

Notes on II Kings 1–12

By Grant Thorpe

available at

<http://www.corobaptist.org.au>

The following notes may be copied and distributed freely if they are acknowledged and not used for profit.

Chapter 1

During the reigns of Ahab in the North and Jehoshaphat in the South, some progress had been made in regaining territory East of Jordan. Now, that was to be eroded away. Ahab's son Ahaziah lost control of Moab. He had not got his way with Jehoshaphat either (see I Kings 22:49). Then he was injured in a fall. He had no son and wondered what would become of him. The Lord was jealously eager that he should enquire of him and be known as the God of Israel, but Ahaziah sought a prediction from Baal instead. What he got was a true prophecy from Elijah: 'Because you think there is no living God in Israel, you will surely die.'

Ahaziah's servants had been suitably awed by Elijah and returned with their message to the king. Not so Ahaziah. He sent soldiers to arrest him. The fire that fell at Carmel had been an act of mercy, because, at the time of evening sacrifice, God accepted Israel's offering at the hands of Elijah. The victim had been accepted in place of Israel. Here, we see the result of people not accepting that this was so. If they did not participate in the offering at Carmel by faith, and in all the daily offerings, they themselves would be the victims. Ahaziah disregarded all this and, in his arrogance, he was willing to lose a second and third troupe of soldiers.

The third captain sought mercy for himself and his men, and they found that their lives were precious to the Lord (cf. Ps. 116:15). Elijah could entrust himself to this man, and, by him, came to the king and discharged his mission. Ahaziah died. The country still lived by every word that came from God's mouth (Deut. 8:3).

Prayer

Dear Father, as we continue to find self-interest and arrogance abounding, grant that we may stand strongly in the spirit and power of Elijah. As your witnesses, may the good news of Christ sound out from us so that all will know there is a living God in the land. This we ask in the strong name of Jesus your Son. Amen.

Chapter 2

The whole prophetic community knew that Elijah was soon to be taken from them. What would this mean for Elisha? Whatever it meant, he would not be shaken from his master for the Spirit of the Lord had been on him. That Spirit was Elisha's only hope of being a successor in the momentous task of bearing witness to the reign of God in the midst of an idolatrous people.

Elijah and Elisha crossed the Jordan in a manner reminiscent of Moses leading Israel out of Egypt (Exod. 14:16), but this time, only a small prophetic contingent saw the miracle. They were a remnant who still lived by the power and love that had brought the whole nation into existence. Elisha asked for twice the portion of Spirit which had been on Elijah; perhaps he felt twice as needful of it. He saw the chariot of Israel with its horsemen. He cried out to Elijah who had been father to him, but he had been taken up in a whirlwind. This vision of Israel's spiritual protection would be greatly needed by Elisha in days to come (6:17).

Elisha was now leader of the prophetic movement and made his entry to office as his 'father' had left it, and also, as Joshua had led Israel into their land. Perhaps the prophets were encouraged to think of the new things God would do rather than dwell on the festering nation that had rejected Elijah. They made a shaky beginning however, and wanted Elisha to search for Elijah in whose physical presence they had taken comfort.

In Joshua's day, Jericho had been first to fall. It had been arrogantly rebuilt, but now became home for these fifty prophets and the scene of Elisha's first miracle. The creation has always groaned under its curse as it fulfills its calling to reflect God's displeasure with our sinning, but it is subjected in hope (Rom. 8:19–25). In this instance, God sweetened the waters to make Jericho habitable for the prophets and all who lived there afterwards—a sign of the healing that came from the Lord of Israel who's word these prophets treasured. However, it did not go so well for those who made light of these strangers in the world (cf. Deut. 18:15–19)!

Prayer

Father, how could we live as your servants in this world if the Spirit of your Son did not fill us, again and again? We are slow to understand your presence and power and your love for the nations. Forgive our tardiness. Hearten us by your providence. Make us to increase and abound in faith and hope and love by your Spirit, for, even now, you are making all things new. We ask this in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

Chapter 3

Jehoshaphat (King of Judah) had made a treaty with Ahab (I Kings 22:44) and sealed it with the marriage of his son to Ahab's daughter, Athaliah (II Chron. 18:1; 21:6; II Kings 8:18). He had assisted Ahab in an ill-fated war against Aram, after insisting on a prophetic word (I Kings 22). But he had been reprovved by another prophet on his return for assisting an evil man (II Chron. 19:2; 20:37). This alliance was to prove nearly disastrous after his death (II Kings 11:1–3).

With Ahab dead, Moab became a problem for his son Jehoram, so the latter called on Jehoshaphat for help (and Edom also) and he agreed. Jehoram had shown some godly awareness in removing a Baal shrine but still led Israel in her rebellion. When the allies found themselves without water and Elisha was called, he wanted nothing to do with Jehoram. However, for the sake of Jehoshaphat, and with some music to quieten his spirit, he heard the word of the Lord.

The allies were to dig trenches in the riverbed to retain the flash flood that was to come. Moab would be destroyed by Israel and Judah. The flood surely came, at the time when the morning sacrifices were being offered in Jerusalem (cf. I Kings. 18:36). Moab was fooled by reflections from this water, and then routed and ruined. Their king barely escaped with his life by the hideous and desperate offering up of his son, the crown prince, a rare practice used to appease the god Chemosh. The wrath which broke out against Israel and Judah could have been the wrath of the Moabites at their awful loss, or rather, the wrath of God against Israel (everywhere else, this phrase is used of God against sinners). If the latter is so, we should understand that what the Moabites did was so repulsive to God (Lev. 18:21; 20:3), that God's wrath broke out against those who precipitated in the deed. Sensing this, Israel quickly withdrew.

Prayer

Father, in days when issues are not clear, and when your judgements are in the land, and when evil people seek your help, grant that we may wait for your word, understand your will and rightly convey your gracious purpose to all who seek us. We ask this in the name of your own Son whose holiness and grace have made us forever his servants. Amen.

Chapter 4

The prophetic community, which had gathered around Elijah, may not have had wide support, and their practical needs quickly threw them back on God. Elisha moved from place to place, including the memorable Mt Carmel, and was careful for the needs of those who trusted God. He was also able to speak to the king and commander personally. These accounts tell us about godly people who were grateful to God for his mercy and how God provided for the prophet and his company. There is not a time in Scripture, apart from the days of Moses and of Christ, when we are told of so many miracles being performed. God was demonstrating to Israel that he still lived among them as their gracious provider. By this, he encouraged the faith and hope of his faithful people.

Selling the sons of a widow seems unjust to us but was within the law of the time. Payment of debt was a high priority in Israel. The woman's debt was not forgiven but she was enabled to repay it. Elisha asked what she had in the house, and, with that and some borrowing from her neighbours, he called her to participate in the miracle. She found that God's providing was as bountiful as her need. (Cf. the earlier miracle of a similar kind in I Kings 17:15.)

A second woman was perhaps as rich as the first was poor. She gave freely and asked for nothing, but, as Jesus later said, anyone who serves a prophet will receive a prophet's reward (Matt. 10:41). Elisha enquired as to her need so that he could discharge this 'debt' of love (cf. Rom. 13:8). Her need was a cry from her heart for a son, a need she could not bear to be trifled with. The son was born, miraculously. When this son died within a few years however, all this giving of God seemed like a cruel joke. Although she felt mocked, she would not rest until Elisha came to her son. His servant was sent urgently before them and was not to greet anyone on the way. We are reminded of the similar urgency with which Christ sent 70 disciples before him to announce the news of new life for Israel (Luke 10:4). Elisha now applied

himself to his task with diligence, seeking God's favour. The Shunammite woman received her gift again, like Abraham before her received his son, as one raised from the dead (Heb. 11:19). She had encountered Elisha, and the God of Elisha, in her depths. All this drew Israel on to understand that God is the God of resurrection. The cry of our heart is heard by the God who has raised up from the dead our Lord Jesus (John 5:20–21; Heb. 13:20).

Famine came to Israel again. Elisha showed the prophetic community that, even if the only remaining fruits were poisonous, and even if there were few in the land who brought their gifts to the Lord's servants, they could be fed. When Jesus came, he taught his disciples, not only that they could be fed, but that they could feed the multitudes (Matt. 14:16).

We are encouraged by these narratives, as servants of Christ, not to expect great things in this world which goes about its life as though God did not matter, but, to expect great things of God who will not leave himself without a witness to his living among us.

Prayer

Father, you know each of the requirements we must meet to fulfil our responsibilities in this life. You see our distress and know all our desires. We do not pray for riches, lest our hearts be turned to them, but ask that we may be kept from poverty lest we be tempted to steal (Prov. 30:8–9). May the joy of your Son and his kingdom fill our minds as we entrust to you all needs for our daily life. Amen.

Chapter 5

The Arameans were enemies of Israel as far back as David's day and had continued their hostility to the Northern tribes. With the encouragement of a prophet, Ahab had defeated them (I Kings 20), but they continued their worrying attacks and captured a young girl who was now servant to their chief military commander. The writer of our *II Kings* acknowledges that it was the Lord who had given this commander his victories for Aram. (In fact, it had already been decreed that a successor to the present king would destroy Ahab's dynasty.)

With remarkable simplicity and grace, the young girl was confident of the power of Elisha to heal this enemy of Israel and her own captor, and longed that it would happen. Perhaps unwittingly, she revealed the desire of God to be known as the living God of grace among all nations.

Naaman took the girl's desire for his healing with all the simplicity it deserved and approached his king. For the sake of this man, the king was willing to take the political risks involved in asking a favour of his enemy and sent Naaman off with liberal gifts. King Jehoram received it with all the threat that is sensed by those who build their own kingdom. If he had embraced the ministry of Elisha, perhaps he could have anticipated that God meant to glorify himself by this request. Elisha, ever a man of the kingdom of God, saw no reason for dismay and asked for the man to be sent on to him.

Elisha's reticence to appear to Naaman to prescribe his lowly remedy should perhaps be understood in the light of his words to Naaman after he was healed. Elisha wanted Naaman to understand, not merely that there was a prophet in Israel, but that there was a living God before whom he stood and who had power and grace to heal. Elisha would take no reward for a task he had not performed. Naaman went back to Aram a convert to Israel's Lord. We do not know what affect this healing had on King Jehoram, but we know that it made Israel furious when it was referred to later by Jesus (Luke 4:27). Israel, for the most part, remained closed off to God's saving deeds. God had wanted to so bless his people that they would be a witness to the nations. Here, God went about his gracious work anyway, through a young girl and a faithful prophet.

Gehazi, in effect, had a different 'god' before whom he stood, a god who gave grudgingly or for payment. He could not see why they, or at least he, should not be enriched by this service, and did not understand the grace of this act that had awakened faith in a foreigner. Without the greatness of the true God before him, he gave way to covetousness and deceit. He spent the remaining days of his service with the power and fear of God powerfully at work in his own flesh.

Prayer

Father, in your mercy, keep us alert to your presence in which we stand. May we be strong through the grace revealed through Jesus Christ. May your kingdom come, the kingdom of your truth and grace. You have ordained that we be witnesses, regardless of the circumstance in which we are placed. Save us from self-concern and from covetousness for the sake of Jesus your Son. Amen.

Chapter 6

The calling of Elisha was to be a prophet; nevertheless he remained careful for the welfare of those around him. Perhaps this is reflected in the desire of the prophets to have him come with them while they gathered timber for their residence. When confronted with the loss of a borrowed axehead, he was sure of the goodness and power of God in his care for the ordinary needs and emergencies of his prophets. Jesus provided for his disciples in similar fashion (Matt. 17:27).

In similar manner, God continued to care for the whole nation, by warning the king of their enemy's tactical moves. This happened enough to make the king of Aram suspect the loyalty of his own men, and often enough for the story of how it happened to filter through to the Arameans. There were probably many natural means for Elisha to know Aram's movements. We know of one girl captive who remembered Elisha (5:3) and who could have been a source of information. But however the information was gained, the intelligence served to demonstrate to the king that the prophetic movement remained faithful to the nation.

The tactical importance of Elisha to the nation was demonstrated by his being made the focus for Aram's attack. Elisha knew he was safe. His eyes seem to have been always open to the power of God among his people, but a vision was provided for his servant who feared for their safety. The servant had seen the enemy all around Dothan, but now he saw that the army of God was all around Elisha. This event

became the occasion for Elisha's loyalty to be even more remarkably demonstrated. He led the vast but blinded Aramean force into Samaria.

More importantly, Elisha was able to demonstrate that the power of the Lord had more to do with mercy than vengeance. In such a manner, the people of Christ are now told to feed their enemies and overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:20–21). In various ways, the Spirit of Christ in Elisha was already opening the eyes of the blind: the fearful saw his protection, the rebellious were delivered into the hands of the Lord's people for judgement, only to discover that they were pardoned. The feast may have sealed a covenant of peace precluding any further hostilities. The king of Israel had been sufficiently moved by these events to call Elisha, not 'my enemy' (as Ahab had done), but 'my father'. It was easy for him to respect the prophet when his enemies were in his power, but he had little idea of the gracious powers of the kingdom of God.

In time, both Aram's peacableness and the king of Israel's respect for Elisha had vanished. Another attack from Aram had come to the point of Samaria being under siege and the people inside were reduced to eating unclean food, and their own children. The king's distress and the revealing of sackcloth under his clothes suggest that he was expressing repentance toward God; only the Lord could help them now. But his idea of relief from trouble was to vent his anger against Elisha. It seems that the elders of the city did respect Elisha and furthermore, he had their help in protecting himself against the King's irrational rage. The king had given up hope for himself from God.

Chapter 7

'Food would soon be plentiful and cheap' said Elisha, except that the captain who expressed his doubt would not taste a morsel of it. His word could have done great damage if it had not been countered immediately. Then, God did for the King (who was effectively his enemy) what he had earlier instructed him to do for his captive enemy: he fed him and his whole city.

The lepers who had nothing to lose were the first to discover the Lord's generosity. They were the first also, to realise that it was time to live in that generosity by sharing it with the whole city. The king still could not believe he would see any good from the Lord. He was in danger of being like the later King Ahaz, to whom Isaiah said, 'If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all' (Isa. 7:9). The King's men, like the lepers, could see that they had nothing to lose and found a way around the despair of their king. So, the extent of God's power and of his care for his people was discovered and food was soon plentiful and cheap. But the King's captain missed the great feast that followed. The judgement on him was a warning to all concerning failure to believe in the God of Israel.

Prayer

Father, you have called us to live in the grace of Christ your Son and to display his superior power in this present evil world. Where our sin abounded and crucified the Lord of glory, your grace abounded all the more. So may that grace abound today. May the memory of your

feeding your enemies always stir us again to do good to those who despitely use us. May your name be known in all the earth, for the sake of Christ our Lord. Amen.

Chapter 8

The lady from Shunem and her son continued to be a significant part of what God was doing in the nation. Elisha told her of the famine that would soon be upon them. She heeded the word of Elisha and moved to Philistia. On returning, she had to appeal to the king for the restoration of her land, only to find that she had arrived in time to confirm her story of a son raised from the dead. The prophet had asked, years before, if he could speak to the king on her behalf. Now, the deed God had done through him spoke for itself to the king. The woman's story was a parable to show the king that God was able to raise the dead and that he was speaking to the nation through Elisha.

We are not told why Gehazi was in the presence of the king, but it is clear that the king was unable to forget the deeds of God through Elisha. He was moved to restore the Shunamite's lands. Perhaps he feared fighting against what was clearly a work of God.

These stories may not be in chronological order because this incident is likely to have occurred before Gehazi was struck with leprosy.

Elisha was in Aram, presumably, to anoint Hazael as their king, a task given to Elijah and not yet discharged. He had his opportunity when the king of Aram sent Hazael to ask if he would recover from his sickness. Elisha was shown the whole scene. The king would recover but not survive the ambitions of his messenger. But it was not this that alarmed Elisha. The new king, Hazael had been anointed to bring judgement on Israel (I Kings 19:15–17), and already, he could see the cruelty with which this would be done and the distress it would cause. Elisha did not relish the judgement attracted by Israel's idolatry. Perhaps he reminded himself that at the end of the judgement, an action in which he and Jehu would share, there would still be 7000 faithful worshippers of the Lord.

Meanwhile, in Judah, all was not well. Jerusalem had a true worship, in a formal sense, but Jehoram, a son in law of Ahab in the North, had come to the throne. Jehoshaphat's policy of alliance with the North, sealed with a marriage, had not worked out well. Athalia was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and knew well the ways of her mother. Jehoram was led into the idolatrous policies of Ahab, who's son now reigned in the North. These two kings shared the same name and the same policy (both men are sometimes referred to as Joram). Judah was more involved in power games than in being the people of God. They lost control of Edom, and nothing other of note is recorded of their king.

Through all this time, the Lord still had David in mind and kept a son of his on the Southern throne. After Joram's reign, his son Ahaziah became king, but the policies of Ahab still reigned. The new king's mother was Athalia who, doubtless, had been the power behind her husband, and she had no intention of losing control. North and South fought together against Aram, but Joram was wounded, and Ahaziah went to visit him.

Prayer

Sovereign Lord, when leaders seek only what is expedient, and your judgements come upon us, cause us to remember your covenant promises, to be ready with your prophetic word and to wait quietly for your salvation. We live by the power of your Son whom you have raised up from death. As those raised up with him, grant that we may live to your praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Chapter 9

At the time when the Ahab and Jezebel family had control of both North and South, Elisha dispatched a younger prophet to fulfil the task first given to Elijah: anoint Jehu as king, and so, bring the Northern Omri (father of Ahab) dynasty to an end. He went to the place where Israel's army fought Aram in the absence of their wounded king. This was the prophet's opportunity to get the commander Jehu alone so that he could be anointed, an honour only recorded elsewhere of Saul, David and Solomon. This should have told Jehu that Israel's kings reigned by God's power and for his purposes. He would be God's servant to avenge the blood of the prophets and the powerless whom Ahab had killed (Deut. 32:43; I Kings 18:4, 13; 19:10; 21:13, 19).

Jehu's fellow commanders quickly aligned themselves under him and against Jo(ho)ram. They were happy to comply with his plan to seize the kingship and rode quickly from the battle zone East of Jordan to Jezreel where the king was recovering from wounds. Jehu seems to have readily commanded the loyalty of Joram's messengers also. Then, Joram, with his uncle who was king of the South, came out to meet Jehu. The zeal of Jehu made compromise impossible and Joram was killed. Jehu seems to have gone beyond his calling in killing Ahaziah as well (cf. Hosea 1:4).

Jezebel understood what Jehu had done. He was like the earlier Zimri who brought the last dynasty down. Would she have sympathy from this upstart? For a third time, Jehu gained the loyalty of Ahab's servants and Jezebel was thrown down to her death. She and her husband both met their deaths in the manner prophesied by Elijah.

Prayer

Father, you make all things serve your ends, including the violence of the ambitious. Help us to wait, with all your prophets, for the time of your vengeance, and to remain servants of your peace. Sustain us by the vision of the Lamb, by whose death the sins of the world have been borne, and by whose wrath all evil will be subdued. In his name we pray. Amen.

Chapter 10

Jehu now gave opportunity to the guardians of Ahab's large family to oppose him. However, they feared Jehu who was victorious at every point, and delivered the heads of every son of Ahab to Jehu at Jezreel. He explained to them that they had been partners with him in bringing about the word of the prophet Elijah. He demonstrated his thoroughness in going beyond what had been foretold and destroyed remaining elements of loyalty to Ahab at Jezreel. Then he travelled to the capital. On the way, he met relatives of the Southern king Ahaziah who seemed to

have been unaware of Jehu's purge, and they also were killed. They were relatives of Ahab.

Jehonadab was a zealous man (see Jer. 35:6) and, probably, widely respected. Jehu sought his presence and support. 'Come see my zeal', he said. So Jehu, accompanied by Jehonadab, arrived at the capital and completely wiped out the house of Ahab. Using guile, and the help of Jehonadab, he also trapped the priests of Baal and exterminated them. Jehu's zeal allowed for no mistakes. Whoever let a Baal worshipper escape would pay with his life.

However, Jehu's zeal was more for himself than for the Lord. He had done what God wanted as far as it suited his gaining of power, but retained the policy of Jereboam. The Lord rewarded him for his service by promising that his family would hold power for four generations, but even this security did not encourage him to fulfil the purpose of God during the 28 years of his reign. He began to lose parts of his territory.

Prayer

Father, many seek only their own interests and not those of Christ (Phil. 2:21), even though you have given them the honour of being your servants. You delight in zeal and despise lukewarmness, but may our affections be true and our labour directed to exalting Christ. Forgive the rashness that so often goes beyond what you have required, and grant that we may remain confident that the reign of Christ shall fully establish your kingdom. In his name we pray. Amen.

Chapter 11

Athaliah, queen mother in the South, had now lost all her royal family in the North. Jehu had also killed her son, the king. Rather than preserve the line of David which prophecies had indicated was so necessary for the welfare of the nation and the world, she salvaged something for herself and Ahab's family by killing all her remaining sons who could inherit the throne in David's name. Or so she thought. One of her stepdaughters had married the priest Jehoiada, and they rescued one son. God's promise was kept (II Sam. 7:11; Ps. 89:36) and Solomon's prayer was heard (I Kings 8:25). The lamp of David was not extinguished (I Kings 11:36; Ps. 132:17).

When the son was old enough to be presented to the nation, Jehoiada staged a coup de etat. Surprise was gained by off duty soldiers joining those on duty, and coming to the temple unarmed as if to worship, and then being armed from an arsenal within the temple. Joash was crowned and given a copy of the covenant and proclaimed king to the acclaim of the nation. It appears that army commanders and priesthood, together with the people welcomed the restoration of covenant loyalty to Yahweh.

Athaliah and the house of Ahab were finished and Baalism had suffered a crushing blow. Young Joash had been given a crown but also 'the covenant', perhaps a copy of the Ten Commandments. His power was not his own but an expression of God's covenant with and kingship over his people. The covenants which the king and the nation made with God, and which the king made with his people, affirmed this. It would have been good for the young king Joash to have prayed the prayer of Psalm

73 at this time. He needed to live in the covenant grace by which he had been sealed in his kingship.

The well meaning but unwise alliance that Jehoshaphat had made with the North had had a sorry history, but had now been brought to an end.

Baalism was not finished however. It would recur in the reigns of Ahaz (II Chron. 28:2) and Manasseh (II Kings 21:3) in the South.

Prayer

'Truly God is good to [Israel], to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant; I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ...when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end.

'You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me with honor. Who have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Indeed, those who are far from you will perish; you put an end to those who are false to you. But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, to tell of all your works' (Ps. 73:1–2, 16–17, 24–28). Amen.

Chapter 12

Old Jehoidada the priest had had considerable influence through his long life and young king Joash did well under his tutelage, except in regard to ridding the country of its 'high places'. (II Chron. 24 has more detail on this story.)

High places were traditional places of worship, which Samuel and other prophets had been happy to use (I Sam. 9:12; 10:5), but from the time of Solomon's temple (I Kings 3:2–4), were centres where people worshipped as they chose, sometimes with their own priests, and sometimes with temple prostitutes.

Asa and Jehoshaphat, like Joash, were good kings who, nonetheless, did not remove the high places where people worshipped falsely. After him, Amaziah and Azariah and Jotham would be the same, but Ahaz himself worshipped there. It was one of the sins for which the North would later be taken into captivity (II Kings 17:9). Hezekiah removed all these places in the South. Manasseh restored them and later purged them of their alien elements (II Chron. 33:17), and Josiah removed them altogether, and not only them, but the high places that remained in the Northern territories.

Some time later, Joash decreed that the taxes and gifts given for the temple should be used for its repair (rather than to make utensils) because it had been neglected and abused by his ancestors. After some time, no start had been made, so he arranged for funds to be collected directly and administered by priests and some of his own soldiers. This arrangement gave opportunity for honest craftsmen to carry the work forward without constant supervision. However, all was not well. Perhaps he had taken the opportunity to assert his own authority over the aging Jehoiada (II Chron. 24:6). The next events reveal that, in fact, he could not secure the temple treasury, and that he had no time for prophets.

After Jehoiada died, the Chronicler tells us that Joash abandoned the worship of the Lord in preference for other gods. The Lord sent Jehoiada's son, who was a prophet,

to rebuke him, and Joash had him stoned to death. God then caused his army to be defeated by a relatively weak Aramean force. Joash bought a truce with many of the temple treasures, but not before he was wounded in action. His own soldiers had not liked his stoning of a prophet and killed him themselves. So, a reign which began with the kindness of Jehoiada and a rebuilding of true worship, ended with violence against his son and further idolatry because the king preferred his own counsel to the word of the Lord.

Prayer

Father, we thank you for the many people who have risked all so that the reign of Christ may be proclaimed and true worship may rise to you. May the joy we have in your grace keep us from selfish ambition and rivalry. May the word of your prophets be received with meekness so that we shall ever honour your name. We ask this for the sake of Christ our Lord. Amen.

© 2000 Grant Thorpe