

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 8A
THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS
CHAPTER 13**

INTRODUCTION

We learned how the wicked and ruthless Athaliah tried to cut off the Davidic line of the throne of Judah or thwart the covenant that God had made with David. Her attempt failed and she was disgracefully executed after six years of ruling over Judah. The Davidic line was restored when the young Joash was made King of Judah. The divine writer then described the reign of King Joash in some detail. He ended his account in chapter 12 by noting that King Joash was assassinated by two of his servants. Amaziah, Joash's son, ascended the Judean throne. In chapter 13, the writer switches to the Northern Kingdom, Israel.

The chapter accounts for the reigns of two Israelite kings, namely, Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, and after Jehoahaz's death, his son, Jehoash. Both kings reigned during the period when Joash was the King of Judah. Therefore, for a period of time, the king of Judah and the king of Israel had the same name – Joash of Judah (the shorter form of Jehoash) and Jehoash

of Israel. One has to be careful not to get confused.

The death of Elisha is recorded in this chapter. The people of the land had the privilege and service of two great prophets of the LORD, Elijah and Elisha. Now they were gone, it would be interesting to learn what would happen to the land, the people and their kings. These are written so that all who read the accounts could see the hand of God working in history and that all may draw spiritual and precious lessons and principles and put them into practice for our good and spiritual growth.

OUTLINE

1. Jehoahaz Reigned in Israel (814-798 B.C.) (vv.1-9);
2. Jehoash Reigned in Israel (vv.10-13);
3. Elisha Performed His Last Deed (vv.14-25).

COMMENTARY

**Jehoahaz Reigned in Israel (814-798
B.C.) – 13:1-9**

Jehoahaz began to rule Israel when King Joash of Judah was in his 23rd year of his reign. Jehoahaz succeeded his father Jehu. He ruled Israel in Samaria for 17 years. God kept His promise to Jehu that his dynasty would rule Israel for four generations. Jehoahaz was the first. Instead of doing right in the eyes of the LORD, he did evil. He was a bad king. He was guilty of perpetuating the

worship of the LORD in the way, which Jeroboam first instituted, that was, continuing the worship of the golden calf images in Bethel and Dan. This was syncretistic worship of the worst kind. The name of Baal was hyphenated to the Name of the LORD!

This incurred the wrath of the LORD upon Israel. The LORD allowed Hazael the King of Syria and his son, Ben-Hadad to oppress Israel for the duration of his reign. Hence the words used in the Bible were, "He delivered them". However, the LORD did not allow the Syrians to totally destroy Israel (v.23). The LORD remembered the covenant that He had made with their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 17:7-8).¹ Israel was still a people within the covenant, which God made with them. The intention of the LORD was to lead Jehoahaz to repentance. Jehoahaz prayed to the LORD for deliverance and the LORD heard his prayer.

The LORD saw the oppression of Israel by the Syrians and gave Israel "a saviour". The identity of this deliverer is not mentioned. But deliverance was obtained by his two successors, namely, Jehoash and Jeroboam II. During their reigns, they recaptured the places taken by the Syrians and restored the boundaries of

¹ Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Israel. God's chastisement on Jehoahaz did not make him repent and stop his worship of the calf images. He also did not remove "the grove" in Samaria.

The word for "grove" in Hebrew is "Asherah", which was the name of the female god of Baal. God allowed the Syrians to decimate the armies of Israel to a small militia of 50 horsemen, and 10 chariots and 10,000 soldiers, thus reducing them like dust that has been threshed – crushed and shattered and weak. Jehoahaz died and was buried in Samaria.

The king ruled for 17 long years and had nothing to show for it except the displeasure of the LORD. What a sad end to a life of wasted opportunity.

Jehoash Reigned in Israel

– 13:10-13

Jehoash, the son of King Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, ascended the throne. He was the second generation of the dynasty of Jehu to rule Israel. This was in accordance to the promise God gave to Jehu that his descendants would be kings of Israel to the fourth generation. (2 Kings 10:30). God is always true to His promise. God never lies. Jehoash of Israel began his reign (798 B.C.) in Israel in the 37th year of the reign of Joash the King of Judah. Now there were two kings in the land who had the same name. The name "Jehoash" was also known as "Joash"².

² Not to be confused, we will refer to the King of Israel as Jehoash, and the King of Judah as Joash.

King Jehoash made no change at all to depart from the sins of Jeroboam in the worship of the LORD. He followed the footsteps of his father. He reigned for 16 years. Not much is written about his rule over Israel except that he went to war against King Amaziah of Judah. He died a natural death and was buried in Samaria, the capital of Israel together with the other kings of Israel. His son, Jeroboam ascended the throne. He took the name after the first king of Jeroboam. To avoid confusion, he is referred to as Jeroboam II.

Elisha Performed His Last Deed – 3:14-25

The last time Elisha was mentioned was when he summoned one of his prophets to anoint Jehu to be the next King of Israel (2 Kings 9:1-3). Elisha is mentioned again here. He had fallen ill and because of his sickness, he died. When Elisha died, King Jehoash of Israel wept over him. Jehoash acknowledged that the prophet of God had been his personal mentor and that he had been a protector of the nation. He described Elisha as “the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof” (13:14). This was significant as it brought to remembrance the manner in which Elijah had been taken from the earth by the LORD through a chariot of fire (cf. 2Kings 2:11-12). At that time, Elisha himself uttered the same words that are found here. **2 Kings 2:12**, *“And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his*

own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.” This means that Elisha lived in such a way that was similar to that of his master Elijah. This was indeed a great compliment to give someone at the end of his ministerial life.

When Elisha was ill, Jehoash “came down unto him.” This suggests that Elisha probably was in Gilgal where he sometimes lived. Elisha performed his last act of prophecy when King Jehoash visited him. He told the king to take the bow and arrow so as to dramatise prediction of the future of Israel. He instructed the king to open the window, which faced eastward that means, towards Syria, and especially Aphek (13:17). Elisha then said to Jehoash with words of encouragement to shoot “the arrow of the LORD’S deliverance” and deliver Israel from Syria, even smiting the Syrians in Aphek, the most strategic site between Damascus and Samaria. Jehoash took the bow and arrow. He shot the arrow and then Elisha said, *“The arrow of the LORD’S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.”* The message to the king from Elisha was very clear.

After that the king was told by Elisha to smite the ground with the arrows he probably had in his hand. The king smote the ground three times and stopped. Elisha was so angry with him because he should have smote the ground five or six times. The whole point was that Elisha expected King Jehoash to be enthusiastic and determined to smite Syria and win a

resounding victory. But alas, Jehoash smote the ground only three times. That was not enough to defeat the Syrians permanently but only three times. It showed that King Jehoash lacked the desire and the will to achieve a total victory. He seemed to be content with just winning some battles but not the war against God's enemy.

Elisha died and was buried in Gilgal. A great prophet of God had been called home to glory. Israel was deprived of another man of God who could advise and protect the nation. Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire. Elisha was led through "the valley of the shadow of death" and ushered into heaven. An interesting and wonderful incident happened. A band of Moabites who lived across the Jordan at Gilgal was invading Israel. Someone who is not identified was being buried at that time. They were at the same cemetery where Elisha was buried. The pallbearers of the dead man saw the invading Moabites. In their fear and haste, they threw the body of the dead man into the sepulchre of Elisha. It is not explained why the stone of Elisha's sepulchre was rolled away thus opening the entrance. This incident must have happened for quite a while after Elisha was buried because his body had decomposed and only his bones were left. Anyway, when the dead man's body came into contact with Elisha's bones, the dead man became alive and stood up on his feet. This miracle was attributed to Elisha – his last miracle, a resurrection miracle! All this was possible because of the LORD

God Almighty of whom Elisha was His prophet.

The destruction of Israel by Hazael the Syrian King was not complete because of the covenant the LORD made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is significant as the LORD's covenant will always be remembered and upheld. It is sad to know also that if not for the covenant mentioned here, Israel would have been destroyed by Hazael for Israel deserved it.

PRACTICAL VALUE

God always evaluate our lives by our relationship with and spiritual life in Him. And the most important is whether we worship Him only or some other gods as well. This truth is evidently clear whenever a new king is introduced – "And he did what was **evil** in the sight of the LORD" or "And he did that which was **right** in the sight of the Lord." We must remember this truth and what pleases the LORD. Although we do not worship idols (tangible ones), yet our idols can be someone whom we are beholden to that we may listen to him rather than to the Word of God; or it can easily be money, power and position so that the pursuits of these may cause us to put everything pertaining to the LORD and His Word and Work aside; or it could also be a pastime like tennis, football, golf or whatever. These can be our idols today. As long as that thing or person causes us to disobey God, it is an idol! Many of these might be legitimate things. They might not be wrong or evil by themselves. But we

need to take care that we do not become too preoccupied with them and put the LORD our God aside. If we come under the power of any of these things, then we have sinned against God. It is to our hurt and detriment. How can we expect God to give us His blessing, His healing of our hurts and sicknesses, and His many blessings that we ask of Him when we do not even honour Him? Even by our own human reasoning, this kind of behaviour is unacceptable.

The case of Jehoash is a special case. Although he did not walk in the ways of the LORD, yet God heard his plea for help. In this case, God reveals to us His reason and purpose. We are not to take this as the norm. All the other Scriptures indicate that God does not heed the prayers of the ungodly sinner (Isaiah 1:15; 59:2; Luke 13:25-28). In this instance, it is because of the covenant the LORD has with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel). AMEN

DAILY READING & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: 2 Kings 13:1-9; Psalm 106:43-44; Jeremiah 33:3.

TUESDAY: 2 Kings 13:10-25; Exodus 32:13-14, James 1:8; 4:8;

WEDNESDAY: 2 Kings 13:1-25;

THURSDAY: 2 Kings 13:1-25;

FRIDAY: 2 Kings 13:1-25.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Why was it so difficult for King Jehoahaz who reigned for 17 long years to stop the worship of the golden calves?

- 2. The two lives of Jehoahaz and his son Jehoash were wasted lives for they could have done so much for he LORD as kings. Do you agree with this statement? If a life was lived for the advancement of human lives such as inventing the elevators or electric light bulbs or telephone, etc. would you still call it a wasted life like that of the two kings?

- 3. Why did Elisha rebuke Jehoash? What relevance can we draw from this to apply to our Christian life?

4. What is revealed in the relationship between King Jehoash and the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 13:14-19)?

5. What do you think God wants us to understand most from the incident in 2 Kings 13:21?

6. How do you think God wants us to respond to King Hazael's success over Israel in 2 Kings 13:22-25?
