

2Kings 13:1 ¶ In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years.

2Kings 13:2 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

In the 23rd year of Joash, son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, became king over Israel in Samaria; he ruled for 17 years. He did that which was evil before the LORD by following the sins of Jeroboam. He continued to promote the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan.

2Kings 13:3 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days.

The people of Israel followed the example of their leader and made the LORD angry by their continued disobedience to His law. So the LORD allowed Hazael and Benhadad, kings of Syria, to oppress them throughout their lifetimes.

2Kings 13:4 And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them.

2Kings 13:5 (And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime.)

2Kings 13:6 Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, *but* walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria.)

2Kings 13:7 Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing.

Jehoahaz prayed for help from the LORD, and the LORD heard him; He answered that prayer. Why? Because He is such a gracious God. He saw how the Syrians were treating them so cruelly. The primary reason, however, is stated in verse 23—because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

So the LORD gave Israel a man to deliver them from the Syrians, allowing them to live in their tents as before. The IVP Commentary provides the following insight: “It may have been a neighboring ruler, such as Zakur of Hamath or Adad-Nirari III of Assyria, both of whom were powerful at this time.”

In spite of God’s deliverance, the people of Israel still continued to ignore the law of God and worshipped the golden calves. They didn’t even destroy the grove in Samaria.

Hebrew for “grove” = “Asherah (or Astarte) a Phoenician goddess; also an image of the same”

Though He delivered His people from the Syrians, the LORD only left Israel with 50 horsemen, ten chariots and 10,000 footmen. The rest had been thoroughly destroyed by the Syrians.

2Kings 13:8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 2Kings 13:9 And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.

The historian ends his account of Jehoahaz with a statement that more was recorded about him in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel (not scripture). Jehoahaz died and was buried in Samaria; Joash his son then became king.

2Kings 13:10 ¶ In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years.

2Kings 13:11 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: *but* he walked therein.

2Kings 13:12 And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2Kings 13:13 And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

It was in the 37th year of Joash, king of Judah, that Jehoash/Joash became king of Israel. It is very confusing that the names of these kings are so alike; you have to be careful to watch the context as you look at this history.

Joash, king of Israel, continued in the evil ways of his fathers and continued to promote the worship of the golden calves in disobedience to God's law. The wording indicates that this is all he intends to tell us about this king of Israel, but a bit more is recorded in the rest of the chapter.

Again the historian notes that more is recorded about this king in the chronicles of the kings of Israel, including the fact that he warred against Amaziah, king of Judah (which is recorded in chapter 14 and in 2Chronicles 25). When this king of Israel died, he was buried in Samaria in the royal graveyard.

Jeroboam became the new king of Israel in Samaria. Though we aren't told here, we know that this was the son of Joash.

2 Kings 14:23 "In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years."

2Kings 13:14 Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said,

O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.
2Kings 13:15 And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.
2Kings 13:16 And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it*: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.
2Kings 13:17 And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he 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*.
2Kings 13:18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them*. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.
2Kings 13:19 And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed *it*: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria *but* thrice.

The historian next records something else that happened before Joash died. The prophet Elisha became sick with a terminal disease. It reads to me like Joash came to Elisha to mourn over the loss of Israel's chariots and horsemen. Gill notes that the Targum puts it this way: "my master, my master, who was better to Israel by his prayers than chariots and horsemen." This actually makes more sense to me.

Side note: The targum is defined in the Jewish Encyclopedia as follows: "The Aramaic translation of the Bible. It forms a part of the Jewish traditional literature, and in its inception is as early as the time of the Second Temple."

JFB makes this observation on verse 14 "Oh my father, my father": "These words seem to have been a complimentary phrase applied to one who was thought an eminent guardian and deliverer of his country. The particular application of them to Elisha, who, by his counsels and prayer, had obtained many glorious victories for Israel, shows that the king possessed some measure of faith and trust, which, though weak, was accepted, and called forth the prophet's dying benediction."

Elisha told Joash to bring his bow and arrows, and he did. He then told the king to pick up his bow; when he did, Elisha placed his hands over the king's hands. He then told the king to open the window facing east (toward Syria) and shoot an arrow. When he did, Elisha declared it to symbolize the LORD's deliverance of Israel from the oppression of Syria. He told Joash that they would destroy the Syrians in Aphek.

Gill adds this note regarding Elisha placing his hands on the king's hands: "...on both his hands, which were put, the one on the bow, the other on the arrow⁷¹³; hereby signifying, that though the king would draw the bow in battle, the Lord, whom the prophet represented, would give the success...."

Elisha then told the king to pick up his arrows and beat the ground. When I looked at the Hebrew, it stated, "clap, give (wounds)... kill...punish...give

(stripes).” In other words, it seemed to imply much more than just a simple strike on the ground. This would explain why Elisha got angry when the king only struck the ground three times. The limited strikes would result in three victories over Syria.

2Kings 13:20 ¶ And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

2Kings 13:21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

The historian notes that Elisha died and was buried. He then includes one more miracle attributed to him after death.

The Moabites invaded the land of Israel at the “coming in of the year.” JFB notes that this was “the spring, the usual season of beginning campaigns in ancient times.”

As some of the men of Israel were burying a man, they spotted a band of the Moabite raiders and threw his body into the cave that was Elisha’s grave. When the man’s body touched the bones of Elisha, he came back to life and stood up on his feet.

Adam Clarke makes a good observation: “This is the first, and I believe the last, account of a true miracle performed by the bones of a dead man; and yet on it and such like the whole system of miraculous working relics has been founded by the popish Church.”

2Kings 13:22 But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 2Kings 13:23 And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.

Hazael, king of Syria, oppressed Israel throughout the lifetime of Jehoahaz. However, the LORD showed grace and compassion to Israel because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He did not allow Syria to destroy them nor did He cast them from His presence.

2Kings 13:24 So Hazael king of Syria died; and Benhadad his son reigned in his stead.

2Kings 13:25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

So Hazael, king of Syria, died and his son Benhadad became the next king of Syria.

Jehoash, king of Israel, reclaimed the cities that Hazael had taken from his father Jehoahaz. Three times he went up against Benhadad and defeated him, recovering the cities of Israel. This fulfilled the prophecy made by Elisha (v19).