



LESSONS

FROM THE KINGS

A BIBLE STUDY
ON THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

PART 3 - TO THE FALL OF THE
NORTHERN KINGDOM

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KING OMRI

A ROUGH START TO A SINFUL DYNASTY

Omri is the first in line of a short but very wicked dynasty.

He come to power at a very turbulent time in Israel.

He was the commander of the army under King Elah. After Elah is assassinated he worked fast to dethrone the assassin, Zimri. After four years' struggle with Tibni for the throne he comes to full power over Israel. He establishes Samaria as the new capital of Israel. He is the father and grandfather of kings of Israel who were unsurpassed in evil.

He supported Jeroboams golden calf cult worship and thus "Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord and sinned more than all those before him." (1 Kings 16:25)

His account is found in 1 Kings 16:16-28

KING AHAB

Ahab is one of the most prominent kings who ruled over Israel. The prophet Elijah is sent to Israel during his reign. Ahab married the daughter of the King of Sidon, Jezebel. She is an instigator and force behind her husband that prods on further evil. He resorts to sulking and pouting while she acts to make sure Ahab comes out on top.

Ahab added to Jeroboam's sin of the golden calf by serving Baal and setting up Asherah poles.

The account of Ahab can be found in 1 Kings 16:28 - 22:40; 2 Chronicles 18

DESTRUCTIVE AND DEMORALIZING FORCES OF EVIL

Have you ever had the wind taken right out of your sail and been completely demoralized over something? Ahab's false prophets of Baal lost a confrontation with the Lord's prophet, Elijah, on Mount Carmel. On top of this Elijah demonstrated that rain would be withheld and given only at the Lord's command. Yet Ahab wasn't demoralized. He held firm to his false worship and called Elijah the "troubler of Israel." Why?

Read 1 Kings 19:1-5 Review what the prophet Elijah had just accomplished against Ahab and Jezebel's forces of evil. He's the last man in Israel you'd probably expect to find sulking in defeat. Sum up what it took to demoralize Elijah.

How does defeatism take hold in God's church? What's the cure?

“BUT I JUST WANT...”

Avoiding pain at all cost is very similar to grabbing for personal pleasure at any cost. Ahab carefully walked the line of a hedonistic King.

Read 1 Kings 20:1-12 Characterize King Ahab based on this account.

Examine his character further by comparing:

- 19:1-2
- 20:43
- 21:25

What seems to be his goal in life? How can we begin to slip into the same mindset?

Jesus, our King, made the well-being of his people and safety of his kingdom his number one goal. List all the things it cost him.

Jesus never had to concede anything to his enemies that he did not plan on already giving up. His enemies couldn't even take his life from him. He rose in victory. How does Jesus' reign over us change our goals in life? Contrast Ahab's life goals with the life goals of those who trusts in their Redeemer God:

GOD DOESN'T GIVE UP YET

How long will you struggle at something once it becomes clear it is a lost cause? God is patient. Read 1 Kings 20:13-34 Collect several reasons why you could say King Ahab was a lost cause. What in this section causes you to marvel at God's grace? Find two reasons listed why God acts on behalf of Israel.

Agree / Disagree: Failure to give thanks to God always leads to sinful rebellion.

Evaluate Ahab's response to God's grace.

Agree / Disagree "It is better to wisely just write off someone as a loss than to naively think that a long-time evil person might still repent."

AFTER ALL THIS TIME SOMETHING GETS THROUGH!

What does it mean to covet? Explain how faith in Jesus leads us to the opposite of coveting.

Read 1 Kings 21. How is James 1:14 played out in this account? Identify the progression of broken commandments going from number ten on down. What is ultimately behind coveting? Why is coveting such a dangerous sin?

What does this account teach us about persistently speaking God's Word even to the most persistent of unbelievers?

Relate how what our King has done for us is the exact opposite process from what Ahab did to Naboth.

KING JEHOSHAPHAT

Jehoshaphat became King in Judah during the final years of Ahab's rule in Israel. He continued the reforms started by his father and ruled for twenty-five years. He followed his father in serving the Lord and opposing idols. He attempted to be on friendly terms with the kings of Israel, even encouraging them to seek the Lord in his own small way. Forming alliances with wicked men proved to be his one weakness. He did this with Ahab and two of Ahab's sons. Sadly his careless alliances with wicked kings would prove the very spiritual downfall of the next generation. He had arranged a marriage between his son Jehoram and Princess Athaliah, daughter of Israel's King Ahab.

Nonetheless he is one of the great examples in Scripture of faithfulness to the Lord as he leads Judah.

Jehoshaphat's account: 1 Kings 22:1-50; 2 Kings 3; 2 Chronicles 17:1 - 21:3

A TWO-PRONGED STRENGTHENING OF JUDAH

So often when we try to help people, we only think about providing immediate physical help. How does the expression “Give a man a fish feed him for a day; teach him to fish feed him for a lifetime” apply to the work of making disciples of Jesus?

King Jehoshaphat began his rule with strife and war. It was only natural that he'd begin with strengthening his defenses and his army. Read 2 Chronicles 17. Identify part of his strengthening efforts which we have not seen done before. Why do you suppose Jehoshaphat saw this as such an important aspect of strengthening his kingdom?

Assess your current strengthening efforts to protect and prosper your family. Determine if you have a healthy two-pronged approach to taking care of yourself and your family.

Can you describe your congregation's current plan to strengthen its ministry? Determine if it has a healthy two-pronged approach that goes beyond building and paying for proper walls, windows, and parking spaces.

HOW DO YOU GET ALONG WITH THE WICKED?

Have you ever met somebody that gets along perfectly with everybody and never is at odds with anyone? Explain why you've found that to be possible or impossible to achieve.

Read 2 Chronicles 18:1-8. Breakdown Jehoshaphat's dealings with wicked King Ahab. What do you see that gives you concern? What do you see that is still good? Can you defend Jehoshaphat's choices here?

Agree or Disagree: "It is okay to get together to work with those who follow false teachings as long as you can still agree on basic truths."

Discuss when you cross the line from just trying to be at peace with unbelievers and false teachers to dishonoring God.

AHAB'S DISAPPEARING ACT

How do people try to thwart off the consequences of disobeying God? Ahab didn't trust or obey the Lord, but he still rightly had to fear him. For the rest of the story on Jehoshaphat and Ahab's military alliance read 2 Chronicles 18:9-19:3. God will not be mocked. Ahab's foolish plan fails. Note the irony of his fear and his thinking he could survive by a disguise. How did God view Jehoshaphat's alliance efforts?

What things show God's grace in this section?

Jehoshaphat wanted to consult the Lord, Ahab didn't. Even after consulting the Lord neither properly followed-through. Differentiate between why Jehoshaphat was okay going forward and why Ahab was okay going forward with the attack.

Did you find anything in this section which reminded you of Jesus and what Jesus' faced on behalf of sinners?

MILITARY, MARKETS, WHAT'S NEXT?

Jehoshephat's alliances were more than military. They included commerce. Read 2 Chronicles 20:35-37. They set out for gold. Each king probably had different goals and motives for that gold. What made this seemingly innocent endeavor so very dangerous that God had to send a prophet to warn and destroy the fleet?

If we desire that God would keep us faithful that may at times mean he brings difficulties and failures into our lives. How should Jehoshephat have seen this failure? Read 1 Kings 22:49 to see if he learned his lesson.

God is loving and gracious and disciplines his children when they need it. Can you think of other examples in which God would cause us to fail for our own good?

Why is it so dangerous for us to become comfortable teaming up with wickedness?

Jesus never compromised his teaching the truth and fulfilling the Father's plan. Explain what temptations he faced to attain riches. How does his faithfulness and victory over those temptations motivate and empower us?

PRAY, PRAISE, AND GIVE THANKS!

Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch watchmaker and Christian. She and her family helped many Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust of World War II. She once said, ““Let God’s promises shine on your problems.” How does that work when problems come? Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-29. The people of Judah face their greatest crisis with a three-fold alliance against them. A national call for fasting (and prayer) went out. List three things about the victory that made it so great.

Breakdown the response of Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah from the start of the conflict to the resolution. How does our response in times of trouble take (or sometimes fail to take) this same path?

Categorize the sections of Jehoshaphat’s prayer and form a similar one with your own words for use in a crisis you could someday face:

What parallels do you see between this deliverance and the deliverance won for us by Jesus?

KING AHAZIAH - OF ISRAEL



King Ahaziah continued his father's wickedness. Like his father he also sought to work together with Jehoshaphat king of Judah. We examined his failed venture to build a joint fleet with Judah for commerce and trade. When personal tragedy strikes, he consults false gods and attacks the true prophet, Elijah. At his untimely death his brother became king.

Ahaziah's story: 1 Kings 22:48-53; 2 Kings 1;

2 Chronicles 20:35-37

DON'T DISRESPECT THE LORD AND HIS PROPHET

Have you ever needed care but went past many local doctors to find another doctor's help? What were your reasons? We saw how King Ahab was quick to disregard the Word of the Lord and dismiss the Lord's prophets. Now his son does the same. Read 2 Kings 1. What things did Ahaziah do to greatly dishonor the Lord and his prophets?

What things in this account are most striking to you?

Connect: Where we go to seek wisdom and truth matters. How does can someone end up disrespecting or disregarding the Lord and his messengers today?

Compare with Luke 9:51-56. What message and lesson did Elijah tie to his act of calling on the Lord to rain down fire from heaven?

Why does the Lord's messenger today take a different route when responding to disrespect and dismissal by the unbelieving world?

KING JEHORAM -OF ISRAEL-



Jehoram (Joram) son of Ahab took to the throne after the sudden death of his brother, Ahaziah.

Jehoram king of Israel ruled the same time as Jehoram king of Judah. They are both alternatively referred to by the name Joram. In 2 Kings 5-8 his name isn't mentioned, but he is the one referred to as the king of Israel.

God gave many wake-up calls in dealing with Jehoram king of Israel. Although he did take some measures against Baal worship he still maintained worship of the golden calf. He rules during Elisha's healing of Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army. Jesus says this was the only healing of the disease by Elisha -none in Israel were healed.

Despite his sin, God rescued him often. He developed a good working relationship with Elisha. (2 Kings 6) He even had the witness given that someone had been raised to life by Elisha. (2 Kings 8) Yet he did not, in the end, respond in faith to all the Lord's working for him.

After he ruled for twelve years, the LORD instructed one of Jehoram's commanders, Jehu, to kill Jehoram. Jehu killed Jehoram and also put an end to all Ahab's line just as was prophesied.

Jehoram's story: 2 Kings 3, 8:28-29, 9:14-24; 2 Chronicles 22:5-7

YOU WILL SEE IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES

Have you ever shared news so unbelievable people didn't believe you at first? Sometimes God's promises are just too good for someone to believe it's true. Read 2 Kings 6:24-33 to see how bad the siege in Israel's capital city, Samaria, had become. What was Jehoram's attitude toward the Lord at this time?

God can make the impossible happen. Often this is done in the least expected way. Read 2 Kings 7. What was Jehoram's right-hand-man's attitude toward the Word of the Lord? Can you deduce from this reading what Jehoram king of Israel himself thought about it?

List as least four other people in Scripture who questioned God's promise when they first heard it: The consequences of doubting God are deadly. When does questioning him cross over into the sin of unbelief?

You will see God's promises kept with your own eyes! Share at least five promises we have in Scripture which on the surface just seem too good to be true:

KING JEHORAM -OF JUDAH-

Jehoshaphat is one of the godliest kings of Judah, but his son Jehoram could be labeled as one of the most wicked. During his eight-year reign over Judah he not only abandoned the Lord but sponsored false worship. To secure his position he murdered six of his own brothers.

For political advantage his father Jehoshaphat had arranged for him to marry, Athaliah, the daughter of wicked King Ahab (2 Chr 18:1). She is credited with influencing him toward evil.

Jehoram's (of Judah) story: 2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chronicles 21

DOES THE PROMISE HANG ON A THREAD?

Jehoram King of Judah was nothing like his father. Read 2 Chronicles 21. What seems to be credited as part of the reason for such a wicked turn? What sort of a role should parent's play in deciding or influencing who their children might marry?

Evaluate the reasons marriage between Jehoram and Ahab's daughter, Ataliah. Briefly discuss some of the wrong reasons people date or get married and how to best warn others against these wrong reasons.

What stands out as most striking to you in this chapter?

God's promise would never fail. Yet his holiness and justice would not be ignored. How does God's response here show both his justice and his mercy?

KING AHAZIAH-OF JUDAH-



Recall how Ahaziah is spared only because God had a promise to keep in David's line. Ahaziah's story is short and tragic. He is born to a wicked couple, murderous King Jehoram and Queen Athaliah, and is the grandson of Ahab, the wicked king of Israel.

He is only twenty-two and is youngest of Jehoram's sons, but he is made king since Ahaziah's older brothers all died at the hands of raiding Arabs.

He is under the guidance of wicked people. After only ruling one year he is taken down by Jehu. He had been working together with Joram king of Israel, who was his uncle and the last of Ahab's line.

Jehu sets in motion many changes with the death of Ahaziah (of Judah) and Jehoram (of Israel). A new dynasty takes the throne in Israel and another is practically extinguished in Judah.

God put an end to a horrible alliance. What do you supposed would have happened if the alliance between Ahab's wicked son (king of Israel) and wicked nephew (king in Judah) had been allowed to grow and continue?

Ahaziah's story: 2 Kings 8:24 - 9:29; 2 Chronicles 22:1-9

KING JEHU



He is a military commander who secures the throne of Israel by killing Joram King of Israel. At the same time also he kills Ahaziah king of Judah. Recall that both of these kings were from Ahab's line.

This was not a military coup. Jehu secured the throne for himself only after the prophet Elisha had anointed him as king. Through Jehu, God's judgment against Ahab was complete and Ahab's line would come to a complete end. Much of the record of his reign details how he brought an end to the rest of Ahab's household.

Perhaps even greater than ending Ahab's line is his efforts to end Ahab's influence. He takes good measure to stop Baal worship in Israel.

Jehu is the tenth and only king of Israel who does not have his heart fully committed to doing evil. Though not without faults, he does obey the Lord and is outstanding among the kings of Israel.

Of important distinction: other captains of the military had become king before and would later on. But only Jehu's reign has God's backing. Jehu is the start of the longest dynasty in Israel's history (almost 100 years). It lasts for four more generations. He ruled in Samaria twenty-eight years (841-814 BC).

Jehu is a small glimpse of stability and godliness in Israel. In strong contrast all twenty kings of Judah were from the line of David, and at least a half dozen of them served the Lord.

To read about Jehu: 2 Kings 9-10

GOD'S INSTRUMENT FOR PUTTING AN END TO EVIL

There is a lot of bloodshed in history. When is the only time it is justified?

Recall that Joram king of Israel is wicked like his father Ahab. His nephew, Ahaziah king of Judah, is a grandson of Ahab through his mother's side. He is also wicked. Ahab's line was now going to end just as prophesied by Elijah. Read 2 Kings 9:1-29

How did Jehu's fellow officers apparently view Elisha? How did they view Jehu? Explain: "Jehu's anointing changes the whole story here."

Comment on which words or events recorded here clearly show that Jehu was conscious of the fact that he was serving the Lord and fulfilling prophecy.

God sent our King Jesus to crush and defeat the prince of this world. Explain how he completely ended the devil's chances of prevailing. Explain how our calling as his disciples causes us to act decisively, boldly, and shrewdly against evil.

THE DEFENESTRATION OF AN UNREPENTANT HEART

Our actions can often be a strong reflection of our attitude. When might the President of the United States be most heavily criticized for playing a round of golf?

Read 2 Kings 9:30-37 and observe just how the actions of those involved stridently speak of what is in their hearts.

Critique the actions of Jezebel and Jehu. Appropriate for the situation?

Read the letter to the church in Thyatira (Revelation 2:18f). When might we be tempted to put on eye shadow instead of weeping, or in other words, when might we be tempted to put off repentance and pretend that we are above it?

FROM TEMPLE OF BAAL TO TOILET

When a new CEO, manager, or president takes position they can begin by undoing all the efforts of the previous leader. Not always an easy task. Jehu clearly wants to reform Israel but knows he must begin with a purge of evil influences.

Scan through 2 Kings 10 and see if you can enumerate all those who were killed to stop Ahab's line and Ahab's influence. Observe some of the clever tactics he utilizes.

2 Chronicles 22:9 records, "So there was no one in the house of Ahaziah powerful enough to retain the kingdom." Compare it with 2 Kings 10:10, 17. Jehu was successful on his efforts to end Ahab's line. How are his efforts to end Ahab's wicked influences evaluated? Did he succeed or fail? (Consider the final result for Baal's temple.)

Jehu's zeal ought to be our zeal as we seek to serve the Lord. Our methods and tools for fighting our spiritual enemies are different. Explain.

When you consider all Jehu accomplished it is hard to criticize him for not going even further with his reforms. But Jehu's zeal ended before his work was really complete. How might we also fail to go all the way when we fight against the influences of evil?

Share some comfort you find as read about how God was able to use his king to undo so much evil so quickly. Explain how Jesus' work was accomplished so quickly and thoroughly.

QUEEN ATHALIAH

Recall that Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, became the wife of Jehoram, the son of the godly Jehoshaphat. A foolish political alliance formed by Jehoshaphat would now haunt his whole family and all his grandchildren. The brightest period in Israel's kingdom is accompanied by one of the darker hours in Judah. Satan no doubt saw the swing away from Baal in the north and raged against the throne of David as he sought to secure a foothold in Judah.

Jehoram king of Judah died from illness. Jehu had Ahaziah king of Judah killed only a year later. Then Ahaziah's mother felt endangered. She took action to secure herself by murdering every rival to the throne in her family and declaring herself queen. (841-835 BC)

TWO VERY DIFFERENT WOMEN

Read 2 Kings 11:1-11 Why do you suppose Athaliah had no qualms with murdering her own family? Explain why we shouldn't be too shocked that she was capable of such wicked heartlessness.

Your marriage can greatly influence your spiritual life! Jehoram is encouraged toward evil because of his marriage to wicked Athaliah the daughter of Ahab.

This influence can go both ways! Jehosheba is one of Jehoram's daughters. Yet she was married to the godly priest Jehoiada. Describe how she saved her infant nephew (Joash, son of Ahaziah). Give some reasons why you suppose her plan succeeded.

Explain why this is good advice, "Never enter a marriage hoping to change someone."

Explain why this is true, "Marriage can really change you."

What other times in Israel's history did it seem like things were almost lost, but God protected a threatened infant and then used that child to deliver his people?

KING JOASH OF JUDAH



It had been fifteen years since Joash's godly great-grandfather Jehoshaphat ruled Judah. When Jehosheba daughter of king Jehoram saw that Athaliah intended to kill all the heirs to the throne, she hid Joash from the Queen for six years. Jehosheba's husband, priest Jehoiada, then boldly orchestrated a coup to place the seven-year old Joash on the throne.

Then, after fifteen years of darkness in Judah, Baal's temple was torn down and a godly ruler was once again on the throne. The people of Judah were thrilled.

Guided by the priest Jehoiada, King Joash helped bring back spiritual reform and underwent projects such as renovating the now deteriorating temple built by Solomon.

However, when his mentor Jehoiada died Joash succumbed to the smooth-talking unbelievers around him. His turn to evil acts was so disappointing that he was overthrown.

To read about Joash king of Judah: 2 Kings 11 - 12;
2 Chronicles 22:10 - 24:27

PROTECTED, PREPARED, POSITIONED TO LEAD GOD'S PEOPLE

When you were seven years old were there any people who had already made a big influence on you? What kind of an impact did they make on shaping your character and life?

Read 2 Kings 11:12-21 How did God make the threat against baby Joash turn into something that actually turned into a great blessing for him?

What is so incongruous about the final recorded words of Queen Athaliah? List some evidence which shows the people wanted to be rid of her.

Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20 and compare with Joash's coronation ceremony. What does verse 18 tell you about the covenant made in verse 17?

These events would have occurred within about a decade of Jehu's reforms in the northern kingdom. Both kingdoms have turned around from Baal worship to honoring the Lord! God accomplished much of this by using the unprecedented events in the lives of a few individuals. The desire to serve the Lord was led by the priest and a new godly king. Who else did God use to make this new godly era possible?

What steps can we take today to protect, prepare, and position young minds and hearts to be leaders of God's people? What role do you personally play in influencing and preparing the next generation of leaders in the Church? Identify what our greatest challenges are for this task.

WORSHIP FUNDING AND RENOVATION

Constant upkeep is an important aspect of maintaining a worship space. Have you ever been involved in a church fund raising campaign? Have you ever been involved with a church renovation project? If so, summarize your experience.

Read 2 Chronicles 24:1-16 Observe the kings timeline chart handout. The temple was in disrepair. How many years ago was the temple built by Solomon?

What went wrong with the first attempt to repair the temple (Compare with 2 Kings 12:8)? How does this problem sometimes show itself in church projects today?

A few more details of the method can also be found in 2 Kings 12:9-16. Contrast this funding campaign and renovation project with methods we use today. Evaluate the methods of funding a project for worship of the Lord.

Discuss what building/repair/renovation plans your congregation has for the future. Do you know how your congregation intends to carry out those plans?

What else does 2 Chronicles 24:10-11 teach us about funding for worship projects? How can we best follow and find similar results?

MISAPPROPRIATION OF CHURCH FUNDS

Instead of carrying out our duties we sometimes look for an easy way out. Can you think of a time when you ended up with a very difficult task and chose the easy way out and lived to regret it? Joash took the easy way out with his responsibility of protecting his kingdom. Read 2 Kings 12:17-18.

Recall Joash's campaign to restore the temple and collect funds for the temple treasury. What did he end up doing when confronted with danger? Evaluate his motives and methods.

How might God's people be tempted today to turn the money that should be set aside for offerings to the Lord and for his glory into an "easy way out"? How could a congregation end up misusing funds designated for ministry of the gospel?

Why can we continue to give the Lord our best and trust in him even when we are fearful of loss? (Philippians 4:19)

Will Joash's son pass the test and trust in the power of the Lord over wealth? We'll save that discussion for an upcoming lesson on 2 Chronicles 25:1-10.

TWO TERRIBLE ENDINGS

“A parent’s job is to make their parenting unnecessary.” “A pastor’s job is to work himself out of a job.” Explain. Read 2 Chronicles 24:17-25.

Describe what sadly took place when the priest Jehoiadah was no longer there to guide Joash. (What does 2 Ch 12:26 tell us about these wicked officials?) Describe the two different stages of the Lord’s response.

Joash apparently relied too much on one man to strengthen him in faith. (Compare 2 Ch 12:2) He was not able to stand in faithfulness on his own. While there are clearly benefits to looking to strong godly mentors like Jehoiada, what pitfalls can a family have when it relies on a single head-figure for spiritual guidance?

How can we prepare the next generation to stand on its own after we are gone? Come up with five things you can do today to ensure that the next generation will not dwindle in faith after your death.

This same generation which had restored the temple now is followed by hearts which “abandoned the temple of the Lord,... and worshiped Asherah poles and idols” What important warning does this give us to remember when we undertake a building or renovation project for our congregation?

Mentioned by Christ? Read Lk. 11:5; Mt. 23:35. The name Zechariah is attached to about 28 different men in the Bible. Some argue that since 2 Chronicles was last book in Hebrew Bible, that Jesus is essentially saying “Abel to Zechariah” to refer to the first to last of Old Testament Scripture. Although Zechariah is “Jehoidah’s son” Berakiah may have also been a name in his lineage. However, Jesus may have been referring to another man. Zech 1:1 refers to that prophet as the “Son of Berekiah” (Compare with M 23:35) Yet there is no record of his murder.

KING JEHOAHAZ OF ISRAEL

Jehoahaz (son of Jehu) is typical of the kings of Israel. Though he didn't go so far as attack the Lord's people like wicked king Ahab, he retained worship of the golden calf started by Jeroboam and tolerated Baal & Asherah. His attitude allowed for toleration and mixing of religions.

Aram oppressed Israel during this time and remarkably Jehoahaz turned to the Lord in prayer. The Lord answered with reprieve by providing an unnamed deliverer. Yet they didn't repent of the golden calf worship and still tolerated false idols.

Don't confuse this man with the King of Judah who ruled two hundred years later for three months in 609 BC.

Everything about his reign is recorded in 2 Kings 13:1-9.

Note on Hebrew names: Jehoahaz's name is another form of the name Ahaziah (who ruled forty years earlier in Judah). Two versions of the name Ahaz have the divine name "Yehweh/Jehovah" prefix and suffix abbreviations attached. Jeho-Ahaz & Ahaz-Yeh.

A GLIMMER OF HOPE THAT IS SNUFFED OUT

Desperation can lead a family back to its roots. Read 2 Kings 13:1-9 to find a glimmer of hope from an ungodly king.

Jehoahaz had a father, Jehu who once served the Lord. How did that make a difference in his life when he had nearly lost everything? How did it fail to make a difference in his heart?

What do you see in this section that shows the heart of God aching on behalf of his people even as they rejected him?

People who have a history of Christianity in their family will at times turn to the Lord in desperate times. What is needed to bring them fully back to faith?

KING JOASH OF ISRAEL



Joash king of Israel is the grandson of Jehu. He is also called Jehoash, and he overlaps for a few years with the reign with the king of Judah who is called by the same names.

He perpetuated the “sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat,” namely, worship of the golden calf at Dan and Bethel, as well as the use of other high places. Jeroboam set these up 125 years earlier.

Joash grieved the loss of Elisha, yet when asked to follow Elisha’s directions followed them only half-heartedly. With God’s blessing and grace he was able to recover some Israelite territory lost to Aram. God also used him to humble King Amaziah of Judah.

Read about Joash King of Israel: 2 Kings 13:9 - 14:16; 2 Chronicles 25:17-25

HALFHEARTED RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

How would you rate your level of enthusiasm from day to day in your job? How would you rate your spiritual level of enthusiasm when it comes to following God's direction and trusting his promises? How is your enthusiasm for trusting the Lord and following his commands different from what keeps you zealous at your job?

Read 2 Kings 13:14-19. Elisha had asked others to do some unusual things: "Go wash seven times in the Jordan." (2 Kings 5) "Lay my staff on the boy's face." (2 Kings 4) "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars." (2 Kings 4). Now after over fifty years of serving as prophet he concludes with the odd request to "Get a bow and some arrows... strike the ground." (2 Kings 13). Each time the action was connected with an intended outcome -by God's blessing. It wasn't necessarily the action itself but faith in the Lord that really mattered. Faith responds with action. Faith trusts his promises and acts relying on them. But sometimes it seems as if we don't care to have or be part of the Lord's promises. Our response to his Word is sometimes less than zealous and excited.

How did King Jehoash respond when he learned that his shooting of arrows was connected to the Lord's promises to defeat the Arameans? What reasons might he have not been too excited about what Elisha had prophesied?

What promises and blessings does God give us in his Word? Why are our responses toward God's promises sometimes halfhearted?

KING AMAZIAH

Amaziah's father, Joash, was murdered when he turned wicked. Joash was one of the few kings who had a great start but finished terribly later in life. His son Amaziah is just the same.

He sets out with faithfulness and listens to the Lord. But when he meets with success he turns toward idolatry and arrogance. His life is a strong warning against the believer who gets puffed up and takes for granted God's blessings of grace.

His own people were so upset by the losses suffered on Jerusalem that they hounded him down to kill him.

Read of Amaziah: 2 Kings 14:1-21; 2 Chronicles 25

“THE LORD CAN GIVE YOU MUCH MORE”

Amaziah's father trusted in riches for security when he tried to buy peace (2 Kings 12:17-18). Amaziah son of Joash does not commit this same mistake. Read 2 Chronicles 25:1-10

What did Amaziah need to forfeit and give up? Why did God ask him to do this? What empowered him to make this difficult decision?

In what situations does God desire we take the harder route in order to avoid working together with someone who teaches falsely?

List at least three reasons why a Christian and their congregation would want to choose the harder route rather than join together with those who teach false doctrine.

What comfort does 2 Corinthians 9:8 give you when you feel that you need more to get the job done and serve him in your life?

DON'T TAKE MORE THAN YOU SHOULD

Read 2 Chronicles 25:10-24 When Amaziah let loose the men of Israel (see previous lesson 2 Chronicles 25:1-10) his faithful action of obedience to God became a cross to bear. How can our faithful following of Scriptural fellowship practices sometimes cause us harm or difficulty? How does being more aware of the dangers of joining together with anyone teaching falsely help prevent some of those issues?

Why was Amaziah feeling he could pick a fight with Israel? Identify some key factors toward his growing arrogance. How many warnings did Amaziah get to stand down? What was the result of his pride?

What things could cause a Christian today to become sinfully proud and arrogant? How can that pride stem from an improper response to a blessing from God?

What is the best cure for sinful pride? (Jeremiah 9:24; Isaiah 66:1-2; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

KING UZZIAH



More commonly known as Uzziah (“My strength is the Lord”), he is also called Azariah (“The Lord has helped”) in the book of 2 Kings. Taking the throne at the young age of sixteen he ruled for a total of fifty-two years (790 BC-740 BC). Recall that the foolish military pride of his father Amaziah left Jerusalem with damaged walls and very humbled under Israel’s crushing strike. The once well-off people of Judah were in a low point with damaged fields, damaged cities, and weak defenses. Uzziah turns all that around. He waged successful campaigns against Judah’s enemies. He had a large and very well equipped army. He built defenses with inventive war machines such as mounted crossbows and catapults. He increased the water sources and agricultural achievements. But when he placed his inventive techniques into the sphere of worship, his pride went to his head. He lived out the later part of his reign in seclusion while his son was the acting head of state.

Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos all began their prophetic work in the time of Uzziah (Is 1:1; Hos 1:1; Am 1:1)

Read about King Uzziah: 2 Kings 15:1-7; 2 Chronicles 26

SOME BOUNDARIES SHOULD NOT BE BROKEN

Off the top of your head give the typical correct or incorrect answers you'd expect to hear when someone is asked "why do we have/call pastors?"

Read 2 Chronicles 26. Uzziah actually built fortified cities for Judah in enemy territory across the usual boundary. Uzziah recaptured Elath, an Edomite city that went back and forth as a boundary city on an important trade route toward Egypt. He also secured dominance over the Ammonites so that they had to pay him tribute. List a few other areas in which he excelled. In what way did he break a boundary that was not his to cross?

Explain the added significance of God using leprosy here. (Compare with Numbers 12)

Who does the Lord use to position and call people into service in the public (representative) ministry today? (Acts 13:2-3; Acts 2:28, Eph 4:11-13.)

In what ways might church leaders, volunteers, or even non-active lay people be tempted through pride to wrongly take over a task which they were not called by God to carry out?

Contrast Uzziah's attitude toward the public office of the ministry with Isaiah's (Isaiah 6). How can a congregation keep a healthy balance of humble pastors and humble church members as they serve one another?

Evaluate this part of our Lutheran Confessions: "Of Ecclesiastical Order they (our churches) teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called." (Augsburg Confession: Article XIV: Of Ecclesiastical Order)

KING JEROBOAM II OF ISRAEL

Jehu's dynasty (the longest in Israel) continued with Jeroboam, who had the longest reign among the northern kings. During his rule the northern kingdom extended its furthest since the time of Solomon. Archaeological evidence discovered in 1910 at Samaria showed there was a rebuilding program in the royal palace during the prosperous reigns of Joash and Jeroboam II.

Unfortunately Jeroboam II lived up to his namesake, Jeroboam I and maintained the golden calf worship. It is striking to note that despite his sinfulness the Lord blessed him and enabled him to rule for a long time. The reason for this is clearly stated as the Lord's faithfulness to his promises (2 Kings 14:27). Even the prophet Jonah foretold this would take place for Jeroboam II.

But the Lord's mercy would not continue indefinitely in the face of Israel's unrepentant sin. For a good handle on just how the wealthy had become complacent during this time read the prophet Amos who spoke to Jeroboam II and Israel. And just as foretold by (Amos 7:7-11) the fall of Israel and its subsequent captivity was only thirty-one years after Jeroboam II's death.

To read about Jeroboam II: 2 Kings 14:23-29

WHY DO THE WICKED PROSPER?

Can you think of a time when you thought a good leader, ruler, or family patriarch should have lived longer but had his life cut short? Can you think of any examples when a corrupt, sinful, or wicked person is allowed to prosper for many years?

When reading the accounts of the kings one has to be careful not to jump to the conclusion that God's dealings with them is the way he always deals with every authority figure or leader. We need to keep in mind that they had a special arrangement and promise. So often we read that good kings are "blessed" but when they do evil they are "cursed" by God. The direct lesson was important for the people of God as they functioned as his "nation of priest" before the world (Exodus 19). Read about the special promise they operated under in Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

Yet God is not bound to immediately bring misfortune and suffering on the wrongdoer. In fact he quite often allows the wicked to prosper -for a time. Read 2 Kings 14:23-29.

What did God do through Jeroboam? What important lesson does this account give us? How is that lesson a comfort to you today?

KING ZECHARIAH OF ISRAEL

There is only a brief account of king Zechariah who ruled for only six months. Just as prophesied (2 Kings 10:30) Jehu's line endured to the fifth generation because he had faithfully served the Lord in ridding the land of Baal and ending the line of Ahab.

Recall that Jehu's reforms didn't go so far as to remove the high places and end the worship of the golden calf at Dan and Bethel. Jehu's offspring all walked in the sins of Jeroboam I with tolerance of golden calf worship as well as other offences.

Just as Amos (Amos 7:9) prophesied Jeroboam II's son, Zechariah, was assassinated and the line of Jehu ended when the throne was usurped.

Coincidentally Jeroboam I's son was also assassinated.

Read about Zechariah king of Israel: 2 Kings 15:8-12

KING SHALLUM

His origins are unknown. He ruled for only one month (752 BC) after his public assassination of King Zechariah. He was then in turn assassinated by Manehem who succeeded him unto the throne. There are only thirty years counting after him until the northern kingdom falls (722 BC).

Read about Shallum king of Israel: 2 Kings 15:10-15

KING MANEHM

His origins are unknown. He ruled for ten years after his assassination of King Shallum. He paid off the King of Assria to maintain his throne and imposed a heavy tax on the people to pay the Assyrian's tribute. He is ruthless in practice even attacking the pregnant women in places he conquered. He is characterized as continuing in the sins of Jeroboam. The spiritual and political decline of Israel becomes increasingly evident by his death (742).

His reign, centered in Samaria, was apparently opposed from the start by a rival throne in Gilead set up by Pekah.

Read about Manehem king of Israel: 2 Kings 15:14-22

KING PEKAHIAH OF ISRAEL



He ruled for only two years. As the son of Manehem he no doubt continued to pay tribute to the Assyrians. He is characterized as continuing in the evil sins of Jeroboam. One of his chief officers, Pekah, wanted to fight the Assyrians to gain freedom.

It seems that his reign from Samaria, was apparently opposed by the rival throne in Gilead with King Pekah. Pekah assassinated Pekahiah (around 740 BC) and took over reign of all of Israel for himself.

Read about Pekahiah: 2 Kings 15:22-26

KING PEKAH OF ISRAEL

He ruled for twenty years and continued the golden calf worship started by the first king of Israel. It seems that Pekah had already set up a rival throne in Gilead to Manehem who ruled in Samaria in 752 BC after the assassination of Shallum.

Pekah made an alliance with Syria and they joined together to attack Jerusalem. He did have some measure of success in campaigns against Judah -killing at one point 120,000 people. (2 Chronicles 28:6) The people of Judah were terrified at his threats to conquer Jerusalem. Isaiah, however, prophesied Pekah's failure. When he stopped paying tribute as a vassal nation to Assyria much of the territory of Israel was lost and many were deported by the Assyrians.

Read about Pekah: 2 Kings 15:25-38, 16:5; 2 Chronicles 28:6; Isaiah 7:1-9

KING HOSHEA –LAST KING OF ISRAEL

Hoshea is the 19th and final king of Israel. He took advantage of the losses of Pekah who rebelled against the Assyrians and assassinated Pekah to take the throne. Not much is recorded of his rule apart from the significant end of Israel as a nation. The prophets Micah, Hosea, and Micah all had important messages for the people of Israel as final warnings and judgments.

After a three-month siege Samaria fell to the Assyrians and a lengthy list of grievances and reasons why God had given over his people to their enemies follows his brief account in 2 Kings 17.

After 722 BC the northern kingdom of Israel is no more and fully under Assyrian control.

Read of Hoshea: 2 Kings 17:1-6, 18:9-12

OUR TAKEAWAYS FROM ISRAEL BEING TAKEN AWAY

Read 2 Kings 17 A short summary of the offenses from Jeroboam on are listed here. Generate a list of “crimes” the people of Israel had committed.

Give some examples of other instances in Bible history when God destroyed or wiped out cities or nations of people because they had rejected his Word. Agree or Disagree: God destroys godless nations.

While it is easy to see God’s justice, how do you see his grace in this chapter?

Israel was influenced by the pagans around them. Note how the sins of Israel in turn influenced their neighbor, Judah. See if you can recall at least two of the kings of Judah who could be blamed for allowing Israel’s sin to cross the borders to Judah. Why do we sometimes unwittingly allow evil to influence us?

How did Samaria end up with a mixed religion of both worship of the Lord and other gods?

Find at least three outstanding characteristic(s) of our Lord and King as you reflect on this recap of the history of the northern kingdom.

How did reading about the kings of Israel help you better see and appreciate Jesus our King?



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