

# SECOND KINGS

## Chapter 8

### *The Shunammite's Land Restored*

Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, “Arise, and depart with your household, and sojourn wherever you can, for the LORD has called for a famine, and it will come upon the land for seven years.” 2 So the woman arose and did according to the word of the man of God. She went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. 3 And at the end of the seven years, when the woman returned from the land of the Philistines, she went to appeal to the king for her house and her land. 4 Now the king was talking with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, “Tell me all the great things that Elisha has done.” 5 And while he was telling the king how Elisha had restored the dead to life, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life appealed to the king for her house and her land. And Gehazi said, “My lord, O king, here is the woman, and here is her son whom Elisha restored to life.” 6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed an official for her, saying, “Restore all that was hers, together with all the produce of the fields from the day that she left the land until now.”

**8:1–6** Result of one of “the great things that Elisha” did (v 4). When the king saw the son of the Shunammite woman “whom Elisha restored to life” (v 5; 4:8–37), he granted her request for the restitution of her property. (TLSB)

**8:1** *Now.* Not an account of another miracle but a conclusion to 4:8–37. (TLSB)

*woman.* Elisha works with her rather than her husband, which seems unusual. A family or spiritual kinship likely stands behind these circumstances (cf 4:8–10). (TLSB)

*household.* Not just their property, but their extended family. (TLSB)

*the LORD has called for a famine.* The famine should have been perceived by the people of the northern kingdom as a covenant curse sent on them because of their sin. (CSB)

*seven years.* It is not clear whether this famine began before or after the Aramean siege of Samaria (see 4:38; 6:24–7:20). (CSB)

**8:2** *She went with her household and sojourned.* Elisha’s instruction enabled the woman and her family to escape the privations of the famine. (CSB)

*Philistines.* Isaac sought survival in their territory during a famine in his day (Gn 26:1). Cf Ru 1:1; (TLSB)

**8:3** *went to appeal ...for house and land.* Either someone had illegally occupied the woman’s property during her absence, or it had fallen to the domain of the king by virtue of its abandonment. (CSB)

During her long absence, her house and land evidently had been become the king’s property by law. (TLSB)

**8:4** *Gehazi*. Incident took place before he became a leper (5:27). Through his servant, Elisha spoke on the Shunammite woman's behalf, as he had offered to do (4:13). (TLSB)

*Tell me about all the great things Elisha has done.* The king's lack of familiarity with Elisha's ministry is perhaps an indication that this incident occurred in the early days of the reign of Jehu rather than in the time of Joram, who had had numerous contacts with Elisha. (CSB)

**8:5** *the woman ... appealed.* She had been waiting as Gehazi represented her. (TLSB)

**8:6** *restore all that was hers.* The widow and her son were living examples of the Lord's provision and blessing for those who were obedient to the word of the Lord through his prophets. (CSB)

*produce.* Income that accrued from her property. (TLSB)

**8:1-6** As Elisha had promised, he supports the Shunammite woman (4:13). Today, the Lord calls you as God's servant to make meaningful, thoughtful promises and to keep your word. Thanks be to God! He keeps His Word to us, granting us an inheritance with His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. • Lord, let my word be my bond, in imitation of Your integrity and compassion. Amen. (TLSB)

*Hazael Murders Ben-hadad*

**7** Now Elisha came to Damascus. Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick. And when it was told him, "The man of God has come here," **8** the king said to Hazael, "Take a present with you and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD through him, saying, 'Shall I recover from this sickness?'" **9** So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, all kinds of goods of Damascus, forty camels' loads. When he came and stood before him, he said, "Your son Ben-hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, 'Shall I recover from this sickness?'" **10** And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover,' but the LORD has shown me that he shall certainly die." **11** And he fixed his gaze and stared at him, until he was embarrassed. And the man of God wept. **12** And Hazael said, "Why does my lord weep?" He answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the people of Israel. You will set on fire their fortresses, and you will kill their young men with the sword and dash in pieces their little ones and rip open their pregnant women." **13** And Hazael said, "What is your servant, who is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?" Elisha answered, "The LORD has shown me that you are to be king over Syria." **14** Then he departed from Elisha and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Elisha say to you?" And he answered, "He told me that you would certainly recover." **15** But the next day he took the bed cloth and dipped it in water and spread it over his face, till he died. And Hazael became king in his place.

**8:7** *Elisha came to Damascus.* The time had come for Elisha to carry out one of the three tasks originally given to Elijah at Mount Horeb (see notes on 1Ki 19:15-16). The annals of the Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser III record Assyrian victories over Ben-Hadad (Hadadezer) of Damascus in 846 B.C. and Hazael of Damascus in 842. Elisha's visit to Damascus is to be dated c. 843. (CSB)

In the Syrian capital, Elisha carried out the task assigned to Elijah: "anoint Hazael to be king over Syria" (1Ki 19:15). Acting in accord with divine revelation (2Ki 8:8-9), Elisha supported a revolt against Ben-hadad so that "Hazael became king in his place" (v 15). (TLSB)

**8:8** *inquire of the LORD through him.* In a reversal of the situation described in 1:1-4, a pagan king seeks an oracle from Israel's God. (CSB)

*shall I recover ... ?* The question is the same as that of Ahaziah in 1:2. (CSB)

No doubt, the king knew that Naaman owed his recovery to Yahweh, Elisha's God. (TLSB)

**8:9** *forty camel-loads.* Damascus was the center for trade between Egypt, Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. Ben-Hadad evidently thought a generous gift would favorably influence Elisha's oracle. (CSB)

Remarkable amount. (TLSB)

*Your son Ben-Hadad.* Use of father-son terminology is a tacit acknowledgment by Ben-Hadad of Elisha's superiority (see 6:21; 1Sa 25:8). (CSB)

Expression of humility. (TLSB)

**8:10** *You shall certainly recover.* This reading of the Hebrew text (see NIV text note for an alternative reading) is to be preferred (see v. 14) and understood as an assertion that Ben-Hadad's illness was not terminal. (CSB)

Elisha gave a cryptic answer. The king would recover from his present illness but would nevertheless certainly die from another cause. (TLSB)

**8:12** *evil that you will do to the people Israel.* The Lord gave Elisha a clear picture of the severity of the judgment he was about to send on Israel by the hand of Hazael (see 9:14–16; 10:32; 12:17–18; 13:3, 22). (CSB)

*set fire ... rip open their pregnant women.* These actions were characteristic of victorious armies in that time (see 15:16; Hos 10:14; 13:16; Am 1:13). Elisha's words do not sanction such acts but simply describe Hazael's future attacks on Israel. (CSB)

Elisha carried out his mission regardless of his personal feelings in the matter. For the evil that he foresaw, cf 10:32–33; 13:3; 15:16; Hos 13:16; Am 1:3–4. (TLSB)

**8:13** *what is your servant, who is but a dog?* Hazael did not show repulsion at these violent acts but saw no possibility to gain the power necessary to accomplish them (for this metaphorical use of "dog" see note on 2Sa 9:8). (CSB)

Hazael registered surprise that a person of his low status should rise to royal heights. (TLSB)

*you are to be king of Syria.* Elisha's prophecy suggests that Hazael was not a legitimate successor to Ben-Hadad. In an Assyrian inscription Hazael is designated "the son of a nobody" (i.e., a commoner) who usurped the throne. (CSB)

Hazael feels honored despite the prophet's description of brutal acts committed under his leadership. (TLSB)

**8:15** *he took.* Hazael took. (TLSB)

*dipped it in water.* Water apparently swelled and thickened the cloth so that it could effectively suffocate the weak king. (TLSB)

*died.* Elisha's prophecy of Hazael's kingship did not legitimize the assassination. Hazael's murder of Ben-Hadad as well as his future acts of violence against Israel were wicked acts arising out of his own sinful heart (see Isa 10:5–19). His reign extended from c. 842 B.C. to c. 806 or 796, and he was followed by a son he named Ben-Hadad (13:24). (CSB)

**8:7–15** Elisha prophesies the death of Ben-hadad, the rise of Hazael, and the destruction of Israel through Hazael. The gruesome passage records the particular means and persons God used for judging rebellious Israel and brutal Ben-hadad. Elisha's tears illustrate the pain of God's heart over the sins and condemnation of His rebellious people. How difficult to apply God's Law when our hearts and God's heart long to show compassion! This text shows the seriousness of sin and its ravages against sinners. How dearly we need God's Word to well up our eyes with tears of sincere repentance and swell our hearts with genuine faith. The Lord can and does grant us such blessings through dearest Jesus. • Penetrate my ears, O Lord. Break my hardened heart and flood my arid eyes. Teach me the need and use of Your Law that I may weep tears of joy at the sound of Your Gospel. Amen. (TLSB)

#### *Jehoram Reigns in Judah*

**16** In the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, when Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began to reign. **17** He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. **18** And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife. And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. **19** Yet the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever. **20** In his days Edom revolted from the rule of Judah and set up a king of their own. **21** Then Joram passed over to Zair with all his chariots and rose by night, and he and his chariot commanders struck the Edomites who had surrounded him, but his army fled home. **22** So Edom revolted from the rule of Judah to this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time. **23** Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? **24** So Joram slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

**8:16–29** Before resuming the account of Jehoram, king of Israel, begun in ch 3, the author inserts brief notices of two Judean rulers: Jehoram (vv 16–24) and Ahaziah (vv 25–29). The latter is introduced here because ch 9 relates how he and his Northern contemporary, Jehoram, came to be killed in a revolt led by the Israelite general Jehu. (TLSB)

**8:16** *fifth year of Joram.* 848 B.C. Jehoram had been co-regent with his father since 853, but he now began his reign as sole king. (CSB)

In this period, the divided kingdom had rulers with the same name. In Israel, King Ahaziah had a Jehoram as successor; in Judah, the sequence was the reverse: a Jehoram was followed by an Ahaziah. The shortened form Joram occurs for the rulers in both kingdoms. The history of the Israelite Jehoram, begun in ch 3, was interrupted by a lengthy report of Elisha's activities (4:1–8:15). (TLSB)

**8:17** *reigned eight years in Jerusalem.* Jehoram's sole reign is to be dated 848–841 B.C. (CSB)

**8:18** *as the house of Ahab had done.* Jehoram introduced Baal worship in Judah, as Ahab had done in the northern kingdom (see 11:18). Baal worship now spread to the southern kingdom at the same time it was being restricted in the northern kingdom by Ahab's son Joram (see 3:1–2). (CSB)

*the daughter of Ahab was his wife.* Jehoram's wife was Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab but probably not of Jezebel (see v. 26; 2Ch 18:1). Athaliah's influence on Jehoram paralleled that of Jezebel on Ahab (see 1Ki 16:31; 18:4; 19:1–2; 2Ch 21:6). (CSB)

Athaliah (v 26). (TLSB)

**8:19** *a lamp to him.* The Lord spared Judah and its royal house the judgment he brought on the house of Ahab because of the covenant he had made with David (see 2Sa 7:16, 29; 2Ch 21:7). (CSB)

**8:20** *set up a king of their king.* Previously Edom had been subject to Judah and had been ruled by a deputy. (CSB)

**8:21** *his army fled.* Although Jehoram and his army were able to break through an encirclement by Edomite forces, they were soundly defeated and forced to retreat to their own territory. (CSB)

**8:22** *To this day.* Until the time of the writing of the account of Jehoram's reign used by the author of 1,2 Kings. Later, Amaziah of Judah was able to inflict a serious defeat on Edom (14:7), and his successor Azariah regained control of the trade route to Elath through Edomite territory (14:22; 2Ch 26:2). (CSB)

To the time when the sources of 2Ki were written. (TLSB)

*Libnah revolted at the same time.* Libnah appears to have been located close to the Philistine border near Lachish (see 19:8). It is likely that the revolt of Libnah was connected with that of the Philistines and Arabs described in 2Ch 21:16–17.

City on the edge of Philistine territory c 23 mi SW of Jerusalem. Sennacherib's army would encamp there (19:8). (TLSB)

**8:16–24** Though Judah binds itself to sinful Israel through a marriage alliance, the Lord does not yet snuff it out but continues in His promised mercy. Today, when temptation confronts you, do not test the Lord's patience by making peace with wickedness or ungodly relationships but pray that He would guide you through the Word into wholesome relationships. His Word is a lamp for your feet and enlightenment for life everlasting in Christ. • Enlighten us, Lord, by the light of Your Christ, and preserve Your people. Amen. (TLSB)

*Ahaziah Reigns in Judah*

**25** In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign. **26** Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah; she was a granddaughter of Omri king of Israel. **27** He also walked in the way of the house of Ahab and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab. **28** He went with Joram the son of Ahab to make war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead, and the Syrians wounded Joram. **29** And King Joram returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds that the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

**8:25–26** Illustrates family connections between the two kingdoms. (TLSB)

**8:25** *twelfth year of Joram.* 841 B.C. In 9:29 the first year of Joram's reign was counted as his accession year and his second year as the first year of his reign, whereas here his accession year was counted as the first year of his reign. (CSB)

**8:28** *made war against Hazael ... at Ramoth Gilead.* As Jehoshaphat had joined Ahab in battle against the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead (1Ki 22), so now Ahaziah joined his uncle Joram in a similar venture. On the previous occasion Ahab met his death (1Ki 22:37). On this occasion Joram was wounded and, while recuperating in Jezree, both he and his nephew Ahaziah were assassinated by Jehu (see 9:14–28). (CSB)

*Hazael.* God's chosen instrument of judgment against sinful Israel (v 12). (TLSB)

**8:29** *Ahaziah ... went down to see Joram.* Shows again the strengthening of the bond between Judah and Israel through their leaders. (TLSB)

**8:25–29** Ahaziah, king of Judah, marries into the family of Joram, king of Israel. They fight alongside each other, and Ahaziah visits Joram when he is wounded. Marriage, mutual defense, and visiting the sick are usually noble acts, blessed by God. But Ahaziah uses them to strengthen his bond with evildoers. Today, act with integrity, seeking what is good and fleeing what is evil. The Lord claims us as His family, not as we are, but through the call to repentance and through the forgiveness of sins in Baptism, making us the Bride of Christ (Eph 5:25–27). • O Savior, by the mystery of Your love and mercy, sanctify us as members of Your household. Amen. (TLSB)