

Storm Clouds Over Israel

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

A. Slide2 Thanksgiving Eve Service: 6:30pm. outside.

II. Slide3 **Intro: Storm Clouds Over Israel**

A. This is the beginning of 8th century BC. *Storm clouds are moving over Israel and Judah.* We'll see the rise of the mighty Assyrian Empire to the Northeast. We will witness the military & political weakness in both Israel and Judah who are at their lowest ebb. The great Elisha the prophet will die, and cast a long shadow over the future of God's people.

[Shepherds Notes, *adapted*]

B. Slide4 A friend shared with me theBibleProject.com which takes each of the books of the bible & does a 5-8min overview. Let's watch 1 & 2 Kings.

III. Slide5 **2 KINGS (1-13) Jehoahaz** Israel **& Jehoash** aka **Joash** Judah

A. (3,4) Marry vs.3 *with* vs.4? - He heard the prayer of the King, in spite of all the evil he had done.

B. (5,6) The Lord gave Israel a deliver... *Nevertheless* they did not depart from the sins...

1. The love of God, **so undeserved and yet so free**, might lead us to repentance.

C. (7) **Only 10 chariots?** Ahab mustered 2000, 50 years before.

IV. Slide6a **DEATH OF ELISHA (14-21)**

A. **ELISHA IS SICK** (14)

B. **Elijah** was spared the common doom of man, and was taken to heaven in a chariot and horses of fire, **without dying**. **But Elisha**, who would honored God so much longer (60 yrs), goes the way of all the earth. **Why the difference?**

1. Slide6b **"I don't want to die without any scars."** ~ Chuck Palahniuk, Fight Club

C. The King **wept over his face** - kind of a touching picture.

D. (14b) Seemed to be saying, **that this 1 man of God was equal to the whole army of Israel.**

E. *Swing low sweet chariot, comin for to carry me home.* That great spiritual from the late 1800's early 1900's spoke of the chariot swooping low to pick one up to bring to heaven.

F. **Slide7a STOPPING HALFWAY** (15-19)

G. (15-19) Elisha gives **2 orders** to Joash. **2 visual aids.** 1 **to shoot** *and* the other **to strike**.

H. **Slide7b To Shoot** (15-17)

1. **The Romans** were accustomed to declare war against an enemy by shooting an arrow into their territory. **Alexander the Great** also did this when he entered Persia. *This order therefore was the 1st signal of war.* **And** we know that it was shot **eastward** towards **Syria**. **But, for what purpose?**

- a) Elisha was the representative of God. He's teaching the king though he should use means, he should not depend upon them.
- b) **The power was not in the weapons, but in God.** Therefore it is called *the arrow of the Lord's deliverance* (17).

2. **It is the same with us.** We work, **but** God must work with us.

- a) **Slide7c** *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord.* Zech.4:6
- b) **I.e.** in Acts 11:21 the apostles went forth preaching...*and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.*

I. **Slide7d To Strike** (18,19)

1. **For Joash to be blamed, he obviously must've been conscious that the action was a sign.** His action showed his lukewarmness and his carelessness. **He was only for injuring & slowing down the enemy, that he should've destroyed.**
2. **Joash lacked** spiritual discernment. He didn't understand the will of God. He merely went through the motions. **As a result he claimed only a limited victory.**
 - a) He missed his opportunity and could never clean it again.
 - b) **What opportunity will got to give you this week that you may never have again?**
3. **Is this how we deal with our enemy, the devil, and our sin? Do we deal with it halfheartedly?**
4. **Slide7e** **Or** like David did with his enemy, Ps.18:37,38,42 *I chased my enemies and caught them; I did not stop until they were conquered. 38 I struck them*

down so they could not get up; they fell beneath my feet. 42 I ground them as fine as dust in the wind. I swept them into the gutter like dirt.

a) In these spiritual matters moderation is a crime! *Crucify the flesh, not caress it.*

b) How? by *giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.* 2 Pet.1:5-7

5. Also think about it, he got exactly what he had **believed** God for.

Yet he did not receive **everything** that the Lord meant for him to have.

a) I wonder if we're owning *all the fullness of His promises and all the possibilities* through believing prayer?

b) He will only do as much *for us* as we will allow Him to do *in us*.

(a) The same power that **saved us, washed us** with his blood, **filled us** with the power of this Holy Spirit, and **protected us** through numerous temptations, will work **for us** to meet every emergency, every crisis, every circumstance. *The Alliance*

c) Slide7f Let's put **no limit** on God by our *restrained prayer* and *meager faith*. Let us go with Him as far as we may, and only **stop** when He says, *ask me no more*.

J. Slide8a THE POSTHUMOUS INFLUENCE OF A GOOD MAN (20,21) *paust-u-mus*

K. Then Elisha died - yes, the dearest, the greatest, the most useful of God's servants die. But *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of the Saints*.

1. We are losers, **but** to them...*to die is gain*.

2. *Their privileged in it, they are privileged by it.*

L. Slide8b This is the story of *a funeral gone bad...turned good*.

1. Obviously, the virtue was not in the bones of *Elisha*, **but** in the power of **God**.

2. **Thus**, it didn't matter if it was a few days after his death **or** a few 1000 years. *God alone could have done it & did do it.*

3. Why is it such a surprise to us that God should raise the dead?

a) There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

M. Slide8c This also points us to Jesus. *Because he died we shall live.*

1. We know that if we were planted together in the likeness of his **death**, we shall also be in the likeness of his **resurrection**.
 2. Jesus made the grave his own. *Behold the place where the Lord Lay.*
 3. **Into this grave we must descend.** But we shall **arise** from it not only **living**, **but immortal**. Not like this man, to die again, **but** to die no more, death having no more dominion over us.
- N. **Slide8d** We also note that we can be used by God even after we die. **How?** Not by our **bones** but by our **example** we left behind.
1. **By** the instructions we left behind, which will still speak. **By** our memory & influence, which will still speak. **By** the prayers we had offered. **By** the books we gave. **By** the funds we sent to missionaries who are still out working in the fields. **By** your investment into a place of worship. etc.

V. **Slide9** **RECAPTURING CITIES OF ISRAEL (22-25)**

- A. (23) Reminds us of what David said in Ps.103:10, *He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.*
1. **Note 3 words:** *gracious, compassion, regarded* (to direct one's interest, attention, or trust towards something).
- B. **Slide10** **Question:** How can **God's people** have **hope** in the midst of **societal** and **political unrest**?
1. **Ask?** Because **God is still on the throne**. We can still cry out to Him for deliverance or for a deliverer. [**so** we settle our hearts **today** in the midst of America's & the world's **unrest**]