

2 Kings 12-13

Good evening family.

Tonight we are going to continue in our study of the Old Testament, we will be in 2 Kings 12 and 13.

Remember the wicked Queen Athaliah almost succeeded in wiping out the last of the lineage of King David as she usurped the throne in Judah.

But Jehosheba and her husband Jehoiada the priest hid away the newborn Jehoash in the Temple for seven years.

It was a dark time in Judah, but at the age of seven years old, a coronation was held for the young boy Jehoash, and he was crowned king by the priest and protected by Temple guard, Athaliah was then removed and killed for her treachery.

And as long as Jehoiada was alive Jehoash did very well.

The priest raised and influenced the young king in the ways of the Lord.

But as we will see Jehoiada was the real power behind the throne, because once he is gone the king will reveal his true heart, and for us it will be a great let down.

So let's pray before we get into the Text this evening.

Understand something, what a person believes is usually is seen by a person's behavior.

Back in Genesis 3 Eve believed the Serpent's lie, and she ate the forbidden fruit.

Her husband believed the same lie and followed suit.

And when they ate, they "plunged" humanity into a new reality of sin and death.

Now, when we believe the Truth of God's Word, and our lives are lived in obedience, God then works through our lives for His Glory.

What we truly believe in life, will be manifested by the fruits of our lives.

And tonight we will have 3 different kings in our text who will illustrate three different kinds of belief, and they will stand as a warning for us, as way to avoid in our own journey of faith.

Remember in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13, Jesus gave four types of spiritual realities using the soil that the Sower cast the Seed upon, the Seed was God's Word.

Jesus illustrated first a hard-hearted individual, who hears the Word, the Seed falls upon them, Satan snatches the Word away immediately.

Other individuals received the Word, but they have no space in their hearts for the Word to take root, and a plant cannot grow without any depths of the roots, and surely there will be no fruit, this person's faith

usually dies off after an initial emotional spurt, the trials of life prove to be all too much for them.

Others have faith that is choked out by the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and their lives become unfruitful.

And lastly, Jesus illustrated the Good Soil, the one who hears the Word, understands it, and believes it, their lives produce fruit unto our Lord many times over.

As we will see here now, king Jehoash will have a shallow heart, and God's Word will be snatched away by the devil.

Let's look at the first 3 verses now...

Jehoash Repairs the Temple(2 Chron. 24:1-14)

12:1 In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. 2 Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. 3 But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

There is an interesting recurrence of the number seven throughout these verses.

In Hebrew the number seven is *seba*.

It appears in the proper names of Beersheba, and remember Jehoash was rescued by Jehosheba.

Also, we see the number seven turn up here, as the coronation took place in the seventh year of Jehu's reign, which was also the seventh year of Athaliah's reign.

Jehoash was seven years old and he was the seventh king in Judah from David.

You see seven is a very important number in Hebrew numerology, it has meaning of 'completeness,' and there is a very important reason for all the sevens in these passages, it is so, so profound and incredibly interesting, I am sure, but you will have to listen to someone much smarter than I am to find out why.

Really it seems coincidental here, but feel free to dig and prove me wrong.

Now the historian of 2 Kings really gives Jehoash a good report card here, as he pens that "he did what was right in the sight of the Lord."

But understand, his high marks only continued as long as his adoptive father, Jehoiada was influencing him.

We will see in 2 Chronicles Chapter 24 that Jehoiada had such control over the king that he even picked out his wives for him.

But as soon as his priestly father figure died, Jehoash will receive a failing grade.

Even here the historian records for us reveals that he was not a straight 'A' student, even with his good

grades he had room for improvement, as verse 3 reveals that the high places were not taken away.

These were former sites of pagan worship that were converted into places of Yahweh worship.

Even though the scriptures at times show God overlooking this practice, it was forbidden.

This was compromising worship, they were to only have one central place to worship their God, in the Temple.

The writer reveals next, his greatest achievement in his career as king.

Remember Athaliah his wicked Queen Grandmother served the Baals, and she let the Temple of Yahweh fall under disrepair.

She even took from the Yahweh's Temple items to worship in Baal's temple. 2 Chron. 24:7

The Temple of Yahweh was now approximately 140 years old, and it has been through a lot since the glory days of Solomon.

So Jehoash will take on the restoration, look with me in verses 4-16

4 And Jehoash said to the priests, "All the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the Lord — each man's census money, each man's assessment money — and all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the

Lord, 5 let the priests take it themselves, each from his constituency; and let them repair the damages of the temple, wherever any dilapidation is found."

6 Now it was so, by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, that the priests had not repaired the damages of the temple. 7 So King Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the other priests, and said to them, "Why have you not repaired the damages of the temple? Now therefore, do not take more money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing the damages of the temple." 8 And the priests agreed that they would neither receive more money from the people, nor repair the damages of the temple.

9 Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the Lord; and the priests who kept the door put there all the money brought into the house of the Lord. 10 So it was, whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up and put it in bags, and counted the money that was found in the house of the Lord. 11 Then they gave the money, which had been apportioned, into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of the Lord; and they paid it out to the carpenters and builders who worked on the house of the Lord, 12 and to masons and stonecutters, and for buying timber and hewn stone, to repair the damage of the house of the

Lord, and for all that was paid out to repair the temple. 13 However there were not made for the house of the Lord basins of silver, trimmers, sprinkling-bowls, trumpets, any articles of gold or articles of silver, from the money brought into the house of the Lord. 14 But they gave that to the workmen, and they repaired the house of the Lord with it. 15 Moreover they did not require an account from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to be paid to workmen, for they dealt faithfully. 16 The money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the Lord. It belonged to the priests.

Perhaps Jehoash and Jehoiada discussed the need to repair the Temple, but we see perhaps a clash of authority here.

Early on the priest was the true power behind the throne, but as the king matured in age and experience, he wanted to break free of this arrangement.

It is not easy for a mentor to loosen the grasp they have on their pupil.

This was intensified by the fact that Jehoiada's pupil was a king, whose office held much authority.

There is a delicate balance in discipleship that needs to take place with our children and those under our influence.

I have seen those who just never let loose those under their influence, it is as though they love the control, or the person needing them.

Personally, I am a little more freeing than most, I like to watch people find their calling, and thrive in their ministries.

I know personally the best teacher in life is experience. Getting people into the work as soon as possible is the best way for them to find their potential.

I remember taking a construction class in college, and we learned the hows and whys of the trades.

And it was wonderful book knowledge, but it was very shallow knowledge until I got out it into the field and put it to practice, and I began to put the tools to use, and see a projects come together.

I found much of the classroom instruction was forgotten quickly, but the lessons I learned while swinging my hammer will never be forgotten.

Jehoiada seemingly held onto the young king too tight, and did not let him get the experience.

And the king naturally wanted to break free of this control.

And the first thing we see that he wanted to do is repair the Temple.

He assigned three categories of income for the restoration process, first was Census money, this

would be the half shekel per year that was paid by each Israelite over the age of Twenty, this was commanded back in **Ex 30:13 This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs). The half-shekel shall be an offering to the Lord.**

The second means was by the Assessment money, which would be each man's property tax based on a personal assessment of each individual. Lev. 27:2

And the third means was the freewill offering, above the commanded tithes and offerings.

This was a good plan laid out by the young king, but we see perhaps contempt on the part of Jehoiada, because the priests did not follow the command.

“Who is this young whipper snapper trying to tell me how to fix the Temple up?”

Some, give Jehoiada more credit than I do, saying that he was old at this point, and had lost his influence over the priesthood.

Now, the text does not tell us how long Jehoash waited for his mentor to act, but we see when he was 23 years old, the king decided enough was enough, he was going to act on his own.

He rebuked the priests for not doing what he asked, and he informed them that he would now oversee the building program.

He installed a new way to too receive the income for the project.

He would do it through the freewill offering, this would not intrude on the priest's income from the people, and it would be done through a box near the altar.

This new arrangement worked, the people willingly brought their offerings in and they gave generously for this purpose.

Every gift they put into the box, they knew it would go directly to the building project.

Jehoash included the priests still, and allowed them to distribute the money accordingly, but they were joined by the king's scribe.

So there were religious and secular eyes overseeing the budget.

The workers were so honest and faithful that no one needed to keep detailed records of the transactions.

Today, in the church, we know that the Lord does not live in buildings, but this does not mean it is wrong to dedicate structures to the Lord, for His service and to His Glory.

Some Christian's today are cynical about church buildings and they think it is a waste of church funds to put money into the facility.

On the other hand, some worship the buildings, and have their priorities mixed up.

There is a balance in all of this.

Campbell Morgan says... “Whereas the house of God today is no longer material but spiritual, the material is still a very real symbol of the spiritual. When the church of God in any locality is careless about the material place of assembly, the place of its worship and its work, it is a sign and evidence that its life is at a low ebb.”

And as we build our own church budget each year, we put a portion aside for up keep and for improvements.

And I find it interesting, that every year I submit a plan to the Board on what I hope we can accomplish, and we look at the end of the year at that list and compare it with what God has done, and the completed projects are usually more than we could have even planned for.

Because what happens is something similar to what is taking place in our text, we have those steadfast and faithful tithers and givers, and with that income we can plan.

But God often times stirs one of you, someone, to give beyond their tithe, and they want to give a freewill offering, above and beyond, and we are able to knock out bigger projects.

For those of you who have been here since before I began here, you know what condition the church was in, and it has been overwhelming to see as we look

back all that God has accomplished through your faithful giving.

Not only has the building been improved upon, but like Campbell Morgan pointed out, the material is a testament to the spiritual work.

It seems the two run parallel to each other, as the church is revived structurally, so too is it being revived spiritually.

So this was Jehoash's legacy, he repaired the neglected Temple.

But now, we will see his work will all be undone in a moment, as the next events take place after the death of Jehoiada the priest, who was 130 when he died, these details will be given in our study of 2 Chronicles 24.

But when he died, Jehoash's true colors came through. So the events of this next scene take place during this time period.

Hazael Threatens Jerusalem

17 Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it; then Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. 18 And Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred things that his fathers, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and in the king's

house, and sent them to Hazael king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.

The historian of 2 Kings does not give the why of this chastening from the Lord.

But in 2 Chronicles we will be given more detail.

2 Chron. 24:17-19 Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. 18 Therefore they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. 19 Yet He sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the Lord; and they testified against them, but they would not listen.

God used the Syrians to chasten Judah and Jerusalem for their apostasy.

It is heartbreaking to see this king do so well in the beginning, but we see it was all a sham, his faith was shallow, and when his adopted father was no longer there to guide, Jehoash fully rebelled.

His faith was propped up on Jehoiada's faith.

Our faith must not be dependent upon the strength of someone else, may it be a wife, a husband, a father or mother.

And on the other side of this, we cannot be the crutch for other people's faith.

Our discipleship should not create spiritual dependents, we want to lead them as quickly to being spiritually independent as possible.

The “Jehoash Effect” is seen often in those who are sheltered in their faith.

We see it too often, when one finally breaks free of any kind of spiritual suppression, they usually rebel against their suppressors ways.

Teach others to live out their faith, not to depend on your faith, this is crucial.

True discipleship is teaching those under you to disciple others. Teaching them to serve their God and others and then you will watch their faith come alive.

Jehoash, although he started well, ends terribly.

A good beginning is no guarantee of a good ending.

Death of Joash(2 Chron. 24:23-27)

19 Now the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

20 And his servants arose and formed a conspiracy, and killed Joash in the house of the Millo, which goes down to Silla. 21 For Jozachar the son of Shimeath and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, struck him. So he died, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

For some reason the historian here really protects Jehoash's reputation, because in the parallel account in 2 Chronicles we will see the motive for this killing was revenge for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priests.

The king killed his son Zechariah for trying to call the people back to their God.

Warren Wiersbe sums up Jehoash's life by saying, "The boy king, who made such a good beginning, had a bad ending, and it was because he forsook the way of the Lord."

A tragic story indeed, understand church, this is why we are commanded in the New Testament to finish well, to serve God until the very end, to fight the good fight of faith until the Lord takes us home.

Satan does not care if he gets you at the beginning of the race or at the end, as long as he gets you.

1 Peter 5:8-11 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Do not let up.

So, next we will move back to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and we will end this chapter with a servant of God who ends his race well.

Elisha who has been missing since chapter 9, will return to show us how a servant of God should finish his race.

But first we read now, chapter 13 verses 1-9.

Jehoahaz Reigns in Israel

13:1 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. 2 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.

3 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. 4 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. 5 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. 6 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. 7 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.

8 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? 9 So Jehoahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Joash his son reigned in his place.

Now we see like father like son, Jehoahaz followed the Jeroboam model.

Jehoahaz would rather worship golden calves than the Living God.

Jehu had died a natural death after a long rule, this would have given him a time to prepare his son for the responsibility of being a king.

Jehu named his son, Jehoahaz meaning “Yahweh has Grasped.”

But although he was named after Yahweh, his life is summed up by the historian in verse 2, as having done evil in the sight of the Lord.

God also used the Syrians here to try to chastise Israel to bring them back to Him.

The oppression that the Syrians brought upon the Israelites had reduced Jehoahaz's army to only a small force of 10 chariots and 50 horsemen and 10,000 foot soldiers.

God's plan was successful, it brought the king and his people humbly before Him, and the king pleaded with the Lord to help.

The wording meaning "to be sick" which would mean weakness and dependency upon God.

Jehoahaz was at rock bottom here.

Some people only turn to the Lord when they are in desperate straits.

Now when this is the case, many times people will come to the Lord in pretense only, when they are in trouble, they will pray God if you deliver me from this right now, I will serve you for the rest of my days, and when God does, they are gone.

And Jehoahaz is one of these types, he only comes to the Lord for deliverance, but is too selfish to change his ways.

It is true of our God **Ps 103:8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.**

And God sent a deliverance for Israel.

But the tragic words read in verse 6, nevertheless Israel did not turn from their sins.

And not only did they resume the worship of the golden calves of Jeroboam but they also worship the wooden images, or the Asherah poles, this was part of the Phoenician worship, the Baal worship that Jehu had rid the land of.

It is interesting to see those who at one time God delivered and freed of their sins, who turn back to the vomit God saved them from.

Those sins usually come back with a vengeance.

Jesus told spoke of a person who was cleaned once, but not filled with the Holy Spirit, will be tormented even greater.

Luke 11:24-26 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' 25 And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. 26 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

Just because God in His mercy delivers an individual who is crying in desperation, does not mean the person is truly converted.

The fruit of the Spirit will come forth from a converted man or woman.

Rom. 6:22-23 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit

to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Your life will either be lived as a slave to sin, or a slave to God.

Jehoahaz and the Israelites were delivered but not converted, or brought back to True Faith.

He died another wicked king in Israel.

Next his son Jehoash will reign, and it is at the same time that the other Jehoash is reigning in Judah, the historian here will use the short form for the king in the south to try to help with the confusion, the southern king is referred to as Joash here.

Jehoash Reigns in Israel

10 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. 11 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.

12 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? 13 So Joash rested with his fathers. Then Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

We have here just a brief summary of the Northern Jehoash's sixteen year reign.

But the last part of this chapter gives a detailed account of the king's relationship with the prophet Elisha, who died during his reign.

The historian first condemns Jehoash for not departing from the sins of Jeroboam, he also mentions a war against Judah and king Ahaziah.

His summery ends with his son Jeroboam the second reigning in his place, he would be the third generation from Jehu's dynasty, remember God promised him four generations.

So we will go into this account of the king and Elisha the prophet.

Look now starting in verse 14...

Death of Elisha

14 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!"

15 And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So he took himself a bow and some arrows.

16 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. 17 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." 18 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. 19 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."

Elisha comes back on the scene after being gone since chapter 9.

This means for over 40 years there was silence on his life and ministry as far as the historical records was concerned.

And here he is only brought back on the pages at the end of his life.

We see he is still serving the Lord, and when he was about to die, the king with all of his faults was wise enough to come visit him.

Elisha really sets forth an amazing example here, you see servants of the Lord really should never retire.

I may not always be a pastor preaching behind the pulpit, but my end game is not to move to a ranch in Montana and retire to live out my final days.

There is always ministry to do, even from his death bed Elisha was serving the Lord and serving others.

As long as God gives us strength and sanity we should serve Him however we can.

I know Senior Pastors who have used their retirement years to minister to hurting ministries, and to pour into younger pastors.

If you keep moving in your later years, you will keep moving.

When you stop, your body tends to stop as well.

The king here showed respect for the prophet and even used the same wording as Elisha used for Elijah when Elijah was taken from the earth.

Elisha was a spiritual father to the nation and was more valuable to Israel than their entire army.

And although Jehoash was a compromised king, we see the mercy of God once more, and Elisha assures the king that deliverance is available to him.

But the king did not understand his deliverance would be according to his own faith.

And we see king Jehoash was not a man of great faith at all.

Seemingly perplexed by what the prophet was asking him to do.

Obviously when the prophet put his hands on the king's hands, it symbolized a conveying of power from God.

When Elisha asked him to shoot an arrow toward the area where the Syrians were at, it clearly spoke of a victory over the enemy.

The king could have made sense of this if he had any spiritual perception. Wiersbe

Then Elisha told him to take the remaining arrows, and to strike the ground, he did not have the spiritual perception to understand the meaning of it.

Shooting one arrow showed that there would be victory, striking the ground would determine the amount of victories that God would give him.

But Jehoash's faith was weak, and he limited himself to only three victories.

And it grieved the dying prophet, who had enough energy to rebuke the king.

He told the king that because of his weak faith he would only get three victories over his enemy.

Then in verse 20 we read...

20 Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. 21 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.

So even in Elisha's death was he still ministering to the people.

An incredible example here that Elisha sets forth, until the end he served the Lord, and because of this, even after his death, the nation of Israel was being impacted.

You know, this year our church lost 2 very important saints.

Both were friends, and both served the Lord until the very end, and even after their deaths, they were still making an impact.

Tom Deem was a retired electrician who used the time he has from his retirement to use his lifetime of wisdom gained, to serve the Lord here at the church.

When I arrived at the church in 2016, he came in and looked around, and said, you are going to need help here.

We made a huge list of needs, an expensive list of repairs and necessary upgrades, and at the beginning of this year, after four years of him serving the Lord, he came in and sat in my office, and he said, "My list is complete."

He had just finished the lighting on the signs out there, and the week after that conversation, after

worshipping the Lord here Sunday morning, he went home and that evening he had a heart attack, and went home to be with the Lord.

He finished his list, he finished well, but interestingly, his wife Carla, told me to come look at some things he had in the garage, and I noticed these little lenses cut out for lighting, and he had made these light coverings for the lights under the eave out there, the old dirty ones always bothered him.

So even after his death he was still blessing the church. The other saint was Susan Gaus, and all throughout her battle with cancer, Sue simply thought of others continually, she knitted chemo caps for others, she made blankets to raise money for missionaries, she ministered in every hospital and treatment facility she had to go to.

She too served the Lord until the very end, and she too heard those words “Well done good and faithful servant.”

But I was even more touched when her husband Dave a few weeks ago brought in some coloring books and things for my kids to do during the pandemic.

While she was in the hospital in her final days, she continued ministering to others and thinking of others and shopping for others, and even after she went home to be with Jesus, her mail order came in for my kids, and after her death she still ministered to us.

Those examples, like Elisha's here, are how we are to finish this race well.

That is how you end with no regrets, just keep serving others, until God says it is time.

So, next will finish up this chapter with the Grace of God.

Israel Recaptures Cities from Syria

22 And Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 23 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.

24 Now Hazael king of Syria died. Then Ben-Hadad his son reigned in his place. 25 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.

Even in spite of the faithless king, and a people that had turned their backs on their God, God stayed true to His covenant, and we see once again the Grace of God shine forth in this account.

Jehoash could have had the whole victory a permanent victory, but his lack of faith never gave him the full victory.

Only three battles won, and although this will hold off the enemy for many years, he could have not only taken back Israelite cities but also completely destroyed the Syrians and eliminated that enemy once and for all.

This morning I was reading in Chuck Smith's devotional about unbelief.

He mentioned those from Jesus' hometown of Nazareth, after Jesus had gone on a healing and ministry circuit in the surrounding areas of Galilee, He came to His own neighborhood.

But the people were skeptical, they brought no sick to Him, no hurting came to Jesus for comfort, and instead the people scoffed and questioned Jesus.

"Where did this hometown Boy get this wisdom and power?"

Chuck pointed out that Jesus was there to do ministry, He loved the people in His hometown, but they were limited when they refused to receive God's Power.

It is unfortunate when someone comes in contact with Jesus, but fails to receive the power and blessing that is available to them because of unbelief.

Understand something tonight, God desires to bless you, He wants to heal you even, to teach you, He desires to minister to you.

And perhaps many of you are keeping Him at an arm's length, you are using your own reasoning, you don't believe He is able to help.

Perhaps you are bound by addiction, paralyzed by a bad decision, suffering under sin.

Listen, Jesus has the power to free you completely, to give you the complete victory, not just a temporary battle or a momentary reprieve.

You are robbing yourself of blessing, because of your unbelief.

Come to Jesus tonight, and find the victory.

Beware of the danger of unbelief, guard your heart against it, cultivate your heart, keep the soil good and receptive, so the work is never limited in your life.

God has great plans to work in your life, if you simply believe His Word and promises.

Tonight, if you have the faith, come forward and get prayer for whatever it is that is holding you back tonight.

There will be men up here during this last song who desire to pray with you, use it as an opportunity to overcome your unbelief, and trust Jesus to work in your life.

Let's pray...