

# The Christian Arsenal

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## 2 KINGS 13:1-25

We saw last week at the end of our lesson in **chapter 12** that the king of Syria came against Judah...and we saw that the king of Judah, who was Joash at the time, bribed the king of Syria.

He took the sacred things from the temple and all the gold that was found among the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house and he sent all this to Hazael, king of Syria.

**Remember the only “claim to fame” Joash had was that he repaired the temple of God and replaced all the utensils of sacrifice in the temple. And here he is willing to give it all away!**

Why? He did this to keep Hazael from attacking them! **It was a bribe!**

Today, we turn our attention away from Judah and we turn it to Israel. **And guess what?** Israel had the very same problem with Syria that Judah had. Jehoahaz was on the throne of Israel...

2 Kings 13:1-9...

Now, let's see if we can get in our mind what's happening here.

Jehoahaz became king of Israel and we see here that he did evil in the sight of the Lord and **followed the sins of Jeroboam**. Who was **Jeroboam**?

Well, to understand who Jeroboam was, we need to remember what happened hundreds of years before this.

Remember that the people of Israel didn't have a king. God was their king.

And God provided them with **priests and prophets** to guide them. But, there came a time when this wasn't good enough for the Israelites. They looked at the nations around them and they said, **"Oh, all these nations have a king...we want a king, too!"**

And you have to be very careful about what you ask for, because you just might get it! Samuel, the prophet, had been their leader and he went before God and said, *"God, they've rejected me. They don't want me in their lives anymore. They want a king."*

And remember what God said to Samuel? He said, "No, Samuel, they haven't rejected **you**. They've rejected **Me**. I'll give them a king. But, I'll also tell them exactly what will happen to them when they get what they want. I'll tell them that first the king will take away

their **sons** and he will take away their **daughters**,  
and the best of their **fields**,  
and their **vineyards** and your their **groves**,  
and their **seed** and their servants and their **donkeys** and their **flocks** and their **money**,  
and indeed even **they themselves** will have to serve the king."

But, you know what the people said? They said, **"Oh, we don't care what God says, we want a king anyway!"**

**I want to tell you this...the Lord may let us choose what we want, but He chooses the consequences of our choices!**

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Well, the first king God gave these folks was Saul. And Saul turned out to be a **terrible** king. So, God gave them David. And even though David wasn't perfect, he was still **a man after God's own heart**.

After David died, his son, Solomon, became king. And Solomon started out with such promise. God gave Solomon more **wisdom** than anyone else and more **wealth** than anyone else, but somewhere along the line, **Solomon decided to go his own way**.

And he married many women and had many others in his life and most of these women were foreigners and idol-worshippers and they brought their idols with them and instead of Solomon influencing them to worship **his** God, they influenced Solomon to worship **their** gods.

And God was very angry with Solomon because of his sin...and God told him that for the sake of his father, David, He wouldn't tear the kingdom away from him in **his lifetime**, but the kingdom would be divided **after** he died...and it was.

The Southern Kingdom became **Judah**, and it was ruled by Solomon's son, **Rehoboam**. And the Northern Kingdom was **Israel** and it was ruled by a man named **Jeroboam**.

Rehoboam was a bad king...but Jeroboam was also a bad king. God's Word says, "And he did evil in the sight of the LORD."

Well, what did he do? **What was the sin he committed that was so bad? What sin did Jeroboam commit that we find Jehoahaz committing?**

***To understand this, I want us to turn first to***

***1 Kings 11:38 – God is promising Jeroboam how he will be blessed if he obeys God...***

Then, let's turn to

***1 Kings 12:26-33...***

Jeroboam said, "The kingdom is divided. And if I allow the men of Israel of the north to continue to go back down to Jerusalem to worship at the appointed time, I know what's going to happen. Their hearts are going to turn away from me and they're going to turn toward Jerusalem, and they're going to turn to Rehoboam as their king.

They're going to love **him** and hate **me** and then they'll probably kill me."

So, instead of Jeroboam turning to God and asking Him for direction, he took matters into his own hands and he institutes his own form of worship that had nothing at all to do with the God of Israel.

God had ordained how He should be worshiped. God had laid down certain standards and rituals and ceremonies and feast days and God had chosen a certain tribe to produce the priests who would carry out this worship and God had just simply made it very, very clear how His people were to worship Him.

And along comes this fellow who just happened to be at the right place at the right time when God decided to divide the

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kingdom and he decides he knows more than God!

I mean, Jeroboam would never have even had any chance in the world of being king if God had not arranged it!

And the first thing that made this sin so bad was that Jeroboam

- **rejected God's promise...**

What did God promise Jeroboam in **1 Kings 11**? He promised Jeroboam that if he would observe His statutes and commandments as David had done, then God would build for Jeroboam an enduring house as He had done for David...

Not only did Jeroboam reject God's promise...he also r

- **rejected God's place of worship...**

God said, "On certain days of the year, I want all the Jewish males to come up to Jerusalem to worship Me." And here was Jeroboam saying, "Well, it really doesn't matter **where** we worship...we can worship **anywhere** we choose."

And I believe individually this is true. I believe we can worship God anywhere.

**I believe a person can worship God sitting on the bank of a stream or a river or down at the beach.**

**I believe I can worship God in my kitchen or in my den or in my bedroom.**

**I believe a person can worship God anywhere he can be still and get the things of the world off his mind and get his mind turned toward the things of God.**

And when it comes to the collective, corporate worship of God, when it comes to God's people gathering together to worship, God has ordained a place to worship Him. And this was especially true in the Old Testament.

God has ordained such a place for you and me. God has told us in **Hebrews** that we're to encourage and stimulate each other to love and good deeds and He said we're to do this by not forsaking the assembling together of ourselves...

And Jeroboam had said, "It doesn't **matter** where God said we're to worship, I know more than God knows."

Not only did Jeroboam reject God's **place** of worship but Jeroboam

- **rejected God's priesthood...**

God had said the priests could come only from the tribe of Levi. But, Jeroboam said, "I can set up my **own** priests in my **own** way from my **own** tribes...any way I see fit."

Jeroboam also

- **rejected God's praise...**

The days God had appointed for the Jewish males to come to Jerusalem were high and holy days. They were days when people would come to worship Him in Jerusalem with joy in their hearts. They would approach the house of God with great anticipation and happiness.

**Many of the psalms were written for the people to sing as they approached Jerusalem..."songs of ascent"...**

They're called "songs of ascent" because Jerusalem sits on a group of hills and to go into Jerusalem from any direction, you must go "up to Jerusalem."

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But, Jeroboam said, "I'm not going to praise God on the feast days that He has set up. I'm going to set **my own** feast days, and we're going to praise the gods that I've made with **my own** hands."

And finally, Jeroboam also

- **rejected God's person...**

He said, "Look at these golden calves. These are the gods that delivered you out of Egypt." Well, doesn't that make a lot of sense? Can you believe the people fell for all this?

And if we had the time, we would run through the Scriptures and see how many times the "sins of Jeroboam" is referred to. All the way from **1 Kings 12** to **2 Kings 17** this term is used...at least 17 times...four times in the chapter we have before us today. **And did you know that in time, this constitutes at least 200 years?**

See, after Jeroboam there were eighteen kings who ruled over a period of 200 years and not a single one of them, not one of them, **ever did away with the golden calves at Bethel and Dan.** Not one of them ever did away with the worship of the golden calves...

So, for over 200 years God looked down upon His people and He saw them worshipping golden calves as though these calves had delivered them out of Egypt.

And that's why the sin of Jeroboam was so bad! It wasn't just one isolated sin. It was a sin that polluted a nation and perverted the worship of the Lord God of Israel **for over 200 years!**

I want to tell you...God doesn't take this lightly. God hates it. God never takes this in stride. God will not stand for it in His **priests**...remember Nadab and Abihu? And God will not stand for it in His **prophets** and God will not stand for it in His **kings!**

So, what did God do to this Jehoahaz who, like so many other kings of Israel had patterned his reign after the likeness of the reign of Jeroboam and had walked in the sins of Jeroboam?

Well, He gave them continually into the hand of the Syrians. We've said before that God often used the enemies of Israel and Judah as a rod against them...a rod of discipline and judgment.

Look at **verse 4** again.

It seems that Jehoahaz had at least a **moment of temporary sanity** and he sought the help of the Lord! And I say this is a temporary moment of sanity instead of a life change because **verse 5** says God sent them a deliverer to deliver them from the hand of the Syrians but look at **verse 6** again...

**Verse 6...**

There was no genuine repentance on the part of Jehoahaz, because genuine repentance means a turning around...a 180 degree turn. You're walking one way and when you repent, you stop walking that direction and you begin walking in the opposite direction.

The religion of Jehoahaz was a religion that ignores God when things are going well, but cries out to God when things are getting tough.

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"God, leave me alone. Let me do what I want to do, go where I want to go, be what I want to be, have what I want to have. If I need You, I'll call You. Otherwise, leave me alone."

I heard this statement this past week: "In the profound depths of life, we cease to talk **about** God and begin to take **to** God."

And that's exactly what we see in our country. Remember 9/11? Oh, we even saw the members of Congress on the front steps of the Capital building singing "God Bless America", didn't we? Folks came to church. Folks dropped by the church just to pray.

Well, that didn't last long, did it? The religion of Jehoahaz is the religion of our country! America will call on God when the next terrorist strike comes. But, the rest of the time America goes her merry way and says, "Don't call me, God. I'll call You...only if I need You."

Listen, God didn't honor the prayer of Jehoahaz because his heart was repentant. God didn't answer the prayer of Jehoahaz because of his goodness. God didn't send a deliverer because of Jehoahaz.

Verse 23...

God is a covenant keeping God. And He had made a covenant with the patriarchs. God chose to deliver Israel over and over and over and still delivers Israel, not because of the goodness of Israel...but because of the fact that **He** is good and **He** is gracious and **He** keeps **His** covenants.

And He has blessed our country for so many years, not because of any goodness of America...but because of the way our country was founded...because of our forefathers and their faith...and because of the world-wide evangelism efforts of the churches of our country and because of our support of Israel...

He is compassionate and longsuffering and merciful. What a God we serve! He loves us! He cares for us!

But, He is not deceived. He is not mocked. Whatever we sow, we will also reap!

By the way, who was this savior or deliverer we see in **verse 5**? The Bible doesn't tell us. Some theologians say he was an Egyptian...some say he was an Assyrian.

Maybe he was Elisha. We haven't seen Elisha since **chapter 9**. And right here in the middle of this chapter he appears and dies.

Whoever this savior or deliverer was, he did an earthly work of deliverance. And that's good. But, I want to tell you, **we** have a Savior who does a better work than that.

The savior of **2 Kings 13** did a **temporary** work.  
**Our** Savior does a **permanent** work.

The savior of **2 Kings 13** did an **incomplete** work.  
**Our** Savior does a **complete** work. "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it..."

The savior of **2 Kings 13** enable them to have a **partial** victory.  
Our Savior gives us **total** victory.

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The savior of 2 **Kings 13** delivered them **physically**, but they were still **spiritually** lost. Our Savior saved us **spiritually** and one day will redeem us **physically**!

**Verses 10-11** give us a brief overview of the king who followed Jehoahaz. Joash (not the same Joash we saw last week...who was the king of Judah) was his son and he became king and **verse 11** tells us "**he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not turn away from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel sin, but he walked in them.**"

**Verses 12 and 13** even tells us of Joash's death...but **verse 14** goes back and picks up on events that happened in his life.

**Verses 14-19...**

We don't know what illness Elisha had. We don't know how old Elisha was.

Some have speculated that he might have been about 120 years of age. We don't know if Elisha was strong and healthy up until the end or if he had been ill for a long time. We just don't know a lot about Elisha's illness.

But we do know that Joash came to Elisha and wept over him and said, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!"

Now, why did he do that? I mean, Joash was not a good king. **Verse 11** tells us that. Why was he paying respect to Elisha, the man of God?

Some say he was just **making an appearance**.

Some say he came **out of gratitude**...maybe Elisha had been the deliverer God sent, and Joash came out of gratitude.

Maybe he came **out of fear**...

Look at **verse 14** again. This is exactly how Elisha addressed Elijah when Elijah was being taken to heaven in the whirlwind.

I believe Joash was saying, "Oh, Elisha, I haven't walked in the way of the God of Israel whom you serve, but you have and you have been our protector. You are the man of God. You are our chariots. You are our horsemen. It's because of you and your relationship with God that we've had military victory...And if you die, only God knows what will happen to us."

You know, sometimes even the most ungodly of men want somebody praying in times of despair and trouble. And Joash knew Elisha was a man of prayer and a man with the power of God upon his life.

Something interesting happened.

Elisha laid his hands on the king's hands. This was symbolic of the blessing of God. This was Elijah's way of telling Joash he must look to God for his success...

Elisha told Joash to shoot an arrow through the window that faced the east. And Elisha told Joash that this symbolized the Lord's arrow of victory and that this meant they would have victory over Syria...

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We need to understand that kings weren't used to doing what people told them to do. And I believe Joash wasn't really having a good time being told what to do by the weak and sickly and dying man of God.

Then, Elisha told Joash to do something else. He told him to take the arrows and strike the ground. Elisha didn't tell Joash how many times to strike the ground...and Joash was probably getting tired of this game and Joash struck the ground only three times and stopped.

**Verse 19** tells us that Elisha was angry with Joash because he didn't strike the ground more times than that. He told him he should have struck the ground five or six times so that they would have totally destroyed Syria, but now they would only strike Syria three times and that wouldn't be enough.

Now, I don't believe God Himself or the man of God is just arbitrarily angry with people. I believe Elisha had reason to believe that Joash should understand that he should have struck the ground more times than three with his arrows.

What was operating here? What was really going through Joash's mind?

Joash had said, "...my father, my father, the horses and chariots of Israel.." Were these just words spoken with no belief behind them?

Was Joash thinking... "Well, if we can get Syria down three times, I don't really need God to do all this...I can take care of them after that?"

Whatever the reason was, Joash didn't make the most of the opportunity that was before him and he only defeated Syria three times when he could have totally destroyed them.

Again, we don't know what Joash was thinking, do we? But, we **do** know how **we** have thought. Have you ever thought, "Well, I have a problem. And I'm going to God with this problem. Just as Elisha put his hand upon Joash, I know if I'm God's child, His hand is upon me..."

But, then has this ever happened to you? You ask God for direction. You ask God for help in a particular situation...but then midway through God's answer, we say, "Oh, I believe **now I** can handle this." And you go off and try to do just that.

How many times have you been told to step out on faith and strike the ground and you do this...but you strike the ground three times and no more?

Do you see what I mean? I believe many times God is testing you and me in a given situation. He tells us to do something and we only partially obey Him. We decide we only needed God's help in the beginning, but we can see it through at the end all by ourselves.

**Verses 20-22...**

"Now Elisha died, and they buried him..." There's a verse over in **Psalms...Psalm 116:15** that says, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints."

We don't say that, do we? I mean, we might say someone's death is **sad**, or a **tragedy**, or even a **release from pain**, but we how many times have you said someone's death was precious? But, that's what God considers the death of His children. He considers it precious!!!

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Elisha's life was one of obedience to the God of Israel. God enabled and empowered Elisha to perform miracle after miracle. And even after Elisha died, he performed a miracle, didn't he?

**What lessons can you and I take with us from this passage today?**

- Well, I think the very obvious one is that the sins you and I commit...the lifestyle you and I live...the walk before the Lord that you and I have...these things don't just affect you and me. **They have lasting consequences.**

The sins of Jeroboam followed his descendants long after he was dead and gone. We should live our lives in such a way that our children and their children and their children will not follow in our sins. They may **make** bad choices. They may not **live** godly lives. **But, they shouldn't have the excuse that they were following in our sins.**

- Another lesson...I believe we should look at those who would be our leaders and see if they are listening for a word from the Lord. Somehow you would think that the people would have risen up and said **"We know what God has commanded and this is diametrically opposed to His commandments!"**

But, hey, can't we identify with that today? How much that goes on in our own country is politically **correct** and politically **expedient**, but is diametrically opposed to the will of God?

We can see that in the vote in the Senate this past week, can't we?

- I believe another lesson we can take with us today is that we should not be satisfied with doing the minimum for the Lord. Think of the difference it would have made had Joash been willing to strike the ground more times than three. **Think of the difference it would make in our lives and in the lives of our family if we were willing to do more than is expected!**
- And finally, I don't think for a minute that in my death, my bones will have the ability to impart life to anyone else...but the question I believe we should ask is "Have I in my **life** shared the gospel with anyone...to impart eternal life to them? Have I told anyone else what Jesus has done in my own life and how they might pass from death to life?"

Have I told anyone **ever** or **in a long time**...that Jesus came to save and to give abundant life to those who will accept Him?