

Kings and Prophets 12-11-23a

This is Friday, the 23rd of November, 2012. Tomorrow is my parents' 58th wedding anniversary. Yes, I kept thinking, you know, longer than I've been alive.

And I thought, well, of course, but hope everyone had a nice Thanksgiving. And we're going to continue tonight, our study in the book of Kings, as well as some side trips into Samuel and Chronicles. We are at the transition point between the reign of David and the reign of Solomon, which really begins the latter history of the kingdom of Israel.

We'll very soon be in the divided monarchy period. Solomon is the last king of the United Israel. And so we're going to be resuming in 1 Kings 2. We'll take a moment as is our custom to dedicate our time of study to the Lord and ask his blessing on it.

Shall we pray? Father, we are so grateful for all of the things that have been woven together in your grace and in your provision, your love for us, expressed through the Lord Jesus Christ, to appoint us to this time in history, this place in geography, and this opportunity in spiritual terms to be filled with your Holy Spirit, to have access to your word, and to lay hold of righteousness by faith. We thank you for the truths of scripture that are laid out before us. And we pray that as we seek to mine those from the pages of your word that God the Holy Spirit will superintend and enable us not only to observe the facts and the details of these accounts, but to see their meaning and application for us as individuals, so that our time will be productive and will help to equip us to produce those good works that you have ordained for us.

We pray that our fellowship will be productive and uplifting, that each one will be encouraged in faith and in obedience and in the outworking of the divine love that has been shed abroad in our hearts by your spirit. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. We began our new series last week with some background as to the time and place in history from the days of Moses leading the people out of bondage in Egypt, the 40 years of wandering, moving into the period of the judges, which lasted for roughly 300 years.

We have studied the book of Genesis, all 50 chapters. We have studied the book of Exodus. We have studied the book of Judges.

And so we've got a pretty complete span of history having been covered up to, and by the way, we've done 1st and 2nd Samuel as well, up to and through the reign of David on the throne of Israel. Now we saw really the first functioning national prophet in Samuel, the first king in Saul, the first successor king, and really the king who was a man after God's own heart in David. And as is so often the case, we noted the first try being sort of a human experiment and being inadequate and insufficient, being followed by God's solution, which is much better.

Saul was the people's king. David was God's king. And the first advent was the Lord Jesus coming to the people of Israel and the people failing to recognize Him, failing to accept Him, failing to measure up and be ready for the fulfillment of God's promises.

When He comes the second time, there is no condition of whether or not the people accept Him. He's coming and they are not gonna raise Him to the throne. He is gonna raise them to life in the millennial kingdom.

And in the same way, we see this time and again, the first son doesn't measure up and it's Jacob, not Esau. It's Isaac, not Ishmael. It's Seth, not Cain.

Now, over and over again, we see that there is a try made in human strength and the deficiencies and the failures are made obvious and are brought forward to be salient and observable. Then we see, as Paul says at the end of 1 Corinthians chapter 12, but I show you a better way. And then you have the operating in love rather than by human effort.

Well, in the same way, as we begin this study looking at the kings and we're really starting with Solomon, what comes after King David? What is the aftermath of the establishment of this throne? And one of the things we're going to see and you'll forgive me, but in order to move quickly, I will be synthesizing and summarizing and doing a little bit of preaching more than expositing just to fit the things that we do look at in detail into their context. And I don't like to do a lot of that, but in this study, I will need to do it from time to time, especially here at the beginning as we get started. So if I speak for a few minutes without going to the text, it's by design.

But one of the things I wanted to suggest as we address ourselves to our passage this evening in 1 Kings chapter two, and we'll be heading back to 2 Samuel and over to Chronicles just a little. But I wanted to suggest as a backdrop for this night's study, the difference between David and Solomon. And it is pointed up in what God says to David when David says, I really want to build your house.

And God says, you're not the one that's going to do it. Your son is going to do it. This same idea that the first iteration of a thing has a specific purpose, and then the next iteration has a new and different purpose, I think is at work here as well.

From Saul to David, you have a certain contrast and point being made. It doesn't matter if you're tall. It doesn't matter if you're popular.

It doesn't matter if you're courageous and you're ready to gather all Israel, chop up the oxen, get them over there, and let's go fight. Doesn't matter if you're ready to attack the Philistines. It needs the divine presence, the divine enablement, divine purpose, reverence, and humility before God and a desire to do his will that really achieves the kind of success that we are called to as believers.

You don't want to end up on the slopes of Mount Gilboa. You want to end up at the end of a career, not without its flaws and its mistakes, but David, at the end of his life, can look back over a life of faith and obedience and great achievement. He was and is a man after God's own heart, and you could hardly ask for a higher accolade than that in spending the capital of time

and life on this earth.

If that is your epitaph, that's about as good as it gets. But then we come to Solomon, and so we shift our frame, and instead of looking at Saul David, we look at David Solomon. And here, we've got two men who both have a heart for God.

We know from our previous experience of Solomon that he is a man who is going to pray for wisdom and God is going to grant it, and he is going to be blessed by God in many ways. But there is also a great contrast. Where is that contrast? Well, we find it when David makes his request to build a house for God.

And if you go back to 2 Samuel, and we're going to be in a couple of chapters here, if you turn back to 2 Samuel chapter seven, God's covenant with David, much of what we are about to see in coming weeks is illuminated by this covenant. It came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies all around. The king said to Nathan the prophet, see now I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.

Then Nathan said to the king, go do all that is in your heart for the Lord is with you. So, initially you think, ah, here's the prophet of God saying, if it's in your heart to build a house, build a house. But it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan saying, just in passing, I will point out that there are times when the man considered to be God's messenger may give a message, and yet in the hours of the night when you're meditating and reflecting, God may provide you a different conviction.

My suggestion is go with the conviction from God. Don't say, well, my right pastor said X, Y, and Z. If you do not have peace about something that comes out of my mouth, go where the peace is. Nobody's gonna be right all the time.

Nobody is gonna nail it in all cases. I've made a few little faux pas just here recently. As an example, what do you add to 144 to get to 153? It ain't 11, it's nine.

And I said 11 sometime in the last week, and I was mistaken, English major. But just, you'll catch things. I said that there was no specific mention of the swelled up man being healed, and yet it's right there in the scripture, and I just missed it.

So we have this treasure in earthen vessels. I will err, both in teaching and in lots of other ways. And this is, such is the lot of man to be fallible.

But if you are hungry for the truth of God, you will find the truth where it is available, and to the extent that someone is communicating it or providing it or slinging the right kind of hash for digestibility, you'll take it. And if there's a failure or a fault or a goof, go with what you know. Nathan here, I think sort of talked off the top of his head, sounded good to Nathan.

Well, house for the Lord, how could that be bad? Well, God makes the correction. And this is the

principle, this is the point. If I or any other communicator, any commentary, any radio program, any online resource, any past, present, future communication of the word of God, if it doesn't sit quite right, or maybe it does, maybe you think it's all fine, but then something else comes in the watches of the night, listen for the voice of God.

Hungry people will never be left hungry. If you're hungering and thirsting after righteousness, what is the promise of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount? They shall be filled. You just keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking, God will provide.

And if not through one guy, then through another, if not from one source, then from another. But look at this example. This is King David and the answer to this wish and this expressed desire is important because it is not God's will that David do this, even though who could raise an objection? Nathan can't think of one, but what did Nathan not do? Nathan didn't say, well, let me go to the Lord and ask and I'll be right back.

Nathan shot from the hip and he misled the King, but God fixed it. And this ought to give us great confidence. You don't have to get nervous if any authority figure in your life errs.

If you are all seeking after God, if you're trying to live in the light of his word, God will fix it. And that's what God does here. It happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan saying, go and tell my servant David, thus says the Lord.

And here's the straight scoop. Nathan's got to go back and say, let me issue a retraction and correction. This is what God actually says.

Would you build a house for me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and a tabernacle. Now, let me just ask you to put a mental yellow sticky on that statement. Up to this point, God says, I have been migratory.

I have been transient. I have moved around like the Bedouin, like your hunter gatherers of ancient history. Think about the nature of life when you are on the move.

You do not lay foundations. You do not build walls. You do not plant crops.

You do not have fixed pastures and corrals. The kind of animals that you raise have to be able to travel. They have to be flock and herd animals that you can manage on the move like cattle and sheep.

And God has been with his people in this moving scenario. How do you learn to be a sedentary people instead of Jacob and his sons who move about through the land, following the flocks, pitching their tent here, digging a well there. Now we're in the Northern part.

Now we're over here. We're up in Hebron. We're down in the South.

We're near the Negev. We're, oh, we came up against this king, moving around. How did God's

people learn to sit still? Well, they spent 200 odd years in slavery in Egypt, didn't they? And they didn't move around.

They were assigned a land in Goshen. And Goshen is not that large. So they didn't migrate all through something the size of the land of Canaan.

They were in Goshen. They learned to build houses. Didn't have to build houses.

They dwelt in tents. Abraham dwelt in tents waiting for a city whose founder and builder is God, right? Well, children of Israel learned to be city dwellers in Egypt. They come out of Egypt.

They've got 40 years of wandering, but they move into the land under Joshua. And what do they do? They take and occupy cities. They are going to dwell in the land.

They are going to plant vineyards and crops, and they are going to eat the produce of the land. They're going to be agricultural people instead of herdsman and hunter gatherers, so to speak. Well, God is noting that with his presence.

In the past, I traveled because my people traveled. Now, with the establishment of the kingdom under David, we're not moving around anymore. This is the fixed and permanent dwelling.

They are not strangers and sojourners anymore. And so God's dwelling is also going to be fixed. Wherever I moved about with all the children of Israel, note, why is God moving? Not just so people can chase around and figure out, well, he's not at Sinai this year.

I wonder where he is. Let me go try Mount Hermon or Mount Ebal or Mount Carmel. Is God moving around just to be elusive? He's moving because his people are moving.

When I moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, why have you not built me a house of cedar? Now, therefore, thus shall you say to my servant David, thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the sheepfold from following the sheep to be ruler over my people. Think about that. I took you from the sheepfold from what? Following the sheep.

The sheep are moving about, right? Sheepfolds were temporary. They make these things out of sticks. You can make a fold anywhere.

It's just an enclosure so they don't wander off during the night. You just make it out of brush and whatever's available. You make a little fold.

These sheepfolds are temporary pens that shepherds would make in the evening so that they could get some sleep. They would have an opening at the front. They are the door of the sheep.

Nobody can come in and get the sheep unless they cross the shepherd who's at the door of the fold. So I took you from following the sheep. David, what's his profession? He's a shepherd.

The shepherd moves around with the sheep. They are migratory. They are transient.

They follow the green grass. They eat up all the grass in one place. They move to other green pastures.

The Lord is my shepherd. He leads me. Green pastures, still waters, paths of righteousness for his namesake and so on.

So there is this idea of movement. God has moved because his people moved. David was the ideal king to start the monarchy because he was a shepherd.

He's a shepherd king. He's a hyksos, so to speak. Therefore, thus shall you say to my servant David.

This is emphasis. He's already told Nathan, thus shall you say. Now he's saying, thus shall you say again.

Here's the main message. Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep to be ruler over my people, over Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you and have made you a great name like the name of the great men who are on the earth.

Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them that they may dwell. Plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more. Nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore as previously since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel and have caused you to rest from all your enemies.

Also, the Lord tells you that he will make you a house. You wanna make me a house? I'm gonna make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seat after you who will come from your body and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father. He shall be my son.

If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But my mercy shall not depart from him as I took it from Saul whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you.

Your throne shall be established forever. According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David. So here's the sequence.

There is this transient people that are moving from place to place. They don't have a home of their own. They don't have a place to call their own and God is with them.

Withersoever they go. Now God is fulfilling the land promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Everywhere you put the sandal of your foot, that is going to belong to you.

He has brought the people out of bondage and through even that curse turns to blessing because they know how to dwell in a city and as they move within one generation, now they're in the land of cities. Obviously there's still agriculture and there's still sheep and goats and herds and so on. But there are sort of city states now where before none of the patriarchs were associated with a single city.

Bethlehem is the city of David. Well, what's the city of Abraham? What's the city of Isaac? What's the city of Jacob? There is none. They dwelt in tents.

And so this is greatly emphasized in this covenant that where there had been wandering, there will be a fixed place and ownership and possession. Well, stop and think about it. What is our life like here? We are strangers and sojourners, spiritually speaking.

Nation in the Old Testament, individual believer in the New. So we are suffering the vagaries of not having permanent possession. Anything you have in this life, you can lose.

Got a house? You can lose it. Got a job? You can lose it. Got anything that is of value? You can lose it.

Someone can steal it. You can fumble it away. It can be lost.

The only thing that we can lay hold of and never lose is in the spiritual realm. And this was how it was for Israel in the Old Testament. Those faithful believers like Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada and Caleb and these guys were heirs by faith of the promise.

But the promise was an intangible. It was a future possession. Well, as we come forward to the subject of our study tonight in 1 Kings, take a look at chapter 2, verse 1. And we've got a couple of different things to cover here.

But David has proclaimed Solomon to be the king. And Adonijah is on probation, much as David had placed some men on probation. And this is what we're going to see here in chapter 2. Now the days of David drew near that he should die.

And he charged Solomon his son saying, I go the way of all the earth. Be strong therefore and prove yourself a man. There is no word for prove here in Hebrew.

This is be a man. Actually, be to a man. Live up to the standard of a man.

It's the word to be or to live. And then sort of the Lamed there, which means to or for. And then Ish, be a man.

Now what does this mean? Solomon's already a man. But when your father checks out, you're on your own initiative. You can't go back to him for guidance.

And Solomon is still a young man at this point. Be a man. Keep the charge of the Lord your God to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His

testimonies as it is written in the law of Moses.

That you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn. That the Lord may fulfill His word, which He spoke concerning me saying, if your sons take heed to their way to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, He said, you shall not lack a man on the throne. The throne of Israel.

Well, how does all of this tie together? That's part of the Davidic covenant, but the covenant is conditional, isn't it? If you walk in His ways, according to all that is written in the law of Moses. This is a second thing that I find fascinating. What have we talked about so far this evening? We've talked about this comparison between the first guy and the second guy, the archetype and the successor.

You start this way and God brings about a different and better way. We have seen the desire on David's part to build a house and God says, no, your son is going to build it. I'm going to build you a house.

Then your son will build the house. But I will establish his throne and then he will build a house. So the desire for God to have a house is a good thing, but David is not the guy to do it.

His function is different. He is a man of war. He is a man of blood and God will specifically tell him, you're not going to build a house because you're a man of blood, a man of war and anti-war peacenik, Quakers and so on have taken this and said, see, God is against war.

Yeah, not exactly. I think they forgot about that. You know, the different books that are recorded in the Bible, there's the book of Jasher and the book of the Acts of King Solomon and there's the book of the wars of the Lord.

So how can there be a book of the wars of the Lord if God doesn't have any wars and doesn't believe in war? There's a different reason why David as a man of blood isn't going to build the house and it isn't because, well, you're just too violent. You blood on your hands. Yeah, you can't wash it clean.

You're like Hamlet, out damned in spot. That's not it. There is a key in what we have addressed and what we've talked about so far about first guy does a certain thing.

Second guy does a different thing. David is the first king in the Davidic dynasty. He is of the tribe of Judah.

He is not Saul who was of the tribe of Benjamin. There is the notion of human energy, human attempts and human failure all the way through Saul's career. When you first meet him, he is trying in his own way to find his dad's lost mules.

Where are the mules of Kish? And he's trying by might and main to find them. And at the end, he is on the slopes of Mount Gilboa trying to win an unwinnable battle. And he loses his

kingdom.

He reaches out for Samuel. He tries to offer the sacrifices himself instead of waiting for Samuel to do them. He's just a man of the flesh.

He's a man of stature and a man of strength, but he falls short. That is not the kingdom that endures. The line of Saul is cut off.

Jonathan is a wonderful man, but he's in the wrong line. He's gonna get his chance to inherit and to excel in a whole different way when he's raised up for the millennial kingdom. But the line of Saul will not prosper.

It's the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe of the right hand, the son of my right hand. Well, what was Benjamin's first name? What did his mother name him? What did Rachel name him? Ben-Oni, son of my pain. My right hand is my pain.

Jesus says, if your right hand offends you, cut it off. It's human effort. This isn't gonna establish you in the kingdom.

All of these things link. So the line of Saul is cut off. Human effort, human endeavor, human attempts apart from God are going to end.

They're going to cut off. David is the first king of Israel by God's appointment, by God's will. And Solomon is his successor.

And you have so many pictures of the first and second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. David comes and he is the man of blood. The Lord Jesus comes and his first advent ends how? In blood.

He conquers, but at a great price. He conquers sin and death. He is the victor over the grave.

The first advent, the Lord Jesus Christ is warring against Satan and the prince of death. He is the one who conquers the principalities and the powers and wins God's victory at the cross. Jesus' second advent is going to be Solomon.

God says, David, because you have been faithful to fight my wars and win my battles, I will establish for you a house. I will build you a house. I will establish your throne because you have faithfully fought these battles.

You're not going to build a house for me as David. Your son will build a house for me. The Lord Jesus Christ doesn't build the house for God in Israel in the first advent.

He's going to build the house of God for Israel in the second advent. The millennial kingdom is Solomon. The first advent is David.

That's kind of the big picture here. And with that as background, as we read the details of

David's charge to Solomon, the covenant that God makes with both David and Solomon, this is going to inform our understanding and help to clarify why God says some of the things that he says. But there it's, you know, we are, I feel like the ant at the base of the skyscraper.

I mean, these things are God's design, God's plan and God's purpose. And they're vast, they're big. And I personally feel somewhat inadequate to even begin to wrap my mind around the entirety of it.

We can see clues and we can see glimmers and we can see through the glass darkly. And hopefully this will be enough of a coverage that when the Lord appears and we shed this flesh and are given our full resurrected capabilities, it will be like Saul after the road to Damascus when he becomes Paul and the scales fall from his eyes and all of his Old Testament knowledge suddenly kicks in and he can appreciate the Lord Jesus and understand him and become the apostle of the mysteries of God because he had that background that was partial and inadequate in many ways. And his understanding of it was inadequate.

But when he is given his sight by the Lord Jesus, the resurrected Lord Jesus, then he's able to put it all together. So if it seems as though you hear noises on the other side of the wall, there are. There are things there that I'm not adequate to cover, but hopefully we'll at least know they're there.

And when the Lord Jesus opens the door and we walk through, we'll say, I thought I heard that. I thought I heard a noise over here and here it is. But the final thought for this session is keep in mind that we too have a first and a second shot.

We are here in the flesh and we're limited and we're fallen and we're inadequate. We're hopeless and helpless and useless. We are trapped in darkness.

We are embroiled in not only our own corruption, but the opposition of darkness in others and in the heavenly places. But this, like Israel, is our opportunity to do what we can with what we are given looking forward to that greater day. And David is going to assemble and furnish and plan for everything that Solomon is going to need to build the house of God.

David can't build it, but he looks at that word through Nathan closely and he says, well, God didn't say I couldn't get the materials. God didn't say I couldn't hire the workmen. God didn't say I couldn't draft the plans.

And David is looking ahead and he is doing everything he can to smooth the way and make it possible for Solomon to succeed in this great building. That's what we're doing in this life. We are equipping and building and laying hold of things by faith.

You know, it talks about laying up treasure in heaven. What's treasure for? You know, we're going to have the Scrooge story coming up again here in less than a month. You know, if you're a miser and all you do is keep it in a vault and you go and count it every once in a while and, you know, rub your hands together with glee looking at the balance, it's not doing any good.

What is treasure in heaven for? What's it for? Why do you save unless you're going to spend or do something useful? The treasure is for something. David is going to amass and apportion and allot all of this treasure, not just so Solomon can be rich, so Solomon can build, so Solomon can achieve, so Solomon can fulfill this great work of God. That's what we're doing when we are patient, when we are forgiving, when we are loving, when we are enduring, when we are prayerful, when we are meditating on the Word of God, we are building into that treasure in heaven that is going to enable us to build and to achieve and to do in that second phase of God's plan for us.

So it isn't just, well, I don't see what God is teaching me here. I don't see what I'm really learning. I don't see why I should have to go through this because how is this going to prepare me for anything in this life? Well, it's probably not.

It's probably preparation for the next. And we'll look back and say, I am so glad that God gave me that preparation because look how fully skilled and experienced and prepared I am for this wonderful assignment that He has given me. I would have never seen it coming because we don't even know what it is.

We're just incapable. But that's what is largely happening in this life is this is our David phase. We are fighting our wars.

We are waging war against principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age in preparation for and to lay the foundations for that house of peace that is coming when we move into our Solomon phase. The Lord Jesus Himself is gonna be in the Solomon phase in the millennial kingdom and beyond. Let's pause here and take a break.

When we come back, we'll actually get into our text and see some really fascinating things in the specific words that David uses and the specific details that are given to us in this book.