

Introduction: How big is our God?! I am not asking if we can express what the Bible says about God in our own words and speak 'correct' answers. But instead: what do we truly feel in our hearts about God? What can He do for us in every moment of every day in our lives?

*** What about little activities of daily living we do by habit without thinking? What about big decisions we make by consulting with others about home improvements, finances and medical treatment? What about important life activities that feed our body and soul, such as: grocery shopping, work, recreation, learning-education, family time, getting to know our neighbors better and to offer them encouragement ... everything? *** Do we feel and experience the mighty goodness and love of God in us? Are we consistently, with every activity, offering ourselves to Him in prayer so we know and do His will AND do we expect big answers from Him, bigger and better than we could ever do on our own?! *** This is the essence of our enactment-prophecy story today. It boils down to two men. First, we meet an evil king of Israel who fought against his brothers in Judah; but, when Syria was threatening him he humbly sought the second man. The great prophet Elisha was dying, but he gave the king two prophecies illustrated by acts he commanded the king to do. Both involved arrows. In the second enactment-prophecy, he gave a vague command. The king obeyed, but did so out of his ignorance of God. As a result, he fell short of full victory. *** Our psalm speaks in big picture poetry of the eternal King promised through David's descendants. It hints at the salvation God will give in His love that will give great joy to those doing His works in His love.

I. Israel's evil king had a short reign in which he fought Judah and humbly sought Elisha as he was dying and received two command enactment prophecies from him. (2 Kings 13:10-19)

A. Israel's evil king began to rule at the end of the reign of Judah's boy-king, then fought against his son. (Verses 10-13)

1. In the thirty-seventh year of Joash, king of Judah, J^hoash, son of J^hoa^haz, reigned over Israel in Samaria (for) sixteen years. (Verse 10)

Names: The king of Judah and Israel had essentially the same name, Joash and J^hoash are interchangeable. The difference is in how much of the divine Name Y^eH^oW^aH, is in each proper name.

Dates: Joash was the baby who was rescued from Athalia's slaughter of David's line who became king at age six (2 Kings 11-12). The date of this episode of J^hoash and Elisha was a little after 800 BC, perhaps 798 BC.

2. He did evil in the eyes of Yahweh; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, which he caused in Israel: he walked (lived and practiced) them. (Verse 11)

Did evil: Like all twenty kings of the ten northern tribes of Israel, J^hoash sinned and did evil in the eyes of the covenant God of all Israel.

3. The remainder of the things of Joash (meaning J^hoash of Israel), and all that he did, and the might with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (Verse 12)

War: The northern kings were usually physically stronger than the kings of David's line. This war took place more than ten years later. J^hoash taunted Amaziah by calling him a 'thistle' trying to topple a cedar (2 Kings 14:1-15).

4. And Joash slept with his fathers (died) and Jeroboam sat on his throne, and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. (Verse 13)

Second Jeroboam: This sentence goes all the way the end of Joash's life and tells of his son sitting on his throne (2 Kings 14:16). By naming his son after the first king whose name came to mean deep rebellion and evil against Yahweh, we get an insight into how evil Joash was.

B. As God's great prophet Elisha was dying, the king of Israel humbly sought him for help against Syria; Elisha gave him two command 'enactment prophecies' using arrows. (Verses 14-19)

1. Elisha was sick, (with the) sickness he will die in it; Joash, the king of Israel, went down to him; then he wept before him and said: My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen. (Verse 14)

Elisha: When Elisha saw Elijah taken to heaven in a whirlwind and realized he was Elijah's successor, he uttered the words Joash now spoke (2 Kings 2:10-15). This event was told to all Israel. Now we see a different side of Joash, he was open to knowing the truth about the true God. He wanted the truth enough to tearfully seek out Yahweh's true prophet.

Application: If we are true followers of Jesus we must realize that all people, including us, are unique mixtures of good and bad.

So we must not be proud when God gives us what we want; and, and we must not give up when God graciously gives us what we need, not what we expect.

2. Elisha said to him: You must take a bow and arrows; then he (Joash) took to him bow and arrows; then he said to the king of Israel: You must draw (with) your hand the bow; then he drew it (with) his hands; then Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. (Verses 15-16)

Take bow and arrows: Elisha commands Joash to take a bow and arrows and to draw back the bow. Even near death, Elisha lays his hands on Joash's hands, signifying God's blessing.

3. Then he said: Open the window to the east; then he opened it and Elisha said: Shoot! And he shot; then he (Elisha) said: The arrow of salvation (victory) of Yahweh, and the arrow of salvation (victory) over Syria; and, you fought the Syrians in Aphek until the end. (Verse 17)

Yahweh's salvation: The word salvation is the noun form of the verb to save. It indicates deliverance by God through human effort. The biblical word for salvation is all-encompassing: body, soul and spirit; and, victory in spiritual and physical warfare!

4. Then he said: Take the arrows; then he (Joash) took; then he said to the king of Israel: Strike the ground; then he struck three times and stood still. (Verse 18)

Strike ground: Elisha gave a command to strike the ground with the cluster of arrows, but gave no details or guidelines. Joash stopped at three strikes.

5. Then the man of God was angry with him and said: You should have struck five or six times, then you would have struck down Syria to the end; and, now you will strike down Syria three times. (Verse 19)

Prophet's anger: Elisha was very angry with Joash for only striking the ground three times. It turns out that each strike was an intercessory prayer for a defeat of the Syrian army. If Joash had a better relationship with God, perhaps through His prophet, he may have even requested seven victories.

Ask Yahweh for more than we need because we don't really know what we need or what to expect.

Application: We must always ask God for amazing answers according to His will; then we must patiently persist in a close relationship with Him seeking Him for the obedient faith to let Him work in us.

**II. Yahweh graciously gave Israel three victories, but only three because of the king's ignorant disobedience;
David's descendant will be the eternal King, and those filled with His love will be saved for joyous great works.**
(2 Kings 13:20-25 & Psalm 132:11-16)

A. After Elisha died, Yahweh graciously gave the king of Israel three victories over Syria, but no more because in ignorance the king only struck the ground three times. (2 Kings 13:20-25)

1. Then Elisha died; then they buried him; and troops of Moabites came into 'the land' (at the) coming (of the) year (spring); when they were burying a man, Behold! They saw a troop, then they threw the man into the grave of Elisha, then the man went (in the grave), then the man touched Elisha's bones; then he came to life and stood on his feet. (Verses 20-21)

Miracle: Elisha became the first prophet to be used by God to resurrect two people (2 Kings 4:18-37) meaning he truly had a 'double portion' of the spirit of Elijah (2 Kings 2:9). How amazing is it that God used the bones of a dead prophet to bring a dead man back to life?!

Application: We must always be aware of how AWESOME God IS so we gain hope and boldness as we pray for miracles which are above and beyond what we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21)!

2. Hazael, king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of J^ehoa^khaz, (king of Israel); and Yahweh was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and He turned to them on account of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; He was not willing to destroy them and He did not cast them from His presence until now. (Verses 22-23)

Yahweh's grace and compassion: Israel, and even Judah, did not deserve any favor from their covenant God, but because of His faithful covenant love to them, God gave them grace and compassion far more than they asked for, or deserved.

Ask Yahweh for more than we need

3. Hazael, king of Syria died, and Ben-hadad, his son, became king; then J^ehoash, son of J^ehoa^khaz, turned and took the cities from Ben-hadad, which he had taken from his father J^ehoa^khaz; three times Joash defeated him and recovered the cities of Israel. (Verses 24-25)

Three victories: As Elisha had said, Joash was given three victories over Syria, and only three! He should have struck the ground seven times; and, we should learn from this to ...

Ask Yahweh for more than we need

B. A psalm of ascents says a descendant of David will be King forever in Jerusalem, and those filled with His love will experience joyful salvation to do great works. (Psalm 132:11-16)

1. Yahweh swore to David truth, He will not turn back from it / from the fruit of your body, I will set on your throne // If your sons will keep My covenant and My testimonies which I will teach them / also their sons until forever will sit on your throne. (Verses 11-12)

Through Nathan: This song of ascents on behalf of David recalls Nathan's prophecy to David that if his descendants continue in faithful obedience to the covenant God, one of his descendants will be the eternal Messiah (2 Samuel 7:4-16). This is a passage all followers of Jesus should know how to find and read in times of distress and despair, even today!

2. For Yahweh has chosen Zion / He desired it for His dwelling-place // This (is) My resting-place until forever / here I will dwell for I have desired it. (Verses 13-14)

Mount Zion: The covenant God of Israel chose Mt. Zion in Jerusalem as His earthly dwelling-place.

Followers of Jesus look forward to the 'new Jerusalem' that will come down from heaven to fulfill God's covenant desire for an ongoing mutual love relationship with people (Revelation 21:1-7).

3. Her produce (food) I will abundantly bless / her poor I will satiate with bread. (Verse 15)

Abundant providence: When God's Messiah from David comes, His people will be blessed greatly by an abundance of food produced from the ground. Even the poor will be given enough bread to thrive as Father God answers the prayer Jesus taught his followers to pray (Matthew 6:11)!

4. Her priests, I will clothe with salvation / and her godly ones will shout out in song! (Verse 16)

God's people: 'Godly ones' are people so filled with God's unconditional love that it flows from them to all people in need of love. This makes them intermediaries, or priests, of God (Exodus 19:5-6), showing His goodness in food and deeds to all people so they may be reconciled to God (1 Peter 2:9-12; 3:14-17). This is how we do the 'good works' of God IN Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Yahweh will do great things through His Messiah from David

Application: Let us walk out of here today determined to be joyful mediators (priests) between God and our families and friends IN Messiah Jesus, fulfilling His last command (Acts 1:8).

Conclusion: Israel's evil king had a short reign in which he fought against Judah. He humbly sought Elisha as he was dying for help against Syria. Elisha gave him two command 'enactment prophecies'. Yahweh graciously gave Israel three victories, but only three because of the king's ignorant disobedience. David's descendant will be the eternal King, and those filled with His love will be saved to have joy by doing great things in Jesus.

Ask Yahweh for more than we need so others may get what they need.