



Second Kings - Chapter Fourteen

Summary of Chapter Fourteen

Following the death of his father, King Amaziah son of Joash reigned in Judah. Like his father he was basically a good king although he too did nothing to remove the high places of worship from the land. He had the servants who killed his father put to death.

Having defeated the Edomites, Amaziah challenged King Jehoash of Israel, who responded by telling him he should stay at home or face a heavy defeat. Amaziah would not listen, went into battle and was defeated. He was taken captive by Jehoash who broke down the walls of Jerusalem and took all the treasure from the temple and the palace before returning to Samaria.

King Jehoash died and was replaced by his son Jeroboam II. Amaziah lived on in Jerusalem for fifteen more years before a conspiracy in Jerusalem caused him to flee to Lachish. However, the conspirators followed him there and killed him. He was succeeded by his son Azariah.

Although Jeroboam too was an evil king in God's sight, the Lord took pity on his people and gave Jeroboam success in regaining some of the land previously lost. When he died his son Zechariah came to the throne of Israel.

V 2 Kings 14:1-15:7 - Amaziah, Jeroboam II, and Azariah

The impetus of the recovery in the closing verses of Chapter 13 continues into Chapter 14, as the house of Jehu brings Israel relief, not only from Aram but also from a hostile Judah.

V.a 2 Kings 14:1-22 - Amaziah Reigns over Judah

Like his father Joash before him, Amaziah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord although he too failed to remove the high places where the people liked to worship. He fought with the Edomites and had great success. However, when he

challenged King Jehoshaphat of Israel he was soundly defeated and Jehoshaphat broke down the walls of Jerusalem in order to plunder the temple and the palace. A conspiracy against Amaziah forced him to flee to Lachish but he was killed there and his son Azariah succeeded him.

¹ In the second year of King Joash son of Joahaz of Israel, King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah, began to reign. ² He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddin of Jerusalem. ³ He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like his ancestor David; in all things he did as his father Joash had done. ⁴ But the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.

2 Kings 14:1-4

In the second year of King Joash was 796 BC.

Amaziah was a relatively good, i.e. non-idolatrous king of Judah for he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, basically keeping the Law of Moses, while failing like others before him to remove the high places; refer to the comments made on 1 Kings 3:2, 15:11, 22:43, and 2 Kings 12:2. He was the son of the great reformer Joash and continued the generally godly reign began by his father. Yet in ways not further defined here, the kings throughout the period from Joash to Jotham are regarded by the authors of Kings as not like David (contrast 1 Kings 3:3, 15:11 and 22:43 with 2 Kings 12:2, 14:3, 15:3 and 15:34 in terms of what is and is not said); there is some doubt in the authors' minds about the wholeheartedness of these kings' commitment to the Lord. Compared to Joash, Amaziah faithfully continued his policies. Yet some of those policies allowed compromises, such as the allowing of continued sacrifices and incense offerings on the high places. Compared to David - the greatest human king to reign over the people of God - Amaziah did not match up favourably.

As will be noted in comments later in the chapter, the Chronicler reveals that Amaziah set up Edomite gods to worship and therefore went from doing right in the sight of the Lord to doing the exact opposite.

⁵ As soon as the royal power was firmly in his hand he killed his servants who had murdered his father the king. ⁶ But he did not put to death the children of the murderers; according to what is written in the book of the law of Moses, where the Lord commanded, 'The parents shall not be put to death for the children, or the children be

put to death for the parents; but all shall be put to death for their own sins.'

2 Kings 14:5-6

He killed his servants who had murdered his father the king. This was both just and in the best interest of Amaziah. It was good for him to eliminate those who found the assassination of the king a reasonable way to change the kingdom. It also fulfilled God's command to punish murderers with execution, first given in Genesis 9:5-7, which predated the Law of Moses.

But he did not put to death the children of the murderers; according to what is written in the book of the Law of Moses. It was the standard practice of the ancient world to execute not only the guilty party in such a murder, but also their family. Amaziah went against the conventional practice of his day and obeyed the Word of God instead: <<*Parents shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their parents; only for their own crimes may persons be put to death*>> (Deuteronomy 24:16).

⁷ He killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt and took Sela by storm; he called it Jokthe-el, which is its name to this day.

2 Kings 14:7

He killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt and took Sela by storm. This shows the military might of Amaziah, and that he successfully subdued the weaker nations surrounding Judah. Edom had revolted against Judæan rule during the reign of Jehoram according to 2 Kings 8:20-22. Amaziah does not re-establish Judæan control over Edom, but this important victory does ultimately have implications for Judah's ability to trade.

Some believe Sela was the ancient rock city in the desert also known as Petra; others believe it was a different place. One way or another, this was a significant victory for Amaziah. Second Chronicles 25:5-16 gives more background to this event. Amaziah gathered a huge army in Judah to go against Edom - three hundred thousand choice men, able to go to war, who could handle spear and shield. He also hired 100,000 mercenary soldiers from Israel. However, a prophet came and warned him to not use the soldiers from Israel, because God was not with that rebellious and idolatrous kingdom. Amaziah was convinced to trust in God, he sent the mercenaries from Israel away, and accepted the loss of the money used to hire them. God blessed this step of faith, and gave them a convincing victory over the Edomites. Amaziah trusted God for the victory over Edom; but immediately after the victory his heart turned from God: <<*Now after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the*

Edomites, he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up as his gods, and worshipped them, making offerings to them>> (2 Chronicles 25:14).

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

⁹ King Jehoash of Israel sent word to King Amaziah of Judah, ‘A thornbush on Lebanon sent to a cedar on Lebanon, saying, “Give your daughter to my son for a wife”; but a wild animal of Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thornbush. ¹⁰ You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Be content with your glory, and stay at home; for why should you provoke trouble so that you fall, you and Judah with you?’

2 Kings 14:8-10

A thornbush on Lebanon sent to a cedar on Lebanon. Emboldened by the success of his Edomite campaign, Amaziah has decided for unstated reasons to confront the more powerful Jehoash of Israel, so Jehoash sends him this warning. The point of Jehoash’s parable is that a puny thistle (i.e. Amaziah), easily trampled by any wild animal, should not make the mistake of comparing itself in might to the immovable cedar on Lebanon, that is, Jehoash. This parable is similar to that recorded in Judges 9:8-15 and may have been in the mind of Jehoash when he issued this warning.

Again, 2 Chronicles 25:5-16 gives more background to this event. When Amaziah sent away the Israelite mercenaries, they were not happy - even though he paid them for not fighting against Edom for they probably counted on receiving much more from the spoils of battle. As they returned to Israel, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, killed three thousand in them, and took what they wanted as their reward. This was the political motivation for Amaziah’s attack against Israel.

Amaziah had reason to believe he would be successful. He had recently assembled a three hundred thousand strong army that had killed twenty thousand Edomites in a victory over Edom. Israel seemed very weak, having only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers following his father Jehoahaz’s defeat by the Aramæans; this is stated in 2 Kings 13:7.

Your heart has lifted you up. Pride was the downfall of other kings who started well in their reigns as Amaziah did, for example: <<***But when he had become strong he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was false to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to make offering on the altar of incense***>> (2 Chronicles 26:16), <<***But Hezekiah did not respond according to the benefit***

done to him, for his heart was proud. Therefore wrath came upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem>> (2 Chronicles 32:25).

Jesus warned that pride was just one of the aspects of the heart that defile a person: <<*For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person*>> (Mark 7:21-23).

Be content with your glory, and stay at home. Jehoash is not seeking conflict with Amaziah. The reply of King Jehoash of Israel was both wise and diplomatic. With this little story and its application, he counselled Amaziah to glory in his previous victory over Edom but then to stay at home.

For why should you provoke trouble so that you fall, you and Judah with you? Amaziah should have listened to this word from Jehoash, but he did not. He provoked a fight he should have avoided, and did not consider both the likelihood of success and the effect his defeat would have on the whole kingdom of Judah.

¹¹ But Amaziah would not listen. So King Jehoash of Israel went up; he and King Amaziah of Judah faced one another in battle at Beth-shemesh, which belongs to Judah. ¹² Judah was defeated by Israel; everyone fled home. ¹³ King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah of Judah son of Jehoash, son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh; he came to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate, a distance of four hundred cubits. ¹⁴ He seized all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the Lord and in the treasuries of the king's house, as well as hostages; then he returned to Samaria.

2 Kings 14:11-14

But Amaziah would not listen. Amaziah was foolish. Not only did he fail to heed the warning given to him by the king of Israel, there is also no indication that he sought the counsel of the Lord, as David had always done; for example: <<*After this David inquired of the Lord, 'Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?' The Lord said to him, 'Go up.'* David said, 'To which shall I go up?' He said, 'To Hebron'>> (2 Samuel 2:1).

Beth-shemesh. This important town on the northwest border of Judah, about 20 miles or 32 km by road from Jerusalem, guarded an important pass from the Philistine plain. Defeat here inevitably led to an assault on Jerusalem itself and the destruction of about 600 feet or 183m of city **wall** on the northern side

between the Ephraim Gate, which was the main gate in the centre of the northern wall, and the Corner Gate, probably at the north-western corner of the city.

Because of his foolish attack against Israel, Amaziah saw the defences of Jerusalem broken down. Not only did they lose the battle at Beth-shemesh, but they were also in a weaker position to face future attacks by any opposing force that might choose to come against them.

King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah of Judah. Because of his foolish attack against Israel, Amaziah lost his freedom and for a time became a prisoner of the king of Israel. Amaziah had a mighty army and Jehoash had a weak army. Yet God gave Israel the victory over Judah to rebuke the idolatry of Amaziah: <<***But Amaziah would not listen – it was God’s doing, in order to hand them over, because they had sought the gods of Edom***>> (2 Chronicles 25:20).

He seized all the gold and silver. Because of his foolish attack against Israel, Amaziah lost the treasure of the people of God. It was not just a loss of his personal wealth, i.e. the treasuries of the king’s house, but also of the gold and silver of God’s people, and indeed that offered up to the Lord himself: all the vessels that were found in the house of the Lord. Amaziah did not have the wisdom to see how losing this battle would hurt others as well as himself. Sin so often has consequences beyond the sinner personally. This even extended to hostages who were taken from Jerusalem to Samaria. The decision to attack Israel was his alone, but the price paid for the foolish attack was paid by the whole kingdom of Judah. It is a sober warning to all leaders, to consider how their foolish decisions affect many other people.

¹⁵ Now the rest of the acts that Jehoash did, his might, and how he fought with King Amaziah of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? ¹⁶ Jehoash slept with his ancestors, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; then his son Jeroboam succeeded him.

2 Kings 14:15-16

The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel was a separate record from Kings and Chronicles to which the authors had access that recorded everything of significance that occurred during the reign of the kings.

Then his son Jeroboam succeeded him. This refers to Jeroboam II, the great grandson or fourth generation of the dynasty of Jehu.

¹⁷ King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz of Israel. ¹⁸ Now the rest of the deeds of Amaziah, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of

the Kings of Judah? ¹⁹ They made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But they sent after him to Lachish, and killed him there.

2 Kings 14:17-19

King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of King Jehoash. The death of Jehoash probably prompted Amaziah's release from captivity, although it may have occurred earlier. The surprising repetition of this information concerning Jehoash in the context of Amaziah's reign (2 Kings 13:12-13) may be intended to contrast the two kings in their deaths: Jehoash, who did not seek conflict with fellow Israelites, came to a natural and peaceful end, while Amaziah, the aggressor who acted as Rehoboam had been forbidden to act, met a violent death; refer to 1 Kings 12:22-24. It is also possible, however, that Jehoash is highlighted here because he was the effective ruler of Judah in this period, as was his son Jeroboam after him; Amaziah is not said to have 'ruled' in Judah after Jehoash's death, but only to have 'lived' there.

The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah was a separate record from Kings and Chronicles to which the authors had access that recorded everything of significance that occurred during the reign of the kings.

They made a conspiracy against him. The embarrassing loss against Israel undermined Amaziah's support among the leaders of Judah. Nothing is said of any reprisals by Amaziah's son against the conspirators (contrast vv.5-6 with 2 Kings 15:1-7), perhaps implying that Azariah was himself one of the mysterious 'they.' Amaziah was bound to be unpopular, given the consequences for the city of Jerusalem from his military folly.

The city of Lachish where Amaziah died was the most important fortified city in Judah after Jerusalem, defending one of the east-west valleys that gave access to the Judæan Plateau and Jerusalem from the coastal plains.

Amaziah tried but was unable to escape the conspirators. He was assassinated, just like his father was in 2 Kings 12:20-21. Lachish was the first of the cities of Judah to adopt the idolatries of the kingdom of Israel: <<*Harness the steeds to the chariots, inhabitants of Lachish; it was the beginning of sin to daughter Zion, for in you were found the transgressions of Israel*>> (Micah 1:13), and it was natural for the idolatrous Amaziah to seek an asylum there.

Some commentators believe the assassins who put Amaziah to death may have been the very children whom Amaziah had spared. They, in turn, were exacting vengeance for Amaziah's executions.

²⁰ They brought him on horses; he was buried in Jerusalem with his ancestors in the city of David. ²¹ All the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king to succeed his father Amaziah. ²² He rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah, after King Amaziah slept with his ancestors.

2 Kings 14:20-22

After King Amaziah slept with his ancestors. The immediate context might lead the reader to think of Amaziah, but 2 Chronicles 26:1b states only: <<**after the king slept with his ancestors**>> and, in fact, it is Jehoash who has just been described as sleeping with his ancestors (v.16). If the reference is indeed to Jehoash, this is further evidence that he was the one exercising power in Judah after the battle of Beth-shemesh; refer to the comments made on vv.15-17. It was only after his death and with the decline of Aram (refer to v.25) that Azariah was able to consolidate Amaziah's gains in Edom by claiming the port of Elath at the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea. This town, closely associated with Ezion-geber and the trade of the Solomonic era with the wider world (1 Kings 9:26), stood at the southern end of the great King's Highway that ran all the way north through Transjordan to Damascus and facilitated trade connections especially with southern Arabia. Presumably it was lost to Judah when Edom revolted during Jehoram's reign; refer to 2 Kings 8:20-22.

All the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king to succeed his father Amaziah. This was the start of the illustrious reign of Azariah also known as Uzziah. He was the greatest king of Judah after David in terms of his military and rebuilding achievements. However, pride stopped him from being a great spiritual leader for he attempted to take on the role of priest by making offerings in the temple and was struck with leprosy by the Lord. Refer to 2 Chronicles Chapter 26 for details.

It was during the reign of King Azariah/Uzziah that the great prophet Isaiah served the Lord by trying to turn the people of Judah away from the path that their northern kin in Israel had chosen to follow: <<The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah>> (Isaiah 1:1).

V.b 2 Kings 14:23-29 - Jeroboam, Son of Joash, Reigns over Israel

King Jeroboam II reigned for forty one years and like his namesake Jeroboam he did evil in the sight of the Lord, continuing the false worship of God. However, the Lord had compassion on his people and saw that there was no one to help them and so he allowed Jeroboam to be successful in restoring some of the land they had previously lost. When Jeroboam died he was succeeded by his son Zechariah.



Resurgence during the Time of Azariah and Jeroboam II circa 767-753 BC

A power vacuum created by Assyria's attack and withdrawal from Aram allowed Jeroboam II of Israel and Azariah, also called Uzziah, of Judah to recover land that had once belonged to their kingdoms. Jeroboam recovered much of Gilead, and Azariah recovered Elath on the Red Sea. Jeroboam also subdued much of Aram's territory for a time, and Azariah captured some Philistine towns and fought against the Arabians at Gurbaal and the Meunites.

²³ In the fifteenth year of King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah, King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel began to reign in Samaria; he reigned for forty-one years. ²⁴ He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he caused Israel to sin. ²⁵ He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher. ²⁶ For the Lord saw that the distress of Israel was very bitter; there was no one left, bond or free, and no one to help Israel. ²⁷ But the Lord had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, so he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Joash.

2 Kings 14:23-27

In the fifteenth year of King Amaziah was 782 BC.

He restored the border of Israel. The Assyrian assault on the area north of Israel, alluded to in 2 Kings 13:5, seriously weakened the kingdoms of that region, including Aram, and this allowed Jehoash to recapture some Israelite towns from the Aramæans; refer to 2 Kings 13:25. In the immediately subsequent years, the Assyrian kings only infrequently ventured out on military campaigns to their west, and in this context Jeroboam II of Israel was able to further the Israelite recovery begun by his father, extending the borders of Israel from the Sea of the Arabah in the south, i.e. the Dead Sea (Joshua 3:16 and 12:3), to the northern Lebo-hamath, which means 'entrance to Hamath,' a city or geographical feature associated with Hamath in central Aram. Jeroboam was thus able to restore the territory of northern Israel to Solomonic proportions; refer to 1 Kings 8:65.

Jonah the son of Amittai is confirmed by Jonah 1:1 as being the prophet in the Book of Jonah who had prophesied that Jeroboam would accomplish all this, although Jonah was not the only prophet active during this period and his was not the only message for Israel: <<*The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri, in the days of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel*>> (Hosea 1:1), and: <<*The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw*

concerning Israel in the days of King Uzziah of Judah and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake>> (Amos 1:1). Clearly, Jonah also had a ministry among his own people, not only among the people of Nineveh.



The Setting of the Book of Jonah circa 760 BC

Jonah prophesied during the politically prosperous time of Jeroboam II of Israel. During this time the Assyrians were occupied with matters elsewhere in the empire, allowing Jeroboam II to capture much of Aram for Israel. The Lord called Jonah to go to the great Assyrian city of Nineveh to pronounce judgement upon it. Jonah attempted to escape the Lord's calling by sailing from the seaport of Joppa to Tarshish, which was probably in the western Mediterranean. Eventually he obeyed the Lord and travelled overland to Nineveh at the heart of the Assyrian Empire.

For the Lord saw that the distress of Israel was very bitter. Out of great mercy, God showed kindness to a disobedient Israel ruled by an evil king. Many Christians take the verse: <<*The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*>> (John 1:17) literally and fail to see that God was both merciful and gracious continually throughout the OT period of history.

There was no one left, bond or free. The Hebrew behind bond and free appears on four other occasions in the OT in Deuteronomy 32:36, 1 Kings 14:10, 1 Kings 21:21 and 2 Kings 9:8, although here it is used in a slightly different form. It is a difficult phrase to interpret, but probably is an idiom for the ability of the males of the royal house to be of strong help to the king; neither those who are important to Jeroboam in this regard nor those who are not will be able to assist him.

To blot out the name of Israel from under heaven would be to destroy Israel utterly as he had threatened to do when he committed idolatry at the very time God was giving the commandments to Moses (Deuteronomy 9:14-19), making forgiveness and restoration impossible: *<<the Lord will be unwilling to pardon them, for the Lord's anger and passion will smoke against them. All the curses written in this book will descend on them, and the Lord will blot out their names from under heaven>>* (Deuteronomy 29:20). This the Lord had not said he would do; and when there was a danger of its happening, during the time of Jehu's dynasty, God took steps to deliver Israel from her enemies.

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 Annals of the Kings of Israel? ²⁹ Jeroboam slept with his ancestors, the kings of Israel; his son Zechariah succeeded him.

2 Kings 14:28-29

How he recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah. This unusual phrase belonged to Judah is also translated as 'Judah in Israel' (e.g. ESV) and reflects the unusual situation in Judah and Israel during the reigns of Jehoash and Jeroboam II, when the kings of Israel were apparently in effective control of Judah. It is perhaps an Israelite designation for the whole recovered kingdom during Jeroboam's reign, representing Jeroboam's claim to lordship over a Judah currently integrated into Israel. Alternatively, it could be a phrase chosen by the authors to represent their view that the Davidic dynasty in Jerusalem remains the chosen dynasty, that Judah is the heartland of the kingdom that rightly belongs to that dynasty, and that the kingdom will one day be returned to Judah in its entirety: *<<For this reason I will punish the descendants of David, but not for ever>>* (1 Kings 11:39). Jeroboam II may appear to be a 'second Solomon,' but the phrase 'Judah in Israel' reminds the reader to whom this territory really belongs. Whatever is the case, this is a period in which territory is being restored (v.22) to Israel, both to the north and to the south.

Jeroboam II ruled Israel from 783 to 753 BC, although he was co-ruler with Jehoash from 793 BC. Archæologists at Megiddo discovered a seal dating to the

8th Century BC. The seal contains a roaring lion; above the animal in Hebrew is the name 'Shema,' and below is the phrase 'Servant of Jeroboam.' The finely rendered seal gives evidence of a high level of craftsmanship at this time.

The reign of Jeroboam II was a time of economic, political, and materialistic prosperity for Israel. Yet it was not because of their own merit or goodness, but because of God's great mercy to Israel.

Archæology confirms the economic might of Jeroboam II. In the age prior to Jeroboam II, the houses in Israel's cities were roughly the same size. However, archæologists find a change starting in the 8th Century BC - ancient cities like Tirzah have a neighbourhood of large, expensive houses and another neighbourhood of small, crowded structures, smaller than the houses from previous years. The larger houses are filled with the marks of prosperity, and the oppressive rich of Israel thought they could find safety there - but God's judgement came against those houses as well: *<<Hear, and testify against the house of Jacob, says the Lord God, the God of hosts: On the day I punish Israel for its transgressions, I will punish the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground. I will tear down the winter house as well as the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall come to an end, says the Lord>>* (Amos 3:13-15). The resultant prosperity, however, which ended in the wrong use of power in luxury and the oppression of the poor, was denounced by the contemporary prophets, especially Amos (Amos 2:6-7 and 8:4-6); Isaiah (Isaiah 3:18-26 and 5:8-13); and Micah (Micah 2:2).

In the days of King Jehoahaz of Israel God promised to send a saviour to Israel, one who helped them to escape from under the hand of the Aramæans (2 Kings 13:4-5). It is likely this was a reference to the Assyrians but it is also possible that Jeroboam II was this promised deliverer.

Although the hand of the Lord was behind these events, God used the strength of the Assyrian Empire to bless Israel. For most of its history, the northern kingdom of Israel struggled against Aram, its neighbour to the north. But around the year 800 BC, the mighty Assyrian Empire defeated Aram, and neutralised this power that hindered Israel's expansion and prosperity. With Aram in check, Israel enjoyed great prosperity during the reign of Jeroboam II. The Book of Amos shows that Israel did not handle this prosperity well, and the wickedness under the prosperity of Jeroboam II heaped judgement up for themselves. When Jeroboam II died in 753 BC he left behind a strong kingdom but, unfortunately, one whose core foundation was so spiritually rotten that the edifice of state would not withstand the rising tides of international intrigue and pressure much longer.

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His son Zechariah succeeded him. Zechariah was the fourth generation of the Jehu dynasty, and it was prophesied that the dynasty of Jehu would continue for four generations in 2 Kings 10:30. From the time of Jeroboam's death, declension set in, ending, less than seventy years later, in its final overthrow and dissolution. Prophetic ministry was from this time greatly increased. God did not let his people fail without due warning and opportunity to change the course of history.