

ISRAEL BECOMES HOPELESSLY APOSTATE

& Is Punished by Exile

JUDAH ASSOCIATES WITH THEM

& This Almost Wipes Out The House of David.

Brief quotes only of Scripture are given with the comment. This means you need to work from your own copy of the Word of God to read each verse in context, and to look up references given, or that come to mind. In this way you're looking directly to the Lord to hear for yourself what He is saying.

E. Read.

SYRIA/Aram is KJV/niv. (*Aram* is the Hebrew name, and Aramaic the language. *Syria* is the Greek name with which I'm familiar, so I find the NIV use of Aram, annoying. It may be used to avoid Syria being confused with Assyria- *Asshur*. I have given KJV generally only when it's significantly different. I have done this to save space, and because in NZ most readers are using NIV. **LXX** is Septuagint (Greek) OT. **Cp** is Compare (with the Scriptures that follow.) **BAR 93/1** = Biblical Archaeology Review 1993, No 1. (Jan-Feb.)

Reference Books used:- EXPOSITORS BIBLE COM., Ed F.E. Gaebelin, 1 Kings-Job. WORD BIBLE COM., 2 Kings, T R Hobbs. A Synoptic Harmony of Samuel, Kings, & Chronicles etc J.D. Newsome. NEW AMERICAN COM., 1 & 2 Kings P.R. House. 1 & 2 Kings, R.D. Patterson & H.J. Austel. Gleanings from Elisha, Life & Miracles, A.W. Pink. NEW INT. BIBLICAL COM., 1 & 2 Kings, I. W. Provan. And, easily the most helpful, TYNDALE OT COM., 1 & 2 Kings, Donald Wiseman.

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INTRODUCTION

(I KINGS 1-8 Booklet has a fuller introduction)

2 KINGS AS HISTORY

During this period there was a great deal of interaction between Israel/Judah and other nations. Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt kept durable records in stone, or baked-clay tablets. **1 The information they give supplements and generally supports the Bible Record, when one makes allowance for the bias against Israel, and the boastful propaganda of the Kings who created what went into their records.

Archaeology shows that in Sodom's time cities had casemate walls (having rooms between inner and outer walls) and 6 roomed defensive gateways at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, 1 Ki 9:15. The 9th century gateways were 4 roomed, 8th century 2 roomed. The Assyrians used battering rams etc, so later walls at Dan, Hazor, Megiddo, Lachish, etc had solid walls 4 m thick.

Footnote **1 Ex Wiseman P 3235 quotes records - 853BC Battle of Qarqar, Stele of Shalmaneser III. 841BC Jehu, Black Obelisk from Kalhu. 830BC Moab rebels. Moabite Stone. 796BC Adad-nerari III names Jehoshaphat of Samaria as paying tribute. 738BC Tiglath-Pileser III records Menahem of Samaria paying Tribute, 2 Ki 15:19. 734BC Azariah mat Yauhi (Azariah/Uzziah of Judah?) pays tribute, 2 Ki 15:1-7. 731BC Deposes Pekah & installs Hoshea who pays tribute. 723BC Shalmaneser V attacked Hoshea 2 Ki 17:3-4. Claims capture of Samaria. (Died

Gen 123. Rahab, Ruth, Sheba's Queen, and Naaman were blessed through Israel, as was Nineveh through Jonah. But the Nations are also used by God to punish Israel's apostasy, 103233 133, Jud 21-23 1 Ki 19:15-17.

CHRONOLOGY- In Pre-exile OT there was little interest in precise dates, a king is named, followed by "In his days." Edom revolted, 820 Tiglath Pileser, 729 Necho, 609, invaded, etc. It isn't clear how the reigns of the kings of Israel/ Judah, and other nations fit together as they vary according to whether the first year is counted or not, whether a few months are counted as a year, and whether fathers and sons reigned at the same time.

When we check Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc, we realise 2 Kings omits much that's recorded about the period. But also that even if we could fit all the Biblical information together as correctly as possible there would still be great gaps in our knowledge. AND that while three writers might be observing and recording God's view of the same situation, what they saw, and the words in which they recorded it, are their own, and so differ in various ways. As we're given a record of only a selection of the events, from varying viewpoints, it's folly to imagine we can make an accurate, whole picture synchronising events, numbers, etc and be dogmatic about it. It's worse folly to discredit God's Word by claiming it contradicts itself. It's as if we were trying to assemble a Jig-saw puzzle from which many pieces are missing. Eg The 41 year reign of Jeroboam II is given in 7 brief verses, 142329.**2

THE FORMER PROPHETS- We think of KINGS as the HISTORY of God's OT people under their Kings. That the Jews call the books THE FORMER PROPHETS reminds us that this is PROPHETIC History. A statement of God's verdict on some events in a King's reign that He considered to be important. God's prophets interact with people and situations and God's message arises from the History, and in response to it. The Prophecies also influence, and even create the History as in Nathan's message to David, 1 Ki 1:22-27, Jehu's destroying the house of Ahab, 1 Ki 19:15-17; 2 Ki 9:1-26. The facts of history selected for recording are presented so that God speaks to us clearly through them, and shows us their contribution to His purposes for His people. It does this to encourage us to play our part also.

Footnote **2. In World War II at one stage the names of the commanders of the Army, Airforce, and Navy allied forces in North Africa were Cunningham, Cunningham, and Coringham. It's obvious that brief references to them could seem contradictory. If in one source we read that the Libyan town Bardia had been

compassion. They spoke the Word of the Lord to the PEOPLE as well as to the Rulers, as Micah did, 1 Ki 22:28. This produced a spiritually educated, responsive "Remnant for Salvation" to expand and carry on God's message, and stir up anticipation of His Messiah.

Israel as a nation heard the prophet's messages, and saw the miracles as a matter of only passing excitement, and continued in their refusal to acknowledge and serve the Lord. But to the Godly minority/remnant (the sons of the prophets - those produced by their work) they were a witness to the faithfulness of God to His covenant promises, and they learned to live in fellowship with Him against the pressures of Apostate Israel, and later the heathen world. These were encouraged to play their part in fulfilling God's purposes, as opportunity came, 44:24-4:21. Their hearts were kept in peace as they "saw" Him who is invisible, and saw His protection of the prophets His servants, 6:15-17. Cp Rom 1:20 2 Cor 4:16-18 Col 1:15 1 Tim 1:17; Heb 11:27. Soon thereafter they returned from exile inoculated against idolatry.

The historical situation is relevant to all times - war, political corruption, poverty and sickness. And, God's providential care enabling His people to be faithful to Him in a fellowship of obedient love and a blessing to each other. God continues to be Holy, Just and Redemptive. Man continues to need Salvation and Discipline. The decisions made by the characters in Kings were consistent with these facts, and the way they in their day saw them. At times the writer explains the significance of the facts, interpreting the motives of the characters, and does so with absolute assurance. The prophetic narrative takes up each event and situation and points to God and shows how the reader can learn to live under God's blessing rather than His punishment. But as we apply to today what we read here we need to do so in ways consistent with the historical facts and the way they were used. **3 That Scripture uses a situation as a warning, rebuke, encouragement etc requires us to use it for the same purpose. And, it's important for us to note how the book fits with other books of the Bible and so allow the Bible to give its own interpretation.

Footnote **3 Jotham's parable, Judges 9:7-20 is a warning that fallen human nature is eager to rule the people of God. The Godly are content with the place of blessing God has given them. I've seen it wrongly used to encourage men to become "Church Ministers" even though the pay is less than in the secular world. And

ministry, thus making a world effective testimony, Num 33:30 Jn 8:17, to the Lord God of Israel, and His eternal purposes for His people. Although both struck the Jordan with Elijah's mantle and it parted for them to walk over the river bed, 28, 14, and he raised a dead boy, Elijah began with proclaiming a drought, 1 Ki 17:1, and Elisha by healing a spring to provide useful water, 2:21-22.

Generally Elijah's miracles were protests against evil, associated with judgment, death, and destruction, and his life culminated in his being taken up accompanied by fiery war chariots. Although Elisha was involved in God's judgment on Ahab's house through Jehu, most of his actions revealed God's willingness to help the distressed. They were life-sustaining miracles of healing and restoration, and his last seen prophesying deliverance for Israel. Together Elijah and Elisha witness to the truth that God is both Light and Love, 1 Jn 1:5; 4:8. We may feel the state of the world around us cries out for an Elijah - as often it has in the past - but in it God continues to work in the quieter ways of Elisha, and may yet do so for many years.

Elijah set the pattern for the Fore-runner of the Lord in His first Coming, and it would seem, His second Coming, Mal 4:5; Mt 11:12-14; 17:10-13; Mk 9:12-13; Lk 1:17 (John the Baptist's ROLE was to be an Elijah. He wasn't Elijah returned from heaven, Jn 1:21. Elisha, whose name means God Saves, was the son of Shaphan whose name means to Judge and execute Judgment. This may foreshadow the life and work of the Lord Jesus which results in both Salvation and Judgment. The healing of Naaman the leper is quoted by Him in Lk 4:27, and with Christ a few loaves feed many, Lk 9:13-17.

Elisha was a prophet yet the record has few verbal proclamations of God's truth that go beyond the immediate events. Instead it's filled with miracles, each of which reveals something about God's will, and His loving concern for His people. Miracles were granted through Moses to reveal God in Egypt where He was unknown. As the knowledge of God was fading in Israel, God, in mercy, through Elisha, granted miracles to catch their attention and remind them of His purposes. The NT Gospels show Israel bound in the chains of legalism, having buried the word of God under the trash of enforced human traditions. So, miracles were granted in great numbers as a witness to the reality that the KING stood among them demonstrating and offering to them the long-promised Kingdom.

God called Elisha, and such a call is essential if God's will is to be done. It's good to encourage young folk to take up the Lord's work, but that is empty

person to carry on the work.

OTHER THEMES

There is a constant theme that the trustful obedience/unbelieving rejection of God and His revealed will on the part of rulers has a positive/negative effect on His people, and their enjoyment of fellowship with God and the blessings that go with it. There is also an emphasis on- In Israel the persistence of Jeroboam's Golden Calf worship. In Judah the use of High places. In both, campaigns against Baal worship. **4

The place of the Temple in God's purposes is emphasised in the restoration of the Davidic dynasty with the anointing of Joash, the repair of the Temple, and in Josiah's time, the finding of the Book of the Law. And negatively with the blasphemous destructive actions of Ahaz and Manasseh. Kings of Judah are increasingly judged by the Law of Moses, in its WRITTEN form, 14:5-6; 17:2-23; 18:4-6; 21:3-9, not merely as a general background to the admired David-style life, 10:31; 16:3-4; 2 Chr 17:3.

Second Kings continues the revelation of God in History and Judgment. His sovereign purposes of blessing for His people, and the inevitable consequences of their trusting obedience, or indifference/defiance. Every King is in some way/at some point lacking in obedient faith, or love for God and so is a failure. Many are deliberately defying God's purposes. But God is a Deliverer, always Faithful to His word, and in the measure any man responds positively his response is valued and used by God in the fulfilment of His purposes of Grace. Behind the covenant with David stood the ancient covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Gen 15:1-21; 17:1-27, Deu 18. The covenant promised that David's descendants will reign over God's Jewish people, 8:19; 2 Sam 7:12-15; 1 Ki 11:36; 15:4. But it's equally clear that this requires their co-operation in loving, trustful obedience, 1 Ki 2:4; 8:25; 9:4-9. God's promise to David WILL be fulfilled, but it's increasingly obvious that no mere man can fulfil it, especially when even a Josiah only briefly lifts the hopes of the Godly.

Footnote **4 Baal worship with its sexual rituals, and its lack of moral requirements (Jezebel was a sincere worshipper of Baal) appealed to man's natural, sinful character. To worship the Lord alongside Baal denied that the Lord alone was

1:1-4 After Ahab's death, Moab rebelled- A further indication that the nation of Israel was in decline, and under God's Judgment Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice- A network of wood or reeds that screened windows, or the rooftop, from view, but allowed a cooling breeze through. So he sent messengers. Go and consult Baal-Zebub- Baal-Zebul, Mk 3:22 would be Baal the Prince or Exalted One. Baal Zebub- Lord of Flies. Zebub- Flies as in Isa 7:18 Ecc 10:1 seems a sneering nick-name used by the writer to show his disgust with the idd. In the same way Bosheth- Shame replaces Baal when Eth-Baal is called Ish-Bosheth, and Merib-Baal, Mephi-Bosheth in 2Sam 2:8, 4:4; 1 Chr 8:33-34 the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury- Instead of acknowledging the Lord is God by consulting one of His prophets, Ahaziah ignores/defies the Lord's command, Lev 19:31, by sending to an Idd Temple. This in effect acknowledges Baal as his chosen "God"

But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah- As in 1Ki 19:7. Go. meet the messengers. ask Is it because there is no God in Israel that you consult Baal-Zebub? Therefore. the LORD says: You will not leave the bed. You will certainly die- The secret designs and intentions of the Palace were an open book to the Lord, and when He chose to reveal them to Elijah, to His servant also. This message from God didn't lead Ahaziah to repentance. It merely gave him someone within reach who he could call to account, and perhaps exercise vengeance on, for being the servant of the Lord that he personally had rejected.

1:5-8 When the messengers returned the king asked Why have you come back?- Ekron was 72 Km from Samaria. They had returned far too soon to have obeyed the King's order. A man came to meet us. he said.. Go back to the king and tell him, The LORD says. What kind of man.. told you this? They replied, He was a man with a garment of hair- Cp John Baptist, Mt 3:4; Mk 1:6. The Hebrew says a Baal/ possessor of Hair, either his own, or his hairy garment imitated by false prophets, Zech 1:34. The Hebrew suggests a hairy man rather than a hairy garment. As Elisha was bald, a hairy head would distinguish Elijah from him. Jewish tradition claimed that Elijah was long haired - Cp Nazirite, Num 6:2-5. The king said, That was Elijah.

God, or to intercede with Him. A haziah as KING is using his army to arrest God's messenger and by brute force perhaps make him reverse the doom. The King is defying the Lord, and taking His Messenger prisoner, so the Captain and his men aren't innocent victims of Elijah's spite. They are attacking him, and God defends him. We as Christians are to stand with our Lord in loving our enemies, not boking for punitive actions "Lord shall we call down fire.." Lk 9:54-55 But arm-chair critics who are not themselves under threat, have no right to say what Elijah or God should have done in this situation Judgment is essential, Heb 10:29 2 Th 1:7-9. But it is the Lord's prerogative, not ours, Rom 12:19-21. Presumably the King would have chosen a Captain and army unit known to be loyal to him, and to Baal. God-fearing men were likely to "Go soft" in dealing with Elijah.

Elijah answered If I am a man of God- Cp Our Lord in Mk 11:27-33 may fire come down from heaven.. Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men- The figure of Elijah seems to stand behind the two prophets of Rev 11:1-6, with their drought and fire from heaven. Fire used by God in Judgment is seen in Gen 19:24 Ex 9:23-24 Lev 10:2 Num 11:1-3; 16:35 Lk 9:54 Rev 20:7-10

The king sent another captain.. The captain said to him, Man of God, the king says, Come down at once! - The King had been reminded of Mt Carmel, where God proved Himself by fire, 1 Ki 18:38-39 but he was a slow learner, and merely makes a sharper demand. As this Captain is more arrogant in his demands on Elijah, his loyalty is obviously to the Apostate King, not to the Lord and Elijah His servant.

If I am a man of God- Ish Elohim. Elijah replied, may fire come down from heaven.. Then the fire of God- Esh Elohim, in contrast to Ish Elohim? fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

a third captain.. This captain fell on his knees before Elijah. Man of God, he begged, please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! - The third army unit is spared, not only because of their plea but because God tells Elijah it's safe for him to go with them. This Captain may have feared/ loved the Lord, or may not, but at least he feared what the Lord might do to him at Elijah's request. This gave assurance that Elijah would be granted "Diplomatic

die- There is nothing new for God's messenger to say. King Ahaziah's case had already been heard, and judgment passed on him by the Lord, and hearing God's verdict had not brought repentance

So he died, according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Joram succeeded him as king. As for all the other events of Ahaziah's reign.. written.. Israel- A brief statement, following that of 1 Ki 22:5-3 Ahaziah copied his father Ahab, and refused to learn from God's dealings with Ahab. He is a new generation/ new person, with new opportunities, but chose to be "more of the same." He is at war with Elijah, and Elijah's Lord. He does not ask God's will, but God breaks in to tell it to him. The confrontation demonstrates his opposition to God and His prophet, and the increasing apostasy of the nation. It also shows to all that God may protect His defenceless servants, and the message they bring is defied at the peril of the defiers. The NATION of Israel may reject God but He will ensure the survival of a remnant byal to/and in fellowship with, Himself.

2:1-25 Elijah to Glory - Elisha takes up the work

(As promised in 1 Ki 19:15-18 Elijah was to depart with his work of turning Israel from Baal back to God handed over to Elisha. He had called down fire from heaven in 1:10-12, 1 Ki 18:38, and now he was to be called up to heaven in fire. The holiness of God, symbolised by fire, brings judgment on rebels and salvation to saints.

2:1-2 When the LORD was to take Elijah up to heaven- During Elijah's farewell tour, Gilgal-Bethel-Jericho, it's made clear he was leaving them at the Lord's command, and soon on their way from Gilgal Elijah said to Elisha, Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel- The polite form of Elijah's command shows it to be permissive, rather than prohibitive. He's saying "You don't need to come with me, there's nothing more that I will need you for," not, "You must not come with me." As with Naomi, Ruth 1:7-18, Elijah's heart's desire for his company may well have been obvious as well as the words of dismissal "You have fulfilled your obligations to me." This tested Elisha's faithfulness Cp Peter's eagerness to be a faithful disciple, Mk 14:29-31, and the Lord's three-fold testing, Mt 26:38-45, Jn 2:15-19.

FROM THY HEAD you today?- Literally "From over you" That day Elisha would cease to be under Elijah's tuition and direction, and would take over Elijah's role as promised in 1Ki 19:15-18 It isn't Elijah who manoeuvres Elisha into the position where he succeeds him, it's the inner commitment of Elisha who has courted the cost, and will go ahead with God as His servant in the face of obstacles - even those raised by the man whose disciple he has been. I know, Elisha replied, but do not speak of it- The thought of being without Elijah must have been painful to him. We must not let shallow concern make us rush in to give unwelcome information to each other.

Elijah said Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho- Again Elijah, who has no further need of human help, assures Elisha that he has fulfilled the obligations of his service, taken up in 1Ki 19. We all have personal obligations to the Lord's servants who brought the Gospel to us, and built us up in Christ. Our final loyalty is to the Lord Himself, but we may need to repay those debts of obedience for a time before we can be free to choose to stand on our own feet before the Lord, and commit ourselves to serve Him, as adult sons and daughters of Almighty God. They gave themselves to the Lord and to us, describes that twofold relationship, 2 Cor 8:5. As the LORD lives and as you live- The twin stars by which his life had been guided. The company at Jericho.. Do you know? Yes. but do not speak of it.

2:6-8 Elijah said Stay here, the LORD has sent me to the Jordan- A third test/setting free, and a third commitment. God isn't like a salesman who pressures people to sign up and then holds them to the contract. Those who respond to the call of God fellowship with Him as sons, freely. That involves their faithfulness being tested by uncertainties/choices needing to be made, 1 Cor 11:19, Heb 11:15

He replied.. I will not leave you.. Fifty.. stood at a distance facing the place- Apart from establishing that his departure was God-ordained, the tour had collected an adequate company of witnesses who could testify to the nature of his departure and the reality of the unseen power and fellowship of God with His servants. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided.. and the two crossed over on dry ground- Into the territory of Moab, the scene of Moses departing in death, Deu 34:5.

his will ed, determined, tested-by-experience choice into words. (And at times so must we in prayer to the Lord. Cp Solomon in 1Ki 3:4-9.)

Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit- The double portion was the inheritance of a firstborn son, who, at his father's death, took his special place in relation to God, as head of the family, Deu 21:17. Elisha is asking to be recognised and endowed as Elijah's heir. This inheritance is a spiritual one of endowment by the Spirit of God for the service of the Lord. He would know well the dangerous and demanding nature of Elijah's work, as seen in the previous chapter. Like Moses, Ex 3:15-17, he knew that apart from God's presence with him his task was impossible. God is eager to so equip His servants, but it may take years of serving Him before our self-confidence/ confidence in natural endowments is ground down to the stage where helpless dependence on the grace and power of God can become a daily reality to us. Cp Paul in 2Cor 12:7-10

He had been called to be Elijah's successor, 1 Ki 19:16-21. His first response of commitment has been tested by the realities of the work. He restates his commitment in a way that shows that he realised it wasn't enough for him to imitate/ repeat the form of words and actions which he had seen as a disciple. Gehazi did NOT want to be an Elisha-style Elisha, 5:20-27. Elisha wanted to be an Elijah-style Elijah, but not as an Elijah clone. Only by God granting to him an ELIJAH SPIRIT/ heart/ mind, so that he could truly live and work in fellowship with God Himself, as Elijah had, could he rightly represent the Lord God of Israel and speak His words in sincerity, truth and power.

As, like Elisha, we learn from God's older servants, follies open to the right and left. The folly of imagining mere imitation of the form of their words and actions will enable us to continue the work the Lord gave them. The folly of wanting to supplant them and do things differently, and of being eager to show that God's work is now "under new management" Elisha showed that he realised that only spiritual endowment for his Elijah-successor-role would enable him to fulfil that role. We too need to be a NEW CREATION in order to speak as Ambassadors for Christ, 2 Cor 5:16-21.

You have asked a difficult thing- As only God could grant His Spirit to work with and transform Elisha's spirit, as had been Elijah's experience

Timothy, Titus, etc to serve Paul, at Paul's discretion, Acts 16:1-3. But before long it was only as a son chooses to identify with his father, Phil 2:19-24 that Timothy continued to work with Paul, with increasing freedom/ responsibility, under Paul's direction. Most of those who served an apprenticeship with Paul qualified to go out and serve the Lord on their own responsibility, but only of Demas does Paul give a negative verdict, 2 Tim 4:10

2:11-14 As they were talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire- Warlike transport, appropriate for Elijah as a faithful warrior for God who had battled against apostasy as personified in Ahab. Fire - as appropriate for God's holiness and His intervention in destruction of evil. In a sense, perhaps God was revealing Himself as in Isa 66:15 appeared and separated them, and Elijah went up to heaven- LXX uses Analambano as used of our Lord's ascension in Mk 16:19 in a whirlwind- Symbol of irresistible, uncontrollable power, and of the Holy Spirit's action in Jn 3:8. The whirlwind took him to Heaven, the fiery chariots separated the two men, God symbolising that He was breaking the link, as was His right.

Elisha saw this and cried out, My father! My father!- As in 2 Sam 19:4; Lk 13:34 the repetition expresses his distress at the loss of his beloved Father-figure in God's service. A cry of conscious affection/ conscious loss, the sense of personal loss is emphasised by his tearing his clothes. The chariots and horsemen of Israel!- An exclamation of awed awareness of the invisible reality and glory of God, now momentarily visible to Elisha His servant. Perhaps suggesting that Elijah, as the agent of the Lord God of Israel, was more important for their security than Israel's armed forces. Cp 6:17.

He picked up the MANTLE /cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went.. the Jordan- Elijah had laid that mantle across his shoulders as a symbol of a call to serve God in serving Elijah in the work God had given to him, 1 Ki 19:19. Now Elisha takes it up as a man directly responsible to God/ directly under His orders, ready to hear and understand the will of God as God chose to reveal it to him. And ready to act in obedient Faith in that God and that revelation. Elisha steps forward in Faith to take up the mantle, and the role, and his first action is in the sight of 50 followers of Elijah to use that mantle as they had just seen Elijah use it. And God honoured his act of Faith.

Exactly echoing Elijah's action, by faith exercising Elijah's role. God grants that this should be demonstrated publicly. CP Joshua (A similar name to Elisha) echoing the crossing of the Red Sea under Moses by crossing Jordan with Israel near where Elisha did, Josh 3 Elijah had gone to his reward, and Elisha, being strengthened by having been shown the end of the road of earthly service, must now return across the Jordan and witness and work - symbolically in the power of a resurrected life.

2:15-18 The SONS/company of the prophets. who were watching, said, The spirit of Elijah is resting- Nuach- To settle down- Used of the Ark coming to rest, Gen 8:4 on Elisha. And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha. The Lord's endowed His servants with His Spirit, Jn 14:16; 15:26,27; 16:13-15; 20:22 Act 1:8; 2:3-4. As to gain this Elisha had to keep his eyes fixed on Elijah in order to see him as he ascended, 2:10 we need to keep our eyes fixed on our Lord in order to become like Him, and serve as He served, Jn 15:12; 2 Cor 3:18; Heb 12:1-3.

We have fifty STRONG/able men- Confident in their natural ability, and distrustful of God. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain- Cp the fears of another unspiritual man, 1 Ki 18:12 They know that God by His Spirit had taken Elijah away, but their lack of faith in the character of God left them doubting that God had taken Elijah into His presence. They have acknowledged that Elisha has taken the place of Elijah but having been gathered in response to the ministry of Elijah it's human that they should be attached to God through him, and reluctant to lose that link. **6 They had seen the fire and whirlwind symbolising the Lord's presence, Ex 32:19,18 but being at a distance, the disappearance of Elijah may have been clearer than his destination. Those who stood afar off weren't privileged to see the details of Elijah's translation. Elisha had torn his clothes as at a death. Moses had died before Joshua took over. So perhaps it's the body of Elijah they expect to find and bury.

No, Elisha replied- Elisha was confident the Lord had not merely taken up Elijah FROM them, but had also taken him TO Himself. But they URGED/persisted- Patsar- To peck at, be stubborn, until he was too ashamed to refuse- To those without faith in God, Elisha's confidence that God had taken Elijah to Himself might seem lack of care for him.

2:19-22 The men of the city said to Elisha.. this town is well situated.. but the water is bad and the land is BARR EN/unproductive- Shkol- To miscarry, suffer abortion, used of persons or livestock, except in Mal 3:11, instead of being fertile. **7 The emphasis in the narrative is that the water became wholesome because Elisha, in God's name, declares it to be wholesome. Bring me a new bowl- So clean, without blemish, as all that God is to use must be, Lev 1:3, 10 Num 19:2, Deu 2:13. and put salt in it. So they brought it to him- He uses what they placed in God's hands by placing it in the hands of His servant. This is God's normal way of acting - Moses had a rod, the Zarephath widow had a handful of flour, etc, Ex 4:2-3, 1 Ki 17:11-16, 2 Ki 4:2-7; Jn 6:8-9 etc. The Lord starts with us where we are, with what we have, but isn't limited to that.

He went to the spring and threw the salt into it- Salt, as a chemical antidote? as a symbol of purifying the water? We're not told. Salt was associated with offerings being made holy in Lev 2:13, Num 18:19, Ezek 43:24. God's intervention is the point, THUS SAITH THE LORD/This is what the LORD says: I have healed this water.. the water WAS HEALED/has remained wholesome- Rapha- Healed, or restored to fertility as were the wives of Abimelech of Gerar, Gen 20:17. according to the word Elisha had spoken- He doesn't work the miracle, but is God's agent. All God's servants work on that basis. He has no selfish motive - he is meeting the needs of people/ giving the Lord's help to those in need. This is true of all God says and does. Yet by this miracle God provides a further proof that Elisha is now His approved messenger.

2:23-25 From there Elisha went up to Bethel- The centre of Golden Calf worship. There were sons of the prophets living there, 2:3, but the town as a whole would resent the prophets and their condemnation of the worship which made the town important and prosperous. As he was walking along the road, some LITTLE CHILDREN/youths- Naar Qatan. Naar is used of children, young men, and servants. Used of Absalom in 2 Sam 14:21 after he'd been exiled, and returned to Jerusalem. As unmarried young folk Naar would be free to wander around as a group Qatan, small, suggests younger singles or children - unless, as I believe Qatan is used in the belittling sense of behaving like infants as Empaiktes- childish mockers is used of adults in 2 Pet 3:3.

WE'RE to bless not curse, but by the way people treat us they show their attitude to God's message, and the judgment they face Phil 1:28 As well as being a personal insult aimed at God's servant it was a substantial physical threat even if the mob was juvenile. A mocking, stone-throwing mob of juveniles is a serious threat even to modern police in anti-riot gear! Although (as Christ did later), Elisha went about doing good non-violently, God made it clear that He would protect His servant. Elisha had been used in blessing, yet must face ridicule and rejection as the Lord Jesus did. We're not to be surprised at fiery trials, 1 Pet 4:12

He turned around, and CURSED/called down a curse- Qalal- To belittle, weaken, mock, curse - Their Jeering- Qalas came back to them as a Qalal! on them in the name of the LORD - Leaving it to the Lord to decide how they should be rewarded/punished. Then two bears came out of the woods and TARE/mauled- Baqa- To open up as the Red Sea was divided, Ex 14:16 firewood split, Gen 22:3; break through army ranks, 1 Chr 11:18 to plough ground Ps 147, NIV. They deserved a whipping. The bears gave them one, and it would be some time before the law would allow them to be arrogantly comfortable in their attitude towards God and His servant Elisha. It was a warning to all who rejected the Lord and His servants.

Footnote **8 "Baldhead" - The idea that holy men - monks etc should shave their heads is Buddhist etc, not Biblical. The only Bible references to hair-cutting were negative - Priests and mourners were forbidden to cut off their hair, Lev 19:27; Deu 14:1. Shaving marked the END of a time of dedication by Nazarites, and Lepers shaved as part of their becoming recognised as being clean again.

3:1-27 War with Moab

(Elisha, as God's Messenger, continues to act on behalf of God-honouring people, but disowns the God-defying King of Israel. The Moabite stone records this war from the Moabite point of view.)

Omri had conquered the Northern half of Moab and so the King of Moab paid tribute. But after Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled- Ahab had been defeated by Syria, and the Israelite army had been scattered.

King Joram.. mobilized Israel.. sent to Jehoshaphat.. Will you go with me to fight Moab- Re-activating the alliance of 1 Ki 224. I will go with you. I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses- Or, I'll match you soldier for soldier, horse for horse. The rebellion would impoverish Israel, but a vigorously independent Moab would be a threat to Judah and Edom as well. On the Moabite Stone Mesha claims to have greatly expanded his territory by taking over the territory of Gad.

3:8-12 Attack.. Through the WILDERNESS/Desert of Edom- The direct route from Israel up the Arnon valley was a steep climb to the fertile Moab plateau and the King of Moab according to the record on the Moabite stone, had captured the land north of the Arnon Valley and strengthened its forts in anticipation of an attack. **9 The southern route round the south end of the Dead Sea required co-operation with Judah and Edom.

So the king of Israel set out with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. After a march of seven days, the army had no more water- The risk of this was inevitable on this route. The King of Edom should have known the state of the streams and wells. But perhaps he would have been happy to change sides? Or simply the army was bigger than expected, and moved more slowly as a result.

Has the LORD called us three kings together only to hand us over to Moab- The Lord gets the blame, even though Joram/ Jehoram may have been only a little more loyal to Him than his father Ahab had been. In the world at large only disasters are called "Acts of God" In the case of Ahab going to fight at Ramoth Gilead, it had indeed been the Lord's judgment action, as Micah revealed.

Jehoshaphat asked, Is there no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD through him- Even though Joram's court "Prophets of the Lord" may have been guiding them so far, as in 1 Ki 227-24 Elisha.. is here He used to pour water on the hands of

Footnote **9. The Moabite stone records the successful rebellion of Mesha King of Moab, and his capturing the towns of Madeba, Atbm, Nebo, and Jahaz, and rebuilding Aroer, Beth-diblathaim, Beth-Badmeon, etc - all of which are in Northern Moab. Archaeology confirms that these cities were re-built and fortified at this time.

Elisha said, As the LORD OF HOSTS/Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have REGARD /respect for.. Jehoshaphat., I would not even notice you. But now bring me a harpist- Cp David playing for Saul, 1 Sam 16:16-23 and the harpists and prophesying in 1 Sam 10:5-6. On the basis of this statement those who themselves have no knowledge of God assume that music was used in Israel to stir people up emotionally so that they got into a state of trance, ecstasy, etc to prophecy. Certainly many pagan people beat drums, etc, and dance frantically into such a state as do Moslem dervishes. But here the quiet playing of a harp is used to help Elisha to relax, and withdraw in thought from the bustle of a military camp, in order to meditate, and seek God's presence for guidance

Some of us today still find gentle music a help in our "Quiet Times" of fellowship with God in Bible Reading and Prayer. While the harpist was playing, the hand of the LORD came upon Elisha- The expression is used of God intervening in deliverance or Judgment, Ex 9:3; Isa 59:1. And it's used of Him moving the prophet to speak in Ezek 1:3; 8:1; 13:9.

The LORD says: Make this valley full of ditches- God would meet their needs miraculously but the flash-flood would sweep past and be gone unless they worked hard to make ditches and ponds to hold water enough for their need. Always God in Grace does for His people what they could never hope to do but He requires us to obediently do our part, according to what he has commanded us. For the LORD says: You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water- Thunderstorms causing Flash-floods far away down valleys aren't unusual there. The timing made it a miracle.

This is a LIGHT/easy thing.. of the LORD; he will also hand Moab over to you. You will overthrow every fortified city.. cut down.. stop up.. ruin..- The Lord promises them such a complete victory that they will be free to ruin Moab's ability to become wealthy and strong enough to

The Moabites.. every man.. stationed on the border- The southern border with Edom, Nahal Zered/Wadi Hasa, Deu 213 When they got up.. the sun shining on the water looked red like blood. That's blood! they said. Those kings must have slaughtered each other- A red-sky sunrise reflected on the reddish water may have looked like blood or was taken to symbolise the blood of slaughtered men. If Moab had been encouraging Edom to join them in rebelling, the possibility of the allies slaughtering each other would have been strengthened.

To the plunder, Moab- Pride, overconfidence and wishful thinking lead men into rash actions. A reckless attack by a disorganised mob eager for loot is easily stopped and turned into headlong flight when faced by well disciplined soldiers. Especially when as in this case they had been promised the mirage of abundant water to be followed by defeat of the enemy. The Israelites. fought them until they fled.

3:2427 The Israelites invaded.. destroyed.. stopped up. cut down.. Only Kir Hareseth was left- God had rescued them from dying of thirst, and as predicted Moab had been defeated and crushed. It would be no threat to Israel and Judah for a long time, but God's judgment against the house of Ahab, and the nation of Israel wasn't reversed. Moab remained independent. Elisha was a true prophet and spoke the true words of God, but that Moab would remain independent had not been revealed to him.

The king of Moab.. took.. swordsmen to break through to the king of Edom- Presumably the weakest link in the encircling armies. Edom had agreed to join the combined forces, but had no reason to fight desperately. Then took his firstborn son.. and offered him as a BURN T OFFERING /sacrifice on the city wall- Cp Judges 11:31, 39 and the rejection of such ideas in Micah 67. The Assyrian pictures of their besieging Lachish in Judah, and other cities, are seen by some as showing numbers of such sacrifices being made by defenders. But others consider the figures represent dying defenders falling from the battlements, etc.

The INDIGNATION/fury against Israel was great; they DEPARTED FROM HIM/withdrew- The attacking armies were so horrified and disgusted they withdrew rather than be blamed for further such Heathen abominations? Or perhaps Judah and Edom felt Israel had gone too far

(These demonstrated that he was God's authorised messenger, bearing His authorised Message, as in Heb 2:3-4. It also showed clearly God's ongoing interest in and care for those who trusted in Him. God cares for His people through His servants.)

4:1-7 Elisha and the Bankrupt Widow

4:1-4 The wife of a man from the SONS/company of the prophets **10 cried out to Elisha, Your servant- A polite expression like "Please Sir." my husband is dead, and you know he DID FEAR /revere the LORD. It's obvious that the sons of the prophets weren't a monastic community. They lived as families with normal roles and family responsibilities. Now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his BONDMEN/slaves- This was common in the East. God's Law limited this among the Jews, Ex 21:2-11; Lev 25:39-43; Deu 15:1-18; Isa 50:1; Amos 2:6; 8:6; Neh 5:5. Even if the creditor was a godly Israelite he was entitled to enslave the family until they had worked off the debt, but release them in the year of Jubilee (This discouraged reckless borrowing for inadequate reasons - eg to enjoy a higher standard of living - and failure to repay.) But still God/Elisha His servant had compassion on them. Cp Mt 18:25-34 Elisha replied How can I help you?.. what do you have? nothing except a POT OF/little oil - Asuk- Probably a small pot of olive oil for anointing the body, as Suk= to anoint the body. Our great God is willing to take up and use mightily our meagre resources if only we will hand them over to Him. He then starts with what we have and can do and shows what He can do with it. Oil may be a figure of the abounding grace of God, Ps 23:5; Isa 61:3, or of His Spirit.

Ask neighbours for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few- Her Faith and enterprise would decide how much blessing God could give her. Cp 13:15-19. WE can't fill people's lives to meet their spiritual needs. But perhaps our testimony to the Lord from our own experience, and our sharing with people what His Word says that has blessed us, may provide them with empty vessels of expectations the Lord can fill for them. Go inside and shut the door behind you- Elisha, as God's servant, could direct her up to a certain point, but in the end she must deal with God, trust and obey Him, for herself. God meets private needs, privately, not by public display. Cp Mk 5:40

it may be a merely human experience that fades, or needs further such experiences. To deal with God for oneself, and to lay hold of His promises, is a life-changing experience of eternal value.

When all the jars were full.. the oil stopped flowing.. Go, sell the oil and pay your debts.. live on what is left- God has proclaimed Himself as the God of the Widow and the Fatherless/poor and helpless Deu 10:18 Ps 68:5; Jas 1:27. He delights to demonstrate that He is

Footnote **10. With no Bible support except that he also was said to have feared the Lord, Josephus etc claimed the man was Obadiah, 1 Ki 18:13, and the money had been borrowed to feed the 100 prophets he had sheltered.

4:8-32 Elisha and the wealthy woman at Shunem

(This incident adds to the witness that Elisha was God's man/God's prophet. It is also a reminder of the need for hospitality and its potential benefits.)

4:8-10 One day Elisha went to Shunem- Close to Jezreel and Mt Tabor. A GREAT/well-to-do- Gadd- Important, of good standing, not merely rich. woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat- Hospitality is important. We should all be ready to share what we have without grudging. Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8; 1 Pet 4:9; Heb 13:2

She said to her husband, I know this man.. is a holy- Qadosh- Set apart man of God- Not merely good company, or learned. It's good when a preacher is welcomed because of his holiness. Let's make a small room on the roof- Aliyah- Going up. On the flat roof, reached by an outside stairway. A small upper room, private, comfortably placed to catch the breeze and convenient for coming and going. This would help make Elisha's pastoral journeys more comfortable.

4:11-13 One day.. You have BEEN CAREFUL/gone to all this trouble.. for us. What can be done for you?- She has helped God's servant, out of respect for God. Is there anything he can do in repayment?

Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army? She replied, I DWELL /have a home among my own people- I am content with where the Lord has placed me. Cp 1 Tim 6:5-9. She has

No, my lord, she objected. Don't LIE TO/mislead your servant, O man of God- Please don't raise false hopes. Elisha's words had touched a deep-seated lack and longing. If hopes were raised that weren't fulfilled it would be a personal tragedy for her. Next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.

4:18-23 The child grew.. went out.. with the reapers. My head! he said to his father- Sunstroke? Cerebral Malaria? Meningitis? are all possible. The boy sat on her lap until noon, then died. She laid him on the bed of the man of God- Hiding his death from the household? The son had been granted to her at Elisha's word, so her action was natural for both rational and emotional reasons. Unexpected life had been granted by God, and now, unexpected death. She has lost her treasured son, but not her faith in God, or in God's servant Elisha.

She called her husband- Asking his permission as a goodwife should, but not attempting to explain so I can go to the man of God.. Why today.. It's not the New Moon or the Sabbath- Non-working days when servants and people generally were free. This shows that travelling to hear a man of God was considered a God-honouring use of the Sabbath, 11:5-8; Isa 66:23; Col 2:16. The Lord protested against the Pharisees distorting the Sabbath to make it a burden on God's people instead of the blessing God intended it to be, Mk 2:23-28.

It SHALL BE WELL /is all right- Shalom. I know what I'm doing, leave me to do it. It will in due course meet with your approval. To interrupt the harvest was a serious matter. To acknowledge the death and launch into public mourning would make it harder to have faith in God. Elisha had promised the birth of a son, against her plea that he not raise false hopes. The boy had been born and was growing into manhood with the prospect of his fathering a further family. For him to die at this stage, was no adequate fulfilment of Elisha's promise. As with the sacrifice of Isaac this was a challenge to her faith - a challenge to claim resurrection, Heb 11:19. Otherwise his birth would bring torment into her life rather than be a reward for her hospitality to the man of God as Elisha had intended.

4:24-26 Don't slow down for me unless I tell you- This marked the urgency of the 25 mile/ 40 km journey to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When he saw her.. Gehazi, Run to meet her and ask her, 1S

greatest Prophets, don't know everything/ don't have instant answers for everything. God isn't a vending Machine automatically producing information and answers to prayer when coins of Faith are fed into it.

Didn't I tell you, Don't DECEIVE /raise my hopes- She reminds him that she hadn't asked for a son, but one having been granted by God through Elisha's prayer, surely he will do something so he may live. The promise of a son was unqualified. God being righteous and faithful to His Word meant she had the right to protest and expect things to be put right. Until then she has the right to accuse him of raising false hopes.

Elisha said to Gehazi.. Take my staff and run. If you meet anyone, do not SALUTE /greet him- Waste time being polite. Lay my staff on the boy's face- This showed Elisha accepted responsibility, and intends to come himself, but the young man can travel much faster. Like a Polynesian Tapu/ Taboo Elisha's staff on the boy's body would symbolise his claim to the right to act with regard to him and prevent premature burial. Gehazi's involvement in each step was part of his discipleship training in becoming a prophet. His greedy action with Naaman indicated that in fact he had no desire to be a prophet as a spiritual privilege of serving God, sacrificially, Elisha-style.

4:30-32 But the child's mother said, As the LORD lives, you live, I will not leave you- She insists on his personal presence, not merely the presence of his servant and his staff. Gehazi went ahead.. but there was no VOICE/sound or HEARING/response.. When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch.

4:33-35 He went in, shut the door- He himself acted as he had ordered the widow to do 4:4. prayed to the LORD - As with Elijah, 1 Ki 17: it was appropriate that God's servant be alone with God in prayer. Cp Mat 6:6. Then he.. lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. the boy's FLESH/body grew warm- Touching a dead body ordinarily made one ceremonially unclean, Num 19:11, but God's servants, to be effective, do not limit themselves to pious words and actions - saving contact with sinners requires both contact, AND heart separation with due fear of seeming involvement with Evil, Jude 23

While the SONS/company of the prophets was meeting with him- Presumably a teaching session he said to his servant, Put on the large pot and cook some stew.. One of them went out into the fields to gather herbs and found a wild vine. He gathered some of its gourds- LXX has Colocynth- Wild cucumbers a strong purgative. A famine of hearing the Word Amos 8:11 opens the door to false teachings - wild gourd contributions, uncultivated by God We need to preach the Word, Rev 32; 2Tim 4:2-3.

When he returned, he cut them up into the pot of stew, though no one knew what they were- This time the problem wasn't death, but a matter of misunderstanding the nature of what seemed to be food In the next it is an inadequate quantity of food In each case God solves the problem/meets the need through His servant/obedience to His servant as they began to eat it, they cried out, O man of God, there is death in the pot!- Not necessarily that they would all die if they ate it, but rather it tasted so bitter it was reasonable to assume it was poisonous, or at least unsuitable for food And they could not eat it.

Elisha said, Get some MEAL/flour. He put it into the pot and said, Serve it to the people. And there was NO HARM/nothing harmful in the pot- Flour would absorb some of the bitterness? But we're not told whether it was a symbolic act of cleansing which gave them confidence to eat it, whether or not it tasted bitter still, or whether the change made by the flour was natural or a miracle. God has again shown His provision and protective care over those who fear Him, and once more he uses His servant to make the dangerously-corrupted, wholesome.

4:4244A man came.. bringing the man of God twenty loaves of bread OF THE FIRSTFRUITS/baked from the first ripe grain along with EARS OF CORN /some heads of new grain- The life of a Godly man is regulated by God's law, Ex 23:19, 34:26 Num 18:8-13; Deu 26:1-11. Those who claimed to be servants of God, the priests at Bethel, had turned away from the Lord God of Israel, so had forfeited their right to receive the firstfruits, etc. So, he brought God's portion, the firstfruits, instead to the man who was visibly God's obedient and faithful servant. We should do the same with what God gives to us, 1 Cor 16:1-3. Obedient Faith and the miracle of provision go together.

His people, and Elisha rightly encouraged them. This strengthened their trust/obedience/fellowship with God in His purposes.

Let us go to the Jordan, each of us get a BEAM/pole- Willows, etc grew alongside the River Jordan, Jer 49:19, 50:44 Zech 1:13. These would provide the roof beams needed in a simple building. One.. said, BE CONTENT/Won't you please come with your servants- Old men may not have the energy to cut much wood or for active evangelism etc, but it's good when the youngmen want their company, and the old men are willing to go with them. God's blessing rests on young people willing to ask permission, and fellowship, with their elders, and who get down to work for themselves. The Lord who calls us all to pray for His Work, and share with Him in it ALWAYS GOES WITH THOSE HE SENDS.

6:5-7 As one was cutting down a tree, the iron axe-head fell into the water. Oh, my lord.. it was borrowed- Iron axes were expensive. John Newton wrote "Not one concern of ours is small, if we belong to Him, To teach us this, the Lord of all, once made the iron to swim." Pink says "This pictures for us that we should tell the Lord our loss/grief. Let Him search us with His Where did it fall?- what were the circumstances associated with the Loss Cast in the cut-down stick/ tree - plead the merits of the Cross 1 Pet 2:24 Stretch forth the hand of faith."

Elisha cut a stick and CAST/throw- Shalak. **11 it there- Where it had disappeared in the muddy water, and made the iron float- The axe-head was out of sight. To throw a stick into the water where the axe head fell, and the iron to float without contact with the stick makes little sense. For Elisha to stab the stick down into the water and by a mirade the stick going into the opening in the unseen axe head where the handle fitted, and for stick and axe head to float to the surface together, would seem to be the mirade. Lift it out.. The man reached out and took it- When God has done what we can't do, we're still required to do what we can do

5:1-27 Naaman

5:1-3 Naaman CAPTAIN/commander of the army of the king of SYRIA/Aram was a great man.. HONOURABLE/highly regarded because through him the LORD had given victory to SYRIA/Aram-

etc being in the area at that time. But what they called leprosy made people ritually unclean, Lev 13:14, and was associated with the judgment of God, Num 12:1-15; 2 Sam 3:28-29. To be a leper threatened his enjoyment of his success and popularity. As a foreigner and a leper Naaman was doubly outside the camp of God's people, although there's no suggestion that he was being kept in isolation from the court of his King. While he saw the leprosy as something to get rid of, God had allowed it as a means of bringing him to repentance and faith. Until recently no human effort could cure Leprosy, and in Scripture there's no record of anyone but Naaman being cured. (What a shock when lepers healed by the Lord showed their healed state, to the Priests, Mk 1:44) This makes it a useful picture of our sinful state, Ps 49:7-10, that would shut us out from God for ever unless God Himself provided a cure, and we accepted/claimed that cure.

Footnote **11. Shalak USUALLY means simply to throw something, but in Lev 11:17; Deu 14:17 Shalak is the name of the Cormorant/Shag which dives into the water and comes up with a fish. Isa 19:8 Fishermen THREW their hooks into the Nile. Jonah 2:3 Jonah says he was THRUST into the depths of the sea in the great fish. Whatever process was involved it meant that a man was aware of his need of help beyond that of a fellow man, appealing to the Lord's servant, and finding that God overruled/ intervened, to bring him the help he needed.

Now bands from SYRIA/Aram had taken captive a LITTLE MAID/ young girl from Israel, and she WAITED ON/served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress WOULD GOD/ if only- Achalay. "God" isn't in the Hebrew my LORD/master would see the prophet who is in Samaria- Israel was Samaria in the sense that the King in Samaria ruled it. The King of Syria seemed to expect the prophet to be part of the King's court at the city of Samaria - employed by the King as all the most gifted people would be! Perhaps in fact Elisha had been living in Samaria the last time the Israelite girl had heard. The girl is unnamed. Much of God's work is done by the humble and weak, 1 Cor 1:26-31. God permits His people to suffer. Yet in her suffering she had faith in God and in His prophet Elisha. God may have seemed indifferent to her needs and prayers, yet is not indifferent to the needs of her Master. As David wrote, we're in God's hands, Ps 31:15. The story of Naaman is recorded to comfort and challenge us, Rom 15:4.

worthy of a King, and worthy of the expectation of a cure that amounted to the cancelling of a death-sentence disease, 5:7. I am sending my servant Naaman so you may cure him of his leprosy.

5:7 As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he RENT/tore his CLOTHES/robes- A sign of despair, 1837. and said, Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life- As in Deu 3239 Cp 48-37, 1 Sam 26; Hos 6:1-2 he is trying to pick a quarrel with me- To ask a King to do an impossible thing such as this, seemed an excuse for attacking them when they failed to do it. The King thought only of himself, and was blind to Naaman's need, and the power of God in Elisha, 3:13-14.

5:8 When Elisha the man of God heard.. Why have you torn your CLOTHES/robe? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel- Elisha's words justify the confidence expressed in him by the slave girl. The King of Syria and Naaman bring in THEIR OWN ideas - taking gifts to the King of Israel - over the offer of God's grace to Naaman, as men do today with the simple Gospel offer.

5:9-12 So Naaman with his horses and chariots stopped at the door of Elisha's house- He went as a man confident in himself, his ability to pay, to do a deal with God to get what he wanted. All who do so are ignoring the GRACE of God, and their HOPELESS state as a lost sinner, which is their only claim on God.

Elisha sent a messenger to say.. wash seven times- Perhaps indicating perfect, complete dipping, but more likely complete persistent obedience to the Lord's command through the prophet. Ritual cleansing of a healed Leper was sevenfold, Lev 147-9. you will BE CLEAN /cleansed- Made ritually clean - fit for fellowship with God.

Naaman went away angry- He was full of his own ideas of what should be done. I thought he would come out to me- ME is emphatic as if to say "A man like me has the right to expect that." After all Israelites had often been defeated by the Syrians. Religious leaders in Damascus faced with the Gift-laden General would have been eager to flatter him, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God- As in Gen 426 1 Ki 1824 etc. Elisha's lack of deference, and his not putting on a dramatic performance, counted against him. It wasn't what those

SI RIK E wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy- He thinks that prophets can do as they like and should do things in the way the powerful and rich expect. Surely a man with chariots and rich gifts has the right to personal attention! For Elisha to bow to Naaman as an important man would have misrepresented the fact that his only hope was in the undeserved mercy of God. To touch a leper before he was cleansed would have defiled Elisha. To heal him without Naaman's will choosing God's way of healing would be to deny God's Sovereignty, and the freewill God had granted to man. God draws us in Sovereign love, Hos 11:4; Jn 6:44 and yet if man is to enter into salvation, he must repent, and obey, Acts 17:30; Rom 1:5; 2 Th 1:7-8; Heb 5:9; 1 Jn 3:23. To be willing in the day of His power, Ps 110:3, is good but to share humbling and suffering with Him in the day of His rejection is what we're called to, Rom 8:17.

Are not Abana- Now called Barada, a fine river coming down from Mt Hermon. Pharpar- Perhaps Wadi Zawaj south of Damascus. rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed? So he went off in a rage- The powerful, wealthy General asked to wash himself as if dirty, and receive healing as a gift! If washing in a river would make him clean he needn't have come.

5:13-14 Naaman's servants said, My father- Suggests that Naaman's servants liked him. The humble servants, as often, show more spiritual insight than the proud if the prophet had told you to do some great thing- God tests the sincerity of those who seek Him. Humility and Faith are needed if God is to save any man. The instructions were simple. The offer of any hope of a cure was surely worth following up easily tested. How much more, when he tells you, Wash and be cleansed!

So he went down and dipped himself- LXX Baptizo- Baptised. He had to go down to the despised Jordan, and down under the water thoroughly, humbly obedient. The sevenfold repetition must have been a real test of his faith, as there's nothing said of any change until after the 7th dipping. A challenge to face up to God's message, and to persist and prove it to be true, as the man of God had told him.

11:2025:12 3942 From the girl's witness he may have thought that the prophet had the healing power, and the Lord was merely nominally involved. He was healed without the Prophet's personal presence, or rituals etc. He dealt with God personally as a matter of simple faith/obedience to God's word, and God proved Himself real to Naaman by the result. Preachers must proclaim God's message, but not take over God's authority and work.

Please accept a BLESSING/gift. As the LORD lives, BEFORE WHOM I STAND /whom I serve, I will not accept a thing- Mt 10:8 he refused- Maen- To refuse utterly. Naaman stands before Elisha, but Elisha stands before the Lord, and is more conscious of Him, and the blessing of doing what pleases Him. The prophet re-emphasises the reality of God and the mercy of God to sinners/ those in need. Rich and poor stand equal before the Lord. God needs nothing and can't be bought by rich gifts or earnest prayers or promises. Neither can his true servants be. It's the Living Lord and His will that's all-important. Elisha insisted on making it clear that God wasn't interested in bribes/ being bribed. God's kindness to Naaman, as a Gentile, was a demonstration of His loving care for all men, and His desire to bring them into fellowship with Himself.

5:17-19 If you will not.. please let me be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry- So that he could prepare an altar of earth on which he could make offerings to God, Ex 20:24 for your servant will never again make burnt offerings- Olah, which were totally consumed by fire and ascended to God as a visible prayer/ an offering of self to God, Lev 1:1-4. and sacrifices- Zebach, some of which were eaten by the offerer in fellowship with God, to any other god but the LORD - Solomon's prayer for foreigners, was being answered, 1 Ki 8:41-43

But may the LORD PARDON/forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon- The Assyrians called Baal, the God of Thunderstorms etc, Ramanu. Syrians called him Hadad. The Scribe probably deliberately altered Ramanu to Rimmon-Pomegranate, to obey the command not to mention the Gods of the heathen, Josh 23:7, or as ridiculing them as a defence against the temptation to worship them.

men, avoid offending them, honour and obey authorities, etc, Mt 22:1-16; Rom 12:1-8; 13:1-7; 1 Cor 8:1-10; 33; 1 Pet 2:13-15, etc. Go in peace- Shalom. Elisha gives no verdict, but leaves Naaman to look to the Lord for guidance, and the Lord to give it. It acknowledges that Naaman now shares with Elisha a relationship with the Lord.

5:19-21 Gehazi- The name means Denier, or Greedy, but whether that meaning followed this man's display of greed, or whether it became his nickname as a result of it, is uncertain. the servant- Naar. He never had the heart commitment of an Ebed- voluntary bondservant, Ex 21:4-6. (used of the Lord Jesus, Ps 40:6-8; Isa 50:5-6.) of Elisha said My master HAS SPARED/was too easy on Naaman- In contrast to the servant girl, and Elisha who saw Naaman as someone to point to the Lord so he could be blessed, Gehazi has all the attitudes of a self-iddler. He despises Naaman as existing to be exploited, and his Master as an unselfish fool he can deceive. He lies and blasphemes in order to steal to satisfy his greed and is appropriately rewarded, Lev 19:12; Acts 5:2-3. In the company of Elisha the man of God Gehazi chose to be covetous. In the Company of Embodied Love Judas chose to betray it. We should do all we can to improve the environment in which children grow up, and adults live, but still the choice of what they will be is theirs. It is out of man's heart that sins come, Mk 7:21-23 and God permits man to face the test and choose for themselves their eternity - the image and likeness of Satan, or of God

So Gehazi FOLLOVED/hurried after- Radaph To run after, often with a hostile attitude. When Naaman saw him.. he got down from the chariot to meet him. Is everything all right?- Shalom, he asked.

5:22-23 My master sent me to say, Two young men.. Please give them a talent of silver- We rightly despise Gehazi for his greed. But we can desire to gain praise for ourselves as we serve the Lord, and emphasis on fund-raising today may lessen the impact of the GRACE of the Gospel.

BE CONTENT/By all means- Yaal- Willingly, take two talents. He urged Gehazi to accept them.. He gave them to two of his servants- Naaman's servants would go back to Syria with their master, and Gehazi thought no-one but himself would know anything about his action

unbribable righteousness- and Gehazi had clouded that witness

Naaman's leprosy will CLAVE/die to you and to your descendants forever. Gehazi went from Elisha's presence- The expression is used for an official dismissal, Gen 41:6 Jonah 1:3. Leprous, as white as snow- Gehazi has cashed in on an act of God's mercy, and so qualifies for an act of God's righteous judgment.

6:8-33 Elisha frustrates the Syrians

(Vision & blindness, physical and spiritual.)

6:8-10 The king of SYRIA/Aram.. he said, I will set up my camp- To set up an ambush, Or make a surprise attack. But all these attempts failed. The man of God sent word.. Beware of passing that place, the SYRIANS/Arameans are going there- God knows man's secret plans, and may choose to reveal them, Dan 2:22 Amos 3:7. He could reveal them to Elisha directly, but it doesn't say that He did. Instead He may have ensured that men "happened" to be in the right places to gain information. Itinerant prophets would learn of many activities, and the interchange between communities of the "sons of the prophets," might have kept Elisha informed.

So the king of Israel SENT/checked- It seems he didn't believe Elisha until he checked.. so he SAVED HIMSELF/was on his guard in such places- A good relationship seems to have developed between prophet and King so the King was willing to benefit from Elisha's warnings.

6:11-13 This SORE TROUBLE D/enraged the king of SYRIA/Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded.. Which of us is on the side of Israel? None of us. but Elisha.. tells the king of Israel- As in Ecc 10:20 Secret counsels, as opposed to open public discussion. The accuracy of Elisha's information was to them miraculous, but they spoke as if he had magical power, without any acknowledgment of God.

Go, find out where he is. so I can send men and FETCH/capture him- Elisha's SPIRITUAL POWER/KNOWLEDGE makes the King's army useless but materialist that he is, he expects that army to capture Elisha, and imprison him, threaten him or whatever. That had been tried in 1:9-12 The report came back: He is in Dothan.

for Elisha and the servant. But Elisha was God's servant, and so in God's care, and God is never at His wits end for a way to protect and provide for His servants, Ps 91:11; Acts 7:56 Rom 8:31-36

Elisha prayed, O LORD, open his eyes so he may see. Always, in all situations, this is our need. The LORD opened the servant's eyes.. saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

6:18-20 As the enemy came.. Elisha prayed Strike these people with blindness. They didn't realise what was happening as God withheld from them the ability to realise who Elisha was, and where they were going. Following a stranger unquestioningly through a strange land is blind stupidity, but one way or another people are conred every day. God over-ruled to make Elisha's words convincing as a step towards convincing them that God/a prophet of God was in Israel, 5:8.

Elisha told them.. Follow me, I will lead you to the man you are looking for. And he led them to Samaria- About 14 Km up the hill. What Elisha said was true. In due course he did lead them to the man they were looking for -when it had become impossible for them to harm him.

6:21-24 The king asked, Shall I kill them, my father- Acknowledging Elisha as his superior to be obeyed as representing God. Do not kill them- Elisha interceded for those who set out to take him prisoner. Our Lord did for those who crucified Him, Isa 53:12 Lk 23:34 It also fitted with Ex 23:4-5; Prov 25:21; Rom 12:21. Set food before them.. go back to their master.

So he prepared a great PROVISION/feast- Kerah - The sort of feast that usually followed the signing of a covenant/peacetreaty.. he sent them away, and they returned to their master- By accepting a meal, they in effect placed themselves in a covenant relationship with the King of Israel. So the bands- Gedud- Groups of raiders from SYRIA/Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory- Through Elisha's advice Israel was free for a time from further raids. But as hostilities were renewed it's reasonable to assume that the King of Israel made no effort to respond to God's kindness through Elisha, and further discipline/punishment from God through Syria was appropriate.

6:24-25 Some time later- In view of the previous verse, some YEARS later. Ben-Hadad mobilised.. laid siege to Samaria. There was a

6:26-27 As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried to him, Help me, my lord the king! - The King was the ultimate human court of appeal as in 1Ki 3:16-28 but how low Kingship has sunk in Israel, from the wisdom and wealth of Solomon. The king replied, If the LORD does not help you, where can I get help for you? threshing floor? winepress? - The sources of grain, and wine. He says in exasperation and despair -Where can I get grain and wine!

6:28-29 This woman said Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we'll eat my son.. but hidden him- Shows clearly the horror of prolonged siege, as they had been warned in, Lev 26:27-29 Deu 28:49-53 Cp Lam 2:20 4:10 Ezek 5:10 Secular history records it happening in Babylon when it was besieged by A surbanipal.

6:30-31 When the king heard.. he tore his robes.. had sackcloth on- He'd been trying to be repentant, but his patience had run out. There's no point in rending our garments if our heart stays whole and stubborn against God, Joel 2:13 He may have regretted having followed Elisha's advice in the previous incident, but is about to experience the deliverance he had despaired of. He said, May God deal with me.. if the head of Elisha remains on his shoulders! - As if silencing God's messenger will silence God's message. A "Curse God and die" attitude, Job 29.

6:32-33 Elisha was in his house, the elders sitting with him- In the city of Samaria. A hopeful scene, city elders listening to God's man, but perhaps not, See Ezek 8:1-18 20:1-49 The king sent a messenger ahead- or from his presence but before he arrived, Elisha said.. See how this murderer is sending someone to cut off my head? when the messenger comes, shut the door.. his master's footsteps behind him- Perhaps already regretting the hasty words ordering the death of Elisha. Delay the messenger. The King will follow him, and I'll deal with the King. Elisha in trustful obedient fellowship with His Lord sat undisturbed, Ps 112:7; Prov 13:3 and so may we, Ps 37:7.

While he was talking the messenger came. And HE /the king- He in the Hebrew, but the King makes sense in view of 7:2 said, This EVIL / disaster is from the LORD. Why should I wait- Yachal- To wait, be patient, hope for the LORD any longer? See 6:30-31.

Judgment, Gen 7:11, or blessings, Mal 3:10 He sneeringly asks Elisha if he means God is going to open trapdoors in heaven and pour down grain and flour from Heavenly storehouses! In a sense God does this, but it's the Syrians who He makes hand over their stores, and His angel messengers that bring the good news are outcast lepers. could this happen?- It seemed impossible for the siege to end and the prices become so cheap, overnight. We can sympathise with the man's reasoning, but not follow him in his folly in ignoring the fact that the One promising is God, who both knows all, and is able do what He says.

You will see it. but not eat any of it!- Unbelief is the doorway to death. Faith is the gateway to life. To mock God's word is to mock the Lord Himself. The proud powerful mocker will die, the humble lepers will bring the good news.

7:3-4 Four men with leprosy at the city gate.. If we go into the city we die. If we stay here, we die. Let's go to the SYRIAN S/Arameans. If they spare us, we live; if they kill us, we die- They are realistic. They've nothing to lose. Some in their desperation, ask for salvation, and God in His Grace grants it. The Heralds of God's deliverance were lepers, put out of the city in obedience to Law even though the King would murder God's prophet. Cp Mt 23:24

7:5-7 At TWILIGHT/dusk they went.. When they reached the UTTERMOST PART/edge of the camp- They didn't try to enter the Syrian Camp from the direction of the city as sentries were likely to be on the alert for foraging or an attack from that direction. They circled around outside the camp to approach it from the rear.

Not a man was there for the Lord had caused the SYRIAN S/Arameans to hear the NOISE/sound of chariots and horses- Some see the coming of the Lepers- Misoraim, being mistaken for the coming of the Egyptians- Misrayim, as a deliberate contrast. Possibly, but it doesn't say the Lepers made the noise that frightened the Syrians, merely that the LORD HIMSELF made the Syrians HEAR a noise. The noise of wind in trees, etc is more likely. But perhaps the Lord opened their ears to hear the heavenly chariots, as with the servants eyes at Dothan, 6:17!

The king of Israel has hired the Hittite- From the North, and Egyptian kings- From the South. to COME UPON/attack us- As Ahaz had hired

gatekeepers. The king said.. the SYRIANS/Arameans.. have left the camp to hide.. thinking, They will come out.. and get into the city- The miracle of deliverance owed nothing to the faith of those who received it.

One of his officers answered, Have men take five of the horses. Their plight will be like that of all the Israelites left who are CONSUMED/ doomed- Despair, at least despair of self and human efforts, may make a firmer foundation for faith/ deeds of faith, than does optimism. Of course it MAY be a trap, but the fate of those caught in it could hardly be any worse than the fate of those who stayed "safely" in the city. His words echo the words of the Starving lepers as they step out in faith, 7:3-4.

7:14 So two CHARIOT HORSES/chariots with their horses were sent after the SYRIAN /Aramean army.. they found the road strewn with clothing and VESSEL S/equipment- Loot already gathered, etc, rather than weapons. They would be likely to keep weapons for their own defence the SYRIANS/Arameans had thrown away in HASTE / headlong flight.

The people.. SPOILED/plundered the camp of the SYRIANS/Arameans. So a MEASURE/seah of flour sold for a shekel- So plentiful that it was only twice the price of the food of the poor, and two seahs of barley sold for a shekel, as the LORD had said- God can be relied on to keep his promises, no matter how undeserving His people are.

7:17-20 The king had APPOINTED/put the officer.. in charge of the gate, and the people TRODE/trampled him and he died, just as the man of God had foretold- It all happened so simply and naturally, as it often does when God works His miracles of Judgment and Mercy. The officer had said.. The man of God had replied, You will see it.. but not eat any!- Sufficiently striking as to be worth repeating.

8:1-3 Elisha had said to the woman whose.. Go SOJOURN /stay for a while- Gur- A resident alien, refugee, not one who intends to make a home permanently in the country. because the LORD has CALLED FOR/decreed a famine that will last seven years- So her return was at least 7 years after the lad was restored to life, 4:37. All Famines were a

to CRY UN T O/beg- I saaq Or stake a legal claim. In 413 she says she has no need of a friend to speak for her at the King's court. But, now she has such a need, and God provides for this.

8:4-7 The king- We're not told what King Jehoram would have personal experience with Elisha but might want to know more. Jehu as an Army officer under Jehoram would also have known much about Elisha, as he did of Elijah, 9:24-26 1 Ki 21:18-19. was talking to Gehazi.. Tell me all the great things Elisha has done- As Gehazi was at court it's not likely that he was a leper at this stage. It may have been BEFORE the incident with Naaman, 5:27, or, like Ahab 21:27-29 he may have repented and God may have lifted the curse. Or merely that what was called Leprosy here wasn't considered to be one of the serious kinds that required total isolation. Or that the King was indifferent or ignorant of the Laws of Moses re leprosy.

Just as Gehazi was telling the king.. the woman came.. Gehazi said, This is the woman.. The king.. assigned an OFFICER/official to her case and said to him, Give back everything that belonged to her- It doesn't say who will pay her. Perhaps those who have made use of her property, or perhaps the state was going to pay.

8:7-9. Elisha went to Damascus, Ben-Hadad- probably a Throne Name/Title, as Pharaoh was in Egypt. His personal name is given as Adad-idri by the Assyrians in their records. was SICK /ill.. he said to Hazael, Take a PRESENT /gift. to the man of God. INQUIRE OF /Consult the LORD through him; ask, Will I recover- Life is often confusing. In 1:1-8 Elijah deals with an Israelite King who asks reassurance from a Heathen God. Here a heathen King asks it from a prophet of the Lord. Elijah was told to anoint Hazael as King of Syria. Here in effect Elisha does so. Israelite Jehoram vows to kill Elisha. Pagan Syrian Ben Hadad owns him as a man of God and asks information from him.

Hazael went to Elisha, taking as a gift forty camel-loads of EVERY GOOD THING /all the finest wares of Damascus.. and said, Your son Ben-Hadad king of SYRIA /Aram has sent me to ask, Will I recover- The polite words and the huge gift display both the wealth of the King, and his eagerness to get a favourable answer from the Lord.

WAS A SHAMED - Bush. Embarrassed. In the Hebrew HE could mean Hazael, who set his face to conceal his pleasure, or because he was embarrassed as he was already plotting to become King and didn't want Elisha to know. Or mean Elisha tried to control his emotions but began to weep. Elisha announced what would happen, and doesn't dissuade. Cp the Lord with Judas, Jn 13:27.

Why is my lord weeping.. Because I know the EVIL harm you will do to the Israelites- Including all the horrors likely in ancient warfare, from which none was safe. Cp 10:32-33 13:3; 15:16

Hazael said, How could your servant, a mere dog- Cp 1 Sam 24:14; 2 Sam 9:8, and in secular sources Tel Amarna letter No 60 He seems shocked, but men are often shocked to see the brutality they became involved in - afterwards when they look back.

The LORD has shown me that you will become king OVER SYRIA /of Aram- This statement seems to be the equivalent of the anointing Elijah was told to do 1 Ki 19:15 Hazael is known as a strong King, although the Assyrian records say he was defeated and paid 100 talents of Gold, and 1000 talents of Silver. A good reason for raiding and robbing from Israel. The Assyrians refer to him as Hazaili mar la mammanna - Hazael son of a nobody, as he was a commoner before usurping the throne.

8:14-15 When Ben-Hadad asked, What did Elisha say to you? Hazael replied, He told me you would recover. But the next day he took a thick cloth- A thick matted cloth, or a sieve-like blanket. Such cloth was hung over window openings to keep out the fierce heat and light of the sun, but let some air through. If it was dipped in water from time to time this would absorb the sun's heat, and cool the air coming into the room. To take down such a window curtain and soak it could be easily explained if someone entered the room as Hazael prepared for action. The short time needed to smother the sick king would be the only time when he could be caught at his murdering. Soaked it in water and spread it over the king's face, so he died- Perhaps excused as in time of threat from Assyria a weak and ailing king was better out of the way. Hazael succeeded him as king- Hazael is in a sense the Syrian equivalent of Jehu, and between them, Ahab's family is wiped out, and Israel suffers the consequences of having turned away from the Lord.

of the kings of Israel, as he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD - He sinned as Israel had done. Athaliah daughter of Ahab introduced Baal worship into Jerusalem, 2 Chr 24:7.

For the sake of.. David, the LORD.. maintain a LIGHT/lamp- A continuing role as a witness for God, 1 Ki 11:36-15:4. for David and his descendants forever- God had promised David that erring kings of his dynasty would be punished, but the dynasty not rejected, 2 Sam 7:14-16. The FULL fulfilment of God's covenant promise to David awaited the coming of Christ, David's great SON, who was also David's Lord, Ps 110:1; Lk 1:68-75; 20:41-44; Acts 2:29-31; Rev 5:5-14; 19:11-21. This required the survival of physical descendants who would link David with the Christ. That these should at least partially fulfil the Covenant requirements was highly desirable to prepare the way for Him to come.

8:20-23 Edom REVOLTED/rebelled- having had a Governor/ subject king under the control of Judah in 39, 1 Ki 22:47. So Jehoram went to Zair with all his chariots. The Edomites surrounded him, but he rose up and broke through by night; his army, however, fled INTO THEIR TENTS/back home- The Hebrew reads "He arose in the night and attacked the Edomites who surrounded him and the chariot commanders, and the people (Israelites? Edomites?) fled to their tents." Clearly Israel didn't succeed in defeating Edom and bringing them under their control again, so it probably means Joram and the chariot section broke through the Edomites as a unit, the rest of his army escaped by scattering.

To this day Edom has been in rebellion against Judah. Libnah revolted at the same time- See 2 Chr 22:1-9. Judah was going down in political power, as it turned away from the Lord spiritually. If Judah dominated the trade route it was in the interests of Arabs and Philistines to be at peace with them, 2 Chr 17:11. Cp 2 Chr 21:16-17. If Edom dominated, this automatically changed, so the revolt of Libnah on the Philistine border of Judah makes sense. Elijah's sharp rebuke to Jehoram recorded in 2 Chr 21:12-20 shows that this happened before Elijah was taken to Glory. As for the other events of Jehoram's reign.. written- At least some of which is found in 2 Chr 21.

841 BC. Assyria finally broke the power of the Western Alliance against them. They defeated Hazael, and made him their agent to defeat Israel etc. And, Jehu came to the throne of Israel, and Athaliah in Judah.

He walked in the ways of.. Ahab and did evil in the eyes of the LORD - Ahaziah led the nation into Baal worship, under the domination of Athaliah, as Ahab in Israel under the domination of Jezebel.

8:2830 Ahaziah went with Joram to war at Ramoth Gilead. The SYRIANS wounded Joram.. Ahaziah went to Jezreel to see Joram- Ahaziah supported Joram in the war, but it seems that he himself hadn't joined him in the battle as Jehoshaphat had done with Ahab.

9:1- 10:36 Jehu slaughters the house of Ahab. 2 Chr 227-9

9:1-3 Elisha summoned a man from the CHILDREN/company of prophets. GIRD UP THY LOINS/Tuck your cloak into your belt- So as to travel fast on an urgent matter. take this BOX/flask- Pak- A small pottery jar as in 1 Sam 10:1. of oil to Ramoth Gilead- Where Israel's army was. The army had brought Omri to power, so it was right the army should bring his successor to power and wipe out Omri's dynasty. look for Jehu.. get him away from his BROTHERS/companions and take him into an inner room- This would leave Jehu free to act on the command, or refuse, and to choose his own time to do so publicly. God invites men to serve Him, Mt 16:24 commands them, Mt 9:9, or simply let's them hear of His purposes, Isa 6:8. Always he honours their freedom to choose, but only by God's sovereign call can any man belong to the Lord and work.

Pour oil on his head and SAY /declare, The LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel- The command had been given to Elijah, 1 Ki 19:15-16 but Ahab's repentance, 1 Ki 21:27-29 had postponed the day of Judgment on Ahab and his family. Now Jehu is anointed to do his work.

Then open the door and run!- Some army officers might be loyal to Jehoram, some to Jehu. That was not his responsibility. He was to do his part and get away quickly. This left Jehu to deal with God for himself. There are situations for all of us where having spoken God's word to someone we also should withdraw ourselves.

domineering way - "First among equals" is a good style of leadership.

The prophet poured oil on Jehu's head and declared The God of Israel, says: I HAVE ANOINTED/anoint you king- Jehu is the only king of Israel said to have been anointed, and he's anointed at God's command as with Saul, 1 Sam 9:16; 10:1, David, 1 Sam 16:12-13, and Solomon, 1 Ki 1:39 This is associated with the idea of God endowing them for their task. And, a challenge to be the kind of King God wanted them to be over the Lord's people Israel- To the Lord they were still His people, although their hearts had turned away from Him, and they were suffering under His discipline. Like Jeroboam, 1 Ki 11:23-39 Jehu was being challenged to view them as such, and to look upon himself/his role as serving God as leader of His covenant people.

You are to SMITE /destroy the house of Ahab.. avenge the blood of.. the Lord's servants shed by Jezebel- See 1 Ki 18:4, 13; 19:10 This is the only place in Kings where the Lord is spoken of as an Avenger, using human avengers of blood to exercise Judgment on His behalf. I will cut off from Ahab every male.. SHUT UP AND LEFT /slave or free- Or within the Palace walls, or illegitimate outside the court circle.

I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam.. Baasha- As promised in 1 Ki 14:11; 16:4; 21:23 Kingly power often brings corruption/a privileged position is easily abused, so it brings judgment, 1 Sam 8:6-18 Hos 13:11. As for Jezebel- Her name is placed oddly in the sentence so as to be emphasised. dogs will devour her.. no one will bury her. Then he opened the door and ran.

9:11-15 When Jehu went out one asked, Is everything all right?- Shalom. It could mean does he want to make peace with the army? Why did this madman come to you- It wasn't obvious his head had been anointed? The disrespectful attitude towards God's spokesmen suggests the disdain Military leaders felt for them as odd people. Anyone who takes God, and His will seriously is so regarded by the goddess and is likely to be slandered, 1 Pet 3:16 Cp the use of the Hebrew word for Madman, 1 Sam 21:12-15; Jer 29:24-28 Hos 9:7.

Commentators who personally don't know God as their Saviour automatically assume that there is no real difference between those who for human reasons, or who from demon possession, act in mad ways -

wasn't natural. As one reads the CONTENT AND FORM OF WHAT GOD'S PROPHETS SAID it's the SANITY of the message, in the Light of Gods known will, that strikes us. Paul warns against the irrational enthusiastic behaviour that men rightly see as mad, 1 Cor 14:23 and reminds us that God has given us a soundmind which we're to use, 2 Tim 1:7.

You know the man- You know the kind of thing that sort of person would say - we shouldn't take it seriously. While Jehu at first pretends to laugh it off, the timing of Gods intervention was obviously right. They spoke in a bantering way, but must have been seriously discontented to respond so promptly and positively. Jehu said, He told me: The LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel- Jehu takes the plunge and accepts Gods statement about himself, and with it the task of avenging those wronged by the house of Ahab.

They took their doaks and spread them under him- The association of a person with his name, his clothes, etc meant that putting their clothes under him symbolised their putting themselves at his disposal, under his authority. Cp Mt 21:7-8; Lk 19:36 They blew the trumpet as with Joash, 11:14; and Solomon, 1 Ki 1:34 shouted Jehu is king!- More a declaration of intent than a formally accepted "Long live the King" 11:12, 1 Sam 10:24, 1 Ki 1:39, 2 Chr 23:11. A wounded and unsuccessful king like Joram inspires little loyalty from his army. They were ready for a change, just as God planned it.

9:15-17 Jehu said.. don't let anyone ESCAPE /slip out to tell the news in Jezreel. He.. rode to Jezreel. When the WATCHMAN /lookout on the tower in Jezreel saw.. he called out, I see troops coming. Get a horseman, Joram ordered. Send him to ask, Do you come in peace?

9:18-20 The horseman rode to meet Jehu.. The king says: Do you come in peace? What do you have to do with peace?- What is it to you and to peace? or as we might say What business is it of yours? Jehu replied. Fall in behind me- Saving his own skin, or happy to be on Jehu's side. The lookout.. The messenger.. isn't coming back.. a second horseman.. The driving is like that of Jehu - he drives FURIOUSLY / like a madman- He drove on aggressively wasting no time on Joram's messengers

marital disloyalty in her life, but from Judges 2:17 on iddlatry is spoken of as if it was breach of the "Marriage contract" between Israel and the Lord. For a strong statement of this see Ezek 16:1-63 and witchcraft-Deu 18:10-12, Jer 27:9. of Jezebel ARE SO MANY /abound?- There was also the corruption of Israel with the concept of absolute monarchy, free to act as she had re Naboth, instead of a King being under the rule of God's Law alongside his less powerful brother Israelites. Jehu isn't interested in negotiations - that the court is dominated by Jezebel rules that out. There can never be peace in a relationship that involves such a clash, 2 Cor 6:14-7:1. Joram.. fled.

9:24-26 Jehu drew his bow- Heb filled his hand with the bow = stretched it fully. and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart. Jehu said to Bidkar, his CAPTAIN/chariot officer Pick him up and throw him on the field that belonged to Naboth- Jehu gives the command and dives on, not wasting his time by stopping.

Remember how you and I were riding together behind Ahab his father when the LORD made this prophecy about him- This makes Jehu and Bidkar older men, and the action of killing Jehoram and throwing his body on that piece of farm land a deliberate action. Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth.. declares the LORD, I will surely REQUIRE /make you pay for it on this PLAT /plot of ground- Quoting 1Ki 21:19 from memory. Throw him on that plot, in accordance with the word of the LORD.

9:27-29 Ahaziah.. fled up the road to THE GARDEN HOUSE /Beth Haggan- Probably En Gannim, Josh 19:21; 21:29 now called Jenin. They wounded him in his chariot on the way up to Gur near Ibleam- This seems to have been going beyond God's orders - a natural expression of Jehu's bloodthirstiness. See Hos 1:4. but he escaped to Megiddo and died there **13 His servants took him by chariot to Jerusalem and buried him with his fathers in his tomb in the City of David.

9:30-33 Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she painted her FACE /eyes- Ayin. Antimony trisulphide was used to highlight a woman's eyes as in the famous bust of Queen Nefertiti of Egypt. TIRED /arranged her hair and looked out of a window- As a

you murderer of your master? A witty reference to Zimri, 1 KI 16:9-20 who was King for a week until Omri, Jezebel's father-in-law defeated him. Her words amount to saying "Do you expect to reign in peace when you've murdered your master as Zimri did. Those who live by the sword can expect to die by it, Mt 26:52

He.. called out.. Throw her down! So they threw her down, and her blood spattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her- Jehu is as ruthless as Jezebel, driving the chariot over her dead body, and having a good meal before deciding that Queens should be given a decent burial. To replace a brutal tyrant such as Jezebel is easily done. But those brutal enough to do that are likely to set up their own ruthless tyranny, as Jehu seems to have. The difference between them is that he in part honoured the Lord God of Israel, although his attitude and methods brought a similar doom on his dynasty.

9:34-37 Jehu went in and ate and drank- By seating himself in the royal chair at the royal table and being served a meal by the palace servants he was proclaiming that he was now king. Those who seated themselves with him at the table automatically symbolised/bound themselves in a common meal of loyalty to him in that role.

GO SEE NOW/Take care of that cursed woman, and bury her, for she was a king's daughter- He didn't say she was a Queen. As an idolater she could have no right to be queen over the Lord's people, Israel. She was under God's curse/Judgment, and Jehu had accepted the role of the Lord's agent in this. But she was a king's daughter, and had behaved like one in the face of death, so his second thought was that she should be buried honorably. But when they went out to bury her.. This is the word the LORD spoke through Elijah.. dogs will devour Jezebel.. CARCA SE/body will be like DUNG/refuse on the ground, so no one will be able to say, This is Jezebel- Fulfilling 9:10 1 Ki 21:23-9.

10:1-36 The Royal Families of Israel & Judah Exterminated

(This is shocking to us moderns who "slaughter" political leaders and parties only by voting against them at the next election. But it was normal at the time. On a monument Shalmaneser III says he made a heap of heads outside a city after capturing it. As Ahab's dynasty had done so much harm to God's people Israel its destruction had God's approval, 9:1-10 10:29-31. BUT, as noted in the case of Baasha, if those who execute God's Judgment on others for their sins,

Jezreel? to the elders- City rulers and the Kings advisers/ Government officials. to the guardians of Ahab's children.. choose the best and most worthy of your master's sons set him on his father's throne.. fight for your master's house- The defences of Samaria were strong- it resisted Assyria for 3 years 17:5. Jehu made a direct challenge that showed his confidence, and forced them to make a prompt decision.

10 4-6 But they were terrified and said, If two kings could not resist him, how can we- Because of Jehu's resourcefulness and determination? seemed to be on a winning streak? or backed by the Lord Himself?

So the palace administrator- In effect the Prime Minister. the city governor.. sent to Jehu: We are your servants- We submit and accept you as King. We will not appoint anyone king- It seems that apart from a selfish desire to survive with the minimum effort, Ahab's family may not have inspired much loyalty, or confidence that God would give them the victory. Jehu wrote.. If you are on my side take the heads of your master's sons and come to me in Jezreel by this time tomorrow.

10 7-10 These men took the princes and slaughtered all seventy of them. They put their heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu in Jezreel- They were now committed to Jehu's cause by having destroyed his potential rivals. The records of Assyria apparently show their kings Esarhaddon and Shalmaneser acting in a similar way. Jehu ordered, Put them in two piles at the entrance of the city- It was custom to pile up the heads of rebels at the city gate as a warning.

Next morning.. stood before the people- In a formal assembly. said, You are RIGHTEOUS/innocent- Or, You are fair-minded/ I respect your judgment, I want you to judge. I conspired against my master and SLEW/killed him- Jehu takes responsibility, but reminds them he was doing God's announced will, and he had acted on His instructions. but who SLEW/killed all these?- Jehu makes a shrewd political point. The heap of heads warns what will happen to those who oppose him. That the Government officials had killed these princes rather than fight for them fulfilled Elijah's prophecy. God is at work in this, so they'd better not resist. Not a word of the LORD.. will fail- A deeper truth than Jehu knew.

SLE W/slaughtered them.. forty-two men- Why kill these? They were related to Ahab's family so may have been considered to be under the curse on that family. They might have been thought to have some claim to the throne of Israel. Jehu may possibly have hoped to lay claim to Judah as God's agent of destruction to the Baal worshippers there.

1Q15-17 He came upon Jehonadab son of Recab- A descendant of the Kenites, Judges 4:11-12, 1 Chr 2:55 related to Moses' Father-in-law. We learn from Jer 35:6-16 that Jehonadab ordered his family to live the traditional life of nomadic herdsmen, growing no crops, and drinking no wine - as desert Arabs do to this day - and they obeyed him. It seems that he and they stood apart from the national life of Israel, protesting against its materialism and apostasy. As traditionalists they were natural supporters of Jehu in his wiping out Ahab's family, and Baal worship, but there's no mention of their having any positive commitment to the Lord and His worship. Today it's still easy for us to preach against the sins and follies of others, and to purify our fellowships from evil doctrine and practices, but this has little value if we don't also proclaim and practice the truth of the Gospel, in love.

Jehu said, IS YOUR HEART RIGHT /Are you in accord with me? I am, Jehonadab answered. So Jehu said, Come with me and see my zeal for the LORD - He claimed the same attitude as Elijah had in 1 Ki 19:10. When Jehu came to Samaria, he killed all left here of Ahab's family; according to the word of the LORD spoken to Elijah- God's judgment on the house of Ahab had now been completed. Jehu sets phase two into operation - abolition of state-supported, public Baal worship.

1Q18-20 Jehu brought all the people together and said, Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much- They may not have fully BELIEVED Jehu, but as in 1Q1-11 his fast-moving forceful actions left them little alternative. Summon all the prophets of Baal.. I am going to hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Anyone who fails to come.

But Jehu DID IT IN SUBTLETY /acting deceptively- Cp Jacob, Gen 27:35-36 to destroy- Abad the WORSHIPPERS/ministers- Abad-Servants of Baal- Typical of Hebrew writings - and a memory aid - is the use of similar words for DESTROY and for SERVANTS Jehu said,

worship. They were unaware that they themselves would be sacrificed to Baal, and that the robes would mark them out for slaughter.

1Q2427 So they went in to make sacrifices. Now Jehu had posted eighty men- Typical of the problems with numbers, some translations have 380men, 3000men, etc. with this warning: If one of you lets any escape, it will be your life for his life. As soon as HE/Jehu- KJV is right. That Jehu made the sacrifices to Baal isn't in the Hebrew. Presumably the High Priest of Baal did. had finished making the burnt offering, JEHU/he- ordered.. Go in- So Jehu was OUTSIDE Baal's Temple when he gave the order. and SLAY/kill them; let no one escape.

Entered the CITY/inner shrine- Ir- City, Walled enclosure. of the temple of Baal. They brought the IMAGES/sacred stone- Matstsebah. out of the temple of Baal and burned it. They BRAKE DOWN/demolished the sacred stone of Baal and BREAK/tore down the temple of Baal, and MADE IT A DRAUGHT HOUSE/people have used it for a latrine- Macharaah- A unique word perhaps meaning a dump, latrine, or a market place to this day.

1Q2831 So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel- His zeal in slaughtering Ahab's family and Baal-worshippers seems to be his sole virtue and use. However, he DEPARTED NOT/did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam.. the worship of the golden calves.

The LORD said to Jehu, you have done well in EXECUTING/accomplishing what is right.. have done to the house of Ahab all I had in HEART/mind to do, your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation- God gave Jehu credit for the enthusiasm and efficiency with which he acted in judgment on other sinners, in his cutting out public Baal worship - the core of the nations apostasy under Ahab/Jezebel. He gets no credit for his brutal attitude, and total lack of personal repentance and living/ruling in the fear and love of God

Yet Jehu was not careful to WALK IN/keep the law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart- To his negative virtue that of being an efficient executioner of Apostates he failed to add the positive virtue of a love for the Lord and the doing of His will. Having taken one step

Bashan- Jehu's revolt would have encouraged such attacks. Shalmaneser King of Assyria daims to have defeated Hazael twice, and that Jehu paid tribute to him - perhaps as a bribe to encourage Assyria to attack Syria. As Hazael is recorded as losing 112 chariots in one battle against Assyria, his attack on Jehu may have been later when he acted as agent for Assyria.

As for the other events of Jehu's reign- Presumably including his submission to Shalmaneser in 184 BC as pictured and described on the "Black Obelisk." all he did.. written in the book.. Jehoahaz his son succeeded him.. reigned twenty-eight years.

(11:1-20A Athaliah Takes Over Judah. 2 Chr 22:10-23:21)

The house of David is almost wiped out as a result of its association with Ahab and Baal worship.)

11:1-3 When Athaliah- Ahab and Jezebel's daughter who had married Jehoram of Judah. the mother of Ahaziah saw her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the SEED ROYAL/whole royal family- Presumably her own sons and grandsons were in the group going "home" to Jezreel already killed by Jehu, 10:12-14. Perhaps she hoped to use Judah as a base for defeating Jehu. Jehoram had killed his brothers, 2 Chr 21:4, presumably because he feared they might be preferred by those loyal to the Lord, and unhappy about his worship of Baal. Her sons had broken into the temple and taken the things dedicated to the Lord and used them in Baal worship, 2 Chr 24:7. Worshippers of the Lord would want a descendant of David to be king. So she set out to kill all the sons and grandsons of other wives, leaving her in sole authority.

But Jehosheba, daughter of King Jehoram, sister of Ahaziah- and wife of the High Priest, 2 Chr 22:11. Josephus says half-sister, not daughter of Athaliah. Joash's mother seems to have been a secondary wife, perhaps so unimportant Athaliah was unaware of Joash's existence took Joash son of Ahaziah.. away from.. the princes, who were to be murdered. She put him and his nurse in a bedroom- Cheder- Inner room. A store-room for bedding rather than bedroom would be more easily overlooked. so he was not killed- The families of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Omri were wiped out. But it was the will of God that

11:4 In the seventh year - A climax of this story, the time for decisive action, not necessarily the religious "7th year" of special feasts etc. Joash was now old enough to be a focus of loyalty to the house of David, and loyalty to the Lord God of Israel, for those unhappy with Baal worship, and a murdering foreign queen.

Jehoiada sent for the RULE RS/commanders. the CAPTAINS/Carites-Kari. Wiseman says Mercenary soldiers from Caria, Asia Minor such as the Egyptian Pharaohs had at this time. But LXX has Cherethites - people from Crete related to the Pelethites from Philistia, as in 2Sam 20:23

So Army Commanders, Palace Guard, and Royal Escort brought to him at the temple of the LORD. He made a covenant with them and put them under oath at the temple of the LORD. Then showed them the king's son - The officers only would have been informed at this stage so as to lessen the risk of any news of it reaching Athaliah.

11:5-7 You in the three companies that are going on duty on the Sabbath. KEEPERS OF THE WATCH/guarding the royal palace - The Palace was alongside the Temple. The Levite Gate-keepers, Guards, etc (Mentioned in 2Chr 23:2) and the Palace guards are involved in Jehoiada's action. Discontentment with Athaliah had presumably become sufficiently obvious for their co-operation to be assured. the Sur Gate. at the gate behind the guard, who take turns guarding the temple - BE NOT BROKEN DOWN - Or the Temple for destruction - Baal's Temple - Soldiers placed to detain its priest, and restrain any effort to kill Joash or support Athaliah.

the other two companies that go off Sabbath duty are to KEEP THE WATCH/guard the HOUSE OF THE LORD/temple for the king - By arranging for Joash's coronation to be on the Sabbath when the teams of Priests, Levites, and guards were due to be replaced allowed them to be all there without rousing suspicion. Athaliah had no interest in what went on in the Temple! What LOOKED LIKE a religious function at the Temple was in fact a political and military coup organised from the Temple, but involving also the Palace guards.

11:8-9 COMPASS/Station yourselves around the king. Anyone who approaches THE RANGES/your ranks put to death. Stay close to the king - While the incoming Guard units took up their normal

David had donated to the Temple treasury the valuable weapons captured when he had defeated Hadadezer, 2 Sam 8:11-12 Shishak had been bribed by handing over Temple Treasures but the less valuable weapons from the time of David remained. Giving these to the soldiers would provide a symbol of empowering from David, to accomplish God's purposes for his family in general, and for his descendant the boy king Joash.

The guards, each with his weapon in his hand, stationed themselves around the king near the altar and the temple.

Jehoiada brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; he presented him with THE TESTIMONY /a copy of the covenant-Eduth. The God-ordained Laws, 17:15; 233; Deu 17:18-20 1 Ki 2:2-3. Perhaps this was the first time the regulation given in Deu 17 had been obeyed. Certainly growing up hidden in the Temple Joash could have easily learned to read and write, and have copied out the 10 commandments, and other basic laws for himself. OR been given them. As Eduth also means treaty it could refer to the Covenant Treaty God had made with David, which had absorbed into it the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants. The terms of the Kingdom, and the basic laws which were to govern the way Joash lived and ruled. Eduth is used of the 10 commandments in Ex 31:18, and of the whole revealed will of God in Ps 119:88 proclaimed him king.. anointed him- 1 Ki 1:39 the people clapped their hands and shouted, GOD SAVE /Long live- Chayah- Life, life to the king!- 9:13, 1 Sam 10:24 1 Ki 1:25 The seed of David had been humbled, 1 Ki 11:39 but preserved as God had promised.

10:13-14 When Athaliah heard the noise.. She looked and there was the king, standing by the pillar- One of those at the entrance to the Temple, 1 Ki 7:15-22 as the MANNER/custom- The situation was unusual. To produce and crown a descendant of David was almost like a resurrection, but his crowning followed the traditional form, emphasising in every way that God had kept His word, and granted them a King again from the seed of David. As in Solomon's case, Joash was made King in full view of the people. And being according to God's will Athaliah could no more stop Joash from being rightly crowned KING, than had Adonijah. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land- The ordinary citizens who

people at Sinai, Ex 24 and with David, 2 Sam 7. It was renewed after Israel had obviously broken it - after the Gold Calf Ex 34; Manasseh, 2 Ki 23 OR at times when leadership changed, Moses to Joshua, Josh 8:30-35; David, 1 Chr 11:3; Hezekiah 2 Chr 29:10; and at other critical times, 1 Ki 8; 2 Chr 15:12; Jer 34:8. Cp 23:1-3; Deu 27:1-30:20; Josh 24:1-27.

Between the LORD, the king and people that they would be the Lord's people - 2 Sam 5:1-3. Joash has been crowned and acclaimed by the army and the available citizens. Athaliah has been killed. It was now important to spell out the obligations of King and people in terms of God's covenant with them all as HIS people.

When people forget their Lord, they forget who and what they are. The King and the people bind themselves to support each other in maintaining the national life according to the will of God revealed in the Law of Moses, and the covenant with King David, etc - To live and act as the people of God, Deu 4:1-20; 14:2; 27:9-10 etc.

That the details of the written Law may not have been generally known at the time wouldn't prevent them accepting and confirming this as a general principle. This is what is done. Once more Judah was on track as God's people under a God-given King of David's family. And as such a King, Joash is now installed in the Palace on the royal throne in the audience chamber there.

All the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and BROKE /tore it down - The covenant with the Lord was a positive action which committed them to the negative one of repudiating and removing rivals to the Lord and His Temple. So, they BROKE /smashed the altars and idols THOROUGHLY /to pieces and killed Mattan the priest of Baal.

11:19-21 He took the RULERS/commanders, the people, brought the king from the temple of the LORD into the palace. The king SAT /took his place on the royal throne - A wonderful end to an exciting day. For years the Godly had mourned the cutting off of David's family, and the apparent failure of God's Covenant with David that one of his descendants would be King for ever in righteousness and peace. Now they knew that God had preserved Joash in the Temple. He had been anointed King, and entered into a covenant with the Lord God of

name daughter after the daily desert Antelope would be appropriate as she was from Beersheba. Joash did what was right in the SIGHT /eyes of the LORD - All live in the sight of the Lord. We should, like David and Paul, delight in living in His sight, 2 Cor 5:9.

all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him- When Jehoiada the priest died, Joash lapsed into evil ways, 2 Chr 24:17-27. In a sense Joash's kingdom was a creation of the Temple, as its Priest and his wife preserved his life from Athaliah's slaughter, and in due course had him installed as King. But in the end, in the sovereignty of God, all that God's servants can do for any man - even their own children - leaves that person as a free/responsible agent. Personal Faith is essential, and sooner or later we have to step out on our own in direct responsibility to God.

On the other hand it was Joash who urged the repair of the Temple, and the Priests who failed to do it - until the King and his treasurer enforced the setting aside of money for it. So we could say that they also failed to be the example and inspiration they should have been. Is it ever possible to say one side of any failure bears the blame alone?

High places were not TAKEN AWAY /removed, people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there- As with A sa, and Jehoshaphat, 1 Ki 15:14; 22:43. There seems to have been only a step from worshipping the Lord at them, to involvement with idolatry through them.

12:4-6 Joash said to the priests, Collect all the money- Kecoph- silver. Money would be pieces of silver, as coins do not appear to have been in use until more than 100 years later. Coins are first mentioned in the Bible, Ezra 2:69 **14 DEDICATE D/brought as sacred offerings to the temple of the LORD.. THAT EVERY MAN IS SET AT/collected in the census- This was first collected in Ex 30:13-15. After the exile it was collected annually, Neh 10:32 money THAT COMETH INTO ANY MAN'S HEART TO BRING /received from personal vows and brought voluntarily- Temple income was from:- Daily sacred dues received - sacred offerings. Poll-tax assessments of half a shekel for each registered male in the census list as in Ex 30:11-15; Mt 17:24. Payment for vows taken, Lev 27:1-25. Voluntary gifts of money, Lev 22:18-23. Deu 16:10 (WILLING donors were sought, as in Ex 25:2-8; Lev 27:28; 2 Chr 24:9-10).

REPAIR OF the Temple, so it could continue to function to the Glory of God. As well as it being the National place of worship, it was also in a sense the King's chapel. (All surrounding Pagan nations had the same attitude.) The need of repair would have been increased by the damage done by Athaliah and her sons as recorded in 2Chr 24:7.

By the twenty-third year of King Joash the priests had not repaired the temple- Joash would be 30yrs old by then. As Jehoiada lived to be 130 2 Chr 24:15, he may have no longer been able to lead/ supervise the priests, and this could explain the slackness

Footnote **14. In Joash's time trade was busy, and hards of silver objects have been found at Eshtemoa etc, cut or cast into convenient sized pieces for storing in a jar. Bar 8:7/6

The events are described in a calm businesslike manner, not in an emotional exhortation, or argumentative confrontation. The meaning of some of the words is unclear to us. The result is clear enough, and that's what matters. What is everybody's responsibility is done by nobody, and the more collectors there are, perhaps the harder it is for any of the collection to reach its intended destination. The system wasn't working so it had to be re-organised so that specific people had this responsibility. Cp the provision of the 7 deacons in Acts 6:1-7.

12:7-9 King Joash summoned Jehoiada.. Why aren't you repairing the Temple? Take no more money from your ACQUAINTANCE/ treasurers- Makkar, but DELIVER/hand it over for repairing the temple- We must not allow any appearance of slackness or possible mishandling of money given to the Lord for His work. As God's servants represent Him, any display of personal greed by them disgraces God and hinders His work in the world. For the handling of the work to be more efficient and visibly righteous may involve the separation of the spiritual leadership from the financial management, as in Acts 6. Some suggest Jehoiada's zeal for the Lord in spiritual matters didn't extend to his pocket, but the problem was more likely his age, as with Eli 1 Sam 2:22-25 That Joash for so long failed to notice the lack of repairs isn't to his credit, either. Both Solomon and Joash reigned 40years, a full term reign. Solomon built the Temple, and Joash repaired it, but the contrast between the magnificent generosity of Solomon which was accomplished in 7years, and the slow-moving, the-Temple-must-raise-

was just inside the Temple court, convenient for all who entered. It was near the altar as giving is a form of sacrifice, Heb 13:16, but not directly alongside the altar where it would have interfered with the work of the priests and Levites.

The priests who KEPT/guarded the DOOR/entrance- 25:18, Jer 5:22-4 put into the chest all the money that was brought to the temple of the LORD - It was under the eye of the Door guards, and so kept safe from thieves in a secure box. Only KINGS, 12:18, 16:8, could commit the blasphemy of robbing God of those things which had been dedicated irrevocably to Him, Lev 27:28.

The solemnity with which Scripture treats any promises made to God means that we must listen to its warnings against rash vows when it comes to committing ourselves to the Lord's service/any specific time and place of service, Ecc 5:2-4; Lk 9:62, 14:25-33.

12:10-12 Whenever they saw there was MUCH/a large amount of money in the chest, the KING'S SCRIBE/royal secretary and the high priest- They had joint responsibility, and so counted/weighed the silver together. As Paul later stated, 2 Cor 8:16-21, it's important that all money given to the Lord's service be handled in a way that is transparently honest. Some have argued that the term "High Priest," wasn't in use before the Exile. Perhaps not, as the term "THE PRIEST," seems to have been used of Aaron and his successors. If so scribes copying the MSS would rightly use the term that in their age would be understood.

TOLD/counted the money.. put it into bags- The Hebrew words could mean tied it up, wrapped the silver, poured it out (of the chest) or melted it down - poured it into same-sized pieces, gave the money to the men THAT HAD THE OVERSIGHT/appointed to supervise the work on the temple.. the carpenters and builders, the masons and stonecutters- Or paid it to those in charge of these workmen. They purchased timber and HEWED/dressed stone.. met all the other expenses.

12:13-16 The money brought into the temple was not spent for making silver basins.. or any other articles of gold or silver- 2 Chr 24:14, for the temple of the LORD - It may be that the priests had been more concerned with equipment for the Temple Service being beautiful works

that God's house was becoming visibly complete and beautiful again was sufficient evidence of trustworthiness. Givers could see they were getting value for money, and that is a great spur to generosity. This worked so well that the method was used again by Josiah, 223-7.

The TRESPASS money/from the guilt offerings- Paid as a penalty for transgressions against God, people, along with any restitution, Lev 5:16; 6:5; Num 5:7-8. and sin offerings- To atone for offences against God not brought into the temple- Put into the box to pay for repairs. it belonged to the priests- Cp Lev 23; Num 5:9-10

1217-18 About his time Hazael king of SYRIA/Aram attacked Gath and captured it. Then SET HIS FACE TO GO UP/turned to attack Jerusalem- Syria always had a strong interest in trading, and by capturing Gath could have ensured control of the trade route south to Egypt. We've not yet found a record of this in History. But Hazael would have been free to raid south with the death of Shamshi Adad V of Assyria and the return of armies for the coronation, and redirection by the new boy king whose mother acted as Regent for him. Israel's weakness allowed Syria to by-pass them in a rapid raid to obtain loot to pay for further defensive preparations against Assyrian attacks. That God permitted this humiliation as a punishment for the sins of Joash/ as a challenge to rise above them and return to faith in the Lord, is made clear in 2Chr 24:24-25 (Joash was wounded at this stage, but didn't die until about 12 years later, these verses telescope events to show the link between cause and effect.)

Joash.. took all the sacred objects HALL OWED/dedicated- Qodesh- set apart for God the gold in the treasuries of the temple of the LORD and of the royal palace, and sent them to Hazael king of Aram, who then withdrew from Jerusalem- The tests of Faith come to us all, even though they come in different ways that God sees as being appropriate to us, and His dealings with us. This was a normal test for Kings in Judah. Joash, along with Asa, 1 Ki 15:15-18, failed it. The treasure had been given to the Lord. By taking it to use as a bribe to buy off an attacker, he showed he was unwilling to trust God to keep His promise to protect His people. This robbed the temple of funds needed for further repair work. Chronicles say that Hazael's army was small, and the Lord delivered into their hands Joash's great army.

tombs, according to 2Chr 24:25 he wasn't granted this honour.

13:1-25 14:23-29 Jehoahaz, Joash & Jeroboam II of Israel.

(Amos is written against the background of these chapters)

13:1-3 Jehoahaz son of Jehu.. reigned seventeen years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD by following the sins of Jeroboam- 1 Ki 12:26-33 13:33-34 14:16 Jehu's reforms checked the growth of state-supported Baal worship in Israel, but stopped at that point with no attempt to return to the Lord beyond the state in which Jeroboam set up worship, 10:31. So the Lord's anger WAS KINDLED/burned against Israel
**15

Footnote **15. The Moabite stone records King Mesha's view that "Omri King of Israel oppressed Moab many days because Chemosh was angry with his land." Hobbs P 166.

for a long time He DELIVERED/kept them under the HAND /power of Hazael and Ben-Hadad- This gives the SPIRITUAL background The Assyrian records give the POLITICAL background After Shalmaneser's victories over Syria he had to fight campaigns to defend the North-West and Eastern borders of Assyria. Then there was a revolt within Assyria and civil war 827-822BC. Then the new king of Assyria Shamshi Adad V had to restore organised government throughout the Assyrian Empire. Only THEN was Assyria free to expand westward into Syria again. This left Syria free to put all its power into attacking Israel. As God had warned, 8:7-15, he did so with considerable success

13:4-6 Then Jehoahaz BE SOUGHT /sought the Lord's favour- Chalah- To be worn out, sick. It's used in 1 Ki 13:6 of unrepentant Jeroboam's request to have the use of his hand restored, and Jer 26:19 of Hezekiah. In his conscious weakness, and the sickness of the nation, Jehoahaz was humbled to repentance, and the judgment disciplinary pressure on him was eased by the Lord. the LORD HEAR KENED/listened, for he saw THE OPPRESSION/how severely- As He took notice of the oppression of His people in Egypt, Ex 39, and promised to in Deu 26:7. As in Judges, God's purpose was to discipline, not destroy, Israel. When in desperation Israel turned to the Lord to have mercy on them, He granted them as much deliverance as was good for them.

May mean they were able to camp on their fields on the plains until harvest time - shepherd their flocks on the plains without returning every night to walled towns on the hills.

They- each was responsible for his own sins, along with Jeroboam and the Kings that followed him. did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam. Also, the Asherah pole remained- So this aspect of the Baal-Asherah Canaanite Fertility cult was tolerated, in spite of Jehu's action, 10:25-27. Jeroboam seems to have been involved in the worship of Asherah as well as the Golden Calves, 1 Ki 14:14-16, so as Jehu kept the Golden Calves, this Asherah pole may have been retained.

Footnote **16. The pillar which records these campaigns says that Jehoash the Samaritan (Samaria being Israel's capital city) brought him tribute. Being subject to Assyria, was at first much less distressing than the constant Syrian raids. Wiseman P. 240. Others suggest Elisha is the deliverer, as in 68-7:20. But symbolising the Lord's deliverance later in the chapter is the only deliverance attributed to him at this stage.

13:7-9 Nothing left of the army of Jehoahaz except fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand foot soldiers- In contrast to the Assyrian record that Ahab had supplied 2000 chariots to the coalition army that fought Assyria at the battle of Qarqar, Wiseman P. 240. The small number of chariots made it impossible to fight an invading army on the fertile plains. Cp Josh 17:16 made them like the dust at threshing time- The light husks that the wind blows away leaving the valuable clean grain. Cp Ps 1:4-5. Israel refused to respond to God's dealings with them, Amos 4:6-12 Cp Isa 1:2-9. Jehoahaz.. buried.. JOASH/Jehoash his son succeeded him as king.

13:10-13 In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah- From 13:1 we might expect this to have been 3rd or 4th year, but we should simply read what is in front of us, learn from it, thank God for it, and not fret over details that are unclear. Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king of Israel, and he reigned sixteen years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD.. As for the other events of the reign of Jehoash.. written.. Jeroboam succeeded him on the throne.

13:14-17 Elisha was FALLE N SICK /suffering from the illness from which he died- After a ministry of about sixty years. Jehoash king of Israel.. wept over him- In Hebrew wept before him. Israel's army is

for, but gives no sign of personal faith in/ obedience to the Lord whom Elisha served. Elisha brought forth fruit in his old age, Ps 92:14. His last action was to point Jehoash to the future deliverance for Israel that God would bring through him. The arrow of the Lord's deliverance.. thou shalt smite them. Cp Joshua Deu 7:2; 3:327.

Elisha said, Get a bow and arrows. Take the bow.. Elisha put his hands on the king's hands- Elisha will join him/support him. It may be that in some sense Elisha was trying to get Jehoahash to take up the spiritual role which Elisha was laying down. Elisha seems to have had no other successor, and here he is asking Jehoahash to identify himself with Elisha, and with God's purposes of deliverance for Israel. Jehoash could be directly under God without an Elijah or Elisha as an intermediary - as well as King over God's people Israel.

Open the east window- Facing toward Syria. Shoot! Elisha said.. The Lord's arrow of DELIVERANCE /victory.. over SYRIA /Aram! You will SMITE TILL THOU HAV E CONSUMED /completely destroy the SYRIANS /Arameans at Aphek- As in the time of Ahab, 1 Ki 22:26-34 This was what God offered. The King's lack of enthusiasm in taking up the promise/ challenge brought a limitation. This action wasn't so-called "sympathetic magic" that imagines that such an action will enlarge itself into a reality. **17 But, an action that symbolises what God has already informed Elisha He is about to do This concrete expression of the revealed will of God will strengthen and encourage the king, and so play its part in the victories God will give him.

13:18-19 Then he said, Take the arrows.. SMITE /Strike the ground. He struck it three times and stopped- An interesting test of Faith/ Obedience, and of the character of the King. In a sense he, by his actions - half-hearted and minimal, or enthusiastic - determines the quantity of Blessing God can give to him, as did the woman by the number of jars she borrowed to be filled by oil miraculously, 4:1-7. Wiseman assumes that the king SHOT three arrows into the ground but it reads as if he held the arrows in his hand when striking. The King's actions seem to have been his humouring an old man, not of taking up his announced role of deliverer in God's obedience

gods to respond by doing what they had acted out. Ancient pagan religions believed in this, as today Voodoo priests may stick pins, nails etc into a model of the person they want to curse. False prophets like Zedekiah in 1Ki 22:11 may have believed this. But God's Prophets were required to say God's Words, and at times also to symbolise God's action. Nothing they did or said was intended to/ could possibly make God do what they wished. On the contrary they were mediators of God's message, and God at times gave them things which they must do to make the message clear, and fix it in the memories of their hearers. Joshua lifted up his spear symbolically against Ai, Josh 8:18. Ezekiel acted out the siege of Jerusalem, Ezek 4:1-5:17, etc. The action was to focus people's attention, not to give God ideas, or stir him into action. The Lord's parables had a similar role. Today, perhaps for some, street drama may have such a role.

Footnote **18. A monument found at Er Rimah records that Jehoash of Samaria paid tribute to Assyria - perhaps in the hope of getting protection against Syria.

132021 Elisha.. buried. Moabite raiders INVAD ED/used to enter the country AT THE COMING IN OF THE YEAR /every spring- Syria may have encouraged them in this, or they merely took advantage of the weakness Israel had fallen into, just as the Midianites had in the time of the Judges before Gideon drove them back, Judges 6.

Once. they threw the body into Elisha's SEPULCHRE /tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man REVIVED/came to life- An odd event, but it could be taken as a reminder to Jehoash, and to Israel as a whole, that although Elisha was dead, his God was emphatically still alive. It could be taken as a reminder that although Israel was spiritually dead and drifting towards exile, she could still be revived. To me the lesson is that the message which God gave through him - God's Word which like his skeleton had determined his shape/ the shape of his life, remained when he was called home and his service here ended. God's Word which he had spoken would continue to bring life to those who contacted it down through the years. God is the God of the Living, Lk 20:38 Cp Isa 44 The words and work of a servant of God doesn't end with his death.

132225 Hazeal.. oppressed Israel. But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion- Racham- From Reham- Womb. The compassion a good mother has for her baby. and HAD RESPECT /showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob..

would be towns on the East side of Jordan. Those in Gilead etc on the West side of Jordan had been lost to Syria back in the time of Jehu. Those in Trans-Jordan were recovered by Jeroboam II when Assyria had completely subdued Syria. Three times Jehoash BEAT /defeated him.

14:23-25 Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel became king in Samaria, and reigned forty-one years- There is at this stage a substantial misfitting of the reigns of the kings in Israel and Judah. No method of reconciling makes ready sense. Once more it is wisest to take each statement at face value, while admitting that we would need more information to be sure of the facts and how they fit together.

He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, did not turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam- His very long and successful reign is dismissed briefly. It was a demonstration of God's mercy to Israel, but Jeroboam made little contribution to the fulfilling of God's purposes.

He restored the COASTS/boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Sea of the PLAIN/Arabah- Dead Sea A temporary restoration, Amos, 6:14. That a man may be disloyal to God and yet act wisely and be blessed, as Jehoash and Jeroboam were, is a reminder of God's sovereignty. And we're warned that like Amaziah, a man may be generally loyal to God and His Law and yet act foolishly with tragic results.

ACCORDING TO/in accordance with the word of the LORD - It was the Lord's doing, not the King's. Writing at this time Hosea and Amos both emphasise that the Lord was being merciful, and Israel unresponsive, Hos 1:2-4:19, 6:6; 11:1-7; 13:4, and Amos 4:1-13; 6:1-7; 7:1-9, 8:1-9:10 spoken through His servant Jonah- So, Jonah was a prophet of salvation like Elisha. The problem he ran away from wasn't that he objected to God showing grace to sinners. It was blessing ENEMY sinners he wasn't prepared to co-operate with God in. That God enabled Jeroboam II to restore the Northern boundary of Israel to the ideal state enjoyed under Solomon, 1 Ki 8:65 was of God's Grace and compassion alone, not because he was in God's sight a good King. God had held out to them the possibility of blessing, in spite of their idolatry, 10:30 13:5, 22-25 Their future would depend on the way they responded to God's grace shown to them.

14:26-29 The LORD SAW THE AFFLICTION/had seen how bitterly-
Oni- 135-7. As in Ex 37; Deu 267. everyone in Israel.. NOT ANY
HELPER/no one to help them.. He saved them by the hand of
Jeroboam son of Jehoash- It might look as if their case was beyond
hope, as Elijah thought it was in 1 Ki 19, but although Israel WOULD
go into exile for their sins, God would bring them back when His
chastening had had the desired effect, 1 Ki 8:33-51. The remains of
extensive rebuilding in Tirzah, and Megiddo are thought to date to this
period.

He recovered for Israel both Damascus and Hamath, which had
belonged to JUDAH H/Yaudi- To Judah in Israel- a puzzling expression.
To Judah as well as to Israel? Judah in association with Israel enjoyed
some restoration of territory? written.. Zechariah his son.. asking.

14:1-20 Amaziah of Judah. 2 Chr 25:1-28

14:1-4 Amaziah son of Joash was twenty-five years old when he became
king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. He did what
was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not as his father David had
done. He followed the example of his father Joash- As always the
verdict on a king shows the general set of his life - for, or against God -
followed by aspects of his life which were exceptions to this. Amaziah
set out to please God, but wasn't as thorough in this as David, Asa, and
Jehoshaphat, 1 Ki 15:11, 14; 22:43 The high places. the people
continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

14:5-6 After the kingdom was CONFIRMED/firmly in his grasp he
SLEW/executed the officials who murdered his father- This was
normal practice at the time. In fact part of the allegiance sworn by
officials and vassals to any Assyrian King was the promise to kill any
such assassins. The unusual thing here was that Amaziah followed
God's Law on the matter recorded in Deu 24:16 He did not put the
sons of the MURDERERS/assassins to death, in accordance with
what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses **19 each to die
for his own sins- Where the children were involved the sin of a parent
they shared the judgment that fell on the parent, Ex 20:5; Josh 7:16-26

meetings such as God called men to have with Him, Gen 3:230 Ex 33:11; Deu 5:4; 1 Cor 13:12 It's a challenge to fight in 1 Sam 17:5-9. This appears to be from an Israelite source/ perspective. From 2 Chr 25:5-16 we know that Amaziah had captured Idols from Edom and brought them to Jerusalem to worship them, and he had threatened to kill the prophet who criticised this. Amaziah had hired 100,000 men from Israel at the cost of 100 talents, non-refundable. He dismissed them reluctantly on the Lord's orders through a man of God. They plundered the Judean border towns on the way home to Israel, to make up for the loss of the chance to plunder towns in Edom. This soured relationships between Judah and Israel. His confrontational attitude towards the Lord means we could expect God to bring judgment on him. Here in Kings the emphasis is on Amaziah's foolish pride.

Footnote **19. While orally transmitted Law already governed the life of God's people from the time of Joshua onwards, awareness of/ obedience to, details such as this followed a wider use of reading and writing.

14:9-12 Jehoash replied.. A thistle sent a message to a cedar, Give your daughter to my son in marriage. Then a wild beast came along and trampled the thistle underfoot- A teaching story like Jotham's parable, Judges 9:8-15. Cp Isa 10:15; Ezek 17:3-8; 19:1-9. Jehoash views himself as a strong cedar tree, Amaziah as a mere thistle bush. Syria having been crushed by Assyria and Jehoash having regained the whole of Israel was now in a strong position, and knew it.

You have defeated Edom.. Glory in your victory! Why MEDDLE /ask for trouble TO YOUR HURT/and cause your own downfall and that of Judah also- Enjoy boasting in your triumph, but don't come out and fight with me, that's asking for trouble, and you'll regret it. Amaziah, would not listen so Jehoash king of Israel attacked.

He and Amaziah faced each other at Beth Shemesh in Judah- See 1 Sam 6:9. Judah was PUT TO THE WORSE /routed, and every man fled to his home- The impression was of a total defeat of an army with little heart for the battle, and which was quick to flee from the battle. 2 Chr 25 says apostasy caused the defeat. Josephus said the army fled before the battle had begun.

such Psalms as Ps 42, 43 as part of this experience

14:15-20 The other events.. written.. Jeroboam his son.. king. Amaziah lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash- It doesn't say how many of these years he spent as Jehoash's prisoner in Samaria. The humiliation of Judah as a chastisement from God is obvious. Cp Chapters 11 and 12 1 Ki 11:39 15:16-22 22:48-49 As for the other events of Amaziah's reign.. written ..

They- A vague statement. Possibly because of his folly in challenging Israel and being defeated, or other signs of incompetence. Possibly a palace plot in favour of his son described discreetly to cover up the scandal of such a thing, conspired against him in Jerusalem. He fled to Lachish, but killed there- The death of Jehoash, had been recorded in 13:13. It is recorded here alongside the death of Amaziah perhaps as a contrast, Jehoash, innocent in the matter of the war with Amaziah died in peace. Amaziah, guilty of the deliberate attack, was murdered by some of his own men. brought back.. and buried in Jerusalem.

15:8-31. The Final Kings of Israel (not in Chronicles)

15:8-12 Zechariah son of Jeroboam became king.. reigned six months. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD.. did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam- With the death of Jeroboam II Israel's "Indian Summer" ran out. Stable Government almost ceased. In the 30 years before the Exile there were 6 Kings, only one of whom died a natural death.

Shallum son of Jabesh.. SMOTE /attacked.. succeeded him as king.. So God's promise to Jehu has now been fulfilled. God's great mercy to Israel, and its King Jeroboam II has come to an end, with apparently no response of repentance towards God. From now on the increasing greed and selfishness of the rich and powerful in Israel, and their spiritual apostasy means that they will reap what they have been sowing, Amos 2:6-12 Assyria has strong kings once more, and their determined march westward towards Egypt is taken up again more forcefully than before.

15:13-15 Shallum.. reigned one month. Menahem son of Gadi- Perhaps meaning of the tribe of Gad, but the Hebrew word could mean "My Luck." attacked Shallum.. and succeeded him as king. The other

It may be an alternative name for I appuah on the border of Ephraim as in the Lucianic text of the LXX. because they refused to open their gates- because they supported Shallum, or some other rival. He sacked Tiphseh and ripped open all the pregnant women- The brutality fits with the increasing apostasy of Israel as it lapsed into the goddessways of Syria, 8:12, and Ammon, Amos 1:13 In contrast to this see the good effect of the knowing and obeying of God's Law in 146. Later, wherever the Gospel reached, cannibalism etc soon became impossible.

Menahem- Comforter. A pleasant name, but his actions at Tiphseh showed there was no comfort for Israel in his becoming king of Israel.. ten years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat.

15:19-22 Then Pul- The name Tiglath Pileser took after he captured Babylon king of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem- Me-ne-hi-im-me of Sa-me-ri-na-a, according to the Assyrian record. At this stage the Assyrians annually sent an army to Arpad, and from that base collected tribute. (The next stage was the stationing of an Assyrian watchdog official, with heavy fines for any inclination to rebel, etc.) gave him a thousand talents of silver to strengthen his hold on the kingdom- Preferring a client status as part of a powerful Empire. The expression in Hebrew suggests it was payment to make his kingdom safe from attack from a rival King of Israel, as with Ahaz's action later.

ALL THE MIGHTY MEN OF WEALTH/Every wealthy man had to contribute fifty shekels of silver- It was the current price of a slave in Assyria. The levy was exacted from all those whose position required them to furnish armed soldiers when an army was needed. So the king of Assyria withdrew. Pekahiah his son succeeded him as king.

15:23-26 Pekahiah.. reigned two years. did evil.. did not turn away.. Pekah.. assassinated Pekahiah, along with Argob and Arieah- Sons of the King? Supporters? succeeded him as king.

15:27-29 Pekah.. reigned twenty years- This 20 years seems too long to fit within the limits of the period covered by these last kings of Israel. It seems probable that two kings were reigning at the same time in different parts of the country. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat.

Assyrians set up a province based on Dor, and another based on Megiddo. This confined the kingdom of Israel to the hill country around Samaria - the last stage of its independence. 16:7 records this invasion as being prompted by the bribe sent by Ahaz of Judah.

15:30-31 Then Hoshea - Saviour. A fine name, but he wasn't one. He conspired against Pekah, succeeded him as king - Tiglath Pileser claims credit for this. His records state "They overthrew Pa-qa-ha their king so I set up Hoshea as king over them. I received from them as tribute 10 talents of gold and 1000 talents of silver. This is puzzling, as Pekah attacked Ahaz of Judah who didn't become King until after Jotham's death, 16:5; Isa 7:1-8:8. Perhaps Ahaz ruled with his father Jotham for his last years.

Other events of Pekah's reign - including his attack on Judah. It seems crazy that these states under constant threat and pressure from Assyria should help their own destruction by fighting each other. But it makes sense that if they could loot their neighbour they could pay the Assyrian tribute, and still have some wealth of their own.

17:1-41 The Fall of Israel. (Not in Chronicles)

17:1-2 Hoshea.. reigned nine years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded him - There was a slight lessening of apostasy under his rule, but Israel had long been under threat of Exile as the only solution to the ongoing insult/disgrace of their being known as the Lord's people and yet blatantly showing that they preferred to worship other "gods." They are pictured as a recklessly shamelessly unfaithful wife, Ezek 16

17:3-6 Shalmaneser.. came to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser's SERVANT/vassal. But FOUND/discovered that Hoshea was a traitor, for he had sent MESSENGERS/envoys to So king of Egypt - The name isn't easily associated with any current Pharaoh. Wiseman says perhaps the name is used of Pharaoh Orsokon or someone acting for him. no longer paid tribute to the king of Assyria - Hosea strongly criticises this action. It was a failure to trust in the Lord, as if Egypt could do more for the King than the Lord could do

of siege machines, but were also known for their patient persistence until the weakened and terrified city fell or surrendered.

In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria- It doesn't say WHICH king of Assyria. Shalmaneser may have died before the city fell, as his successor Sargon II claims to have captured the city early in his reign. **20 He may well have been deporting these from the country as a whole while still besieging the city of Samaria. TOOK /captured Samaria and CARRIED AWAY CAPTIVE /deported the Israelites to Assyria.

Settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River **21 and in the CITIES/towns of the Medes- Sargon claims to have made the city of Samaria greater than before, as capital of an Assyrian province

Footnote **20. A stone prism of Sargon II at Nimrod reads "I.. took as booty 27,280 people with their chariots and their gods in whom they trusted. I incorporated 200 chariots into my army. The rest of the people I made to dwell within Assyria." P. 266. Wiseman.

Footnote **21. Near Haran, Gen 112631, East of the Euphrates River, Bar 91/4 P 53.

E. Read 7.11.98.

SEALS & SEALED DOCUMENTS

A document folded, tied with string and sealed with a lump of clay. The person who stamped their seal on the clay had the right to break the seal and open the document (Jar handles were also stamped with Seals to show ownership of the contents - Many are stamped L'Melek" - For the King, as the oil, wine, etc was to be paid as tax.)

Ostracoon (Broken pieces of pottery) were used as paper. This one says: "In obedience to the order to you A shyahu the king to give by the hand of Zecharyahu of Tarshish to the House/Temple of Yaweh/Jehovah shekels. (In Scripture they are Joash/Jehoash, and Zechariah.

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An Assyrian picture of Jehu paying tribute to Shalmaneser III

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