

2 Kings 8

Written by K B Napier

Friday, 09 September 2016 14:06

We continue to see how God helps the righteous. In this case, Elisha. He was the second most powerful man in Israel, because he spoke the word of God. In their right minds kings listened. But, when they did not, bad things happened.

The same thing happens in our own day. When Christians listen and obey, godly things happen. But, when they fail, align with evil, or go their own way, the opposite occurs. Then, they wonder why this or that has happened to them! God wants only the best for us and he will reward true righteousness. There are times when He will allow, or evens end, bad things, but only so that we will come through them and be even greater in our faith. As believers, unlike unbelievers, we have a choice to do good or evil. Which are you living in today?

Verses 1&2

1.

Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.

2.

And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

The woman who made a shelter for Elisha was approached by him. He warned her to go away from the country with her family and to find a temporary home somewhere else, because God told him there was to be a seven-year famine. She listened to his warning and escaped the torture of starving to death.

Those who utter God's warnings are often ignored nowadays, by self-assertive Christians who always think they know better. They ignore warnings and biblical teaching if it dares to cross their own vain ideas and beliefs, and argue their case. And they think that their knowledge is better than the knowledge of God's appointed pastors and teachers. Then, later, they suffer, either by losing what they have, or by persuading themselves they are right. Their spiritual sharp-edges are made blunt and so their godliness becomes no more than an outward

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acknowledgement. God speaks through His chosen men – will you listen?

Verses 3&4

1.

And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.

2.

And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.

When the seven year famine was finished, the woman returned to her own land from her stay in Philistia. Immediately, she went to see the king, for her house and land to be returned to her. In return the king asked Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, to tell him all the wondrous things Elisha had done. (It is possible that Gehazi was not with Elisha for some years, for 2 Kings refers to him differently at times). For the king, this was just a reminder, not a new revelation, for all Israel knew of Elisha's miracles.

Verses 5&6

1.

And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.

2.

And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

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Gehazi faithfully repeated the glorious things Elisha had done, in particular bringing this woman's son to life. The king checked with the woman and when she confirmed what Gehazi had said, he called for one of his officers (probably an administrator), and told him to give back to the woman everything that belonged to her, plus all the income from her fields for the past seven years. The woman evidently knew the right person – Elisha! How many Christians lean on God's servants to obtain something in life? How many rely on their godly counsel? Very few; most are too proud.

It seems odd that the king spoke to Gehazi, when it did not appear to be related to this woman's request. My assumption is that the king might have remembered the raising of the dead son, but wanted Gehazi to remind him of the details.

Verses 7-14

1.

And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.

2.

And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

3.

So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

4.

And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.

5.

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

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6.

And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

7.

And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

8.

So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldest surely recover.

9.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

At some time afterwards, Elisha visited the capital of Syria, Damascus, 130 miles north-east of Jerusalem. As we have seen, small battles between Syria and Israel were regular events and, in between wars, Elisha travelled where he wished. On this occasion, the king of Syria, Benhadad, was ill with leprosy. As he lay sick, someone told him that Elisha was in the city, with the obvious hope that he could restore the king to health.

The king called for Hazael and told him to take presents to Elisha, and to ask him to say whether or not he would survive the illness. The presents were indeed lavish – forty camel's carrying huge sacks of luxury goods. Hazael found Elisha and offered him the presents, asking if the king would survive.

Elisha's response was veiled in mystery. He told Hazael to say that he would get better, but that he would nevertheless die. Elisha looked deeply into Hazael's eyes and then, feeling sorely disappointed by what he saw, he cried bitterly.

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Hazael was puzzled and asked Elisha why he was crying. Elisha had been given a vision of the future, in which Hazael would commit evil against the people of Israel and their fortresses, which he would burn to the ground. He would kill the young men and children, and would even cut open the bellies of pregnant women and pull out the unborn babies to massacre them.

At that time, Hazael did not seem to understand his own heart, and he protested to Elisha – asking him if he thought Hazael was a wicked dog. Elisha did not answer that query, instead simply telling him that he was to be king. God knows the future more than any man's mind and heart!

Hazael went to the king and repeated the message – yes, he would recover. But, he failed to tell him he would then die. The next day, Hazael got hold of a thick cloth soaked in water, and placed it on the king's face, causing him to suffocate. And so Hazael reigned as king in his stead. Elisha was shown Hazael's wickedness – and the same wickedness stayed with him during his reign. Very often I see evil overtaking someone, or a movement, but say nothing, because they would not listen. But, it occurs anyway, showing God's knowledge to be supreme. I urge all Christians to listen to their pastors and preachers if they are resolute and godly. Such is wisdom, possibly saving from much heartache or failure. (Interestingly, I have urged this several times lately – there must be a godly reason yet to unfold).

Verses 16-24

1.

And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.

2.

Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

3.

And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

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4.

Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him always a light, and to his children.

5.

In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.

6.

So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents.

7.

Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time.

8.

And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

9.

And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Joram, son of Ahab, had reigned for five years; Jehoram took his father's place when he died. Jehoram was 32 years old and reigned in Jerusalem for eight years. Sadly, Jehoram lived as did king Ahab of Israel (who was his father-in-law), in sinful disobedience to God. So, he did evil in God's eyes instead of following his natural father. Even so, God refused to obliterate him, because of His regard for David and his house.

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When he was king, the vassal land of Edom revolted against Judah, electing their own king. Joram, the new king of Israel, decided to take sides and attacked Edom at one of its cities, Zair, at night, winning the battle. But, Edom continued its revolt for many years. Taking notice of the activity, the Canaanite kingdom of Libnah also revolted. (It was earlier captured by Joshua, made a Levitical city, and given to Judah). Scripture does not spend more time on the matter, but gives more details in Chronicles. Joram died and was buried in Jerusalem. Ahaziah his son then reigned.

Verses 25-29

1.

In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign.

2.

Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.

3.

And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab.

4.

And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramothgilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram.

5.

And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

When Joram had ruled Israel for 12 years, Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, began to rule Judah. He was 22 years old, but only reigned for one year. As with so many other rulers, his mother was

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evil, being daughter of the wicked Omri. This young king followed the wickedness of Ahab and was just as evil, leading the people into sin.

He joined forces with the king of Israel against Hazael of Syria, to take back Ramoth-Gilead. In the fight, Joram received wounds and returned to Jezreel to be treated and to rest. When he had finished fighting, Ahaziah travelled to Jezreel to see if the Israelite king was improved.

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