

encourage Joash to take back the stolen countries, and therefore he chose for the symbolical act the window that looked toward them. **And he opened it.** "One opened it." **Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot.** Intent was the king on doing what the prophet told him, that he might have the assurance that would come from the parable he was helping to enact. **And he said.** That is, Elisha said. **The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria.** Substitute the name Jehovah for "the Lord." The meaning is, this arrow represents Jehovah's deliverance of Israel from its trouble, a deliverance from Syrian tyranny. **For thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.** So it is not merely deliverance after all, but victory. The army defeated shall be annihilated. **In Aphek.** A town three miles east of the Sea of Galilee, where once before the Israelites had routed the Syrians. There is no record of this second battle of Aphek, but we must assume that what was prophesied came to pass in history. The modern village Fik is on the site of the ancient Aphek.

18. He said, Take the arrows. And he took them. Elisha commanded the king to take the quiver into his hands, and the king did so, and doubtless held the arrows in a bunch. **Smite upon the ground.** It is not certain what this means, but the best authorities explain it as a command to strike with the arrows against the floor. **He smote thrice, and stayed.** The king struck the arrows on the floor three times, and then the apparent folly of the whole transaction coming upon him, he stopped, nor could he be induced to carry the symbolism further. He did not enter into its spirit at all. He was ready to fight, but this shooting looked like child's play.

19. The man of God was wroth with him. Indignant at his lack of faith and zeal. Furthermore he was conscious that there was more of real symbolism here than Joash understood. The same feebleness of character which led the king to strike three times in place of twenty would have the same results when the actual warfare began. **Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it.** "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." It is the zealous and energetic who conquer. Faith and zeal are at the bottom of every victory. "He was wanting in the proper zeal for obtaining the full promises of God."—*Keil*. **Now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.** The last verse of this lesson declares that this prophecy was exactly

accomplished. If Joash had had more reverent confidence in the work of Elisha, the conquests of the second Jeroboam might have been anticipated by him.

20. Elisha died, and they buried him. Very different from the fate of the man who was taken in a chariot of fire to heaven. Where Elisha was buried is not certainly known, probably near to Samaria. Josephus mentions the magnificence of his funeral. **The bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.** An evidence of the weakness of Israel, especially as the point where they were probably discovered was far from the national border.

21. As they were burying a man. That is, as some unnamed Israelites were burying a friend. **Behold, they spied a band.** The Hebrew has it "the band." An evidence that such bands were frequent. **They cast the man into the sepulcher of Elisha.** They had no place else to put him. There was no time for ceremony. They did not know whose Elisha's tomb was, but took the nearest. **And when the man was let down.** This is not in the Bible text. Elisha's tomb was not a pit dug in the ground like a modern grave. **Touched the bones of Elisha.** The one corpse, wound in its grave clothes, but uncoffined, was strongly pushed over to the other one, which was equally bound.

23. The Lord was gracious unto them. And therefore they were preserved. His covenant to Abraham was repeated to Isaac and Jacob, a promise that the children of Abraham should be preserved with gracious mercy. **Neither cast he them from his presence as yet.** The time came when they were cast away, rejected, but for that they and not God were responsible. The sad event came more than a century from this time.

24. So Hazael king of Syria died. This was the cruel king who so severely had punished the Israelites. **Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead.** Hazael, a usurper, gave to his eldest boy the name of the monarch he had de-throned and murdered.

25. Jehoash the son of Jehonhaz took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities. These had been captured from Israel by the greater Ben-hadad. **Three times did Joash beat him.** Thrice defeated, Hazael was forced to abandon his conquest in western Samaria. He retained, however, the trans-Jordanic territory, which was not recovered by the Israelites till the reign of Jeroboam II.