

ELISHA WEEK SEVEN—VICTORY (EVEN IN DEATH)

2 Kings 13:14-21

Introduction

The book of Kings has a clear rhythm, with the pace increasing as Israel and Judah head towards destruction at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. Chapters 13 and 14 of Second Kings continue this trend, seamlessly highlighting how quickly the people resume their mundane, godless, and halfhearted living. Elisha is now dying, and Israel must have felt hopeless as his death approaches. Despite his over fifty years of efforts to save God's people from their enemies and guide them away from sins, it seems like there was no significant progress or outcome.

There seems to be no prophet waiting to take his place which raises questions about what's next. The people were immoral, their leaders were inept, their army was ineffective, and now their prophet was incapacitated. The conversation between Elisha and Joash only hints at what could have been, and it is reinforced by a description of the continuing conflict with the Syrians. This conflict, ultimately unresolved, is attributed to Joash's lack of faith.

Nothing has changed and God is still keeping his covenant faithfulness as was promised to Abraham. God will not abandon his people even when they forsake him. The God who wields the universe shows that he will give VICTORY (EVEN IN DEATH).

Outline

Not all tears are created equal—crying over suffering is not the same as crying over sin. True repentance results in obedience.

God will meet us with his light in the darkest moments of failure.

Wholehearted trust does not produce halfhearted obedience.

God is the source of every victory.

God alone can use death to give life.

Application

Have you turned from your sin and to Jesus?

Where do you need to trust God?

How does the promise of resurrection impact the way you live today?

Questions

1. It's fascinating how God linked his promise to defeat Syria with Joash's eagerness to take on the task, given Syria's history of triumphing over Israel. Have you ever experienced a sense of defeat or discouragement that made it hard to feel enthusiastic about God's promises? In light of his promises, what do you think your responsibilities are? Keep in mind that God provides for the birds, but he doesn't put the food directly in their nests.
2. Israel was at its weakest point when God gave victory over its long-standing enemy. What does this tell us about God? About the victory that Jesus won at the Cross?
3. Elisha, who had performed healing miracles and brought people back to life, was now facing a deadly illness (13:14). Despite this, God was still able to bring glory to himself through Elisha's death, just as he had in his life. How can we pray when faced with similar situations?
4. The hope of the resurrection isn't just for later. It matters now. We are risen with Christ, so we think about things from Heaven. How should this knowledge affect the way you live today?
5. The story makes it seem like Elisha's bones have special powers. What is the real power in the story?