

# 2 Kings 14 - Annals of Both Kingdoms: Amaziah's Good Reign in Judah; Jeroboam II's Evil Reign in Israel

II. The divided kingdom from the North-South division until the Assyrian invasion (1 Kings 12:1—2 Kings 17:41)

(21) Amaziah's reign in the South (14:1-22)

(22) Jeroboam II's reign in the North (14:23-29)

## Overview

The two major kings of Israel during the last half of its brief existence as a separate nation were Jehu and Jeroboam II. Their stories also provide the context for looking briefly at three prophets, whose ministries help us see the reason for the nation's fall: Jonah, Amos, and Hosea. When Jehu became king in Israel in 841 BC, the Northern Kingdom had some 119 years left. Jehu wiped out the family of Ahab and purged the land of Baal worship. But Jehu continued to support the counterfeit religion established at the time of the division of the unified kingdom some 90 years before.

Plagued by a series of weak and evil kings, Israel knew a brief glory only in the time of Jeroboam II, who began his rule in 793 BC. During the long decades, God did not desert His people Israel. He sent them suffering and defeat in an effort to turn them back to Him. And God sent Israel other prophets. In the days of Jeroboam II, three of the most powerful of the prophets—Jonah, Amos and Hosea—labored to turn Israel to the Lord. Their efforts were in vain. The people of Israel hurtled on in their rush toward judgment. When destruction of the kingdom finally did come, and the Israelites were torn from the land by the Assyrians, the Scriptures make this sad comment:

2 Kings 17:16-17:

16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

- The people of the North would not turn from evil, so evil came. But let's first take a look at the situation in the Southern Kingdom:

## **2 Kings 14**

(21) Amaziah's reign in the South (14:1-22)

**1** In the second year of Joash son of Joahaz king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah became king.

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**1** Amaziah, son of Judah's King Joash, became king during the second year of the reign of Joash, son of King Joahaz of Israel,

**1** In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah.

- Amaziah of Judah reigned over Judah for 29 years (796-767 BC)

— He began reigning when Jehoash was king over Israel, and died during the reign of Jehoash's son and successor Jeroboam II

The prophet Joel may have ministered in Judah during the reign of Amaziah.

**2** He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddin of Jerusalem.

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**2** at the age of 25. He reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddin; she was from Jerusalem.

**2** He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

- Amaziah began to reign in Judah about a year after Jehoash had become king of Israel

— Amaziah was fairly young, 25 years old, when he became king, and ruled a long time, 29 years (796-767 BC)

— Much of this time his son Azariah's reign overlapped with his own (790-767 BC)

**3** He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like his father David; he acted in accordance with everything that his father Joash had done.

**3** He did right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father; he did according to all that Joash his father had done.

**3** He practiced what the LORD considered to be right, but not like his ancestor David did. He acted as his father Joash had done,

3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did.

4 Only the high places were not eliminated; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

4 Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

4 except that the high places were not abolished. The people continued to offer sacrifices and to burn incense on the high places.

4 Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.

- The king followed his father Joash's example; he upheld the worship of the LORD but did not remove the high places, where the people worshiped God in disobedience to the Mosaic Law (Deut 12:2-7,13-14).

— These high places (*bamoth*) were elevations set aside for pagan worship. Each contained an altar featuring idols. Sometimes the Hebrews would set aside a high place for the worship of the Lord and would ordain local priests. This practice was in direct violation of OT Law, which insisted on:

(1) A single center for worship and sacrifice (Jerusalem, during the kingdom era)

(2) On a priesthood staffed by descendants of Aaron, Moses' brother

— The pagan associations of the high places were much too strong; worship there soon took on characteristics of occultism and immorality. Compared with David, the founder of his dynasty and Judah's greatest king, Amaziah fell short.

5 Now it came about, as soon as the kingdom was firmly in his hand, that he killed his servants who had killed the king, his father.

5 Now it came about, as soon as the kingdom was firmly in his hand, that he killed his servants who had slain the king his father.

5 Later on, as soon as he was in firm control of his kingdom, he executed the servants who had murdered his father the king,

5 And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king his father.

6 But he did not put the sons of the murderers to death, in obedience to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, as the LORD commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, nor the sons be put to death for the fathers; but each shall be put to death for his own sin."

6 But the sons of the slayers he did not put to death, according to what is written in the book of the Law of Moses, as the LORD commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, nor the sons be put to death for the fathers; but each shall be put to death for his own sin."

6 but he did not execute the children of the murderers, in keeping with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, as the LORD had commanded: "Fathers must not be put to death because of their children's sin; nor are children to die because of their fathers' sin, for each person is to be put to death for his own sin."

6 But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

- In obedience to God's Law (Deut 24:16) Amaziah did not execute the children of his father's assassins as was customarily done by Near Eastern monarchs. He trusted God to control these potential rebels.

— Note: The citation from the law of Moses is evidence that Deuteronomy is not a late composition, as the higher critics hold.

7 He killed ten thousand of the Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and took Sela by war, and named it Joktheel, as it is to this day.

7 He killed of Edom in the Valley of Salt 10,000 and took Sela by war, and named it Joktheel to this day.

7 Joash executed 10,000 Edomites in the Salt Valley and captured Sela in battle, renaming it Joktheel, which remains its name to this day.

7 He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

- This war with Edom is described more fully in 2 Chr 25:5-16

- This describes an unprovoked act of war on Edom, showing Amaziah's arrogance and cruelty

— It was one more step down in Judah's progression to her final destruction

— He also took Edom's gods to Jerusalem and worshiped them (Cf. 2 Chr 25:14ff)

— Edom had revolted from Judean control during the reign of Jehoram. Amaziah wanted to regain control of this neighbor because Edom gave Judah access to southern trade routes.

— The battle took place in the Valley of Salt, a marshy plain at the south end of the Dead Sea (Cf. 2 Sam 8:13)

— Sela, renamed Joktheel by Amaziah, was later named Petra, the stronghold city of Edom carved out of sheer mountain walls

8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let's face each other *in combat*."

8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face each other."

8 Later, Amaziah sent couriers to Jehoahaz's son Jehoash, grandson of King Jehu of Israel, challenging him, "Come on! Let's fight face to face!"

8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face.

- Amaziah's heart became proud because of this victory. He concluded that his superior power had gained it rather than God's might. This led him to challenge Israel in battle.

9 But Jehoash king of Israel sent *messengers* to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thorn bush that was in Lebanon sent *word* to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' But a wild animal that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thorn bush.

9 Jehoash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thorn bush which was in Lebanon sent to the cedar which was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' But there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trampled the thorn bush.

9 But King Jehoash of Israel sent this message to King Amaziah of Judah: "The thorn bush in Lebanon sent this message to the cedar of Lebanon: 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' But just then a wild beast from Lebanon wandered by and trampled down the thorn bush.

9 And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.

- The Israelite king responded to this challenge by sending a warning to Amaziah in the form of a parable

— Amaziah was the thistle and Jehoash the cedar. As a wild beast could easily squash a thistle, so anyone could easily defeat Judah.

10 You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart is elated. Enjoy the glory and stay home; for why should you get involved in trouble so that you would fall, you and Judah with you?"

10 You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart has become proud. Enjoy your glory and stay at home; for why should you provoke trouble so that you, even you, would fall, and Judah with you?"

10 You just defeated Edom and you're arrogant. Bask in your victory and stay home. Why incite trouble so that you—yes, you!—fall, along with Judah with you?"

10 Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry at home: for why shouldst thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldst fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?

- Jehoash's advice that Amaziah stay at home was good, but Amaziah's pride had been hurt by the story. So he committed himself even more strongly to war.

— God permitted this situation to punish Amaziah, because after subduing the Edomites, he had brought some of their idols into Jerusalem and worshipped them (2 Chr 25:14,20)

**11** But Amaziah would not listen. So Jehoash king of Israel went up; and they faced each other, he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Beth-shemesh, which belongs to Judah.

**11** But Amaziah would not listen. So Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced each other at Beth-shemesh, which belongs to Judah.

**11** But Amaziah refused to listen. So Israel's King Jehoash and Judah's King Amaziah faced each other at Beth-shemesh, which is part of Judah.

**11** But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Bethshemesh, which belongeth to Judah.

12 And Judah was defeated by Israel, and they fled, every man to his tent.

12 Judah was defeated by Israel, and they fled each to his tent.

12 Judah was defeated by Israel, and everybody fled to their own tents.

12 And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents.

13 Then Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem and tore down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate, four hundred cubits.

13 Then Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem and tore down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate, 400 cubits.

13 Then King Jehoash of Israel captured Judah's King Amaziah, the son of Jehoash and grandson of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh. He went to Jerusalem and demolished 400 cubits of the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate.

13 And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Bethshemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

- Jehoash seized the initiative and attacked Judah. He faced Amaziah in battle at Bethshemesh, about 15 miles west of Jerusalem.
- Judah was defeated, its troops retreated, and Amaziah was captured
- Jehoash then proceeded to Jerusalem where he broke down 600 feet of the city wall

14 And he took all the gold and silver and all the utensils which were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house, the hostages as well, and returned to Samaria.

14 He took all the gold and silver and all the utensils which were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria.

14 He confiscated all the gold and silver, all the instruments he could find in the LORD's Temple and in the palace treasuries. He also captured some hostages and then returned to Samaria.

14 And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.  
- It was probably around this time that Amaziah's son Azariah ("Yahweh Has Helped") began to reign in Jerusalem as his father's co-regent (790 BC); Azariah continued as co-regent until Amaziah died in 767 BC.

**15** Now as for the rest of the acts of Jehoash that he did, and his might and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

**15** Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

**15** The rest of Jehoash's activities that he undertook, including his valor in fighting King Amaziah of Judah, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, are they not?

**15** Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

- This second mention of Jehoash's death (Cf. 13:12-13) seems to be added here because of the unusual situation that existed with Amaziah being held prisoner in Israel

— When Jehoash died (782 BC), Amaziah was released and returned to Judah. Jehoash's successor was his son Jeroboam II.

16 So Jehoash lay down with his fathers and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and his son Jeroboam became king in his place.

16 So Jehoash slept with his fathers and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son became king in his place.

16 Jehoash died, as had his ancestors, and he was buried in Samaria alongside the kings of Israel. His son Jeroboam reigned in his place.

16 And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.

17 Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel.

17 Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel.

17 Joash's son, King Amaziah of Judah, lived for fifteen years after Jehoahaz' son, King Jehoash of Israel, died.

17 And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.

- Amaziah (who died in 767 BC) outlived Jehoash (who died in 782 BC) by at least 15 years. After Amaziah returned to Judah he made his son Azariah his co-regent. They shared the throne (790-767 BC) until Amaziah's death.

18 Now *as for* the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

18 Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

18 The rest of Amaziah's activities are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, are they not?

18 And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

19 They formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent *men* to Lachish after him and they killed him there.

19 They conspired against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there.

19 A conspiracy arose against him in Jerusalem, and he ran off to Lachish, but he was pursued to Lachish and killed there.

19 Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there.

- The people who conspired against Amaziah are not identified but may have been some of his own officials

— The king fled to Lachish, a former royal city on the southern border of Judah, from which he could have fled the country if his enemies had not caught up with him first

20 Then they carried him on horses, and he was buried in Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

20 Then they brought him on horses and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

20 His body was brought back on horses and he was buried at Jerusalem alongside his ancestors in the City of David.

20 And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

21 And all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah.

21 All the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah.

21 All the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and installed him as King to take the place of his father Amaziah.

**21** And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.

- Azariah had begun to reign at the age of 16 (790 BC) when his father Amaziah was taken prisoner to Israel. When his father died in 767 BC, Azariah began his sole reign.

22 He built Elath and restored it to Judah after the king lay down with his fathers.

22 He built Elath and restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers.

22 He rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah. Later on the king died, as did his ancestors.

22 He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

#### (22) Jeroboam II's reign in the North (14:23-29)

Jeroboam II was fourth in Jehu's line. The OT says very little about him, passing quickly over his time (2 Kings 14:23-29), and giving him brief mention in 1 Chr 5:17. Yet we know from archaeology that Jeroboam II was a vital, aggressive ruler. The later reign of Jeroboam II was a time of exploding prosperity for Israel. The earlier destruction of the military power of Syria had enabled Jeroboam to expand his kingdom, even taking over the old capital of Aram, Damascus. Jeroboam II restored Israel's borders to approximately what they had been in Solomon's day and extended Israel's influence over her neighbors to an extent unparalleled in the history of the Northern Kingdom. Now Israel controlled the important trade routes which criss-crossed Palestine, linking the ancient world. Their multiplied revenues made Israel rich.

The prophet Jonah had predicted Israel's territorial extension. He, along with Hosea (Hosea 1:1) and Amos (Amos 1:1), ministered in Israel during Jeroboam II's reign. It is believed that Jonah visited Nineveh during the reign of Assur-dan III (772-755 BC).

The concentration of wealth stimulated economic corruption. Heavier and heavier taxes were laid on workers. The wealthy became land hungry, forcing out the small farmers and building great estates. Many of the poor were forced to sell themselves and their families as bondservants, becoming no better than serfs on lands that had once been their own. Even the small merchants were corrupted, and it became common for them to use unjust weights to measure out purchases. The process of corruption was accelerated by the failure of the justice system. Rather than acting to protect the poor, judges took bribes from the rich and so joined the oppressors! The old middle class began to disappear, and the society was increasingly divided into the oppressed poor and the very rich.

In this situation the rich showed no sense of responsibility to the poor. Instead of showing compassion and concern, they seemed bent on depriving the poor of all rights and property. The heartlessness of the rich is well expressed in one angry charge hurled by Amos—these people are willing “to sell ... the needy for a pair of sandals” (2:6).

Luxury footwear meant more to the wealthy of Jeroboam II's day than did the suffering of fellow human beings. [1] Religiously, economically, and socially, Israel had become an unjust society. Again the summary in 2 Kings 17 written after Israel's deportation is succinct:

2 Kings 17:13-14:

13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

**23** In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel became king in Samaria, *and reigned* for forty-one years.

**23** In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel became king in Samaria, *and reigned* forty-one years.

**23** In the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, began a 41 year reign in Samaria.

**23** In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.

- Jeroboam II had served as co-regent with his father Jehoash from 793 to 782 BC

— The 15th year of Amaziah king of Judah marked the beginning of his sole reign (782 BC)

— In all, he reigned 41 years (793-753 BC), longer than any other king of Israel before him

24 He did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not abandon all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, into which he misled Israel.

24 He did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin.

24 He did what the LORD considered to be evil by not abandoning all the sins of Nebat's son Jeroboam, who made Israel sin.

24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

- Spiritually, Jeroboam II followed in the footsteps of his predecessors in Israel. However, politically he was Israel's strongest king.

— Only a few of Jeroboam II's accomplishments are recorded; these were of lesser importance in view of the writer's emphasis on the spiritually significant aspects of Israel's history

25 He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.

25 He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher.

25 He rebuilt Israel's coastline from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the message from the LORD God of Israel that he spoke through his servant Jonah the prophet, Amittai's son, who was from Gath-hepher.

25 He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gathhepher.

- Jeroboam II restored Israel's boundaries to approximately their extent in Solomon's time (excluding of course the Southern Kingdom's territory belonging to Judah and Benjamin)

— Hamath (Cf. 1 Kings 8:65) was over 150 miles northeast of the Sea of Kinnereth; the Sea of the Arabah was the Dead Sea

— This territorial extension had been prophesied by Jonah, who ministered in Jeroboam II's reign. This prophecy of Jonah is not recorded elsewhere in Scripture, but dating the prophet's time (780 BC)

— This is the same Jonah who traveled to Nineveh with God's message of repentance for the Assyrians (Cf. Jonah 1:1).

26 For the LORD saw the misery of Israel, *which was* very bitter; for there was neither bond nor free *spared*, nor was there any helper for Israel.

26 For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, *which was* very bitter; for there was neither bond nor free, nor was there any helper for Israel.

26 For the LORD observed Israel's bitter misery, and there was no one left, neither slave nor free, and there was no deliverer for Israel.

26 For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.

- No one escaped from Israel's previous national affliction in Jeroboam II's day, neither servants nor free people. This probably means that everyone in Israel was suffering before Jeroboam II began to improve conditions.

27 Yet the LORD did not say that He would wipe out the name of Israel from under heaven, but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

27 The LORD did not say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

27 The LORD had never said that he would erase the name of Israel from under heaven. Instead, he delivered them by Joash's son Jeroboam.

27 And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

- The suffering of the Israelites came as a result of the oppressive influence of Hazael of Damascus. Out of compassion for His people, the LORD began to relieve their distress under Jehoash (Cf. 13:22-25) and continued to do so under Jeroboam II.

**28** Now *as for* the rest of the acts of Jeroboam and all that he did and his might, how he fought and how he recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, *which had belonged* to Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

**28** Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam and all that he did and his might, how he fought and how he recovered for Israel, Damascus and Hamath, *which had belonged* to Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

**28** The rest of Jeroboam's actions—everything he did, including his powerful fighting and how on behalf of Israel he restored Damascus and Hamath to Judah—are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, are they not?

**28** Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

- Jeroboam II took Damascus, the Aramean capital, and Hamath. These cities (and their surrounding territory) had belonged to Yaudi (Judah) in the days of David and Solomon but

not since that time.

- By controlling this area, Jeroboam II undoubtedly also recovered all of Israel's Trans-jordanian territory which Hazael had seized (Cf. 10:32-33), thus making Israel the largest country on the eastern Mediterranean coast
- Jeroboam II's victories were accomplished because Damascus had been weakened by attacks from the Assyrians to their northeast under Adad-nirari III (Cf. 13:5)
- Also Assyria herself was weak at this time, suffering from the threat of attack from the Urartu people on their northern frontier, internal dissension, and a series of weak rulers
- Jehoash had been a successful military strategist (Cf. 14:11-14), and his son Jeroboam II evidently inherited his father's abilities and even surpassed him

Jeroboam II's success was due to the capable leadership that both Jeroboam II and Joash of Judah provided, and the weaknesses of both Damascus and Assyria at this time. As Israel declined spiritually, God strengthened Assyria politically and militarily. The two periods of Israel's greatest decline correspond exactly to the two periods of Assyria's greatest growth, namely, during the Omri dynasty and shortly after Jeroboam II's reign. This reflects precisely what God had said He would do if His people forsook Him (Deut 28:1,25,43,44,49-57). One writer correlated Assyria's rise to power with Israel's apostasy. The cause and effect relationship is unmistakable.

With the death of Jeroboam II, the history of the northern state becomes a tale of unmitigated disaster. Her internal sickness erupting into the open, Israel found herself racked with anarchy at the very moment when she was called upon to face in resurgent Assyria the gravest threat of her entire history. Within 25 short years she had been erased from the map.

29 And Jeroboam lay down with his fathers, with the kings of Israel, and his son Zechariah became king in his place.

29 And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel, and Zechariah his son became king in his place.

29 Jeroboam died, as had his ancestors the kings of Israel, and his son Zechariah became king in his place.

29 And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

- During Jeroboam II's reign the prophets Amos and Hosea ministered in Israel (Amos 1:1; Hosea 1:1)

— Their prophecies give additional insights into life in Israel during Jeroboam's reign

- Jeroboam II died in 753 BC and his son Zechariah succeeded him (Cf. 2 Kings 15:8-12)

Three prophets spoke out during the time of Jeroboam II. Each of their messages constituted both a warning and a promise to the people of Israel. And each prophecy contains warnings and promises for us, who in many respects live in a time of prosperity much like that of Jeroboam:

### **Jonah**

Jonah is not only known from his book: He is also mentioned in the section of 2 Kings that traces the decline and fall of Israel in the North. Jonah was somewhat unusual. He was a popular prophet. The reason was seen in this text (v25). Jonah was popular because he foretold good things for Israel. And Jonah was also a patriot. This is why it was particularly difficult then when Jonah was sent to Nineveh to warn that city of coming judgment. Jonah was reluctant. Jonah 4:2 explains that Jonah was afraid that the people of Nineveh might heed him and repent, and that the Lord would withhold judgment. Jonah didn't want that! Nineveh was capital of mighty Assyria, which had raided Israel before and which would later be the agent of Israel's destruction. So rather than going overland to Nineveh, Jonah found a ship going in the opposite direction! We all know the story of Jonah's repentance in the belly of the great fish. And we remember that he finally did go to Nineveh and deliver his message. We also remember the results: the people of Nineveh repented, and God withheld His judgment. The last we see of Jonah is the angry and discouraged prophet slumped on a hill overlooking the city, deaf to God's explanation of His concern for the children and even the dumb animals who would have perished with the responsible adults. But if we are to understand the impact of Jonah's ministry in Israel, we need to see his adventure as God's object lesson. Soon Amos and Hosea would appear. They would detail the sins of Israel, and call the people to return to the Lord. The mission of Jonah to Nineveh provided proof that if only a people would repent, they could be saved. But despite the example of Nineveh, the people of Israel simply would not respond to the prophets of the Lord. It was their failure to repent that made judgment inevitable!

### **Amos**

Amos was one of the poor that the wealthy in Israel despised. He was a citizen of neighboring Judah, where he worked caring for sheep and a stand of sycamore trees. We know that Amos was poor, for sycamores were to the poor what figs were to the rich. Though neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, Amos responded to God's call and trudged in his rags across the border into Israel. There he must have visited the cities that had grown up around the worship centers at Bethel and Dan. He must have walked past the great houses, seen the luxury goods in stores outside of which the poor crouched. Walking through the market he must have noticed merchants mix chaff with the grain they sold, or

slyly exchange honest weights for lighter ones when they measured out the purchases of the poor. Angered by the heartlessness and the materialism, Amos boldly identified the sins for which God was about to judge the Northern society. In his rebuke we can hear God's evaluation of man's greed, and a powerful expression of the divine values that had been expressed for centuries in the Law.

Amos 2:6-8:

6 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;

7 That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name:

8 And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

Amos 5:11-15:

11 Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

12 For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.

13 Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

## **Hosea**

We know little about the prophet. What we do know is heartrending. Hosea was called to suffer the pain of commitment to a faithless wife— a prostitute. His experience graphically reveals the meaning of Israel's religious apostasy. Just as Hosea's wife would not remain faithful to her marriage covenant, so God's people had abandoned Him. The imagery of sexual unfaithfulness is appropriate in this case. The religions which the Israelites followed were nature faiths. They sought to influence fertility in lands and animals as well as humans by sexually stimulating the gods, whose passions were thought to overflow as fertility on earth.

So the pagans of Palestine engaged in all sorts of sensual excess in an effort to arouse their gods. So idolatry and sexual promiscuity were closely linked in Hosea's day. And God, through the anguished prophet, communicated something of His own anguish at His rejection by an Israel that ran after pagan, sensual faiths. Hosea announced proof upon proof of Israel's abandonment of God and His Law. There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying, and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed (Hosea 4:1-2).

Despite all this, God continued to pour out His love on Israel. In a beautiful passage Hosea describes God's loving care:

Hosea 11:1-4:

- 1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.
- 2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.
- 3 I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.
- 4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

Even so, God was anguished at the thought of giving Israel up and handing His people over to her enemies (11:8-11). Though Israel's sin demanded punishment, ultimately this people would return to Him and beg forgiveness. Then, "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for My anger has turned away from them" (14:4). But Israel was as unmoved by the pleas and the pain of Hosea as the nation had been by the angry denunciations of Amos. And Israel remained blind to the promise implicit in God's gracious treatment of Nineveh. The prophets spoke. But Israel would not hear. The apparent parallel with America should arrest our attention as well. Will we hear?