

Elisha: A PROPHET TO A WAYWARD NATION

LESSONS FOR OUR DAY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

- 1 LESSON #1: **ELISHA:** *Man of God* - 1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 19-25; 4:1-7;38-41, 42-44; 6:1-7
- 5 LESSON #2: **TAKING MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS** - 2 Kings 3
- 9 LESSON #3: **BEHOLD, I THOUGHT . . .** - 2 Kings 5:1-27
- 13 LESSON #4: **SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS** - 2 Kings 6
- 17 LESSON #5: **SPIRITUAL HARDNESS** - 2 Kings 6:24-7:20
- 21 LESSON #6: **WHERE IS GOD?** - 2 Kings 8-9
- 23 LESSON #7: **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES** - 2 Kings 13



ELISHA: Man of God

And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said . . . I will follow thee. . . . then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him

God is continually seeking those who have wandered from the faith and those who are lost. He goes to great lengths to bring them home.

I can say this with confidence. God's mercy is continually portrayed in the Scriptures. This can especially be seen in the amazing ministries of the Old Testament prophets — Elijah and Elisha. They are two of the more notable prophets sent by God to the wayward northern kingdom of Israel. Their combined ministries lasted 86-years and ministered to six kings.

Often missed during this time period are the school of prophets stationed in at least three cities in the northern kingdom. They were headed by both Elijah and Elisha. Those schools resided in Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho.

The first king of the northern kingdom (Jeroboam) made it impossible for the biblical priesthood, Scribes and Levites to be faithful to their call and remain in the north. Therefore, they left Israel and moved to Judah. However, God did not abandon the people. The schools of the prophets remained in the north, ministering to the wayward nation.

Fifty-four years after Israel divided into two nations, the religious conditions in the north worsened. It became so bad under the reign of King Ahab that a man by the name of Obadiah hid 100 of the prophets in a cave in order to keep them from being killed by the king.

The nation's disregard of God led to flagrant acts of sin. Open paganism filled the country. Sexual perversion, violence and corruption erupted at every level. Justice on the whole failed.

Under King Ahab and Jezebel, the nation reached a new spiritual low. It was so bad that even the great prophet Elijah believed he was the only one left. But God revealed to him that there were 7000 who had not yet bow their knee to Baal.

God used Elijah to show Israel the powerlessness of paganism. The three year drought brought crushing blows to Israel's faith in Baal, the storm god. The water shortage brought the people to their knees. This was climaxed with the destruction of 450 prophets of Baal along with another 400 prophets of Ashteroth. This all happen in one day. It was a major defeat for paganism.

God then instructed Elijah to anoint his successor, (Elisha) and the next King of Israel, (Jehu) and the king of Syria (Hazeal). Their reigns continued to loosen the grip of persecution and violence that plagued the land. Though paganism was not abolished, there would be more room for the message of God to spread in the north.

Through these acts we can see God is continually seeking to reach those that have wandered from the faith or are lost. He goes to great lengths to bring them home.

If you are struggling with your faith, please note that God has not given up on you. If you think God has given up on your love ones, think again. God is still reaching out to them.

Today, we will look at the ministry of Elisha. He is Elijah's successor. In many ways He is strikingly different than Elisha.

Elijah dressed in camel hair clothing and lived in poor and rural areas. Whereas, Elisha was from a wealthy family and more comfortable dressed in the common apparel while dwelling in cities and towns.

Both prophets boldly confronted kings. However, Elijah was more confrontational, even challenging the prophets of Baal and Ashteroth to a showdown. He was designed to challenge and strike down paganism.

While Elisha still confronted paganism, his ministry focused on rebuilding the school of the prophets and restoring the faith of the remnant in the north. He knew that by strengthening the faithful, they in turn would be able to bring the message of life to a wayward nation.

In our lesson today, we find God remembering his own. Furthermore, we find God still reaches out to the lost and hurting, even in times of apostasy and open rebellion.

1. **What do we learn of Elisha's dedication to the Lord in 1 Kings 19:19-21?**

2. When we read 2 Kings 2, eight years have past since we first heard of Elisha. There is only one passage that gives us any insight to those eight years. It is found in 2 Kings 3:11. **What do we learn about Elisha and leadership?**

3. **What can we learn about the school of the prophets in the following passages. (2 Kings 2:3, 5; 4:38; 5:22.**

4. Elisha performed a number of unusual miracles for those associated with the sons of the prophets. He healed the polluted waters in Jericho (2 Kings 2:19-22). He provided oil to a prophet's widow. (2 Kings 4:1-7). He healed a pot of food that was accidentally poisoned (2 Kings 4:38-41). During the feast of firstfruits, he multiplied 20 loaves of bread to feed 100 guests (2 Kings 4:42-44), and he recovered a lost ax head by having it float to the surface of the water (2 Kings 6:1-7). In Bethel (a place where a school of the prophets resided) he cursed an blasphemous mob of young men and 42 of them were mauled by two she bears (2 Kings 2:23-25). **What was the purpose of these miracles?**

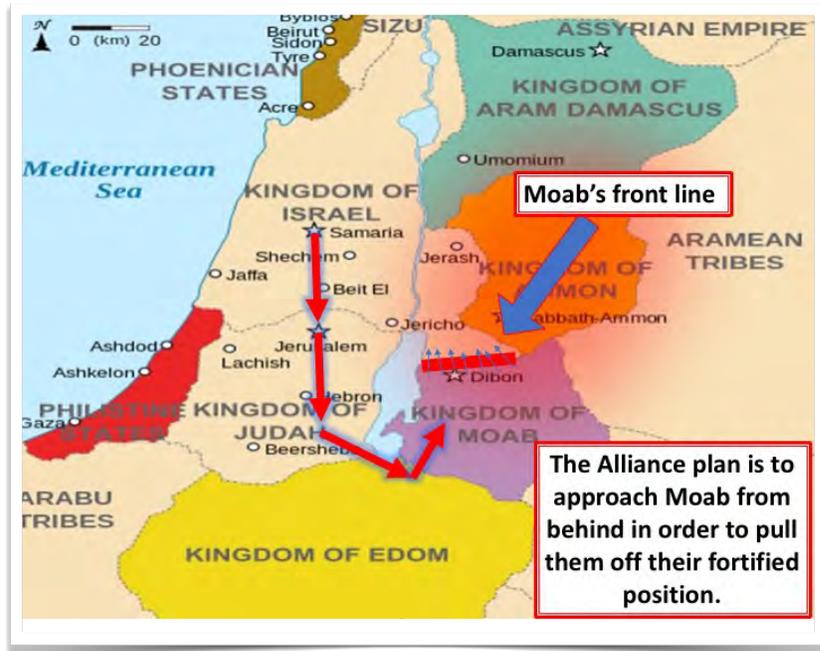
5. **Discuss the miracle found in 2 Kings 2:19-22 an its application.**

6. **Discuss the miracle found in 2 Kings 2:23-25 an its application.**

WHEN WE TAKE MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS

Most of us know what it is like when we take matters into our own hands without first seeking guidance from the Lord. We all know how that worked out for Abraham.

One time he left the Promised Land without asking God. He moved to Egypt because of a famine, and out of fear he ended up lying about his wife. He said she was his sister. Then the king of Egypt took Sarah with the intent of marrying her. It took a divine act of God to deliver Sarah and Abraham from the mess he created.



Another time, he attempted to fulfill the promise God made about a son. Instead of waiting on God's timing he took Sarah's servant Hagar to father a child. What a disaster that turned out to be. Sarah was plagued with envy and jealousy. Hagar was cruel to Sarah. The issue compounded itself many times over when Sarah bore Isaac. Ishmael taunted Isaac. Abraham's heart was broken when God told him to send Hagar and Ismael away. Then for centuries a conflict continued between Ishmael's descendants (Edom) and Isaac's descendants (Israel).

This all happened because someone got out of step with God. Problems like this can get really out of control, that is, unless God intercedes. Otherwise, everything will go up in smoke.

Have you ever been there? Are you in one of those death spirals of your own making? It is amazing the messes we can find ourselves — debt, bad relationships, business and family problems. It is possible for things to get so bad that lives can be lost. That is what we find in our lesson this morning. An entire army could be wiped out, and several nations crippled.

In this study, we will find people doing what seemed to be right, but they did so without first seeking God's wisdom on the matter.

1. What was King Jehoram's spiritual state? (2 Kings 3:1-3)

What does it mean when it says, "Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom."

What were the sins of Jeroboam? (see 1 Kings 12:32-33)

2. What did Jehoram's brother (the previous king of Israel) try to do to Elijah? — 2 Kings 1:2-4, 9-15.

Discuss how Ahaziah's actions against Elijah might effect Elisha's relation to King Jehoram — (2 Kings 3:14).

3. What problem was king Jehoram trying to solve? — 2 Kings 3:4-6

4. What was the battle plan? — 2 Kings 3:7-8. Why does this plan make a lot of sense from a human standpoint?

5. What is wrong with the Alliance's plan? — 2 Kings 3:7-8; 1 Kings 19:2

6. Discuss the disaster that followed — 2 Kings 3:9-10. Why did Jehoram blame the Lord for their predicament?

7. Discuss God's deliverance — 2 Kings 3:11-18, 20-27.

8. Discuss the following insights:

First, Jehoshaphat should have known better. How does this relate to us?

Second, what was Elisha doing in Moab? What can we learn from this?

Third: What would have happened if Jehoshaphat had not called for a prophet? How can this be applied to us?

Fourth, God delivered them from a disaster, but He called the kings to step out on faith first. Does this act relate to what God may do in our lives?

Fifth, God is revealing Himself to a wayward people. What can we learn from this?

BEHOLD, I Thought

He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.



Where did Naaman ever get the idea that Elisha would dramatically call on the name of the LORD and strike his hand over the place of his leprosy to recover him from his disease?

In every age there have been false prophets, and teachers. Scripture says, “there were **false** prophets also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” — 2 Peter 2:1. No doubt Naaman had seen his share of false prophets within the ranks of Dagon, Baal and Astaroth. He may have even heard of those within the ranks of Judaism and expected the same from Elisha.

The Scriptures have much to say about false prophets. We are told that “many shall follow their pernicious ways . . . and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: . . . beguiling unstable souls . . . *speaking* great swelling words of vanity. They promise . . . liberty, *but* they themselves are the

servants of corruption. . . . for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Peter 2; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

This lesson will examine Naaman’s healing. He is a Syrian general; an enemy of Israel, but God heals him. In this miracle we find a portrait of grace. That is, we are saved by God’s grace through faith *in Christ*; and that not of ourselves: “it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Yet Satan sought to mar this amazing portrait of grace by using another prophet’s greed to corrupt the work of God.

1. List and discuss the six features given about Naaman in 2 Kings 5:1, 6.

ANSWER:

- a. He was _____ of the Host of the King of _____ – 2 Kings 5:1a
 - b. He was also a _____ – 2 Kings 5:6
 - c. He was a _____ with his Master – 2 Kings 5:1b
 - d. He was an _____ man – 2 Kings 5:1c
 - e. He was a _____ of _____ – 2 Kings 5:1d
 - f. “. . .but he was a _____. – 2 Kings 5:1e
2. **Discuss this phrase**, “that by him (Naaman) the LORD had given deliverance to Syria” (2 Kings 5:1c). Syria was a neighbor and enemy of Israel. Even Naaman’s wife’s servant was an Israelite, captured in a Syrian raid, and sold into slavery. **How could the LORD give deliverance to Syria and at the same time be LORD of Israel?**
3. **Discuss Naaman’s disease and its physical and spiritual relevance to what God is conveying in this account.**
4. **Read 2 Kings 5:2, 4 and discuss the role of Naaman’s wife’s servant and how her example is helpful to us.**
5. **Read 2 Kings 5:5-6 and discuss how Naaman planned on using the supplies he gathered. Besides silver and gold, what other items did Naaman bring with him?**
Calculate the monetary value of Naaman’s silver and gold at today’s market value. Silver today sells at \$18 an ounce. Gold sells today at \$1200 an ounce. Naaman brought ten talents of silver, which weighs approximately 750 lbs and 6,000 pieces of gold weighing approximately 150 lbs. How much money did he bring with him?

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Besides the physical state called blindness, that is the condition of being unable to see because of injury, disease, or a congenital condition. There are other effects we call blindness which are due to the lack of perception, awareness, or judgment; ignorance.

In the case of perceptual blindness our minds are usually darkened because we fill it with wrong information. We call it being deceived. Men can be blinded by science, tradition and even religion, when the information they come to trust is flawed. Scripture confirms this when it says,

We are not to walk “as other Gentiles walk, **in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened**, being alienated from the life of God **through the ignorance that is in them**, because of **the blindness of their heart**: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all

uncleanness with greediness” — Ephesians 4:17-19.

In Jesus’s day the Pharisees were blinded by their traditions. Because of them many could not grasp the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. Scripture tells us that

“*even though he (Jesus) had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him*” — John 12:37

The people hardened their heart to truth. They could not let go of what they believed to be true, even after it was proven to be flawed. Therefore, when Jesus continued to perform miracles in their presence, instead of their hearts softening to the gospel, their hearts hardened. The more Jesus did, the more resistant they became.

Scripture repeatedly speaks of this hardening process. First men resist the truth. The more often they resist, the harder they become. At a certain point it is no longer men who are hardening their hearts, it is God. The more



revelation God provides, the angrier and more stubborn men become.

John 12:40 speaks of this fact when it says,

“He (*God*) hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted.”

In this account, we will find human minds filled with tainted information. As a result, their minds are darkened and their heart hardened.

It is staggering to think of just how many souls have missed coming to Christ, or missed heaven or missed finding peace because their minds were filled with misleading information that darkened their understanding regarding the truth.

To further complicate man’s frail condition, we must add a few other features that compound the darkening of our souls — our depraved nature, sin and Satan.

Scripture makes it clear that we are all born with a sin nature. It says, “by one man sin

entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” — Romans 5:12.

No one is exempt. Apart from God “there is none righteous, no, not one.” Apart from God, “there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

Therefore, the natural man is blind to spiritual things. Apart from God in Christ we would remain dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from God. For “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” — Cor. 2:14.

In our lesson, we will encounter spiritual blindness on three levels: natural man’s blindness — 2 Kings 6:8-15; 21-23; supernatural blindness — 2 Kings 6:18-20 and the believers blindness – 2 Kings 6:15-17.

1. Look up the following verses and discuss the different ways men’s minds are blinded from finding the Truth.

- a. _____ blinds the mind and darkens the human heart to truth — 1 John 2:11; Revelation 3:17.
- b. Resisting the _____ hardens the heart — Romans 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:14-15
- c. _____ can blind the mind — 2 Corinthians 4:4

2. In what ways did king Ben-hadad of Syria demonstrate his blindness to God’s power? — 2 Kings 6:8-14.

How does this apply to us?

3. Why did Ben-hadad send a great army to take Elisha, why not an elite group of warriors, like our Navy Seals? - 2 Kings 6:14-15 ; 2 Kings 1:9-13.

How does this event help us?

4. Discuss four cases where God supernaturally blinded people to their surroundings. How do these events help us?

a. Genesis 19:5-11

b. Luke 4:28-31

c. Acts 5:17-20; 12:3-19

d. 2 Kings 6:18-20

5. Discuss the blindness of Elisha's servant found in 2 Kings 6:15-17. Why couldn't he see the heavenly host at first, as Elisha did? What spiritual application does this have for the believer?

6. It is interesting to note that these miracles did not change the King of Syria. Instead of raiding parties, he attacked Israel head on — 2 Kings 6:24. Nor did it make the king of Israel a faithful follower. In 2 Kings 6:31 we find the king of Israel sending a messenger to behead Elisha. **What can we learn from this?**

SPIRITUAL HARDNESS

2 Kings 6:24-7:20

If you have been a Christian for a while you have watched people make a profession of faith in Christ followed by dramatic changes in his or hers life. It's exciting to see their new joy. But then a difficult trial hits. Their faith is shaken. They stop coming to church. They begin to avoid other Christians. Soon they are back into their old ways. And you wonder, "What happened? Was their conversion genuine?"



Jesus explains what I just described in the parable of the sower. He says the seeds of the gospel fall on four kinds of soil: the hard road; the thin soil over a hard-rocky layer; the soil infested with thorns; and, the good soil.

What I just described is the seed that fell on rocky soil. In Jesus' own words He says, "And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended." (Mark 4:16-17). Sadly, neither they, nor the

thorny ground appear to bear fruit unto eternal life.

When we look at the book of Hebrews, we find the author is concerned with the same thing. He is troubled that his readers may be on the rocky soil on which the seed of the gospel was sown. When affliction or persecution arises in their life the truth about God withers. It never finds any root in their heart.

They were in danger of going back to a more comfortable life in their old Jewish religion because of the imminent threat of persecution in their newfound Christian faith. So, as he concludes his comparison showing Jesus' superiority over Moses, he says that we are God's

house, but then adds, “if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope” (3:6).

He illustrates his point with a story from Jewish history that all of his readers knew well, the story of Israel in the wilderness. He quotes the latter half of Psalm 95, which in its entirety was the call to worship in the Jewish synagogues. It tells about a people who had been redeemed from Egypt by applying the blood of the Passover lamb to their homes.

They had been “baptized” into Moses through the cloud that enveloped them through the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:2). They had eaten the heavenly manna and drank water from the rock. Seemingly, they were a “redeemed” people. Yet, as Paul states, “with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness” (1 Cor. 10:5). As he goes on to say, “these things happened as examples,” so that we would not fall into their same sins.

The author of Hebrews uses this story to make the same point. He is warning us against the soul-damaging sin of hardness of heart. He is saying, “to avoid hardness of heart, we must submit our selves to God’s Word and God’s ways, especially in times of trial.”

Such is the situation we find in 2 Kings 6:24f. The King of Israel, along with the entire nation of Israel had been privileged to see and/or to hear of the amazing power of God. Elijah demonstrated God’s power by performing nine miracles, and Elisha had at this point in history performed fourteen recorded miracles.

Elisha divided the Jordan River (2 Kings 2:14); he floated an ax head (2 Kings 6:1-7); he healed Naaman, the Syrian general from leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-14); he healed the waters of Jericho (2 Kings 2:19-22); he sent two female bears to maul irreverent youths (2 Kings 2:23-25); he multiplied a widow supply of oil (2 Kings 4:1-7); he prayed that a barren woman would conceive and give birth (2 Kings 4:8-17); he raised a child from the dead (2 Kings 4:18-37); he struck Gehazi, his disobedient servant with leprosy (2 Kings 5:15-27); he multiplied loaves of bread (2 Kings 4:41-44); he purified a poisoned stew (2 Kings 4:38-40); he delivered Israel, Judah and Edom from Moab (2 Kings 3:12-27); he prayed special sight would be given his servant in order to see the spiritual realms (2 Kings 6:16-17); he prayed the Lord would blind the Syrian army, and he then led them into the very midst of Israel’s capital (2 Kings 6:8-23).

How much more revelation does the King of Israel need in order to believe? How much more revelation does the nation of Israel need to believe that the LORD is on the throne? How much more revelation does the enemies of Christ need before they turn away from their false gods to the true and living God?

This lesson will examine 2 Kings 6:24-7:20 and show the spiritual hardness of men. First the hardness of Ben-hadad king of Syria, the enemy of Israel — (2 Kings 6:24), second, the hardness of the people of Israel — (2 Kings 6:28f) and finally, the hardness of Israel’s leaders — (2 Kings 6:26, 30-31; 7:2).

1. List and then discuss the various forms of revelation granted the Syrian kings (2 Kings 5:1, 4-6, 14; 2 Kings 6:12, 18-20).

2. Why did the King of Syria continue to attack Israel (2 Kings 6:24) with his entire army when he knew the God of Israel through the prophet Elisha was able to blind and ensnare an army brigade. (see 2 Kings 7:6-7, 15)

Why did Elisha's actions seem to have little impact?

What do we learn from this?

3. What did Israel's trial with Syria's aggression reveal about the heart of the people? (2 Kings 6:24-25, 28-29, 2 Kings 7:16-17).

4. Review the special revelation granted King Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1, 10-19; 2 Kings 5:1-4; 2 Kings 6:8-11).

After all Elisha did in the past, why did King Jehoram seek to decapitate Elisha (2 Kings 6:31)?

5. What insights can we learn from God allowing the calamity to befall Israel?

6. What can we do to avoid hardening our heart to spiritual things?

WHERE IS GOD

God's divine dealings with human government, nations and men

On the surface of everyday life, whether in ancient Israel or our modern world, there are news stories of nations firing weapons at each other. The Scriptures are filled with reports of aggressive acts made by world leaders who threaten the stability of nations. The annals of history are filled with accounts of conflicts, escalation and death.



Today's headlines speak of Iranian fast boats intimidating naval vessels in the Persian Gulf; North Korea firing Ballistic missiles over Japan's airspace; or Hamas sending suicide bombers into Tel Aviv. They are no different than the 9th Century BC Syrian king Ben-hadad sending raiding parties into Israel, or the Assyrian empire breaking treaties in order to subdue the middle east.

Do we not hear of nations breaking binding treaties in our day? We are told if their actions are left unchecked, an entire region of the world would be turned upside down. It wasn't any different in Elisha's day.

Today, we turn to our local or national news reports and hear of unrest, political wrangling, economic crisis, natural disasters and suffering. Yet these headlines were just as real in Elisha's day as it is in our day. In fact, our lesson this morning describes two coup d'état's set in motion by the Prophet

Elisha. They result in the assassination of three kings, the annihilation of two dynasties and the Middle East turned upside down.

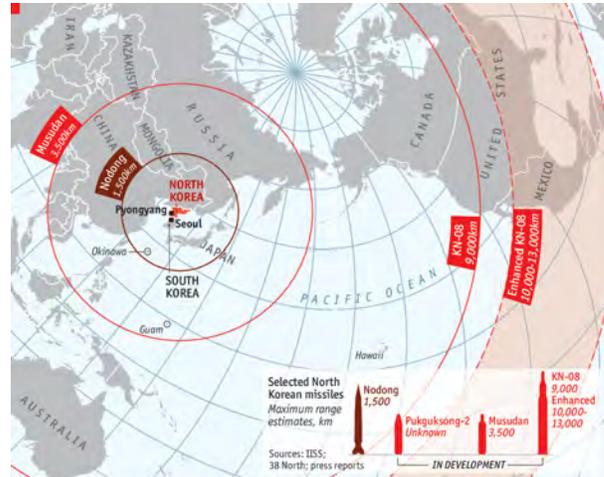
The Arab spring of 2011 through 2013 was child's play in comparison to the political transformation that took place in Elisha's day. The names may be different, the playing field may be larger, but the global intrigue and violence has not changed.

However, in this lesson, I want to go beyond the report of another day in the turbulent history of the Middle East. God has given us these accounts for a reason. He wants us to understand Him better. In fact, we will learn a lot about the depravity of man and God's sovereign control over His creation.

There are three features we will discover in today's lesson. First, God is in control and is sovereign over all nations and governments. Despite the evil we see unfolding in the

world, God still has His hand on the steering wheel of history. Second, God is faithful to His Word, even if a great deal of time passes. He does not forget His promises. Third, God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked. Don't ever think for one minute that the wicked acts of the unrighteous will go unpunished. Though time may pass, God does not forget. They will meet their end, and it will not be pleasant.

Let's visit the headlines of the past so we might understand the workings of God today.



1. In 2 Kings 8:7 and in 2 Kings 9:1 we find the prophet Elisha setting in motion two coup d'état's resulting in the assassination of three kings and the end of two dynasties. **Discuss Elisha's dealings with Syria in 2 Kings 8:7-15 and with Israel in 2 Kings 9:1-3.**
2. **What insights can we gain from the above events? (see Isaiah 40:15, 17, 22-24; Romans 13:1-5).**
3. **Twenty years before we get to our passage, God spoke to a discouraged prophet and commanded him to execute three things — 1 Kings 19:15-18. What was Elijah to do?**
4. **Elijah executed only one of the three items commanded in 1 Kings 19:15-18. Why? What can we learn from this?**
5. **Discuss 2 Kings 9:4-10 and compare it with 1 Kings 19:15-16; 1 Kings 21:21-24. What do we learn about God from these accounts?**

MISSEID

OPPORTUNITIES



Today we are going to examine a man who needed help. He was over his head with troubles. Part of the problem came from the poor choices his father and grandfather made. The other part of the problem came from his weak secular faith.

His life was entangled with worldly pursuits. He was nominally religious. He sometimes prayed. He knew the rituals associated with worship. He occasionally attended services.

He knew some of the stories of the faith, but that was it. He claimed to belong to the Lord, but the Scriptures report, “he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord and followed the sins” (*of those who went before him*) — 2 Kings 13:3.

How many “Christians” fall into this camp. People who are nominally religious, following the steps of their worldly parents or friends, instead of following the steps of their Lord.

Such was the life of Joash, king of Israel. He was better than the previous dynasty of Ahab and Jezebel, but he was still religiously secular and evil. His acts stirred the wrath of the Lord.

Amazingly, God still had mercy on this new King. 2 Kings 13:23-25 says, “the LORD was gracious unto them (*Israel*), and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet. . . . And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.”

In our lesson we will find Jehoash (*sometimes called, Joash*) overwhelmed with personal, political and national troubles. Even though God was gracious unto him, he could of had more, but he lacked faith. God offered to help him, but it required simple faith on his part.

All he had to do was comply with God’s simple instructions. They were not hard. In fact, it was downright simple. So simple that a four year old could accomplish what was asked. But that was the problem. He must have thought the command to be foolish. So he half-heartedly obeyed. Sadly, he failed to receive all that God would have done for him.

This is the point of today’s lesson. God often works in conjunction with our willingness to step out in faith. God asks us to do simple things, and He does the rest. God asked Moses to raise his rod over the Red Sea. This took faith on Moses’ part to stand before the people and raise his rod. What if God did nothing? Moses would have looked foolish. But Moses had faith that God would perform that which He promised. Moses raised his rod in faith and God divided the Red Sea.

God asked Moses to strike the rock, and God promised that when he did, water would flow from the rock. This took faith on Moses’ part. He had to stand before the people and strike the rock. Moses would have looked foolish if God did nothing. But Moses had faith that God would perform that which He promised. So in faith, Moses struck the rock, and God did the rest. The same was true when God asked Moses to throw a tree into the bitter waters of Marah to purify it. Moses had to step out in faith, and God healed the water.

God works in conjunction with our willingness to step out in faith. He asks that we have the faith the size of a mustard seed. Therefore, He asks us to do simple things in order to strengthen our faith, and He does the rest.

Such was the case with Joash. He was asked to do a simple thing but he failed to grasp the opportunities that God literally placed in his hands. His lack of faith cost him and his nation dearly.

1. Examine the following passages and discuss Joash’s problem.

- a. What was happening to Elisha? — 2 Kings 13:14
- b. Discuss what happened to the kingdom under Joash’s father’s rule — 2 Kings 13:4-7, 9.
- c. As the new king of Israel, what kind of problems was Joash facing?

