

# Commentary & Notes on 2 Kings

The commentary and notes below are adapted from the teaching materials of Annie Kartoizian (1906-1989). In 1934 Annie became a missionary in China with OMS. During World War II she spent 21 months in a Japanese concentration camp as a prisoner. She was repatriated in 1943 and sailed on the famous vessel Gripsholm. In 1949 she made a miraculous last-minute escape from Beijing before it fell to Mao's Communists. When she could no longer enter China, Annie went to Taiwan. Annie and her family have been life-long friends of our family. In 1989, while pastoring with the United Armenian Congregational Church of Hollywood I had the honor of participating in her funeral. It was during those years in Los Angeles that Annie gave me her teaching notes (the commentary below) - laboriously typed on what is now yellowed paper with hand written marginal notes, many of which are in Chinese. - Pastor Steve

## INTRODUCTION

### Introductory Study to the Books of 1 and 2 Kings

These two books form but one book in the ancient Hebrew manuscripts. The incidents are mainly concerned with the character, sins, and punishment of the kings and the people.

#### I. Period of History Covered

- A. The first book of Kings gives the history of the passing of David, the reign of Solomon, the division of the kingdom, and the ministry of Elijah.
- B. The second book of Kings gives the history of the ministry of Elisha, the corruption of the entire nation, the reigns of the good kings Hezekiah and Josiah, and the partial and final complete captivity of the entire kingdom.

#### II. Dates and Period of Years Covered

The events recorded in First Kings cover a period of about 118 years, from 1015-897 B.C.

The events recorded in Second Kings cover a period of about 308 years, from 896-588 B.C.

#### III. Author

The author of the books is unknown; but it is generally agreed that they are a compilation from different sources, including: 1) The book of Jashar (2 Samuel 1:18); 2) The priest, scribes, and recorders who also wrote 2 Kings 18:18; 3) The book of Nathan the prophet (1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29); and 4) Jeremiah (2 Kings 25; Jeremiah 39, 52).

#### IV. Outstanding Events

1. The reign of Solomon

His reign started with a blaze of glory, but passed away in gloom and failure. He built the Temple and established the worship of Israel, but he failed because his heart turned from its loyalty to God. As luxury increased he became more and more despotic, placing heavy taxes upon the people. Like his father, David, he allowed his heart to go after strange women. The judgment of God then fell upon him and his people.

## 2. The division of the kingdom

This is a sad story of civil war and bloodshed. The two kingdoms were constantly at war with each other. The northern kingdom, Israel, had the city of Samaria for its capital; the southern kingdom, Judah, had the city of Jerusalem for its capital.

## 3. The captivity

The first book of Kings opens with the Israelites at the height of their power; the second book closes with Israel and Judah in captivity. The cause is plainly stated in the fact that they would not obey God. God permitted them to be taken captive that they might learn lessons which they would not learn as a free people. The Assyrians took Israel captive. The Babylonians took Judah captive.

## V. Prophets of the period

Elijah was the great prophet of the book of First Kings.

In the book of Second Kings, Amos and Hosea prophesied in Israel (the northern kingdom), and Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah prophesied in Judah.

## VI. Brief Outline of the Book

1. Elisha - chapters 1-9
  - a. Elijah - chapter 1
    - 1) The sin and sickness of Ahaziah
    - 2) Elijah on behalf of God
    - 3) The judgement of fire
  - b. Elijah and Elisha - 2:1-18
    - 1) The translation of Elijah
    - 2) The succession of Elisha
  - c. Elisha the prophet - 2:19-chapter 9
    - 1) Healing the waters of Jericho - 2:19-22
    - 2) Punishment of the mocking children - 2:23-25
    - 3) The sign at the war with Moab - chapter 3
    - 4) The wonders performed through the prophet - chapters 4-7
    - 5) The restoration of the Shunamites' land - 8:1-6
    - 6) Elisha foretells Ben-hadad's death - 8:7-15
    - 7) Final events in his life - 8:16-chapter 9
2. Corruption Of The Kingdom - chapters 10-17
  - a. Israel - chapter 10
    - 1) The zeal of Jehu - 10:1-28
    - 2) The failure of Jehu - 10:29-36
  - b. Judah - chapters 11,12
    - 1) Athaliah and Jehoash - chapter 11
    - 2) Death of Elisha - chapter 12

- c. Israel - chapter 13
  - 1) Jehoahaz and Jehoash
  - 2) Death of Elisha
- d. Judah - 14:1-22
  - 1) Amaziah
  - 2) Azariah
- e. Israel - 14:23-15:12
  - 1) Jeroboam II - 14:23-28
  - 2) Zechariah - 14:29-15:12
- f. Israel and Judah - 15:13-16:20
  - 1) Israel's throne - 15:13-31
  - 2) Judah's troubles - 15:32-16:20
- g. The passing of Israel - chapter 17
  - 1) Victory for Assyria - 17:1-23
  - 2) Samaria colonized - 17:24-41
- 3. Hezekiah and Josiah - chapters 18-23:30
  - a. Hezekiah - chapters 18-20
    - 1) His accession and character - 18:1-12
    - 2) The coming of Sennacherib - 18:13-37
    - 3) Isaiah's message and victory - chapter 19
    - 4) The last events - chapter 20
  - b. The reaction - chapter 21
    - 1) Manasseh - 21:1-18
    - 2) Amon - 21:19-26
  - c. Josiah - 22-23:30
    - 1) The finding of the law - chapter 22
    - 2) Reform and death - 23:1-30
- 4. Captivity - 23:31-chapter 25
  - a. Tributary - 23:31-24:7
    - 1) Egypt
    - 2) Babylon
  - b. Beginning of captivity - 24:8-20
  - c. Carried away - chapter 25

## COMMENTARY AND NOTES

### Chapter 1

#### Chapter Outline

- I. Illness of Ahaziah - verses 1,2
- II. Elijah's message to Ahaziah - verses 3-5
- III. Elijah's deliverance - verses 6-16
- IV. Death of Ahaziah - verses 17,18

#### Meaning of proper names

Ahaziah - "whom Jehovah upholds"  
Baal-zebub - "lord of flies"  
Ekron - "eradication"  
Jehoram - "Jehovah is high"

#### Notes

Verse 1: The Moabites had been subdued by David (1 Samuel 8:2); but when the Hebrew power was weakened by the division of the kingdom, they had in a great measure regained their independence. They were subdued again by Omri and Ahab and were compelled to pay a heavy tribute. Now they revolted again.

Verse 2: Ekron was one of the five cities belonging to the land of the Philistines (Joshua 13:3). This "fly-god" was so called either because he was worshipped under the form of a fly (like a beetle-god of the Egyptians) or because he was the supposed protector against such annoying insects. Potentially the god was seen as an oracle. There is speculation as to whether or not the name is a corruption of "Baal-zebub" ("Baal the exalted" or "Baal master of height/dwelling") intended by the author to express disdain or hostility towards this god of the Ekronites.

Ahaziah was so far away from Jehovah that he sent to such a god to find if he was to recover. He was desperate as was Saul in 1 Samuel 15. When one cannot get a message from God because he is cast off, he will do anything to find relief.

Verse 3: God revealed the matter to Elijah and he was sent to give the answer of the Jehovah-God whom Ahaziah was afraid to consult.

Verse 5: The messengers were impressed to the extent that they went back to the king at once.

Verses 9,10: Ahaziah knew that the man was Elijah and sent a band of fifty men to capture him.

Elijah was told to come down at the command of the "king". Elijah appealed to his King and followed His instructions. Elijah's King prevailed and fire consumed the band who had been sent after him. This was a severe but well-merited rebuke of the king and people for their impious rejection of Jehovah; and a solemn admonition of His absolute control over life.

Verses 11,12: The second company of fifty was likewise consumed.

Verses 13,14: God granted mercy to the penitent captain.

Verse 15: The true King now commissioned Elijah to go down.

Verse 16: The very man whom the king was seeking to kill stood by his bedside and predicted his death.

Verse 17: Ahaziah died according to the word of the Lord. He was succeeded by Jehoram or Joram, his brother.

### Lessons from Chapter 1

1. It is impossible to escape God.

The sinner can go where he will, but he cannot go where God is not. He may shut his eyes to the truth of God, but he will be visited by the messengers of the Lord.

2. Mercy is always shown to the penitent.

## **Chapter 2**

### Chapter Outline

- I. The translation of Elijah - verses 1-11
- II. The beginning of Elisha's ministry - verse 12-25

### Meaning of proper names

Elijah - "my God is Jehovah"  
Elisha - "to whom God is salvation"

### Notes

In chapter one we saw a wicked king leaving the world in disgrace, under the sentence of death. In chapter two we have a holy prophet leaving the world in honor. The departure of Ahaziah was most miserable; the departure of Elijah was wonderful. *"In the place where the tree falls, there it will lie"* (Ecclesiastes 11:3d).

Verse 1: There was a school of prophets at Gilgal (4:38) and also at Bethel and Jericho. Elijah made his final visitation to these places.

Elisha had ministered to Elijah since the incident in 1 Kings 19:19-21. The best possible earthly training for service is association with a great man of God. Joshua and Moses; David and Samuel; Timothy and Paul.

The stops of the journey of Elijah and Elisha show us how the latter was tested to see if he was capable of taking up the work laid down by Elijah.

Gilgal was the place where the tribes entered into the land of Canaan, the place where they left all that savored of the old life (Joshua 4:20). The first essential for service is a willingness to leave everything that might tie one down to the old life (Luke 9:57-62).

Verse 2: Elisha was determined in his choice to follow Elijah.

Verse 3: Bethel - "house of God" - the place of vision. It was here that Jacob met the Lord (Genesis 28:19).

Verse 4: Elisha was also determined to go with Elijah beyond this stage in the journey.

Verse 5: Jericho - It was by faith that the walls of fell down. This stands for faith. One must press on through faith to secure the inheritance.

Verse 6: Jordan - Jordan stands for the death of self life. Fifty of the sons of the prophets watched from the bank; they were only spectators, not actual participants. Elisha crossed over into the place of blessing.

Verse 8: The outward badge of the prophetic office and power (1 Kings 19:19) was here used as Moses used his rod in dividing the Red Sea.

Verse 9: Elisha did not wish to be twice as great as his master had been; the double portion was that which the firstborn received in his father's inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). Paraphrase: *"Thou has been visited at Gilgal, at Bethel, and at Jericho, thy spiritual sons; let me be as the first-born among them. Let me be indeed, thy successor, the inheritor of thy spirit, and the continuer of thy work."*

Verse 10: This thing was not hard because of any limitation of the power and grace of God, but because of the spiritual qualifications it required in the one who received it. Elisha had already passed the test of tenacity of purpose. He still had to pass the test of spiritual insight.

Verse 11: This was the glorious departure of the man who wanted to die under the juniper tree (1 Kings 19:4). This testified to God's approval of Elijah's life and ministry. It also helped to revive and confirm a faith in the resurrection and future glory of the saints.

A fiery chariot and horses were the emblem of Jehovah of Hosts (Psalm 104:3,4; Isaiah 66:15).

Elijah translated, Moses resurrected. Christ is to judge the living and the dead (2 Timothy 4:1). These are represented in Elijah and Moses at the transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:31). Both had bodies of the same appearance to show that the bodies of the glorified saints are the same whether translated by rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51) or raised from the dead.

Verse 12: Elisha here passed the test of spiritual insight. Mortal eye cannot see the workings of the immortal God; Elisha's eye of faith was sensible of that glorious visitation (2 Kings 6:17). The next three incidents were preparatory to his prophetic activity; first, his public acknowledgement by the sons of the prophets, and second, and third, his public acknowledgement by the people when Elisha appeared as the instrument of God's in administering mercy and judgment.

Verses 14-18: By this miracle Elisha's commission as Elijah's successor was made known. Not only do they acknowledge as their leader, but he also shows himself stronger in faith for he believed in the translation of Elijah.

Verses 19-22: This action was symbolical although salt is a type of that which preserves; a man of God is the salt of the earth.

Three things were necessary to the performing of this miracle: 1) The means, which in itself was ineffectual. God uses weak material means as the channels of His power; 2) The word of the prophet; and 3) The power of God.

Verses 23-25: These were not “*small boys*” but “young men” - the same Hebrew word is used in Ruth 2:15; 2 Samuel 18:5; and 1 Kings 3:7. Irreverence and scoffing are hated by God.

## Lessons from Chapter 2

1. Lessons from the translation of Elijah.
  - a. We must not dictate to God.

Elijah had wanted to die under the juniper tree (1 Kings 19:4). God was good in refusing to answer that prayer, for He had for Elijah this glorious departure from the world. We ask often for things which we do not really understand and God, in His love and wisdom, says “No”, in order that He may give us that which is superior.
  - b. Death is the door to life.

As by a single act of birth we enter into this lower life, so by the single act - which men call death, but which is really a birth (Christ is the first born from among the dead) - we pass into the real life. Those who die in Christ die to live forevermore.
  - c. Elijah’s translation is a type of the rapture of the saints.

In this scene corruption put on incorruption; the mortal put on immortality; the body of humiliation was exchanged for the body of glory (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
2. The power of God can be obtained only by those who:
  - a. Are determined to obtain even though they cross Jordan.
  - b. Have eyes open to spiritual things.

## **Chapter 3**

### Chapter Outline

- I. Character of Jehoram - verses 1-3
- II. War with Moab - verses 4-27

### Meaning of proper names

Jehoram - “exalted by Jehovah”  
Jehoshaphat - “he whom Jehovah judges”

### Notes

In chapter two we saw that Elisha was exalted by God to be the prophet of Israel. In the southern kingdom God made His purposes and plans known by the priests, if they were faithful; otherwise He raised up prophets. But in the northern kingdom it was altogether by the prophets as there was no true priesthood. Here we see Elisha with the army. Elisha was the real defender of Israel (2 Kings 2:13; 6:17; 13:14). Real men of God are the real defenders of a nation.

Verse 1: Jehoram was the son of Ahab and the brother of Ahaziah (1:17).

Verse 2: He put away the images of Baal.

Verse 3: However, he persisted in the sin of the calf worship.

Verse 4: There was an extensive grazing district in the highlands of Moab. In Eastern countries it is still customary for tribute to be paid in kind (Isaiah 16:1). Most likely the tribute consisted of the wool of 100,000 lambs and of 100,000 rams.

Mesha is mentioned on the "Moabite Stone" (about 850 B.C.) which was discovered in 1868 by a German missionary. The stone is now in the Louvre in Paris. The stone bears an inscription of 34 lines in the Moabitish language. Describes are Mesha's conflicts with Israel for forty years during the days of Omri. He speaks of how he was afflicted by Omri and Ahab, kings of Israel. Then he gives thanks to Chemosh, his god, for giving him victory over Israel (3:27). The rest of the inscription speaks of the details of the conflict and the building operations of Mesha.

Verse 5: His brother, Ahaziah, made no attempt to recover the losses suffered by this revolt (1:1). Ahaziah was a very weak character.

Verse 6: Jehoram was to make and attempt to recover the tribute given by Moab.

Verse 7: Jehoram invited Jehoshaphat, king of Judah to help him. It seems strange that Jehoshaphat consented to go after his mistake with Ahab (1 Kings 20). This seems to have been his weak place - association with the ungodly. This union naturally ended in failure. If sinners wish success in their undertakings they should be careful not to admit into their partnership God's children, for God's hand may be upon His own for discipline, and ill fortune will attend them. Neither Ahab nor Jehoram gained anything by having the godly Jehoshaphat as their ally - so jealous is God of His people's association.

Verses 8,9: They went by the way of the wilderness of Edom to take the king of Edom, a tributary king of Israel with them. When there was not water they faced a serious difficulty. One always encounters difficulties when he does anything without the direction of the Lord.

Verse 10: This difficulty brought despair to the ungodly king. A man with an empty profession always falls into despair when difficulties arise.

Verse 11: Jehoshaphat the man of God knew where to secure help. Elisha was designated as the one who waited on Elijah.

Verses 13,14: This was an unusual combination. Jehoshaphat was a true worshipper of God although he showed himself to be weak in certain respects. Jehoram was an idolator and Edom was a heathen nation. The prophet only regarded the man of God; God's message was only for His child.

Verse 15: The music soothed the mind and God revealed Himself to a quiet mind (Psalms 46:10; 131). See also 1 Samuel 10:5.

Verse 16: While the king could do nothing to procure the supply of water he was directed to make trenches for its reception. God's blessings come only to the prepared life and heart.



Verse 19: According to the law laid down in Deuteronomy 20:19, fruit-trees were usually spared; but in the present case no exception of this kind was to be made.

Verse 20: The Bible offers no explanations to the origin of this water. It is enough to know that God supplied it.

Verse 22: That which was a blessing to Israel brought defeat to the enemy. It is always so; the Word of God savors of life unto life and of death unto death; the cross is life or death (1 Corinthians 1:13).

Verse 23: They felt they only had to gather up the spoil, while they were going to their death. This is always the promise and the result given by the devil. To follow him and his promises is to walk into a trap.

Verse 25: “Kir of Moab” (Isaiah 15:1); “Kir-haresh” (Isaiah 16:11); “Kir-heres” (Jeremiah 48:31) - This was a great fortress where their progress was arrested.

Verse 26: The king of Moab had at this time probably retreated, and shut himself up in his capital, whence he made this unsuccessful attempt to avenge his defeat.

Verse 27: The king of Moab offered his own son as a sacrifice upon the walls of the city. He did it to secure the favor of Chemosh his god (1 Kings 11:7), and to terrify the besiegers by showing how desperate he was. Josephus says that the allies of Israel were so shocked with the spectacle and so moved with pity that they raised the siege immediately and retired from the country.

### Lessons from Chapter 3

Our hearts must be prepared to receive God’s blessings.

This water only came after deep ditches were dug. Just so deep heart searching is necessary before God works. Notice that the victory came when the water came. Water is one of the types of the Holy Spirit. Although the victory did not come until the water came, still the preparation was important in that it had to be made before the water could come.

## **Chapter 4**

### Chapter Heading

Five miracles performed by Elisha.

### Meaning of proper names

Shunem - “two resting places”

Gehazi - “valley of visions”

Gilgal - “circle”

Baal-shalisha - “lord (or place) of shalisha”

### Notes

None of these miracles were merely for show. God never performs miracles merely for display but always for good purpose. This is an account of the private activity of the

prophet, and the following chapter gives an account of his public activity. Elisha died during the reign of Joash (2 Kings 13:14) so his ministry must have extended over four reigns, and lasted altogether about fifty-five or fifty-seven years. Perhaps, therefore, these events did not occur exclusively during the reign of Joram which lasted only twelve years (3:1).

Verse 1: Josephus and some of the Rabbis have suggested that this widow had been the wife of Obadiah who had provided shelter and food for the persecuted prophets in the reign of Ahab. In seizing the sons of the widow, the creditor availed himself of his legal right in the matter (Leviticus 25:39; Matthew 18:25).

Verse 2: In order to put aside any idea of direct agency in the matter on the part of the prophet, the miraculous help was not sent by the hands of Elisha, but connected so far as possible with some visible and ordinary means. It is in this manner that we explain the question of the prophets.

Verse 3: Only empty vessels could be used.

Verse 4: Perhaps this was done to guard against intrusion and to avoid display. God's transactions with individuals are always carried on behind closed doors.

Verse 6: The blessing of the Holy Spirit never stops as long as there is a vessel to receive it.

Verse 7: The oil was sufficient to deliver the sons from bondage as well as to enable them to live after their deliverance.

Verse 8: Shunem was where the Philistines encamped opposite Mt. Gilboa, and not far from Nain where Christ raised the widow's son to life. It was near the summer palace at Jezreel.

Verse 9: This man of God was evidently distinguished by his holiness.

Verse 10: In Palestine an outside stair led up from the road to the roof of the house, so that it was not necessary to pass through the interior of the dwelling. Part of the roof of the house was surrounded by walls, so making an upper room of it. This would give the prophet at all times undisturbed, and, if he wished it, unobserved access to, and exit from, his lodging. The making of this chamber implied the surrender by the family of the part of the house most appreciated in the East.

Verse 13: The king and his general were under great obligations to Elisha (3:17-25); so that he might with propriety ask a favor. Her answer meant that she had nothing to expect from such persons. She only desired to live quietly at home.

Verse 21: Her faith was in the God of the man who had promised her the child.

Verses 22,23: She must have been strong in faith for at this time she kept her feelings under control, so much so that her husband did not know that the child had died.

Verse 25: This was a distance of about twenty miles.

Verse 27: The gift of prophecy did not include the supernatural revelation of every event.

Verse 28: This was enough to suggest to the prophet that the anguish of the mother arose from the loss of her son.

Verse 29: Gehazi was instructed to do two things. He was not to salute any man by the way. Oriental salutations were tedious and this mission was one which necessitated speed. Gehazi was also to avoid any wordy distraction when on such an errand. He was also told to lay the staff of Elijah on the face of the child. Perhaps this was done to test the urgency of the case for in the next verse we find that the woman was not satisfied until the prophet himself went. This action showed also that the prayer of faith was absolutely necessary before God would answer.

Verse 33: The closing of the door was symbolic of being alone with God.

Verse 34: In this case the dead did not defile the living. The story speaks to us of Him through Whom "*death is swallowed up in victory*" (Isaiah 25:8; 1 Corinthians 15:54). It is a case of life imparting life to the dead, not a case of death imparting death to the live on. There is also the lesson that God expects us to use the natural means at hand (warmth of body, blowing in the mouth to inflate the lungs, etc.) and believe Him to do the supernatural.

The staff did not do the work, but life did. The letter kills, the spirit gives life.

There is also an allegorical view of this account. The dead lad represented the human race dead in sin; the staff represented the law of Moses which could not set free from sin and death; Elisha was the type of the Son of God, Who, by His incarnation, had entered into fellowship with our flesh, and imparted a new life to the race (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Verses 38,39: Elisha was probably there to give them instruction. The sons of the prophets lived in the humblest manner.

Verse 39: This is supposed to have been a poisonous gourd; its fruit was like a small water-melon.

Verses 40,41: Out of the very pot in which death was and from which death came, life afterwards came. The very heart which once poured out death sends forth life when God works through presence of His Son. That is God's purpose for us: Not only that the death in us be changed into life, but that life flow out to others.

Verse 42: This place was not far from Gilgal. The Lord directed the first-fruits to be given to the priests and Levites (Numbers 18:13; Deuteronomy 18:4). This ordinance could not any longer be obeyed in Israel since the priesthood was not in office there. The pious in Israel who made such contributions willingly presented to the prophet what, if circumstances had allowed, would have been brought to the priest.

Verses 43,44: This foreshadows two miracles which Christ performed (Matthew 14; John 6). Elisha did not perform, but predicted this miracle which teaches the lesson of trust in God. The Lord will always provide for His servants when they look to Him.

#### Lessons from Chapter 4

1. The workings of the Holy Spirit illustrated - verses 1-7
  - a. Oil represents the Holy Spirit

- b. The Holy Spirit only fills empty vessels.
  - c. The Holy Spirit fills to capacity, until all this empty is full.
  - d. The filling of the Holy Spirit delivers from bondage (4:1; Romans 8).
  - e. The Holy Spirit delivers from the bondage of sin and then enables us to live to the glory of God (4:1)
2. God is the only source of life.
  3. God will provide for the needs of His children.

## Chapter 5

### Chapter Outline

- I. The healing of Naaman - verses 1-19
- II. Gehazi's sin and its penalty - verses 20-27

### Meaning of proper names

Naaman - "pleasantness"  
 Jordan - "flowing down", "descender"  
 Abana - "stony"  
 Pharpar - "swift"

### Notes

Verse 1: Naaman was of high rank and had performed great deeds. He was a brave man but he was a leper. Leprosy is a type of sin (i.e. not a sin itself, but an "type" of sin) because of: 1) its deadly character; 2) the fact that it causes separation; and 3) the fact that until recently there was no human cure and no remedy for the damage done. In the ancient world, as a type of sin, leprosy exemplified that, whatever qualifications one may have, if he is a sinner he is without hope.

Verse 2: Israel was now suffering because of the fact that the people persisted in idolatry. These captives taken by the Syrians were typical of the great captivities which were to take place later. The account of the little maid shows how God can use the seeming misfortunes which befall His faithful children if they remain faithful to Him.

Verse 3: Even though a captive in a strange land she was faithful in giving her testimony.

Verse 5: Ten talents represents about 750 pounds. Six thousand shekels of gold was approximately 150 pounds or the equivalent of the combined annual wages of 600 common laborers.

Verse 7: Jehoram not thinking of Elisha saw in the letter only a pretext for hostilities. He did not at this time turn to Elisha and this fact shows us that his spiritual life could not have been very deep.

Verse 8: It was impossible for Elisha to be silent on this occasion. What he said was a testimony to Israel and to heathen Syria that God still lived and worked.

Verse 10: The simplicity of the means prescribed shows that it was merely a sign of the cure and a test of his obedience. The number seven implied that a perfect obedience was

necessary for a perfect cure.

Verse 11: Naaman expected Elisha to come out to one so high in rank and perform the cure by public invocation and manipulations. He had therefore to be taught that the cure would be due, not to the magical touch, but only to the power of God.

Verse 12: The waters of these rivers are clearer and purer than those of the Jordan but God wanted to show that any earthly agency would be but a means for the power of God which only can work miracles.

Verse 13: Naaman is a type of those to whom God's way of salvation is an offence because it is so simple. Greater means have often been attempted, but always in vain. A humble heart and a simple faith are always required of those who would receive any blessing from the hand of God (Matthew 18:3).

Verse 14: His healing was immediate and complete.

Verse 15: He was convinced of the power and superiority of God.

Verse 16: The workings of God are not to be purchased and Elisha showed that he had been used only as an instrument of God and only for the glory of God. He was actuated by no selfish motives.

Verse 17: Naaman thought that the worship of Israel's God would be most acceptable on a portion of its soil.

Verse 18: Rimmon was the god of thunder, lightning, and flood. Naaman desired to obtain the prophet's sanction to this act which he should in the future perform only as one of civil service to his king, not as an act of religious worship. Often the plea is thus made for outward conformity without heart consent. The prophet neither approved nor condemned; he left it up to Naaman's own conscience.

Verse 20: Gehazi as guilty of the sin of avarice and greed.

Verse 22: To the sin of avarice was shortly added the sin of untruth.

Verse 24: "*The hill*" was probably a well known location near the prophet's house.

Verse 25: Again he had to lie in order to cover his former sin.

Verse 26: Gehazi probably expected to purchase land with the gifts which he had received from Naaman.

Verse 27: The punishment was not too severe for the offense. It involved covetousness, fraud, and lying and also tended to obscure the glory of God's workings.

The Syrian had become an Israelite in heart and spirit, and he was healed of his leprosy in Israel's waters. The Israelites had become heathen in heart and spirit, and he and his descendants were struck with the leprosy of the Syrian, whose money he had coveted for himself and his family. What each had sown, that did he reap. This was not only for a judgment but also for a testimony to God and to His servant.

## Lessons from Chapter 5

1. Cleansing from sin is by humility and obedience coupled with faith.
2. Lessons for the servants of God.
  - a. We must always be faithful in our testimony.
  - b. We must be impartial to rich and poor.
  - c. Our reward for our service is to be given by God. We must not expect it of man.
3. Prophetic lesson.

Naaman's healing is typical of the healing of the Gentiles. Gehazi's leprosy is typical of Israel's sin and blindness in rejecting the gospel. Great opportunities for spiritual blessing bring blessing to those who receive them. Those who reject such opportunities are judged for their rejection (Romans 11:25).

## **Chapter 6**

### Chapter Outline

- I. Elisha recovers the lost axe - verses 1-7
- II. The deliverance from the Syrians - verses 8-23
- III. The Syrian's siege of Samaria - verses 24-33

### Meaning of proper names

Dothan - "two wells"

### Notes

Verses 1-4: This scene probably took place among the prophets who lived at Jericho. The number of prophets was doubtless increasing due to the ministry of Elisha. This story shows the simplicity of their habits and the poverty of their lives. The school of the prophets in Jericho was nearest the river Jordan.

Verse 6: The stick cast in was the sign of the miracle which was wrought by the power of God. Here we see God interested in the smallest details of the lives of His servants.

Verses 8-12: God can make known His secrets to His servants (Genesis 18:17; Psalm 25:14).

Verse 13: Dothan is twelve miles north of Samaria. The king did not seem to perceive that the God of Israel could disclose this place to His prophet as easily as the former plans, and that God could protect the prophet as well.

Verse 15: Without the eye of faith it is impossible to perceive the extent of the power which is at the disposal of God's children; without faith it is also impossible to discern the extent of God's workings on our behalf.

Verse 16: See 2 Chronicles 32:7; Psalm 55:18; Romans 8:31.

Verse 17: This was, doubtless, a real and supernatural though spiritual manifestation,

revealing God's protecting power.

Verse 18: The enemies of God are blind although they may not be physically so. The Hebrew word used does not mean actual blindness, but blinding in the sense that one does not see the actual object, but an imaginary one. Besides the present passage this word is only used in Genesis 19:11.

Verse 19: In view of this heavenly guard there could be no hesitation on the part of Elisha and his servant in carrying out what we have supposed to have been their original intention of returning to Samaria. In going down from the hill on which Dothan was built, in order to journey to Samaria, they would necessarily come into the Syrian host which surrounded the place.

Verse 20: Elisha was then on his way to his home at Samaria; one who had just pointed his servant to the heavenly defense around them surely could not have lied at this time in order to escape the threatened danger. It was true that he led them to the man whom they were seeking. When they could see again, he was there before them. The Syrians were shown that they could effect nothing against the prophet of the Eternal God.

Verses 21-23: Here the prophet returned good for evil. This was a wise treatment of them for the activities of the marauding bands ceased for some time.

Verse 24: We do not know just how long after the preceding events this took place. Ben-hadad seems to have been convinced that secret attempts upon the king of Israel were hopeless, so he resorted to open warfare.

Verse 25: The ass was an unclean animal; but necessity disregarded the law. "*The fourth part of a kab of dove's dung*" cost what the average worker could make in six months (five shekels of silver).

Verses 26,27: Even the king had nothing with which to help his people.

Verse 29: This and other miseries had been foretold by Moses as the consequences of apostasy (Deuteronomy 28:53-57). Similar things happened during the sieges of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Lamentations 4:10; Ezekiel 5:10).

Verse 30: Sackcloth was a token of humiliation and repentance.

Verses 31-33: Perhaps the king thought that Elisha had brought on this calamity; or he may have thought that Elisha did not exercise his power to remove it. He may, too, have advised the king not to surrender the city, promising deliverance if he would penitently wait for the Lord.

He had sackcloth on his flesh but murder in his heart. By birth and disposition he was a true son of Ahab, who murdered the prophets and innocent Naboth.

The command to slay Elisha was immediately succeeded by another resolve. He hastily followed the messenger whom he had sent. By the direction of the prophet those who were with him prevented the entrance of the king's messenger. The monarch, himself, came soon after. The words in verse 33 were spoken by the king as he entered the presence of the prophet: "*Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?*" Elisha's answer is given in the next chapter.

## Lessons from Chapter 6

1. God's protecting care is real though it may be unseen

There is no doubt of the real and constant, though by us unseen, presence of those angel-hosts, which both the Old and New Testaments teach us to believe are the messengers of God's behests and ministering spirits to His saints. This is both comforting and warning (1 Kings 19:5; Psalms 34:7; 91:11; Daniel 6:22; Matthew 2:13,19; 4:11; Luke 22:43; Acts 5:19; 12:7-10).

2. God is concerned about the smallest details of our lives.

We can take the smallest things to the Lord in prayer because He cares for them.

3. God reveals His secrets to His children (Genesis 18:17; Psalm 25:14).

These revelations are for a definite purpose; never only for display.

4. The enemies of God are blind to the greatness of the power of God.

## **Chapter 7**

### Chapter Outline

- I. The promise of deliverance given through Elisha - verses 1-15
- II. Elisha's promise fulfilled - verses 16-20

### Notes

Verse 1: The word from the Lord was astounding for such abundance as this could not be expected even in the most fruitful seasons. Only absolute faith in the word of the prophet and the presence of Jehovah could lead anyone to believe this promise. A seah is about seven quarts. A shekel was about 2/5 ounce. Needless to say, the cost would be very little.

Verse 2: These are the words of unbelief and of scorn. The allusion is to Genesis 7:11.

Verse 3: Lepers were excluded by law from walled cities and towns (Leviticus 13:46; Numbers 5:2) as they had been from the camp during the journeys in the wilderness.

Verse 4: The lepers were willing to take the risk because their condition was already hopeless.

Verse 6: The Syrians thought they heard the approach of relieving armies from the Hittites and neighbors of the Hittites. These tribes were from the north. The word translated "Egypt" probably refers to neighbors of the Hittites.

Verse 9: They were quick to tell the good news.

Verse 10: They told the good news to the guard at the city gate. They felt that the news was urgent enough to be told at once.



Verses 13-15: The king thought it was an attempt on the part of the Syrians to lure them out of the city.

Some of the servants of the king wanted to put the matter to a test. The result of the test showed that the word of the lepers had been correct.

Verse 16: God's word was literally fulfilled.

Verses 17-20: there shall be a day when the unbelieving shall see the fulfillment of God's word, but they shall receive no benefit from it.

### Lessons from Chapter 7

1. Every promise of God tests not only God's faithfulness, but also our faith.

If we do not believe we shall not taste the good things of God; but we shall live to see the faithfulness of God even though we ourselves do not share in the blessing.

2. Only the desperate obtain God's best for His children.

Absolute dissatisfaction with surrounding conditions and things of the world is necessary before the blessings of God can be obtained. He who hopes to receive anything from the world cannot get much from God.

3. We are obligated to tell the good news quickly.

## **Chapter 8**

### Chapter Outline

- I. The seven years of famine in Israel - verses 1-6
- II. Death of Ben-hadad and the anointing of Hazael over Syria - verses 7-15
- III. Jehoram, king of Judah - verses 16-24
- IV. Reign of Ahaziah over Judah - verses 25-29

### Meaning of proper names

Hazael - "whom God watches over"

Zair - "small"

Jehoram - "Jehovah is high"

Edom - "red"

Libnah - "whiteness"

Ahaziah - "whom Jehovah upholds"

### Notes

God had done many things through Elisha and yet the nation of Israel was rushing on to destruction. His ministry had not checked them in their mad rush. With the beginning of chapter eight we see punishment coming. God had spoken through Elijah and at Elijah's hand three men had been appointed to carry out God's work (1 Kings 19:15-17); Elisha as a prophet to take Elijah's place; Jehu to be king over Israel; and Hazael to be king over Syria. The work of mercy of the prophet Elisha was drawing to a close. Rejection of mercy brought judgment.

Verse 1: The famine was a divine punishment for the idolatry of the people.

Verse 2: If the famine was caused by drought, the lowlands near the sea were less likely to suffer from it than the mountainous districts, and they might also obtain supplies by sea. If it was occasioned or aggravated by Syrian invasion, the Philistines in the south might be exempt.

Verse 3: This petition involved her whole inheritance for she had been defrauded of all she had.

Verses 4,5: The appearance of the woman with her son during Gehazi's conversation not only confirmed the truth of what was being said, but also augmented the interest of the king in her case.

There is a question as to whether this was before or after the healing of Naaman. That this occurred before the cure of Naaman is supported because after that Gehazi was in no condition to converse with the king. That this occurred after the cure of Naaman is supported because Gehazi could have been called to give this special information to the king, and because it took place when the authority of the prophet with the king was at its highest - probably after the fulfillment of Elisha's prediction of the relief of Samaria.

Verse 6: Not only was her property returned to her but she was also given the value of the produce of the land during the previous years.

Verse 7: Although there is no statement to that effect, perhaps the journey of Elisha towards Damascus was connected with the commission formerly given to Elijah to anoint Hazael king over Syria. If this be true it shows that the fulfillment of God's word may be delayed and it may come in other manner than was expected.

Verse 8: It had been prophesied that Hazael would become king of Syria (1 Kings 19:15).

Verse 10: This means that his disease would not be fatal, but that nevertheless he would die. Ben-hadad had formerly sought to kill Elisha (6:14) but now, in the time of sickness, he sought help from the one he hated.

Verse 11: Elisha kept his eyes fixed upon Hazael until the latter was ashamed at finding his purposes detected.

Verse 13: The answer shows the mock humility of Hazael.

Verse 14: Hazael gave the king the lying assurance of recovery as Elisha had foretold.

Verse 15: The "bed cloth" may refer to a hairy or woolen cloth. It was probably steeped in water and suffocated or smothered the sick and weak king. This would be murder without leaving any marks of violence.

Verses 16-19: Jehoram was 22 years old when he began to reign; he reigned eight years. His wife was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and was as wicked as her mother. Jehoram slew all his brethren because he feared their influence (2 Chronicles 21:2-4). He rebuilt the high places which his father had destroyed. This was no doubt partly due to the influence of his wife. He made war with the Edomites but did not win them back to himself because the Lord was not with him. He died a terrible death of an incurable disease (2 Chronicles 21:12-20).

Verses 20,21: Jehoram barely escaped.

Verse 22: Thus was fulfilled the second part of Isaac's prediction respecting Esau (Genesis 27:40). Esau was Edom (Genesis 36:1).

Verses 25-29: The Masoretic text for 2 Chronicles 22:2 says that he was 42 which would make him older than his father (2 Chronicles 21:20). His father died when he was only forty (2 Chronicles 21:5) so it is no doubt that Ahaziah was only 22 when he began to reign. The more probable reading is from the Septuagint which is the basis for 8:26. He was 22 years old when he began to reign. His reign of one year fell entirely within the twelfth year of Joram of Israel (8:25).

### Lessons from Chapter 8

Prophetic lesson - verses 1-6

1. The Shunamite woman was told to leave the land so as to escape the famine which lasted for seven years. God will call His people away before the tribulation which is to last for seven years.
2. At the end of seven years the woman returned to the land; so the bride of Christ will return with Christ as the end of the tribulation period.
3. She sought and obtained the inheritance which had been hers. So the saints of God will reign over this earth with Christ (Revelation 3:21).

## **Chapter 9**

### Chapter Outline

- I. Jehu anointed king - verses 1-10
- II. Jehu's trip to Jezreel - verse 11-29
- III. The slaying of Jezebel - verses 30-37

### Meaning of proper names

Jehu - "Jehovah is he"  
Jehoram - "Jehovah is high"  
Ahaziah - "whom Jehovah upholds"  
Jezebel - "unmarried"  
Jezreel - "God scatters"

### Notes

The destruction of the seed of Ahab had been announced by Elijah (1 Kings 21:21). Because of the repentance of Ahab the punishment had been postponed (1 Kings 21:27-29). At this time Jehoram, the son of Ahab, was reigning. It was now God's time to fulfill His word.

Verse 1: An unnamed prophet was sent to anoint Jehu.

Verses 4,5: At this time Jehu was captain of the army of Israel and they were fighting at Ramoth-Gilead.

Verses 7-10: God's time for the punishment of the house of Ahab had come.

Verses 11-13: He was at once declared king by the army. It was an ancient custom to honor royal and illustrious personages by covering the ground over which they had to pass. If there was not time for preparation, the robes and mantles of the persons present were used for this purpose (Matthew 21:8).

Verses 14,15: The Syrians wanted to recover Ramoth-Gilead, which was being guarded by the Israelites. But at this time the king had gone to Jezreel because of wounds received in battle. Jehu happened at the coming of the prophet to the camp.

Verse 16: The death of Ahaziah's father removed any check which he might have felt, and he united himself with his mother's relatives in their sins and warfare. This friendship cost him his life.

Verses 24-27: Jehoram was killed at the scene of their encounter. Ahaziah, it appears (2 Chronicles 22:9) fled first to Samaria, that being on the way to his own kingdom. When discovered there he was taken, or perhaps fled, to Megiddo, where he was slain.

Verses 30-37: This is the record of the death of Jezebel who did her utmost to make her Baal-worship the established religion of her husband's kingdom, and who hesitated not to slay any who dared oppose her or interfere with her desires or designs in any way.

### Lessons from Chapter 9

1. God's messengers must do only what they are told - verses 3,10

As we do the will of God we must avoid mere talking and human explanation. God's workings will best explain itself. We cannot explain it. When we have done the whole will of God in any situation we should withdraw.

2. Prophetic lesson - verses 30-37; Revelation 2:20

Prophetically Jezebel represents the priestess of idolatry introduced among the people of God and everything pagan.

In Revelation 2:20 there can be little doubt that a woman, named after the notorious wife of Ahab, had risen up on this group claiming to be inspired. She no doubt was promulgating a new teaching based on some vision or enlightenment which she claimed to have received. The church's wrong was that this woman had been permitted. All religions which dishonor Jesus Christ are patrons of the crime of spiritual idolatry. They forsake Christ, the true Husband of the Church and follow demons; idolatry whether it is the worship of an image made by man or the man himself, is spiritual idolatry.

## **Chapter 10**

### Chapter Outline

- I. Seventy sons of Ahab slain in Samaria - verses 1-11
- II. Forty-two brethren of king Ahaziah slain - verses 12-14
- III. The worshippers of Baal destroyed - verses 15-28
- IV. God's promise to Jehu - verses 29-31
- V. Diminishing power of Israel - verse 32-36

## Meaning of proper names

Jehonadad - "Jehovah is bounteous"  
Jehoahaz - "whom Jehovah holds fast"

## Notes

Verses 1-3: Jehu did this to test these officials of the court. If they opposed him he would fight them; if they were submissive he was to use them as tools in completing the destruction of Ahab's family.

Verses 6-11: The seventy male descendants of Ahab were slain.

Verses 12-14: All the sons of Jehoram, excepting Ahaziah (Jehoahaz), had been slain by the Arabians (2 Chronicles 21:17; 22:1). These persons were probably nephews who, belonging to the family of Ahab, fell withing Jehu's commission.

Verse 15: Jehonadab was a Rechabite. This was a branch of the Kenites (1 Chronicles 2:55) to whom Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses belonged. He is elsewhere called Jonadab. He joined with Jehu in slaying all that remained to the house of Ahab.

Verses 19-29: Jehu here served God's purpose as an executioner. He could slay with all his heart but was not willing to serve Him with all his heart.

Verses 30,31: God sometimes sees fit to use such persons as Jehu for His purposes, though they do not have His approbation and obtain from Him no reward unless the passing temporal reward be considered.

Verses 33,33: At this time Hazael probably inflicted the cruelties predicted by Elisha (8:12,13). The territory now lost comprised nearly half of the kingdom. It was afterwards recovered by Jehoash and Jeroboam II.

## Lessons from Chapter 10

1. God's word will be fulfilled.
2. The servants of God must not be found doing His work with an impure heart motive.

Jehu was one of a large class of men who are willing to serve God so far as they think to be consistent with their own temporal interests, and shut their eyes to commands which do not agree with their heart inclinations. He served God's purpose as an executioner, but with that he stopped. It is easier to serve God in outward things than to acquire the character which He loves.

## **Chapter 11**

### Chapter Outline

- I. Athaliah attempts to destroy the royal seed of Judah - verses 1-3
- II. Joash made king over Judah - verses 4-12
- III. Execution of Athaliah - verses 13-16
- IV. The revival under Jehoida - verses 13-16

## Meaning of proper names

Athaliah - "whom Jehovah has afflicted"

Jehosheba - "Jehovah is the oath"

Jehoash (Joash) - "Jehovah is strong", "whom Jehovah supports"

Jehoidada - "Jehovah knoweth"

## Notes

We are now dealing with the last period of the history of Judah and Israel. The terrible condition of both kingdoms was caused largely by Queen Jezebel and King Ahab and also by Athaliah their daughter. The union between Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, and Athaliah almost blotted out the Davidic line of kings in Judah. The marriage may have been planned from political motives, or at least to form a closer alliance between the two kingdoms; the result showed that it was disastrous. Each deviation from Divine order and rule, each attempt to compose results by departure from God's law and word, brings with it, not success, but failure and ruin. From her entrance into her new home at Jerusalem until she seized the throne she brought only ruin. Her name, Athaliah (whom Jehovah has afflicted) is significant. She counselled her son to evil (2 Chronicles 22:3). The revival of idolatry was partly due to her (8:18,27; 11:18; 2 Chronicles 22:3,4). The destruction of the temple was also connected with her (2 Chronicles 24:7). Doubtless to her was due the slaughter of the house of Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21:4).

Verse 1: Athaliah determined to seize the royal power; and unknowingly she fulfilled a part of the sentence (9:8) against the house of Ahab. For it was through her that the taint of Ahab's blood had been given to the house of David.

Verse 2: Jehosheba was the wife of Jehoiada the priest (2 Chronicles 22:11). She as the daughter of Jehoram and aunt of Joash. The nurse and the baby were hidden in the place where the mattresses and bed clothing were kept.

Verse 3: Later Joash was moved to the temple where Jehoiada the priest lived. This little boy was all that was left to secure the fulfillment of God's promise to David (1 Kings 15:4). God did keep His word.

Verses 4-12: All was under the control of the priest, Jehoiada. The priests had been divided by David into courses, which attended at the temple in turns. Upon this occasion those whose weekly term of service was ended were retained, in addition to those whose week of duty was beginning. So two courses of priests, singers, and porters were in the court of the temple at the same time (2 Chronicles 23:8). The militia also joined in this act of protecting the king.

"*The testimony*" refers to the Book of the Law. The words "*gave him*" are not in the Hebrew, which runs, "he put the crown upon him and the testimony," i.e. laid it on his head, to show that he was to be not above but beneath the law of his God.

Verses 13-16: Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, was killed (9:8).

Verses 17-20: As the people had, under the preceding kings, openly forsaken Jehovah and worshipped Baal, it was necessary to renew the covenant, which both king and people had violated. At the same time the king promised to govern the people according to the law of the Lord, and the people engaged to obey the king whom the Lord had placed over them.

## Lessons from Chapter 11

1. The enemy cannot frustrate God's plan.
2. The wages of sin is death.

## **Chapter 12**

### Chapter Outline

- I. The reign of Joash - verses 1-3
- II. The temple repaired - verses 4-16
- III. The attack by Hazael, king of Syria - verses 17,18
- IV. The death of Joash - verses 19-21

### Meaning of proper names

Jehoash - "Jehovah is strong", "whom Jehovah supports"  
Zibbiah - "gazelle"  
Millo - "a mound"  
Silla - "way", "highway"  
Jozacar - "whom Jehovah has remembered"  
Jehozabad - "Jehovah gave"  
Amaziah - "Jehovah strengthens"

### Notes

Verse 1: Joash reigned forty years.

Verse 2: Joash did what was right as long as the priest Jehoiada lived. The success of Joash was due to the prayers of the priest.

Verse 4: Two kinds of dedicated money are here mentioned, namely: 1) the half-shekel paid by everyone one who was numbered among the people (Exodus 30:11-13); and 2) the free-will offerings.

Verse 5: The temple had suffered, not only from neglect, but still more from injuries maliciously committed by the sons of Athaliah; who had pillaged it to enrich the temple of Baal (2 Chronicles 24:7). This holy place had been the asylum and nursery of Joash in his childhood; and he showed himself zealous for its maintenance and honor.

Verse 7: The income which had been ordained for repairing the temple had been retained by the priests and Levites.

Verse 9: According to Chronicles this change in the plan of collection was at the command of the king (2 Chronicles 24:8).

Verse 13: All the money thus collected was spent in repairs of the temple building; none of it was applied in providing vessels for the temple service. In 2 Chronicles 24:14 it is stated that after the repairs were finished the offerings again were devoted to the latter purpose.

Verse 15: These were men of integrity.

Verse 16: This refers to “*money from the guilt offerings and the money from the sin offerings*” (Leviticus 5:15,18; 7:7; Numbers 18:9).

Verse 17: This was the first appearance of the Syrian power in the southern kingdom. This invasion occurred long after the events related in the preceding part of this chapter; and during the interval, the king, with his people, had revolted from God, and he had even murdered his cousin Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, for his faithful reproofs (2 Chronicles 24:18-24).

Note on the death of Zechariah (2 Chronicles 24:20-22; Matthew 23:35): Abel is the first righteous man whose death is recorded in the Bible (Genesis 4:8). Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, is the last (Hebrew Bible). As all the circumstances of the death of the latter agree with the particulars here mentioned, it is likely that he is the person intended. “*The son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo*” (Zechariah 1:1) may have been a second name for Jehoiada, and it would have been very appropriate as it means “Jehovah blesses”; or he may have been one of Zechariah’s earlier ancestors. The prophet Urijah was slain two hundred and fifty years after this, but his death is not recorded in the historical books of Scripture; it is only mentioned incidentally in the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:23). According to the extra-biblical historical record, Zechariah the prophet was the son of Berechiah and was slain in the sanctuary.

### Lesson from Chapter 12

God’s children should work peacefully together. - verses 11,12,14,15

No accounts were kept; there was no suspicion of dishonesty or misappropriation; Christian confidence prevailed. In the work of God there should be one common object and selfish ends should be absent.

## **Chapter 13**

### Chapter Outline

- I. The reign of Jehoahaz over Israel - verses 1-9
- II. The reign of Jehoash over Israel - verses 10-25
- III. The illness and death of Elisha - verses 14-21

### Meaning of proper names

Jehoahaz - “whom Jehovah holds fast”  
Joash (Jehoash) - “whom God supports”  
Hazeal - “whom God watches over”  
Elisha - “to whom God is salvation”

### Notes

Verse 3: This was not the Ben-hadad whom Hazeal murdered in 8:7; for Ben-hadad was conquered by Joash, son of Jehoahaz (13:25).

Verse 5: This may refer either to the victories of Joash (13:25), or to the invasion of Syria by the Assyrians, which caused the invading army to withdraw from Israel. “*Lived in their homes as formerly*” - The fear of the Syrians had driven the country people to live in the walled towns; they now returned to their rural homes.



Verse 6: God delivered them out of the hands of Syria in answer to prayer and yet they did not forsake their sins.

Verse 14: Like many another disobedient heart unreconciled to God, king Joash had a sense of the loss that Elisha's death would be to the kingdom.

His words to Elisha bring to mind the departure of Elijah. In calling him "*The chariots of Israel and its horsemen*" he meant that the prophet's presence in their midst was to them what chariots and horsemen were to other nations - their main defense. In the departure of Elisha, Jehovah's defense, as well as His reproofs, was departing.

Verse 16: Joash was to put his hands upon the bow as a sign that God had appointed him to the work of which the shooting was symbolical, and would assist him in it.

By putting his dying hands upon those of the king, Elisha meant him to understand the truth of what God said more than three hundred years later, through the prophet Zechariah, "*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts*" (Zechariah 4:6).

Verse 17: Syria lay on the north and east of the kingdom of Israel. The arrow shot to the east showed that God would give Israel victory over Syria.

Verses 18,19: After Elisha's encouraging assurance (13:17) Joash could not have been ignorant of the meaning of the symbol. His conduct showed his want of faith and perseverance.

Verse 21: A man was being buried and, while carrying him to the place of burial, the friends saw a band of Moabites who had invaded the land, coming toward them. Hastily rolling away the stone which enclosed the tomb of Elisha, they laid the dead man on the dead prophet and fled. As the dead were only wrapped in linen and laid in the tomb, one body might touch another, and, on returning to life, would not be hindered from moving.

This was a pledge of the fulfillment of Elisha's dying promise of victory over the Syrians, as recorded in the following verses.

Verse 23: It was because of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that God dealt in this merciful way.

### Lessons from Chapter 13

1. According to your faith be it unto you - verses 18,25
2. "*Though he died, he still speaks*" (Hebrews 11:4).

The same power that worked through Elisha while living, worked through him when dead. A man's influence lives after life.

3. Elisha a type of Christ.

Out of the tomb of the crucified Christ, come spiritual and resurrection life for the believer. We live by His death.

## Chapter 14

### Chapter Outline

- I. Reign of Amaziah over Judah - verses 1-20
- II. Reign of Azariah over Judah - verse 21,22
- III. Reign of Jeroboam II over Israel - verses 23-29

### Meaning of proper names

Amaziah - "Jehovah strengthens"  
Azariah - "whom Jehovah aids"  
Jeroboam - "whose people are many"  
Elah - "terebinth (the turpentine tree)"  
Lachish - "impregnable"  
Jonah - "dove"  
Gath-hepher - "the wine-press of the well"

### Notes

Verses 3,4: He worked some reforms but did not completely do what God would have wanted him to do.

Verses 5,6: He slew the servants who had slain his father but spared their children. This was in accord with the Divine command (Deuteronomy 24:16). To slay the children was the general practice of the surrounding nations and had, at times, been practiced in Israel.

Verse 7: We know nothing of the circumstances or the cause of this invasion of Edom. They lived in an age when the general practice was "*an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.*"

Verse 8: Amaziah's challenge appears to have been prompted partly by revenge for the outrages committed by the Israelitish soldiers whom he had dismissed (2 Chronicles 25:13), and partly by the elation consequent upon his victory over Edom.

Verse 9: The thistle: King Amaziah of Judah. The cedar: King Joash of Israel. Even a beast could crush the thistle; so it was absolute folly for Amaziah to compare himself with Joash.

Verse 12: This defeat came because he set up the gods of Edom and worshipped them (2 Chronicles 25:14-16).

Verses 13,14: Instead of retaining Amaziah as prisoner, Joash took hostages as pledges of Amaziah's good conduct. This is the only instance of hostages in Scripture, but the practice was in use among the Persians, Greeks, and Romans.

Verse 19: He died as a result of a conspiracy.

Verse 21: He was often called Uzziah (15:13). The two names, though derived from different words are nearly synonymous; Uzziah referring to strength, and Azariah to the help of Jehovah.

Verse 22: He rebuilt Elah (1 Kings 9:26).

Verse 23: The reign of Jeroboam II was the longest, and outwardly the most prosperous, of any king of Israel, for he regained possession of the land on the north and east (14:25) and made the Syrians tributary (14:28). Before its close the prophets Hosea and Amos were sent to the people of Israel (Hosea 1:1; Amos 1:1; 7:10), reproving them for their sins, especially their idolatry, warning them against relying upon foreign help, and foretelling captivity under the Assyrians, if they persisted in their wickedness; yet inviting them to repentance by offers of mercy.

Verse 25: Hamath had belonged to Israel in the time of David and Solomon. The sea of the plain was the Dead Sea (Deuteronomy 3:17).

Jonah prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II. Jonah is the first of the written prophets. Only his account of the mission to Nineveh has come down to us, but this prophecy referring to the enlargement of Israel's coast was directly to the kingdom of Israel. Later he turned from apostate Israel, by Divine commission, to Gentile Nineveh. Compare Elijah's mission to the widow of Zarephath and Elisha's healing of Naaman (Matthew 12:39-41; Luke 11:29-32). Gath-hepher is near Nazareth.

Verses 27-29: He was a great warrior and deliver of Israel.

#### Lessons from Chapter 14

1. True and lasting prosperity must be spiritual and not political.

The period of prosperity under Jeroboam did not last (see chapter 15).

2. Pride leads to a fall.

Elation over a previous victory may cause defeat at the next battle.

### **Chapter 15**

#### Chapter Outline

- I. Reign of Azariah (Uzziah) over Judah - verses 1-7
- II. Reign of Zachariah over Israel - verses 8-12
- III. Reign of Shallum over Israel - verses 13-15
- IV. Reign of Menachem over Israel - verses 16-22
- V. Reign of Pekahiah over Israel - verse 23-26
- VI. Reign of Pekah over Israel - verses 27-31
- VII. Reign of Jotham over Israel - verses 32-38

#### Meaning of proper names

Zachariah - "whom God remembers"

Shallum - "retribution"

Menahem - "comforter"

Pekahiah - "whose eyes Jehovah opened"

Pekah - "open-eyed"

Jotham - "Jehovah is upright"

## Notes

Verses 1-7: He came to the throne while very young, 16 years of age. Probably he was not the oldest son of king Amaziah, but the best qualified to be king. Notice his two names; Azariah used especially in Kings, meaning "Jehovah helps"; Uzziah, "my strength is Jehovah", used almost exclusively in 2 Chronicles. Some think that Azariah was his real name, but after his attempt offer incense it was changed to Uzziah.

The kingdom was in a very bad condition, in a worse condition than any previous time in its history. Amaziah, his father, was a tributary king to Israel; the wall of Jerusalem had been broken down and the city was open to the attack of the enemy.

Uzziah freed the kingdom from the rule of the king of Israel (2 Chronicles 25:23). He rebuilt the wall and built towers to defend the city and had engines for defending the city; in fact, he restored Jerusalem to her former greatness.

He revived the commerce of the nation, and took Elath an important harbor on the gulf of Ahabak.

He extended the borders of his country and the kingdom became prosperous. His fame spread in every direction. His army was large and well equipped.

The religious conditions of the country: He followed the Lord, but did not remove the high places. This was said of nearly every king. The tragic thing in his life was that after he had been so highly blessed, he went into the temple and attempted to offer incense on the golden altar in the Holy Place. His great successes along every line had made him proud and now he tried to combine the duty of the priesthood with that of the king.

This had been forbidden (Exodus 30:7,27; Numbers 18:1-7; 2 Chronicles 26:17,18). He was resisted by the high priest and the priests but did not heed their resistance of warning. He was smitten with leprosy and the sin in his heart became evident on his face. He lived in a separate house during the rest of his life.

The kingdom was administered by his son Jotham. He was not even buried in the tombs of the kings.

### Special Note:

There seems to be a period unaccounted for between Jeroboam's death and the reign of his son, Zachariah (about 11 years). Anarchy prevailed during that time. Hosea seems to allude frequently to this period of lawlessness and revolution (Hosea 7:7; 10:3,7; 13:10). The people were probably unwilling to have Zachariah succeed his father to the throne, for he appears to have been slain by Shallum without fear before the people (15:10).

It is very important to notice that at this time a new stage in prophecy begins. Hitherto the prophets had been God-sent teachers and messengers to the people of that day. Now their messages are not simply for that day, but they begin to look to the Messiah and His kingdom. It is more and more evident that the monarchy was a failure and only the setting up of the kingdom of Christ would accomplish God's purpose. The prophets were despairing of the present, but their thought as of the future. They looked forward to a time when the Messiah would reign over a restored and converted people and righteousness and peace would flourish on the earth. It is significant that

written prophecies with the hope of the Messiah and His kingdom began with the king (Uzziah) who became so proud that he went into the temple of God to offer incense; *“In the year that King Uzziah died...”* (Isaiah 6:1).

Verses 8-12: The assassination of Zachariah ended the dynasty of Jehu, five generations in all, and extending over a period of more than a hundred years.

Zachariah’s name was significant - “Jehovah remembers”. God remembered the wickedness of his family and this judgment came upon the fifth and final member of Jehu’s family.

Verses 13-15: Shallum’s name - “recompense, retribution” - was significant. He was a murderer and retribution came, for he was murdered in a month. The assassination of two rulers in the space of a year speaks loudly of the state of anarchy prevailing in the kingdom.

Verses 16-22: Menahem was a military ruler and made a successful raid upon Syria (15:16). However, the Assyrians who had been steadily pushing westward, came upon him. Menahem gave them money which he had secured from the rich of Israel.

Verses 23-26: He also was murdered.

Verses 27-31: The king of Assyria invaded northern Israel and carried away the inhabitants of Naphtali and perhaps some of the other tribes east of Jordan. This was the first captivity or exile of Israel; but it was not sufficient to humble the pride of the inhabitants of Samaria (Isaiah 9:9,10).

Verses 32-38: In the reign of Jotham, Micah and Isaiah prophesied. He defeated the Ammonites who paid tribute to him. He was a good ruler and careful not to commit the sin of his father (2 Chronicles 27:2).

### Lessons from Chapter 15

1. Prosperity is a dangerous thing because it leads to pride (Amos 2:4; Hosea 5:5,13; Isaiah 2:5; 3:12,15; 7:10-13; 28:7-10).
2. He that pursues evil, pursues it to his own death (Proverbs 11:19).
3. Wickedness overthrows the sinner (Proverbs 13:6).

## **Chapter 16**

### Chapter Heading

Reign of wicked king Ahaz over Judah - verses 1-20

### Meaning of proper names

Ahaz - “possessor”  
Urijah - “light of Jehovah”

## Notes

Verse 3: He did abominably before the Lord. It seems that children were actually sacrificed to the god Moloch, being sometimes first slain, and then burned. Ahaz followed the worst kings of the house of Omri in worshipping Baal (2 Chronicles 28:2).

Verse 4: The first five chapters of Isaiah throw much light upon the state of the people at this period.

Verses 5,6: Rezin, king of Syria, made a successful attack. This is the first instance in which we find the name Jews - literally, men of Judah.

Verses 7,8: *"I am your servant"* - I will be tributary to thee and place myself under thy protection. He preferred to apply to any one rather to God. He took the silver and the gold out of the house of the Lord and gave it to the king of Assyria. This is at least the third time that the temple had been robbed of its gold; Rehoboam gave to the king of Egypt (1 Kings 14:24-28); Amaziah gave to Joash, king of Israel (14:14).

Verse 9: The king of Assyria hearkened unto Ahaz and fought against and conquered Syria.

Verse 10: It was Urijah, the corrupt priest, who built the altar.

Verses 12,13: Ahaz actually sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, proceeding to suspend the temple worship, and multiplying altars both in Jerusalem and throughout Judah (2 Chronicles 28:23,24). He offered every kind of offering except that which he most needed himself - the sin offering.

Verse 16: Urijah obeyed the king rather than God. This is a contrast with the action of his predecessor, Azariah (2 Chronicles 26:17,18).

Verse 18: The approaches to the temple were turned or changed.

## Lessons from Chapter 16

Significance of the changing of the furniture in the temple.

The purpose of the devil is to drive Jehovah out of His own house of worship. In the last days the devil will occupy the temple of God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

The altar was made by Urijah the priest. The priest, above all others should have been jealous for the worship of the Lord. When the ministers of God are not jealous for His worship, the devil begins to work at his purpose and design of dethroning God.

The brazen altar was changed. This had been designed by God and stood at the gate of the temple. When the sinner entered, it was by way of the altar of sacrifice. This was changed in the man-made plan of worship. Those who do away with the blood sacrifice have nothing to offer to the hungry, no cleansing, no forgiveness.

The days in which we live are like the days of Ahaz. The worship of many so-called Christian nations is but a refined heathenism dressed up in the clothes of Christianity, but the altar of sacrifice has disappeared.

## Chapter 17

### Chapter Outline

- I. Reign of Hoshea, last king of Israel - verses 1-3
- II. Israel carried away into Assyria - verses 4-6
- III. The sins for which Israel was carried into captivity - verses 7-23
- IV. The new inhabitants in the land of Israel - verses 24-41

### Meaning of proper names

Hoshea - "salvation"  
Habor - "joining together"

### Notes

This gives the last act in the tragedy of the nation of Israel. The nation began with the rule of Jeroboam who set up the calf worship. Hoshea is the last of the nineteen kings who ruled Israel. An interval of at least eight years occurred between the murder of Pekah and his actual assumption of the throne.

Verse 2: Of all the other Israelite kings (Shallum excepted, whose reign was only thirty days) it is expressly stated that they only maintained the calf worship of Jeroboam; but this sin is nowhere attributed to Hoshea, though he was otherwise a bad man.

Verse 3: He became tributary to the king of Assyria.

Verse 4: Hoshea failed to pay this tribute money and appealed to the king of Egypt for help. For this he was shut up in prison. What finally became of him is not revealed, unless he is the king meant in the prophet's allusion: "*Samaria's king shall perish like a twig on the face of the waters*" (Hosea 10:7).

Verse 5: We have not particulars of this siege; but the characters of the invaders, as described by the prophets (Hosea 10:14; Nahum 2:12,13; 3:1), and historians show us that it must have been a time of extreme suffering.

Verse 6: It was by Sargon (Isaiah 20:1) that the city was taken. This was the second captivity of Israel (722-721 B.C.) which included chiefly the inhabitants of the central part of Canaan. The former captivity is recorded in 15:29.

Verses 7-23: A review of Israel's downward course. They forsook God who brought them out of the land of Egypt. They served other gods. They would not listen to God's prophets. They hardened their hearts. God rejected them and the sad ending is seen in 17:23.

They continued this downward course for more than two hundred years, though often checked by miraculous interventions of Jehovah. Famine, war, and pestilence had been inflicted upon them and a long succession of faithful men of God had warned them of their danger, but all had been in vain. The people had failed to accomplish the great object for which Jehovah had separated them for Himself. Instead of being witnesses to the world of the spirituality of a people chosen of God, they had dishonored His holy name. Therefore He gave them up into the hand of their enemies, and removed them out of their place.

Verse 23: From this captivity the ten tribes have never been restored to Palestine. A number returned under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, but the national restoration is yet to be fulfilled in the sense of tribal allotment and designation.

Verse 24: This does not mean that all the Israelites were carried away, but that they were no longer the principal inhabitants of the land. It is evident from 2 Chronicles 30:6; 34:9, that many of them were left, as was afterwards the case in the kingdom of Judah (24:12-16; 25:12,22). Their descendants became intermingled with those of the heathen colonists; and this mixed population was afterwards known by the name Samaritans.

“Samaritans” (17:29) applies to Israelites. Later it came to denote a people of mixed origin composed of peoples brought by the conquerors from Babylon and elsewhere and those who were left in the land. They became bitter enemies of the Jews (Ezra 4; Nehemiah 4). “*You are a Samaritan and have a demon*” (John 8:48) is an expression spoken to disgrace Jesus.

Verse 25: Lions had always existed in the land (Judges 14:5; 1 Samuel 17:34; 1 Kings 13:24). Because of the depopulation of the country, the lions became numerous and terrified the people. This came as a divine judgment (Exodus 23:29; Leviticus 26:22; Deuteronomy 32:24).

Verse 27: This was probably one of the priests who had ministered at the high places. The result of this proceeding was a mixed worship of false gods and of Jehovah. In later time the Samaritans gave up idolatry and professed to worship Jehovah, and to regard His law as given by Moses; but they rejected all the later sacred writings.

Verse 34: These people never entered into the covenant of God.

Verse 41: The remnant of the people who still inhabit Nablous, the ancient Shechem, respect the law of Moses and offer annually the paschal lamb on Mt. Gerizim.

Note on the history of Israel:

Of the nine distinct dynasties that successively ruled the tribes, three ended with the total extirpation of the reigning family. The kingdom continued for a period of about two hundred and fifty years, and the inspired records of those eventful years furnish us with little more than repeated and fearful exhibitions of lawlessness and evil. Out of the nineteen kings that reigned from the division of the kingdom to the deportation to the land of Assyria, only seven died natural deaths (Baasha, Omri, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Menahem); seven were assassinated (Nadab, Elah, Joram, Zachariah, Shallum, Pekaiiah, and Pekah); one committed suicide (Zimri); one died of wounds received in battle (Ahab); one was “struck” by the judgment of God (Jeroboam); one died of injuries received from a fall (Ahaziah); and the other one (Hoshea) apparently was cut off “like a twig on the face of the waters” (Hosea 10:7). There were also two long periods of anarchy, when, there was not king in Israel and every man did as he pleased.

### Lessons from Chapter 17

1. The years of the wicked shall be shortened (Proverbs 10:27).

*“The wicked are overthrown and are no more”* - Proverbs 12:7



2. The people of a mixed religion do most to hinder the work of God.

These Samaritans did much to hinder the people of Judah when they returned from the Babylonian captivity. The worst persecutors of the people of God are those who profess to know God without the real experience of godliness. Galatians and 1 and 2 Corinthians tell how the Judaizers persecuted Paul (Philippians 3:18).

## Chapter 18

### Chapter Outline

- I. The revival under Hezekiah - verses 1-7
- II. Hezekiah's victory over the Philistines - verses 8-12
- III. Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and his challenge to Jehovah - verses 13-37

### Meaning of proper names

Hezekiah - "the might of Jehovah"

Abi - "father of Jehovah"

Sennacherib - "Sin (the moon) multiplies bretheren"

Shebna - "youth"

Joah - "Jehovah is brother"

### Notes

Verse 3: *"And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done"* - this statement is only made of Hezekiah and Asa (1 Kings 15:11).

Verse 4: The first act of his government was to abolish every form of idolatry. High places were abolished, and the statues erected for the worship of Baal were broken down. The brazen serpent which had become an object of worship, was destroyed. The destruction of a thing so valued in their national history showed the wisdom and the extent of his piety and desire for reform. He called it Nehushtan - "a thing of brass", "a copper thing." (see 2 Chronicles 29)

Verse 5: His only policy was to trust in God, to obey His word and to follow His guidance.

Verse 7: Depending upon the help of God, he refused the submission which his father had yielded to the king of Assyria. To do this, when that monarch's power was growing and his attention was directed to Palestine, was an act of unusual faith.

Verse 8: Having set in order the spiritual matters of the kingdom, Hezekiah turned to the more material things in his dominion. In this defeat of the Philistines was fulfilled the word which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah; *"Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of you, that the rod that struck you (Uzziah) is broken (in Ahaz's death), for from that serpent's root (as they regarded him) will come forth an adder (Hezekiah), and its fruit will be a flying fiery serpent"* (Isaiah 14:29).

Verses 9-12: Hezekiah was king during the siege of Samaria and it was known to him and to his people that God permitted the captivity of Israel because of disobedience.

Verse 13: Old inscriptions found on the probable sight of Nineveh record Sennacherib's campaigns against Judah. *"Hezekiah, king of Judah,"* says the Assyrian king, *"who had*

*not submitted to my authority, forty-six of his principal cities and fortresses, and villages depending upon them, of which I took no account, I captured, and carried away their spoil; I shut up himself, like a bird in a cage, within Jerusalem, his royal city,"* etc. He says further, that he added tribute, and took from Hezekiah the treasure he had collected in Jerusalem, thirty talents of gold, and eight hundred talents of silver, the treasures of his palace, besides his sons and his daughters, and his male and female servants or slaves, and brought them to Nineveh.

Verses 14-16: Hezekiah's faith, when put to a severe test, at first failed; and he purchased an expensive peace, becoming again a vassal of the Assyrian king; but his faith soon regained its power (2 Chronicles 32:2-8). The book of Chronicles records that he: 1) protected the water supply; 2) built up and strengthened the weak places in the walls; and 3) prepared great quantities of shields and darts.

Verse 17: These three names are official, not personal: 1) Tartan - general commanding the royal body guard; 2) Rabsaris - the chief eunuch or chamberlain; and 3) Rab-shakeh - the chief cupbearer.

Verse 21: Egypt is compared to a reed which is injured, though not apparently so, and so incapable of yielding the support expected from it. The reed was a peculiarly fit symbol of Egypt, as it grew plentifully in that country.

Verse 22: This refers to the removal of the "high places" which had been effected by Hezekiah, and which to the heathen must have appeared as an act of impiety towards the God of the land.

Verse 23: This taunt is aimed at their military feebleness.

Verse 25: Rab-shakeh may have heard that the prophets had announced the Assyrian's invasion as a judgment on Judah; or he may have made the false boast to terrify the people into submission.

Verse 26: Through a great part of the Assyrian monarchy the Syrian or Aramaic language was spoken.

Verse 30: The Assyrian had before endeavored to excite fears of Jehovah's anger; he now insinuated mistrust of divine protection. The enemies of God's people can only succeed by shaking their confidence in His grace and power.

### Lesson from Chapter 18

The enemy can gain the victory over us if he can make us lose our faith in the power of God.

## **Chapter 19**

### Chapter Outline

- I. God's message to Hezekiah given through Isaiah - verses 1-7
- II. Sennacherib defies Jehovah - verses 8-13
- III. Hezekiah's prayer - verses 14-19
- IV. Jehovah's answer through Isaiah - verses 20-34
- V. The destruction of the Assyrian army and the death of Sennacherib - verses 35-37

## Meaning of proper names

Isaiah - "salvation of Jehovah"  
Nineveh - "dwelling?"

## Notes

Verse 1: Hezekiah's faith prompted him to take this matter to Jehovah, whom he had always acknowledged as his Sovereign, and had made it his chief care to serve and honor, and against whom Rah-shakeh's blasphemies were directed.

Verse 2: This is the first mention in this history of the great prophet's name. He had evidently before this taken an active part in giving advice to the king and the people.

Verse 4: "*The living God*" - this is in contrast to the gods of the surrounding nations, with whom the Assyrians had confused Him. The "*remnant*" probably refers to Jerusalem and the few fortresses, with their inhabitants, which had thus far escaped desolation.

Verse 7: "*I will put a spirit in him*" - making him alter his feelings and purposes.

Verse 10: Sennacherib wished to induce Hezekiah to surrender before the Ethiopians arrived, or perhaps before the Jews heard of their approach.

Verse 14: Hezekiah spread the letter out before the Lord; in other words, he laid open all his concern before the all-seeing God.

Verse 15: In this prayer Hezekiah, like Solomon (1 Kings 8:23) recognized God's special protection of His people, and His sovereignty over all things.

Verse 21: These would be tokens of scorn and exultation.

Verse 23: He claimed that no obstacle had hitherto impeded him in his progress.

Verse 24: The proud king boasted that he could easily overcome the obstacles which opposed his expedition to Egypt. In the wilderness he would dig wells and drink foreign waters; and the rivers of Egypt were to dry up at the tramp of his feet.

Verse 25: God declared that Sennacherib had only been used as an instrument in His hands to punish wicked cities and peoples.

Verse 29: The message now turns to Hezekiah and his people. As a pledge of God's promise of deliverance, there was to be an abundant supply of provisions for two years.

Verse 32: The sculptures of Nineveh contain representations of the Assyrian methods of conducting a siege, which are in exact accordance with these words.

Verse 35: Some have supposed that this destruction was caused by a pestilence, some by a storm of hail, and others by a destructive wind. But the best explanation is that an "*angel*", a celestial agent, divinely commissioned to accomplish this work of judgement and deliverance, worked this destruction, though he may have used some secondary cause.

Verse 36: According to Assyrian history he reigned eighteen years after this time; and the

records show that he made many expeditions, but not into Judea.

### Lessons from Chapter 19

1. We ought to spread out completely all our difficulties before the Lord.
2. God's hands are not tied when there seems to be no human help.

## **Chapter 20**

### Chapter Outline

- I. Hezekiah's illness and recovery - verses 1-11
- II. Hezekiah shows his treasures to the Babylonians - verses 12-19
- III. Death of Hezekiah - verses 20,21

### Notes

Verse 1: This must have been the fourteenth year of his reign, for he reigned nearly twenty-nine years.

Verse 6: Fifteen years were added to his life.

Verse 7: God again uses a simple means to accomplish the miracle.

Verse 8: His full recovery was on the third day. It is the day of resurrection (Hosea 6:2) and on that day Judah received her king as it were from the dead.

Verse 11: A clockmaker can turn the hands of his own workmanship backward; God, the Creator, turned backward the workings of His own law.

Herodotus states that the Greeks obtained the knowledge of the dial, and the divisions of the day into twelve parts, from the Babylonians. It is not at all unlikely that Ahaz, who appears to have been found of foreign objects of art, obtained a dial (see 16:10).

Verse 12: We learn from 2 Chronicles 32:31 that an account of the miracle just narrated had reached Babylon.

Verse 13: It was his pride which led him to do this. It would have been an excellent opportunity to have honored Him who had wrought the miracle, by telling the Babylonians of His wonderful workings in behalf of His children.

Verse 17: The punishment was to be inflicted through the very people who had occasioned his sin. This is the first clear prediction of the Babylonian exile, though it had been hinted at before. It was partially fulfilled in the captivity of Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:11); and in the reign of Zedekiah it was fully accomplished.

Verse 19: The king acknowledged the judgment as being righteous and deserved, but he gratefully acknowledged also the mercy shown in the postponement of the sentence.

### Lessons from Chapter 20

1. God hears the prayers of the righteous.

2. Popularity often leads to pride, the sin of the devil.

The devil fell because of pride and he knows that he can cause us to fall also if he can lead us into the same sin. We have no cause for pride, for all that we have and all that we are are a result of God's workings.

## Chapter 21

### Chapter Outline

- I. The reign of wicked king Manasseh over Judah - verses 1-18
- II. Reign of wicked king Amon over Judah - verses 19-26

### Meaning of proper names

Manasseh - "one who causes to forget"

Hephzibah - "in whom is my delight"

Amon - "a master workman"

Meshullemeth - "friend"

### Notes

Verse 1: This was the longest reign of any king of Judah (55 years).

Verse 2: Manasseh quickly undid the good work of his father's early reign.

Verse 3: Manasseh not only restored the high places and imitated Ahab in the worship of Baal, but introduced star worship and the cruel rites of Moloch. The worship of stars seems to have been of Chaldean origin.

Verse 7: He placed a carved wooden image of Asherah, the Phoenician goddess, in the temple of Jehovah.

Verse 10: Besides Isaiah, some of the "minor prophets" were living in his reign, and perhaps others whose messages have not been preserved.

Verse 13: "*House of Ahab*" - As the king and people of Judah had followed Ahab's sins, so they should share the doom of his family and kingdom.

Verse 16: Hebrews records that there were many who, while remaining faithful and righteous, were "sawn in two" (Hebrews 11:37). Josephus says that "*Manasseh... barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflowed with blood*" (Antiquities of the Jews: 10.3.1.38). The Jews have a tradition that the prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder by the king's command.

Special note from 2 Chronicles 33:11-17:

1. Punishment came and Manasseh was carried into Babylonian captivity.
2. He repented as evidenced by his prayer of supplication and his humility.
3. God heard him and brought him again to Jerusalem.
4. He was probably tributary to Assyria.
5. He built a wall, took away the idols and repaired the altar.

6. However the evil he had done caused the people to continue to sacrifice upon the high places.

Verses 20,21: Amon followed the example of his father's sin, not the example of his father's good deeds.

Verse 23: This private assassination, probably the result of court intrigue, was evidently displeasing to the people at large, who still venerated the royal line of David.

### Lesson from Chapter 21

God's grace is truly greater than sin, for He heard the repentant prayer of the wicked Manasseh.

## **Chapter 22**

### Chapter Outline

- I. The reign of Josiah; the repairing of the temple - verses 1-7
- II. The law of Moses discovered in the temple - verses 8-10
- III. Repentance of the king - verses 11-14
- IV. The message of Huldah the prophetess - verses 15-20

### Meaning of proper names

Josiah - "whom Jehovah heals"  
Jedidah - "beloved"  
Hilkiah - "portion of Jehovah"  
Ahikam - "brother of the enemy"  
Achbor - "a mouse"  
Shaphan - "coney"  
Asahiah - "Jehovah hath made"  
Huldah - "weasel"

### Notes

During the reign of Josiah occurred one of the greatest revivals Judah ever had. It was also Judah's last revival.

Verse 2: "*He did not turn aside*" - a strong commendation given to none but Josiah (see 1 Kings 15:5; 2 Chronicles 34:3-7).

Verses 3-7: He next repaired the temple.

Verse 8: It is generally agreed that it was the book of Deuteronomy. At least it is certain that it was the law of Moses which had been laid up beside the ark (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). There are few books of the Bible about which more controversy has arisen. The devil had always tried to destroy this book because it was under the covenant included in this book that Israel entered into the land. Jesus defeated the devil by quoting from this book.

During the reigns of Manasseh and Amon the reading of the Scriptures had been prohibited and generally given up. However the existence of the book was known and its

character at once recognized.

Verses 11-13: The passage read to the king probably included the threatenings and curses of the law against its transgressors (Deuteronomy 28). Josiah was moved by the words of the Lord.

Verse 14: Notice the men who were associated with king Josiah. These men had much to do with the great revival which followed.

Hilkiah - the high priest and the grandfather of Seraiah (1 Chronicles 6:13,14; Nehemiah 11:11) was high priest at the time of the captivity (2 Kings 25:18) and an ancestor of Ezra (Ezra 7:1).

Shaphan - he was the scribe (22:3) and the father of Gemariah, the protector of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:10,19,25) and the grandfather of Micaiah (Jeremiah 36:11-13).

Ahikam - he protected Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:24).

Achbor - he was the father of Elnathan, one of the princes who vainly endeavored to keep the king from burning the roll dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch (Jeremiah 36:12).

Verses 15-20: In wrath God remembers mercy; and like his great-grandfather Hezekiah, Josiah is confronted with the assurance that there should be a postponement of these impending judgments during his death, because he, like Hezekiah, humbled himself. Josiah died in peace, but he was the last of Judah's kings to be so blessed. None of Josiah's successors had a royal funeral in Jerusalem.

### Lessons from Chapter 22

1. God has and will protect His holy word.
2. The reading of the Word has power to move the hearts of men.

## **Chapter 23**

### Chapter Outline

- I. The covenant of King Josiah - verses 1-3
- II. The religious reformations of Josiah - verse 4-27
- III. The death of Josiah - verses 28-30
- IV. Reign of Jehoahaz - verses 31-33
- V. Reign of Jehoiakim - verses 34-37

### Meaning of proper names

Tophet - "burning"  
Nathan-Melech - "gift of the king"  
Jehoahaz - "whom Jehovah holds fast"  
Hamutal - "refreshing like dew"  
Jehoiakim - "Jehovah has set up"  
Zebudah - "given"

## Notes

Verses 1-3: There is no doubt that the pledging of this covenant was very real on the part of the king, but one has only to read the earlier part of Jeremiah's prophecy to see how hypocritical it was with the mass of the people. They had enthusiastically entered into covenants with the Lord before, and the outcome was always the same - breakdown, and wider departure from God than ever before.

Verses 4-7: This purification appears to have begun before the finding and public reading of the law; but it was probably not completed till afterwards, and therefore the whole is placed together here.

In the twelfth year of his reign, or when he was twenty years old, he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from idols.

He burned the vessels made for Baal worship and carried the ashes to Bethel thus sending the impure to a place which had long ago been polluted by calf-worship. He purged the land from high places, groves, carved images, and molten images. He broke down the altars of Baal and all the images and ground them into dust and scattered the dust upon the graves of those that had sacrificed to them.

Verse 8: The "*high places of the gates*" were probably altars erected at the city gates that passers-by might be induced to worship and make offerings there.

Verse 10: The word "topheth" is understood to mean a place of burning. This place having been the scene of the cruel worship of Molech, Josiah caused it to be polluted by throwing into it the dead bodies of animals and the refuse of the city. This practice being continued afterwards, fires were lighted in the valley to consume the carcasses, and thus prevent the unsanitary effects which might have otherwise arisen. It was regarded by the Jews as representing the place of punishment for the wicked, where it is emphatically said by Jesus "*where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched*" (Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:44).

Verse 11: The ancient Persians, who were sun-worshippers, dedicated to the sun white horses and chariots, which were paraded on solemn occasions. The Jews seem to have adopted this practice, together with the sun-worship, from the Assyrians in the reigns of Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon.

Verse 12: The altars were on the roof. The roofs of the houses were used by the Persians for the worship of the heavenly bodies.

Verse 13: The mount of corruption was the southern end of the Mount of Olives, where idolatrous worship was practiced.

Verse 16: He also burned the bones of the priests upon their altars thus defiling them. After more than three hundred years the prophecy of 1 Kings 13:2 was fulfilled.

Verse 18: The second prophet mentioned here is he of 1 Kings 13:31.

Verse 19: He also cleansed part of the territory occupied by northern Israel.

Verse 22: This Passover Feast is described in 2 Chronicles 35:1-9. The ark was carried back to its proper place in the temple. This is the last historical reference to the ark in



Scripture.

Verse 26: Josiah seemed to have a few supporters in his reform and superintended some of the work personally (23:16). He could not be blamed if the mass of the people were hypocritical and unreal. Genuine repentance is not wrought by a king's command, but he did all that lay in his power, and did not permit a single visible vestige of idolatry to remain in his realm. When this last righteous king of Judah died, the whole land was outwardly cleansed of its abominations. Yet the people were idolatrous at heart.

Verse 29: Josiah was probably compelled as a tributary king of Assyria to oppose the progress of the Egyptian army.

Verse 31: He was not the oldest son of Josiah, but he appears to have been more popular with the people (1 Chronicles 3;15).

In Ezekiel 19:1-4 he is likened to *"a young lion, and he learned to catch prey; he devoured men."* He was probably guilty of deeds of violence.

Verse 33: History informs us that after his victory at Megiddo, Necho intended to march to the Euphrates; but, hearing of Jehoahaz's elevation to the throne by popular acclamation, he sent a division of his army to Jerusalem, which deposed him and brought him captive to Riblah (between Lebanon and Hermon) where Necho and his chief forces were. This he did, it is said, because he believed Jehoahaz leaned toward an alliance with Assyria against him.

Verse 34: Eliakim was Josiah's second son. After defeating Josiah's army, Necho fought another battle; on his return, treating Judah as a conquered province, he exercised his power by appointing Eliakim king and changing his name to Jehoiakim.

### Lesson from Chapter 23

Outward revival and reformation does not blind the eyes of God to the sin of the heart.

## **Chapter 24**

### Chapter Outline

- I. Reign of Jehoiakim - verses 1-7
- II. Reign of Jehoiachin - verses 8-10
- III. The first Babylonian captivity - verses 11-16
- IV. Reign of Zedekiah - verses 17-20

### Meaning of proper names

Jehoiakim - "Jehovah has set up"  
Jehoiachin - "Jehovah has established"  
Mattaniah - "gift of Jehovah"  
Zedekiah - "justice of Jehovah"

### Notes

Verses 1-5: Judgment began to fall upon the people through the bands which the *"the Lord sent against him."*

Verses 6-10: Jehoiachin reigned only three months as a mere vassal of the king of Babylon.

Verses 12-16: The number of this first captivity is estimated at ten thousand. The temple was despoiled of its remaining treasures. A few years before the king of Babylon had carried away the solid and smaller vessels (2 Chronicles 36:7).

The Babylonian captivity dates from Jehoiachin's reign. He never returned from captivity. There he spent thirty-six years in prison until the death of Nebuchadnezzar in his eighty-third or eighty-fourth year, after a reign of forty-three years. Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-merodach succeeded him on the throne. This son had once been himself shut up in prison by his father, where he probably made the acquaintance of the royal Hebrew captive. He selected Jehoiachin from all the other kings and exalted him. This continued until his death.

Verse 17: Zedekiah was Josiah's youngest son.

Verse 20: He rebelled against Babylon relying on the aid of the king of Egypt.

### Lessons from Chapter 24

Jehoiachin a type of God's dealings in grace (2 Kings 24:8-16; 25:27-30). In this we find a wonderful example of the grace of God.

1. Jehoiachin in his sin; a type of all sinners. He did that which was evil. He was taken captive. Others went with him into captivity. Sinners always drag others with them.
2. Jehoiachin in bondage; a type of the bondage of sin. He was helpless and at the mercy of one stronger than he. He had no hope of release in the future.
3. Jehoiachin released; a type of the release of the sinner. A new king came to the throne. Christ, the new King born of the virgin, came to deliver those in bondage. Jehoiachin was released. His garb was changed. These garments were those provided by the new king. A continual allowance was given him. Jehoiachin could not provide this for himself; the new king provided it for him. All he needed as long as he lived was graciously provided.

## **Chapter 25**

### Chapter Outline

- I. Siege of Jerusalem and final deportation - verses 1-21
- II. Gedaliah made governor of Palestine - verses 22-26
- III. Jehoiachin released - verses 27-30

### Meaning of proper names

Zedekiah - "justice of Jehovah"  
Gedaliah - "whom Jehovah has made great"  
Ishmael - "whom God hears"  
Jehoiachin - "Jehovah has established"

## Notes

Verse 2: Jerusalem was strong by nature, and had been so fortified by art that Nebuchadnezzar was only able to reduce it by a blockade which lasted eighteen months.

Verse 3: This long siege caused famine in the city. The terrible sufferings of the people in the city are described in Lamentations 4:3-10; Ezekiel 4:16; 5:10. See also Jeremiah 21; 24; 27-34; 37-39.

Verses 4,5: After a hopeless effort to hold out against the kings of Babylon, the city was taken. King Zedekiah and the part of the army tried to flee from the city by night and escape across the Jordan (Jeremiah 39:4).

Verse 6: This was just judgment on Zedekiah for the breach of his oath, his disregard of the merciful counsel of God; he had assured the Babylonian king of his loyalty but entered into political intrigues with the king of Egypt and others.

Verse 7: The last thing he saw was the slaying of his sons. The loss of his sight was meant not only as a punishment, but also to incapacitate him from ever being king again. In the king's blindness two apparently inconsistent prophecies are both literally fulfilled (Jeremiah 32:1-5; Ezekiel 12:8-16).

Verse 9: The ark of the covenant was probably burned with the temple, for it is never mentioned afterwards; showing how little God cares for the outward ceremonial when the inward spirit of religion is gone (Jeremiah 7:4,13-15). The prophet Jeremiah was present, and beheld the sad accomplishment of his early predictions, in the horrors of the famine and carnage, and the plunder and destruction of the city and temple; and has recorded his feelings (2 Chronicles 26:17-19 and Lamentations).

Verse 11: This formed the third stage in the captivity of Judah.

Verse 12: Only the poorest of the land were left to be husbandmen and vine dressers, so as not to leave the soil uncultivated.

Verses 13-17: When God thus permitted the temple to be despoiled, the Jewish kingdom was truly at an end. These precious vessels which only the priests and Levites were allowed to touch, were carelessly carried by reckless worldly soldiers through the streets and down into Babylon probably to be placed in heathen temples.

Verses 18-21: Those who were regarded as ring leaders were executed.

Verses 22-24: Gedaliah was made governor and tried to persuade the people to live in peace.

Verse 25: Ishmael at the head of a band of conspirators murdered Gedaliah and his followers.

Verse 26: They were afraid that the king of Babylon might avenge them for this murder, and appealed to Jeremiah to get the mind of the Lord. Jeremiah told them that they were to remain in Palestine, but they refused and went down to Egypt (Jeremiah 42:13). The last remnant was not gone.

Verses 27-30: These verses tell of the treatment of Jehoiachin by the son of

Nebuchadnezzar who succeeded his father on the throne.

### Lessons from Chapter 25

1. Continued sin brings judgment.
2. There is a time in the course of a sinner's life when even the God of mercy must permit punishment.
3. God's warnings of judgment are just as sure as His promises of mercy and grace.