



In 2 Kings 13, we see that despite the kindness of God and the witness of God's prophet Elisha, Israel continued in their sin. Then in 2 Kings 14, we read about how even one of the few good kings of the south, Amaziah, was not like his father, David, for he held back on full devotion to God. Amaziah also allowed his victories to make him arrogant, and he tried to war against his fellow brothers in Israel. God had to humble Amaziah because he had refused to humble himself. Yet despite the faithlessness of God's people, God remained faithful. We serve a gracious God!

1. Context

a. The divided kingdom

i. Israel was divided into two kingdoms.

1. The ten tribes to the north made up the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
2. The two tribes to the south—Judah and Benjamin—made up the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

ii. The two kingdoms had different kings, and the Bible alternates between them.

b. The kings

i. Israel had 19 kings and 1 queen.

ii. Judah had 19 kings.

iii. The two kingdoms had 38 kings (or 39, counting the queen) combined.

1. Of these 38–39 kings, only 8 were considered “good.”
2. The good kings came exclusively from Judah.

c. Queen Athaliah

i. Athaliah was King Joash's murderous grandmother.

ii. Upon the death of Athaliah's son, King Ahaziah, she decided she wanted to become queen.

1. Usually, one of the king's sons would inherit the throne after him.
2. Knowing this, Athaliah killed off her grandsons.
3. Joash was a child during his grandmother's murderous rampage, and escaped alive thanks to his aunt, Jehosheba.

d. King Joash

i. In chapter 11, Joash became king.

1. Jehosheba was married to Jehoiada, the high priest, and they raised Joash.

2. After six years of hiding, Jehoiada staged to put Joash on the throne and have Athaliah killed.
 3. Joash was seven years old when he became king.
 - a. Joash wore the crown, but Jehoiada made the decisions until he was of age.
 - ii. Joash was a relatively good king as long as he was under the tutelage of the high priest Jehoiada.
 - iii. When Jehoiada died, Joash strayed from God and marred his reign.
 - iv. In chapter 12, Joash died.
 1. Joash was considered one of the few relatively good kings of Judah.
2. **2 Kings 13:1-3** – *“In the twenty-third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. He did not depart from them. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-Hadad the son of Hazael, all their days.”*
- a. The year of Joash
 - i. Joash had already passed. This reference to him was only made to establish that Jehoahaz came into power during Joash’s reign.
 - b. Jehoahaz
 - i. Jehoahaz *“did evil in the sight of the LORD”*—a common description given about the kings of the north.
 - ii. Jehoahaz followed the sins of Jeroboam.
 1. Jeroboam was the first king of the north.
 2. Even though Jehoahaz is the 11th king of Israel, he and the kings before him have continued in the same practice of idolatry introduced by Jeroboam.
 - c. God’s judgment
 - i. God used Syria to rebuke Israel.
 1. Hazael and his son Ben-Hadad were rulers of Syria, used by God to get Israel’s attention and wake them up to their sin.
 2. Hazael and Ben-Hadad would pose a threat to Israel.
3. **2 Kings 13:4-6** – *“So Jehoahaz pleaded with the LORD, and the LORD listened to him; for He saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. Then the LORD gave Israel a deliverer, so that they escaped from under the hand of the Syrians; and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents as before. Nevertheless they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who*

had made Israel sin, but walked in them; and the wooden image also remained in Samaria.”

- a. Jehoahaz was not a good king, and yet God listened to Him.
 - i. God was still concerned about the oppression of His people despite their wickedness.
 1. This pattern was seen in Judges:
 - a. Israel sinned.
 - b. God judged.
 - c. Israel cried out to God in their oppression.
 - d. God heard and sent a deliverer.
 - e. Israel experienced peace—until they fell into sin again.
 - f. **DISCUSS**: How do we avoid falling into the sin pattern depicted in the book of Judges?
 2. God consistently has a heart to help His people.
 - a. **Exodus 3:7–8** – *“I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.”*
 - b. **DISCUSS**: How have you seen the graciousness of God in your life?
 3. God’s mercy is based on His faithfulness, not ours.
 - ii. God sent an unnamed deliverer to His people.
 - b. The people did not repent.
 - i. Israel kept their “wooden image.”
 1. Some translations say, “Asherah pole.”
 2. Asherah poles were wooden phallic symbols, set for the worship of Baal and his female counterpart, Asherah.
 3. These pagan gods were worshiped through lewd practices.
 4. Despite Israel’s sins, God was patient with them.
 5. **DISCUSS**: Looking back, when has God been patient with you?
4. **2 Kings 13:7–13** – *“For He left of the army of Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers; for the king of Syria had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Jehoahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Joash his son reigned in his place. In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in*

Samaria, and reigned sixteen years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, but walked in them. Now the rest of the acts of Joash, all that he did, and his might with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Joash rested with his fathers. Then Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.”

- a. Joash, king of Israel
 - i. Jehoahaz rose up as king of Israel during the reign of Joash, king of Judah.
 - ii. Jehoahaz named his son Joash (or Jehoash), and he reigned over Israel while Joash (or Jehoash) reigned over Judah.
- b. Jeroboam (the second)
 - i. The Joash who ruled over Israel had a son whom he named Jeroboam.

5. **2 Kings 13:14–19** – *“Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, ‘O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!’ And Elisha said to him, ‘Take a bow and some arrows.’ So he took himself a bow and some arrows. Then he said to the king of Israel, ‘Put your hand on the bow.’ So he put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king’s hands. And he said, ‘Open the east window’; and he opened it. Then Elisha said, ‘Shoot’; and he shot. And he said, ‘The arrow of the LORD’s deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them.’ Then he said, ‘Take the arrows’; so he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, ‘Strike the ground’; so he struck three times, and stopped. And the man of God was angry with him, and said, ‘You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times.”*

- a. Elisha, the prophet
 - i. Elisha had served Israel for around 50 years.
 - ii. Elisha became sick and died.
 - 1. Despite doing more miracles than any other man in the Bible (except Jesus), death came for Elisha as it comes for us all.
 - 2. **DISCUSS:** Are you prepared to face your mortality? Why or why not?
- b. Joash, the king of Israel
 - i. 2 Kings is not in chronological order, hence the reference to an already dead Joash.
 - 1. The story was meant to show that Elisha died during the reign of Joash.

- ii. Joash called Elisha *“my father.”*
 - 1. Elisha was not Joash’s biological father; this was simply a way of paying honor to someone.
 - 2. Elisha was the *“father”* of the prophets, so Joash honored him.
- iii. Joash called Elisha *“the chariots of Israel and their horsemen.”*
 - 1. This phrase was a way to ascribe dignity and power to Elisha.
- c. Elijah’s last prophecy
 - i. Elisha foretold how God, out of His great mercy, would deliver Israel again out of the hand of Syria.
 - ii. Elisha told Joash to strike the ground as a sign of God giving Israel victory over Syria.
 - 1. Joash struck the ground with an arrow three times.
 - 2. Elisha did not tell Joash how many times to strike the ground.
 - 3. If Joash had struck the ground more times, he could have fully defeated Syria, but he did not.
 - 4. Because Joash struck the ground three times rather than five or six times, Israel would deal a blow to Syria but would not destroy Syria completely.

6. **2 Kings 13:20–25** – *“Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band of raiders; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet. And Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. But the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and regarded them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence. Now Hazael king of Syria died. Then Ben-Hadad his son reigned in his place. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz recaptured from the hand of Ben-Hadad, the son of Hazael, the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times Joash defeated him and recaptured the cities of Israel.”*

- a. Elisha’s death
 - i. Most scholars believe Elisha was about 90 years old when he died.
 - ii. Oddly, a dead man was thrown into a tomb quickly so his bones would not be desecrated, and this man revived when his body brushed up against the bones of Elisha.
- b. God’s character
 - i. God is gracious, compassionate, and true to His word.
 - 1. God stayed true to His covenant, even if the ones He made a covenant with were not being true to their word.
 - 2. **DISCUSS:** Are you reflecting Christ in how you keep your word?

3. **DISCUSS:** What promises of God do you go to for help in times of distress?
 - c. Israel and Syria
 - i. As Elisha prophesied, Joash defeated Syria three times.
7. **2 Kings 14:1-6** – *“In the second year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, became king. He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like his father David; he did everything as his father Joash had done. However the high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established in his hand, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. But the children of the murderers he did not execute, according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, in which the LORD commanded, saying, ‘Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall be put to death for his own sin.’”*
- a. A new king
 - i. While Joash was king of Israel, Amaziah became king of Judah.
 - b. A good king
 - i. Amaziah was a good king, but not like his “father” David.
 1. David was not Amaziah’s father, though David was a distant ancestor.
 2. Despite David’s sin, he was quick to repent and of a contrite heart.
 - a. David understood that God honored brokenness, repentance, and humility.
 - b. **Psalms 51:17** – *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.”*
 3. Amaziah did not take away the high places, leaving the people to their idolatry.
 - c. Amaziah’s judgment
 - i. Amaziah executed judgment, but not indiscriminately.
 1. Amaziah killed the servants who had murdered his father, Joash.
 2. Amaziah did not kill the children of these servants, because he knew God forbade punishing the children for the sins of their fathers.
 - a. Verse 6 was quoting **Deuteronomy 24:16**.

8. **2 Kings 14:7-14** – *“He killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and took Sela by war, and called its name Joktheel to this day. Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, ‘Come, let us face one another in battle.’ And Jehoash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, ‘The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, “Give your daughter to my son as wife”; and a wild beast that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Glory in that, and stay at home; for why should you meddle with trouble so that you fall—you and Judah with you?’ But Amaziah would not heed. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went out; so he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which belongs to Judah. And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. Then Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth Shemesh; and he went to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate—four hundred cubits. And he took all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king’s house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.”*

a. Amaziah’s victory

i. The Valley of Salt

1. The Valley of Salt was thus named for its location by the Dead Sea.

ii. The Edomites

1. The Edomites were Israel’s neighbors to the south of the Dead Sea.
2. Edom was predominately located in parts of Jordan.

iii. Selah

1. Selah was a town.
2. Selah means “rock” in Hebrew.
3. Amaziah changed the town’s name to Joktheel, meaning “subdued by God.”

b. Amaziah’s pride

- i. Amaziah, king of Judah, wanted to war against Israel.
- ii. Joash, king of Israel, said to Amaziah that his victory over Edom had made him arrogant.
 1. Joash rightly pointed out that Amaziah should not be trying to go to war against his fellow Jews in Israel.

c. Amaziah’s loss

- i. The southern kingdom had 300,000 soldiers (**2 Chronicles 25:5**).
 1. Amaziah’s great army had made him proud and overconfident.
- ii. The northern kingdom had 10,000 soldiers.
- iii. Judah lost to Israel despite their great advantage.

1. God will humble us if we do not humble ourselves.
2. **Proverbs 16:18** – *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*
3. Many have been ruined by pride, the same sin that brought about Satan’s fall.
4. **Matthew 23:12** – *“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*
5. **DISCUSS**: Has God had to humble you? How can we catch pride early and humble ourselves before our God?

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)