

WEEK 40.

2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Jonah, Isaiah, Amos, (Elisha, Jonah, Isaiah, Amos)

Sunday ([2 Kings 5–8](#))

Elisha Heals a Syrian General

5:1 Now Naaman, the commander of the king of Syria's army, was esteemed and respected by his master, for through him the Lord had given Syria military victories. But this great warrior had a skin disease. 5:2 Raiding parties went out from Syria and took captive from the land of Israel a young girl, who became a servant to Naaman's wife. 5:3 She told her mistress, "If only my master were in the presence of the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his skin disease."

5:4 Naaman went and told his master what the girl from the land of Israel had said. 5:5 The king of Syria said, "Go! I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten suits of clothes. 5:6 He brought the letter to king of Israel. It read: "This is a letter of introduction for my servant Naaman, whom I have sent to be cured of his skin disease." 5:7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill or restore life? Why does he ask me to cure a man of his skin disease? Certainly you must see that he is looking for an excuse to fight me!"

5:8 When Elisha the prophet heard that the king had torn his clothes, he sent this message to the king, "Why did you tear your clothes? Send him to me so he may know there is a prophet in Israel." 5:9 So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood in the doorway of Elisha's house. 5:10 Elisha sent out a messenger who told him, "Go and wash seven times in the Jordan; your skin will be restored and you will be healed." 5:11 Naaman went away angry. He said, "Look, I thought for sure he would come out, stand there, invoke the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the area, and cure the skin disease. 5:12 The rivers of Damascus, the Abana and Pharpar, are better than any of the waters of Israel! Could I not wash in them and be healed?" So he turned around and went away angry. 5:13 His servants approached and said to him, "O master, if the prophet had told you to do some difficult task, you would have been willing to do it. It seems you should be happy that he simply said, "Wash and you will be healed." 5:14 So he went down and dipped in the Jordan seven times, as the prophet had instructed. His skin became as smooth as a young child's and he was healed.

5:15 He and his entire entourage returned to the prophet. Naaman came and stood before him. He said, "For sure I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel! Now, please accept a gift

from your servant.” 5:16 But Elisha replied, “As certainly as the Lord lives (whom I serve), I will take nothing from you.” Naaman insisted that he take it, but he refused. 5:17 Naaman said, “If not, then please give your servant a load of dirt, enough for a pair of mules to carry, for your servant will never again offer a burnt offering or sacrifice to a god other than the Lord. 5:18 May the Lord forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to worship, and he leans on my arm and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord forgive your servant for this.” 5:19 Elisha said to him, “Go in peace.”

When he had gone a short distance, 5:20 Gehazi, the prophet Elisha’s servant, thought, “Look, my master did not accept what this Syrian Naaman offered him. As certainly as the Lord lives, I will run after him and accept something from him.” 5:21 So Gehazi ran after Naaman. When Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from his chariot to meet him and asked, “Is everything all right?” 5:22 He answered, “Everything is fine. My master sent me with this message, ‘Look, two servants of the prophets just arrived from the Ephraimite hill country. Please give them a talent of silver and two suits of clothes.’” 5:23 Naaman said, “Please accept two talents of silver. He insisted, and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, along with two suits of clothes. He gave them to two of his servants and they carried them for Gehazi. 5:24 When he arrived at the hill, he took them from the servants and put them in the house. Then he sent the men on their way.

5:25 When he came and stood before his master, Elisha asked him, “Where have you been, Gehazi?” He answered, “Your servant hasn’t been anywhere.” 5:26 Elisha replied, “I was there in spirit when a man turned and got down from his chariot to meet you. This is not the proper time to accept silver or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, sheep, cattle, and male and female servants. 5:27 Therefore Naaman’s skin disease will afflict you and your descendants forever!” When Gehazi went out from his presence, his skin was as white as snow.

Elisha Makes an Ax Head Float

6:1 Some of the prophets said to Elisha, “Look, the place where we meet with you is too cramped for us. 6:2 Let’s go to the Jordan. Each of us will get a log from there and we will build a meeting place for ourselves there.” He said, “Go.” 6:3 One of them said, “Please come along with your servants.” He replied, “All right, I’ll come.” 6:4 So he went with them. When they arrived at the Jordan, they started cutting down trees. 6:5 As one of them was felling a log, the ax head dropped into the water. He shouted, “Oh no, my master! It was borrowed!” 6:6 The prophet asked, “Where did it drop in?” When he showed him the spot, Elisha cut off a branch, threw it in at that spot, and made the ax head float. 6:7 He said, “Lift it out.” So he reached out his hand and grabbed it.

Elisha Defeats an Army

6:8 Now the king of Syria was at war with Israel. He consulted his advisers, who said, "Invade at such and such a place." 6:9 But the prophet sent this message to the king of Israel, "Make sure you don't pass through this place because Syria is invading there." 6:10 So the king of Israel sent a message to the place the prophet had pointed out, warning it to be on its guard. This happened on several occasions. 6:11 This made the king of Syria upset. So he summoned his advisers and said to them, "One of us must be helping the king of Israel." 6:12 One of his advisers said, "No, my master, O king. The prophet Elisha who lives in Israel keeps telling the king of Israel the things you say in your bedroom." 6:13 The king ordered, "Go, find out where he is, so I can send some men to capture him." The king was told, "He is in Dothan." 6:14 So he sent horses and chariots there, along with a good-sized army. They arrived during the night and surrounded the city.

6:15 The prophet's attendant got up early in the morning. When he went outside there was an army surrounding the city, along with horses and chariots. He said to Elisha, "Oh no, my master! What will we do?" 6:16 He replied, "Don't be afraid, for our side outnumbers them." 6:17 Then Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he can see." The Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw that the hill was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 6:18 As they approached him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, "Strike these people with blindness." The Lord struck them with blindness as Elisha requested. 6:19 Then Elisha said to them, "This is not the right road or city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you're looking for." He led them to Samaria.

6:20 When they had entered Samaria, Elisha said, "O Lord, open their eyes, so they can see." The Lord opened their eyes and they saw that they were in the middle of Samaria. 6:21 When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, "Should I strike them down, my master?" 6:22 He replied, "Do not strike them down! You did not capture them with your sword or bow, so what gives you the right to strike them down? Give them some food and water, so they can eat and drink and then go back to their master." 6:23 So he threw a big banquet for them and they ate and drank. Then he sent them back to their master. After that no Syrian raiding parties again invaded the land of Israel.

The Lord Saves Samaria

6:24 Later King Ben Hadad of Syria assembled his entire army and attacked and besieged Samaria. 6:25 Samaria's food supply ran out. They laid siege to it so long that a donkey's head was selling for eighty shekels of silver and a quarter of a kab of dove's droppings for five shekels of silver.

6:26 While the king of Israel was passing by on the city wall, a woman shouted to him, "Help us, my master, O king!" 6:27 He replied, "No, let the Lord help you. How can I help you? The threshing floor and winepress are empty." 6:28 Then the king asked her, "What's your problem?" She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Hand over your son; we'll eat him today and then eat my son tomorrow.' 6:29 So we boiled my son and ate him. Then I said to her the next day, 'Hand over your son and we'll eat him.' But she hid her son!" 6:30 When the king heard what the woman said, he tore his clothes. As he was

passing by on the wall, the people could see he was wearing sackcloth under his clothes. 6:31 Then he said, "May God judge me severely if Elisha son of Shaphat still has his head by the end of the day!"

6:32 Now Elisha was sitting in his house with the community leaders. The king sent a messenger on ahead, but before he arrived, Elisha said to the leaders, "Do you realize this assassin intends to cut off my head?" Look, when the messenger arrives, shut the door and lean against it. His master will certainly be right behind him." 6:33 He was still talking to them when the messenger approached and said, "Look, the Lord is responsible for this disaster! Why should I continue to wait for the Lord to help?"

7:1 Elisha replied, "Hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Lord says, 'About this time tomorrow a seah of finely milled flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria.'" 7:2 An officer who was the king's right-hand man responded to the prophet, "Look, even if the Lord made it rain by opening holes in the sky, could this happen so soon?" Elisha said, "Look, you will see it happen with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of the food!"

7:3 Now four men with a skin disease were sitting at the entrance of the city gate. They said to one another, "Why are we just sitting here waiting to die? 7:4 If we go into the city, we'll die of starvation, and if we stay here we'll die! So come on, let's defect to the Syrian camp! If they spare us, we'll live; if they kill us – well, we were going to die anyway." 7:5 So they started toward the Syrian camp at dusk. When they reached the edge of the Syrian camp, there was no one there. 7:6 The Lord had caused the Syrian camp to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a large army. Then they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has paid the kings of the Hittites and Egypt to attack us!" 7:7 So they got up and fled at dusk, leaving behind their tents, horses, and donkeys. They left the camp as it was and ran for their lives. 7:8 When the men with a skin disease reached the edge of the camp, they entered a tent and had a meal. They also took some silver, gold, and clothes and went and hid it all. Then they went back and entered another tent. They looted it and went and hid what they had taken. 7:9 Then they said to one another, "It's not right what we're doing! This is a day to celebrate, but we haven't told anyone. If we wait until dawn, we'll be punished. So come on, let's go and inform the royal palace." 7:10 So they went and called out to the gatekeepers of the city. They told them, "We entered the Syrian camp and there was no one there. We didn't even hear a man's voice. But the horses and donkeys are still tied up, and the tents remain up." 7:11 The gatekeepers relayed the news to the royal palace.

7:12 The king got up in the night and said to his advisers, "I will tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know we are starving, so they left the camp and hid in the field, thinking, 'When they come out of the city, we will capture them alive and enter the city.'" 7:13 One of his advisers replied, "Pick some men and have them take five of the horses that are left in the city. (Even if they are killed, their fate will be no different than that of all the Israelite people – we're all going to die!) Let's send them out so we can know for sure what's going on." 7:14 So they picked two horsemen and the king sent them

out to track the Syrian army. He ordered them, "Go and find out what's going on." 7:15 So they tracked them as far as the Jordan. The road was filled with clothes and equipment that the Syrians had discarded in their haste. The scouts went back and told the king. 7:16 Then the people went out and looted the Syrian camp. A seah of finely milled flour sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, just as the Lord had said they would.

7:17 Now the king had placed the officer who was his right-hand man at the city gate. When the people rushed out, they trampled him to death in the gate. This fulfilled the prophet's word which he had spoken when the king tried to arrest him. 7:18 The prophet told the king, "Two seahs of barley will sell for a shekel, and a seah of finely milled flour for a shekel; this will happen about this time tomorrow in the gate of Samaria." 7:19 But the officer replied to the prophet, "Look, even if the Lord made it rain by opening holes in the sky, could this happen so soon?" Elisha said, "Look, you will see it happen with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of the food!" 7:20 This is exactly what happened to him. The people trampled him to death in the city gate.

Elisha Again Helps the Shunammite Woman

8:1 Now Elisha advised the woman whose son he had brought back to life, "You and your family should go and live somewhere else for a while, for the Lord has decreed that a famine will overtake the land for seven years." 8:2 So the woman did as the prophet said. She and her family went and lived in the land of the Philistines for seven years. 8:3 After seven years the woman returned from the land of the Philistines and went to ask the king to give her back her house and field. 8:4 Now the king was talking to Gehazi, the prophet's servant, and said, "Tell me all the great things which Elisha has done." 8:5 While Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had brought the dead back to life, the woman whose son he had brought back to life came to ask the king for her house and field. Gehazi said, "My master, O king, this is the very woman and this is her son whom Elisha brought back to life!" 8:6 The king asked the woman about it, and she gave him the details. The king assigned a eunuch to take care of her request and ordered him, "Give her back everything she owns, as well as the amount of crops her field produced from the day she left the land until now."

Elisha Meets with Hazael

8:7 Elisha traveled to Damascus while King Ben Hadad of Syria was sick. The king was told, "The prophet has come here." 8:8 So the king told Hazael, "Take a gift and go visit the prophet. Request from him an oracle from the Lord. Ask him, 'Will I recover from this sickness?'" 8:9 So Hazael went to visit Elisha. He took along a gift, as well as forty camel loads of all the fine things of Damascus. When he arrived, he stood before him and said, "Your son, King Ben Hadad of Syria, has sent me to you with this question, 'Will I recover from this sickness?'" 8:10 Elisha said to him, "Go and tell him, 'You will surely recover,' but the Lord has revealed to me that he will surely die." 8:11 Elisha just stared at him until Hazael became uncomfortable. Then the prophet started crying. 8:12 Hazael asked, "Why are you

crying, my master?" He replied, "Because I know the trouble you will cause the Israelites. You will set fire to their fortresses, kill their young men with the sword, smash their children to bits, and rip open their pregnant women." 8:13 Hazael said, "How could your servant, who is as insignificant as a dog, accomplish this great military victory?" Elisha answered, "The Lord has revealed to me that you will be the king of Syria." 8:14 He left Elisha and went to his master. Ben Hadad asked him, "What did Elisha tell you?" Hazael replied, "He told me you would surely recover." 8:15 The next day Hazael took a piece of cloth, dipped it in water, and spread it over Ben Hadad's face until he died. Then Hazael replaced him as king.

Jehoram's Reign over Judah

8:16 In the fifth year of the reign of Israel's King Joram, son of Ahab, Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram became king over Judah. 8:17 He was thirty-two years old when he became king and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem. 8:18 He followed in the footsteps of the kings of Israel, just as Ahab's dynasty had done, for he married Ahab's daughter. He did evil in the sight of the Lord. 8:19 But the Lord was unwilling to destroy Judah. He preserved Judah for the sake of his servant David to whom he had promised a perpetual dynasty.

8:20 During his reign Edom freed themselves from Judah's control and set up their own king. 8:21 Joram crossed over to Zair with all his chariots. The Edomites, who had surrounded him, attacked at night and defeated him and his chariot officers. The Israelite army retreated to their homeland. 8:22 So Edom has remained free from Judah's control to this very day. At that same time Libnah also rebelled.

8:23 The rest of the events of Joram's reign, including a record of his accomplishments, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah. 8:24 Joram passed away and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David. His son Ahaziah replaced him as king.

Ahaziah Takes the Throne of Judah

8:25 In the twelfth year of the reign of Israel's King Joram, son of Ahab, Jehoram's son Ahaziah became king over Judah. 8:26 Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king and he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother was Athaliah, the granddaughter of King Omri of Israel. 8:27 He followed in the footsteps of Ahab's dynasty and did evil in the sight of the Lord, like Ahab's dynasty, for he was related to Ahab's family.

8:28 He joined Ahab's son Joram in a battle against King Hazael of Syria at Ramoth Gilead in which the Syrians defeated Joram. 8:29 King Joram returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds he received from the Syrians in Ramah when he fought against King Hazael of Syria. King Ahaziah son of Jehoram of Judah went down to visit Joram son of Ahab in Jezreel, for he was ill.

PRAYER

Lord, You grant blessings on Your terms and in Your time, and You often do so through Your human servants. May I never be confused that Your gifts, poured out through me, are for my direct or indirect (financial or other) benefit. Being used as Your instrument of blessing is more than enough. Your power is greater than that of armies, and those who refuse to trust You are doomed to miss out on Your blessings. May I never doubt that You are the omnipotent God and never question anything that You say. Your knowledge is perfect, and though You know the evil men plan in their hearts, Your perfect timing means that sometimes You respond and sometimes not. May I never question Your perfect knowledge and wisdom even when I do not like or understand what is happening.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Naaman, a Syrian general, had a skin disease and a captured Israelite servant girl told his wife that he could be healed by a prophet who lived in Samaria.

Naaman told the king who wrote a letter to the king of Israel and Naaman headed off along with valuable gifts. When he presented the simple letter to the king of Israel, which only said here is Naaman for you to cure of his skin disease, the king tore his clothes in the expectation that Syria was picking a fight.

Elisha heard that the king of Israel was in mourning over the letter and sent word to have Naaman sent to him. When Naaman arrived, expecting a formal and official welcome, Elisha sent a messenger to him to dip in the Jordan River seven times and he'd be cured.

Naaman was angered at the apparent disrespect and dismissed the instructions but when he turned away in anger to return home his servants persuaded him to reconsider. They argued that if the prophet had challenged him to a more onerous process he'd have complied so why not give it a try? Naaman did so and was healed.

When Naaman returned to the prophet's home, testifying that there was no God but the God of Israel, and he offered the gifts he had brought but Elisha refused them. Naaman asked to take a load of dirt home so he could only make offerings to the God of Israel. He also asked for forgiveness that the king of Syria would require his company when he went to worship their false god and Elisha told him to go in peace.

One of Elisha's students was upset that Elisha refused the gifts and snuck out to catch Naaman to lie and say that Elisha had changed his mind. Naaman gladly consented, giving him more than he requested, but when Elisha confronted him the skin disease of Naaman became the punishment for Gehazi's offense.

The student prophets asked to build a larger meeting place and Elisha agreed. When they began felling trees one of the ax heads fell into the water. The prophet informed Elisha that it was a borrowed tool and pointed to where it fell. Elisha tossed a branch in that location and the ax head floated to the surface where it was retrieved.

Syria was at war with Israel but every time they planned a place of ambush or attack Elisha warned the king of Israel. At first the Syrians thought they had a traitor but their spies explained that it was Elisha. The Syrians sent an army to capture him but the Lord God provided an army of horses and chariots of fire to protect Elisha then blinded the Syrians at Elisha's request. He then led them, unknown to them, to Samaria where the King of Israel waited.

The King of Israel wanted to kill them but Elisha reminded him that he had nothing to do their capture so he had nothing to say about their treatment. Elisha instead instructed that they be given water and a feast and sent home. They did so and after they returned to Syria no raiding parties were sent for a long time.

King Ben Hadad of Syria some time later laid siege to Samaria for so long that the people were so desperate for food that some actually killed and ate a child. The king was angry and blamed Elisha and set out to kill him.

When the king's messenger arrived Elisha informed him that the people would be feasting the next day, but a military man who overheard expressed his doubt because there were no crops to grow nor animals to slaughter – so Elisha repeated the prophesy but added that the doubting soldier would not participate in the feast.

Four men who were ceremonially unclean from a skin disease were starving outside the city gates and decided to defect to the Syrians in hopes of food – they knew they would die of starvation so if the Syrians killed them they'd be no worse off.

When they arrived in the Syrian camp they found it abandoned. The Lord God had caused them to hear the sound of chariots and they thought the Samaritans had hired Egyptians and Hittites to attack them. There was food enough for an army, so they ate, then decided to tell the others.

The king sent two horsemen to check on the Syrians and they found nothing but discarded supplies as the Syrians fled in terror. The people stormed out of through the city gate, trampling to death the soldier who had doubted Elisha, thus fulfilling the prophesy of abundant food and nothing for him.

Elisha warned the Shunnamite woman to take her son to another region as a famine was coming. She went to the land of the Philistines and when she returned she petitioned the king for the return of her property. Elisha's assistant, Gehazi, was just-then telling the king of Elisha's expressions of God's

power – including the story of bringing the Shunnamite woman’s son back to life – so the king inquired then hearing her story returned her property and all that her property had produced while she was gone.

Elisha traveled to Damascus, in Syria, when the king was ill. The king requested an oracle from a prophet and his assistant found Elisha. Hazael learned that the king would survive the illness but would still die.

Elisha stared at Hazael then cried as the Lord God revealed to him the horrors he would visit upon the Israeli people, Hazael didn’t understand until Elisha told him he would be come king. Hazael gave the king the news of his recovery then smothered him to death in his sick bed and took over as king of Syria.

Jehoshaphat’s son Jehoram became king over Judah but he married Ahab’s daughter and did evil like Ahab and the other kings of Judah. The Edomites rebelled and when Joram, king of Israel, went to challenge them he was overwhelmingly defeated.

Jehoram’s son Ahaziah became king of Judah but was a descendant of Ahab and sinned against God. He joined Joram in attacking King Hazael of Syria but things went badly and Joram was injured, so Jehoram went to see him in Jezreel.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Naaman was apparently an intelligent, teachable, man. He listened to his wife’s servant girl, then to his other servants. Rather than consult Elisha, and ask for the Lord God’s intervention, the king of Samaria doubted God and blamed Elisha. The Lord God continued to use Elisha to bless the faithfulness of the Shunnamite widow and her son.

DISCUSS

Why would Elisha’s student have imagined Elisha would not uncover his foolish actions? Why would the kings have attacked Syria without first consulting Elisha?

REFLECT

The Lord God used many people to teach Naaman and the enemy tried to interfere, via the king of Syria's careless letter, and Elisha's selfish student. The Syrians, who worshiped false gods, were used by the Lord God to provide for the Samaritans. Elisha, through God, knew what Hazael would do but he was not empowered by God to stop him as the people of Israel and Judah were constantly rebellious.

SHARE

When have you been blessed because you were teachable? When have you experienced or observed a situation where the Lord God was either not consulted or doubted and then blamed for bad circumstances? When have you experienced or observed the Lord God returning to bless again someone whom He had previously blessed?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place in your life where you have resisted His leading, to reveal to you a place in your life where He has blessed you through someone whose intent was to be your enemy, or where He is in the process of doing so, and/or to reveal to you a place where you have set-off on a course of action without pausing to consult and patiently wait on God's leadership.

ACT

Today I will accept the challenge of the Holy Spirit to trust Him and be led to where He desires to bless me with healing. I will ask a fellow believer to pray in-agreement that I will hear rightly, obey completely, and not turn back until the Lord's work in me is complete. I will praise the Lord for His amazing provision, be it past or present, and I will testify to His faithfulness to a fellow believer as an encouragement to them. I will stop what I am doing and consult the Lord God via prayer and searching His Word. I will also ask a fellow believer to pray in-agreement that I recognize the leadership of the Lord for my life.

Be Specific _____

Monday ([2 Kings 9-13](#))

Jehu Becomes King

9:1 Now Elisha the prophet summoned a member of the prophetic guild and told him, "Tuck your robes into your belt, take this container of olive oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead. 9:2 When you arrive there, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi and take him aside into an inner room. 9:3 Take the container of olive oil, pour it over his head, and say, "This is what the Lord says, "I have designated you as king over Israel." Then open the door and run away quickly!"

9:4 So the young prophet went to Ramoth Gilead. 9:5 When he arrived, the officers of the army were sitting there. So he said, "I have a message for you, O officer." Jehu asked, "For which one of us?" He replied, "For you, O officer." 9:6 So Jehu got up and went inside. Then the prophet poured the olive oil on his head and said to him, "This is what the Lord God of Israel says, 'I have designated you as king

over the Lord's people Israel. 9:7 You will destroy the family of your master Ahab. I will get revenge against Jezebel for the shed blood of my servants the prophets and for the shed blood of all the Lord's servants. 9:8 Ahab's entire family will die. I will cut off every last male belonging to Ahab in Israel, including even the weak and incapacitated. 9:9 I will make Ahab's dynasty like those of Jeroboam son of Nebat and Baasha son of Ahijah. 9:10 Dogs will devour Jezebel on the plot of ground in Jezreel; she will not be buried." Then he opened the door and ran away.

9:11 When Jehu rejoined his master's servants, they asked him, "Is everything all right? Why did this madman visit you?" He replied, "Ah, it's not important. You know what kind of man he is and the kinds of things he says." 9:12 But they said, "You're lying! Tell us what he said." So he told them what he had said. He also related how he had said, "This is what the Lord says, 'I have designated you as king over Israel.'" 9:13 Each of them quickly took off his cloak and they spread them out at Jehu's feet on the steps. The trumpet was blown and they shouted, "Jehu is king!" 9:14 Then Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi conspired against Joram.

Jehu the Assassin

Now Joram had been in Ramoth Gilead with the whole Israelite army, guarding against an invasion by King Hazael of Syria. 9:15 But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds he received from the Syrians when he fought against King Hazael of Syria. Jehu told his supporters, "If you really want me to be king, then don't let anyone escape from the city to go and warn Jezreel." 9:16 Jehu drove his chariot to Jezreel, for Joram was recuperating there. (Now King Ahaziah of Judah had come down to visit Joram.)

9:17 Now the watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel and saw Jehu's troops approaching. He said, "I see troops!" Jehoram ordered, "Send a rider out to meet them and have him ask, 'Is everything all right?'" 9:18 So the horseman went to meet him and said, "This is what the king says, 'Is everything all right?'" Jehu replied, "None of your business! Follow me." The watchman reported, "The messenger reached them, but hasn't started back." 9:19 So he sent a second horseman out to them and he said, "This is what the king says, 'Is everything all right?'" Jehu replied, "None of your business! Follow me." 9:20 The watchman reported, "He reached them, but hasn't started back. The one who drives the lead chariot drives like Jehu son of Nimshi; he drives recklessly." 9:21 Jehoram ordered, "Hitch up my chariot." When his chariot had been hitched up, King Jehoram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah went out in their respective chariots to meet Jehu. They met up with him in the plot of land that had once belonged to Naboth of Jezreel.

9:22 When Jehoram saw Jehu, he asked, "Is everything all right, Jehu?" He replied, "How can everything be all right as long as your mother Jezebel promotes idolatry and pagan practices?" 9:23 Jehoram turned his chariot around and took off. He said to Ahaziah, "It's a trap, Ahaziah!" 9:24 Jehu aimed his bow and shot an arrow right between Jehoram's shoulders. The arrow went through his heart and he

fell to his knees in his chariot. 9:25 Jehu ordered his officer Bidkar, "Pick him up and throw him into the part of the field that once belonged to Naboth of Jezreel. Remember, you and I were riding together behind his father Ahab, when the Lord pronounced this judgment on him, 9:26 "Know for sure that I saw the shed blood of Naboth and his sons yesterday," says the Lord, "and that I will give you what you deserve right here in this plot of land," says the Lord.' So now pick him up and throw him into this plot of land, just as the Lord said."

9:27 When King Ahaziah of Judah saw what happened, he took off up the road to Beth Haggan. Jehu chased him and ordered, "Shoot him too." They shot him while he was driving his chariot up the ascent of Gur near Ibleam. He fled to Megiddo and died there. 9:28 His servants took his body back to Jerusalem and buried him in his tomb with his ancestors in the city of David. 9:29 Ahaziah had become king over Judah in the eleventh year of Joram son of Ahab.

9:30 Jehu approached Jezreel. When Jezebel heard the news, she put on some eye liner, fixed up her hair, and leaned out the window. 9:31 When Jehu came through the gate, she said, "Is everything all right, Zimri, murderer of his master?" 9:32 He looked up at the window and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. 9:33 He said, "Throw her down!" So they threw her down, and when she hit the ground, her blood splattered against the wall and the horses, and Jehu drove his chariot over her. 9:34 He went inside and had a meal. Then he said, "Dispose of this accursed woman's corpse. Bury her, for after all, she was a king's daughter." 9:35 But when they went to bury her, they found nothing left but the skull, feet, and palms of the hands. 9:36 When they went back and told him, he said, "The Lord's word through his servant, Elijah the Tishbite, has come to pass. He warned, 'In the plot of land at Jezreel, dogs will devour Jezebel's flesh. 9:37 Jezebel's corpse will be like manure on the surface of the ground in the plot of land at Jezreel. People will not be able to even recognize her.'"

Jehu Wipes Out Ahab's Family

10:1 Ahab had seventy sons living in Samaria. So Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria to the leading officials of Jezreel and to the guardians of Ahab's dynasty. This is what the letters said, 10:2 "You have with you the sons of your master, chariots and horses, a fortified city, and weapons. So when this letter arrives, 10:3 pick the best and most capable of your master's sons, place him on his father's throne, and defend your master's dynasty."

10:4 They were absolutely terrified and said, "Look, two kings could not stop him! How can we?" 10:5 So the palace supervisor, the city commissioner, the leaders, and the guardians sent this message to Jehu, "We are your subjects! Whatever you say, we will do. We will not make anyone king. Do what you consider proper."

10:6 He wrote them a second letter, saying, "If you are really on my side and are willing to obey me, then take the heads of your master's sons and come to me in Jezreel at this time tomorrow." Now the king had seventy sons, and the prominent men of the city were raising them. 10:7 When they received the letter, they seized the king's sons and executed all seventy of them. They put their heads in baskets and sent them to him in Jezreel. 10:8 The messenger came and told Jehu, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons." Jehu said, "Stack them in two piles at the entrance of the city gate until morning." 10:9 In the morning he went out and stood there. Then he said to all the people, "You are innocent. I conspired against my master and killed him. But who struck down all of these men? 10:10 Therefore take note that not one of the judgments the Lord announced against Ahab's dynasty has failed to materialize. The Lord had done what he announced through his servant Elijah." 10:11 Then Jehu killed all who were left of Ahab's family in Jezreel, and all his nobles, close friends, and priests. He left no survivors.

10:12 Jehu then left there and set out for Samaria. While he was traveling through Beth Eked of the Shepherds, 10:13 Jehu encountered the relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah. He asked, "Who are you?" They replied, "We are Ahaziah's relatives. We have come down to see how the king's sons and the queen mother's sons are doing." 10:14 He said, "Capture them alive!" So they captured them alive and then executed all forty-two of them in the cistern at Beth Eked. He left no survivors.

10:15 When he left there, he met Jehonadab, son of Rekab, who had been looking for him. Jehu greeted him and asked, "Are you as committed to me as I am to you?" Jehonadab answered, "I am!" Jehu replied, "If so, give me your hand." So he offered his hand and Jehu pulled him up into the chariot. 10:16 Jehu said, "Come with me and see how zealous I am for the Lord's cause." So he took him along in his chariot. 10:17 He went to Samaria and exterminated all the members of Ahab's family who were still alive in Samaria, just as the Lord had announced to Elijah.

Jehu Executes the Prophets and Priests of Baal

10:18 Jehu assembled all the people and said to them, "Ahab worshiped Baal a little; Jehu will worship him with great devotion. 10:19 So now, bring to me all the prophets of Baal, as well as all his servants and priests. None of them must be absent, for I am offering a great sacrifice to Baal. Any of them who fail to appear will lose their lives." But Jehu was tricking them so he could destroy the servants of Baal. 10:20 Then Jehu ordered, "Make arrangements for a celebration for Baal." So they announced it. 10:21 Jehu sent invitations throughout Israel, and all the servants of Baal came; not one was absent. They arrived at the temple of Baal and filled it up from end to end. 10:22 Jehu ordered the one who was in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out robes for all the servants of Baal." So he brought out robes for them. 10:23 Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Rekab went to the temple of Baal. Jehu said to the servants of Baal, "Make sure there are no servants of the Lord here with you; there must be only servants of Baal." 10:24 They went inside to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had

stationed eighty men outside. He had told them, "If any of the men inside get away, you will pay with your lives!"

10:25 When he finished offering the burnt sacrifice, Jehu ordered the royal guard and officers, "Come in and strike them down! Don't let any escape!" So the royal guard and officers struck them down with the sword and left their bodies lying there. Then they entered the inner sanctuary of the temple of Baal. 10:26 They hauled out the sacred pillar of the temple of Baal and burned it. 10:27 They demolished the sacred pillar of Baal and the temple of Baal; it is used as a latrine to this very day. 10:28 So Jehu eradicated Baal worship from Israel.

A Summary of Jehu's Reign

10:29 However, Jehu did not repudiate the sins which Jeroboam son of Nebat had encouraged Israel to commit; the golden calves remained in Bethel and [Dan. 10:30](#) The Lord said to Jehu, "You have done well. You have accomplished my will and carried out my wishes with regard to Ahab's dynasty. Therefore four generations of your descendants will rule over Israel." 10:31 But Jehu did not carefully and wholeheartedly obey the law of the Lord God of Israel. He did not repudiate the sins which Jeroboam had encouraged Israel to commit.

10:32 In those days the Lord began to reduce the size of Israel's territory. Hazael attacked their eastern border. 10:33 He conquered all the land of Gilead, including the territory of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh, extending all the way from the Aroer in the Arnon Valley through Gilead to Bashan.

10:34 The rest of the events of Jehu's reign, including all his accomplishments and successes, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel. 10:35 Jehu passed away and was buried in Samaria. His son Jehoahaz replaced him as king. 10:36 Jehu reigned over Israel for twenty-eight years in Samaria.

Athaliah is Eliminated

11:1 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she was determined to destroy the entire royal line. 11:2 So Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram and sister of Ahaziah, took Ahaziah's son Joash and sneaked him away from the rest of the royal descendants who were to be executed. She hid him and his nurse in the room where the bed covers were stored. So he was hidden from Athaliah and escaped execution. 11:3 He hid out with his nurse in the Lord's temple for six years, while Athaliah was ruling over the land.

11:4 In the seventh year Jehoiada summoned the officers of the units of hundreds of the Carians and the royal bodyguard. He met with them in the Lord's temple. He made an agreement with them and made them swear an oath of allegiance in the Lord's temple. Then he showed them the king's son. 11:5 He ordered them, "This is what you must do. One third of the unit that is on duty during the Sabbath

will guard the royal palace. 11:6 Another third of you will be stationed at the Foundation Gate. Still another third of you will be stationed at the gate behind the royal guard. You will take turns guarding the palace. 11:7 The two units who are off duty on the Sabbath will guard the Lord's temple and protect the king. 11:8 You must surround the king. Each of you must hold his weapon in his hand. Whoever approaches your ranks must be killed. You must accompany the king wherever he goes."

11:9 The officers of the units of hundreds did just as Jehoiada the priest ordered. Each of them took his men, those who were on duty during the Sabbath as well as those who were off duty on the Sabbath, and reported to Jehoiada the priest. 11:10 The priest gave to the officers of the units of hundreds King David's spears and the shields that were kept in the Lord's temple. 11:11 The royal bodyguard took their stations, each holding his weapon in his hand. They lined up from the south side of the temple to the north side and stood near the altar and the temple, surrounding the king. 11:12 Jehoiada led out the king's son and placed on him the crown and the royal insignia. They proclaimed him king and poured olive oil on his head. They clapped their hands and cried out, "Long live the king!"

11:13 When Athaliah heard the royal guard shout, she joined the crowd at the Lord's temple. 11:14 Then she saw the king standing by the pillar, according to custom. The officers stood beside the king with their trumpets and all the people of the land were celebrating and blowing trumpets. Athaliah tore her clothes and screamed, "Treason, treason!" 11:15 Jehoiada the priest ordered the officers of the units of hundreds, who were in charge of the army, "Bring her outside the temple to the guards. Put the sword to anyone who follows her." The priest gave this order because he had decided she should not be executed in the Lord's temple. 11:16 They seized her and took her into the precincts of the royal palace through the horses' entrance. There she was executed.

11:17 Jehoiada then drew up a covenant between the Lord and the king and people, stipulating that they should be loyal to the Lord. 11:18 All the people of the land went and demolished the temple of Baal. They smashed its altars and idols to bits. They killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altar. Jehoiada the priest then placed guards at the Lord's temple. 11:19 He took the officers of the units of hundreds, the Carians, the royal bodyguard, and all the people of land, and together they led the king down from the Lord's temple. They entered the royal palace through the Gate of the Royal Bodyguard, and the king sat down on the royal throne. 11:20 All the people of the land celebrated, for the city had rest now that they had killed Athaliah with the sword in the royal palace.

Joash's Reign over Judah

11:21 (12:1) Jehoash was seven years old when he began to reign.

12:1 (12:2) In Jehu's seventh year Jehoash became king; he reigned for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother was Zibiah, who was from Beer Sheba. 12:2 Throughout his lifetime Jehoash did what the Lord

approved, just as Jehoiada the priest taught him. 12:3 But the high places were not eliminated; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense on the high places.

12:4 Jehoash said to the priests, "I place at your disposal all the consecrated silver that has been brought to the Lord's temple, including the silver collected from the census tax, the silver received from those who have made vows, and all the silver that people have voluntarily contributed to the Lord's temple. 12:5 The priests should receive the silver they need from the treasurers and repair any damage to the temple they discover."

12:6 By the twenty-third year of King Jehoash's reign the priests had still not repaired the damage to the temple. 12:7 So King Jehoash summoned Jehoiada the priest along with the other priests, and said to them, "Why have you not repaired the damage to the temple? Now, take no more silver from your treasurers unless you intend to use it to repair the damage." 12:8 The priests agreed not to collect silver from the people and relieved themselves of personal responsibility for the temple repairs.

12:9 Jehoiada the priest took a chest and drilled a hole in its lid. He placed it on the right side of the altar near the entrance of the Lord's temple. The priests who guarded the entrance would put into it all the silver brought to the Lord's temple. 12:10 When they saw the chest was full of silver, the royal secretary and the high priest counted the silver that had been brought to the Lord's temple and bagged it up. 12:11 They would then hand over the silver that had been weighed to the construction foremen assigned to the Lord's temple. They hired carpenters and builders to work on the Lord's temple, 12:12 as well as masons and stonecutters. They bought wood and chiseled stone to repair the damage to the Lord's temple and also paid for all the other expenses. 12:13 The silver brought to the Lord's temple was not used for silver bowls, trimming shears, basins, trumpets, or any kind of gold or silver implements. 12:14 It was handed over to the foremen who used it to repair the Lord's temple. 12:15 They did not audit the treasurers who disbursed the funds to the foremen, for they were honest. 12:16 (The silver collected in conjunction with reparation offerings and sin offerings was not brought to the Lord's temple; it belonged to the priests.)

12:17 At that time King Hazael of Syria attacked Gath and captured it. Hazael then decided to attack Jerusalem. 12:18 King Jehoash of Judah collected all the sacred items that his ancestors Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had consecrated, as well as his own sacred items and all the gold that could be found in the treasuries of the Lord's temple and the royal palace. He sent it all to King Hazael of Syria, who then withdrew from Jerusalem.

12:19 The rest of the events of Joash's reign, including all his accomplishments, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah. 12:20 His servants conspired against him and murdered Joash at Beth-Millo, on the road that goes down to Silla. 12:21 His servants Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer murdered him. He was buried with his ancestors in the city of David. His son Amaziah replaced him as king.

Jehoahaz's Reign over Israel

13:1 In the twenty-third year of the reign of Judah's King Joash son of Ahaziah, Jehu's son Jehoahaz became king over Israel. He reigned in Samaria for seventeen years. 13:2 He did evil in the sight of the Lord. He continued in the sinful ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat who had encouraged Israel to sin; he did not repudiate those sins. 13:3 The Lord was furious with Israel and handed them over to King Hazael of Syria and to Hazael's son Ben Hadad for many years.

13:4 Jehoahaz asked for the Lord's mercy and the Lord responded favorably, for he saw that Israel was oppressed by the king of Syria. 13:5 The Lord provided a deliverer for Israel and they were freed from Syria's power. The Israelites once more lived in security. 13:6 But they did not repudiate the sinful ways of the family of Jeroboam, who encouraged Israel to sin; they continued in those sins. There was even an Asherah pole standing in Samaria. 13:7 Jehoahaz had no army left except for fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers. The king of Syria had destroyed his troops and trampled on them like dust.

13:8 The rest of the events of Jehoahaz's reign, including all his accomplishments and successes, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel. 13:9 Jehoahaz passed away and was buried in Samaria. His son Joash replaced him as king.

Jehoash's Reign over Israel

13:10 In the thirty-seventh year of King Joash's reign over Judah, Jehoahaz's son Jehoash became king over Israel. He reigned in Samaria for sixteen years. 13:11 He did evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not repudiate the sinful ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat who encouraged Israel to sin; he continued in those sins. 13:12 The rest of the events of Joash's reign, including all his accomplishments and his successful war with King Amaziah of Judah, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel. 13:13 Joash passed away and Jeroboam succeeded him on the throne. Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Elisha Makes One Final Prophecy

13:14 Now Elisha had a terminal illness. King Joash of Israel went down to visit him. He wept before him and said, "My father, my father! The chariot and horsemen of Israel!" 13:15 Elisha told him, "Take a bow and some arrows," and he did so. 13:16 Then Elisha told the king of Israel, "Aim the bow." He did so, and Elisha placed his hands on the king's hands. 13:17 Elisha said, "Open the east window," and he did so. Elisha said, "Shoot!" and

he did so. Elisha said, "This arrow symbolizes the victory the Lord will give you over Syria. You will annihilate Syria in Aphek!" 13:18 Then Elisha said, "Take the arrows," and he did so. He told the king of

Israel, "Strike the ground!" He struck the ground three times and stopped. 13:19 The prophet got angry at him and said, "If you had struck the ground five or six times, you would have annihilated Syria! But now, you will defeat Syria only three times."

13:20 Elisha died and was buried. Moabite raiding parties invaded the land at the beginning of the year. 13:21 One day some men were burying a man when they spotted a raiding party. So they threw the dead man into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the dead man came to life and stood on his feet.

13:22 Now King Hazael of Syria oppressed Israel throughout Jehoahaz's reign. 13:23 But the Lord had mercy on them and felt pity for them. He extended his favor to them because of the promise he had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He has been unwilling to destroy them or remove them from his presence to this very day. 13:24 When King Hazael of Syria died, his son Ben Hadad replaced him as king. 13:25 Jehoahaz's son Jehoash took back from Ben Hadad son of Hazael the cities that he had taken from his father Jehoahaz in war. Joash defeated him three times and recovered the Israelite cities.

PRAYER

Lord, Your prophesies always come true, even though fallen man makes things messier than they need to be. May I trust You and not try to rush things that You have ordained. You use the available tools to fulfill Your prophesy and the occasional willing leader to purge the land of evil. May I be more than available, and more than occasionally willing, but rather strive to be always-available and always-willing. Partial faithfulness to You results in partial blessings from You. May I mature day by day so that I draw ever closer and more obedient to You.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Elisha sent one of his young student prophets to Jehu with instructions to privately anoint him with oil and inform him that he would become king of Israel in place of Joram, a descendant of Ahab.

The young prophet did as he was told. He is recorded in the text as having delivered a much more detailed message than that recorded in Elisha's instructions to him.

Jehu tried to pretend with his nearby friends that the young prophet said nothing worth repeating but they chided him until he shared and then they laid down their jackets and celebrated as if he was already king. Jehu immediately began a conspiracy to kill Joram.

Jehu marched to Jezreel where king Joram of Israel was recovering from his battle injuries and king Ahaziah of Judah was visiting him. When Jehu refused to reply to the two messengers he sent, and they

were informed that the chariot driver drove wildly in the style of Jehu, Joram and Ahaziah rode out to meet him.

Jehu murdered Joram and then chased and murdered Ahaziah as well. As he was chasing Ahaziah he encouraged his men by quoting the prophesy of God's vengeance against the families of both kings.

Jehu then went into Jezreel and was challenged by Jezebel. He challenged her eunuchs to prove their loyalty to him as their new king and they threw her out the window. She died and was devoured by dogs as had been prophesied.

Jehu convinced the frightened leaders in the home town of Ahab to kill his sons, then he killed the rest of his family and associates. He also killed forty-two of the relatives of Ahaziah.

Jehu then tricked the priest of Baal into their temple and had them all killed, he destroyed their temple, and their idols and altars.

Jehu did not destroy the sacred cows and therefore was only partially obedient to the Lord God. He was promised only four generations of descendants as kings.

Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah conspired to destroy the rest of the family line after his death, but his sister hid his son Joash. The priest Jehoiada gathered warriors to protect Joash and then crowned him king of Judah.

They executed Athaliah, and Mattan the priest of Baal, and destroyed the temples and artifacts of the worship of the false god of Baal.

Joash/Jeh'ash became king at seven years old and generally followed the Lord God, other than failing to abolish the high places of improper worship.

He commanded that the temple silver be used to repair the temple but the priests failed to get the job done and some time later he challenged Jehoiada the high priest to get the job done, so they hired contractors and the work was immediately begun.

King Hazael marched on Jerusalem so Joash/Jeh'ash sent all of the gold and gold articles he could find and Hazael was satisfied to turn away from his attack.

In the same year that Joash/Jeh'ash caused the repairs to the temple in Judah to finally begin Jehu's son Jehoahaz became king over Israel. Jehoahaz was disobedient to the Lord God so the Syrians were allowed to destroy their army and oppress them for a time. Jehoahaz cried out to the Lord and He broke the hold of the Syrians.

Jehoahaz's son Jehoash became king over Israel but continued his father's evil ways.

King Joash/Jeh' oash of Judah was murdered by some evil servants and his son Jeroboam became king.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The names Joram and Jeho'ram are, inexplicably, used interchangeably in the text. Easton's Bible Dictionary asserts that both are acceptable renderings of the name from the original text. There is no explanation given as to why each translation would not choose one or the other in order to avoid confusion. Jehu used clever strategy to fulfill part of the prophesy of the Lord God, to purge the land of the descendants of disobedient kings, and to purge the places of worship of Baal. It was a form of warfare, just as was the original taking of the Promised Land, which made the strategy and violence acceptable before the Lord. King Joash/Jeh' oash was enthroned by the Lord God to accomplish more but he, inexplicably, failed to remove the high places of worship.

DISCUSS

Does it not seem that the arrogance of Jezebel contributed to her death? Rather than welcome Jehu and attempt an alliance she insulted him. Why would Jehu not get rid of the golden calves at the same time he was getting rid of the Baal worship? Why would the priests have failed to make repairs to the temple? The text doesn't say that they were stealing the silver, perhaps they lacked the skills?

REFLECT

The prophet had not instructed Jehu to kill either of the kings, though when He sent the prophesy to Jehu via the prophet the Lord God surely knew that he was not a mature or patient man. The Lord God used the aunt of young Joash to keep him alive, then the priest and many soldiers to protect him as they elevated him to king of Judah. This was a pattern of God, choosing to work through several faithful and willing people. Joash/Jeh' oash was wise enough to bribe the Syrians to not attack Jerusalem in Judah, Jehoahaz was so rebellious before the Lord God that the Syrians were allowed to overrun Israel for a time.

SHARE

When have you experienced or observed someone who believed they were receiving a promotion and either tried to rush the process or began to act as if they had already been promoted? When have you observed leaders dealing with one obvious problem but leaving another equally-obvious problem unaddressed? When have you experienced or observed a situation where the resources to do a good work were available but were hoarded rather than used for the intended purpose?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place he plans to increase your authority and your responsibilities, to reveal to you a place in your life where an idol, great or small, still needs to be removed, and/or to reveal to you a place here you may be failing to act out of fear of failure or neglect even though the Lord God has otherwise provided the necessary resources.

ACT

Today I will ask a fellow believer to pray in-agreement, and be my accountability-partner so that I do not get out ahead of the Lord and that I am careful to use my new authority to meet my responsibilities with wisdom from Him. I will celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit in my life, in removing one idol, and I will partner with Him to remove the one that I previously ignored, missed, or have tolerated. (It may be too much attention focused on a mere human celebrity, displacing the Lord God. It may a hobby, or money, a worry or an obsession, it may be something from the past or the present which I don't allow the Lord to heal, it may be a lust for a pleasure in this world or a retreat from the world to where I am useless for evangelistic-missions.)

Be Specific _____

Tuesday ([2 Chronicles 24](#), [2 Kings 14:1-22](#), [2 Chronicles 25](#))

2 Chronicles

Joash's Reign

24:1 Joash was seven years old when he began to reign. He reigned for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother was Zibiah, who was from Beer Sheba. 24:2 Joash did what the Lord approved throughout the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. 24:3 Jehoiada chose two wives for him who gave him sons and daughters.

24:4 Joash was determined to repair the Lord's temple. 24:5 He assembled the priests and Levites and ordered them, "Go out to the cities of Judah and collect the annual quota of silver from all Israel for repairs on the temple of your God. Be quick about it!" But the Levites delayed.

24:6 So the king summoned Jehoiada the chief priest, and said to him, "Why have you not made the Levites collect from Judah and Jerusalem the tax authorized by Moses the Lord's servant and by the assembly of Israel at the tent containing the tablets of the law?" 24:7 (Wicked Athaliah and her sons had broken into God's temple and used all the holy items of the Lord's temple in their worship of the Baals.) 24:8 The king ordered a chest to be made and placed outside the gate of the Lord's temple. 24:9

An edict was sent throughout Judah and Jerusalem requiring the people to bring to the Lord the tax that Moses, God's servant, imposed on Israel in the wilderness. 24:10 All the officials and all the people gladly brought their silver and threw it into the chest until it was full. 24:11 Whenever the Levites brought the chest to the royal accountant and they saw there was a lot of silver, the royal scribe and the accountant of the high priest emptied the chest and then took it back to its place. They went through this routine every day and collected a large amount of silver.

24:12 The king and Jehoiada gave it to the construction foremen assigned to the Lord's temple. They hired carpenters and craftsmen to repair the Lord's temple, as well as those skilled in working with iron and bronze to restore the Lord's temple. 24:13 They worked hard and made the repairs. They followed the measurements specified for God's temple and restored it. 24:14 When they were finished, they brought the rest of the silver to the king and Jehoiada. They used it to make items for the Lord's temple, including items used in the temple service and for burnt sacrifices, pans, and various other gold and silver items. Throughout Jehoiada's lifetime, burnt sacrifices were offered regularly in the Lord's temple.

24:15 Jehoiada grew old and died at the age of 130. 24:16 He was buried in the City of David with the kings, because he had accomplished good in Israel and for God and his temple.

24:17 After Jehoiada died, the officials of Judah visited the king and declared their loyalty to him. The king listened to their advice. 24:18 They abandoned the temple of the Lord God of their ancestors, and worshiped the Asherah poles and idols. Because of this sinful activity, God was angry with Judah and Jerusalem. 24:19 The Lord sent prophets among them to lead them back to him. They warned the people, but they would not pay attention. 24:20 God's Spirit energized Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood up before the people and said to them, "This is what God says: 'Why are you violating the commands of the Lord? You will not be prosperous! Because you have rejected the Lord, he has rejected you!'" 24:21 They plotted against him and by royal decree stoned him to death in the courtyard of the Lord's temple. 24:22 King Joash disregarded the loyalty his father Jehoiada had shown him and killed Jehoiada's son. As Zechariah was dying, he said, "May the Lord take notice and seek vengeance!"

24:23 At the beginning of the year the Syrian army attacked Joash and invaded Judah and Jerusalem. They wiped out all the leaders of the people and sent all the plunder they gathered to the king of Damascus. 24:24 Even though the invading Syrian army was relatively weak, the Lord handed over to them Judah's very large army, for the people of Judah had abandoned the Lord God of their ancestors. The Syrians gave Joash what he deserved. 24:25 When they withdrew, they left Joash badly wounded. His servants plotted against him because of what he had done to the son of Jehoiada the priest. They murdered him on his bed. Thus he died and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the

kings. 24:26 The conspirators were Zabad son of Shimeath (an Ammonite woman) and Jehozabad son of Shimrith (a Moabite woman).

24:27 The list of Joash's sons, the many prophetic oracles pertaining to him, and the account of his building project on God's temple are included in the record of the Scroll of the Kings. His son Amaziah replaced him as king.

2 Kings

Amaziah's Reign over Judah

14:1 In the second year of the reign of Israel's King Joash son of Joahaz, Joash's son Amaziah became king over Judah. 14:2 He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jehoaddan, who was from Jerusalem. 14:3 He did what the Lord approved, but not like David his father. He followed the example of his father Joash. 14:4 But the high places were not eliminated; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense on the high places.

14:5 When he had secured control of the kingdom, he executed the servants who had assassinated his father. 14:6 But he did not execute the sons of the assassins. He obeyed the Lord's commandment as recorded in the law scroll of Moses, "Fathers must not be put to death for what their sons do, and sons must not be put to death for what their fathers do. A man must be put to death only for his own sin."

14:7 He defeated 10,000 Edomites in the Salt Valley; he captured Sela in battle and renamed it Joktheel, a name it has retained to this very day. 14:8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel. He said, "Come, let's meet face to face." 14:9 King Jehoash of Israel sent this message back to King Amaziah of Judah, "A thornbush in Lebanon sent this message to a cedar in Lebanon, 'Give your daughter to my son as a wife.' Then a wild animal of Lebanon came by and trampled down the thorn. 14:10 You thoroughly defeated Edom and it has gone to your head! Gloat over your success, but stay in your palace. Why bring calamity on yourself? Why bring down yourself and Judah along with you?" 14:11 But Amaziah would not heed the warning, so King Jehoash of Israel attacked. He and King Amaziah of Judah met face to face in Beth Shemesh of Judah. 14:12 Judah was defeated by Israel, and each man ran back home. 14:13 King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah of Judah, son of Jehoash son of Ahaziah, in Beth Shemesh. He attacked Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate – a distance of about six hundred feet. 14:14 He took away all the gold and silver, all the items found in the Lord's temple and in the treasuries of the royal palace, and some hostages. Then he went back to Samaria.

(14:15 The rest of the events of Jehoash's reign, including all his accomplishments and his successful war with King Amaziah of Judah, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

14:16 Jehoash passed away and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. His son Jeroboam replaced him as king.)

14:17 King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz of Israel. 14:18 The rest of the events of Amaziah's reign are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah. 14:19 Conspirators plotted against him in Jerusalem, so he fled to Lachish. But they sent assassins after him and they killed him there. 14:20 His body was carried back by horses and he was buried in Jerusalem with his ancestors in the city of David. 14:21 All the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in his father Amaziah's place. 14:22 Azariah built up Elat and restored it to Judah after the king had passed away.

2 Chronicles

25:1 Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jehoaddan, who was from Jerusalem. 25:2 He did what the Lord approved, but not with wholehearted devotion.

25:3 When he had secured control of the kingdom, he executed the servants who had assassinated his father. 25:4 However, he did not execute their sons. He obeyed the Lord's commandment as recorded in the law scroll of Moses, "Fathers must not be executed for what their sons do, and sons must not be executed for what their fathers do. A man must be executed only for his own sin."

25:5 Amaziah assembled the people of Judah and assigned them by families to the commanders of units of a thousand and the commanders of units of a hundred for all Judah and Benjamin. He counted those twenty years old and up and discovered there were 300,000 young men of fighting age equipped with spears and shields. 25:6 He hired 100,000 Israelite warriors for a hundred talents of silver.

25:7 But a prophet visited him and said: "O king, the Israelite troops must not go with you, for the Lord is not with Israel or any of the Ephraimites. 25:8 Even if you go and fight bravely in battle, God will defeat you before the enemy. God is capable of helping or defeating." 25:9 Amaziah asked the prophet: "But what should I do about the hundred talents of silver I paid the Israelite troops?" The prophet replied, "The Lord is capable of giving you more than that." 25:10 So Amaziah dismissed the troops that had come to him from Ephraim and sent them home. They were very angry at Judah and returned home incensed. 25:11 Amaziah boldly led his army to the Valley of Salt, where he defeated 10,000 Edomites. 25:12 The men of Judah captured 10,000 men alive. They took them to the top of a cliff and threw them over. All the captives fell to their death. 25:13 Now the troops Amaziah had dismissed and had not allowed to fight in the battle raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon. They killed 3,000 people and carried off a large amount of plunder.

25:14 When Amaziah returned from defeating the Edomites, he brought back the gods of the people of Seir and made them his personal gods. He bowed down before them and offered them sacrifices. 25:15 The Lord was angry at Amaziah and sent a prophet to him, who said, “Why are you following these gods that could not deliver their own people from your power?” 25:16 While he was speaking, Amaziah said to him, “Did we appoint you to be a royal counselor? Stop prophesying or else you will be killed!” So the prophet stopped, but added, “I know that the Lord has decided to destroy you, because you have done this thing and refused to listen to my advice.”

25:17 After King Amaziah of Judah consulted with his advisers, he sent this message to the king of Israel, Joash son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, “Come, face me on the battlefield.” 25:18 King Joash of Israel sent this message back to King Amaziah of Judah, “A thorn bush in Lebanon sent this message to a cedar in Lebanon, ‘Give your daughter to my son as a wife.’ Then a wild animal of Lebanon came by and trampled down the thorn bush. 25:19 You defeated Edom and it has gone to your head. Gloat over your success, but stay in your palace. Why bring calamity on yourself? Why bring down yourself and Judah along with you?”

25:20 But Amaziah did not heed the warning, for God wanted to hand them over to Joash because they followed the gods of Edom. 25:21 So King Joash of Israel attacked. He and King Amaziah of Judah faced each other on the battlefield in Beth Shemesh of Judah. 25:22 Judah was defeated by Israel, and each man ran back home. 25:23 King Joash of Israel captured King Amaziah of Judah, son of Joash son of Jehoahaz, in Beth Shemesh and brought him to Jerusalem. He broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate – a distance of about six hundred feet. 25:24 He took away all the gold and silver, all the items found in God’s temple that were in the care of Obed-Edom, the riches in the royal palace, and some hostages. Then he went back to Samaria.

25:25 King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of King Joash son of Jehoahaz of Israel. 25:26 The rest of the events of Amaziah’s reign, from start to finish, are recorded in the Scroll of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 25:27 From the time Amaziah turned from following the Lord, conspirators plotted against him in Jerusalem, so he fled to Lachish. But they sent assassins after him and they killed him there. 25:28 His body was carried back by horses, and he was buried in Jerusalem with his ancestors in the City of David.

PRAYER

Lord, given the clear history of failure from rebellion king after king still chose rebellion against You and brought trouble to the people. May I take care not to drift into rebellion.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Joash was only seven years old so Jehoiada assisted him greatly in purging the land of false idols. When Jehoiada died Joash listened to the bad counsel of members of his court and turned-away from the Lord God.

Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, delivered the Lord's challenge to him and Joash had Zechariah stoned to death. As he died Zechariah asked the Lord God to take notice and punish Joash. God empowered the weaker Syrians to overwhelm the army of Judah and Joash was badly injured. Joash was murdered in his bed for killing Zechariah. He was not buried in the royal tombs.

Amaziah began his time as king in loyalty to the Lord God but after the Lord gave him victory over the Edomites he brought home their false idols and worshiped them. When a prophet of God challenged him he was threatened with execution, so the prophet did not trouble him further, other than to inform him that God had decided to end his reign and his life badly.

Amaziah became king of Judah and led a very successful battle against the Edomites and then he challenged King Joash of Israel. Joash warned him to not be too bold after only one victory but Amaziah continued to threaten them so Israel attacked and defeated Judah.

He was captured, and the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed. He was in captivity many years and then assassinated.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The pattern of blessed loyalty to the Lord God versus troubles for rebellion continued for the kings and the people of Israel and Judah.

DISCUSS

Why would the kings, sons of blessed kings, choose the path of rebellion and trouble rather than that of faithfulness and blessing?

REFLECT

The prophets had a tough time of things, sometimes kings and other leaders listened, and sometimes they were ignored – and even killed – in their service to the Lord.

SHARE

When have you experienced or observed someone speaking-up for the truth of God, only to be ignored, and/or punished by those who claimed to be followers of Christ?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you someone who is being faithful to the Lord and who faces challenges as a result.

ACT

Today I will diligently pray for, and as is appropriate, otherwise assist the one to whom the Lord God directs my attention. They may be domestic or foreign missionaries, leaders or members in a local fellowship, or activists within the larger community of faith.

Wednesday ([Jonah 1–4](#))

Jonah Tries to Run from the Lord

1:1 The Lord said to Jonah son of Amittai, 1:2 “Go immediately to Nineveh, that large capital city, and announce judgment against its people because their wickedness has come to my attention.”

1:3 Instead, Jonah immediately headed off to Tarshish to escape from the commission of the Lord. He traveled to Joppa and found a merchant ship heading to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went aboard it to go with them to Tarshish far away from the Lord.

1:4 But the Lord hurled a powerful wind on the sea. Such a violent tempest arose on the sea that the ship threatened to break up! 1:5 The sailors were so afraid that each cried out to his own god and they flung the ship’s cargo overboard to make the ship lighter. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold below deck, had lain down, and was sound asleep. 1:6 The ship’s captain approached him and said, “What are you doing asleep? Get up! Cry out to your god! Perhaps your god might take notice of us so that we might not die!” 1:7 The sailors said to one another, “Come on, let’s cast lots to find out whose fault it is that this disaster has overtaken us.” So they cast lots, and Jonah was singled out. 1:8 They said to him, “Tell us, whose fault is it that this disaster has overtaken us? What’s your occupation? Where do you come from? What’s your country? And who are your people?”

1:9 He said to them, “I am a Hebrew! And I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

1:10 Hearing this, the men became even more afraid and said to him, “What have you done?” (The men said this because they knew that he was trying to escape from the Lord, because he had previously told them.) 1:11 Because the storm was growing worse and worse, they said to him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” 1:12 He said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea to make the sea quiet down, because I know it’s my fault you are in this severe storm.” 1:13 Instead, they

tried to row back to land, but they were not able to do so because the storm kept growing worse and worse.

1:14 So they cried out to the Lord, “Oh, please, Lord, don’t let us die on account of this man! Don’t hold us guilty of shedding innocent blood. After all, you, Lord, have done just as you pleased.” 1:15 So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped raging. 1:16 The men feared the Lord greatly, and earnestly vowed to offer lavish sacrifices to the Lord.

Jonah Prays

1:17 The Lord sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

2:1 Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish 2:2 and said, “I called out to the Lord from my distress, and he answered me; from the belly of Sheol I cried out for help, and you heard my prayer.

2:3 You threw me into the deep waters, into the middle of the sea; the ocean current engulfed me; all the mighty waves you sent swept over me.

2:4 I thought I had been banished from your sight, that I would never again see your holy temple!

2:5 Water engulfed me up to my neck; the deep ocean surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head.

2:6 I went down to the very bottoms of the mountains; the gates of the netherworld barred me in forever; but you brought me up from the Pit, O Lord, my God.

2:7 When my life was ebbing away, I called out to the Lord, and my prayer came to your holy temple.

2:8 Those who worship worthless idols forfeit the mercy that could be theirs.

2:9 But as for me, I promise to offer a sacrifice to you with a public declaration of praise; I will surely do what I have promised.

Salvation belongs to the Lord!”

2:10 Then the Lord commanded the fish and it disgorged Jonah on dry land.

The People of Nineveh Respond to Jonah’s Warning

3:1 The Lord said to Jonah a second time, 3:2 “Go immediately to Nineveh, that large city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.” 3:3 So Jonah went immediately to Nineveh, as the Lord had said. (Now Nineveh was an enormous city – it required three days to walk through it!) 3:4 When Jonah began to enter the city one day’s walk, he announced, “At the end of forty days, Nineveh will be overthrown!”

3:5 The people of Nineveh believed in God, and they declared a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. 3:6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, took off his royal robe, put on sackcloth, and sat on ashes. 3:7 He issued a proclamation and said, “In Nineveh, by the decree of the king and his nobles: No human or animal, cattle or sheep, is to taste anything; they must not eat and they must not drink water. 3:8 Every person and animal must put on sackcloth and must cry earnestly to God, and everyone must turn from their evil way of living and from the violence that they do. 3:9 Who knows? Perhaps God might be willing to change his mind and relent and turn from his fierce anger so that we might not die.” 3:10 When God saw their actions – they turned from their evil way of living! – God relented concerning the judgment he had threatened them with and he did not destroy them.

Jonah Responds to God’s Kindness

4:1 This displeased Jonah terribly and he became very angry. 4:2 He prayed to the Lord and said, “Oh, Lord, this is just what I thought would happen when I was in my own country. This is what I tried to prevent by attempting to escape to Tarshish! – because I knew that you are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in mercy, and one who relents concerning threatened judgment. 4:3 So now, Lord, kill me instead, because I would rather die than live!” 4:4 The Lord said, “Are you really so very angry?”

4:5 Jonah left the city and sat down east of it. He made a shelter for himself there and sat down under it in the shade to see what would happen to the city. 4:6 The Lord God appointed a little plant and caused it to grow up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to rescue him from his misery. Now Jonah was very delighted about the little plant.

4:7 So God sent a worm at dawn the next day, and it attacked the little plant so that it dried up. 4:8 When the sun began to shine, God sent a hot east wind. So the sun beat down on Jonah’s head, and he grew faint. So he despaired of life, and said, “I would rather die than live!” 4:9 God said to Jonah, “Are you really so very angry about the little plant?” And he said, “I am as angry as I could possibly be!” 4:10 The Lord said, “You were upset about this little plant, something for which you have not worked nor did you do anything to make it grow. It grew up overnight and died the next day. 4:11 Should I not be even more concerned about Nineveh, this enormous city? There are more than one hundred twenty thousand people in it who do not know right from wrong, as well as many animals!”

PRAYER

Lord, Your desire to bring hope to wretches like us, as well as to the historically-brutal Ninevites, is consistent with Your character as a loving God of grace and of mercy. May I praise You for Your patient and persistent love for me. You brought Jonah where he could recognize and repent of his sin, then You rescued him. May I not make it necessary for You to get my attention in such a profound way. Jonah tried to foil Your plan to offer mercy to the enemies of his people, but You overcame his resistance. May I be a willing instrument of Your mercy no matter to whom You may choose to offer it.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord said go and Jonah said no.

The beneficiaries of the prophetic ministry assigned to Jonah were the people of Ninevah. Jonah and his people despised them because of their exceptionally brutal conduct during war and their vicious treatment of captive people.

Jonah discovered that what David had written was true – there is nowhere one may go to escape the presence of the Lord God.

Because of his rebellion Jonah placed many others, the Ninevites and the sailors (and fellow passengers) in jeopardy.

When confronted Jonah finally acknowledged his responsibility for the trouble and accepted that he had to sacrifice himself to save the others, despite their resistance he finally persuaded them to throw him overboard, which they reluctantly did.

The men promised to sacrifice to the Lord to cover their fear of punishment.

Jonah was rescued by the Lord God Who sent a great fish to swallow him, keeping him from drowning.

While inside the fish Jonah prayed and reflected – confessed his sin and his fear that his separation from the Lord God could be permanent - then he repented.

Jonah observed that just as he thought he would die the Lord God reached-out and saved him. He also observed that those who worshiped false idols would miss that mercy.

The Lord caused the fish to swim to a beach near the city of Ninevah and to spit-out Jonah there.

Jonah obeyed the Lord God, went to Ninevah, and walked a third of the way across the city (one-days walk) then proclaimed the message he had been given “At the end of forty days, Nineveh will be overthrown!”

From the people to the king they were terrified and responded with repentance and by fasting and they even turned "... from their evil way of living and from ... violence".

The Lord God was impressed by their repentance and relented from His angry judgment.

Jonah, who despised the Ninevites for their violence against his people, was angry – for the Lord had done as he feared – shown mercy, and He had used him as His agent to make that possible. He declared that he would rather die than see the Ninevites forgiven and that he had fled from his mission from the Lord God because he wanted to prevent them from being forgiven.

The Lord God questioned him if he was really that angry and watched as Jonah left the city, made himself a shelter from the sun, and watched in hope that the city would not succeed in avoiding destruction.

The Lord God caused a small plant to grow very large and to provide Jonah with a great deal more shade than his little shelter and so Jonah was quite pleased with the plant. In the morning the Lord caused the plant to die and a hot wind to overcome Jonah – who complained again that he'd be better-off dead.

The Lord questioned him about his anger at the death of the plant, which he had neither planted nor fed, but not the greatly-populated city of Ninevah "... more than one hundred twenty thousand people in it who do not know right from wrong, as well as many animals!"

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Jonah placed national/tribal emotions ahead of the calling of the Lord. The Lord God said that the Ninevites "... do not know right from wrong", which means that they had never been taught about Him. Jonah must have been preaching the entire first day's walk into the city before declaring the impending judgment of the Lord.

DISCUSS

Why would Jonah have thought he could disobey and then hide from the Lord God? Why would the Lord God have confronted Jonah rather than discarding him and replacing him? Why would Jonah have continued to watch the city in expectation of destruction when the Lord God had already told him that He had decided to withhold it?

REFLECT

The sailors were placed in a terrible predicament, to die in a storm that was caused by a prophet of the Lord God, or to throw that prophet into the sea to die and maybe survive the storm – then be punished by the Lord God. While needing the mercy of the Lord, in the way that Jonah did, is something we'd rather avoid – it is encouraging to know that it is available – and sad that the unsaved have no such access. Jonah's petulant disregard for the Lord's sovereign decision to give mercy to those whom he, a mere human, thought unworthy was hypocritical since he had only just experienced mercy – both before and after his ministry to the city.

SHARE

When have you been trapped between emotional desires of the world and what you know to be different expectations of the Lord? When have you benefited from the mercy of the Lord? When have you experienced or observed someone challenging the Lord God's decision(s)?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place where you are placing your human emotional response ahead of His heavenly spiritual perspective, to reveal to you a place where you have been resisting the Lord God's call to a ministry project and He may have to get your attention because you are allowing some flesh-based attitude to block the way, and to reveal to you a place where you have, in the past, questioned a decision of the Lord – but learned and come to appreciate His perfect wisdom.

ACT

Today I will give praise and thanks to the Lord God for His patience with me. I will confess and repent of that place in my life where I have been allowing anger, bitterness, greed, laziness, lust, revenge, selfishness, or some other emotion to hold first-place instead of the fruits of Your Holy Spirit Who lives in me. I will confess and repent, seek and receive the Lord God's forgiveness, and then overcome my flesh-based resistance and in-faith with His power complete the task He has assigned to me. It may be confronting a brother or sister in sin, it may be sharing the Word with someone who is considering-Christ, it may be confessing your own sin, it may be seeking forgiveness from someone you find difficult to deal with, or something else. I will humbly and prayerfully ask that I be shown another place where I may be doubting the mercy, or some other redemptive action, of the Lord - so that I may again learn to trust His grace and wisdom even more.

Be Specific _____

Thursday (Isaiah 1–5)

1:1 Here is the message about Judah and Jerusalem that was revealed to Isaiah son of Amoz during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah reigned over Judah.

Obedience, not Sacrifice

1:2 Listen, O heavens, pay attention, O earth!

For the Lord speaks: "I raised children, I brought them up, but they have rebelled against me!

1:3 An ox recognizes its owner, a donkey recognizes where its owner puts its food; but Israel does not recognize me, my people do not understand."

1:4

The sinful nation is as good as dead, the people weighed down by evil deeds.

They are offspring who do wrong, children who do wicked things. They have abandoned the Lord, and rejected the Holy One of Israel. They are alienated from him.

1:5 Why do you insist on being battered? Why do you continue to rebel? Your head has a massive wound, your whole body is weak.

1:6 From the soles of your feet to your head, there is no spot that is unharmed. There are only bruises, cuts, and open wounds. They have not been cleansed or bandaged, nor have they been treated with olive oil.

1:7 Your land is devastated, your cities burned with fire. Right before your eyes your crops are being destroyed by foreign invaders. They leave behind devastation and destruction.

1:8 Daughter Zion is left isolated, like a hut in a vineyard, or a shelter in a cucumber field; she is a besieged city.

1:9 If the Lord who commands armies had not left us a few survivors, we would have quickly become like Sodom, we would have become like Gomorrah.

1:10 Listen to the Lord's word, you leaders of Sodom! Pay attention to our God's rebuke, people of Gomorrah!

1:11 "Of what importance to me are your many sacrifices?" says the Lord. "I am stuffed with burnt sacrifices of rams and the fat from steers. The blood of bulls, lambs, and goats I do not want.

1:12 When you enter my presence, do you actually think I want this – animals trampling on my courtyards?

1:13 Do not bring any more meaningless offerings; I consider your incense detestable!

You observe new moon festivals, Sabbaths, and convocations, but I cannot tolerate sin-stained celebrations!

1:14 I hate your new moon festivals and assemblies; they are a burden that I am tired of carrying.

1:15 When you spread out your hands in prayer, I look the other way; when you offer your many prayers, I do not listen, because your hands are covered with blood.

1:16 Wash! Cleanse yourselves! Remove your sinful deeds from my sight. Stop sinning!

1:17 Learn to do what is right! Promote justice! Give the oppressed reason to celebrate! Take up the cause of the orphan! Defend the rights of the widow!

1:18 Come, let's consider your options," says the Lord. "Though your sins have stained you like the color red, you can become white like snow; though they are as easy to see as the color scarlet, you can become white like wool.

1:19 If you have a willing attitude and obey, then you will again eat the good crops of the land.

1:20 But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." Know for certain that the Lord has spoken.

Purifying Judgment

1:21 How tragic that the once-faithful city has become a prostitute! She was once a center of justice, fairness resided in her, but now only murderers.

1:22 Your silver has become scum, your beer is diluted with water.

1:23 Your officials are rebels, they associate with thieves. All of them love bribery, and look for payoffs. They do not take up the cause of the orphan, or defend the rights of the widow.

1:24 Therefore, the sovereign Lord who commands armies, the powerful ruler of Israel, says this: "Ah, I will seek vengeance against my adversaries, I will take revenge against my enemies.

1:25 I will attack you; I will purify your metal with flux. I will remove all your slag.

1:26 I will reestablish honest judges as in former times, wise advisers as in earlier days. Then you will be called, "The Just City, Faithful Town."

1:27 Zion will be freed by justice, and her returnees by righteousness.

1:28 All rebellious sinners will be shattered, those who abandon the Lord will perish.

1:29 Indeed, they will be ashamed of the sacred trees you find so desirable; you will be embarrassed because of the sacred orchards where you choose to worship.

1:30 For you will be like a tree whose leaves wither, like an orchard that is unwatered.

1:31 The powerful will be like a thread of yarn, their deeds like a spark; both will burn together, and no one will put out the fire.

The Future Glory of Jerusalem

2:1 Here is the message about Judah and Jerusalem that was revealed to Isaiah son of Amoz.

2:2 In the future the mountain of the Lord's temple will endure as the most important of mountains, and will be the most prominent of hills. All the nations will stream to it,

2:3 many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the Lord's mountain, to the temple of the God of Jacob, so he can teach us his requirements, and we can follow his standards." For Zion will be the center for moral instruction; the Lord will issue edicts from Jerusalem.

2:4 He will judge disputes between nations; he will settle cases for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations will not take up the sword against other nations, and they will no longer train for war.

2:5 O descendants of Jacob, come, let us walk in the Lord's guiding light.

The Lord's Day of Judgment

2:6 Indeed, O Lord, you have abandoned your people, the descendants of Jacob. For diviners from the east are everywhere; they consult omen readers like the Philistines do.

Plenty of foreigners are around.

2:7 Their land is full of gold and silver; there is no end to their wealth. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to their chariots.

2:8 Their land is full of worthless idols; they worship the product of their own hands, what their own fingers have fashioned.

2:9 Men bow down to them in homage, they lie flat on the ground in worship. Don't spare them!

2:10 Go up into the rocky cliffs, hide in the ground. Get away from the dreadful judgment of the Lord, from his royal splendor!

2:11 Proud men will be brought low, arrogant men will be humiliated; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.

2:12 Indeed, the Lord who commands armies has planned a day of judgment, for all the high and mighty, for all who are proud – they will be humiliated;

2:13 for all the cedars of Lebanon, that are so high and mighty, for all the oaks of Bashan;

2:14 for all the tall mountains, for all the high hills,

2:15 for every high tower, for every fortified wall,

2:16 for all the large ships, for all the impressive ships.

2:17 Proud men will be humiliated, arrogant men will be brought low; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.

2:18 The worthless idols will be completely eliminated.

2:19 They will go into caves in the rocky cliffs and into holes in the ground, trying to escape the dreadful judgment of the Lord and his royal splendor, when he rises up to terrify the earth.

2:20 At that time men will throw their silver and gold idols, which they made for themselves to worship, into the caves where rodents and bats live,

2:21 so they themselves can go into the crevices of the rocky cliffs and the openings under the rocky overhangs, trying to escape the dreadful judgment of the Lord and his royal splendor, when he rises up to terrify the earth.

2:22 Stop trusting in human beings, whose life's breath is in their nostrils. For why should they be given special consideration?

A Coming Leadership Crisis

3:1 Look, the sovereign Lord who commands armies is about to remove from Jerusalem and Judah every source of security, including all the food and water,

3:2 the mighty men and warriors, judges and prophets, omen readers and leaders,

3:3 captains of groups of fifty, the respected citizens, advisers and those skilled in magical arts, and those who know incantations.

3:4 The Lord says, "I will make youths their officials; malicious young men will rule over them.

3:5 The people will treat each other harshly; men will oppose each other; neighbors will fight. Youths will proudly defy the elderly and riffraff will challenge those who were once respected.

3:6 Indeed, a man will grab his brother right in his father's house and say, 'You own a coat – you be our leader! This heap of ruins will be under your control.'

3:7 At that time the brother will shout, 'I am no doctor, I have no food or coat in my house; don't make me a leader of the people!'"

3:8 Jerusalem certainly stumbles, Judah falls, for their words and their actions offend the Lord; they rebel against his royal authority.

3:9 The look on their faces testifies to their guilt; like the people of Sodom they openly boast of their sin. Too bad for them! For they bring disaster on themselves.

3:10 Tell the innocent it will go well with them, for they will be rewarded for what they have done.

3:11 Too bad for the wicked sinners! For they will get exactly what they deserve.

3:12 Oppressors treat my people cruelly; creditors rule over them. My people's leaders mislead them; they give you confusing directions.

3:13 The Lord takes his position to judge; he stands up to pass sentence on his people.

3:14 The Lord comes to pronounce judgment on the leaders of his people and their officials. He says, "It is you who have ruined the vineyard! You have stashed in your houses what you have stolen from the poor.

3:15 Why do you crush my people and grind the faces of the poor?" The sovereign Lord who commands armies has spoken.

Washing Away Impurity

3:16 The Lord says, “The women of Zion are proud. They walk with their heads high and flirt with their eyes. They skip along and the jewelry on their ankles jingles.

3:17 So the sovereign master will afflict the foreheads of Zion’s women with skin diseases, the Lord will make the front of their heads bald.”

3:18 At that time the sovereign master will remove their beautiful ankle jewelry, neck ornaments, crescent shaped ornaments, 3:19 earrings, bracelets, veils, 3:20 headdresses, ankle ornaments, sashes, sachets, amulets, 3:21 rings, nose rings, 3:22 festive dresses, robes, shawls, purses, 3:23 garments, vests, head coverings, and gowns.

3:24 A putrid stench will replace the smell of spices, a rope will replace a belt, baldness will replace braided locks of hair, a sackcloth garment will replace a fine robe, and a prisoner’s brand will replace beauty.

3:25 Your men will fall by the sword, your strong men will die in battle.

3:26 Her gates will mourn and lament; deprived of her people, she will sit on the ground.

4:1 Seven women will grab hold of one man at that time. They will say, “We will provide our own food, we will provide our own clothes; but let us belong to you – take away our shame!”

The Branch of the Lord

4:2 At that time the crops given by the Lord will bring admiration and honor; the produce of the land will be a source of pride and delight to those who remain in Israel.

4:3 Those remaining in Zion, those left in Jerusalem, will be called “holy,” all in Jerusalem who are destined to live.

4:4 At that time the sovereign master will wash the excrement from Zion’s women, he will rinse the bloodstains from Jerusalem’s midst, as he comes to judge and to bring devastation.

4:5 Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over its convocations a cloud and smoke by day and a bright flame of fire by night; indeed a canopy will accompany the Lord’s glorious presence.

4:6 By day it will be a shelter to provide shade from the heat, as well as safety and protection from the heavy downpour.

A Love Song Gone Sour

5:1 I will sing to my love – a song to my lover about his vineyard. My love had a vineyard on a fertile hill.

5:2 He built a hedge around it, removed its stones, and planted a vine. He built a tower in the middle of it, and constructed a winepress. He waited for it to produce edible grapes, but it produced sour ones instead.

5:3 So now, residents of Jerusalem, people of Judah, you decide between me and my vineyard!

5:4 What more can I do for my vineyard beyond what I have already done? When I waited for it to produce edible grapes, why did it produce sour ones instead?

5:5 Now I will inform you what I am about to do to my vineyard: I will remove its hedge and turn it into pasture, I will break its wall and allow animals to graze there.

5:6 I will make it a wasteland; no one will prune its vines or hoe its ground, and thorns and briars will grow there. I will order the clouds not to drop any rain on it.

5:7 Indeed Israel is the vineyard of the Lord who commands armies, the people of Judah are the cultivated place in which he took delight. He waited for justice, but look what he got – disobedience! He waited for fairness, but look what he got – cries for help!

Disaster is Coming

5:8 Those who accumulate houses are as good as dead, those who also accumulate landed property until there is no land left, and you are the only landowners remaining within the land.

5:9 The Lord who commands armies told me this: “Many houses will certainly become desolate, large, impressive houses will have no one living in them.

5:10 Indeed, a large vineyard will produce just a few gallons, and enough seed to yield several bushels will produce less than a bushel.”

5:11 Those who get up early to drink beer are as good as dead, those who keep drinking long after dark until they are intoxicated with wine.

5:12 They have stringed instruments, tambourines, flutes, and wine at their parties. So they do not recognize what the Lord is doing, they do not perceive what he is bringing about.

5:13 Therefore my people will be deported because of their lack of understanding. Their leaders will have nothing to eat, their masses will have nothing to drink.

5:14 So Death will open up its throat, and open wide its mouth; Zion's dignitaries and masses will descend into it, including those who revel and celebrate within her.

5:15 Men will be humiliated, they will be brought low; the proud will be brought low.

5:16 The Lord who commands armies will be exalted when he punishes, the sovereign God's authority will be recognized when he judges.

5:17 Lambs will graze as if in their pastures, amid the ruins the rich sojourners will graze.

5:18 Those who pull evil along using cords of emptiness are as good as dead, who pull sin as with cart ropes.

5:19 They say, "Let him hurry, let him act quickly, so we can see; let the plan of the Holy One of Israel take shape and come to pass, then we will know it!"

5:20 Those who call evil good and good evil are as good as dead, who turn darkness into light and light into darkness, who turn bitter into sweet and sweet into bitter.

5:21 Those who think they are wise are as good as dead, those who think they possess understanding.

5:22 Those who are champions at drinking wine are as good as dead, who display great courage when mixing strong drinks.

5:23 They pronounce the guilty innocent for a payoff, they ignore the just cause of the innocent.

5:24 Therefore, as flaming fire devours straw, and dry grass disintegrates in the flames, so their root will rot, and their flower will blow away like dust. For they have rejected the law of the Lord who commands armies, they have spurned the commands of the Holy One of Israel.

5:25 So the Lord is furious with his people; he lifts his hand and strikes them. The mountains shake, and corpses lie like manure in the middle of the streets. Despite all this, his anger does not subside, and his hand is ready to strike again.

5:26 He lifts a signal flag for a distant nation, he whistles for it to come from the far regions of the earth. Look, they come quickly and swiftly.

5:27 None tire or stumble, they don't stop to nap or sleep. They don't loosen their belts, or unstrap their sandals to rest.

5:28 Their arrows are sharpened, and all their bows are prepared. The hooves of their horses are hard as flint, and their chariot wheels are like a windstorm.

5:29 Their roar is like a lion's; they roar like young lions. They growl and seize their prey; they drag it away and no one can come to the rescue.

5:30 At that time they will growl over their prey, it will sound like sea waves crashing against rocks. One will look out over the land and see the darkness of disaster, clouds will turn the light into darkness.

PRAYER

Lord, You are holy and righteous and in return for your grace, protection, and provision You require that we respond in obedience and righteousness. May I be increasingly grateful and therefore increasingly faithful in seeking after righteousness through surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit in and through me. You love the people whom You created, and Your desire is to bless them. You ask for integrity, in our relationship with You, and with fellow humankind. May I be attentive to what it is that You want, rather than what the world values, and so become a conduit of Your blessing and truth to others.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Isaiah was a prophet to Israel a little over 200 years after the reign of King Solomon. His service to the Lord spanned the times of kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

Isaiah delivered the message of the Lord God which compared the people of Israel to an ox and a donkey and found the people wanting because of their foolish rebellion.

The Lord observed that they are beaten and bruised, suffering and over-run by their enemies, yet they persisted in their rebellion.

He further observed that it was only the Lord God who preserved a few survivors, otherwise they would have been utterly destroyed as were the people in Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Lord God said, through Isaiah, that He did not want their sacrifices while they were in active rebellion, and that He would not listen to their prayers either.

He told them that they must “Learn to do what is right! Promote justice! Give the oppressed reason to celebrate! Take up the cause of the orphan! Defend the rights of the widow!”

He then reminded them of His grace “Though your sins have stained you like the color red, you can become white like snow”, but warned that they had been warned and were without excuse were they to fail to repent of their sinful ways in rebellion.

His final word of the first chapter is that He would purify them by fire, all who rebelled – regardless of their station in life – would be destroyed. Only righteousness could result in a reconciliation and restoration of their relationship with the Lord God – and the blessings that would flow from that.

Isaiah began with what Constable’s Notes explains was a preference of the Lord God for Israel, followed by what was and what was coming as a result, and then a return to His preference. [The middle part is more of a prophesy whereas the rest represents a conditional offer from the Lord Who wants to bless His people for obedience.] Through Isaiah the Lord challenged the people to repent of the worship of mere men and other elements of temporary fallen Creation and to return to Him.

Isaiah announced the Lord’s discipline, that He would remove from them the leaders – kings and others – so that they no longer had the excuse to blame them and so that they would individually and corporately reap the consequences of their rebellion.

He continued to detail the consequences, beginning with facial sores on the women whose pride and abuse of their sexuality was offensive to Him, then make the fronts of their heads bald, followed by destitution and slavery.

He would also cause the strong young men to die in battle so that there would be seven women begging one man to marry them so that they would no longer be without husbands.

The desire of the Lord God would be to make the crops of those who remained in Jerusalem, those whom He had found to be obedient, to be exceptional and He would wipe clean the shame of the women.

The Lord God declared that He had created a “vineyard” of opportunity for relationship and for blessing but the people had rebelled and made the “grapes ... sour”, so He was about to destroy it all.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Despite all of the losses they had experienced, and the reprieves they had received when they were momentarily repentant, the people continued their rebellious ways. When the people of Israel first

demanded of the Lord God a mere human king “like the nations around them” they were warned via God’s prophet that these kings would bring them trouble, He reminded them that He was the only King they needed, yet they insisted – and He gave them their demand and along with it - the inevitable consequences.

DISCUSS

Why would the people have bothered to pray and to make sacrifices when they refused to obey the Lord God? Why was it so difficult for the people to see that the Lord God wanted to bless them and that all of their rebellion was getting them nowhere?

REFLECT

Despite their persistent rebellion the Lord God stood ready and willing to forgive and restore them. The evidence of true repentance that the Lord God sought was “... justice, but look what he got – disobedience! He waited for fairness, but look what he got – cries for help!”

SHARE

When have you experienced or observed a person going through the motions of ‘religion’ while living a pagan lifestyle, then expressing frustration that things went badly for them? When have you experienced or observed that a leader who practiced justice and created a healthier environment rather than one that was arbitrary and selfish?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place in your journey where you have been ‘talking the talk’ but not ‘walking the walk’ because you have preferred the values of the world over those of the Lord God.

ACT

Today I will confess and repent, seek and receive forgiveness from the Lord God, and make the necessary changes to better align my words with my deeds and to surrender more completely to the Lordship of Christ in my life. (It may be in a gray area of financial dealings, integrity in academics, truth-telling in social relationships, or in some other area.)

Be Specific _____

Friday ([Isaiah 6–8](#))

Isaiah’s Commission

6:1 In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the sovereign master seated on a high, elevated throne. The hem of his robe filled the temple. 6:2 Seraphs stood over him; each one had six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and they used the remaining two to fly. 6:3 They called out to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord who commands armies! His majestic splendor fills the entire earth!" 6:4 The sound of their voices shook the door frames, and the temple was filled with smoke.

6:5 I said, "Too bad for me! I am destroyed, for my lips are contaminated by sin, and I live among people whose lips are contaminated by sin. My eyes have seen the king, the Lord who commands armies." 6:6 But then one of the seraphs flew toward me. In his hand was a hot coal he had taken from the altar with tongs. 6:7 He touched my mouth with it and said, "Look, this coal has touched your lips. Your evil is removed; your sin is forgiven." 6:8 I heard the voice of the sovereign master say, "Whom will I send? Who will go on our behalf?" I answered, "Here I am, send me!" 6:9 He said, "Go and tell these people:

'Listen continually, but don't understand!

Look continually, but don't perceive!'

6:10 Make the hearts of these people calloused; make their ears deaf and their eyes blind!

Otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears, their hearts might understand and they might repent and be healed."

6:11 I replied, "How long, sovereign master?" He said, "Until cities are in ruins and unpopulated, and houses are uninhabited, and the land is ruined and devastated,

6:12 and the Lord has sent the people off to a distant place, and the very heart of the land is completely abandoned.

6:13 Even if only a tenth of the people remain in the land, it will again be destroyed, like one of the large sacred trees or an Asherah pole, when a sacred pillar on a high place is thrown down. That sacred pillar symbolizes the special chosen family."

Ahaz Receives a Sign

7:1 During the reign of Ahaz son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel marched up to Jerusalem to do battle, but they were unable to prevail against it.

7:2 It was reported to the family of David, "Syria has allied with Ephraim." They and their people were emotionally shaken, just as the trees of the forest shake before the wind. 7:3 So the Lord told Isaiah, "Go out with your son Shear-jashub and meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool which is located on the road to the field where they wash and dry cloth. 7:4 Tell him, 'Make sure you stay calm! Don't be afraid! Don't be intimidated by these two stubs of smoking logs, or by the raging anger of Rezin, Syria, and the son of Remaliah. 7:5 Syria has plotted with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah to bring about your demise. 7:6 They say, "Let's attack Judah, terrorize it, and conquer it. Then we'll set up the son of Tabeel as its king." 7:7 For this reason the sovereign master, the Lord, says: "It will not take place; it will not happen.

7:8 For Syria's leader is Damascus, and the leader of Damascus is Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will no longer exist as a nation.

7:9 Ephraim's leader is Samaria, and Samaria's leader is the son of Remaliah. If your faith does not remain firm, then you will not remain secure."

7:10 The Lord again spoke to Ahaz: 7:11 "Ask for a confirming sign from the Lord your God. You can even ask for something miraculous." 7:12 But Ahaz responded, "I don't want to ask; I don't want to put the Lord to a test." 7:13 So Isaiah replied, "Pay attention, family of David. Do you consider it too insignificant to try the patience of men? Is that why you are also trying the patience of my God? 7:14 For this reason the sovereign master himself will give you a confirming sign. Look, this young woman is about to conceive and will give birth to a son. You, young woman, will name him Immanuel. 7:15 He will eat sour milk and honey, which will help him know how to reject evil and choose what is right. 7:16 Here is why this will be so: Before the child knows how to reject evil and choose what is right, the land whose two kings you fear will be desolate. 7:17 The Lord will bring on you, your people, and your father's family a time unlike any since Ephraim departed from Judah – the king of Assyria!"

7:18 At that time the Lord will whistle for flies from the distant streams of Egypt and for bees from the land of Assyria. 7:19 All of them will come and make their home in the ravines between the cliffs, and in the crevices of the cliffs, in all the thorn bushes, and in all the watering holes. 7:20 At that time the sovereign master will use a razor hired from the banks of the Euphrates River, the king of Assyria, to shave the head and the pubic hair; it will also shave off the beard. 7:21 At that time a man will keep alive a young cow from the herd and a couple of goats. 7:22 From the abundance of milk they produce, he will have sour milk for his meals. Indeed, everyone left in the heart of the land will eat sour milk and honey. 7:23 At that time every place where there had been a thousand vines worth a thousand shekels will be overrun with thorns and briers. 7:24 With bow and arrow men will hunt there, for the whole land will be covered with thorns and briers. 7:25 They will stay away from all the hills that were cultivated, for fear of the thorns and briers. Cattle will graze there and sheep will trample on them.

A Sign-Child is Born

8:1 The Lord told me, "Take a large tablet and inscribe these words on it with an ordinary stylus: 'Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.' 8:2 Then I will summon as my reliable witnesses Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah." 8:3 I then had sexual relations with the prophetess; she conceived and gave birth to a son. The Lord told me, "Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, 8:4 for before the child knows how to cry out, 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria."

8:5 The Lord spoke to me again: 8:6 "These people have rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah and melt in fear over Rezin and the son of Remaliah. 8:7 So look, the sovereign master is bringing up against them the turbulent and mighty waters of the Euphrates River – the king of Assyria and all his majestic power. It will reach flood stage and overflow its banks. 8:8 It will spill into Judah, flooding and engulfing, as it reaches to the necks of its victims. He will spread his wings out over your entire land, O Immanuel."

8:9 You will be broken, O nations; you will be shattered! Pay attention, all you distant lands of the earth! Get ready for battle, and you will be shattered! Get ready for battle, and you will be shattered!

8:10 Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted! Issue your orders, but they will not be executed! For God is with us!

The Lord Encourages Isaiah

8:11 Indeed this is what the Lord told me. He took hold of me firmly and warned me not to act like these people:

8:12 "Do not say, 'Conspiracy,' every time these people say the word. Don't be afraid of what scares them; don't be terrified.

8:13 You must recognize the authority of the Lord who commands armies. He is the one you must respect; he is the one you must fear.

8:14 He will become a sanctuary, but a stone that makes a person trip, and a rock that makes one stumble – to the two houses of Israel. He will become a trap and a snare to the residents of Jerusalem.

8:15 Many will stumble over the stone and the rock, and will fall and be seriously injured, and will be ensnared and captured."

8:16 Tie up the scroll as legal evidence, seal the official record of God's instructions and give it to my followers.

8:17 I will wait patiently for the Lord, who has rejected the family of Jacob; I will wait for him.

8:18 Look, I and the sons whom the Lord has given me are reminders and object lessons in Israel, sent from the Lord who commands armies, who lives on Mount Zion.

Darkness Turns to Light as an Ideal King Arrives

8:19 They will say to you, "Seek oracles at the pits used to conjure up underworld spirits, from the magicians who chirp and mutter incantations. Should people not seek oracles from their gods, by asking the dead about the destiny of the living?" 8:20 Then you must recall the Lord's instructions and the prophetic testimony of what would happen. Certainly they say such things because their minds are spiritually darkened. 8:21 They will pass through the land destitute and starving. Their hunger will make them angry, and they will curse their king and their God as they look upward. 8:22 When one looks out over the land, he sees distress and darkness, gloom and anxiety, darkness and people forced from the land.

PRAYER

Lord, You are holy, we are not. May I be as aware of Your holiness as was Isaiah. You rule over all armies and nations, therefore You may choose which will fail and which will have victory – especially where it impacts Your people. May I never fear (as a child of God) that in the battles of life anything of significance, in the eyes of the Lord, will go other than the way that You decide. You loved the people and they rejected You, and after generations of grace Your discipline fell upon them. May I remember to respond appropriately and obediently to Your love and not give you a reason to discipline me.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Isaiah explained the experience of his calling to the prophetic ministry "I saw the sovereign master seated on a high, elevated throne ..." and He was surrounded by angelic beings who celebrated "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord ..."

He was frightened "Too bad for me! I am destroyed, for my lips are contaminated by sin, and I live among people whose lips are contaminated by sin. My eyes have seen the king, the Lord ..." because his (and that of the people around him) imperfection could not survive the presence of the Lord God. He was correct.

Isaiah then reported "But then one of the seraphs flew toward me. In his hand was a hot coal he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, "Look, this coal has touched your lips. Your evil is removed; your sin is forgiven.""

It was at that moment that Isaiah's heard the call "I heard the voice of the sovereign master say, "Whom will I send? Who will go on our behalf?"" ... and he answered ... "Here I am, send me!"

The Lord God then defined Isaiah's prophetic ministry "Go and tell these people ..." who "Listen continually, but don't understand! Look continually, but don't perceive!"

The Lord God then declared that He would "Make the hearts of these people calloused; make their ears deaf and their eyes blind! Otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears, their hearts might understand and they might repent and be healed.""

Isaiah asked the Lord how long would this punishment last, to which He replied "Until cities are in ruins and unpopulated, and houses are uninhabited, and the land is ruined and devastated, and the Lord has sent the people off to a distant place, and the very heart of the land is completely abandoned."

The Lord concluded His edict of complete national obliteration within the land "Even if only a tenth of the people remain in the land, it will again be destroyed, like one of the large sacred trees or an Asherah pole, when a sacred pillar on a high place is thrown down. That sacred pillar symbolizes the special chosen family."

The news had come the king of Judah (of the former nation of Israel, since divided into Israel and Judah) that King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel and the nation of Ephraim (which had splintered off from Judah) were about to attack, and they were terrified because they were unable to resist such a combined military force.

The Lord God directed Isaiah "Go out with your son Shear-jashub and meet Ahaz ... Tell him ... Don't be afraid! Don't be intimidated by these two stubs of smoking logs ... It will not take place; it will not happen."

The Lord God, through Isaiah, challenged Ahaz to test His promise by asking for a sign or even a miracle, but Ahaz refused, fearful of testing the Lord, so He declared that Ephraim and Syria would soon be desolate, saying "Look, this young woman is about to conceive and will give birth to a son. You, young woman, will name him Immanuel." but before he reached the age of accountability "... the land whose two kings you fear will be desolate."

Isaiah was instructed by the Lord God to write a name that meant something similar to "come quickly" and for that name to be witnessed on the tablet by others.

Isaiah then went to his wife, labeled as a "prophetess" as was the custom for the wife of a prophet, and they had a child - whom they obediently named as instructed. Before he was of the age of accountability the king of Assyria was to plunder Ephraim and Syria as prophesied. [Note: There is scholarly debate as to the possible rhetorical vs literal meaning of Isaiah's son as a foreshadowing of Jesus, but the text fails to support that, and such is unnecessary to the later 7:14 text in which Jesus is prophesied.]

The Lord then prophesied that after obliterating Ephraim and Syria the Assyrians would over-run Israel and Judah and all of the nations around them. [Note: The term “Immanuel” (God with us) is used to describe the nations of Israel, as they were the earthly expression of the Lord God, were also a vague shadow compared to Jesus the Christ – The Immanuel” (God literally with/among us - in the flesh.)

The Lord God warned Isaiah to take care not to follow the actions and thinking of the people:

“Do not say, ‘Conspiracy,’ every time these people say the word. Don’t be afraid of what scares them; don’t be terrified.”

“... recognize the authority of the Lord who commands armies. He is the one you must respect; he is the one you must fear.”

“He will become a sanctuary, but [also] a stone that makes a person trip, and a rock that makes one stumble – to the two houses of Israel. He will become a trap and a snare to the residents of Jerusalem. Many will stumble over the stone and the rock, and will fall and be seriously injured, and will be ensnared and captured.”

“Tie up the scroll as legal evidence, seal the official record of God’s instructions and give it to my followers.”

Isaiah then said “I will wait patiently for the Lord, who has rejected the family of Jacob; I will wait for him. Look, I and the sons whom the Lord has given me are reminders and object lessons in Israel, sent from the Lord who commands armies, who lives on Mount Zion.”

Isaiah was warned further that the people, filled with spiritual darkness in their rebellion, would ask him to call upon demons and ghosts and witches in the hope that the dead might tell them of the future of the living. It would be yet another act of foolishness and of rebellion; he was to ignore them as their due punishment descended upon them.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The celebration of the holiness of the Lord God in Heaven is an amazing thing to imagine. The people of Judah saw things only through their human eyes, and so they were terrified, but the Lord God saw their enemies as already defeated; indeed, destroyed. The Lord God would protect Isaiah, and others, who honored their relationship with Him but would bring trouble to rebels and create challenges for others who denied His presence.

DISCUSS

Would you have the presence of mind, like Isaiah, to cry out “Here I am, send me!” to the Lord? Why might Ahaz have been so fearful of asking the Lord God for a sign or a miracle? Why would the Lord God cause Isaiah to write ‘Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.’ (come quickly) on a tablet for others to see?

REFLECT

Isaiah’s very challenging ministry was to people who “Listen continually, but don’t understand! Look continually, but don’t perceive!” He was to tell them that terrible trouble, beyond what they had already experienced, awaited them. At one moment the people of Judah were terrified and in the next they learned that their fearful enemies were soon to be wiped from the map, by the Lord God. Just as Saul turned to witchcraft so also did the people of Isaiah’s time.

SHARE

When have you experienced or observed a moment in praise and worship, or in prayerful and intense study of the Word of God, where a sense of His unique holiness overwhelmed you? When have you been fearful of a person or situation only to have your prayers answered and the entire threat disappear? When have you observed people acting and thinking in pagan ways in hopes of a God-less magical solution to their problems?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place in your journey where you “Listen continually, but don’t understand! Look continually, but don’t perceive!”, to reveal to you today something of which you are afraid, with legitimate cause, but which He intends to remove from your life, and a place in your life where you think ‘magically’, hoping for a solution to a problem, rather than taking it to the Lord God in faithful and trusting prayer and then leaving it with Him.

ACT

Today I will confess and repent, ask forgiveness and receive it from the Lord, and then surrender to the Holy Spirit as He leads me to listen with His ears, understand with His wisdom, see with His filter (so that I notice what He says is important), and perceive with His perspective of eternity. I will raise grateful prayers of praise and thanks to the Lord God. I will begin a daily discipline to bring everything to the Lord in prayer.

Be Specific _____

Saturday ([Amos 1–9](#), [2 Kings 14:23-15](#), [2 Chronicles 26](#))

Amos

Introduction

1:1 The following is a record of what Amos prophesied. He was one of the herdsmen from Tekoa. These prophecies about Israel were revealed to him during the time of King Uzziah of Judah and King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

God Will Judge the Surrounding Nations

1:2 Amos said: “The Lord comes roaring out of Zion; from Jerusalem he comes bellowing! The shepherds’ pastures wilt; the summit of Carmel withers.”

1:3 This is what the Lord says: “Because Damascus has committed three crimes – make that four! – I will not revoke my decree of judgment. They ripped through Gilead like threshing sledges with iron teeth.

1:4 So I will set Hazael’s house on fire; fire will consume Ben Hadad’s fortresses.

1:5 I will break the bar on the gate of Damascus. I will remove the ruler from Wicked Valley, the one who holds the royal scepter from Beth Eden. The people of Aram will be deported to Kir.” The Lord has spoken!

1:6 This is what the Lord says: “Because Gaza has committed three crimes – make that four! – I will not revoke my decree of judgment. They deported a whole community and sold them to Edom.

1:7 So I will set Gaza’s city wall on fire; fire will consume her fortresses.

1:8 I will remove the ruler from Ashdod, the one who holds the royal scepter from Ashkelon. I will strike Ekron with my hand; the rest of the Philistines will also die.” The sovereign Lord has spoken!

1:9 This is what the Lord says: “Because Tyre has committed three crimes – make that four! – I will not revoke my decree of judgment. They sold a whole community to Edom; they failed to observe a treaty of brotherhood.

1:10 So I will set fire to Tyre’s city wall; fire will consume her fortresses.”

1:11 This is what the Lord says: “Because Edom has committed three crimes – make that four! – I will not revoke my decree of judgment. He chased his brother with a sword; he wiped out his allies. In his anger he tore them apart without stopping to rest; in his fury he relentlessly attacked them.

1:12 So I will set Teman on fire; fire will consume Bozrah's fortresses."

1:13 This is what the Lord says: "Because the Ammonites have committed three crimes – make that four! – I will not revoke my decree of judgment. They ripped open Gilead's pregnant women so they could expand their territory.

1:14 So I will set fire to Rabbah's city wall; fire will consume her fortresses. War cries will be heard on the day of battle; a strong gale will blow on the day of the windstorm.

1:15 Ammon's king will be deported; he and his officials will be carried off together." The Lord has spoken!

2:1 This is what the Lord says: "Because Moab has committed three crimes – make that four! – I will not revoke my decree of judgment. They burned the bones of Edom's king into lime.

2:2 So I will set Moab on fire, and it will consume Kerioth's fortresses. Moab will perish in the heat of battle amid war cries and the blaring of the ram's horn.

2:3 I will remove Moab's leader; I will kill all Moab's officials with him." The Lord has spoken!

2:4 This is what the Lord says: "Because Judah has committed three covenant transgressions – make that four! – I will not revoke my decree of judgment. They rejected the Lord's law; they did not obey his commands. Their false gods, to which their fathers were loyal, led them astray.

2:5 So I will set Judah on fire, and it will consume Jerusalem's fortresses."

God Will Judge Israel

2:6 This is what the Lord says: "Because Israel has committed three covenant transgressions – make that four! – I will not revoke my decree of judgment. They sold the innocent for silver, the needy for a pair of sandals.

2:7 They trample on the dirt-covered heads of the poor; they push the destitute away. A man and his father go to the same girl; in this way they show disrespect for my moral purity.

2:8 They stretch out on clothing seized as collateral; they do so right beside every altar! They drink wine bought with the fines they have levied; they do so right in the temple of their God!

2:9 For Israel's sake I destroyed the Amorites. They were as tall as cedars and as strong as oaks, but I destroyed the fruit on their branches and their roots in the ground.

2:10 I brought you up from the land of Egypt; I led you through the wilderness for forty years so you could take the Amorites' land as your own.

2:11 I made some of your sons prophets and some of your young men Nazirites. Is this not true, you Israelites?" The Lord is speaking!

2:12 "But you made the Nazirites drink wine; you commanded the prophets, 'Do not prophesy!'

2:13 Look! I will press you down, like a cart loaded down with grain presses down.

2:14 Fast runners will find no place to hide; strong men will have no strength left; warriors will not be able to save their lives.

2:15 Archers will not hold their ground; fast runners will not save their lives, nor will those who ride horses.

2:16 Bravehearted warriors will run away naked in that day." The Lord is speaking!

Every Effect has its Cause

3:1 Listen, you Israelites, to this message which the Lord is proclaiming against you! This message is for the entire clan I brought up from the land of Egypt: 3:2 "I have chosen you alone from all the clans of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for all your sins."

3:3 Do two walk together without having met?

3:4 Does a lion roar in the woods if he has not cornered his prey? Does a young lion bellow from his den if he has not caught something?

3:5 Does a bird swoop down into a trap on the ground if there is no bait? Does a trap spring up from the ground unless it has surely caught something?

3:6 If an alarm sounds in a city, do people not fear? If disaster overtakes a city, is the Lord not responsible?

3:7 Certainly the sovereign Lord does nothing without first revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

3:8 A lion has roared! Who is not afraid? The sovereign Lord has spoken! Who can refuse to prophesy?

Samaria Will Fall

3:9 Make this announcement in the fortresses of Ashdod and in the fortresses in the land of Egypt. Say this: "Gather on the hills around Samaria! Observe the many acts of violence taking place within the city, the oppressive deeds occurring in it."

3:10 "They do not know how to do what is right." (The Lord is speaking.) "They store up the spoils of destructive violence in their fortresses.

3:11 Therefore," says the sovereign Lord, "an enemy will encircle the land. He will take away your power; your fortresses will be looted."

3:12 This is what the Lord says: "Just as a shepherd salvages from the lion's mouth a couple of leg bones or a piece of an ear, so the Israelites who live in Samaria will be salvaged. They will be left with just a corner of a bed, and a part of a couch."

3:13 Listen and warn the family of Jacob! The sovereign Lord, the God who commands armies, is speaking!

3:14 "Certainly when I punish Israel for their covenant transgressions, I will destroy Bethel's altars. The horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground.

3:15 I will destroy both the winter and summer houses. The houses filled with ivory will be ruined, the great houses will be swept away." The Lord is speaking!

4:1 Listen to this message, you cows of Bashan who live on Mount Samaria! You oppress the poor; you crush the needy. You say to your husbands, "Bring us more to drink!"

4:2 The sovereign Lord confirms this oath by his own holy character: "Certainly the time is approaching when you will be carried away in baskets, every last one of you in fishermen's pots.

4:3 Each of you will go straight through the gaps in the walls; you will be thrown out toward Harmon." The Lord is speaking!

Israel has an Appointment with God

4:4 "Go to Bethel and rebel! At Gilgal rebel some more! Bring your sacrifices in the morning, your tithes on the third day!

4:5 Burn a thank offering of bread made with yeast! Make a public display of your voluntary offerings! For you love to do this, you Israelites." The sovereign Lord is speaking!

4:6 “But surely I gave you no food to eat in any of your cities; you lacked food everywhere you live. Still you did not come back to me.” The Lord is speaking!

4:7 “I withheld rain from you three months before the harvest. I gave rain to one city, but not to another. One field would get rain, but the field that received no rain dried up.

4:8 People from two or three cities staggered into one city to get water, but remained thirsty. Still you did not come back to me.” The Lord is speaking!

4:9 “I destroyed your crops with blight and disease. Locusts kept devouring your orchards, vineyards, fig trees, and olive trees. Still you did not come back to me.” The Lord is speaking!

4:10 “I sent against you a plague like one of the Egyptian plagues. I killed your young men with the sword, along with the horses you had captured. I made the stench from the corpses rise up into your nostrils. Still you did not come back to me.” The Lord is speaking!

4:11 “I overthrew some of you the way God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick snatched from the flames. Still you did not come back to me.” The Lord is speaking!

4:12 “Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel. Because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, Israel!

4:13 For here he is! He formed the mountains and created the wind. He reveals his plans to men. He turns the dawn into darkness and marches on the heights of the earth. The Lord, the God who commands armies, is his name!”

Death is Imminent

5:1 Listen to this funeral song I am ready to sing about you, family of Israel:

5:2 “The virgin Israel has fallen down and will not get up again. She is abandoned on her own land with no one to help her get up.”

5:3 The sovereign Lord says this: “The city that marches out with a thousand soldiers will have only a hundred left; the town that marches out with a hundred soldiers will have only ten left for the family of Israel.”

5:4 The Lord says this to the family of Israel: “Seek me so you can live!

5:5 Do not seek Bethel! Do not visit Gilgal! Do not journey down to Beer Sheba! For the people of Gilgal will certainly be carried into exile; and Bethel will become a place where disaster abounds.”

5:6 Seek the Lord so you can live! Otherwise he will break out like fire against Joseph's family; the fire will consume and no one will be able to quench it and save Bethel.

5:7 The Israelites turn justice into bitterness; they throw what is fair and right to the ground.

5:8 (But there is one who made the constellations Pleiades and Orion; he can turn the darkness into morning and daylight into night. He summons the water of the seas and pours it out on the earth's surface. The Lord is his name!

5:9 He flashes destruction down upon the strong so that destruction overwhelms the fortified places.)

5:10 The Israelites hate anyone who arbitrates at the city gate; they despise anyone who speaks honestly.

5:11 Therefore, because you make the poor pay taxes on their crops and exact a grain tax from them, you will not live in the houses you built with chiseled stone, nor will you drink the wine from the fine vineyards you planted.

5:12 Certainly I am aware of your many rebellious acts and your numerous sins. You torment the innocent, you take bribes, and you deny justice to the needy at the city gate.

5:13 For this reason whoever is smart keeps quiet in such a time, for it is an evil time.

5:14 Seek good and not evil so you can live! Then the Lord, the God who commands armies, just might be with you, as you claim he is.

5:15 Hate what is wrong, love what is right! Promote justice at the city gate! Maybe the Lord, the God who commands armies, will have mercy on those who are left from Joseph.

5:16 Because of Israel's sins this is what the Lord, the God who commands armies, the sovereign One, says: "In all the squares there will be wailing, in all the streets they will mourn the dead. They will tell the field workers to lament and the professional mourners to wail.

5:17 In all the vineyards there will be wailing, for I will pass through your midst," says the Lord.

The Lord Demands Justice

5:18 Woe to those who wish for the day of the Lord! Why do you want the Lord's day of judgment to come? It will bring darkness, not light.

5:19 Disaster will be inescapable, as if a man ran from a lion only to meet a bear, then escaped into a house, leaned his hand against the wall, and was bitten by a poisonous snake.

5:20 Don't you realize the Lord's day of judgment will bring darkness, not light – gloomy blackness, not bright light?

5:21 "I absolutely despise your festivals! I get no pleasure from your religious assemblies!

5:22 Even if you offer me burnt and grain offerings, I will not be satisfied; I will not look with favor on your peace offerings of fattened calves.

5:23 Take away from me your noisy songs; I don't want to hear the music of your stringed instruments.

5:24 Justice must flow like torrents of water, righteous actions like a stream that never dries up.

5:25 You did not bring me sacrifices and grain offerings during the forty years you spent in the wilderness, family of Israel.

5:26 You will pick up your images of Sikkuth, your king, and Kiyyun, your star god, which you made for yourselves,

5:27 and I will drive you into exile beyond Damascus," says the Lord. He is called the God who commands armies!

The Party is over for the Rich

6:1 Woe to those who live in ease in Zion, to those who feel secure on Mount Samaria. They think of themselves as the elite class of the best nation. The family of Israel looks to them for leadership.

6:2 They say to the people: "Journey over to Calneh and look at it! Then go from there to Hamath-Rabbah! Then go down to Gath of the Philistines! Are they superior to our two kingdoms? Is their territory larger than yours?"

6:3 You refuse to believe a day of disaster will come, but you establish a reign of violence.

6:4 They lie around on beds decorated with ivory, and sprawl out on their couches. They eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the middle of the pen.

6:5 They sing to the tune of stringed instruments; like David they invent musical instruments.

6:6 They drink wine from sacrificial bowls, and pour the very best oils on themselves. Yet they are not concerned over the ruin of Joseph.

6:7 Therefore they will now be the first to go into exile, and the religious banquets where they sprawl on couches will end.

6:8 The sovereign Lord confirms this oath by his very own life. The Lord, the God who commands armies, is speaking: "I despise Jacob's arrogance; I hate their fortresses. I will hand over to their enemies the city of Samaria and everything in it."

6:9 If ten men are left in one house, they too will die. 6:10 When their close relatives, the ones who will burn the corpses, pick up their bodies to remove the bones from the house, they will say to anyone who is in the inner rooms of the house, "Is anyone else with you?" He will respond, "Be quiet! Don't invoke the Lord's name!"

6:11 Indeed, look! The Lord is giving the command. He will smash the large house to bits, and the small house into little pieces.

6:12 Can horses run on rocky cliffs? Can one plow the sea with oxen? Yet you have turned justice into a poisonous plant, and the fruit of righteous actions into a bitter plant.

6:13 You are happy because you conquered Lo-Debar. You say, "Did we not conquer Karnaim by our own power?"

6:14 "Look! I am about to bring a nation against you, family of Israel." The Lord, the God who commands armies, is speaking. "They will oppress you all the way from Lebo-Hamath to the Stream of the Arabah."

Symbolic Visions of Judgment

7:1 The sovereign Lord showed me this: I saw him making locusts just as the crops planted late were beginning to sprout. (The crops planted late sprout after the royal harvest.) 7:2 When they had completely consumed the earth's vegetation, I said, "Sovereign Lord, forgive Israel! How can Jacob survive? He is too weak!"

7:3 The Lord decided not to do this. "It will not happen," the Lord said.

7:4 The sovereign Lord showed me this: I saw the sovereign Lord summoning a shower of fire. It consumed the great deep and devoured the fields.

7:5 I said, "Sovereign Lord, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is too weak!"

7:6 The Lord decided not to do this. The sovereign Lord said, "This will not happen either."

7:7 He showed me this: I saw the sovereign One standing by a tin wall holding tin in his hand. 7:8 The Lord said to me, "What do you see, Amos?" I said, "Tin." The sovereign One then said, "Look, I am about to place tin among my people Israel. I will no longer overlook their sin.

7:9 Isaac's centers of worship will become desolate; Israel's holy places will be in ruins. I will attack Jeroboam's dynasty with the sword."

Amos Confronts a Priest

7:10 Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent this message to King Jeroboam of Israel: "Amos is conspiring against you in the very heart of the kingdom of Israel! The land cannot endure all his prophecies. 7:11 As a matter of fact, Amos is saying this: 'Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly be carried into exile away from its land.'"

7:12 Amaziah then said to Amos, "Leave, you visionary! Run away to the land of Judah! Earn your living and prophesy there! 7:13 Don't prophesy at Bethel any longer, for a royal temple and palace are here!"

7:14 Amos replied to Amaziah, "I was not a prophet by profession. No, I was a herdsman who also took care of sycamore fig trees. 7:15 Then the Lord took me from tending flocks and gave me this commission, 'Go! Prophesy to my people Israel!' 7:16 So now listen to the Lord's message! You say, 'Don't prophesy against Israel! Don't preach against the family of Isaac!'

7:17 "Therefore this is what the Lord says: 'Your wife will become a prostitute in the streets and your sons and daughters will die violently. Your land will be given to others and you will die in a foreign land. Israel will certainly be carried into exile away from its land.'"

More Visions and Messages of Judgment

8:1 The sovereign Lord showed me this: I saw a basket of summer fruit.

8:2 He said, "What do you see, Amos?" I replied, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the Lord said to me, "The end has come for my people Israel! I will no longer overlook their sins.

8:3 The women singing in the temple will wail in that day." The sovereign Lord is speaking. "There will be many corpses littered everywhere! Be quiet!"

8:4 Listen to this, you who trample the needy, and do away with the destitute in the land.

8:5 You say, “When will the new moon festival be over, so we can sell grain? When will the Sabbath end, so we can open up the grain bins? We’re eager to sell less for a higher price, and to cheat the buyer with rigged scales!

8:6 We’re eager to trade silver for the poor, a pair of sandals for the needy! We want to mix in some chaff with the grain!”

8:7 The Lord confirms this oath by the arrogance of Jacob: “I swear I will never forget all you have done!

8:8 Because of this the earth will quake, and all who live in it will mourn. The whole earth will rise like the River Nile, it will surge upward and then grow calm, like the Nile in Egypt.

8:9 In that day,” says the sovereign Lord, “I will make the sun set at noon, and make the earth dark in the middle of the day.

8:10 I will turn your festivals into funerals, and all your songs into funeral dirges. I will make everyone wear funeral clothes and cause every head to be shaved bald. I will make you mourn as if you had lost your only son; when it ends it will indeed have been a bitter day.

8:11 Be certain of this, the time is coming,” says the sovereign Lord, “when I will send a famine through the land – not a shortage of food or water but an end to divine revelation!

8:12 People will stagger from sea to sea, and from the north around to the east. They will wander about looking for a revelation from the Lord, but they will not find any.

8:13 In that day your beautiful young women and your young men will faint from thirst. 8:14 These are the ones who now take oaths in the name of the sinful idol goddess of Samaria. They vow, ‘As surely as your god lives, O Dan,’ or ‘As surely as your beloved one lives, O Beer Sheba!’ But they will fall down and not get up again.”

9:1 I saw the sovereign One standing by the altar and he said, “Strike the tops of the support pillars, so the thresholds shake! Knock them down on the heads of all the people, and I will kill the survivors with the sword. No one will be able to run away; no one will be able to escape.

9:2 Even if they could dig down into the netherworld, my hand would pull them up from there. Even if they could climb up to heaven, I would drag them down from there.

9:3 Even if they were to hide on the top of Mount Carmel, I would hunt them down and take them from there. Even if they tried to hide from me at the bottom of the sea, from there I would command the Sea Serpent to bite them.

9:4 Even when their enemies drive them into captivity, from there I will command the sword to kill them. I will not let them out of my sight; they will experience disaster, not prosperity.”

9:5 The sovereign Lord who commands armies will do this. He touches the earth and it dissolves; all who live on it mourn. The whole earth rises like the River Nile, and then grows calm like the Nile in Egypt.

9:6 He builds the upper rooms of his palace in heaven and sets its foundation supports on the earth. He summons the water of the sea and pours it out on the earth’s surface. The Lord is his name.

9:7 “You Israelites are just like the Ethiopians in my sight,” says the Lord. “Certainly I brought Israel up from the land of Egypt, but I also brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir.

9:8 Look, the sovereign Lord is watching the sinful nation, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth. But I will not completely destroy the family of Jacob,” says the Lord.

9:9 “For look, I am giving a command and I will shake the family of Israel together with all the nations. It will resemble a sieve being shaken, when not even a pebble falls to the ground.

9:10 All the sinners among my people will die by the sword – the ones who say, ‘Disaster will not come near, it will not confront us.’

The Restoration of the Davidic Dynasty

9:11 “In that day I will rebuild the collapsing hut of David. I will seal its gaps, repair its ruins, and restore it to what it was like in days gone by.

9:12 As a result they will conquer those left in Edom and all the nations subject to my rule.” The Lord, who is about to do this, is speaking!

9:13 “Be sure of this, the time is coming,” says the Lord, “when the plowman will catch up to the reaper and the one who stomps the grapes will overtake the planter. Juice will run down the slopes, it will flow down all the hillsides.

9:14 I will bring back my people, Israel; they will rebuild the cities lying in rubble and settle down. They will plant vineyards and drink the wine they produce; they will grow orchards and eat the fruit they produce.

9:15 I will plant them on their land and they will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the Lord your God.

2 Kings

Jeroboam II's Reign over Israel

14:23 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Judah's King Amaziah, son of Joash, Jeroboam son of Joash became king over Israel. He reigned for forty-one years in Samaria. 14:24 He did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not repudiate the sinful ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat who encouraged Israel to sin.

14:25 He restored the border of Israel from Lebo Hamath in the north to the sea of the Arabah in the south, in accordance with the word of the Lord God of Israel announced through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hopher. 14:26 The Lord saw Israel's intense suffering; everyone was weak and incapacitated and Israel had no deliverer. 14:27 The Lord had not decreed that he would blot out Israel's memory from under heaven, so he delivered them through Jeroboam son of Joash.

14:28 The rest of the events of Jeroboam's reign, including all his accomplishments, his military success in restoring Israelite control over Damascus and Hamath, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel. 14:29 Jeroboam passed away and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. His son Zechariah replaced him as king.

Azariah's Reign over Judah

15:1 In the twenty-seventh year of King Jeroboam's reign over Israel, Amaziah's son Azariah became king over Judah. 15:2 He was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah, who was from Jerusalem. 15:3 He did what the Lord approved, just as his father Amaziah had done. 15:4 But the high places were not eliminated; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense on the high places. 15:5 The Lord afflicted the king with an illness; he suffered from a skin disease until the day he died. He lived in separate quarters, while his son Jotham was in charge of the palace and ruled over the people of the land.

15:6 The rest of the events of Azariah's reign, including all his accomplishments, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah. 15:7 Azariah passed away and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David. His son Jotham replaced him as king.

Zechariah's Reign over Israel

15:8 In the thirty-eighth year of King Azariah's reign over Judah, Jeroboam's son Zechariah became king over Israel. He reigned in Samaria for six months. 15:9 He did evil in the sight of the Lord, as his ancestors had done. He did not repudiate the sinful ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat who encouraged Israel to sin. 15:10 Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against him; he assassinated him in Ibleam and took his place as king. 15:11 The rest of the events of Zechariah's reign are recorded in the scroll called

the Annals of the Kings of Israel. 15:12 His assassination brought to fulfillment the Lord's word to Jehu, "Four generations of your descendants will rule over Israel." That is exactly what happened.

15:13 Shallum son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of King Uzziah's reign over Judah. He reigned for one month in Samaria. 15:14 Menahem son of Gadi went up from Tirzah to Samaria and attacked Shallum son of Jabesh. He killed him and took his place as king. 15:15 The rest of the events of Shallum's reign, including the conspiracy he organized, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel. 15:16 At that time Menahem came from Tirzah and attacked Tiphseh. He struck down all who lived in the city and the surrounding territory, because they would not surrender. He even ripped open the pregnant women.

Menahem's Reign over Israel

15:17 In the thirty-ninth year of King Azariah's reign over Judah, Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel. He reigned for twelve years in Samaria. 15:18 He did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not repudiate the sinful ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat who encouraged Israel to sin.

During his reign, 15:19 Pul king of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem paid him a thousand talents of silver to gain his support and to solidify his control of the kingdom. 15:20 Menahem got this silver by taxing all the wealthy men in Israel; he took fifty shekels of silver from each one of them and paid it to the king of Assyria. Then the king of Assyria left; he did not stay there in the land.

15:21 The rest of the events of Menahem's reign, including all his accomplishments, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel. 15:22 Menahem passed away and his son Pekahiah replaced him as king.

Pekahiah's Reign over Israel

15:23 In the fiftieth year of King Azariah's reign over Judah, Menahem's son Pekahiah became king over Israel. He reigned in Samaria for two years. 15:24 He did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not repudiate the sinful ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat who encouraged Israel to sin. 15:25 His officer Pekah son of Remaliah conspired against him. He and fifty Gileadites assassinated Pekahiah, as well as Argob and Arieah, in Samaria in the fortress of the royal palace. Pekah then took his place as king.

15:26 The rest of the events of Pekahiah's reign, including all his accomplishments, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

Pekah's Reign over Israel

15:27 In the fifty-second year of King Azariah's reign over Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king over Israel. He reigned in Samaria for twenty years. 15:28 He did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not repudiate the sinful ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat who encouraged Israel to sin. 15:29 During Pekah's reign over Israel, King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria came and captured Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, including all the territory of Naphtali. He deported the people to Assyria. 15:30 Hoshea son of Elah conspired against Pekah son of Remaliah. He assassinated him and took his place as king, in the twentieth year of the reign of Jotham son of Uzziah.

15:31 The rest of the events of Pekah's reign, including all his accomplishments, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

Jotham's Reign over Judah

15:32 In the second year of the reign of Israel's King Pekah son of Remaliah, Uzziah's son Jotham became king over Judah. 15:33 He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jerusha the daughter of Zadok. 15:34 He did what the Lord approved, just as his father Uzziah had done. 15:35 But the high places were not eliminated; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense on the high places. He built the Upper Gate to the Lord's temple.

15:36 The rest of the events of Jotham's reign, including his accomplishments, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah. 15:37 In those days the Lord prompted King Rezin of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah to attack Judah. 15:38 Jotham passed away and was buried with his ancestors in the city of his ancestor David. His son Ahaz replaced him as king.

2 Chronicles

Uzziah's Reign

26:1 All the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in his father Amaziah's place. 26:2 Uzziah built up Elat and restored it to Judah after King Amaziah had passed away.

26:3 Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah, who was from Jerusalem. 26:4 He did what the Lord approved, just as his father Amaziah had done. 26:5 He followed God during the lifetime of Zechariah, who taught him how to honor God. As long as he followed the Lord, God caused him to succeed.

26:6 Uzziah attacked the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. He built cities in the region of Ashdod and throughout Philistine territory. 26:7 God helped him in his

campaigns against the Philistines, the Arabs living in Gur Baal, and the Meunites. 26:8 The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah and his fame reached the border of Egypt, for he grew in power.

26:9 Uzziah built and fortified towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, Valley Gate, and at the Angle.

26:10 He built towers in the desert and dug many cisterns, for he owned many herds in the lowlands and on the plain. He had workers in the fields and vineyards in the hills and in Carmel, for he loved agriculture.

26:11 Uzziah had an army of skilled warriors trained for battle. They were organized by divisions according to the muster rolls made by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer under the authority of Hananiah, a royal official. 26:12 The total number of family leaders who led warriors was 2,600. 26:13 They commanded an army of 307,500 skilled and able warriors who were ready to defend the king against his enemies. 26:14 Uzziah supplied shields, spears, helmets, breastplates, bows, and slingstones for the entire army. 26:15 In Jerusalem he made war machines carefully designed to shoot arrows and large stones from the towers and corners of the walls. He became very famous, for he received tremendous support and became powerful.

26:16 But once he became powerful, his pride destroyed him. He disobeyed the Lord his God. He entered the Lord's temple to offer incense on the incense altar. 26:17 Azariah the priest and eighty other brave priests of the Lord followed him in. 26:18 They confronted King Uzziah and said to him, "It is not proper for you, Uzziah, to offer incense to the Lord. That is the responsibility of the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who are consecrated to offer incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have disobeyed and the Lord God will not honor you!" 26:19 Uzziah, who had an incense censer in his hand, became angry. While he was ranting and raving at the priests, a skin disease appeared on his forehead right there in front of the priests in the Lord's temple near the incense altar. 26:20 When Azariah the high priest and the other priests looked at him, there was a skin disease on his forehead. They hurried him out of there; even the king himself wanted to leave quickly because the Lord had afflicted him. 26:21 King Uzziah suffered from a skin disease until the day he died. He lived in separate quarters, afflicted by a skin disease and banned from the Lord's temple. His son Jotham was in charge of the palace and ruled over the people of the land.

26:22 The rest of the events of Uzziah's reign, from start to finish, were recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 26:23 Uzziah passed away and was buried near his ancestors in a cemetery belonging to the kings. (This was because he had a skin disease.) His son Jotham replaced him as king.

PRAYER

Lord, when leaders compromise with Your great and perfect plan everyone around them suffers. May I take care to do things Your way and not make excuses for exceptions which are really rebellion.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Amos delivered his prophecies “Listen, you Israelites, to this message which the Lord is proclaiming against you! This message is for the entire clan I brought up from the land of Egypt: “I have chosen you alone from all the clans of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for all your sins.” Do two walk together without having met? If an alarm sounds in a city, do people not fear? If disaster overtakes a city, is the Lord not responsible? Certainly the sovereign Lord does nothing without first revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who is not afraid? The sovereign Lord has spoken! Who can refuse to prophesy?”

He warned them that judgment was coming for all of the nations and all of the tribes who had rebelled and who had committed terrible sins – and who remained unrepentant. While the Lord God continued to plead with them to return to Him there was to be no escape from a terrible judgment in their immediate future.

Amos was primarily delivering his prophesy of judgment to Israel, the Northern region of the divided people of God.

He recorded an exchange with the Lord God where three symbolic visions were presented, the first two were of the destruction of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem, to which he responded with the plea that Judah could not bear it, the third was against Israel alone.

The high priest of Israel, Amaziah, challenged Amos to cease prophesy in Israel and to relocate to Judah. Amos replied that the Lord God had called him into his prophetic ministry and that he would continue as instructed – and, since Amaziah had disrespected him, terrible things would happen to his family and he would be exiled.

Amos concluded with a prophesy of hope, that one day the Lord God would restore all of His people to a land made-new.

Joash tore down part of the wall around Jerusalem and sacked the temple and royal palace for gold and silver, then took Amaziah and several others captive.

Joash died and his son Jeroboam replaced him as king of Israel. Amaziah also died and his son Azariah became king of Judah. Although he failed to discourage false gods Jeroboam was successful in restoring Israelite control of border regions.

Azariah became king over Judah at the age of 16 but failed to remove the high places – after a time the Lord God visited him with a skin disease so his son Jotham functioned as the public ruler while he was hidden away in his private quarters.

Jeroboam's son Zechariah became king over Israel for six months, he was an evil king who promoted the worship of false gods, Shallum son of Jabesh murdered him and became king for one month until Menahem son of Gadi killed him and took his place as king.

Menahem was so evil that during one attack he even cut open pregnant women. Pul, king of Assyria, invaded Israel so Menahem paid him a thousand talents of silver (taken from wealthy citizens) to buy Pul's support and solidify his own power.

Menahem's son Pekahiah became king over Israel for two years, he was evil like his predecessors and was murdered by his officer Pekah, who then reigned for twenty-two years. Pekah was also evil and King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria captured several regions of Israel, deporting many of the people to Assyria as slaves.

Jotham became king over Judah for sixteen years, he was generally obedient to the Lord God but did not remove the high places. At the Lord's prompting King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel attacked Judah. During his reign Jotham built the Upper Gate to the Lord's Temple. After his death Jotham's son Ahaz became king.

Jeroboam possessed military skills and God desired to restore much of the coastline which Israel had lost, so despite his failure to purge evil from Israel the Lord God used him.

Uzziah, as king of Judah, followed God while Zechariah was king of Israel – then he turned away. His pride led him to charge into the Temple to offer incense and as Azariah (the priest, not the former king) warned him the Lord struck him with a disease on his face and he remained isolated the rest of his life, his son Jotham served as king in his stead.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The prophets of the Lord God, despite their reluctance to deliver a prophesy of judgment, felt compelled to do so once He gave that prophesy to them. The arrogance of the Israelites to imagine that the Lord God would not fulfill His prophesies and that they would not suffer consequences for the worship of false idols and for unrepentant sin is incredible. Jeroboam possessed military skills and God desired to restore much of the coastline which Israel had lost, so despite his failure to purge evil from Israel the Lord God used him. Menahem was evil but clever, he tolerated the domination of Pul of Assyria – rather than fight and probably lose - paying Pul with wealth taken from the wealthy, so he could remain as king.

DISCUSS

Do you find it encouraging that so great was the love of the Lord was that even as He was initiating the judgment of Israel He was still seeking those who would repent and return to Him so that they might be His instruments to preserve a remnant in the exile? Why would the priest think that he could get away with disrespecting God's prophet? Why would Amaziah of Judah threaten Joash of Israel? Given the history of troubles why did none of these kings figure out that ignoring God's expectation that they remove the high places was a major reason for the absence of blessing?

REFLECT

Israel, Damascus, Moab, and others were judged first but Judah and Jerusalem were placed on-notice that unless they ceased from their rebellion what they were about to observe would be their fate as well. The Lord's love for His Creation, despite the Fall, is amazing. Had Joash listened closely to Elisha and obeyed fully he would have been empowered to obliterate Syria as an enemy. Tolerance of the evil "high places" created an evil environment where king after king was murdered and replaced by their murderers.

SHARE

When have you experienced or observed the delivery of some sort of punishment – deserved - yet the one delivering it held-out hope for a future reconciliation? When have you drifted into sin and resisted efforts to encourage you to repent – and suffered some consequences you should have known were coming? When have you experienced or observed the Lord God blessing someone either in spite of their limited obedience and not as completely as He might have because of their limited obedience? When have you experienced or observed troubles that flowed from disobedience yet the disobedience continued?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAYER

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a warning that He wants you to share with someone who is making choices that are harming their relationship with Him and his children, to reveal to you a place in your life where you are at risk of trouble because of continuing sin, to reveal to you a place where you are not listening closely and not obeying fully, and/or to reveal to you a place in your life where you have made excuses for something that you know to be offensive to the Lord God.

ACT

Today I will humbly and prayerfully deliver the Lord's warning. I will share my own experience with His chastising, I will share my own struggle to remain faithful in all things, and I will ask them to pray for me as well. I will confess and repent, seek and receive the Lord God's forgiveness, and I will listen more-closely to the Holy Spirit so that I will have the strength and wisdom to live rightly. I will pause

and pray and listen closely to the Lord God for what He has been trying to tell me. I will do so several times during the day and make time to reflect upon what I believe He is saying and to consult my Bible. As appropriate I will ask a fellow believer to listen to my reflections, to pray in-agreement for wisdom, and to share anything the Lord may reveal to them. I will begin the process of purging that which offends the Lord God from my life. I will ask a fellow believer to be my accountability partner and to pray in-agreement for my complete and continued freedom.

Be Specific _____

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Note 1: These Studies often rely upon the guidance of the NET Translators from their associated notes. Careful attention has been given to cite that source where it has been quoted directly or closely paraphrased. Feedback is encouraged where credit has not been sufficiently assigned.

Note 2: When NET text is quoted in commentary and discussion all pronouns referring to God are capitalized, though they are lower-case in the original NET text.

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