

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 KINGS 13

2 KINGS 13:1-3 - JEHOAHAZ, KING OF ISRAEL

V. 1 - NOTE THE NEW ROYAL FAMILY LINE THIS TIME THROUGH JEHU. REMEMBER THAT JEHU WAS THE INSTRUMENT USED BY GOD TO DESTROY THE HOUSE OF AHAB, ACCORDING TO THE PROPHECY OF ELIJAH. AS A RESULT OF HIS (TEMPORARY AND SELF-SERVING) ZEAL FOR THE LORD, HE IS "REWARDED":

2 KINGS 10:30 - THE LORD SAID TO JEHU, "BECAUSE YOU HAVE DONE WELL IN EXECUTING WHAT IS RIGHT IN MY EYES, AND HAVE DONE TO THE HOUSE OF AHAB ACCORDING TO ALL THAT WAS IN MY HEART, YOUR SONS OF THE FOURTH GENERATION SHALL SIT ON THE THRONE OF ISRAEL."

HOWEVER, AS A RESULT OF JEHOAHAZ'S IDOLATRY, HE WILL CONTEND WITH REGIONAL POWER ARAM. HIS SPECIFIC SIN SHOULD BE ONE THAT IS FAMILIAR TO US BY NOW - "THE SINS OF JEROBOAM THE SON OF NEBAT" - THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL WHO FORSOOK THE LORD AND WORSHIPPED GOLDEN CALFS.

2 KINGS 13:4-9 - JEHOAHAZ SEEKS THE LORD, BRIEFLY

V. 4 - "ENTREATED THE FAVOR OF THE LORD" - JEHOAHAZ SEEKS THE LORD IN TROUBLE AND AMAZINGLY THE LORD RESPONDS! YET THE REMAINING VERSES WILL TELL US THAT JEHOAHAZ WILL RETURN RIGHT BACK TO IDOLS ONCE HIS CRISIS IS OVER. HOWEVER, IT IS REMARKABLE THAT THE LORD RESPONDS AT ALL! ONE COMMENTATOR SPEAKS TO THIS MOMENT WELL:

"WE ARE NOT SURPRISED THAT YAHWEH'S WRATH IGNITES AGAINST ISRAEL AND HE GIVES THEM INTO THE POWER OF HAZAEL AND BEN-HADAD CONTINUALLY (V. 3). BUT WE ARE SURPRISED THAT JEHOAHAZ 'PLEADED WITH YAHWEH' (V. 4A). NATURALLY WE ARE READY TO SHOOT OUR PROVERBS 28:9 MISSILE AT THIS JEROBOAMIST ("HE WHO TURNS AWAY HIS EAR FROM LISTENING TO THE LAW, EVEN HIS PRAYER IS AN ABOMINATION."). BEFORE WE CAN LAUNCH IT, HOWEVER, WE MEET A MORE SURPRISING SURPRISE: "YAHWEH LISTENED TO HIM" (V. 4B). TO A CALF WORSHIPPER. WHY ON EARTH WOULD YAHWEH DO THAT?

"FOR HE SAW THE OPPRESSION OF ISRAEL -- HOW THE KING OF (ARAM) OPPRESSED THEM' (V. 4C). THE SAME NOUN AND VERB (ROOT=LAHAS) APPEAR IN YAHWEH'S WORDS IN EXODUS 3:9. "AND WHAT'S MORE I HAVE SEEN THE OPPRESSION WITH WHICH THE EGYPTIANS KEEP ON OPPRESSING THEM'. THE WRITER OF KINGS IS SAYING THAT YAHWEH IS STILL THE SAME EXODUS GOD, WHO SEES NOT ONLY EGYPTIANS BUT (ARAMEANS) SQUEEZING THE LIFE OUT OF HIS PEOPLE, HIS APOSTATIZING PEOPLE. OUR WRITER IMPLIES THAT SOMETIMES YAHWEH'S PITY OVER THE DISTRESS OF HIS PEOPLE TRUMPS THE WICKEDNESS OF THE ONE SEEKING HIM FOR RELIEF." (DALE RALPH DAVIS, "FOCUS ON THE BIBLE: 2 KINGS", PAGE 193)

V. 4-5 - "DELIVERER" - "IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE "SAVIOR" (NASB: DELIVERER) IN QUESTION HERE IS ASSYRIA, WHOSE INTEREST IN SYRIA-PALESTINE WAS REKINDLED IN THE CLOSING YEARS OF THE NINTH CENTURY B.C., RESULTING IN A MEASURE OF RELIEF FOR ISRAEL AS THE ATTENTION OF DAMASCUS (CAPITAL OF ARAM) NECESSARILY TURNED TO THE NORTH (WHERE ASSYRIA WAS ATTACKING)." (ESV STUDY BIBLE, 2 KINGS 13:4-5)

2 KINGS 13:10-13 - JEHOASH (JOASH), KING OF ISRAEL

JEHOASH (AKA JOASH) BECAME THE KING IN ISRAEL. HE HAS THE SAME NAME AS A DIFFERENT JOASH WHO RULED IN JUDAH (SEE 2 KINGS 12) , SON OF JEHOAHAZ REIGNS FOR 16 YEARS AND FOLLOWS AFTER HIS FATHER'S EXAMPLE OF IDOLATRY AND CONTINUED TO WORSHIP THE GOLDEN CALVES OF JEROBOAM BECAUSE HE WAS AN IDIOT. DOES SUCH EVIL DESERVE MORE ELOQUENCE THAN THAT? NOT MUCH IS RECORDED ABOUT THE REIGN OF JEHOASH OF ISRAEL WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE FOLLOWING STORY.

2 KINGS 13:14-19 - THE LORD'S ARROW OF VICTORY

V. 14 - IT'S UNCLEAR WHETHER OR NOT HIS GREETING IS ONE OF HONOR OR MOCKING.

ELISHA IS GOING TO DIE SOON AND HE IS VISITED BY KING JOASH OF ISRAEL. REMEMBER, THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL WAS AT WAR WITH ARAM THROUGHOUT THIS TIME. AS OF LAST ACCOUNTING, JOASH'S FATHER HAD A SERIOUSLY DEPLETED MILITARY AS A RESULT (V. 7). PERHAPS JOASH IS COMING TO ELISHA FOR HELP FROM THE LORD AS HIS FATHER DID AT ONE POINT (V. 4)?

IN CLASSIC PROPHETIC STYLE, ELISHA USES AN OBJECT LESSON TO ILLUSTRATE THE WORD OF THE LORD. HE HAS JOASH SHOOT SOME ARROWS THROUGH THE WINDOW, REPRESENTATIVE OF "THE LORD'S ARROW OF VICTORY...OVER ARAM" (V. 17). WHAT THE KING DOESN'T KNOW IS THAT THE AMOUNT OF TIMES HE SHOOTS AN ARROW WILL CORRELATE WITH THE NUMBER OF VICTORIES HE WILL HAVE OVER ARAM. HE SHOOTS 3 TIMES AND STOPS.

ONE MIGHT THINK THAT IT WAS UNFAIR TO NOT INFORM THE KING OF THIS BEFORE HE SHOT THE ARROWS. FOR SURELY THE KING WOULD WANT FULL VICTORY WOULDN'T HE? HAD HE KNOWN WHAT THE ARROWS REPRESENTED, PERHAPS HE WOULD HAVE KEPT SHOOTING.

HOWEVER, AN EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT SHOWS THAT THE KING DID KNOW WHAT THE ARROW REPRESENTED! AND, VERSE 18 TELLS US THAT THE KING "STRUCK IT THREE TIMES AND STOPPED".

WHAT THIS RECORD ILLUSTRATES IS THAT THE KING LACKED THE DRIVE TO OBEY THE WORD OF THE LORD TO THE FULLEST EXTENT. YOU CAN PICTURE HIM AS A CHILD WHO IS HALF-HEARTEDLY DOING CHORES BECAUSE THEY WERE ASKED BY THEIR PARENTS. THE CHILD WANTS TO GO AND PLAY OUTSIDE AND SO THEY QUICKLY MAKE THEIR BED AND PICK UP A FEW TOYS, ONLY TO RETURN 30 SECONDS LATER TO THE PARENT AND ASK "CAN I GO PLAY OUTSIDE NOW?". THE CHILD DOESN'T WANT TO CLEAN, THEY JUST WANT TO PLAY. AND JOASH DOESN'T WANT TO OBEY THE WORD OF THE LORD, HE JUST WANTS TO WIN AGAINST ARAM. AND SO HE QUICKLY, HALF-HEARTEDLY PLAYS THE PROPHET'S LITTLE ARCHERY GAME SO THEY CAN GET ON WITH THE BIGGER BUSINESS AT HAND. ONLY THIS TIME, HIS LACK OF PASSION MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

2 KINGS 13:22-25 - WAR WITH ARAM

V. 25 - THREE TIMES, JUST AS ELISHA HAD SPOKEN

V. 23 - YET AGAIN THE MERCY AND GRACE OF GOD ON DISPLAY IN SPITE OF HUMANITY'S ACCEPTANCE OR ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIM. GOD IS GOOD. AND HE IS COMMITTED TO HIS WORD AND COVENANTS IN SPITE OF WHAT THE CURRENT GENERATION OF "HIS PEOPLE" ARE UP TO.

2 KINGS 13:20-21 - ELISHA BURIED

THIS IS A PECULIAR STORY. BUT A COOL ONE. A DEAD MAN IS QUICKLY THROWN INTO A GRAVE AS THE FUNERAL GUESTS FLEE SOME ATTACKERS. HE ROLLS DOWN INTO THE PLACE WHERE ELISHA, THE GREAT PROPHET, WAS BURIED. WHEN THE DEAD MAN TOUCHES THE BONES OF ELISHA, HE IS INSTANTLY RESURRECTED! WOW!

LESSONS FROM 2 KINGS 13

YET AGAIN, A CHAPTER THAT INITIALLY SEEMS DEAD AND DULL WITH NAMES WE STUMBLE OVER AND PLACES WE DON'T KNOW, IS FILLED WITH TIMELY LESSONS AND REMINDERS FOR OUR LIVES TODAY. THE BIBLE IS AMAZING! HERE ARE THREE OBSERVATIONS.

1 - THE BEGINNING RECORD OF 2 KINGS 13 HIGHLIGHTS AN IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL LESSON. GOD IS MERCIFUL. HE ANSWERS THE CALL OF EVEN THOSE FAR AWAY FROM HIM. AT TIMES HE CHOOSES TO INTERVENE AND DELIVER EVEN PEOPLE WHO WORSHIP OTHER GOD'S WHEN THEY CALL UPON HIS NAME. THE LORD IS MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, LONGSUFFERING AND KIND. HE EXTENDS LOVING-KINDNESS TO THOUSANDS. GETTING YOUR "ACT" TOGETHER IS NOT A PREREQUISITE OF BEING A RECIPIENT OF HIS GRACE. THAT'S THE WHOLE IDEA OF GRACE - IT'S NOT EARNED.

BUT OUR TEXT GIVES US A FULLER PICTURE OF THE EFFECTS OF GOD'S GRACE AND MERCY UPON THE HEART OF A NATION OR AN INDIVIDUAL. HOW ONE RESPONDS TO HIS GRACE, AFTER RECEIVING IT IS IMPORTANT. IN THIS CASE JEHOAHAZ CRIES OUT TO THE LORD AND THE LORD SEES THE AFFLICTION OF ISRAEL AND DELIVERS THEM. BUT THEN, ONCE THE CRISIS OR IMMEDIATE NEED IS OVER, THEY RETURN TO THEIR IDOLS OF CHOICE AND YAHWEH IS CAST ASIDE. THE CORRECT RESPONSE TO GOD'S MERCY SHOULD HAVE BEEN A WHOLE-HEARTED REPENTANCE AND DEVOTION TO HIM.

IT'S EASY TO LOOK AT JEHOAHAZ AND RECOGNIZE THE FOOLISHNESS OF HIS CHOICES. BUT BEFORE WE LAUGH HIS FOLLY AWAY, LET'S REMEMBER HOW EASY IT IS FOR US TO FOLLOW IN THIS PATTERN. THE NEW TESTAMENT GIVES MANY CHARGES TO THIS POINT THAT WE WOULD NOT RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD ONE MOMENT AND IGNORE IT THE NEXT.

ROMANS 6:1-4 - WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN? ARE WE TO CONTINUE IN SIN SO THAT GRACE MAY INCREASE? 2 MAY IT NEVER BE! HOW SHALL WE WHO DIED TO SIN STILL LIVE IN IT? 3 OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT ALL OF US WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST JESUS HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? 4 THEREFORE WE HAVE BEEN BURIED WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM INTO DEATH, SO THAT AS CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD THROUGH THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, SO WE TOO MIGHT WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.

ROMANS 11:33, 12:1 - OH, THE DEPTH OF THE RICHES BOTH OF THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD! HOW UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS AND UNFATHOMABLE HIS WAYS!...12:1 THEREFORE I URGE YOU, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, TO PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING AND HOLY SACRIFICE, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP.

2 CORINTHIANS 6:1 (NLT) AS GOD'S PARTNERS, WE BEG YOU NOT TO ACCEPT THIS MARVELOUS GIFT OF GOD'S KINDNESS AND THEN IGNORE IT.

2 - ANOTHER LESSON COMES TO US FROM THE BOW AND ARROW SCENE WITH ELISHA BEFORE HIS DEATH. AS WE LOOKED AT ALREADY, THE KING DID NOT APPROACH OBEYING THE PROPHET'S WORD WITH MUCH GUSTO. AS A RESULT, HE ONLY REAPED THE BENEFITS OF HIS EFFORT. I THINK THIS IS ANOTHER GOOD WORD FOR US. THERE ARE PROMISES OF GOD WITHIN OUR REACH - ACCESSED BY FAITH OR PRAYER OR OBEDIENCE - AND WHEN WE GET A TASTE OF WHAT THE LORD HAS IN STORE FOR US, TOO OFTEN WE SIT BACK, ENJOY IT AND THEN GET EMPTY AGAIN. RATHER, WE SHOULD KEEP PRESSING, KEEP BELIEVING, KEEP PRAYING, KEEP OBEYING...AND SEE WHAT THE LORD COULD AND WILL DO FOR AND THROUGH US. DON'T JUST PUT A LITTLE EFFORT IT AND THEN STOP. GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT...

3 - LASTLY, WE HAVE THE GREAT STORY OF THE REVIVED MAN WHO ACCIDENTALLY IS ROLLED INTO ELISHA'S TOMB. THIS IS A GREAT REMINDER OF THE POWER AND WORD OF GOD.

"WE MUST NOT DISMISS THIS ACCOUNT. IT SHOWS THAT THE WORD OF GOD WHICH ELISHA HAD SO FAITHFULLY BORNE WAS STILL MIGHTY AND POWERFUL EVEN THOUGH THE PROPHET HIMSELF HAD DIED. WHAT A COMFORT THERE WAS HERE FOR THE CAPTIVES! THEY MUST HAVE OFTEN THOUGHT THEIR NATION WAS AS GOOD AS DEAD, BUT BECAUSE OF THE POWERFUL WORD OF GOD THEIR NATION WOULD LIVE AGAIN!" (ROGER ELLSWORTH, "APOSTASY, DESTRUCTION AND HOPE" PAGE 158)

HERE'S THE POINT WE CAN SEE FROM THIS RECORD. ONE WOULD ASSUME THE FAITHFUL IN ISRAEL (IF THERE WERE ANY) WOULD HAVE BEEN DEVASTATED AT THE DEATH OF ELISHA. WE READ OF NO SUCCESSOR TAKING HIS MANTLE AS WE READ WITH ELIJAH. BUT YOU SEE, THE POWER OF ELISHA WASN'T FROM WITHIN ELISHA - IT WAS IN THE LORD. AND THE LORD'S POWER WAS SO GREAT IN HIM (AND IN GENERAL) THAT IT ENDURES EVEN BEYOND ELISHA'S DEATH! THE POWER OF GOD IS SO GREAT, THE RESIDUAL POWER LEFT IN ELISHA'S BONES CAN RAISE A DEAD MAN!

SO THEN WE TAKE COURAGE THAT THE POWER OF GOD IS AT WORK EVEN WHEN WE DON'T SEE A SPECIFIC WAY OR PERSON OR MINISTRY HE IS WORKING THROUGH. IF HE CAN RAISE A DEAD MAN WHO ROLLS INTO A PROPHET'S CASKET, WHAT CAN HE DO THROUGH YOU AND I - AS WE RESPOND TO HIS GRACE AND GIVE HIM OUR WHOLE HEARTS!