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Dear Associates and Friends,

December 2017

The southern Kingdom of Judah and the northern Kingdom of Israel are the scenes of this month's article, "[Israel and Judah: 27. Elisha and the Rise of Jehu](#)." Elisha is again a major character driving events, as God works through His prophet. The destinies of kingdoms and dynasties are being determined behind the scenes.

Cast of Characters (In Order of Appearance):

There is a larger than usual cast of characters in this episode of the "Israel and Judah" series. Note the distinction between the prophet Elijah succeeded by the prophet Elisha. Elijah left the Kingdom of Israel (by flying chariot, 2 Kings 2:11–14) and went to live in the wilderness of Judea in Arabia.

- The **Shunammite woman**, unnamed, who was previously helped by Elisha. She wants her land restored upon her return when the prophesied famine (that Elisha warned her about) ended.
- **The prophet Elisha** (his name means "God saves" or "God is savior").
- **Gehazi**, the former servant of Elisha, now an advisor to the King of Israel.
- **Ben-hadad** king of Syria, now seriously ill and in bed, desires information from YHWH's prophet.
- **Hazael**, anointed to be king of Syria. Do **not** let him offer you a damp cloth.
- **Joram** (means "exalted by YHWH"), the King of Israel, goes to fight Syria. Things do not go well.
- **Jehoram/Joram** (both mean the same, "exalted by YHWH") was the King of Judah. You do **not** want to be one of his brothers.
- **Athaliah** is the wife of King Joram of Judah. Her father was Ahab of Israel and her mother was the lovely Queen Jezebel. After Jehoram dies, she is the power behind the throne of her son Ahaziah.
- **Ahaziah**, son of Jehoram and Athaliah of Judah, began his reign at 22 years of age, but will rule only one year. You do **not** want to be one of his brothers.
- **The prophet Elijah** writes a document, a letter, to the King of Judah pronouncing his doom. Elijah is obviously physically alive at this time and not "living" in heaven. He wrote something with pen and parchment and was very much aware of the religious and political situation in Judah.
- **Jehu**, a commander of Israel, will be given a great gift from YHWH. You do **not** want to be his king.
- **Jezebel**, does not appear in the episode, but there is doom pronounced with her name on it. A lovely woman — murderous, but lovely. You do **not** want to be her enemy ... nor do you want to be her.

This month's article, like most episodes in the Israel and Judah series, revolve around faithfulness to YHWH, his covenant with His people Israel, and their worship of Him alone, excluding other gods in their worship.

Remember always as you read anywhere in the Old Testament, the people were allowed to acknowledge that other gods existed and had power and influence. They were forbidden to worship those other gods. Remember when Solomon crossed the line and began to worship the gods of his wives. God prophesied the kingdom would be split in two. Read 1 Kings 11:1–8 to recognize the "slippery slope" that led the world's wisest man down to idolatry. God even warned him specifically not to do what he eventually did do.

"So Yahweh showed Himself angered with Solomon because he had turned aside his heart from

Yahweh Elohim of Israel Who had appeared twice to him, and had instructed him in this matter, so as not to go after other elohim; yet he did not keep what Yahweh had enjoined on him. Hence Yahweh said to Solomon, ...”

• **1 Kings 11:9–12**

YHWH told Solomon He would tear the kingdom in two, but not in Solomon’s lifetime. After Solomon every king of Judah and every king of Israel struggled (or rather did not struggle) with the problem of serving other gods. All future kings had the example of Solomon, perhaps thinking or saying to themselves:

“Well, if Solomon worshipped other gods, why can’t I? If YHWH is the creator, He created the other gods, did He not? He created them to oversee the nations on YHWH’s behalf, did He not? I am king, anointed by YHWH. I have the same freedom to worship as Solomon had.”

Well no, they were to obey YHWH, not their own reasoning. Again, the problem was with the worship of the other gods. To paraphrase a movie tag line, “if you worship them they will come” and commune with you, perhaps speak with you through their prophets. YHWH does not communicate on human terms.

Communication is done with God on His terms, not your terms. God will hear you if you ask anything according to His will. He may not give your request according to your desired timeframe, or He may choose not to give you what you ask for at all. But He does hear your requests:

“These things I write to you that you who are believing in the name of the son of God may be perceiving that you have life eonian. And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we should be requesting anything according to His will, He is hearing us.”

• **1 John 5:13–14, Concordant Version**

Then read Philippians 4:6, and let God be God.

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Thank You

We at ASK are thankful for you that we are able to provide valuable biblical information. **“O give thanks unto YHWH; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people”** (Psalm 105:1). This is what we try to do, month after month, year after year, decade after decade. The Israel and Judah series of articles are an attempt to “open up” the Scriptures that lead to the coming of Israel’s Messiah and the Savior of all mankind — and to make known God’s deeds among His people. Learning the past is important.

Yes, the accounts of ancient times are unpleasant at times, but they are events that happened to real people. It seems incomprehensible how the Israelites, especially the kings, could be saved from disaster repeatedly, yet they barely acknowledged YHWH, and rarely thanked Him or changed their lives in any way. This is because, as the apostle Paul tells us, the wicked are averse to thanking God: **“When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ... and their foolish heart was darkened”** (Romans 1:21).

God chose Israel, a stiff-necked people whose faults would be magnified as examples to us about our own faults. King Ahab humbled himself of his evil ways, yet he was merely sorry for his situation after Elijah pronounced YHWH’s doom upon his dynastic house. He was sorrowed in his heart, but took no action to change the actions of his people of the northern Kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 21:25–29). How sad.

We are thankful to God that you appreciate the work that we do enough to support A.S.K financially. If we feed you spiritual food, please support us.

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