

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Elisha

No 15

Limiting God's Blessing

Second Kings 13:14-25

There was a Joash, son of Ahaziah who was king of Judah at Jerusalem in the south, and also Joash, son of Jehoahaz who was king of Israel at Samaria in the north. To complicate things further 'Joash' is sometimes termed 'Jehoash.' See 2 Kings 13:8&9. If that is not enough, sometimes the story back tracks as it probably comprises various source documents. You will just have to sort it out for your self. It will make an interesting project. Our story has to do with Joash, son of Jehoahaz in the north. The Aramite king of Syria at this time was Ben Haddad III, son of Hazael, successor of Ben Haddad II with whom Elisha previously dealt. About 50 years have elapsed since then. We do not know what Elisha was doing during this time.

Precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of His Saints¹.

Death may seem to be a random event. However the Bible clearly states that it is an appointment², and one which cannot be avoided, except by prayer. For many, it is by means of illness, an illness unto death³

When that time comes, the Lord Himself will meet you and take you safely home⁴. For Elisha the event was somewhat reminiscent of that of his mentor Elijah who went to glory accompanied by a fire chariot Cp. 2 Kings 2:11&12 and 13:14 (the chariots of Israel being its armed defences.) Both Elijah and Elisha were concerned for the succession and legacy of their ministry, but their own welfare at death was in the care of their Lord and this was enough for them.

So it is with you, child of God. If you have put your hand upon the head of the sacrifice of Calvary, your Lord has you in His care. Until then He has all things in His control. Our obligation is to follow Him carefully and to walk in His way and in fellowship with Him.

Our God is for ever and ever. He will guide us unto death. Psalm 48:14.

The Appeal of the King. Joash was king in Israel at this time⁵ and demonstrates a high regard for Elisha and his ministry. He is mournful at his death-bed. It was more than a sad occasion. "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!⁶" should be seen as an appeal to the dying prophet to provide ongoing security for the kingdom in perilous times. Elisha placing his hand on that of the king was a symbol, meaning that Elisha, and thereby God, would be with him in his engagement of war. The arrow shot to the East was aimed at toward Aphek⁷, Syrian territory.

Joash the Half Hearted King.

"Strike the ground," and he struck it three times" v18.

Elisha was angry with him:

"You should have struck five or six times, then you would have struck Aram until you would have destroyed him, but now you shall strike Aram only three times" v19.

Do we find Elisha's response unreasonable? Remember we often have a condensed record, but as the Holy Spirit preserved Scripture for

our guidance, we accept Elisha's evaluation of the situation.

We see Joash's response then as a tentative and half hearted. After seeking Divine intervention and blessing in the face of a national crisis, why should he be so reluctant? Compare this with the response of Philip the evangelist:

The Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot.' And Philip ran ... Acts 8:29&30

When the Lord gives us His word we need to zealously comply.

Just as we know when people are reserved toward us, the Lord knows when we are half-hearted in our relationship with Him:

Judah did not turn to me with all her heart, but rather in deception, declares the Lord Jeremiah 3:11.

Moses commanded his people:

... to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul Deuteronomy 11:13.

Let us be quick to do the same.

Joash True to Type to the End. His story is found in 2 Kings 13:9-25 and 2 Chronicles 25:17-24. He sought the Lord for deliverance, but his heart's desire was not toward the

Lord, but he followed the wickedness of his forefathers 2 Kings 13:11. He was forced into war with Judah, but did not pursue it to the end.

Finishing the task. Paul's claimed:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith⁸

and unlike Moses who began reluctantly, failed occasionally and was replaced by Joshua to see the campaign to its end⁹. Service to the Lord calls for a good beginning, a good continuance and a good ending. Having put our hand to the plough, we dare not look back¹⁰, else our service to the Lord will be defective. If our lives are pliable, the clay marred in the hand of the potter can be returned to the wheel to be reformed¹¹, but once they are fired, damaged vessels are marred permanently and put aside, bypassed in future service¹². It need not be like this¹³.

Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him and He will do it

Endnotes: **1.** Psalm 116:15AV. **2.** Hebrews 9:27, Ecclesiastes 3:2. **3.** 2 Kings 20:1. **4.** John 14:2, Acts 7:56. **5.** Joash began to reign about 839BC, About 50 years have passed since the time of our previous studies, and we know nothing of Elisha's activities in this period. The Syrian king, Ben Haddad referred to in this chapter is Ben Haddad III who was taking control after Hazael, the Syrian successor and murderer of Ben Haddad II, the king who besieged Samaria. **6.** More literally "the chariot (singular) of Israel and its horseman (plural)," suggest the chariot as the king's command post in battle, and the horsemen its leading warriors. **7.** This Aphek was in Israel's territory in Bashan, across Galilee but occupied by the Syrians See 1 Kings 20:26-34 then 2 Kings 10:32&33. **8.** 2 Timothy 4:7. **9.** Joshua 1:1&2. **10.** Luke 9:62. **11.** Jeremiah 18:2-4. **12.** 1 Corinthians 9:27 **13.** But see 2 Timothy 2:15-26. Bible quotations in this study are from the NASB, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Welcome Glen Park Gospel Church
Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

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