

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Dec 17

MONDAY

The king appointed his advisor who had doubted Elisha's prediction the day before to stand guard at the city gate. But he was trampled in the rush to get food and never got to eat any himself, and so again, the word of the prophet was fulfilled.

READ: II Kings 7:17-20

Don't think for a moment that the king has decided to help Elisha's prediction come true, and that he stationed his advisor in death's pathway. The king may have commanded him to his post in the city gate, but it was God who brought about the events of his death. We are to see that God will have His way every time. What God says, goes. What He says to us about forgiveness and salvation, stands. *The Bible stands though the hills may tumble; it will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble! So I'll plant my feet on its firm foundation for the Bible stands!* (go ahead, sing it!)

TUESDAY

The widow who had provided housing for Elisha previously returns to Samaria after a prolonged absence to find that someone has moved into her home and claimed her property. She goes to the king and asks for his intervention. At the very moment she appears before King Joram, he was talking with Elisha's former servant, Gehazi, trying to get information about the prophet. Gehazi sees the widow and tells the king that she is the very person he had just told the king about! The timing was perfect, and the king ordered all her property returned unto her.

READ: II Kings 8:1-6

The Lord's timing is flawless. On any other day, it's likely that the king pays no mind to this poor widow. He has other fish to fry. But God orchestrates her arrival with the explanation which Gehazi gives to the king in such a way that he acts swiftly and returns her property. Think back on some "good timing" in your own life, and thank God for being the One who knows the times!

WEDNESDAY

The king of Assyria, Ben-hadad, is sick. So he sends Hazael to ask Elisha whether or not the sickness will kill him. Hazael shows up at Elisha's front door and asks the prophet about the king's sickness and his recovery, and Elisha gives him a strange answer - saying that he will not die of the sickness, but that he will die.

READ: II Kings 8:7-10

One thing I notice here is that God is providing for Elisha in marvelous ways. Even though he lives a frugal existence and has refused gifts and rewards in the past, here God supplies him with great wealth. Remember that Elisha leads a group of prophets-in-training, you might say. With this amazing gift, Elisha is able to provide for their needs as well. God often supplies the needs of others thru His blessings to another. How is He doing that in your life, I wonder?

THURSDAY

Having told Hazael, the king's officer, that the king wouldn't die of his sickness, but that he would die, Elisha stares long and hard at Hazael's face. Then the prophet begins to cry. He explains his tears by saying that he is crying because he knows the suffering which Hazael will bring upon Israel. Hazael refutes that by saying that he's a nobody and not in a position to do anything like that. But Elisha predicts that Hazael will become king of Assyria.

READ: II Kings 8:11-13

The text says that Elisha stared at Hazael until he felt ashamed. It's telling us, I think, that God had somehow told the old prophet that Hazael was already up to no good and his staring at Hazael was Elisha's way of saying "I know what you are up to." Hazael felt shamed because he now knew that Elisha knew. Evil does not come along and surprise God. He knows the intents of the heart before we turn it into action. Our way is not hidden from the Lord. That's why we do well to give ourselves fully to the Lord each day.

FRIDAY

Reporting back to his king, Hazael tells him that Elisha predicted a recovery. But the very next day, Hazael takes a wet cloth, covers the king's mouth and nose with it, and suffocates him to death.

READ: II Kings 8:14-15

Hazael carries out his plan despite Elisha being aware of it. To me, what stands out here is that Elisha's prediction comes true: although his sickness does not kill him, King Ben-hadad dies. His prediction comes true because he spoke the word of the Lord. That's the confidence we always have when we say what God has said - that it is completely true in every way. I'm not sure at all that CNN gets it right, or Readers Digest, or *US News and World Report*. But when we speak God's Word, we get it right every time. So let's speak it!

SATURDAY

Down in Judah (the southern half of the kingdom which was really only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) Jehoshaphat became king. He only rules 8 years, and he is as evil as the kings of Israel, to the north. And that's evil!

His wife is a daughter of Ahab so the whole family seems to share the evil. But God does not destroy (*annihilate*, the word means) Judah because He had made some promises to David which He fully intends to keep, and to do so, the family line must continue.

READ: II Kings 8:16-19

Verse 19 says that God will maintain a lamp for David. The metaphor of a lamp burning or being snuffed out is a way of saying that a life (or dynasty) continues or ceases. David's line will continue because God promised that it would - that his descendants would sit upon the throne in Jerusalem again.

As kids, we sang *This Little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine* but it's really God who keeps it shining. Lord, let my light shine brightly for you today. #112