

Life Lesson 91
The Last Kings of Israel
Text: II Kings 13 to 17

Introduction

People don't always keep their promises, but God does. He always does exactly what He says He will do, no matter what. We will see how God kept His Word in our story today.

The Story

Almost all the kings of Israel were wicked, yet God was merciful to them. He sent prophets to warn them. He let them be punished by invading enemies so that they would repent and cry out to Him. He gave them chance after chance to do right, and they kept right on in their wicked ways.

God made a promise to King Jehu that there would be four kings in his family. Four generations of his household would rule over Israel. God kept His promise. Jehu ruled for many years, and then his son, Jehoahaz became the king. Think of the tongue twister "Jehu has Jehoahaz" to remember that Jehu's son Jehoahaz became the next king of Israel.

Jehu started out as a good king but was bad at the end of his rule. Jehoahaz was just the opposite. He allowed idol worship and sinned against God at first, so God allowed the Syrians to defeat them. For a time the Syrians were in control of the country.

Jehoahaz sought God and asked Him for help. God heard and delivered them from the Syrians.

After Jehoahaz, his son Jehoash became king. Say those three kings of Israel: Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash. That makes an even better tongue twister: "Jehoahaz has Jehoash."

Jehoash was mostly bad, but he at least listened to the prophet Elisha. When Elisha was sick and dying, Jehoash came to visit.

Elisha had one last prophecy for him.

"Take your bow and shoot an arrow out the window," Elisha told him.

Jehoash did as Elisha said.

“That represents the arrow of God’s deliverance. You will win a battle with the Syrians in Aphek,” Elisha said. “Now take your arrows and strike them on the ground.”

Jehoash hit the ground three times with his arrows.

“Why did you stop?” Elisha asked sorrowfully. “If you had hit the arrows on the ground five or six times, you would have beaten the Syrians until they were completely defeated. Now you will win only three victories.”

Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash. There was one more king from Jehu’s family to reign. His name was Jeroboam. He wasn’t related to the other King Jeroboam, so we will call him Jeroboam II to tell them apart.

Jeroboam II wasn’t a good king, either, but he reigned for 41 years. Then his son Zachariah began to rule. His reign didn’t really count because he was overthrown right away by Shallum. Then Shallum only ruled one month before a man named Menahem killed him and took over the kingdom.

Jeroboam II, Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem – the Bible doesn’t tell us much about them, except that they were bad.

Then came Pekahiah and Pekah. Same story – wicked kings.

Hoshea was the last of the kings of Israel. While he was ruling God sent the judgment He had promised. The Assyrians came and took over the land. Hoshea was captured and put in prison by the Assyrian king.

The Assyrians took many of the people away as captives and took over the farms and the towns. The nation of Israel was no more.

The Life Lesson

The Bible tells us in I Kings 17 that God punished Israel because they kept on sinning against Him. They didn’t believe God would send such a great judgment, but, as we have already learned, God always keep His promises.

There are many people today who believe there is a God, but they don’t believe He will do as He promised. They think they can live as they like and that God will put up with it.

Yet God says in Hebrews 9:27 that “It is appointed for a man once to die, but after this the judgment.” He goes on to say in the next chapter “The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Our prayer for you is that you won't be like the foolish Israelites and their wicked kings. Don't think that because God is merciful and gives you warnings and time to repent that judgment will never come. God always keeps His word!

Review Questions

How many generations of kings did God say would rule from Jehu's family?

Four

Who was Jehu's son?

Jehoahaz

Was Jehoahaz a good king or bad?

He started out bad, but turned to God later on.

Who came to see the prophet Elisha when he was dying?

Jehoash

What did Elisha tell Jehoash to do?

Shoot an arrow out the window, then to strike the ground with his arrows.

What did the arrow from the window mean?

It stood for God's deliverance from the Syrians.

How many times did Jehoash hit the ground with his arrows?

Three

Why did just three hits make Elisha said?

Each time the arrows hit the ground represented a victory against the Syrians. If the king had hit the ground five or six times, they would have destroyed the Syrians.

Who was the last king of Israel?

Hoshea

What happened to the country when Hoshea was king?

The Syrians took over the country and took King Hoshea away as a captive.