

2 Kings 13-15 - The Death of Elisha

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

2 Kings, and we're in the 13th chapter. Sue asked me this morning as I was starting to study; she said, how's it going with 2 Kings? And I said, boring. What I meant by that is that when you get to the midway point here of 2 Kings, you go into this rapid-fire succession of these kings that work their way through the Northern kingdom of Israel because the kingdom is deteriorating very rapidly.

Many of the kings don't last very long. Some last a month. Some might last two years, which was a long time during this latter part of the period of the Northern kingdom of Israel because they started dying by assassination quite readily. And it was a really, really —well, you think it's a hard job being the president of the United States of America; try to have been the king of Israel during the time of the divided kingdom, just before Assyria came in and took them all away.

You do know that after the kingdom split, you got Northern kingdom of Israel, Southern kingdom of Judah. The Northern kingdom of Israel, because they wandered away from the Lord sooner than did Judah, they were then conquered eventually by the Assyrian army. The Assyrians came in. The way the Assyrians would conquer an army is they would come in, overpower them, and then take them away.

Can you imagine a nation coming to the United States of America, conquering us militarily and then just taking us, uprooting us from our homes, and saying, we're going to put you somewhere else? What the Assyrians would do is they'd put them in other nations where they had conquered people. So in order to keep their enemies weak and less liable to rise up against them, they would take this country, and literally put a few here, and a few here, and a few here; take this country, and put a few here, and a few here—you see what I'm saying—and sprinkle them out.

Well, what happened is, those people groups would begin to intermarry with one another, and they would just become completely mixed, and their nationalities would be lost. Essentially, that's what happened in the Northern kingdom of Israel. Their nationality, their national identity, was lost eventually. They became half-breeds. And worse, by the time of the New Testament, when Jesus came along, the Samaritans were despised. Israel was from that—

Israel was gone essentially from the standpoint that the northern area was made up of Samaritans – and Samaritans we're formerly Jews who'd been mixed with the races of many other peoples by essentially the Assyrian army, and later after that, the Persian armies, which then conquered the Assyrians.

You have basically Assyria, and then they are conquered by Babylon, and then Babylon is conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire. When you conquer a country, you take over what they've conquered. I know it's hard to keep it all straight in your brain, but essentially what we realized is that the Northern kingdom of Israel was lost. I don't mean lost in the sense of, gee, where do we go to find them? They, those people groups were essentially assimilated, and whoever was living in the Southern kingdom of Judah eventually survived. They, too, are conquered by Babylon, but they were brought back. They were allowed to come back to their country as a people later on.

Okay, 2 Kings chapter 13— enough history. It says:

“In the twenty-third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria (now, we're talking the Northern kingdom here because Samaria is the capital of the Northern kingdom of Israel), and he reigned seventeen years. ² He did (and we're told here) what was evil in the sight of the LORD and (he) followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from them.” (ESV)

Again, to remind you, it keeps referencing—and it will again several times—the sins of Jeroboam, son of Nebat. He was the first king of the Northern kingdom of Israel after the split. Okay? After the split, which— the split took place under David's grandson, Rehoboam. Then Jeroboam took over the Northern kingdom, while Rehoboam remained king in the Southern kingdom.

Remember, the Southern kingdom is ruled and reigned by the lineage of David. The Northern kingdom, there's no lineage, really, at all. I mean, one of the kings might continue to have his sons on the throne for maybe up to the fourth generation. But after that they'd be assassinated, and whoever assassinated him would take the throne. And then his line would begin, and sometimes, his line would be no further than just his own generation, and then he'd get assassinated. It was a mess.

You'll notice here that it says that this new king takes over in Israel, and we're told in verse 3 that:

“...the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Syria and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael.”

In other words, it continued on for a few generations. Because the Northern kingdom of Israel was disobedient to God, God would give them into the hands of their enemies. Why? To discipline them; to get them to turn from their ways.

People will ask sometimes: Does God still do that today? Does God still give people into the hands of their enemies? Well, don't think of it quite like that. I will say this: God will allow you and I—when, if we become disobedient to Him and wander from Him, God will allow you and I to experience the consequences of our actions so that we will turn to the Lord. That's why God is allowing those sorts of things.

Now, here's the interesting thing: There are issues and consequences of life that may have no connection to your actions. Do you understand that? So what I'm saying to you is that, yes, there are times when God will allow you to feel the difficulties of your life so that He might get your attention, but please understand that's not the only time we go through difficult seasons and challenges and things in life. We go through difficult things because we live in a fallen world.

Sometimes people will come to me; they're going through a difficult season and they'll say, I keep asking God, what have I done? What are you saying to me? Well, it's possible the Lord is trying to get your attention. It's also very possible that you are just dealing with life in a fallen world.

Do you understand that we live in a sin-soaked world that is spinning out of control and is under the rulership of Satan himself – temporarily? Jesus referred to him as the prince of this world; the prince of the power of the air, as the Bible would refer to him also. And as such, we are living within the temporary domain of the enemy. The world that you and I live in is just absolutely messed up. It's totally messed up.

People will ask sometimes: If God is a God of love, why do bad things happen? Because the world is messed up, you guys. It has nothing to do—and what people don't think through, what if God decided He was going to get rid of all evil and all who do evil? Let's just say for a moment, tonight at midnight, He's going to get rid of all evil and those who do evil, would you be here at 12:01?

You see, God is bearing with the circumstances and the situations of this world because He's wanting people to be saved. He is bearing with it in the sense of He's allowing this burden to continue on, but do you think He's happy about it? You think He's satisfied with it? You think He's looking at the world that you and I live in and thinking, could be worse? He's horrified. He's grieved by the things that go on in this world. He's bearing with it.

There is going to come a day when He's going to pull the plug. There is going to come a day when things are going to wind down – and I believe we're getting close to that day. But meanwhile, we live in this fallen world – and as Christians, it touches us.

We're going to see here, one of the things that we get into here in the midway point of our study in 2 Kings is we come to the end of the ministry of Elisha. Elijah, you'll remember, was taken up in a whirlwind; didn't experience death. Elisha, his successor, is now at the end of his life on earth. We're going to see that he dies of an illness, the same sort of illnesses, I suppose, he probably healed people from. And yet Elisha died from one of those illnesses. Why? Because Elisha, though he went around doing the work of the Lord, he couldn't avoid being touched by this fallen world.

All right, let's keep going here. So Syria is being raised up as the spanking spoon of God for Israel to get their attention. It says in verse 4:

“Then Jehoahaz sought the favor of the LORD, ...”

Now notice the words LORD in your Bible are capitalized, or at least maybe the “ORD” is in small caps. You guys remember what that means? That means it is the tetragrammaton. It means YHWH, okay? That is, it is Israel's unspeakable name for God. So when it says that he sought the favor of the Lord, he's not talking to some pagan deity. He is literally coming to the covenant God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and seeking relief from this Syrian oppression that Israel is under currently.

So it says that the anger of the Lord was so kindled that Jehoahaz has sought the favor of the Lord. It says:

“and the LORD listened to him...”

And that, by the way, is a good example of mercy in the Old Testament. Did the king deserve God's listening ear? Did he deserve God's deliverance? Absolutely not. We already read here; he was an evil king. It says he did evil in the sight of

the Lord, and he did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam, son of Nebat, started when he began that worship to those golden calves he set up in the Northern kingdom of Israel. This guy didn't turn from it, and yet when life got challenging, he turned to the real God.

Isn't it interesting? Isn't it interesting? People will turn to all kinds of things when things are going well, and then when things really bottom out, they'll come to God. They'll come to the Lord, and in their coming to the Lord, they will cry out for mercy. That's exactly what he does here – and it says here, again, that God heard him. It says:

“for he saw the oppression of Israel, how the king of Syria oppressed them.”

And it says in verse 5:

“Therefore the Lord gave Israel a savior,”

Your Bible may say deliverer; it means the same thing. It's not talking about the savior, as in Jesus Christ. It just means God gave them someone to deliver them out of the hands of Syria. Now, we don't know who that was, but it says here:

“...that they escaped from the hand of the Syrians, and the people of Israel lived in their homes as formerly.”

All right? Isn't that interesting? God raised up a deliverer; his name doesn't even get a mention in the Bible. We don't even know if it was a man for sure, but somebody was raised up to deliver them. We don't know if he was a general. We don't know. Look at—but verse 6 is very important to see:

“Nevertheless, they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, which he made Israel to sin, but walked in them; and the Asherah also remained in Samaria.” Meaning the Asherah poles, which was a form of pagan worship, and that sort of thing.

God allows Syria to be raised up as a spanking spoon to get Israel's attention, not that they might be miserable, but that they might repent of their sin. And you can see that the king humbled himself long enough to go to the Lord and say, deliver us, O God, deliver us from our oppression. And it says, God listened because He looked upon Israel and He saw their misery. So He raised up a deliverer to bring them out of that situation.

And what did they do? As soon as the burden or the weight or the difficulty was lifted, they went right back to what they had done always. They went right back to their worship that Jeroboam had established in the Northern kingdom of Israel, the worship of those two golden calves. They didn't change. There was no lasting change in their lives.

People, understand this. Individuals, people, can come to God. They can come to the Lord with their hearts, and they can turn to the Lord temporarily, but it doesn't mean their hearts have been given to God. Some of you, if I gave you an opportunity tonight, you could probably get up and give a testimony. You could probably tell a story about how maybe it took multiple times of you turning to the Lord before you finally gave your heart to Him completely.

You can probably tell of circumstances where life got challenging, got difficult, and you turn to God, and you prayed, and God met you at some particular place. But then you just went off and did your own thing again; and then life got challenging again, so you turned to the Lord, and even came to church for a while, and read your Bible once in a while. But then things eased up a little bit, and so you went back into your old lifestyle; you put life on cruise again.

And then you might be able to tell about a final breaking time in your life. I use that word, breaking, very specifically because it's very much like a horse being broken. There comes that time in a horse's life where he's just done bucking; he's bucked his last, and now he is willing to let the rider sit upon his back. He's willing to let the bit and the bridle go into his mouth, and he's willing to be directed by a higher authority.

And there's that point in our lives where we finally come to that place where we're willing to allow our lives to be directed by the higher authority who is Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives. We finally yield to His Lordship, whereas we bent the knee temporarily to it for a while. We gave up on it after a while because— what happened? Things got better. Things got better.

I've learned over the years to be careful to pray with people to receive Christ when they're at the absolute bottom of the barrel because, sometimes, they can have a bottom-of-the-barrel conversion that doesn't last. It's not genuine because they don't stay at the bottom of the barrel. Life begins to ease up after a while, and pretty soon they're yeah, well, things are better, and they just go on with their life.

And we wonder—please don't think because somebody says the sinner's prayer that they're saved. The sinner's prayer is not a magical incantation that— like

you wave your wand over someone and poof, they're a born-again Christian. You can recite the sinner's prayer and be just as unsaved as anybody else, as an atheist.

Listen, somebody gets saved when they finally give up. You know what I mean? When they finally just give up and say, God, I am yours. Till death do we part. Well, I don't know— death will never part us, in fact, but I am yours. I am yours. I give myself to You wholly.

That's the reality of the situation. How often do we flirt with the Lord but don't commit?

So it says here that the king did not turn from his ways. Verse 7, it says:

“For there was not left to Jehoahaz an army of more than fifty horsemen and ten chariots and ten thousand footmen (that's a small army; why?), for the king of Syria had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing.⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?⁹ So Jehoahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria, and Joash his son reigned in his place.”

Now it goes on to say:

“¹⁰ In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah,”

Notice it says we now have two kings named Joash, but that's why they're going to start here in verse 10, calling the Israel king, Jehoash, because that's a variant of Joash; and rather than have two King Joashes, they call the one in Israel slightly something different. But don't get confused, okay? Joash was apparently a very popular name during that time. There you go. It says:

“Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned sixteen years.¹¹ He also did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.”

By the way, if you're sitting here hoping upon hope that maybe one day we're going to get through here and we're going to read about the kings of Israel, at least somebody is going to say of him he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, it's not going to happen. There were never any kings of Israel who did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Only kings of Judah—and not all of them, but fortunately there were some. But in the kings of Israel, no good kings. None, okay? None turned away from their paganism to the Lord. So—

“He also did what was evil on the sight of the Lord. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat (boy, I heard that again; you’ll hear it even more), which he made Israel to sin, but he walked in them.

¹² Now the rest of the acts of Joash and all that he did, and the might with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah (wait a minute, we didn't hear about that; no, we're not going to actually read about it until the next chapter when we talk about Amaziah), are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (I don't know, we don't have that book) ¹³ So Joash slept with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.”

All right, now we come to the end of the life of Elisha and his final prophetic event. It says in verse 14:

“Now when Elisha had fallen sick with the illness of which he was to die, Joash king of Israel went down to him (obviously before he passed away; we just heard about him dying, but now we've gone back in time a little) and wept before him, crying, “My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!”

And that was a statement that they would say back then. That's exactly what Elisha said when he saw Elijah being taken up into heaven: *“The chariots and horsemen of Israel.”* We don't really know what it means except it is believed to be a cry as if to say, now what are we going to do? Now how are we going to come against our enemies? Now how are we going to be able to fight the battles of the Lord with you gone? Elisha said basically the same thing over Elijah. And now king Joash is saying it over Elisha because he's obviously sick and close to death.

“¹⁵ And Elisha said to him, “Take a bow and arrows.” So he took a bow and arrows. ¹⁶ Then he said to the king of Israel, “Draw the bow,” and he drew it. And Elisha laid his hands on the king's hands. ¹⁷ And he said, “Open the window eastward,” and he opened it. Then Elisha said, “Shoot,” and he shot. And he said, “The Lord's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Syria! For you shall fight the Syrians in Aphek until you have made an end of them.”

Now, I want to stop. A couple of things I want you to understand here. Notice he tells him to open an eastward window, and he says, take the bow and draw it back. And so the King did, literally pointing out of an eastward window. First of all, eastward would be toward Syria. Then he says, shoot! And so the king fires an arrow out the window towards Syria.

Now, here's the interesting thing. From what I understand, it was customary back in ancient times to either shoot an arrow or to throw a spear in the direction of your enemy in a way of saying, this is the beginning of hostilities. If you were going to go to war against a country, the king might get his army together. The enemy isn't even there yet, but he would point the arrow toward the enemy's nation, shoot, and fight it, and all the people would know, all the army would know, okay, this is it, we just started. We're going to battle. It was a symbolic statement, if you will.

Now, but the symbolism takes on a greater, more prophetic edge when Elisha says, this is not just the beginning of hostilities. What does he say when king Joash shoots it out the window? He says, this is the arrow of victory, right? So he's prophesying and saying, you will be victorious over Syria. How victorious? How victorious are they going to be? Well, that's what we find out here as we read on. And verse 18 says:

“...Take the arrows,” and he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, “Strike the ground with them.” And he struck three times and stopped. ¹⁹ Then the man of God was angry with him (and this is Elisha speaking here now), “You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck down Syria until you had made an end of it, but now you will strike down Syria only three times.”

It's interesting, isn't it? So God told the king, you will have victory over Syria. But He didn't tell him to what extent their victory would be; He was going to leave that up to the king. He wanted to test the king's passion. How badly do you want to beat Syria? They've been oppressing you for years. Have you become satisfied in your condition of oppression or do you really want to be free? Do you really want to be free?

Elisha says to him, take these arrows and strike the ground with them. The king just got in my mind's eye, and this theater going on in my brain, which you'd be shocked, it plays all the time. He takes these arrows and he just goes doing, and Elisha goes, ah, what? Is that all? Is that all? I mean, does that describe your passion to be free from the oppression of Syria? Why didn't you bang the ground with the thing? Why didn't you express the essence of your passion to say, I want to be free. In that case, you would have been set free. As it is, you'll only defeat them three times, and you will not have a complete victory over your enemy.

Wow. Now, in case some of you are thinking, well, why didn't He tell him, hit it five or six times on the ground, be strong about it? Because he wanted to test

Joash to see, where does your passion lie? Where does your passion lie? Do you really want to be free from the enemy?

You've got to remember something about this man, this king. This is a king who had turned to the Lord, right? He did; he turned to the Lord. But when the Lord delivered him and gave him these victories here that we read about, what did he do? He went back to his old life. See, he wasn't completely dedicated and devoted to the things of the Lord, and he just wanted to be comfortable. It wasn't that he wanted to be completely free.

I think that there's a connection here, people, to Christians who come to the Lord— and maybe they're crying, oh God, I need God to help me or whatever— how much do you want to be free? Take those arrows and strike them against the ground. I think that— you know how Jesus said so many times during His public ministry, according to your faith it will be done to you?

I think about that from time to time. I think, is that a picture of how God deals with us sometimes in our lives? According to our heart, our faith, our devotion, according to the degree of our desire will it be done either for us or to us or with us or whatever. And I think sometimes maybe some of the reasons that we don't see the results that we want is because our hearts just really aren't in it, aren't really saturated with it.

God, I want to be free. Do you really want to be free? That's the question. We can say, yes, I want to be free. But do you really? God has a way of testing and knowing what's really going on in our hearts. And that's what He's doing here to the king.

Verse 20—wow, this Elisha, what a guy. It says:

“So Elisha died, and they buried him. (You know how they buried people. They didn't bury them underground. They put them in caves, which they called tombs, and they sealed them with rocks.) Now bands of Moabites used to invade the land in the spring of the year.” They would invade the land to steal crops when they'd be bringing them in, or they'd steal goods and whatever.

“²¹ And as a man was being buried, behold, a marauding band was seen and the man was thrown into the grave of Elisha, and as soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.”

This is one of the craziest stories in the Bible. I mean, this beats just about everything. Here they are having a funeral procession. They're walking along.

They probably have their funeral music going and the usual Jewish a way of—they're getting ready to bury this guy, and they probably have a way to go to his tomb. Suddenly somebody goes, Moabites! And these Moabites are coming over the horizon.

They know what the Moabites are there to do—they're a marauding band of thieves—and so they're like, ugh, what are we going to do? They're carrying this corpse, right? And so, what do they do? They just throw him in the closest tomb. Then it's like, we don't have any time to get to where we're taking this guy; here, this one's good enough. So they roll the stone away, and they just heave the guy in there and roll him back. Get out of here! And they run. It just happens to be Elisha's tomb. He's dead, been dead.

But it says that when the body of this man—and by the way, they buried people the same day they died, okay? That was the Jewish way. You did not let the sun go down before you buried someone. So this guy had died just that day; we would know that according to tradition. So they throw this guy in, and he touches Elisha's remains, and he revives.

Isn't that creepy? Creepy. I mean, majorly creepy. To wake up in a tomb and be looking around going, what in the world is going on? Well, obviously he got out of there to tell about it because we know the story. So that's fortunate. But anyway, isn't that crazy? Elisha in death! Or maybe I should say the Lord is still working through Elisha, even in death. Wow.

“²² Now Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. ²³ But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, nor has he cast them from his presence until now.

²⁴ When Hazael king of Syria died, Ben-hadad his son became king in his place. (Ben-hadad has the same name as his grandfather. There was a Ben-hadad earlier, if you remember that name. It's not because he's a really long-lived guy; it's his grandson now.) ²⁵ Then Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again from Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities that he had taken from Jehoahaz his father in war. Three times Joash defeated him (just as Elisha had prophesied) and recovered the cities of Israel.” Those are three victories that Elisha told him that he would experience.

Chapter 14:

“In the second year of Joash the son of Joahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, began to reign. (Now we're going to Judah. All right, we're going to the Southern kingdom.)² He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and (look at this) he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddin of Jerusalem.³ And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet not like David his father. He did in all things as Joash his father had done.⁴ But the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.”

Remember the high places were places where worship was not sanctioned. They were only supposed to offer their sacrifices in Jerusalem at the temple. But the people would sacrifice wherever they wanted. They'd go up on the high hills and sacrifice up there. And God did not look favorably upon it because the people were doing things in their own way.

It was like Christians today who just pick and choose what they want to believe. Have you ever met somebody like that? They go through the Bible and they have a cut-and-paste mentality to believing the Bible. They just take out what they don't like, they embrace what they do, and that's the way they live their life. They don't live their lives according to the Word of God. These Christians, they just live their life however they want, however they want.

And that would be a similar sort of an attitude to these Jewish people who worship the Lord however they want to worship the Lord. The king is responsible for removing these kinds of things, and this man did not do it.

Verse 5:

“And as soon as the royal power was firmly in his hand, he struck down his servants who had struck down the king his father. (His father had been assassinated, and so he goes and puts them to death who assassinated his father.)⁶ But he did not put to death the children of the murderers, according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, where the LORD commanded, “Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. But each one shall die for his own sin.”⁷ He struck down ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt and took Sela by storm, and called it Joktheel, which is its name to this day.”

You can see, this king, as he goes into power, he starts off by eliminating those who assassinated his father, and then he goes to war against Edom and has a victory there. Now, you know what battles, when you have victories, can do? It's just like our Christian life. When we have victories in the Christian life, we

can start to become complacent and even a little prideful, and think that somehow we had something to do with it. Maybe we're all that like we really think. That's exactly what's going to be going on with Amaziah. Look what it says in verse 8:

“Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, ‘Come, let us look one another in the face.’” (And that's not an invitation for afternoon tea. That is a threat of warfare.) ⁹ *And Jehoash king of Israel sent word to Amaziah king of Judah, ‘A thistle on Lebanon sent to a cedar on Lebanon, saying, ‘Give your daughter to my son for a wife,’ and a wild beast of Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thistle. ¹⁰ You have indeed struck down Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Be content with your glory, and stay at home, for why should you provoke trouble so that you fall, you and Judah with you?’”* ¹¹ *But Amaziah would not listen. (Are you shocked?) So Jehoash king of Israel went up, and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another in battle at Beth-shemesh, which belongs to Judah. ¹² And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his home.”*

Isn't that interesting? Judah was defeated by Israel. Israel is the nation which is completely given over to paganism. Judah is a godly nation for the most part, but yet God allows them to be defeated by an ungodly kingdom of Israel. Why? Because he was lifted up in pride.

There's a spiritual principle that pride goes before the fall. Pride goes before a time of stumbling, and God is not going to lift that spiritual principle just because these people happen to be godly for the most part. His pride needs to be dealt with. And so He allows Israel to defeat Judah. It *“says every man fled.”*

Verse 13:

“And Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem and (furthermore) broke down the wall of Jerusalem for four hundred cubits, from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. ¹⁴ And he seized all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house (so he pillaged the temple), also hostages, and he returned to Samaria.

¹⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash that he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ¹⁶ And Jehoash slept with his fathers and was

buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel, and Jeroboam his son reigned in his place.

¹⁷ Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. ¹⁸ Now the rest of the deeds of Amaziah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ¹⁹ And they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But they sent after him to Lachish and put him to death there.”

You can imagine he was probably pretty unpopular after going to war against his own kinsmen; and so, the people of Judah were not happy with him and they followed him to Lachish and they killed him there. They assassinated him there.

“²⁰ And they brought him on horses; and he was buried in Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. ²¹ And all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. ²² He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his fathers.

²³ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years.”

This is Jeroboam II. Now he's not the second in the sense of the son of the first Jeroboam, we call him the second because it's just the same name as the guy who was the first king of the Northern kingdom of Israel.

“²⁴ And (we are told that) he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not depart from all the sins of (his namesake) Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin. ²⁵ He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher. ²⁶ For the LORD saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter, for there was none left, bond or free, and there was none to help Israel.”

So God looked upon Israel. He saw their bitter suffering. He was compassionate to them. Well, you think to yourself, why was He compassionate? Because He's a compassionate God.

“²⁷ (For) the Lord had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, so he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

28 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam and all that he did, and his might, how he fought, and how he restored Damascus and Hamath to Judah in Israel, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? 29 And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, the kings of Israel, and Zechariah his son reigned in his place.”

Do we have time to quickly read the next chapter? We'll try to do this fast.

“In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, began to reign.”

Now I need to tell you something very quickly that Azariah is also known as Uzziah. And when you get to 2 Chronicles, and you read these same stories, he's called Uzziah. But he's called Azariah here most of the time. Sometimes they'll just switch and call him Uzziah, just to be confusing. I assume that's probably, it's like, let's throw him a curve here. So anyway,

“2 He was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned (look at this) fifty-two years in Jerusalem. (Wow.) His mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. 3 And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 4 Nevertheless, the high places (again) were not taken away. The people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places. 5 And the LORD touched the king, so that he was a leper to the day of his death, and he lived in a separate house. And Jotham the king's son was over the household, governing the people of the land.”

Now, if you stop there for just a moment. We're not told why Uzziah was made a leper by the hand of the Lord, but we find out in 2 Chronicles that it was because he was prideful. Again, pride became the issue.

He went into the temple to burn incense, which was only for the priests to do. The priests warned him; they said, leave now. And he began to just rail against them. You guys can't tell me what to do. And as he was literally like pointing the bony finger, leprosy just broke out on his body. The priests saw it, and they grabbed him and hustled him out of the temple. He himself, we're told, was anxious to get out of there, too, because he realized God had his number.

He had leprosy for the rest of his life, so he entered into a co-regency with his son, Jotham – meaning that because the king was a leper, he pretty much had to stay out of society, so his son ruled for about ten years really in his place. Uzziah was still credited as the king of Judah, but Jotham was ruling during that time.

“⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Azariah (or Uzziah, if you will), and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (And we do have that book. Not much information here in this one for a reign that endured for 52 years. But anyway.) ⁷ And Azariah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and Jotham his son reigned in his place.

⁸ In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria (look at this) six months. ⁹ And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.

¹⁰ Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him and struck him down (that means assassinated him) at Ibleam and put him to death and reigned in his place. (You can just see that the kingdom of Israel is just a horrible place to live.)

¹¹ Now the rest of the deeds of Zechariah, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (probably a short little passage of six months). ¹² (This was the promise of the Lord that he gave to Jehu, “Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.” And (after that, boom, it was done) and it came to pass.)” In this king.

“¹³ Shallum (the man who did the assassinating), the son of Jabesh began to reign in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah (look, now we switch his name, Uzziah) king of Judah, and he reigned one month in Samaria. ¹⁴ Then Menahem the son of Gadi came up from Tirzah and came to Samaria, and he struck down Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and put him to death and reigned in his place.

¹⁵ Now the rest of the deeds of Shallum, and the conspiracy that he made, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ¹⁶ At that time Menahem sacked Tiphshah and all who were in it and its territory from Tirzah on, because they did not open it to him.”

The idea here is that they wouldn't open their gates to him because they probably didn't recognize him as king. He was an assassin who took the throne through assassination. So it goes on to say here in verse 16:

“Therefore he sacked it, and he ripped open all the women in it who were pregnant.” Now this is terrible, but what isn't clear about this is where this actually took place. Apparently, there were two cities with a name that was very similar to this Tiphshah. One was located on the Euphrates River, and it was in

some territory that had been won by the Second Jeroboam – and that would have been outside of Israel.

The other city that's very similar to this would have been in Israel, which would mean that this man would have done this against his own kinsmen, which is a terrible thing to do. But either way, we're looking at an act of brutality that shows that Israel has now become very much like their neighbors, like the Syrians, like the Moabites, and so forth, becoming brutal and cruel in their dealings with people.

“¹⁷ In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi began to reign over Israel, and he reigned ten years in Samaria. ¹⁸ And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not depart all his days from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.

¹⁹ Pul the king of Assyria came against the land (Now, this is the first mention we've had of Assyria. Don't confuse Assyria with Syria. Different nations. All right, so the king of Assyria now comes against the land) and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that he might help him to confirm his hold on the royal power. ²⁰ Menahem exacted the money from Israel, that is, from all the wealthy men, fifty shekels of silver from every man, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back and did not stay there in the land.”

In other words, Menahem paid him off, and the king of Assyria withdrew. But of course, you give somebody money like that, that's not a huge incentive to stay away.

“²¹ Now the rest of the deeds of Menahem and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ²² And Menahem slept with his fathers, and Pekahiah his son reigned in his place.

²³ In the fiftieth year of Azariah (or, again, Uzziah) king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned two years. ²⁴ And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin. ²⁵ And Pekah (sounds very similar to Pekahiah, but it's not; Pekah, who is the captain of the army, it's) the son of Remaliah...conspired against him with fifty men of the people of Gilead, and struck him down in Samaria, in the citadel of the king's house with Argob and Arieah; he put him to death and reigned in his place. (So again, you have another military assassination in Israel.)

²⁶ Now the rest of the deeds of Pekahiah and all that he did, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

²⁷ In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned twenty years. ²⁸ And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin. (Boy, we're getting tired of that refrain, aren't we?)

²⁹ In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and captured (a bunch of cities; you'll notice they're listed there) Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and he carried the people captive to Assyria.”

This is the beginning of the Assyrian takeover of the Northern kingdom of Israel. Again, Assyria would just take people away, carry them off into captivity.

“³⁰ Then Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah and struck him down and put him to death and reigned in his place, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.”

So this man named Hoshea, ascends to the throne, like many who came before him, through assassination. This Hoshea guy is going to take over the throne just in time to see the nation of Israel, the Northern kingdom, go down the tubes.

“³¹ Now the rest of the acts of Pekah and all that he did, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.”

All right, from now on— well, for a bit here anyway, the author is going to freeze the history on the Northern kingdom for just a bit so that he can focus on the Southern kingdom of Judah.

“³² In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign. ³³ He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerusha the daughter of Zadok.”

And again, what we're not told here is that the first 10 years of Jotham's reign was that co-regency with his father who was a leper. We're not told that, but that was the case.

“³⁴ And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done. ³⁵ Nevertheless, the high places were not removed. (There's that familiar refrain.) The people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places. He built the upper gate of the house of the LORD. ³⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ³⁷ In those days the LORD began to send Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah. (I know it says that these guys have already died, but it's just saying in those days of that king.) ³⁸ Jotham slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Ahaz his son reigned in his place.”