

## Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 21, Part 2

### 2 Kings 8-9, Part 2

© 2024 John Oswalt and Ted Hildebrandt

The second part of our study today takes the middle piece between the two bookends. The appointment of Hazael is on one side, and the appointment of Jehu is on the other. In between that, in chapter 8, verses 16 through the remainder of chapter 8, verse 29, we see two kings of Judah.

Sort of the sandwich, the meat in the sandwich. Remember how the books of Kings or the book of Kings is organized. They're going back and forth between, okay, here's what's happening in the northern kingdom and what's happening in the southern kingdom at the same time.

And it's interesting, they will tend to go through a whole reign in the north and then jump over and say, okay now here's what was going in part of that reign during, in Judah during that time. So, interestingly now, we have the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah with the same name. Both of them are called Jehoram.

And what that means is Yahweh is high. Remember, because of our German influence, we pronounce what the Hebrews pronounced as Yah, we pronounce it as Jah. So it's, here's the divine name and here is to be high.

Now, what the Hebrew has done is to try to help us keep these two straight. It calls the guy in the north, and that shortens it. And the guy in the south, it gives the full name.

But here is another indication of how Judah was under the thumb of the northern kingdom at this time. Remember, this fellow is the son of Ahab. God had said to Ahab when he repented over the thing of Naboth's vineyard.

God had said, all right, I'm not going to bring the disaster on you. I'll let you die in peace. The disaster will come on your son.

Now again, remember, there were two sons. There was a son named Ahaziah. He died as Elijah predicted he would.

He only reigned for a matter of about two years. He had no children. And so, his brother, Joram, became the new king.

So, Ahab's the father of both those guys, and he's the father of Joram. But guess what? Did you pick it up? Ahab is the father-in-law of this fellow, Ahab's daughter.

And just so you won't get too confused by all these marks, Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, is married to Joram.

Joram. So, you see how easily, how totally they've gotten tangled up together. So, the first of these two kings of Judah that we're going to talk about is the one named Jehoram, whose wife is Ahab's daughter, Athaliah.

Now we don't know whether Athaliah is Jezebel's daughter too. That's, we're never told that in the Bible. But certainly, when we meet her and we'll meet her next week, she certainly seems to take after Jezebel.

But that's my point here. These two are completely tangled up. Now, through the years of the church, we've wrestled with this whole business of separation.

What does it mean not to be of the world? Jesus said, I'm asking you that you keep them in the world, but don't let them be of the world. How do you do that? Well, unfortunately, it's hard to sort that out in terms of your attitudes. It's a lot easier to sort it out in terms of your external behavior.

So, I'm not of the world because I don't drink. I don't smoke. I don't go to movies.

I don't let my wife wear short skirts. I don't let my wife cut her hair. I don't have any buttons on my coat.

That's not it. Now again, now again, it's not that simple. You can't say, well, it has nothing to do with externals at all.

Oh, yes, it does. Yes, it does. But it is primarily internal.

It is primarily your attitudes. Are you part of the world? Is your entertainment the same as the world's? Is your outlook the same as the world's? Well, what's in it for me? Are your desires the same as the world's? I want to feel good all the time. It's harder to sort that out.

But I say to you, friends, unless the church is different from the world, we're not going to have any impact on the world. So, the question is, what do I value? Do I value things above everything else? Do I value money above everything else? Do I value position and power above everything else? How big a house can a Christian live in? You say, Oswald, if you could answer that, you'd be a great man. Yes, I would.

And I can't. I can only say I think we ought to live about 10% below our desires. The question ought not to be, how far can I live from Jesus and still go to heaven? The question ought to be, how close to Jesus can I live? John Wesley said it so well in talking about tithing.

He said the question is not, why does God demand 10% of my money? The question is, why does God allow me to use 90% of his money? So, as we look at these two kings, Jehoram ruled, as we're told, for eight years, and then his son Ahaziah, who only ruled for part of a year, apparently. As we look at these two, we see people who have allowed themselves to become totally entangled with the world. Totally entangled with those who are not their friends.

They are their enemies. Oh, they may look like friends, but if they're of the world, they are the enemy. Now you say, Oswald, are you saying that we Christians ought to go live in a monastery somewhere? I am not.

How can we win the world unless we're in it? But there's the challenge to be in the world but so thoroughly in Christ that we're not of the world. There's the challenge, and it's a real challenge, but it's one that by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can live through. So, Jehoram is the son, excuse me, Jehoram, the southern king, is a son of Jehoshaphat, grandson of Asa.

He's got a good background there. But in verse 18, he followed the ways of the kings of Israel as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab and did evil in the eyes of the Lord. Yes, yes.

Now, presumably, this was not merely his choice to marry Athaliah. Almost certainly, this was an arranged marriage between Jehoshaphat and Ahab. So, Jehoshaphat doesn't get out of this.

As I've said to you before, it seems to me that Jehoshaphat must not have been the sharpest knife in the drawer. The good man, but not terribly bright, not able to see where this thing was headed. Again, you and I have got to take some responsibility for our children's choices.

Oh, this is a different day. Even if you'd like to, you're not going to be able to choose your son's wife. But still, the issue is, how does my life influence my children's life? They learn; they learn what is truly valuable to you.

I told this old story years ago, and it's so old now that it's hard for it to connect exactly. But do you remember the days when there used to be a Sears catalog? The big wish book, as it was called, was where you could page through it, and it was sort of like Amazon on paper. Anything you wanted was in those pages.

So, the mother was visiting with the pastor, and she told her little boy, Honey, to go get the big book that Mama loves so well. He came back with the Sears catalog. They learn, they learn.

Nevertheless, this is verse 19: for the sake of his servant David, the Lord was not willing to destroy Judah. He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever. My, my, my.

Even as early as Solomon, as we saw in our study, the Davidic line was polluted. It was corrupted. But God kept his promises across 300 years.

It's the same with Israel. Israel broke its covenant within five weeks of making it, but God kept his part of it for a thousand years. Oh, that's our God.

That's our God. He is slow to anger. Does he get angry? Of course, he does.

He sees his children messing up their lives, ruining the world that he made. Of course, he gets angry. But it takes him a long time to come to the end of his patience.

Thank God you and I are here because of that. So God, in spite of this failure, says, it's all right, I'm going to keep my promise. You may break yours, but I'm going to keep mine.

Thank God. Thank God. In the time of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against Judah and set up its own king.

What we're seeing here, if you remember, when Ahab died, Moab, on the other side of the Dead Sea there, on the east side of the Dead Sea, take my hand for the Dead Sea, on the east side there, Moab rebelled against Israel. Now, Edom, down around the south end of the Dead Sea, has revolted against Judah. David had conquered these lands, and Solomon had held them.

And they had continued to be the vassals of Israel and Judah through all these years. But slowly, slowly, they're breaking away. What's happening? God, who had enabled them to enjoy these possessions, is slowly withdrawing his hand.

Oh, America, America, God's hand has been over us. And we have enjoyed the results of godly ancestors. And now, slowly, slowly, slowly, regretfully, unwillingly, God's hand is being withdrawn from us.

And we wonder what's happening. The Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, but he rose up and broke through by night. His army, however, fled back home.

To this day, Edom has been in rebellion against Judah. Libnah revolted at the same time. Yes, yes.

Asa and Jehoshaphat had ruled Judah for 66 years. Now, Jehoram would rule for just eight and Ahaziah only one.

Oh, my. As I said to you weeks ago, think about that stable, godly reign for 66 years in Judah. Did that have anything to do with the fact that Judah then was going to survive another 150 years after Israel had fallen? Oh, absolutely.

But now, now, they have gone the way of the north—and Jehoram rules for only eight years. And Ahaziah is the only one who dies by violence.

Verse 25, in the 12th year of Joram, son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign. Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became king. Verse 27, he followed in the ways of the house of Ahab and did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

As the house of Ahab had done, for he was related by marriage to Ahab's family. He went with Jehoram, son of Joab, excuse me, son of Ahab, to war against Hazael, king of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. We've talked about this before.

We'll have reason to talk about it again. Ramoth Gilead was the crossroads on the great highway, the highway of the kings. Remember that Moses had given the tribes of Manasseh and Gad and Reuben permission to dwell on the east side of the Jordan River.

Now, again, we can argue about all of that. Was that a good thing? Was that wise? The Bible didn't tell us. It just says, yes, God gave them permission.

Now, this great highway came from the Gulf of Eilat down on the Red Sea up along the edge of the arable land and the desert. And right about here is this crossroads where you've got another road leading out here now to the Mediterranean. This is Ramoth, the heights of Gilead.

This region here is Gilead. So, obviously, it is a very, very important crossroads. Trade coming up here is going to go out that way.

The Syrians are trying to take it away from Israel. Joram's army is fighting over here. Ahaziah, the king of Judah, has been with him.

Joram gets injured and comes back here to Jezreel, the summer palace of the northern kings, where Naboth's vineyard was. He comes back there to recover. And Ahaziah may have stayed in the battle for a while or maybe came back with him, but Ahaziah is with him here in Jezreel.

And that's setting the stage for what comes next.