

## 2 Kings Lesson 8

### 2 Kings Chapter 8

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Memory verses for this week: *1Jn 3:20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.*

*1Jn 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.*

**Introduction:** In chapter 7, we studied about the four lepers who were in dire straits. They decided to not just sit there at the gate and die, but to go and see if the Syrians might give them some food. Before they arrived, God had brought the sound of marching troops to the Syrians, and they all fled because they 'thought' that they were about to die. They left behind all their supplies, and the Israelites were fed by their goods after the lepers returned and told them what they had discovered in the Syrian camp.

In Chapter 8, we will be studying about the latter days of Elisha's prophetic ministry. He foretells an impending seven year famine for Israel. Through the reminder of Gehazi, the Shunammite woman's land is restored. Elisha predicts the new king in Syria in Hazael. Then the chapter shifts back to history in Judah under the reign of Jehoram and then Ahaziah.

### I. Elisha Predicts 7 Year Famine

*2Ki 8:1 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.*

*2Ki 8:2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.*

The woman in here spoken of is the great woman of Shunem as noted in II Kings 4:8-17. Because of her faithfulness to Jehovah, God through the prophet warned her of an impending famine which would last for seven years. Elisha urged her to flee the nation. The woman did what she was encouraged to do according to the word of Elisha. She went with her household, and dwelt in the land of the Philistines seven years.

### II. Jehoram Restores the Shunammite Woman's Property

*2Ki 8:3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned*

*out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.*

*2Ki 8:4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.*

*2Ki 8:5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried 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.*

*2Ki 8:6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.*

Evidently, during her absence, the land that belonged to this woman had been appropriated by others in her absence. She appealed to the king for relief.

In the meantime, the king spoke with Gehazi the servant of the man of God. He was interested to know all about Elisha's miracles. The last we read of Gehazi was at the end of chapter 5 wherein he had leprosy. Some years had obviously passed. It seems that he was no longer Elisha's servant.

God providentially ordained events so that as Gehazi was telling the king about the Shunammite woman and how Elisha had raised her son from the dead, she appeared to appeal her cause. Gehazi announced her to the king. Never doubt that God will take care of you. This woman probably didn't expect to find someone who knew her, but by faith she went up to the King for help. Upon hearing her appeal, the king directed one of his officers to not only restore her land to her, but also the crops she was denied in her absence.

Albert Barnes in his commentary said it was common for fields abandoned to be taken up by others in the owners absence.

### **2 Kings 8:3**

During the Shunammite's absence in Philistia, her dwelling and her grain-fields had been appropriated by some one who refused to restore them. She therefore determined to appeal to the king. Such direct appeals are common in Oriental countries.

### **III. Elisha Predict Hazael's Reign Over Syria**

*2Ki 8:7 And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.*

*2Ki 8:8 And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?*

Curious indeed is the arrival of Elisha, a prophet of Jehovah, in pagan

Damascus. Benhadad, who had been an inveterate enemy to Israel was seriously sick. Elisha's arrival was made known to him. Having had previous experience with Elisha, Benhadad knew he was a prophet of God and sent word for him to ask God if he would recover.

*2Ki 8:9 So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?*

*2Ki 8:10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.*

The respect which Benhadad had come to develop for Elisha is apparent. Even as a pagan gentile, he had learned firsthand of God's power upon him and through him. He sent massive gifts and sent his lieutenant Hazael to meet Elisha.

The king even humbled himself to the degree that he referred to himself as Elisha's son. This was practically the same as to referring to him as his servant. King Benhadad directed Hazael to ask the prophet if he would recover of his disease. Elisha's answer was twofold. He informed Hazael that the king would indeed recover of his disease. However, Elisha also informed him that Jehovah had revealed to him that he would soon die.

*2Ki 8:11 And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept.*

*2Ki 8:12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.*

*2Ki 8:13 And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.*

In verse 11, Elisha refrained his facial expression until he was embarrassed and then he wept. When Hazael inquired as to why Elisha wept, the prophet told him how he knew of the cruelty that Hazael would inflict someday upon Israel.

Elisha knew that Hazael would someday be king of Syria and that he would attack Israel with cruelty. He thus wept in reflection thereupon.

In verse 13, Hazael was taken aback that Elisha would so accuse him. Upon being confronted by Hazael's protest, Elisha informed him that he would someday be king of Syria. Though not noted as such, Elisha may have anointed Hazael king of Syria as foretold in I Kings 19:15.

*1Ki 19:15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of*

*Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:*

Matthew Henry said this about the prophet's weeping.

When Hazael asked him why he wept he told him what a great deal of mischief he foresaw he would do to the Israel of God (2Ki 8:12), what desolations he would make of their strong-holds, and barbarous destruction of their men, women, and children. The sins of Israel provoked God to give them up into the hands of their cruel enemies, yet Elisha wept to think that ever Israelites should be thus abused; for, though he foretold, he did not desire the woeful day. See what havock war makes, what havock sin makes, and how the nature of man is changed by the fall, and stripped even of humanity itself.

*2Ki 8:14 So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldst surely recover.*

*2Ki 8:15 And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.*

Upon returning to Benhadad, Hazael informed him how that Elisha said he would recover. However, he did not tell him all that Elisha had told him. Hazael's character is thus revealed. Upon learning that he would someday be king, he did not wait. The next day, he murdered the still sick Benhadad by suffocating him as noted in the text. He then ascended the throne of Syria as prophesied by Elisha.

#### **IV. The Focus Now Turns to Judah**

*2Ki 8:16 And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.*

*2Ki 8:17 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.*

“And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.” It is thought by some that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, co-reigned with his father for the final two years of his reign.

Collating II Kings 3:1 together with I Kings 22:42, it is apparent that Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, became joint-king with his father in the twenty-third year of Jehoshaphat. He reigned a total of twenty-five years.

It should also be noted that Joram, son of Ahab, is also known as Jehoram as well. However, to prevent further confusion, Jehoram of the northern kingdom is at times referred to as Joram. As noted, Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned for

eight years.

*2Ki 8:18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.*

*2Ki 8:19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a light, and to his children.*

Sadly, Jehoram, king of Judah walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. Because Jehoram married Ahab's daughter, the wicked influence of that lineage was strengthened in Judah. Accordingly, he did evil in the sight of the LORD. Notwithstanding the sin that continued in Judah, God remained faithful to His promise to David. He always keeps His Word. See Psalm 132:11,17.

*Psa 132:11 The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.*

*Psa 132:12 If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.*

*Psa 132:17 There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.*

*2Ki 8:20 In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.*

*2Ki 8:21 So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents.*

*2Ki 8:22 Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time.*

Though God would not destroy Judah because of His covenant with David, He nevertheless chastened them for their sin. During his reign, Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. Edom, a small country to the south and east of Judah, had been a tributary to Judah since the time of David.

At the very least, sin brings a removal of God's blessings. Jehoram (Joram) thus lost part of his empire because of his sin. As noted above in comments for verses 16-17, the Joram mentioned is another name of Jehoram of Judah. He attacked Edom and initially prevailed. Though Joram (Jehoram) had initially subdued Edom, apparently as soon as Joram went home, they revolted again.

Libnah, another city toward the border of Philistia in the opposite direction, revolted at the same time. Implicit is that Joram did not have the resources to

deal with both revolts. Things were not going well for Joram. He had lost God's blessing. In fact, it seems clear that God was chastening him for his sin.

*2Ki 8:23 And 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?*

*2Ki 8:24 And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.*

In verse 23, we have record that Jehoram dies. Joram's son Ahaziah ascended the throne of Judah.

*2Ki 8:25 In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign.*

*2Ki 8:26 Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.*

*2Ki 8:27 And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab.*

Verse 25 shows the accession of Ahaziah over Judah. Ahaziah was a weak and wicked king like his father. According to II Chronicles 21:17, Ahaziah was also called Jehoahaz, the youngest king of the sons of Jehoram (Joram). He is noted as beginning to reign in the twelfth year of Joram, king of the northern kingdom. This young king reigned for only one year.

II Chronicles 22:1-4 notes that the influence of his mother and the house of Ahab to the north were his counselors to his destruction. How he died is not noted, but implicit is that it was with God's providential permission.

II Chronicles 22:2 notes that Ahaziah began to reign at age forty two.

*2Ch 22:2 Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.*

*2Ch 22:3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.*

John Gill explains the difference accordingly. "These forty two years are not the date of the age of Ahaziah, but of the reign of the family of Omri king of Israel."

Sadly, he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab. Because of the influence of his mother Athaliah and the house of Ahab (son of Omri), he did evil before God. Family can be an influence for either good or evil. In this case, it was evil.

*2Ki 8:28 And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramothgilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram.*

*2Ki 8:29 And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given 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.*

Ahaziah joins Jehoram in the defense of Ramoth-gilead. Ahaziah cooperated with Jehoram (Joram) king of Israel against the Syrians. However, the coming of Ahaziah to Jezreel to visit Joram was his undoing. As will be noted in II Kings 9:27-28, Ahaziah got caught in an insurrection in the northern kingdom against Jehoram and was there killed as was Jehoram.

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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