

## 2 Kings 13-14

### **The Kings of Israel after the judgment of the house of Ahab**

The rise and fall of the house of Ahab (the Omride dynasty) is a focal point in the books of the kings. They play a central role during the prophetic ministries of both Elijah and Elisha and they had an important effect on both Israel and Judah. In the wake of the judgment on these kings, both kingdoms are left politically and militarily weak. Keeping these kings straight is difficult and really not that important. We will focus on the big picture as the situation begins to transition to the Assyrian Crisis.

Remember, Jehu was promised four generations of kings. His first successor is Jehoahaz, and because of his evil ways, Israel will continue to be dominated by Hazael, king of Aram. Jehoahaz then seeks the LORD and 13:5 says that God provided "A Deliverer." We really do not know who this is. There is no political, military or prophetic figure that rises at this time to bring relief to the nation from the oppression by the Arameans. What does change is the reassertion of Assyrian power in the region to the north of Aram. This causes Aram to focus on defending itself from the Assyrians who dominate Damascus at this time and thus leave poor Israel alone. Sometimes, God's deliverer is not what we expect, but a bigger bully to beat up the bully that was stealing our lunch money. In any case it is God that provides deliverance for his people because he controls the power of the nations.

Now Jehoahaz is replaced by his son Jehoash (the grandson of Jehu) and he is another evil king. It is during his reign however, that Elisha dies. Elisha is most probably in his home town east of the Jordan River and the king comes to see him and wept over him. Elisha had been the one who prophesied that Jehu would start a new dynasty. He mentioned the chariots and horsemen of Israel – referring to the Chariot of fire that had taken Elijah into heaven and the Lord's army that has been so frequently revealed in the ministry of Elisha. Elisha, on his death bed prophesied that Jehoash would defeat the Arameans but that he did not have enough faith in God to utterly destroy them. This brings the Aramean conflict, that has been so important during the ministry of Elisha to an end. There is then a quick story of a group of men who are digging an grave and they invade the burial space of Elisha in the process, some raiders from Moab come and they are forced to throw the body into the half prepared grave and upon contact with the bones of Elisha, the dead man rose from the dead. Again the incredible anointing of Elisha is seen even after his death. By verse 24, Hazael, the king of Aram had died, closing out another key figure in this narrative. His son Ben-Hadad is weaker and Jehoash is able to recuperate much of the territory of Israel that had been lost.

### **Chapter 14: The Kings of Judah**

After the assassination of Joash, his son Amaziah becomes king in Jerusalem. He does right in the eyes of the Lord but he is not as faithful as David. After he consolidates control of his kingdom he executed the people directly involved in his father's assassination but he did not kill their extended families because he wanted to be just according to the Law of Moses. He then goes to war with Edom in the south and secures some valuable trade routes and asks the king of Israel for help. There must have been a disagreement between the two kings during this campaign and the king of Judah calls out the king of Israel to a fight. The king of Israel says you are

arrogant because of your victory over Edom but don't start something you are going to regret. Judah insists and Israel defeats them takes the king of Judah, Amaziah, hostage and then attacked Jerusalem and breaches the wall and takes the treasures from the Temple and the palace treasuries as well as some hostages that presumably he held for ransom. Amaziah is eventually released and lives another 15 years and his people conspire against him and he fled Jerusalem and was killed in Lachish. Azariah, his 16 year old son is placed on the throne in Jerusalem.

Now we return to Israel in the North and Jehu's great grand son becomes king and his name is Jeroboam II and he reigns for 40 years. He is of course an evil king, but he is very powerful and successful both politically and militarily. He reasserts Israel's control over the lands that were once held by Solomon. This expansion is not credited to Jeroboam by the writers of "The Kings" but rather to the LORD who had prophesied this success through the prophet JONAH (14:25). The Lord is responding to the suffering of the people and that is why he gives Jeroboam success, not because of his personal righteousness.