

Wednesday, December 7, 2022 • Read 2 Kings 8:7–15

Questions from the Scripture text: Where did Elisha go in v7? What was the condition of Ben-Hadad? What was told the king? To whom does the king speak (v8)? What does he tell him to take to whom? What does he want Elisha to do? What is he calling Elisha? Where does Hazael go in v9? What does he bring? What does he call the king, in the king's behalf (cf. 6:21)? What does he ask, in his behalf? What does Elisha say about the disease (v10)? But what has Yahweh shown him will happen anyway (v10)? What does he then do to Hazael (v11)? How does Hazael respond? And how does Elisha respond to that? What does Hazael ask (v12)? What else had Yahweh shown Elisha that Hazael would do to whom? What four evil things, specifically, will he do to Israel? What does Hazael think that Elisha is calling him (v13a)? What is Elisha actually calling him (v13b)? Where does Hazael go in v14? What does the king ask? What does Hazael answer? But what does he do, when (v15)?

How does God carry out His historical judgments of His people? 2Kings 8:7–15 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God carries out His judgment according to His Word, with weeping, and often by the hand of the wicked.**

God carries out His historical judgments of His people according to His Word, v7–10. It seems strange for Elisha to be on his way to Damascus in v7, but the Bible is full of prophets doing strange things. What is happening comes into focus when we find that Hazael is going to have a role.

It's been about 12 chapters, so I hope that you haven't forgotten 1Ki 19:15–18, where the Lord had given Elijah a final assignment of anointing Hazael king of Syria, Jehu king of Israel, and Elisha as prophet. These would serve to kill all of the house of Ahab as God judges Israel for its Baal worship. So, when we meet Hazael in v8, it's not Ben-Hadad's death that takes center stage, but the first tolling of the death knell for the house of Omri/Ahab, and the eventual downfall of the northern kingdom.

Now, the Lord's word to Elijah has been matched by what he has shown Elisha. Ben-Hadad seeks a word about his disease (v8), for which he is willing to pay generously (v9). But Elisha's word about that has less to do with the disease (v10a, cf. v14) and more to do with Hazael (v10b, cf. v15). The disease won't kill the king; his right-hand man will.

God carries out His historical judgments of His people with weeping, v11–12. Elisha stares Hazael down in the first part of v11 until Hazael is quite embarrassed. And then the prophet embarrasses him even more. Elisha begins to weep. Naturally, this military/political higher-up is quite uncomfortable with this emotional display and asks about it (v12a).

But by his doing so, the Spirit provokes us to wonder as well about the prophet's weeping. Doesn't Israel deserve all the horrible things that Hazael is going to do? Why would the representative of Yahweh weep over God's just judgment? Because God does not delight in judging even those whom He is directly calling wicked. We see this with the eventual judgment of the southern kingdom (cf. Ez 18:23, 32; Hos 11:8). And when God becomes a Man, we see Him weeping over Jerusalem's forthcoming destruction for rejecting Him (cf. Luk 19:41–44).

Behold the compassion of God, even in the midst of a proper hatred of the wicked and their wickedness! When we love our enemies, as sons of our heavenly Father, we learn to weep over their just perishing. And if ever we or our church come under just judgments, may the weeping heart of Jesus in it move us to worship and repent.

God often carries out His historical judgments of His people by the hand of the wicked, v12–15. The word "evil" in v12 can mean "harm" in addition to moral evil, but the actions described are shocking for their immorality. Hazael himself considers them "gross" actions suitable to a dog more than a man (v13). And the treachery of using access to the sickbed to turn it into a death bed (v15) should also disgust the reader. Even the slow, suffocating method of murder highlights the evil of Hazael. But even in the examples previously cited, it was Babylon and Rome whom the Lord had used. And both of them came under historical judgment for it.

The Lord still brings historical judgments against His people (cf. Rev 2–3). When it comes with extremely wicked men doing extremely wicked things, let us not forget that it still comes as the just judgment of God.

What are some judgments that have come upon the churches? What is Jesus's heart toward those churches, and how should they respond? Who are some wicked who have done very wickedly against the church. What will God do to them for it?

Sample prayer: Lord, You are righteous when You judge, and when Your judgment begins at the household of God. Yet, we forget that You have no pleasure in the death of the wicked and that Jesus Himself wept over Jerusalem. Forgive us for not weeping like You do. Forgive us for failing to see how much our pain means to You, even when it is right and necessary. Make us think rightly about You we ask, in Jesus's Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP119W "Lord, Let My Cry Before You Come" or TPH103E "O, Come My Soul, Bless Thou the Lord"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Second kings, chapter 8 verse 7 through 15, these are God's words. Then election went to Damascus and Ben Haddad king of Syria was sick. And it was told him saying The man of god has come here and the king said to have tail, take a present in your hand, and go to meet the man of god and inquire of y'all play by him saying.

So i recover from this disease, So happy, i want to meet him and took a present with him of every good thing of Damascus. 40 camel loads. Then he came and stood before him and said, your son been haddad king of syria has sent me two, you saying, shall i recover from this disease?

Well, i just said to him, go say to him, you shall certainly recover However, He always has said me, that he will surely die. Then he said his countenance, in a stare until he was ashamed. And the man of god wept, That's also said, why is my lord weeping?

He answered because i know the evil that you will do to the children of israel. They're strongholds, you will set on fire and their young men, you will kill the sword. And your dash their children and rip open their women with child. So that's y'all said but what is your servant a dog?

That he should do this gross thing. And Elisha answered. You always send me that you will become king over syria. Then he departed from a license came to his master. Who said to him? What did, oh, i should say to you. And he answered, he told me you would surely recover.

But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth. Dipped it in water and spread it over his face. So that he died. And Hatfield, his son. Sorry, not answer all this one. It's not his son and Hatsule. Rained. In his place. So far the reading of god's inspired and Inherent word.

Well, the lord is. Perfectly. Just and righteous. He does not. Forget about sin. The only Way, that sin and guilt can be put away as When they are attend for and he's also perfectly faithful to his word. And this chapter, finally, Introduce us to hatseal. When the verse 8 says, and the king said, To hatzile.

Suddenly, we remember that all the way back and first kings, 19, When elijah was discouraged about the Effectiveness, or fruit of his ministry. That the lord had told him to anoint, three people that lord had told him. Uh, to anoint hatzile, who would be king of syria? And jihu son of nimshi, who had come to be king.

Um, Of israel. And, Elisha, who would be the prophet and elijah's place, but we hadn't heard of absol since And when the lord had told elijah to do that, he said whoever escapes the sort of hat seal G hub will kill and whoever escapes the sort of Jehu eligible kill.

And so, Uh, it should be a great big. Alarm or reminder for us when We're just reading along, and Elisha goes to Damascus and we Are given that as a sort of providential, Arrangement, that Elisha has an assignment and going to Damascus because Ben had ed king of serious sick.

And, Uh, we see the effect that Elijah's ministry has had upon bin Haddad. Among other things. You remember the sparing of the entire Syrian army? By the word of alyssa. And when When Ben hadad had sent them to kill elisha. And elisha had spared their life. Remember the lord?

Having Struck this here in army blind. And then he leads them to the capital city of israel and the king of israel. Uh, refers to Elisha, my father, shall i killed them? Uh, recognizing the Um, the position in place. Of the word of god by comparison to him. All you have the same sort of language the way that it had sales instructed to speak to alyssia.

So you're Ben Haddad, your son.

Uh, your son Ben Haddad king of syria has sent me to you saying, shall i recover from this disease? And he considers him a man of god and Ben Hadad wants to know, wants to inquire of y'all way instead of Ramon or any of the Of the syrian gods and he sends 40 camel loads.

Of gifts, compare that to the 10 camo loads that Abram had abraham had sent with his servant for the Um, The potent prospective bride of of Isaac. And abraham wasn't was a very wealthy, man. In the earth at the time. And here's four times as much as a present from, not in israelite king, but the king of syria Uh, for the man of god.

And yet. God's word is true and he is faithful to it. Spend the idolatry has not been repented of, it's in the northern kingdom. It's we're going to And judgment must come. Upon the people of god. So that's the first Lesson here is that god carries out. Um, Is judgments in history.

Upon his people in accordance with his word and We should remember as peter. By the holy spirit tells us judgment begins with the household of god. What matters most in the course of human history, and the rising and falling of nations and all of the events that Um, that people pay attention to and wars rumors of wars and The economic prosperity and collapse and all of those things.

That which is driving everything. Is what god is doing in his church. Judgment begins at the household of god. And there must be repentance in his church. And the lord of course is still the same today as he was then. And we see that and revelation, 2, and 3, and the letters to the seven churches, and The lord jesus is personal interaction.

With every part of his church wherever it is. And warnings. For unrepentence and sympathies with us in our suffering. And Commendations commending us for that, which Uh is even by his grace that we do that, which is good. And so god carries out historical. Judgments of his people. Uh, according to his word.

And he does that, even Um, Even through the wicked as we're going to see at the end of the chapter. But how one of the things that i think we need to see? Before we even get to that that he uses, the wicked is the disposition of god towards us.

But he has no pleasure. And the death of the wicked, or the Discipline or destruction of his people. Elisha says to him, go say to him, you shall certainly recover However, Yahweh has sent me that he will really die. And the reason is because he doesn't die of the disease, does he?

He sends him with the word that that he will recover. And Um, adziel doesn't kill the king. Uh, immediately upon returning probably because Hatfield doesn't believe. Uh, in yahweh or the word of yahweh and elicious mouth for the way that Ben Haddad does. And so he goes and he delivers the message dutifully, And yet, on the next day, Uh which of course the word of of the lord is faithful and true and Elijah wasn't telling hatsale.

A lie from yahweh. It was a lie from Hatfield. Um, And so we're not surprised that the king is getting better. But hats, y'all is surprised. And we're also not surprised when Hatfield murder him. Because the word of the lord has, Um, it's told us about it but that's not the end of his interaction with Hatfield.

We're gonna we're gonna get to that in a moment. Um, the use of the wicked. Uh, but once he says, However, yahai has shown me that he will really die. Verse 11 says, then he set his countenance in a stair. Until he was ashamed. So, alysis Elisha says, Tell him he's gonna get better from his disease.

But y'all has send me that he will shortly. Die dying, he will die. And then Elisha fixes his gaze upon him. Or if this was, um, Yeah, a douglas bond book. Elisha looked at him, meaningfully. And he didn't look away. And had seal starts to squirm. Uh, remember hats, y'all doesn't give Elisha.

Or you off. It doesn't give y'all way any credence. Let alone to give a life shock credence as the mouth of yahweh. And so, he fidgets And this after one head seal starts fidgeting. Elisha starts weeping. And this of course, for somebody who is a cutthroat politician and a hardened military guy, Having a grown, man.

Staring at him crying. It's very unusual and uncomfortable. This is why. Now, why is my lord weeping? In other words, why is Yeah, somebody who's supposed to be somebody like you are You know, why are you weeping? And Elisha. Answers, because i know the evil that you will do to the children of israel.

Their strongholds, you will set on fire. Their young man. You will kill with a sword. We will dash their children. Rip open their women with child. And we could really, we could spend some time on those. Versus talking about how those are some of the very evils. That we see perpetrated wherever satan is hostile to the image of god and especially hostile to the church of god and the renewed image of god and christ and believers.

Um, Uh, but i think we should Notice. The weeping of elisha, who is God's representative to us in the situation? And remember places like In ezekiel chapter 18 and then again later in the book, i didn't put the reference in here, chapter 33, i think later in the book but a couple of times and in chapter 18, And god.

Um, Appealing to israel. Why will you die of israel? Why will you die? Do i have any pleasure in the death of the wicked? But that, but rather that he should turn and live And, The way he talks to. Israel and ephraim in in hosea. Chapter 11. How can i give you up?

Talking about his great love for them, and And describing himself. Of using human emotion language. We know that god doesn't have human emotions but describing whatever is in god. The disposition of god, even towards the people, he has judging not taking pleasure in. They're suffering. Of course, he takes pleasure in his holiness.

Of course he takes pleasure in his justice. Of course, he takes pleasure in the greatness of the display of his wrath because it is a, it is a, it comes from a perfection of his, the perfection of his justice and his holiness. But he doesn't take pleasure in the pain.

Even of the one being judged. Interval. God, in his divine nature, does not have. Human emotion yet. God adds a human nature to himself. Doesn't mean the second person of the trinity. And jesus and luke 19. As he looks at jerusalem. And thinks about and talks about. And it says there that he's Uh, thinking about when rome in some 40 years is going to come.

Uh, and level, the city of jerusalem and the suffering that is going to come to the people. He weeps over them, even though they're suffering is as it says, they're in luke 19 because they did not know the day of their visitation.

Jesus is not denying the justice or the holiness or the necessity of even the, the fury or intensity. Of what will come upon jerusalem. And yet, he who is god in the flesh and is a perfect. Uh, expression to us of of what that which is in. God looks like, When?

Uh, when it has its proper analogy in man. He weeps over jerusalem. And so this is a help to us because one of the hardest things, i think in the christian life, especially when thinking about those who are hostile to us and especially as we grow in grace and it means more and more to us thinking about those who are hostile to god.

One of the difficult things is How do? Uh, delight in the justice of god and the holiness of god and the proper. Infinite intensity of the vengeance and wrath of god. How does that go together with loving my enemies?

And here Elisha is weeping in behalf of israel. For the horrors that they Will have brought upon themselves. The horrors that are a just response of god, a righteous responsive god. To what they have done to the lord, their god. And yet, for all the justness of the profit weeps for them, And so we must learn to Be those who weep.

Over the disaster, that comes to our Enemies into god's enemies. Whether in the world, But especially in the church. And so we see the god carries out his historical judgments. And faithfulness to and fulfillment of his word. We see that god carries out his historical judgments of his people with weeping, And as it were, and That god often carries out his historical judgments.

Of his people by the hand of the wicked. And magnum mistake Hatfield is wicked. He's so wicked. That. Um, he's offended by hearing out loud. The things that he's actually going to do is What am i a dog that i would do such things? And oh, life is answering is basically.

Uh, no, you're something worse than a dog. You're going to be a king of syria. And this is par for the course. For wicked kings.

We may actually meet Ben Haddad and glory. It is not out of the realm of possibility, reading. This passage To see the effect and perhaps that factors into Um, No, ice is answer to him. Because we are all going to be healed of all our diseases, aren't we? Good.

Belong to god through jesus christ and in a much better way than The faith, healer con men of the church think?

He said, what is your servant to dog that he should do this gross thing? Elijah answered. Y'all has shown me that you will become king of king over syria. And he starts by. Responding to his master's. Um, Beginning recovery from illness. By making sure that if Although he Doesn't die of the sickness.

He doesn't rise from the thick bed. And he soaks the towel. Um, In water. And smothers his face and suffocates, man. So that he will become king. And almost certainly, he comes out of the room. Grieving and weeping. Oh no. What is it? General hatsale. What has happened? Oh, those prophets of israel.

What do they know? He has passed his died after all. He will never rise from his sick bed. And the murderer. Who is the great general of the army, becomes air apparent to the throne? Just a wicked man. Yeah, we mustn't forget that the word of god. Which is pronounced a righteous judgment against the people of israel.

Is in control of this whole thing. And this is going to bother, of course, abacus. When habrickik starts out upset by how the people of judah are disregarding the lord and the lord says, yeah, i'm gonna i'm gonna judge them using the chaldeans and pancakes. They're worse than the people of judah.

But god is a righteous god, and he judges everyone for their part in it. Patio will be judged. For what he did to israel. The Babylon was judged. For what they did to israel, even though For what they did to do to even though judah was being judged. Uh, by the lord by the by the hands.

The instrumentality of the Babylonians.

So it will do us no good to look at those who are wicked, whether in the church or in Uh, the the world or the government and say, how wicked they are If we aren't also remembering that god often uses exactly such people and even Providentially raises up, exactly such people.

Because of what the church needs. In response to our unfaithfulness to god in our worship. And in our worldliness. And in our doctrine. And how can someone look at the last 150 170. Yeah, going on to two 200 years now of the church in our nation. And not actually expect from the bible.

That there would be a hat sale or that there would be an Assyria it's an acrid or that there would be a Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar or that there would be a roam.

To come and level us. And then we say, oh, You know, this president or, you know, or that tech company owner, and we ring our hands about how evil they are and what harm they might do. Instead of reforming our worship and getting rid of all of our our man-made, holy days, and men made parts of worship and repenting and coming back to god, and abandoning our worldliness.

And saying we have idolized comfort and counted money more important to us than the Lord and comfortability and convenients. We have no diligence in in obedience or service or the killing of sin. Because we are much more diligent to have our vacations and our retirements and our entertainments.

Then god brings us to second kings chapter 8 and he says, Don't you remember from the bible? What i often do by the hands. Of hat sales.

And yet, in the same passage. Haven't we seen him weeping over the harm? Over the pain and the intensity. Don't we hear from Ezekiel? That he doesn't have pleasure in. The pain that his church goes through. But that it would be much more pleasing. That we would turn and repent.

And that the evil ones would be. Uh, frustrated and shot down and a new age of reformation and revival would come. And blessing with it. Oh my god, grant to us. To hear and respond properly. To this passage, not just in our family, although Obviously, this is our family worship with me.

He Grant it to his church as well.

Now, father in heaven will pray that you would Blessed to us. What we have heard from this portion of your word. Thank you for the reminder that your word is in control of all things. And we bless your name that it's the same word that has. Determined that we should.

Be brought to repentance and faith in the united to christ and, and dwelt by your spirit and adopted as your children and conformed to christ. So that we might have u as our inheritance. Than be fully blessed in you forever. When we pray, oh god, that you would Comfort our hearts and move us to repentance by the fact that you weep Over the pain of your people even when they are being disciplined.

Over the suffering of your church, even In particular. Times and places in it are Being obliterated. By famine our sword. And help us remember. Oh god, that The wicked are not in control. And that they shall be judged for their wickedness, but that they are also often Used by you for the chastening.

Of your church. And so grant to us repentance, grant to us to see that which would give You pleasure as it were to speak in that way. And give us reformation of worship and reformation. From worldliness. Reformation from fleshly indulgence. And, Bring the season in your church of. Yep.

Pouring of your spirit and revival. Brain lord for my family. And for me, That you would make us to count you as our treasure and to lighten you. And that you would bring us into a season of So enjoying The work. That you give us to do. Because it is from and for, You whom you have brought us to worship?

So help us lord by your word that these wouldn't just be lessons that we know are true. When we sit down to, To worship you and then Are just lost to the. Into the atmosphere. When we rise to, to our Other activities. Because your word to bear fruit in their lives.

We ask As the implanted word, that is able to save our souls. That we would be doers and not yours. Only. By the grace of christ. And his name. We ask it. Amen.