

Lesson 10

2 Kings 9-13

I. The Setting

- A.** In 1 Kings 19, God told Elijah about three people other than himself who would play a major role in defeating Baalism. Those three were Elisha, Hazael, and Jehu, and by Chapter 9 we still await the arrival of only the third, Jehu. Elisha has replaced Elijah, and Hazael is now king of Syria. Jehu will arrive in this chapter with a vengeance!
- B.** Following the death of Naboth at the hands of Ahab and Jezebel, God through Elijah told Ahab that his family would be obliterated. So far, and with the exception of Ahab's own death, that prophecy has not been fulfilled. Jezebel is still alive, Ahab's son is on the throne, and Ahab has 70 other sons waiting in reserve. Jehu is about to change all of that.
- C.** Elisha appears only at the beginning of our lesson and at the end of our lesson, but his influence and that of his mentor, Elijah, are felt throughout these chapters. We cannot study the lives of Elijah and Elisha without considering Chapters 9-13.

II. [9:1-13] Jehu becomes king

- A.** In 1 Kings 19:15-17, God told Elijah to anoint Jehu king of Israel, but Elijah never did so. Instead, this job falls to Elisha, but Elisha does not do it either! Instead, Elisha sends his servant to anoint Jehu king – and he tells the servant to anoint Jehu and then run for his life! Why the great reluctance to meet Jehu? As we will soon discover, Jehu has a rather nasty temper.
- B.** So Elisha asks one of his students to go to Ramoth Gilead and anoint Jehu king of Israel. Jehu was a commander in the army of King Joram. The student is told to anoint Jehu privately and then to flee as soon as it is done.
 - 1.** We are not told why Elisha did not go himself, but perhaps he would have been too conspicuous.
 - 2.** In Jewish tradition, this young prophet is identified as Jonah.
- C.** The student goes, finds Jehu, and anoints him king, but instead of fleeing immediately, he first gives Jehu a short sermon. He tells Jehu that his rise

to power will come as a result of Elijah's prophecies about Ahab and Jezebel.

1. 2 Kings 9:7-10 'You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. 8 'For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free. 9 'So I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. 10 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her.' " And he opened the door and fled.
 2. Jehu was the only king of the Northern kingdom to have been anointed. God had plans for Jehu!
- D. After the young prophet runs away, Jehu's servants (perhaps seeing his oily head!) ask him what that madman wanted. Jehu is at first reluctant to tell them what happened, but eventually he does. The servants then shout "Jehu is king!" But Jehu still has a lot to do if those shouts are to be anything but wasted breath.
1. The troops seemed quite eager for a new king. Perhaps Joram's military failures has caused significant unrest in the army.
- E. For now, Elisha fades from the scene. He will briefly and dramatically emerge again later, but the bulk of his work is now over.

III.[9:14-29] Jehu kills two kings

- A. "Few events in the history of the divided kingdom are as momentous as Jehu's purge of the political and religious leaders of Israel and Judah."
- B. It was not uncommon for a king of Israel to come to power by murdering the previous occupant of the throne. Jehu, however, goes one better than that – he comes to power by assassinating not one king, but two kings! And in doing so, Jehu creates an unprecedented power vacuum.
- C. King Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead against King Hazael of Syria, but he had been wounded and had gone to Jezreel to recover.
- D. Jehu first makes sure that no one will be able to leave Jezreel and warn King Joram, and then he heads there himself to find the king. At the same time, King Ahaziah of Judah also heads to Jezreel to meet with King Joram.

- E.** When Jehu's chariots are spotted approaching Jezreel, a watchman is sent to find out what he wants. The watchman ends up joining Jehu's approaching company of men. A second watchman is then sent, and he too ends up joining in with Jehu. Interestingly, the watchmen know that it is Jehu approaching by the way he drives his chariot – furiously! In fact, we are about to witness a rather severe example of road rage.
- F.** King Joram knows these men are his own soldiers, and he is not fearful for his own safety. He just wants to know what was going on. Perhaps disaster had overtaken Ramoth Gilead. Perhaps these soldiers are all that remain of his army.
- G.** So the king himself goes out to meet Jehu at one of the most infamous places in the Bible – Naboth's vineyard. The king asks Jehu, "Is it peace?" Jehu responds in verse 22.
1. 2 Kings 9:22 "What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many?"
 2. The term "harlotries" is the Bible's standard metaphor for Israel's abandonment of God in favor of idols. By "witchcraft" is meant the false cults, which we have seen are linked very closely with demons.
 3. Say what you will about Jehu and his methods, Jehu knew one thing that many today would be wise to learn – God does not want us to seek peace at any cost when that cost is disobedience to his word. Jehu knew that he could have no peace with Israel's departure from God's word, just as we should know that we can have no peace with departures today. It is true that peacemakers are blessed, and it is true that our Savior is the prince of peace, but it is equally true that we can find peace only through our obedience to the word of God. We will never find peace through disobedience to God. If standing up against error means that we disrupt someone's "peacefulness," then peace must go. There can be no peace apart from God's word, and we are peacemakers when we point people to Jesus Christ.
- H.** The king finally wakes up to the danger he is in and he tries to warn Ahaziah, but it is too late. Jehu shoots him through with an arrow and leaves his body in the field of Naboth, the source of the curse that was now being fulfilled.
- I.** Ahaziah suddenly decides he may have out-stayed his welcome and heads south for home. But again, it is too late. Jehu shoots him also, and he escapes but soon dies. His body is carried back to Jerusalem and buried. Jehu has single handedly assassinated the kings of the northern

and southern kingdom, and has himself become king of the northern kingdom.

- J. Why did Jehu kill Ahaziah? Probably because Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah, was Ahab's daughter. In any event, he was definitely in the wrong place at the wrong time, and it cost him his life.

IV. [9:30-37] Jehu kills Jezebel

- A. After killing the kings of both the northern and southern kingdoms, Jehu next turns his attention to Jezebel. The reader has known for quite some time that her days were numbered, and it is here that she finally meets her much anticipated end.
- B. Jehu enters the city of Jezreel and finds Jezebel all painted up and looking out a window waiting for him to show up. She asks him "Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?"
 - 1. Commentators disagree on why Jezebel dressed up for Jehu. Some suggest she was trying to seduce him; others suggest she wanted to die looking like a queen; and others suggest she was attired as a prostitute to honor the Baal fertility cult. If she was trying to seduce him, she got off to a bad start with that comment about Zimri, who was the ineffectual short-lived usurper of Elah's throne in 1 Kings 16. (Zimri reigned for 7 days.)
- C. Jehu asks her eunuchs to toss her out the window, which they do without hesitation. She falls to the ground and is trampled under foot by Jehu.
- D. After killing Jezebel, Jehu goes off to eat dinner. Later he commands his servants to bury Jezebel because she was a king's daughter – but once again it is too late. While Jehu has been eating his dinner, the dogs have also been eating their dinner. As prophesied, the dogs have eaten all but "the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands."

V. [10:1-11] Jehu kills Ahab's family

- A. In addition to Jezebel's demise, we have also known for quite some time that Ahab's family would eventually be wiped out, and that prophecy is also fulfilled by Jehu. One final obstacle remains in Jehu's path to power, and that obstacle is the 70 descendants of Ahab who live in Samaria.
- B. Jehu writes a letter to the guardians of Ahab's 70 sons asking them to choose a king from among them and send him out. The guardians are

understandably afraid and refuse to name a king, but they tell Jehu that they would be happy to do whatever he wanted them to do. (Wink! Wink!)

- C.** Jehu responds with a second letter asking the guardians to lop the heads off the 70 sons and to send the heads to Jehu in Jezreel. They do so, and Jehu piles the heads up in two heaps outside the city gate. Jehu then tells the inhabitants of the city in verses 9-10, "You are righteous. Indeed I conspired against my master and killed him; but who killed all these? Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of the LORD which the LORD spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the LORD has done what He spoke by His servant Elijah."
1. Jehu uses the piles of heads as evidence of God's approval of his rise to power. Jehu killed the king, but *others* killed his sons. Jehu is not totally honest here because he leaves the false impression that he had nothing at all to do with these gruesome deaths.
 2. Notice how all of this letter writing parallels Jezebel's letter writing in the death of Naboth.
- D.** Finally, Jehu murders Ahab's priests and close friends, going (for neither the first time nor the last time) a little further than prophecy required.
1. Jehu's killings exceed reform and become atrocities, as the prophet Hosea makes clear:
 - a) Hosea 1:4 Then the LORD said to him: "Call his name Jezreel, For in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu."

VI. [10:12-17] Jehu kills Ahaziah's relatives

- A.** As before, Jehu is not content with killing members of the royal family from the northern kingdom. In addition, he now avails himself of an opportunity to kill royal relatives from the southern kingdom.
- B.** Jehu leaves Jezreel for Samaria, and on the way he meets up with brothers of the dead king Ahaziah who apparently have not heard the bad news. They tell Jehu that they have come "to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother." Jehu takes them all alive (probably to question them) and then has all 42 of them killed.
- C.** As before, Jehu most likely killed these royal brothers because of the mixing of the northern and southern royal families. That is, these 42 might have had a claim to the throne in the north. Jehu was most likely

suspicious of their presence in the north – and perhaps justifiably so. Why, after all, was this group north of Samaria on the Jezreel road if they were really coming from Judah in the south?

- D. In any event, these killings also went beyond Elijah's prophecies about Ahab. Elijah said nothing about killing David's descendants.

VII. [10:18-27] Jehu kills the priests of Baal

- A. So far, Jehu has fulfilled Elijah's prophecies regarding Ahab, Jezebel, and Ahab's family. Jehu next finishes the job that Elijah began when he defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. An act of deception completes Jehu's rise to power.
- B. In verse 15, Jehu meets up with a very interesting and influential character, Jehonadab, the son of Rechab. The two discover they share a common zeal for the Lord, and they head off to Samaria together.
 - 1. Jeremiah later gives us some more information about Jehonadab when contrasts the loyalty of Jehonadab's descendants with Israel's rejection of the Lord's commands.
 - a) Jeremiah 35:14 The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; for to this day they drink none, and obey their father's commandment. But although I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, you did not obey Me.
 - b) "The group's ascetic lifestyle – they did not cultivate land, nor plant vineyards, did not drink wine nor build houses – represented an extreme rejection of all aspects of the civilization of the land of Canaan. Thus the joining of Jehonadab with Jehu to root out the cult of Baal would seem to have been a natural linking of interests."
 - c) Jonadab provides us with an important lesson. We can do no good for God if we blend in and become indistinguishable from the world around us. And if that is true, doesn't it follow that the more different we are and distinctive we are from the surrounding worldliness, the more we can do for God? We are more effective servants of God when we step back from the edge of worldliness, where many of us seemingly prefer to live.
- C. When Jehu arrives in Samaria, he tells the people, "Ahab served Baal a little, Jehu will serve him much."

1. The dynasty may have changed, Jehu says, but the religious policy will stay the same – or so he wants them to believe.
- D.** Jehu continues and says "Now therefore, call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. Let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing shall not live." But, we are told, Jehu is not being entirely honest with these priests of Baal. Ironically, he threatens to kill those who do not show up while all the time planning to kill those who do show up!
- E.** The priests arrive and fill up the temple of Baal. Jehu (perhaps) offers the sacrifice to Baal, but once it is over he orders 80 men who are waiting outside to kill everyone inside. They also burn the pillars and tear down the temple, turning it into a refuse dump, which we are told is what it remains "to this day."
1. Jehonadab's presence indicates Jehu's continuing desire to show his new ally how serious he is about religious reform. The Hebrew does not necessarily tell us who offered the sacrifices to Baal, although many translations say that Jehu did.
 2. The temple where all of this occurs was built by Ahab and is mentioned in 1 Kings 16:32. Jehu turns the temple into a refuse dump, which many commentators believe refers to a latrine.
- F.** Verse 28: "Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel." Jehu has finished what Elijah began.

VIII. [10:28-36] Jehu and Israel's decline

- A.** Although he started off well, Jehu's reign became a great disappointment. And with the decline of the king came the decline of his kingdom as God began to reduce the size of the northern kingdom by foreign invasion.
- B.** Despite Jehu's central role in the fulfillment of God's prophecies regarding Ahab's family, verse 29 tells us that Jehu did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam or from the golden calves that were in Bethel and Dan.
1. Jehu in effect expelled the foreign religion of Baalism in favor of the long-standing Israelite state religion started by Jeroboam.
 2. Jehu did not operate out of Elijah-like motives. If the reform helped Jehu on his rise to power, he was all for it. But religious reform against the people's favorite "high-places" would have had the opposite effect, and so Jehu had nothing to do with that reform.

3. Ultimately, Jehu was like Syria, Assyria, and Babylon – an instrument of punishment used by God, but not a friend of God.
 4. Jehu had taken Israel back to where it was before Ahab and Jezebel, but he had not taken them back to the Lord.
 5. These events are a perfect illustration of the difference between reformation and restoration. Protestant denominations are a product of the Reformation Movement, which sought to reform and change the Catholic church. Yet that movement simply replaced one departure for another departure, just as Jehu replaced Baal with Jeroboam. The Lord's church (of which we are members) is not a denomination, and we are not Protestants.
- C. Why, if he did nothing to remove the false idols, is Jehu said in verse 30 to have done what is right in the eyes of the Lord?
1. This is surprising, because apart from this one verse, the Hebrew word for "right" used here is used positively only when speaking of David and the relatively good (non-idolatrous) kings of Judah.
 2. It is even more surprising that Jehu here receives a David-like dynastic promise – his descendants will sit on the throne to the fourth generation. It is not an eternal dynasty like David's, but it is nevertheless extraordinary.
 - a) Jeroboam, for example, was promised a dynasty like David's if he did what was right (1 Kings 11:38). But he did not do so (1 Kings 14:8), and his son was overthrown (1 Kings 15).
 - b) And yet Jehu, who now stands accused of the sins of that same Jeroboam, now receives a four generation dynastic promise. Why?
 - c) "Evidently the eradication of Baal-worship is so significant that, for the moment, participation in the sins of Jeroboam pales in comparison. What Jehu has done that is right far outweighs what he continues to do that is wrong."
 - d) Sometimes you hear people say that all sin is equally bad, and in a way they are correct in that any sin separates us from God. But some sins are definitely greater than others.
 - (1) John 19:11 Jesus answered [to Pilate], "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

- D. God promises Jehu that his sons will reign in Israel to the fourth generation, but Jehu still takes no heed to walk in the law of the Lord. As a result, God begins to carve away at his kingdom by using Hazael and the Syrians.
1. Hazael's domination of Jehu amounts to one usurper defeating another.
- E. One of the most interesting events in the life of Jehu is not mentioned in the Bible, but comes to us from secular history.
1. Assyria invaded Syria more than once during the last half of the ninth century B.C. In 853 BC, Assyria's Shalmaneser III was turned back at the battle of Qarqar, a conflict that found Israel fighting along side Syria against their common enemy.
 2. A more serious invasion by Assyria occurred early in Hazael's reign in 841 BC. That same year, Jehu paid homage to Shalmaneser, brought him tribute money, and began a pro-Assyrian policy that was followed by his descendants.
 3. These events are recorded on a black obelisk (now in the British museum) that depicts Jehu bowing down before the Assyrian monarch. (See handout.)
 4. Clearly, Hazael would not have appreciated Jehu's support of his Assyrian enemy. But what probably made Hazael really mad was that Jehu most likely was not forced to bow down before the Assyrian king. Some believe that the obelisk depicts foreign powers that brought tribute at their own initiative. If so, Jehu was likely either taking preventive measures or simply providing support to the enemy of his enemy.
- F. Jehu dies in verse 35, and his son Jehoahaz becomes king.

IX. [11:1-21] Joash becomes king of Judah

- A. Attention now turns to events in the southern kingdom, but the events begin with a northern twist! As you recall, Jehu killed Ahaziah, the king of Judah. Ahaziah's mother was Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, and Athaliah had much in common with her mother! After seeing that her son is dead, Athaliah destroys the entire royal family (her own family!) and seizes the throne for herself. But unknown to her, one of her grandsons would survive her murderous scheme.

1. Like Jehu, Athaliah was a usurper to the throne, but she was a much more unusual usurper. First, this was the only time a usurper grabbed the throne of Judah from a descendant of David. Second, Athaliah was a woman, and no other woman ever formally ruled the nation.
 2. But Athaliah was not just any woman – she was the queen mother. Queen mothers were very prominent in Judah, with each being named except for two (Jehoram and Ahaz).
 3. God's promise to David was kept alive, but just barely. Was the house of David to suffer the same fate as the house of Ahab? Could the two houses have become so intermingled that God had decided to end them both? No. If Athaliah had succeeded in all she wanted to do, she would have destroyed the Messianic line, but of course she could not succeed. The house of David was in a very different position with God than were the royal houses of the northern kingdom.
 - a) Interestingly, this is not the only time when God's promises hung by the slender thread of a baby boy whose life was threatened by wicked rulers. Moses was hidden from Pharaoh, and Jesus was hidden from Herod.
- B.** Jehosheba, the sister of the dead king, took her son Joash and hid him with a nurse so that he escaped death at the hands of his grandmother. He remained hidden for six years while Athaliah reigned as queen.
- C.** In verse 4, Jehoiada (who we find out in verse 9 is a priest) brings out the seven year old and shows him to the captains. He tells them to protect the young king, which they do. They bring him out, place a crown on his head, give him the Testimony, anoint him king, and shout "Long live the king!"
1. Jehoiada becomes the catalyst for restoring the Davidic dynasty to its historic place. It is significant that this counter-revolution was led by a religious leader, because it will eventually lead to religious reform.
 2. Joash is swept to power in a movement that includes popular, religious, and military support.
 3. Notice that Joash was given a copy of the Covenant or the Testimony at his coronation. This passage is the basis for the British custom of presenting the monarch with a Bible during the coronation service.
- D.** Athaliah shows up, sees the young king, sees all the people of the land rejoicing, and shouts "Treason! Treason!" Jehoiada orders her to be

taken outside of the temple and killed. The usurper has experienced her own usurpation!

- E. Jehoiada then makes a covenant between the Lord, the king, and the people that they should be the Lord's people. The people tear down the temple of Baal and kill the priest of Baal.
- F. Judah has survived an invasion of northern royalty, a turn to Baalism, and a temporary overthrow of David's dynasty.

X. [12:1-16] Joash repairs the temple

- A. Although he became king when he was only 7, Joash turned out to *initially* be a good king, primarily no doubt due to his wise advisor, Jehoiada the priest. In fact, verse 2 tells us that Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord "all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him." But even so, the high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.
 - 1. Over and over in this book we have been told that despite whatever good may have been happening, the people and the king continued in their refusal to remove the high places where they offered sacrifices to false gods. Each time we are told, they did such and such but they still sacrificed on the high places.
 - 2. Do we have our own high places? Are there things in our lives that we know are wrong, and yet we steadfastly refuse to remove them? Does God look at us and say we have done well in doing such and such but we refuse to remove our high places?
- B. Joash eventually notices that the temple has fallen into disrepair, and he orders the priests to collect money for its repair. When that does not happen, Joash sets up his own people to oversee the collection of funds, and he sees that the money goes to the craftsmen who can undertake the repairs.
 - 1. 2 Chronicles 24:7 tells us that Athaliah's sons had been looting the temple to support Baal worship.
 - a) 2 Chronicles 24:7 For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had also presented all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD to the Baals.

2. It is an indictment of Joash that he does not notice this state of affairs until the 23rd year of his reign! (verse 6) He did not seem to have had any great personal zeal for God.
3. Joash's reforms represented a major change in the procedures for handling Temple funds, which lasted until the Exile. It also reflected a shift of power over Temple affairs from the priests to the king.

XI. [12:17-21] Joash's tragic decline

- A. Joash's reign started off well due to a wise mentor. Joash's decline is so tragic that it ends with his murder of his mentor's son simply for proclaiming his mentor's message.
- B. In verse 17, King Hazael of Syria has taken Gath (perhaps to control the southern trade routes) and then turns his attention against Jerusalem. Joash puts together gold and other items from the treasury and sends it to Hazael as a bribe. It works, and Hazael spares Jerusalem.
 1. Ironically, what Joash collected in verses 4-16 he now gives to the Syrians.
 2. The temple will never be safe from such usage. Judah's policy of appeasement will emerge again and again throughout the rest of its history.
- C. Joash eventually dies in a palace coup carried out by his own servants. His son, Amaziah, becomes king in his place.
 1. 2 Kings does not tell us much about what led to this coup, but 2 Chronicles fills in some of the blanks. In 2 Chronicles 24:17-18, we see that after the death of his mentor, Jehoiada, Joash listened to the wrong crowd and left the house of the Lord to serve wooden images and idols. Jehoiada's son, Zechariah, stands up against the king, and the king has him stoned to death. 2 Chronicles 24:25 tells us that the coup occurred as vengeance for the blood of Zechariah.
 2. We have become accustomed to northern kings meeting a violent end, but the only southern king to suffer this fate so far has been Ahaziah. Now his son, Joash, has met a similar end.

XII. [13:1-9] Jehoahaz becomes king of Israel

- A. God promised Jehu a four generation reign, and the fulfillment of that promise begins with the coronation of Jehu's son, Jehoahaz. And quite unusually for a northern monarch, Jehoahaz seeks the Lord's favor.
- B. Verse 2 tells us that Jehoahaz begins his reign by doing evil in the sight of the Lord and following in the ways of Jeroboam. God's anger is roused against him, and he delivers them into the hands of Hazael and Ben-Hadad (the son of Hazael) of Syria. It is at this time that Jehoahaz gets religion and pleads with the Lord – and the Lord listens and sends a deliverer to rescue Israel from the hands of the Syrians. Even so, they continue in the sins of Jeroboam. Verse 7 tells us the Israel was left with very few horsemen, chariots, and soldiers following the battles with Syria.
 - 1. Since 1 Kings 14:15-16, we have expected to read of Israel's exile from the land, but it is not until here that exile is described as an event rather than as an idea. But this exile was not permanent. God sent a deliverer.
 - 2. Who was this deliverer sent by the Lord to rescue Israel from the Syrians? Some commentators believe that Elisha is this deliverer. He is certainly a good candidate as he was certainly one person who could consistently strike fear in the hearts of the Syrians. But probably a better candidate (since Elisha is not mentioned by name here) is Adadnirari III, an Assyrian king who invaded Syria in 805 BC.

XIII. [13:10-19] The death of Elisha and defeat of Syria

- A. Chapter 13 ends with the death of the two remaining main characters in our study of Elijah and Elisha – Elisha himself and Hazael, the king of Syria.
- B. Though he has not figured in the story since the anointing of Jehu in Chapter 9, Elisha is still alive. His death in this chapter will end the Elijah-Elisha era, which occupied over one third of the text of First and Second Kings. But did it really end with his death? We will soon see Elisha performing a miracle even after his death.
- C. By this time, Jehoahaz has died, and his son, Joash, has become king of Israel. (This is a different Joash from Joash, the king of Judah, who we just talked about.)
- D. This northern Joash goes to Elisha (who is sick and near death) and he says, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!"

1. The king calls Elisha "the chariots and horsemen of Israel," in a statement that recalls what Elisha said about Elijah in 2 Kings 2:12 when Elijah was taken up: "And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!'"
 2. "The prophet is the man whose prayer is better than chariots and horsemen. Trust in the words of the prophet means that horses and chariots can be abandoned."
- E.** Elisha tells the king to shoot an arrow out the east window, which he does. Elisha tells him that this arrow is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and it signifies that Joash will strike the Syrians at Aphek until he has destroyed them.
- F.** Elisha then tells the king to strike the ground with arrows, which he does three times. Elisha angrily tells him that he should have shot the ground with five or six arrows, but because he shot only three arrows, the Syrians would not be destroyed, but instead would only be struck three times.
1. The problem is not that the king failed to obey Elisha. The problem is that the king did not obey Elisha enthusiastically! Some commentators suggest he used only half his quiver of arrows. Perhaps by holding back a few arrows he was showing a lack of faith in God's ability to save him from the Syrians. In any event, this event provides an excellent lesson on the topic of half-heartedness.
- G.** Elisha then dies and is buried. Sometime later, Moab invaders show up during a funeral, and the mourners hastily place the dead man's body in the first empty tomb they find, which happens to be Elisha's tomb. When the dead man's body touches that of Elisha, the dead man comes to life and stands on his feet.
1. "Elijah has gone to heaven without dying; Elisha has kept giving Israel life after he has died."
 2. Some commentators have seen a parallel with this event and the previous section describing Israel's brief exile. Just as these mourners no doubt reluctantly threw the body into the wrong tomb, God reluctantly threw Israel into exile. Yet even in exile there was hope. If contact with the prophetic word of God was maintained through obedience to its teachings, then their death in exile could be followed by a resurrection. Their defeat could be followed by a victory.
- H.** In verse 22-23, we are told that Hazael continued to harass Israel, "but the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and regarded

them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence."

1. Under normal circumstances, Syria would have probably finished off Israel at this time. All of the pieces were in place for Syria to do now what Assyria eventually did later. But the end did not happen now. Instead, God remembered his covenant with Abraham and he spared Israel from destruction by the Syrians.
2. Verse 23 presents the promise to Abraham as analogous to the Davidic promise. God was unwilling to destroy Israel because of Abraham, and he was unwilling to destroy Judah because of David (and, no doubt, also because of Abraham).
 - I. Hazael dies in verse 24, and his son Ben-Hadad becomes king of Syria in his place. As prophesied by Elisha, Joash defeats Ban-Hadad three times and recaptures the cities of Israel that had been captured by the Syrians.
 - J. And so ends our study of the lives of Elijah and Elisha in First & Second Kings, two of the most intriguing characters in the Bible. But our study does not end here. Next week we will consider the role that Elijah plays in the New Testament.