

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

As this chapter opens, we find Elisha warning the Shunammite woman whose son he had raised from the dead to get out of the country because the LORD had determined to send a famine upon the land for seven years. The woman immediately gathered all her household and traveled to the land of the Philistines to stay for seven years.

At the end of the seven years, the woman returned to her homeland. It seems that her land had been confiscated during her long absence, so she went to the king to petition for the return of her house and her land.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

The king (Jehoram) was talking with Elisha's servant, Gehazi, and asking him to tell him about all the miracles he had seen Elisha do. It was as he was telling the king about Elisha restoring the life of a dead boy to his mother, that the woman showed up to beg the king to restore her house and land. Gehazi told the king that this was the very woman he was talking about. (Coincidence—I think not; a Godincidence.)

The king asked the woman to verify the event and she told him. The king then ordered one of his officers to make sure that all that was hers was restored to her, including any profit that had been realized from the use of her land during the time she had been gone.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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?

2Kings 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?

In this section we find that Elisha is sent to Damascus, Syria, to complete an assignment that had evidently been delegated to him by Elijah.

1 Kings 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...."

This is yet another event that gives testimony to how the LORD's plans and purposes include the Gentile nations as well as Israel's.

Benhadad, the king of Syria, was sick and was told that the "man of God" was in town. The king sent his servant Hazael to go and ask the prophet to ask the LORD if he would recover from his illness.

Hazael went to see Elisha, bringing with him a very large gift of all the good things in Damascus—so large that it required 40 camels to carry. He then presented the king's request to the prophet.

JFB provides some possible insight: "The present, consisting of the rarest and most valuable produce of the land, would be liberal and magnificent. But it must not be supposed it was actually so large as to require forty camels to carry it. The Orientals are fond of display, and would, ostentatiously, lay upon forty beasts what might very easily have been borne by four."

2Kings 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.

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

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

Elisha's reply was intriguing. He told him to go and tell Benhadad that he would recover while admitting that the reality was that he would die. This seems to indicate that his disease was not fatal, and he would have recovered had he not been killed.

Then he stared at Hazael so long that he became uncomfortable. Maybe the wording of Elisha's answer made the man realize that Elisha knew that he harbored evil in his heart against the king.

Eventually, Elisha began to weep, and Hazael asked him what was wrong.

Elisha answered that he knew the evil that Hazael would do to the children of Israel. He knew that he would destroy many of their cities by fire, kill many of the young men and children and even kill pregnant women.

Hazael questioned how Elisha thought it was possible that someone in his position could orchestrate and do such things. Then, Elisha told him that the LORD had shown him that Hazael would become king over Syria.

This reminds me of what we as Christians today know about the future as revealed in God's word. We know that there is a coming leader that is going to cause death and destruction throughout the world—especially against those who declare themselves to be followers of God during his reign. Does it grieve us? Are we doing what we can to warn as many people as possible?

2Kings 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.*

2Kings 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.

When Hazael returned to Benhadad, he told the king that Elisha said he would recover. The next day, emboldened by the words of the prophet I am sure, he took a thick cloth soaked in water and smothered the king to death. Hazael then became king.

The IVP Commentary provides this historical note: "Hazael is referred to in the records of his contemporary, Shalmaneser III of Assyria, where he is identified as a usurper. He reigned from 842 to about 800 B.C."

This is another one of those hard stories in scripture. Why did God allow Hazael to become king? The answer is found in his instructions to Elijah.

1 Kings 19:15–18 "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: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

It was to bring judgment upon His people for worshipping false gods.

2Kings 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.

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

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

The historian now turns his attention back to the kings of Judah. It is noted that it was in the 5th year of the reign of Joram, Ahab's son, in Israel that Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign in Israel. He was 32 years old at the time and reigned for 8 years in Jerusalem. He followed the example of Ahab and did evil in the sight of the LORD, obviously influenced by his wife, Ahab's daughter. According to the Chronicler, one of the first things he did as king was to kill all his brothers and the high-ranking men in the government.

2 Chronicles 21:4 "Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Israel."

The LORD would not destroy Judah because of His covenant promise to David that his descendant would one day occupy the eternal throne of his kingdom.

2 Samuel 7:11-13 "Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."

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

2Kings 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.

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

It was during the days of Jehoram that Edom revolted from the rule of Judah and established their own king.

In response to the revolt, Jehoram/Joram assembled all his chariots and attacked the city of Zair by night. It seems that the men of Edom were ready for them and surrounded the chariots of Judah. The wording is confusing, but it is clear that Edom maintained their independence.

Gill explains it this way: "It appears that the Israelites were surrounded by the Idumeans; and that in the night Joram and his men cut their way through them, and so got every man to his tent, for they were not able to make any farther head against these enemies; and therefore it is said, that Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day."

It seems that the troops of Judah had to face revolts on two fronts, dividing their

forces, since Libnah revolted at the same time as Edom.

2Kings 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?*

2Kings 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.

The historian closed his account of Jehoram's rule by noting that more was recorded about him in the chronicles of the kings of Judah.

The Chronicler tells us how he died.

2 Chronicles 21:18–19 “And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers.”

Jehoram died and was buried with his father in the city of David. He was succeeded to the throne by his son Ahaziah.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

It was in the 12th year of Joram the king of Israel that Ahaziah began his reign in Judah; he was 22 years old at the time. His mother was Athaliah, (grand)daughter of Omri (cf v18), the father of Ahab. Greatly influenced by his mother I am sure, Ahaziah followed the example of the house of Ahab and did evil in the sight of the LORD.

Ahaziah is also called Jehoahaz in the book of Chronicles.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

He allied himself with Joram, the son of Ahab, to go to war against Hazael, king of Syria in Ramothgilead. Joram was wounded in that battle. He returned to Jezreel to recover from his wounds, and Ahaziah went to visit him during this time.

Note: Joram was his uncle, his mother's brother.

This narrative will eventually be continued in the next chapter.