

# SECOND KINGS

## Chapter 13

### *Jehoahaz Reigns in Israel*

**In the twenty-third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned seventeen years. 2 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from them. 3 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Syria and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael. 4 Then Jehoahaz sought the favor of the LORD, and the LORD listened to him, for he saw the oppression of Israel, how the king of Syria oppressed them. 5 (Therefore the LORD gave Israel a savior, so that they escaped from the hand of the Syrians, and the people of Israel lived in their homes as formerly. 6 Nevertheless, they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, which he made Israel to sin, but walked in them; and the Asherah also remained in Samaria.) 7 For there was not left to Jehoahaz an army of more than fifty horsemen and ten chariots and ten thousand footmen, for the king of Syria had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing. 8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? 9 So Jehoahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria, and Joash his son reigned in his place.**

**Ch 13** Before taking up the reign of Amaziah, the next king of Judah (12:21; 14:1–22), the author turns to two contemporary rulers in the Northern Kingdom: Jehoahaz (vv 1–9) and J[eh]oash (vv 10–25). (TLSB)

**13:1** *twenty-third year of Joash.* 814 B.C. (CSB)

*seventeen years.* 814–798. (CSB)

**13:2** *sins of Jeroboam.* See 1Ki 12:26–32; 13:33–34; 14:16. (CSB)

**13:3** *Ben-Hadad.* See v. 24. His reign began in either 806 or 796 B.C. (CSB)

Not the same as in 1Ki 20. (TLSB)

**13:4** *sought the favor of the LORD.* Not necessarily in repentance (cf v 6), but an acknowledgment that Israel had given offense to the Lord. (TLSB)

*the LORD listened to him.* Although deliverance did not come during the lifetime of Jehoahaz (see v. 22), the Lord was merciful to his people in spite of their sin, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (v. 23). (CSB)

**13:5** *a savior.* Probably either (1) the Assyrian ruler Adadnirari III (810–783 B.C.), whose attacks on the Arameans of Damascus in 806 and 804 enabled the Israelites to break Aramean control over Israelite territory (see v. 25; 14:25), or (2) Jehoash son of Jehoahaz (vv. 17, 19, 25), or (3) Jeroboam II, who was able to extend Israel's boundaries far to the north (see 14:25, 27) after the Assyrians had broken the military power of the Arameans. (CSB)

Hbr *moshia*. 'Israel was saved from oppression by the Syrians because the Syrians had to defend their eastern borders against inroads by the Assyrians. The situation is ironic, since the Assyrians would later

take Israel into exile. This relief from Syrian pressure was evident particularly under the next two Israelite kings: Jehoash (v 25) and Jeroboam II (14:27). (TLSB)

**13:6** *Asherah pole remained.* This idol had been set up by Ahab (see 1Ki 16:33) and had either escaped destruction by Jehu when he purged Baal worship from Samaria (see 10:27–28) or had been reintroduced during the reign of Jehoahaz. (CSB)

**13:7** *ten chariots.* In effect, a small police force. According to the Assyrian annals of Shalmaneser III, Ahab had contributed 2,000 chariots to the coalition of forces that opposed the Assyrians at the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. (CSB)

Israel's military strength had all but vanished. According to Assyrian records, Ahab had once been able to field a cavalry contingent of 2,000 chariots. (TLSB)

*ten thousand footmen.* At the battle of Qarqar Ahab had supplied 10,000 foot soldiers to the coalition of forces opposing the Assyrians. At that time this would have represented only a contingent of Israel's army, while now it represented the entire Israelite infantry. In 857 Ahab had inflicted 100,000 casualties on the Aramean foot soldiers in one day (see 1Ki 20:29). (CSB)

*dust at threshing.* Useless, fine dust that was normally blown away or burned. (TLSB)

**13:1–9** In dire threat from the Syrians, Jehoahaz is one of the few Israelite kings to seek the Lord's favor. God's favor is ever available, especially for those who sincerely repent of their sins (which Jehoahaz failed to do). The repentant will not have a savior like the Assyrians but will have the true Savior, Christ Jesus, who bears away our sins and establishes an eternal homeland for us. • Savior Jesus, have mercy on me according to Your surpassing favor. Amen. (TLSB)

*Jehoash Reigns in Israel*

**10 In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned sixteen years. 11 He also did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin, but he walked in them. 12 Now the rest of the acts of Joash and all that he did, and the 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? 13 So Joash slept with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.**

**13:10** *thirty-seventh year of Joash.* 798 B.C. (CSB)

King of Judah (ch 12) and the king of Israel had the same name: Jehoash. Both are known also by the shorter form Joash (12:19). (TLSB)

*sixteen years.* 798–782. (CSB)

**13:11** *sins of Jeroboam.* See 1Ki 12:26–32; 13:33–34; 14:16. (CSB)

**13:12** *fought against Amaziah.* See 14:8–14; 2Ch 25:17–24. (CSB)

Cf 14:8–14 for the battle between the two kings. (TLSB)

**13:10–13** Jehoahaz walks in his forebears' ways and renews war with Judah, using the respite from Syria to multiply his sins. God's mercy is abused most when used as an opportunity to do evil. As the Lord has mercy on you, exercise mercy and kindness toward others. His mercy is the dearest treasure of His great and gracious reign, by which He grants forgiveness for your sins. • Lord, grant me opportunities for faithful service and the heart to act on them. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Death of Elisha*

**14** Now when Elisha had fallen sick with the illness of which he was to die, Joash king of Israel went down to him and wept before him, crying, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" **15** And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and arrows." So he took a bow and arrows. **16** Then he said to the king of Israel, "Draw the bow," and he drew it. And Elisha laid his hands on the king's hands. **17** And he said, "Open the window eastward," and he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot," and he shot. And he said, "The LORD's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Syria! For you shall fight the Syrians in Aphek until you have made an end of them." **18** And he said, "Take the arrows," and he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground with them." And he struck three times and stopped. **19** Then the man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck down Syria until you had made an end of it, but now you will strike down Syria only three times." **20** So Elisha died, and they buried him. Now bands of Moabites used to invade the land in the spring of the year. **21** And as a man was being buried, behold, a marauding band was seen and the man was thrown into the grave of Elisha, and as soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet. **22** Now Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. **23** But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, nor has he cast them from his presence until now. **24** When Hazael king of Syria died, Ben-hadad his son became king in his place. **25** Then Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again from Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities that he had taken from Jehoahaz his father in war. Three times Joash defeated him and recovered the cities of Israel.

**13:14** *Elisha had fallen sick.* Ch. 9 contains the last previous reference to Elisha. Since Jehu had been anointed in 841 B.C. and Jehoash began to reign in 798, there is at least a 43-year period in which we are told nothing of Elisha's activities. Based on Elisha's relationship with Elijah, he must have been born prior to 880 and he must have lived to be more than 80 years of age. (CSB)

Some 50 years had passed since Elisha had helped put Jehu on the throne (9:1–13). Now old and stricken with a fatal illness, he had one more message to deliver. (TLSB)

*The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!* An expression of recognition by Jehoash that Elisha was of greater significance for Israel's military success than Israel's military forces were. (CSB)

**13:16** *laid his hands on the king's hands.* By this symbolic act Elisha indicated that Jehoash was to engage the Arameans in battle with the Lord's blessing on him. (CSB)

Expressing a bond with the king and a blessing of the deeds committed with his hands. The gesture symbolized that the arrow became "the LORD's arrow of victory" (v 17) because divine power was transmitted to the king. (For other symbolic acts, see notes, Jsh 8:18; 1Ki 22:11; cf Jer 19:10–11.) (TLSB)

**13:17** *Open the window.* Elisha freed the king to make the shots. (TLSB)

*eastward.* Faced Transjordan, which was controlled by the Arameans (see 10:32–33). (CSB)

*Aphek*. About 60 years earlier Ahab had won a decisive victory at Aphek over the Arameans and Ben-Hadad II. (CSB)

Various sites bore the name, which in Hbr means “fortress.” This Aphek probably was located east of the Sea of Chinnereth. (TLSB)

**13:18** *Strike ... with them*. Elisha refers to shooting all the arrows. (TLSB)

*struck it three times and stopped*. The moderately enthusiastic response to Elisha’s directive reflected insufficient zeal for accomplishing the announced task. (CSB)

Rather than making an “end of them” (v 17). (TLSB)

**13:19** *strike down Syria only three times*. Jehoash’s moderate enthusiasm in striking the ground with arrows symbolized the moderate success he would have against the Arameans. It would be left for Jeroboam II son of Jehoash to gain complete victory over them (see 14:25, 28). (CSB)

*five or six times*. Shooting to the end of the quiver. The strikes represent victorious battles against Syria. (TLSB)

**13:20** *bands of Moabites*. Raiders, seeking spoil or slaves. (TLSB)

**13:21** *thrown*. Placed hastily. (TLSB)

*the man touched Elisha’s bones, he revived and stood on his feet*. The life-giving power of the God Elisha represented is demonstrated once again in this last OT reference to Elisha (for previous demonstrations of this power see 4:32–37 and 1Ki 17:17–24; for Elijah’s translation to heaven without dying see 2:11–12). (CSB)

Burials were in caves or tombs, where numerous corpses would be placed. *bones*. Corpses would decay down to the bones in about a year. The bones would be lying on a bench, where another body might be laid. *revived*. A resurrection amid a decaying kingdom, oppressed by Syrian armies, raiders, and unfaithful rulers. The Lord works one last miracle through Elisha, a shocking illustration that the Lord is the master of life and the future. Ambr: “Why should we wonder ... that flesh returns to the bones [in the resurrection], when we remember the dead raised by the touch of the prophet’s body?” (*NPNF* 2 10:187). (TLSB)

**13:22** *oppressed*. Or, “had oppressed.” The servile condition of Israel under Joash’s predecessor is recalled in contrast with the freedom promised in v 17. (TLSB)

**13:23** *gracious ... compassion*. Chem: “It is correct to say that grace is mercy. For the word *chānan* is translated this way by the interpreters, and the word ‘to have mercy’ is often joined with [it]” (*LTh* 2:524). (TLSB)

*covenant*. Writer reaches back past David to the beginning of Israel as a people chosen and blessed by God. In their rebellion and failure, their heritage wears away down to the first promise from God, which became the last basis of hope. (TLSB)

*would not destroy them or cast them from his presence*. In his mercy and grace the Lord was long-suffering toward his people and refrained from full implementation of the covenant curse of exile

from Canaan. This postponement of judgment provided Israel with the opportunity to repent and return to covenant faithfulness. (CSB)

*until now.* Until the time of the writing of the source from which the author derived this account. (CSB)

At the time this passage was written, Israel still stood as a people. (TLSB)

**13:25** *cities that he had taken from Jehoahaz.* Probably towns west of the Jordan, since the area east of the Jordan had been lost already in the time of Jehu (see 10:32–33). It was not until the time of Jeroboam II that the area east of the Jordan was fully recovered for Israel (see 14:25). (CSB)

*Three times.* In fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy (v. 19). (CSB)

**13:14–25** The end of Elisha's life signals lingering hope for the Israelites as the Lord's covenant people. But it also signals the loss of their last great prophet, whose service kept them connected to the Lord. When matters appear hostile or even hopeless, remember that the Lord is gracious and compassionate. He cannot forget you and will not cast you aside. • Revive me, O living Savior; draw me to Your side as Your beloved child. Amen. (TLSB)