

II KINGS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Kings chapter 13 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we left off last time we were looking at the kings in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, specifically Joash. And as we closed we saw the death, really the assassination of Joash king of Judah by his servants and now his son is going to be on the throne, and his name is Amaziah.

This evening as we pick up our study in II Kings chapter 13 we are once again looking at the Northern Kingdom of Israel and their kings. And once again things are not looking good for the Northern Kingdom, their kings were wicked and now they are only some 100 years or so from being taken away captive by the Assyrians for their idolatry. The judgment of God was coming upon them. The timeframe is around 814 BC and Assyria came in and took them captive in 721 BC. For the Southern Kingdom of Judah, they fared a little better, they lasted another 115 years after the Northern Kingdoms captivity, they did not get taken captive till 606 BC by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.

As we are going to see, Jehoahaz is now the king in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and thus, let's begin reading in II Kings chapter 13, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening.

II KINGS 13

VERSES 1-3

1. Keep in mind that we are going back a little from chapter 12 because Joash is just a little past the halfway mark of his reign in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, he reigned for forty years and right now, when Jehoahaz takes the throne in the north he is in the twenty-third year of his reign in the Southern Kingdom.

2. Like his father Jehu, Jehoahaz did not get into Baal worship but like his father and like the first king in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, they set up those golden calves to worship God by and in God's eye's, that was still idolatry and He brought judgment upon them for their sin! Think about that. You can't say, "Well, Lord, I just stole that iPad, it is not like I murdered someone!" Or, "Hey, I'm still going to church, don't go crazy over the icons and candles and things!" No, God does not look down favorably upon sin, but will judge it as He is doing here!

3. Also, Hazael is king over the Syrians just as Elisha had said back in II Kings chapter 8. Remember the set of events that led to this. The king of Syria, Ben Hadad II was ill and he sent Hazael to Elisha to see if he would recover from this illness. And we are told in II Kings 8:10, "**And Elisha said to him, 'Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover.' However the Lord has shown me that he will really die.'**" Kind of a strange thing to say and it gets even stranger!

After Elisha says this he begins to stare at Hazael and you can imagine how uncomfortable Hazael was feeling. He was not only staring but then he started to weep. And Hazael can't take it any more and asks him what is wrong and Elisha tells him that the Lord has shown him the evil that is in his heart and the things he will do to the children of Israel. He will kill the women and children. He will be brutal to those around him.

Well, Hazael is mad at Elisha, he can't believe what he is saying, he would never do that, or would he? You bet he would and this evil is in the heart of every one of us! In fact, Hazael says, “**... ‘But what is your servant — a dog, that he should do this gross thing?’ And Elisha answered, ‘The Lord has shown me that you will become king over Syria.’**” II Kings 8:13. And as Hazael reports back to Ben Hadad II he tells the king that he will recover from this illness and the next day he kills the king, Ben Hadad II and Hazael takes the throne in Syria! And what Elisha said is coming to pass as the Syrians, under the leadership of Hazael and then his son, Ben Hadad III as they would invade Israel!

VERSE 4

1. Here is an interesting verse. Jehoahaz was a wicked king, and now that the nation is in distress, he cries out to the Lord and God hears his cry and delivers them. This tells me that God does hear the prayer of a sinner, even though He is under no obligation to respond, but because of His rich love towards Israel and His deep grace, He not only hears, but responds to their cry and delivers them!

2. In fact, in regards to the state that Jehoahaz was in, Dilday tells us, “The term ‘*pleaded with the Lord*’ comes from a word meaning ‘to be sick,’ implying weakness and dependency. Jehoahaz was at the end of his rope.” I wonder how many times the Lord is just waiting for us to come to the end of ourselves so that He can work? Why wait that long!

VERSES 5-9

1. Why would God send a deliverer when the king and the nation were in sin? I think God was trying to get their attention and get them back on track. He places them in a hopeless situation and when they cry out He responds, delivering them, and showing them that He is a God that not only hears, but also is able to respond. But after their deliverance, they went right back to their sinful ways instead of turning to God. Spurgeon wrote this regarding the actions of Israel, “Israel’s repentance was only half-hearted; they repented because they suffered. They repented because of the suffering rather than because of the sin. They went back to the sin after they escaped from the sorrow.”

How many people today do the exact same thing? They find themselves in a hopeless situation with their backs up against the wall, and when they can do nothing else they cry out to the Lord. And after the times of oppression, after the difficult time is over, they do just what Israel did; continue to walk in sin and rebellion against God, until the time of the next oppression, the next difficulty comes upon them!

2. Now who is this deliverer that God sent to Israel to deliver them from the hands of the Syrians. We are not sure, the Bible does not say, but the deliverer here could have been king Adad-Nirari III of Assyria. They could have caused the Syrians to stop their aggression upon Israel and focus it on protecting themselves from the Assyrians. Historically the Assyrian Empire kept the Syrians weak and unable to expand their domain into Israel and there was a time of some internal problems within the Assyrian empire that allowed the Syrians to make advances into the Northern Kingdom, or should I say God needed them to bring judgment upon His people. Now that Jehoahaz pleads before the Lord, it could be that God uses the Assyrians now to stop the Syrians from coming upon Israel. They could have been the deliverer that we are reading about here, the Assyrians and their king!

3. Why was the army of Israel so weak, so insignificant? God brought this upon them because of their idolatry, their lack of fellowship with their God! Why would God do this? Maybe so that they would take their eyes off of what they had and look up to the Lord. It is as David said in Psalm 62:1-8, **“Truly my soul silently waits for God; From Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved. How long will you attack a man? You shall be slain, all of you, Like a leaning wall and a tottering fence. They only consult to cast him down from his high position; They delight in lies; They bless with their mouth, But they curse inwardly. My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.”** May we never forget that because God plus one is a majority and the victory is found in Him and not our strength, our might!

VERSES 10-13

1. The Lord wants us on our toes I guess because once again we have two kings with the same name in both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Joash or Jehoash who was in Judah. And there was Joash in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and he was just as evil as their first king, Jeroboam. He continued with the calf worship and God judged him for that! He was the grandson of Jehu and the son of Jehoahaz, continuing this dynasty.

2. Not much detail is given of his life and that is the pattern of I and II Kings. You see, they give us a highlight of events that occurred and Chronicles will fill in some of those details and specifically the details of the kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. We do not have the Chronicles of the kings of the Northern Kingdom, that was not something that is important to us because the Messiah was to come from Judah, the Southern Kingdom and thus, we only have the Chronicles of the kings of Judah and not of Israel, and with the wickedness of the Northern Kingdom, it is probably better we don't have that information. What we do have here in II Kings regarding some of the things that transpired in the life of Joash in the North is the death of Elisha, his victories over the Syrian forces and then his war with Amaziah the king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. And we will pick up this war with Amaziah in II Kings chapter 14 and when we get to II Chronicles chapter 25.

VERSE 14a

1. We are now moving towards the end of the Prophet Elisha's life. He became sick and this sickness was going to cause him to die. It is too bad for Elisha that he did not have the faith to be healed, that he lacked that faith. Now we laugh at that but today, in some churches, Elisha would be told that he lacked the faith to be healed. If he only believed, he would not die. What garbage and what a guilt trip that is as people are sick and they are told that they lack faith to be healed. Folk's, it doesn't take a theologian to figure out that Elisha was a man of faith and he did more miracles in the Bible that were recorded, except for Jesus! Let me just share a few quotes from these teachers and you will see what I mean and then I will show you what the Scriptures have to say.

Benny Hinn teaches “Sickness does not belong to any of us. . . . He promises to heal all - everyone, any, any whatsoever, everything - all our diseases! That means not even a headache, sinus problem, not even a toothache - nothing! No sickness should come your way . . . God’s greatest desire for the church of Jesus Christ . . . is that we be in total and perfect health.”

Kenneth Copeland said, “The basic principle of the Christian life is to know that God put our sin, sickness, disease, sorrow, grief, and poverty on Jesus at Calvary. For Him to put any of this on us now would be a miscarriage of justice. Jesus was made a curse for us so that we can receive the blessing of Abraham.”

Benny Hinn writes, “The Bible declares that the work was done 2,000 years ago. God is not going to heal you now – He healed you 2,000 years ago. All you have to do today is receive your healing by faith.”

Fred Price states, “Medicine is not God’s highest or best. Use your faith, and then you won’t need the medication.”

Fred Price goes on to proclaim, “We don’t allow sickness in our home.” That is an interesting statement for him to make. Why do I say that? Because his wife was stricken with cancer and they even thanked the doctors for the radiation and chemotherapy that she has received from them. Where’s the faith? How come they ridicule and put down others who get sick and they go to the doctor, take medicine?

Kenneth Hagin brags about not having a cold, a headache, the flu, not even “one sick day” in nearly 60 years. I guess he doesn’t count the heart condition that he has!

Oral Roberts was healed of chest pains by Paul Crouch on TBN’s live television show on October 6, 1992 and ironically just hours after this he suffered a heart attack!

You see, they tell others what they themselves don't see in their own lives and it lays a guilt trip on these poor people that are sick! Does God heal people today? You bet He does but not all are healed and all will eventually die.

You see, the reality is this, as Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, **“To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: A time to be born, And a time to die; A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted.”** The point is this, we all will die as I have said, both the saved and the unsaved. Think about it, where are the apostles? They all died and not because they lacked faith, this body will go back to the dust of the earth, it is not eternal! In Hebrews 11:32-40 we see that the great men and women of ***FAITH*** who got sick and they died. “Or, as Walter Martin used to say, “The death rate is still one per person and we're all going to make it!”

VERSES 14b-17

1. This may seem strange, why in the world would Joash go to Elisha when Joash was seen as evil before the Lord? Even though Joash did not follow the Lord, he was not necessarily a worshipper of false gods but a false worshipper of the true God and he did recognize that Elisha, and not his army, was the strength of the nation. It is interesting the great men and women of God are recognized even by the unsaved for their faith and strength in the Lord and how their influence has affected cities, and nations. And I think Joash was concerned that when this prophet was gone, **“the chariots of Israel and their horsemen”** or that their strength would be gone also!

2. Now we see that Elisha tells Joash to open the window towards Syria and shoot an arrow out the window, as Elisha had his hands around the hands of Joash. This was an object lesson for Joash, showing him that God would deliver Israel out of the hands of the Syrians. And specifically here we see Elisha speak of Aphek, which was the most strategic site between Damascus and Samaria. The strength was not in the instrument, Elisha, but in God who used Elisha and with him passing off the scene, God is not dead!

VERSES 18-19

1. What we are seeing here is a test of faith for Joash, and he is only half hearted in following through with what Elisha told him to do. Because of his apathy, the Syrians will not be completely wiped out. It as Knapp wrote, “Only Joash’s lack of faith, manifested in his half-hearted smiting the ground with arrows but thrice, prevented his destroying the Syrians utterly. And it was unto him according to his faith.”

2. Now how does this relate to us? God is calling each of us to be fervent in our relationship with Him and not half hearted. You will never experience true victory over the enemy if you are apathetic in your walk, just as Israel did not completely destroy Syria because of their apathetic approach to this situation.

We are told to be **fervent in spirit**, Acts 18:25. **Fervent in prayer**, James 5:16. And **fervent in love**, I Peter 4:8. In other words, be sold out to Jesus and He will give you the victory. Don’t go into battle unprepared, but put on the whole armor of God and you will stand strong in the Lord. J. Vernon McGee put it like this regarding those that sit back and don’t walk by faith. He wrote,

Many wonderful projects for God never come to fruition, are never executed, because a child of God meets opposition or discouragement. He gives up, and says, “The project is not in God’s will.” That is the attitude of Joash—he smote only three times. He is saying by this, “I don’t think God will see me through.” Today I see so much soft “faith.” Folk sit on the sidelines and engage in wishful thinking. They say, “Oh, I want to do something for God.” And the next time I see them, they are still sitting there. God expects you to get on the move for Him. If you believe God can use you, then get busy! Elisha gives us a very practical lesson here.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Vol. II, p. 333

VERSES 20-21

1. Notice that Elisha is not taken up in a whirlwind; he dies just like everyone else, why? Because he is like every one of us, of like passions, he is flesh and blood and thus, his time was over and God took him home through the death of his physical body. Now we see that Elisha’s ministry spanned some 56 years, and yet even in his death he still is touching the lives of others.

Before I share with you what I think this story means to us, it is a kind of strange story. We see Moab invading the land and as the Jews were burying a man these raiders came upon them and they placed this dead man in the tomb with Elisha and this man came back to life! Was there power in the bones of Elisha? No, God chose to bring this man back to life this way and we don’t see that again. I told you, strange and interesting but God can do what He wants, He is God!

2. Now let's see how this plays out in our own lives because I believe we can look at this two ways. First of all, before we can touch others for Christ, influence their lives, we must die to self. That is what Jesus said in John 12:24, speaking of Himself, and of us. He said, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”**

Secondly, the influence of a godly man or woman will be passed on long after that person has gone to be with the Lord. Look at men like Moody, Spurgeon, Luther, Tyndale, Finney and others, who still influence people's lives long after they have gone to be with the Lord. That is what Paul is saying in Philippians 1:20, **“according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.”** The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“This is in keeping with my own eager desire and persistent expectation and hope, that I shall not disgrace myself nor be put to shame in anything; but that with the utmost freedom of speech and unflinching courage, now as always heretofore, Christ (the Messiah) will be magnified and get glory and praise in this body of mine and be boldly exalted in my person, whether through (by) life or through (by) death.”**

In other words Paul is saying that he wants to influence people's lives when he is living and he wants that to continue on long after he has gone to be with the Lord. I think he accomplished that, don't you! Folk's don't ever under estimate your influence on the lives of others! We tend to leave inheritances to our children that are monetary in nature and guess what, that blows away like chaff. I am not saying don't leave your children anything, but what are you leaving them spiritually speaking that they can take with them? That is far more important!

VERSES 22-23

1. Here we see God having compassion upon Israel, even though they were not walking with Him, He still was faithful to His people because of the unconditional covenant that He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God would always have a faithful remnant who did love Him and for those that didn't, we do see his compassion and longsuffering towards them!

VERSES 24-25

1. Joash defeated the king of Syria, Ben Hadad III, three times, just as Elisha had said. But Israel did not completely wipe them out.
2. Now, as we move into chapter 14, Joash, king of Judah is assassinated, and his son, Amaziah takes over the throne. Thus, this chapter picks up where chapter 12 left off.

II KINGS 14**VERSES 1-4**

1. Now we are back in the Southern Kingdom of Judah with the reign of Amaziah, and he was a good king. And yet, he did not measure up to the standard from which all the kings were measured by, David. And Knapp sums things up for us as he wrote, “He made a good beginning in thus adhering closely to the law. Happy would it have been for him and for his kingdom had he continued as he began.” And we will see that as we look at his life.

2. Yes, as you look at the Southern Kingdom, for the most part they were following after the Lord. They were not sacrificing to idol’s on these high places, but to the Lord and yet, that was a compromise of their faith, it went against what the Lord had instructed them to do. You see, before the tabernacle and priesthood were established, you could sacrifice to God. But that all changed back in Deuteronomy 12:13-14, 32 where we read, “**Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which the Lord chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you. . . . Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**”

You see, now it was up to the priest or bridge builder to go before God for the people and offer the sacrifices and at a specific location, the tabernacle and now the temple. And maybe it was difficult to get to the temple now, and very time consuming to bring your sacrifice all that way. So they, in a sense, developed their own self-styled religion, according to their desires, not God's.

2. But we would never do that, would we? You bet it is being done today and we are, many times blind to it just as they were. You see, today we have Jesus as our high priest, the mediator between God and man. And yet we still find church very inconvenient and time consuming. We approach God any way we want instead of according to His standards. I remember Pastor Phil saying that he saw an advertisement in the local paper for a church that guaranteed that you would be in and out of the service in 45 minutes! How sad it is when we don't have time for God and come before Him according to our own ways! What is next, drive through sermons? Is spending time with God an inconvenience? I hope not!

VERSES 5-6

1. Remember that Joash, king of Judah, was assassinated by his own servants. Now that his son, Amaziah has established himself on the throne, he executed those who murdered his father. But notice that he did not put to death his children, why? Because God said way back in Deuteronomy 24:16 that we are responsible for our own sin and here we see Amaziah apply that command of God to those that murdered his father, Joash. That did go against what the other nations would do, for they would wipe out all that were associated with that person. If we would only apply that today, that we are responsible for our own actions and we can't blame anyone else, just as God has said. But again, Amaziah was taking a chance here as Poole tells us, "Wherein he showed some faith and courage, that he would obey this command of God, though it was very hazardous to himself, such persons being likely to seek revenge for their father's death." Why did he go against conventional wisdom here? Because he trusted the Word of God, he walked by faith you might say instead of sight. What a lesson for us!

VERSE 7

1. Edom was lost to Judah during the reign of Jehoram, and now Amaziah recaptures it. In doing so it gave Judah access to the southern trade routes. And this was a great victory and it must have bolstered Amaziah's confidence in what he could do. But please understand that some of the details are not included here; listen to what transpired according to II Chronicles 25:14-16, **“Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up to be his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. Therefore the anger of the Lord was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, ‘Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?’ So it was, as he talked with him, that the king said to him, ‘Have we made you the king’s counselor? Cease! Why should you be killed?’ Then the prophet ceased, and said, ‘I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my advice.’”**

It did not start out that way. You see, he first hired 100,000 mercenary soldiers from Israel and God, through a prophet warned him not to use the soldiers from Israel because God was not with that idolatrous kingdom. And he obeyed the Lord, trusted in the Lord and God gave them victory but immediately after the victory his heart turned from God. How come? Maybe pride! “Look what I have done!” mentality! He brought home these false gods, the gods of the nation he defeated and worshipped them instead of the true and living God. Be careful after a victory that God has given you that you don't let pride bring you down as Amaziah did and it is only going to get worse!

VERSES 8-14

1. Why did Amaziah do this? I think it was pride again. You see, after this victory, those mercenary soldiers from Israel that he sent home, even though he paid them for not fighting, they attacked the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon; they killed 3,000 people, and took much spoil. So you can see why he wanted to attack the Northern Kingdom, besides having an army of 300,000 while the Northern Kingdom had some 10,000 foot soldiers after their defeat by the Syrians! (II Kings 13:7).

2. As you can see, Joash is not happy with this challenge and he sent this little parable back to Amaziah. Basically he says that he is the cedar of Lebanon and Amaziah is a thistle that will be trampled upon. Your pride has made you to think more highly of yourself than you really should. And he does give some good advice to Amaziah. He tells Amaziah to stay at home and enjoy the spoils of your victory with Edom. Don't go looking for trouble. That was good advice.

3. As Christians we don't have to look for trouble either. We don't have to go looking for the enemy or challenge the enemy. Why? Because if you are doing the work of God the enemy will find you! If you go and meddle in the things you shouldn't, and you are defeated, it will be easier to fall the next time. Why is that? Because your defenses will be broken down just as we will see the walls of Jerusalem broken down here when Amaziah and the Southern Kingdom is defeated! Also, there are things that will hurt you, that will impede your progress towards your goal. Yes you can do them, but will they benefit you? Again, the more you do those things, the easier it is to do it again because your walls of purity, your defenses are broken down.

4. Well, as we have read, Amaziah refuses to heed the warning and these two kings do battle at Beth Shemesh, which was located about 15 miles west of Jerusalem. And as Joash defeats Judah and captures the king, he goes and breaks down some 600 feet of the wall of the city. This war, prompted by Amaziah, cost Judah dearly and the people will not forget what Amaziah did. In fact, they will rise up and eventually kill Amaziah. And now, for a time, Amaziah is taken captive by Joash.

5. Notice also that there were hostages taken from Jerusalem to Samaria. You see, his sin, his poor decision not only affected himself, but also the people in his kingdom. What a lesson for us. That our decisions, our sin will affect others as well as ourselves!

VERSES 15-16

1. With the death of Jehoash or Joash in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, we see his son, Jeroboam II now on the throne, being named after the first king in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

VERSES 17-22

1. Amaziah was released some time after his capture and lived some 15 years after the death of Joash, king of Samaria. But the people never forgave him for what he did and they eventually went after him and caught him up in the area of Lachish, in the area of Judah, and killed him. For those 15 years he must have been walking on egg shells, knowing that the people were against him and finally, his end came all because he did not heed the words of Joash and instead, went to battle and lost! And keep in mind, during that time he was probably co-reigning with his son, Azariah or Uzziah, who reigned for 52 years in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and was one of the best kings in the kingdom besides David!

VERSES 23-29

1. Jeroboam II was one of Israel's strongest kings, and he recovered much of the land they had lost during previous wars. He was a great military leader that God assisted in battle, but Jeroboam II was also a very wicked king. But with all the prosperity they enjoyed, they fell into a false sense of security. Little did they know that they were only some 30 years from the final deportation into Assyria! We are around 753 B.C. and the captivity came around 721 B.C. All the prosperity that they were enjoying did not bring them back to God and it lead to all kinds of wickedness. Wiseman puts it like this as he tells us, "The resultant prosperity, however, which ended in the wrong use of power in luxury and the oppression of the poor, was denounced by the contemporary prophets, especially Amos (2:6-7; 8:4-6); Isaiah (3:18-26; 5:8-13) and Micah (2:2)."

2. The prophets that were ministering during this time were Hosea, Amos, Jonah, and Micah. Shortly we will see Isaiah's ministry begin, after the death of king Uzziah. And when you look at the prophets that were around during this time, you may be thinking, "Oh, only to have men like that today?" Folks, you can have Jesus Christ stand before you, as many did during His earthly ministry and unless you are willing to listen and obey, it is meaningless. And that is what we see here, they had the warning, they had the Words of God, they knew what they needed to do, they just chose not to listen and obey!

3. Remember back in II Kings 10:30 we were told, “**And the Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation."**” Thus, the brief reign of Zechariah is noted in II Kings 15:8-12. He was the fourth in the line of Jehu to reign in Israel, in fulfillment of God’s gracious promise to Jehu. Make no mistake about it; God’s Word will always come to pass!