

Elisha

Lesson 14 – King Benhadad
2Kings 8:7-15

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The Prophet of God

1. Elisha visited Damascus (v.7)

- a. Elisha must not have visited the actual city but just the area for in verse 9 the king sent his servant from Damascus to go see Elisha.
- b. God does not tell us why Elisha went to Damascus. The events that follow his arrival assure us that he was following the Lord's leading. He may have hoped to strengthen Naaman's faith or to escape the famine, but God planned for him to declare that Hazael would be king.
- c. I believe God sent him to glorify God's unlimited knowledge of the future and to anoint Hazael to be the king.

2. Benhadad king of Syria was sick (v.7)

- a. Elisha is called "the man of God". He knew that Elisha had a part in God healing Naaman his captain of Leprosy (2Ki 5). Later, he had ordered the capture of Elisha who was passing secrets to Israel's king. He heard how God temporarily blinded the soldiers and then had them set free (2Ki 6). He knew how God had delivered Samaria from Syria by causing them to hear the noise of advancing armies (2Ki 6-7). Now sick in bed, he desired the help of Elisha's God.
- b. The king sought Elisha peaceably, perhaps hoping that Elisha would heal him.
- c. When sickness or trial comes our way, it is wise for us first to make sure there is nothing between our soul and the Saviour. Sometimes the Lord uses sickness or trial as chastening to get our attention. If that is not the case, then we ought to ask the Lord to heal or help us. (Psalms 119:71) *"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."*
- d. It is sad that it often takes sickness, danger, burdens, or fears to get people to think about the LORD. However, even then, they desire His help, but seldom consider their real need of His eternal salvation.
[Illustration: Neighbour with cancer]

3. Benhadad sent for Elisha's divine prediction (v.8-9)

- a. He calls Elisha the *man of God* (v.8). He wanted him to enquire of Jehovah regarding his recovery. Benhadad humbly calls himself Elisha's son (v.9). Though there is no sign of his conversion, this heathen king had learned to respect the LORD God of Israel.

- b. He sent his trusted servant, Hazael, with a huge present to go see Elisha (v.9). This huge gift must have been a bribe to get Elisha to answer the king who had so often fought against Israel. Nothing is said as to whether Elisha accepted the gift, but as with Naaman's gift, he likely refused it.

4. Elisha's response (v.10-11)

- a. His response sounds almost contradictory at first (v.10).
- b. Some commentators take it that Hazael "*settled his countenance steadfastly, until he was ashamed.*" If this phrase does apply to him, he shamefully knew his secret plans. Most commentators apply the phrase to Elisha's countenance (v.11). In other words, Elisha remained silent and unmoved. This lasted until he was ashamed. It was as if he just could not say any more once God revealed to him what was ahead.
- c. Either way, Elisha could not contain himself and he wept. He had a broken heart for Israel even though they continued to reject the Lord and his preaching.

5. Hazael's question (v.12-13)

- a. Why are you weeping?
- b. Note the sad answer that Elisha had to give him (v.12).
 - 1) He would do evil to Israel.
 - 2) He would burn their cities, kill their young men, and cruelly kill their children and women.
- c. Hazael acts surprised by the terrible accusation (v.13).
- d. Elisha did not here anoint Hazael to be king, but he did say that the LORD showed him it was to be so. It seems odd that Hazael would have acted surprised if years earlier Elijah or Elisha had anointed him to be king of Syria. Though we read no mention of anointing oil, I suspect that this was the anointing God had revealed to Elijah many years earlier (1Kings 19:15).

6. Hazael's actions (v.14-15)

- a. He returned to Benhadad and gave him Elisha's word that he could recover (v.14).
- b. The next day, Hazael murdered Benhadad and claimed the throne (v.15).

7. Application

- a. In the Dispensation of Law, God often miraculously worked through prophets to reveal unknown events as he did here to Elisha the prophet.
- b. In the present Dispensation of the Church, God uses the Bible and the inner prompting of the Holy Spirit rather than revelations to reveal His will for men's lives. Wise men stay close to God and listen to his leading.