

7 Then Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, "The man of God has come here." 8 And the king said to Hazael, "Take a present in your hand, and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?' " 9 So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, of every good thing of Damascus, forty camel-loads; and he came and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?' " 10 And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover.' However the LORD has shown me that he will really die." 11 Then he [a]set his countenance in a stare until he was ashamed; and the man of God wept. 12 And Hazael said, "Why is my lord weeping?" He answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child." 13 So Hazael said, "But what *is* your servant—a dog, that he should do this gross thing?" And Elisha answered, "The LORD has shown me that you *will become* king over Syria." 14 Then he departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Elisha say to you?" And he answered, "He told me you would surely recover." 15 But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* over his face so that he died; and Hazael reigned in his place.

1. Odd occurrence

a. Several points of this narrative are unusual:

- a1. Elisha going to Damascus, the capital of Israel's enemy
- a2. Ben Hadad II seeking of the Lord through Elisha the prophet of God
 - b1. Ben Hadad had tried to capture Elisha (to execute him)
 - b2. Elisha had warned the king of Israel of Syria's plans & had led the army of Syria into Samaria
- a3. BH does not seek an answer from his idols
 - b1. He knows that Elisha represents the true God by the miracles he performed
 - b2. BH doesn't repent, but seeks an answer

b. 1 Kn. 19 God had directed Elijah to do 3 things:

- a1. Anoint Elisha as his successor

a2. Anoint Hazael to be king of Syria

a3. Anoint Jehu to be king of Israel

c. Elijah did not accomplish the latter 2, but gave the assignments to Elisha to complete

d. BH sends a top aide, Hazael, to inquire of Elisha

2. A recovery without a recovery

a. BH was sick & wanted to know if he would recover

b. BH sent Hazael (*God sees*) with great gifts (the seer's fee) to inquire of Elisha's God

a1. Elisha probably turned down the gifts

a2. Hazael's intent at this point is unclear

c. Elisha gives a confused answer

a1. BH would certainly recover from the illness

a2. BH would not live, but die of other causes

d. Elisha glares at Haz. & then starts weeping

a1. Haz. is confused by the prophet's reaction

a2. Elisha then informs Haz. that he will become king & will brutalize Israel

e. Haz. will raid, kill, rape, cut open pregnant women, & put children to the sword

a1. Haz. protests that he is not a dog to do such despicable things

a2. El. says that the Lord had revealed it to him

3. Hazael becomes king

a. Haz. delivers the news that BH would recover

a1. He does not tell BH that he would die anyway

a2. Haz. is not part of the royal line

b. Haz. smothers BH with a wet cloth, making it seem that he died of the illness

c. Haz. takes the throne after BH ruled 18 yrs. (860-842 BC)

d. Hazael (called *son of no one*) is also Shalmaneser III

a1. Haz. rules 41 years (841-800 BC)

a2. Haz. was brutal in raids, war, & destruction

a3. Haz. conquered all of Israel east of Jordan

a4. Haz. took Gath in Philistia

a5. Haz. wounded Jehoram at Ramoth-Gilead

a6. Haz. attacked Judah & was paid tribute by Jehoahaz to leave his territory

e. God will use brutal means to chastise the unrepentant in order to humble them

a1. Throughout the Judges God sent raiders

a2. Israel & Judah remained stubborn

a3. Some, like David (2 Sam. 12) & the prodigal son (Lk. 15) repent, but many do not (Rv. 16)