

2 Kings 5-8 • Chapter Study

INTRO

The next chs are set against the backdrop of an on-going contest between the Northern Kingdom of Israel and **Syria** which lies on their N&E.

Syria's early history was a bit like ancient Greece.

It was made up of several city-states; powerful cities that controlled the regions around them.

The mayor of each city was like a king over his region.

Eventually, **Damascus** rose to dominate the other Syrians city-states, forging an over-arching kingdom.

The King's **title** was Ben-Hadad = Son of Hadad = The chief Syrian deity.

Ch5

We looked at vs 1-15 a few Sundays ago in the message "**Humbling**." In summary ...

A cease-fire's been called btwn Israel and Syria.

Naaman, commander of the Syrian forces is a man of honor; a favorite of the people & king.

He comes down with the dreaded disease of leprosy.

One of his servants is a young Jewish girl who suggests the Prophet Elisha may be able to heal him.

So Naaman gets permission and makes the trip to Israel.

Elisha tells him to dunk himself in the Jordan River and he'll be healed.

Naaman at first balks because the Jordan is a bit of a joke as far as rivers go.

But his friends persuade him to give it a try and sure enough, he's healed. So

¹⁵ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant."

Naaman becomes a believer **in** & follower **of** Yahweh.

¹⁶ But he [Elisha] said, "As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing." And he urged him to take *it*, but he refused.

Nothing prohibited Elisha accepting this gift. But he sensed he wasn't supposed to.

All the emphasis and attention was to be on Naaman receiving **FROM** God.

Not doing something to **merit**, to **earn** what he was given.

¹⁷ So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant [meaning Naaman] be given 2 mule-loads of earth [dirt]; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord. Which is saying something because in the ancient world, devotion to the local god was an issue of **loyalty**; **patriotism**.

By refusing to worship the Syrian idols and instead worshipping Yahweh, ISRAEL'S God, he could be accused by his enemies of being a traitor.

This is what happened to Shadrach, Meshech & Abed-Nego when they were tossed into the fiery furnace by the Babylonian King Neb, in the book of Daniel

It's what happened to Daniel himself a bit later when the Persians took over.

This is what fueled the persecution of Christians in the 2nd & 3rd Cs in the Roman Empire.

The main charge against them was that their **refusal** to worship the Roman gods was **DANGEROUS!!!**

It imperiled everyone else because **angered** those gods and goddesses.

Namaan asked for some dirt so he could make an altar to worship God at.

But he has do do things covertly, so ...

¹⁸ Yet in this thing may the Lord pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord please pardon your servant in this thing." ¹⁹ Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a short distance.

While Namaan was now a committed worshipper of Yahweh, as a Syrian official, there'd be times he'd have to accompany the king to the temple of Rimmon, their name for Baal; the god of war.

He asks Elisha if that's okay. Elisha consents & sends him on his way with a blessing.

This yields important insight into how to conduct ourselves in a fallen world.

Elisha didn't tell Naaman to shout out "BLASPHEMY!" when he went to Rimmon's temple.

No command was given for Naaman to topple Rimmon's idol.

For that matter, he didn't even say, "Don't go."

Listen: We live in a fallen world given over to the worship of idols that come today in the form of godless ideologies.

We're not called to rail against them *on their turf*.

We *don't honor* them. We *don't bow our knee* to them.

But we don't *scream* about how stupid they are *where they're worshipped by the lost*.

Don't stand in the middle of the mall and rail against greed.

Don't stand in the quad of the local college and decry the stupidity of secularism.

They accomplish nothing but make us look foolish and raise hostility toward the Gospel.

We certainly don't allow such things in our homes and church because God's given us authority there.

But we don't have authority over the public square.

So our mode there is the same as Naaman's in Rimmon's temple.

Let the life cultivated in your relationship with God SHOW the superiority of The Gospel to the empty ideologies of man.

Win the lost by the beauty of your conversion, not the anger of your attacks on their emptiness.

Naaman's healing teaches us God doesn't just love & care for Israel. He loves all people; all nations.

And He's intimately aware of what's going on all over the planet.

Though Naaman was a potential enemy of the Jews, he lived by the light he'd received & realized truth was bigger than what he'd learned so far.

God blessed him & gave him success in all he set his hand to so that he came to the attention & favor of the Syrian king.

Once in that position, he contracted leprosy; a career- & life-ending threat.

But it was part of God's plan; a great blessing wrapped in the package of hardship.

Because: Naaman needed to get to Israel so he could learn about the real God.

God even allowed one of His own, a Jewish girl, to be taken in a raid so she could tell Naaman where healing could be found.

Once healed, Naaman couldn't do what was expected & reward Elisha because it would have short-circuited the lesson Yahweh is a God of grace. His blessing cannot be bought.

It can only be received by humble faith.

Next time a skeptic asks you what happens to the guy who's never heard the Gospel, remember the story of Naaman God knows how to reveal Himself to those who genuinely seek Him.

²⁰ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said,

This is an internal dialog he had with himself.

"Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but *as* the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him."²¹ So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw

him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, "*Is all well?*"²² And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me, [**liar!**] saying, 'Indeed, just now 2 young men of the sons of the prophets have come

to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and 2 changes of garments.'"²³ So Naaman said, "Please, take 2 talents." And he urged him, and bound 2 talents of silver in 2 bags,

About \$50K in silver – a LOT of money in that time!

with 2 changes of garments, and handed *them* to 2 of his servants; and they carried *them* on ahead of him.²⁴

When he came to the citadel, he took *them* from their hand, and stored *them* away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed.²⁵ Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where *did you go*, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere."

One lie leads to another, to another, to another.

²⁶ Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go *with you* when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? *Is it* time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?"

Gehazi had only received silver and clothes. So what's this about groves, vineyards, flocks and servants?

Ah! No doubt that's all the stuff Gehazi was scheming to DO with the treasure he now had.

Not only did Elisha know what he'd **DONE**, he knew what he was **thinking!**

²⁷ Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous, *as white as snow*.

Gehazi's an example of those who want to make a buck off the things of God.

Judas was cut from the same cloth.

These guys hover round the edge of things, always alert to those God's blessing is on.

Then they present themselves as assistants, claiming they just want to help.

They angle for position to line their pockets off the generosity of those whose lives are changed.

The leprosy that came on him was an outward manifestation of the greed consuming his soul.

Ch6

¹ And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. ² Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell." So he answered, "Go." ³ Then one said, "Please consent to go with your servants." And he answered, "I will go."

A revival breaks out under Elisha's ministry.

The school of the prophets grows and needs more room.

The timber is by the Jordan and the workers don't want to be parted from their leader so they ask him to go with them.

⁴ So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. ⁵ But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron *ax head* fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas, master! For it was borrowed." They're chopping away when one guy's borrowed axe-head comes off and falls into the river.

Iron tools were extremely hard to come by so this was a major loss.

⁶ So the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw *it* in there; and he made the iron float. ⁷ Therefore he said, "Pick *it* up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it.

This is no *David Copperfield/Criss Angel* slight of hand illusion. Iron doesn't float!

And the stick Elisha threw in didn't "do" something that caused the axe-head to come to the surface.

This was a miracle!

Elisha threw the stick so those watching would learn; when God performs a miracle, He uses an agent.

It's God's power, but that power travels thru the faith of His people.

That stick was nothing but Elisha's way to demonstrate **his dependence on God**.

Then, when the axe-head surfaced, he told the man to go get it.

He **could have** made the axe-head appear back on the end of the axe-handle, or in the man's hand.

God did it **this way** to teach

When it comes to faith, He does what only He can do, but looks for us to open the door for Him to do it.

Okay: Some time passes & now it's **back** to war btwn Israel & Syria.

Since Rob covered this two Sundays ago, we'll just skim it tonight. Great story!

⁸ Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "My camp *will be* in such and such a place." ⁹ And the man of God [**Elisha**] sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there." ¹⁰ Then the king of Israel sent *someone* to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. ¹¹ Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?"

Relations between Syria & Israel have deteriorated and they are again at war.

Problem is, whatever plans the Syrians make, God tells Elisha, who warns the king of Israel.

After a while, the Syrian king concludes he must have a leak.

¹² And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who *is* in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." ¹³ So he said, "Go and see where he *is*, that I may send and get him." And it was told him, saying, "Surely *he is* in Dothan." ¹⁴ Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great

army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city.

Which, you have to wonder **WHY?** // If Elisha knew everything he'd do, why do it?

You can't catch a guy like that – unless he WANTS to be caught.

In which case, do you really want to catch him?

¹⁵ And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, ...

Since Gehazi's out of the picture, this is a new guy.

¹⁵ And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" ¹⁶ So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who *are* with us *are* more than those who *are* with them." ¹⁷ And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Elisha knew he was protected by the host of heaven.

I love the confidence & peace Elisha has here.

We can have it too because of this promise in 1 John 4:4

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

¹⁸ So when *the Syrians* came down to him,

They're attacking -

Elisha prayed to the Lord, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

While the servant's eyes were **opened**, the enemy's were **shut**.

God did something similar to the men of Sodom trying to get into Lot's house.

He made it impossible for them to find the door.

Which suggests He not only **blinded** them, he even made their sense of touch insensate.

Evil is no equal to God. // His enemies are not able to subdue Him. Not even close.

That means when the enemies of God DO accomplish something they intend, it's only because God allows it – FOR SOME GREATER PURPOSE OF HIS OWN.

Psa 76:10 says God makes even the wrath of man to praise Him.

¹⁹ Now Elisha said to them, "This *is* not the way, nor *is* this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." But he led them to Samaria. ²⁰ So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "Lord, open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see." And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and there *they were*, inside Samaria!

The capital & heart of Israel. They're *surrounded* by Jewish troops.

Not only were they *physically* blind, their *reasoning faculty* must have been dumbed down that they would follow a Jewish guide.

²¹ Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I kill *them*? Shall I kill *them*?" Hear the **EAGERNESS** in his appeal. "Can we kill 'em?"

²² But he answered, "You shall not kill *them*. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." ²³ Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian *raiders* came no more into the land of Israel.

One man, favored by God, took captive an entire army. // Elisha wasn't even a soldier.

But he walked in complete dependence on God. // **That** was based on what he KNEW about God.

And **what** he knew is that God is filled with mercy & grace.

If Elisha was thinking as a mere man, he'd have wasted those who'd come to kill him.

Instead, he enters into what God's plan for Israel had always been To bless others thru them.

[Abe – Gen 12; "In you all the fams of the earth will be blessed.]

God blessed Israel here by subduing their enemies.

IF they'd wiped them out, Syria would be bound by custom; the ways of that time, to recover their losses and return with overwhelming force to settle the score.

It might take a generation, but back they'd be.

LONG are the memories of these cultures. Feuds go on, not for decades, for centuries!

That's what fuels the conflicts STILL raging in the Middle East.

This was a way to put an end to it; at least for a season.

Instead of wiping them out, treat them kindly and shame them into peace.

Then we have another space of time we have no idea how long. // A new king rises in Syria.

²⁴ And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria.

Which means they've already conquered the outlying cities & territory that they've lain siege to the capital.

²⁵ And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was *sold* for 80 *shekels* of silver, and ¼ of a kab of dove droppings for 5 *shekels* of silver.

A donkey was unclean; not kosher, not allowed for consumption.

It's head was the very LAST part that would have been eaten.

A shekel = about ½ oz. // 80 shekels = 40 oz. at \$20/oz = That head was going for \$800 in today's terms!

A ½ cup of bird droppings cost \$50.

Now: Commentators do this neat little dance with these "dove droppings."

They say this *may* refer to *chickpeas*; not because there's any real linguistic evidence for that.

But because it's hard for academics sitting in comfy studies with a hot cup of tea and a scone to imagine people eating bird poop.

Accounts of what people are reduced to when starving to death quickly clears up any confusion about what's meant by "dove droppings."

It's bird poop! As the next vs reveal ...

²⁶ Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" ²⁷ And he said, "If the Lord does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?" ²⁸ Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?" And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' ²⁹ So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son."

The horror of this needs no comment.

In Lev. 26:29 & Deut. 28:53, 57 God warned that if Israel turned from Him to idols their enemies would surround & lay siege to them and they'd fall to the curse of cannibalism.

Understand: When God foretold the curses that would come on Israel if they turned from Him

Those curses weren't so much manifestations of His wrath as they were **WARNINGS** of what their evil choices would bring on their own heads.

Donkey brains, bird poop & cannibalism were what they chose for themselves by rejecting God & worshipping idols.

That's what you end up with when you tell God to take a flying leap & leave you alone.

It's what the US is headed for if we persist in rejecting God and bowing to the idol of secular humanism.

We have a growing homeless, drug, & crime problem because we no longer abide by the motto ***In God We Trust***.

Our prisons are overflowing to the point dangerous criminals are released back onto the streets, because we've rejected His counsel on how to live.

We may not be eating donkey-heads and bird-poop yet, but start saving recipes because if we stay on this course, we will be.

³⁰ Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath *he had* sackcloth on his body.

Jehoram was appalled & tore his royal garment. Underneath he wore the sackcloth of sorrow.

That was supposed to be a sign of repentance.

When King Ahab had replaced his royal robes with sack-cloth, God relented of Judgment.

So Jehoram *apes* the same thing, hoping for a similar response from God.

But he wasn't genuinely repentant.

If he was, he'd have torn down the idols they worshipped and restored the worship of Yahweh.

Instead ...

³¹ Then he said, “God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!”

Jehoram thought prophecy **CREATED** the future instead of just foretelling and explain it.

Elisha had warned this siege was God’s judgment on Israel’s idolatry.

The king thought if he could kill Elisha, it would end the siege.

³² But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And *the king* sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, “Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. *Is not the sound of his master’s feet behind him?*”

Jehoram sent a guy to take out Elisha. // But it’s difficult surprising a guy God tells what’s coming.

Elisha had his friends corral the guy when he showed up

³³ And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger, coming down to him; and then *the king* said, “Surely this calamity *is* from the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer?”

Jehoram followed after the guy he’d sent to make sure the job got done.

When he arrived, Elisha let him in // Jehoram then blamed God for the city’s troubles.

Ch7

Since we looked at vs 1-16 Sunday, we’ll just read them tonight.

¹ Then Elisha said, “Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord: ‘Tomorrow about this time a seah [**2 gals**] of fine flour *shall be sold* for a shekel [**\$10**], & 2 seahs [**4 gals**] of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.’” ² So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, “Look, *if* the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?” And he said, “In fact, you shall see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.”

³ Now there were 4 leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, “Why are we sitting here until we die? ⁴ If we say, ‘We will enter the city,’ the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die.” ⁵ And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one *was* there. ⁶ For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, “Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!” ⁷ Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives. ⁸ And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid *them*; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried *some* from there *also*, and went and hid *it*. ⁹ Then they said to one another, “We are not doing right. This day *is* a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king’s household.” ¹⁰ So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, “We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one *was* there, not a human sound—only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact.” ¹¹ And the gatekeepers called out, and they told *it* to the king’s household inside. ¹² So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, “Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *are* hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, ‘When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.’” ¹³ And 1 of his servants answered and said, “Please, let several *men* take 5 of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they *may either become* like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; or indeed, *I say*, they *may become* like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed; so let us send them and see.” ¹⁴ Therefore they took 2 chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, “Go and see.” ¹⁵ And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road *was* full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king. ¹⁶ Then the people went out and plundered the tents

of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and 2 seahs of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.

Again – we looked at this Sunday. Those 4 lepers are a marvelous picture of Christians.

We too can say / MUST say “This is a day of Good News. How can we be silent?”

¹⁷ Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. ¹⁸ So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, “2 seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be *sold* tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria.” ¹⁹ Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, “Now look, *if* the Lord would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?” And he had said, “In fact, you shall see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.” ²⁰ And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.

Sad but true: Those who mock the Word of God, without repenting, will know judgment.

Ch8

¹ Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, “Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the Lord has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for 7 years.”

In ch4 we read of a family in the village of Shunem with whom Elisha used to stay.

For the woman’s kindness, God healed her barrenness & gave her a son.

But he’d died while still a lad & Elisha was used by God to restore him to life.

Now that a time of famine was to come, the prophet warns them to find refuge someplace else.

We draw a lesson from this.

God used both Elijah & Elisha to inform people when calamity was God’s judgment.

The remedy was to repent & return to the Lord.

Here, Elisha warns a godly family of judgment so they could take measures to deal with it.

We ought to expect the same.

Let’s pray for discernment about the troubles hammering our land.

Are they normal, run of the mill events that are part & parcel of living in a fallen world, or are they the judgment of a holy God for the evils of our age.

Ask God to raise up a **modern** Elisha to declare what’s what & counsel the godly on what to do.

² So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God, and she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistines 7 years. ³ It came to pass, at the end of 7 years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land.

While she was gone it was taken over by squatters.

⁴ Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, “Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done.”

The last time we saw Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, was when he’d become a leper in judgment for his deceit & greed.

Some scholars think after lifting of the siege of Samaria, Jehoram was so curious about Elisha, he sent for his old servant & asked him to relate his experiences with the man of God.

Being so close to the story of the 4 lepers who discovered the empty Syrian camp, it’s possible Gehazi was one of them.

Now he’s become something of a hero & has this interview with the king.

⁵ Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, “My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son whom Elisha restored to life.” ⁶ And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, “Restore all that *was* hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now.”

⁷ Then Elisha went to Damascus,

Where, due to his previous history with the Syrians, he was highly respected.

and Ben-Hadad king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, “The man of God has come here.” ⁸ And the king said to Hazael, “Take a present in your hand, and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by

him, saying, ‘Shall I recover from this disease?’ ”

Hazael was a trusted assistant to the Syrian king // Too bad, because he’s a snake!

⁹ So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, of every good thing of Damascus, 40 camel-loads; and he came and stood before him, and said, “Your son Ben-Hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, ‘Shall I recover from this disease?’ ” 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.”

Elijah isn’t telling Hazael to lie to Ben Hadad.

The king **would have** recovered IF not for what Hazael’s about to do.

God then gives Elisha a vision of the trouble this guy will bring.

¹¹ Then he [Elisha] set his countenance in a stare until he [Hazael] was ashamed; and the man of God wept. ¹² And Hazael said, “Why is my lord weeping?” He answered, “Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child.”

Elisha weeps heavy tears of grief over the suffering this guy will cause.

Anyone who announces judgment without tears is no prophet of God.

Jonah was delighted to announce judgment on Nineveh, but he was very far from God’s heart.

I shudder when people today gleefully announce God’s judgment.

Those fools from Westboro Baptist Church who show up at rallies & soldier’s funerals with their stupid signs.

¹³ So Hazael said, “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.” ¹⁴ Then he departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, “What did Elisha say to you?” And he answered, “He told me you would surely recover.” ¹⁵ But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* over his face so that he died; and Hazael reigned in his place.

Hazael hoped Ben Hadad **WOULD** die of the disease.

But now that he knows he won’t; he takes matters into his own hands and assassinates him.

¹⁶ Now in the 5th year of Joram [short for ‘Jehoram’] the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *having been* king of Judah, [another guy named] Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign as king of Judah. ¹⁷ He was 32 years old when he became king, and he reigned 8 years in Jerusalem.

Now catch this ...

¹⁸ And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, WHY???

for the daughter of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the Lord. ¹⁹ Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah, for the sake of his servant David, as He promised him to give a lamp to him *and* his sons forever. Jehoshaphat was a good & godly king.

But he erred in making an alliance with the wicked kings of Israel.

That opened a door to the same idolatry that infected Israel.

When Jehoshaphat died, his son Jehoram became king.

He married Ahab & Jezebel’s daughter; Athaliah; a real piece of work like her mother.

Thru her influence, Baal & Asherah were installed in Judah.

The seeds of apostasy planted at this time will bear a bitter harvest years later.

Jehoshaphat teaches **We must never compromise our commitment to God for the sake of political gain.**

²⁰ In his days Edom revolted against Judah’s authority, and made a king over themselves. ²¹ So Joram went to Zair, [on the border] and all his chariots with him. Then he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; and the troops fled to their tents. ²² Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah’s authority to this day. And Libnah revolted at that time.

As Moab was a vassal state to Israel, Edom was to Judah.

Turning from God led to political weakness, which the Edomites exploited in a bid to regain independence.

Jehoram was unable to regain control. His army was routed.

Libnah was a priestly town in the middle of Judah.

Being filled with those loyal to God, it rebelled against Jehoram's evil reign.

An indication some in Judah remained faithful to God even when wicked kings ruled.

²³ Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Joram rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

Don't miss who Ahaziah is; grandson of Ahab & Jezebel.

²⁵ In the 12th yr of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign. ²⁶ Ahaziah *was* 22 yrs old when he became king, and he reigned 1 yr in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri, king of Israel. ²⁷ And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, like the house of Ahab, for he *was* the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.

We'd call Ahaziah, Ahab's grandson-in-law. No such difference is made in Hebrew.

²⁸ Now he went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. ²⁹ Then King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

Ramoth was the key city of the region known as Gilead, a fertile & strategic region East of the Jordan.

It was the perennial battleground btwn Israel & Syria, today know as the Golan Heights.

In yet another alliance between Israel & Judah, they managed to take Ramoth from the Syrians who counter attacked.

Jehoram, king of Israel was wounded & withdrew to Jezreel to recover.

King Ahaziah of Judah went to visit him because Jehoram was his uncle.

We leave it there till next time.