suffer great loss.

God has promised us a rest from the yoke of the old sin nature. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). The only way we can do battle with the enemy is to be loosed from his grievous yoke through humility and to be yoked up with the Lord Jesus Christ. He will lead us gently in the way we should go.