



## ELISHA FOLLOWS IN ELIJAH'S FOOTSTEPS

### THE SHUNAMMITE'S LAND RESTORED

**2 Kings 8:1-6** Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, "Go away with your family and stay for a while wherever you can, because the LORD has decreed a famine in the land that will last seven years."<sup>2</sup> The woman proceeded to do as the man of God said. She and her family went away and stayed in the land of the Philistines seven years.<sup>3</sup> At the end of the seven years she came back from the land of the Philistines and went to the king to beg for her house and land.

<sup>4</sup>The king was talking to Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, and had said, "Tell me about all the great things Elisha has done."<sup>5</sup> Just as Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had restored the dead to life, the woman whose son Elisha had brought back to life came to beg the king for her house and land. Gehazi said, "This is the woman, my lord the king, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life."<sup>6</sup> The king asked the woman about it, and she told him. Then he assigned an official to her case and said to him, "Give back everything that belonged to her, including all the income from her land from the day she left the country until now."

1.) How does this account demonstrate God's continued gracious care of the faithful?

### ELISHA AND HAZAEL

**2 Kings 8:7-15** Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Aram was ill. When the king was told, "The man of God has come all the way up here,"<sup>8</sup> he said to Hazael, "Take a gift with you and go to meet the man of God. Consult the LORD through him; ask him, 'Will I recover from this illness?'"<sup>9</sup> Hazael went to meet Elisha, taking with him as a gift forty camel-loads of all the finest wares of Damascus. He went in and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad king of Aram has sent me to ask, 'Will I recover from this illness?'"

<sup>10</sup>Elisha answered, "Go and say to him, 'You will certainly recover'; but the LORD has revealed to me that he will in fact die."<sup>11</sup> He stared at him with a fixed gaze until Hazael felt ashamed. Then the man of God began to weep.<sup>12</sup> "Why is my lord weeping?" asked Hazael. "Because I know the harm you will do to the Israelites," he answered. "You will set fire to their fortified places, kill their young men with the sword, dash their little children to the ground, and rip open their pregnant women."

<sup>13</sup>Hazael said, "How could your servant, a mere dog, accomplish such a feat?" "The LORD has shown me that you will become king of Aram," answered Elisha.<sup>14</sup> Then Hazael left Elisha and returned to his master. When Ben-Hadad asked, "What did Elisha say to you?" Hazael replied, "He told me that you would certainly recover."<sup>15</sup>

But the next day he took a thick cloth, soaked it in water and spread it over the king's face, so that he died. Then Hazael succeeded him as king.

1.) This episode gives us some insight into God's eternal foreknowledge, free will, and evil in real time.

- What did God know about Ben-Hadad's illness and death?
- Evaluate: Because he revealed Hazael's violent future, the Lord is responsible for Hazael's violent actions.

**Isaiah 45:21** "Declare what is to be, present it—let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me."

**James 1:13-15** When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup> but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

2.) It is likely that "Ben-Hadad" was a throne name for the kings of Aram, meaning "son of the god." In any event the Arameans had been a thorn in Israel's side for generations, being at near constant war with them. How had the LORD foretold he would use Hazael's violence?

**1 Kings 19:15-17** The LORD said to [Elijah], "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. <sup>16</sup> Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. <sup>17</sup> Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu."

## JEHORAM KING OF JUDAH

**2 Kings 8:16-24** In the fifth year of Joram son of Ahab king of Israel, when Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat began his reign as king of Judah. <sup>17</sup> He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. <sup>18</sup> He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. <sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah. He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever.

<sup>20</sup> In the time of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against Judah and set up its own king. <sup>21</sup> So Jehoram went to Zair with all his chariots. The Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, but he rose up and broke through by night; his army, however, fled back home. <sup>22</sup> To this day Edom has been in rebellion against Judah. Libnah revolted at the same time. <sup>23</sup> As for the other events of Jehoram's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? <sup>24</sup> Jehoram rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. And Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king.

1.) For some time the narrative of Kings has been headed towards the prophesied destruction of Ahab's royal house. What crucial pieces of information do we discover here? (v. 18)

2.) Were the spread of idolatry something like a spiritual cancer, what might an aggressive physician now have done? Why did God restrain himself? (v. 19) What discipline did he allow? (v. 20-24)

## AHAZIAH OF JUDAH

**2 Kings 8:25-29** In the twelfth year of Joram son of Ahab king of Israel, Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign. <sup>26</sup> Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother's name was Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri king of Israel. <sup>27</sup> He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab and did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was related by marriage to Ahab's family.

<sup>28</sup> Ahaziah went with Joram son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram; <sup>29</sup> so King Joram returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds the Arameans had inflicted on him at Ramoth in his battle with Hazael king of Aram. Then Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to Jezreel to see Joram son of Ahab, because he had been wounded.

1.) What appears to be happening—politically and religiously—between Israel and Judah?

## JEHU ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL

**2 Kings 9:1-13** The prophet Elisha summoned a man from the company of the prophets and said to him, "Tuck your cloak into your belt, take this flask of oil with you and go to Ramoth Gilead. <sup>2</sup> When you get there, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Go to him, get him away from his companions and take him into an inner room. <sup>3</sup> Then take the flask and pour the oil on his head and declare, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.' Then open the door and run; don't delay!"

<sup>4</sup> So the young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. <sup>5</sup> When he arrived, he found the army officers sitting together. "I have a message for you, commander," he said. "For which of us?" asked Jehu. "For you, commander," he replied. <sup>6</sup> Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the prophet poured the oil on Jehu's head and declared, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anoint you king over the LORD's people Israel. <sup>7</sup> You are to destroy the house of Ahab your master, and I will avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the LORD's servants shed by Jezebel. <sup>8</sup> The whole house of Ahab will perish. I will cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free. <sup>9</sup> I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah. <sup>10</sup> As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her.' " Then he opened the door and ran.

<sup>11</sup> When Jehu went out to his fellow officers, one of them asked him, "Is everything all right? Why did this madman come to you?" "You know the man and the sort of things he says," Jehu replied. <sup>12</sup> "That's not true!" they said. "Tell us." Jehu said, "Here is what he told me: 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.'"

<sup>13</sup> They hurried and took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!"

1.) What is the Scripture's position on revolt/rebellion from within a government? What is exceptional about a case such as is recorded here?

**Acts 5:29** Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

**Romans 13:1-2,5** Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. <sup>2</sup> Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.... <sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

**Psalms 47:5-9** God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. <sup>6</sup> Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. <sup>7</sup> For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. <sup>8</sup> God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. <sup>9</sup> The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.

**Jeremiah 18:5-10** Then the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>6</sup> “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, <sup>8</sup> and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. <sup>9</sup> And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, <sup>10</sup> and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.”

## **JEHU CARRIES OUT GOD’S JUDGMENT ON JORAM, AHAZIAH, AND JEZEBEL**

**2 Kings 9:14-37** So Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram and all Israel had been defending Ramoth Gilead against Hazael king of Aram, <sup>15</sup> but King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds the Arameans had inflicted on him in the battle with Hazael king of Aram.) Jehu said, “If this is the way you feel, don’t let anyone slip out of the city to go and tell the news in Jezreel.” <sup>16</sup> Then he got into his chariot and rode to Jezreel, because Joram was resting there and Ahaziah king of Judah had gone down to see him.

<sup>17</sup> When the lookout standing on the tower in Jezreel saw Jehu’s troops approaching, he called out, “I see some troops coming.” “Get a horseman,” Joram ordered. “Send him to meet them and ask, ‘Do you come in peace?’”

<sup>18</sup> The horseman rode off to meet Jehu and said, “This is what the king says: ‘Do you come in peace?’” “What do you have to do with peace?” Jehu replied. “Fall in behind me.” The lookout reported, “The messenger has reached them, but he isn’t coming back.” <sup>19</sup> So the king sent out a second horseman. When he came to them he said, “This is what the king says: ‘Do you come in peace?’” Jehu replied, “What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me.” <sup>20</sup> The lookout reported, “He has reached them, but he isn’t coming back either. The driving is like that of Jehu son of Nimshi—he drives like a madman.”

<sup>21</sup> “Hitch up my chariot,” Joram ordered. And when it was hitched up, Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah rode out, each in his own chariot, to meet Jehu. They met him at the plot of ground that had belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. <sup>22</sup> When Joram saw Jehu he asked, “Have you come in peace, Jehu?” “How can there be peace,” Jehu replied, “as long as all the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother Jezebel abound?” <sup>23</sup> Joram turned about and fled, calling out to Ahaziah, “Treachery, Ahaziah!”

<sup>24</sup> Then Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart and he slumped down in his chariot. <sup>25</sup> Jehu said to Bidkar, his chariot officer, “Pick him up and throw him on the field that belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. Remember how you and I were riding together in chariots behind Ahab his father when the LORD made this prophecy about him: <sup>26</sup> ‘Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, declares the LORD, and I will surely make you pay for it on this plot of ground, declares the LORD.’ Now then, pick him up and throw him on that plot, in accordance with the word of the LORD.”

<sup>27</sup> When Ahaziah king of Judah saw what had happened, he fled up the road to Beth Haggan. Jehu chased him, shouting, “Kill him too!” They wounded him in his chariot on the way up to Gur near Ibleam, but he escaped to

Megiddo and died there. <sup>28</sup> His servants took him by chariot to Jerusalem and buried him with his fathers in his tomb in the City of David. <sup>29</sup> (In the eleventh year of Joram son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king of Judah.)

<sup>30</sup> Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she painted her eyes, arranged her hair and looked out of a window. <sup>31</sup> As Jehu entered the gate, she asked, "Have you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master?" <sup>32</sup> He looked up at the window and called out, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. <sup>33</sup> "Throw her down!" Jehu said. So they threw her down, and some of her blood splattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot.

<sup>34</sup> Jehu went in and ate and drank. "Take care of that cursed woman," he said, "and bury her, for she was a king's daughter." <sup>35</sup> But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands.

<sup>36</sup> They went back and told Jehu, who said, "This is the word of the LORD that he spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite: On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs will devour Jezebel's flesh. <sup>37</sup> Jezebel's body will be like refuse on the ground in the plot at Jezreel, so that no one will be able to say, 'This is Jezebel.'"

1.) Do you see any irony in Jezebel's demise?

2.) What does this account tell us about God's justice? How is that a comfort to us?

## **PRAYER**