

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Kings 13 –

We have been inching our way through 2 Kings –

And if I was going to summarize the second part of 2 Kings in two words – I would use the words “missed opportunities.”

You see, as we get closer to the end of 2 Kings and we get to the part where God uses the Assyrians and the Babylonians to judge Israel and Judah – there is no way the reader can say that God was unjust in His judgment.

Despite His children turning their backs on God – God continued to be faithful to them and gave them every opportunity to repent.

Church, no one will be able to stand before God at the Great White Throne judgment and say – I didn’t know or say, “That’s not fair”

God’s judgments are just and holy.

In our chapter this morning, once again we are going to see another example of a king that failed to respond to God’s mercy and grace.

We are then going to see an example of another king – who failed to reach out to God’s promises that God had put within his reach.

Let's pray...

[2Ki 13:1-25 NKJV] 1 In the twenty-third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, **Jehoahaz the son of Jehu** became king over Israel in Samaria, [and reigned] seventeen years. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and **followed the sins of Jeroboam** the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. He did not depart from them.

So for the past two weeks we have been dealing with the Southern Kingdom – Judah. And we were looking at King Joash / Jehoash, the seven year old king – who is an example of someone who started so well (the scriptures state that Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days in which Jehoiada instructed him) but finished so poorly –

Here in chapter 13, we are now shifting to the Northern Kingdom – Israel.

So while Joash reigned in Judah for forty years, Jehoahaz begins to reign in Israel.

The reason I had you make a note of it was the God had made a promise to Jehu – that because he had been faithful in obeying His word in bringing judgment to the house of Ahab, his descendants would sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.

So we have the fulfillment of prophesy – Jehu is out of the picture and now we have one of his sons taking over.

However, we see that Jehoahaz did evil in the sight of the LORD.

And what he did was that he was following in the footsteps of all the previous kings of Israel as they continued to worship the golden calves that Jeroboam had set up in Israel.

And the reason that these golden calves were set up was because Jeroboam didn't want the people to travel to Jerusalem – to the temple to worship.

So, he set up these golden calves in two locations in Israel and told the people that they could worship Yahweh as they worshipped the calves.

It was an alternate form of worship – even though God had already given instructions on how to worship Him.

3 Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-Hadad the son of Hazael, all [their] days. 4 So Jehoahaz pleaded with the LORD, and the LORD listened to him; for He saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them.

From the time that Jeroboam had set up the alternate form of worship to the time of King Jehoahaz – it had been 117 years.

117 years of following after these golden calves.

One would think God would begin to lose a little bit of patience with His people. And that is exactly what occurred.

He takes out His paddle and brings correction to His rebellious people.

But before that He shows patience. (117 years)

[2Pe 3:9 NKJV] 9 The Lord is not slack concerning [His] promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

When God described Himself on Mt Sinai —

[Exo 34:6 NKJV] 6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

God is not quick to anger.

He's slow to anger.

Sometimes we get to wondering why God doesn't bring judgment on certain evil people a little more quickly.

Church, God is being patient on them as well.

God wants them to have a chance to turn around as well.

If it wasn't for His patience, none of would be here this morning.

So God takes out His paddle – this king that did evil in the sight of the Lord knows that God took His paddle out as a result of their disobedience and he pleads to the Lord.

And get this church; **God listened to his prayer because of His great mercy and because He cares for His people.**

5 Then the LORD gave Israel a deliverer, so that they escaped from under the hand of the Syrians; and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents as before. 6 Nevertheless they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin, [but] walked in them; and the wooden image also remained in Samaria.

So not only did God listen to Jehoahaz's prayer – He answered it.

He sends a deliverer / a savior to free Israel from the hands of the Syrians.

And how do the people respond? They continued to sin – they continued in the practice of worshipping God in their own way.

When we get to the book of Judges, we see the same scenario played out.

The people would sin, God used nations to oppress them, the people would cry out, God would send a deliverer and then the process would repeat itself all through the book of judges.

The wooden image here refers to the worship of Asherah.

These were poles that the Canaanites would use in their worship.

Before the Children of Israel came into the Promised Land, one of the things that God commanded them was to cut down all of the Asherah poles.

In a couple of weeks, we will see one of the most wicked kings in Judah – Manasseh – he actually puts one of these poles in the temple of the Lord.

Now, I first want you to see that God sends this deliverer to them only out of His grace, mercy and lovingkindness – the same way that a Savior was granted to you and me.

Why would people continue to sin when the Lord raised up a Savior for them?

I think that is a question we have to ask ourselves everyday – because we do the same thing.

The Kingdom of Israel took grace for granted.

(Ga 6:7–8 NKJV) —7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

When God gives us an opportunity to change, we take it.

7 For He left of the army of Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers; for the king of Syria had destroyed them and made them

like the dust at threshing. 8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, all that he did, and his might, [are] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 9 So Jehoahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then **Joash** his son reigned in his place.

Because the people of Israel failed to repent – and because they lacked fellowship with God – God allowed their army to be depleted and more susceptible to attacks of the enemy.

And church that is exactly what happens to us when we don't have fellowship with Him.

So then his son, Joash becomes king in Israel.

Now, this is a different Joash from the one that reigned in Judah – this one is reigning in Israel – and sometimes, he is also referred to as Jehoash.

10 In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria, [and reigned] sixteen years. 11 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, [but] walked in them. 12 Now the rest of the acts of Joash, all that he did, and his might with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, [are] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 13 So Joash rested with his fathers. Then

Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

So the Joash of the north follows in his father's footsteps.

And therefore we see that he did evil in the sight of the Lord –

I am not going to get into the details of his war with Amaziah – because we will be dealing with that next week.

His death is recorded here, but the rest of the chapter still deals with events that take place during his reign.

14 Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!"

Even though Joash did evil in the sight of the Lord, he and the other kings of Israel knew that Elisha was their greatest asset as a king.

As we studied the early chapters of 2 Kings, we saw God use Elisha to deliver Israel over the Syrians multiple times.

So, Joash, when he finds out that Elisha is on his deathbed, he comes over is sad at the prospect of losing Elisha and what that might mean to Israel as a nation.

That is why he cries out - "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!"

Which is better translated as

"my master, my master, who was better to Israel by his prayers than chariots and horsemen."

By the way, this is the same thing that Elisha had cried out when Elijah was about to be caught up into heaven.

So what we have here is a cry of desperation from Joash – there is no successor to Elisha. They have no army – he can't deliver the people from their enemies.

And so what happens next is Elisha is going to provide an object lesson to the king encouraging him that God is with him.

Let's take a look at the object lesson.

15 And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So he took himself a bow and some arrows. 16 Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So he put his hand [on it], and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.

The important part of the object lesson is that Elisha put his hands on the king's hands as he held on to the bow.

Because as God's representative, Elisha is demonstrating to Joash that deliverance is not going to happen because of his own might but by God's might.

The power to wield the bow was coming from the Lord.

17 And he said, "Open the east window"; and he opened [it]. Then Elisha said, "Shoot"; and he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed [them]."

The east window faced the direction of the Syrian army.

But notice, Joash had to shoot.

The arrow he shot eastward symbolized their deliverance over the Syrians.

Jesus Christ is our arrow.

But in order to have deliverance, just like Joash, we must shoot the arrow – we must open the window and cry out, "I need You"

Now, there is another important part to the object lesson – for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed [them]."

Elisha told him he was to KEEP striking them until they were destroyed.

18 Then he said, "Take the arrows"; so he took [them]. And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground"; so he struck three times, and stopped. 19 And the

man of God was angry with him, and said, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed [it]! **But now you will strike Syria [only] three times.**"

Elisha had told King Joash to take his arrows and strike the ground.

And the scriptures tell us that he shot the ground three times and stopped.

Why did he stop?

Did he run out of arrows? No –

Because Elisha saw more arrows still in his quiver.

He saw that the king still had at least two arrows – possibly three arrows still.

So why did he stop.

Maybe he held back a few in case God's promise of delivery didn't happen.

Maybe he wanted a part in the deliverance of Israel – so he kept a few to be used in battle.

Yet for whatever reason, the prophet had given him an instruction, and he had held back. He quit long before he ever should have.

All of us, to one degree or another, can identify with king Joash.

We find ourselves under attack, we find ourselves overwhelmed by our circumstances.

And instead of emptying out our quivers in faith, we stop early. We quit.

We will shoot the three arrows – after all, we want a little bit of God.

But we hold back – just in case.

Think about how many times we stop praying and turn to trying to solve things on our own.

In spiritual warfare, our chief offensive weapon is prayer – where each request is like an arrow.

Let's not make Jehoshaphat's mistake & give up after firing off just a few requests.

We keep at it till the victory is secure or until God tells us to stop praying.

The king failed to trust God even though he knew what God had promised.

The prophet told him that had he shot more arrows, God would have honored his faith & given him the victories needed to accomplish Syria's complete destruction.

Because the king chose to use only part of what he had, he only received part of what had been promised.

20 Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the [raiding] bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. 21 So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band [of raiders]; and they put the man in the

tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.

Here we find that God still uses Elisha to help bring Israel to repentance.

Israel was so weak now, that they were having problems with raiding bands.

No longer is Syria causing trouble – groups of gangs are taking over Israel.

And so in our text – there was a funeral taking place – and someone spots these gangs approaching and they lower the body of the dead guy into the tomb of Elisha and when the body touches the bones of Elisha – he comes back to life.

Here we have another object lesson.

During Elisha's ministry – his message to the people of Israel was "Turn back to the Lord and serve Him only"

In this miracle, God once again is reaching out to His people.

The dead man represents Israel.

When the dead man makes contact with Elisha – the man of God. He is revived.

If the people would turn back to the Lord and serve Him only, there will be revival in Israel.

The sad part is that once again, Israel did not respond.

22 And Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 23 But the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and regarded them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence. 24 Now Hazael king of Syria died. Then Ben-Hadad his son reigned in his place. 25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz recaptured from the hand of Ben-Hadad, the son of Hazael, the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times Joash defeated him and recaptured the cities of Israel.

Israel is drawing closer to judgment – they will soon be trampled by the Assyrians.

But in the very midst of their well-deserved judgment is a short season of relief.

And all because, apart from ANY MERIT ON THEIR PART, God is good & merciful & incredibly patient.

He made a promise to Abraham to bless his descendants and even though His people were completely devoid of the faith that Abraham had, just to prove His faithfulness, God continued to bless them.

The chapter ends with Joash's 3 victories over Syria.

I am pretty sure that after the third one he was wishing he had shot a couple more arrows in order to have the complete victory that God had promised.

I want to end with this -

Elisha means "God is salvation." Jesus/Joshua means "Yahweh is salvation."

Elisha is a type of Christ here, who through His death & resurrection breaks the power of the enemy & fills us with the power of His Spirit.

There's spiritual territory within each of us God wants us to take back from the enemy.

How far do we want to go & grow in Christ?

Are we going to be like Joash - and only want to reclaim 3 cities, 3 areas of our life that the enemy has laid claim to, or do you want to enforce Jesus' victory in every place.

I pray that we may be moved to empty our quivers and not hold back.

Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you. 25 May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. 26 May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

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