

Kings and Prophets 13-02-16a

This is Friday the 15th of February 2013. We pick up our long lost study in Kings and Prophets after a pretty significant hiatus. But we have the opportunity to look together at this section of narrative in God's Word that is often overlooked.

It's very lengthy. It is replete with historical details. And yet we have the opportunity to survey rather than perhaps doing a word by word or verse by verse study, but to move at a somewhat more rapid pace.

And in so doing, what we hope to do is put the prophets, especially the minor prophets that we've not yet covered, in the context of the history of the northern and southern kingdoms to better appreciate their message. And so we're going to see at a fairly rapid clip the monarchies beginning in the United Kingdom and then going to the Divided Kingdom and encountering the prophets. Why did Micah preach what he preached? What about Amos? What about Obadiah? And Zephaniah? And the prophets in their context, why does their message consist of the specific material that is contained therein? Why would those messages be preached at that time to those audiences? And by having a bit of that background, and it is just a bit, I have to really fight the urge to slow down because every word is a Bible class in itself.

But I've had some time now to discipline myself to look at this from a bit more distance. And in so doing, we're going to see some really interesting things. I was talking with Ken, and it just reminds me of a Mandelbrot set.

You can move out and see a pattern. And by looking at the major features that we're going to see as we go through these books, the keys that we derive and that we observe will pertain. If you want to drill down in a particular chapter or a particular section or a particular episode, the larger keys that we're going to observe will hopefully be useful in interpreting and applying the more detailed pericopes and episodes and paragraphs.

So we're going to see the large grid, and when you break it down into smaller squares, these things still pertain and still provide a key for understanding. So this will allow us to move through a lot of material in a rapid fashion without really losing the opportunity, especially on an individual basis, to look at the finer points. And some of the examples that we'll give when we do briefly slow down and plow through a wavetop, if you will, as we would do in a verse-by-verse study, those keys will pertain to any other particular wavetop that we've skipped that you want to look at.

It is of a piece. And I really believe that this is the way God designed these accounts to benefit the original recipients who didn't have a text to put before them, but they knew the stories. And the truth is in this larger realm.

So we'll see it both at the macro and the micro level as we go through. But let's begin, as we always do, by going to the Lord in prayer and dedicating our time and our hearts to Him. And

then we'll pick up our study in the book of 1 Kings.

Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is to be called Your children, to be adopted into Your family, to be redeemed, to be given the gifts that belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, eternal life, sonship, inheritance, a future with You. We thank You for the time that You have assigned to us in this life, the opportunities, the challenges, the blessings, the opportunities to exercise faith and to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. We thank You for this portion of Your Word and the truth that it holds for us.

We pray that as we look at it together that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our souls and to our hearts, give us a keen sense of its application as we face our daily tasks and our daily decisions, as we pursue our goals and seek to live in the light of our values and our Christian integrity when the world around us is very much opposed to those things. We pray that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified and we ask it in His name. Amen.

We began looking in 1 Kings at the closing days of David and the changeover of power in the kingdom of Israel which was united under Saul originally and then under David. He begins ruling in Hebron and eventually the other tribes in addition to his own tribe of Judah recognize that he is the Lord's anointed and he establishes the kingdom. This is your first pop quiz question.

See how far back you can recall now. How was that kingdom secured? It's been years now but we do have in the can, if you will, studies in 1 and 2 Samuel. What is the story of David's reign? There is a lot of conflict, a lot of warfare, a lot of bloodshed, a lot of Philistines slaughtered both when he was a general in Saul's army, when he was freelancing during the time of Saul's hostility and then after he comes to the throne he is a man of war.

God says you are a man of blood. You have shed all kinds of blood but he fights the wars. How many battles and wars does Solomon fight? Not a one.

Why is that? Because his father David fought them all. He's the one that secured the borders. He's the one that built the mighty men of valor, solved the Philistine problem that Saul could never solve, subdues the Moabites and the Ammonites and the other surrounding nations.

They are all quiescent at this time when we pick up in 1 Kings largely because of the military victories that David and his army, even when David is not in the field with them, Joab is out there fighting and subduing these recalcitrant and hostile elements. And so when that is complete, it seems almost in keeping with God's perfect timing that as those threats subside, David becomes too old to fight those battles and he is checking out. And we saw in our initial few lessons the attempt by Adonijah who is Solomon's older brother and in the traditional human understanding would be the natural successor to the throne, Adonijah seeks to make that claim but Israel isn't like the nations and this isn't going to be a monarchy based strictly on human ideas of rights of succession.

This is a divinely ordained throne and the kings who come to this throne are anointed by God's prophet. And as has so often been the case in the history of Israel, this anointing and this blessing and this call to leadership is divinely determined, not determined by order of birth. How many times in the previous history of Israel has the elder ended up serving the younger? Frequently.

It's almost a pattern and a given. You go back to Jacob and his story and then when he meets the sons of Joseph and crosses his hands and Ephraim and Manasseh are reversed. So this is not without precedent but it requires, think about this now, it requires not only sensitivity to the fact that Israel is a covenant nation under God and has a covenant with God but acquiescence, obedience, recognition of God's authority to make these choices and to be subservient, to be willing to accept God's choices.

And there are people who do and there are people who don't. So we saw the Adonijah rebellion and what I'd like to do tonight is pick up in 1 Kings 2, David's final instructions to Solomon. We touched on this in the past.

But he says in verse 2, I go the way of all the earth. Be strong therefore and prove yourself a man. And Solomon is of course young at this point and some may think too young.

But David says prove yourself a man. What I like even in the English here is to look at the first couple of words and the last couple of words. David says, I go.

And there is an important notion here that we're going to see carrying through as sort of a theme in our study tonight. David has come onto the scene and has accomplished by blood the victory. Now it is time for the peaceable kingdom.

David and Solomon foreshadow and embody in many ways the first and second advent of Jesus Christ. David is Christ in his first advent. David, of course, not being Christ, has some failures.

He has some grievous errors. And these things serve, I think, as warnings and as encouragements when the Lord Jesus Himself comes in His first advent and is tested by Satan. The Lord Jesus passes tests that His father David failed.

But in shadow, in type, form, David's reign, David's kingship is the establishment by blood and by personal sacrifice of the kingdom. But David doesn't really bring in the era of peace personally. He is going to go away.

And it is shlomo, shalomo. Dawid is the one that is beloved of God. Dawid means beloved.

What does God say when He sends the dove down at the baptism of the Lord Jesus? This is who? This is my Dawid son in whom I am well pleased. This is my David son. Sounds less poetic in English than it does in Hebrew.

Kind of like some other Hebrew names. I can't imagine any family looking down into a cradle

and naming a girl Gomer or Abishag. They are not very euphonious in our pronunciation and in our language.

And Dawid doesn't sound that great in English. But it is a beautiful name in Hebrew. And I suspect that when God spoke at the baptism of the Lord Jesus, He probably spoke Hebrew.

Possibly Aramaic. But the syllables of David's name came from the lips of God at the baptism of Jesus Christ. This is my beloved son.

That's David's name. You will call his name Yeshua. He is the Joshua.

He is the deliverer. He is the one who goes in and by conquest delivers the land. He is Joshua in the first advent.

He is David in the first advent. And it is time for him to go. He has to go so that the man of peace, Shalomo, can reign.

And this is really key to understanding some of the events. Because when you look at these first few chapters of 1 Kings, the instructions that David gives to Solomon, David's death, and then the first actions that Solomon takes. What's the first thing that Solomon does? Sheds blood through Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada.

He executes people. Who is it that gets executed and why? Well, we've seen some of this because there is a covenant. Look at chapter 2. Actually, look at chapter 1, verse 52.

Adonijah makes a play. He makes a strategic scheme, plotting maneuver by working on Bathsheba to gain Abishag. And Bathsheba does not see through it, but Solomon does.

But at the beginning, Adonijah, all he has done is try to claim the throne. And he's got tradition on his side. Traditionally in a monarchy, the oldest surviving son, and of course there are some older sons that have not survived like Absalom.

The whole reason Absalom got in trouble in the first place was slaying his brother for the Tamar episode. But Adonijah is the senior surviving son, so he figures, hey, I can make a claim here. And he's disregarding the word of the Lord through Nathan, the word of the Lord that has already come about Solomon.

It is known. But they say, hey, tradition trumps some mythology or some legend or whatever. So there is a rejection of the word of the Lord in favor of a human opportunity.

And this is Adonijah's crime, if you will, is that he subverts the word of the Lord, which he knows, because he's got what he considers to be a legitimate claim from a human point of view. And so in verse 51, it was told Solomon, saying, Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon, for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword. Because Solomon's kingship is now a fait accompli.

David has seen to that. And so Adonijah says, okay, I'm his servant. I'm holding on to the horns of the altar.

He's got to promise that he won't kill me because this is also, by the way, the human solution to rivals is to kill them. But look at verse 52. Solomon said, if Solomon puts a choice out there for Adonijah, if he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth, but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.

So whose hands is Adonijah's life in? His own. He has a choice. He can prove himself a worthy man.

He can change his mind and start paying attention to the word of the Lord, or he can allow wickedness to spring up in himself, and it is going to be his death. Now, what is going to happen in the millennial kingdom when the Lord Jesus establishes His throne? You people, resuscitated, entering in, surviving the tribulation, however you get there, what is your choice? Regardless of your past attitude toward Jesus Christ, if you're an Old Testament saint, regardless of your attitude, whatever it is, look, you've got another chance to make your decision. If you prove yourself a worthy man, not one hair is going to fall to the ground, but if wickedness is found in you, you will pay with your life.

You see the echo here, and Adonijah represents a whole class, a whole category of people at the inception of the kingdom, and they can be held accountable in one way of looking at it for past nefarious conduct, but they sort of get a fresh slate. Look, you've said that you're a servant, you're holding on to the horns of the altar, all right, here's your chance. Prove yourself worthy, but if wickedness is found in you, you're going to die.

State it up front. If he will show himself a worthy man, that's one possibility, but if wickedness shall be found in him, that's the other. His choice.

Again, this is not an arbitrary, there's not a picture of sovereign overriding grace or lack thereof here. Solomon doesn't come in and say, you live, you die, you live, you die. What does he say? Here's what you must do to live, and if you disobey, you will die, and it's stated up front, and it's left to the person to determine their fate.

Adonijah is one case. Now, to follow Adonijah, look at chapter 2, verse 23. You know what he does.

He goes and convinces Bathsheba to make the request. Bathsheba is the weak link. Bathsheba is Eve.

Bathsheba is the woman. You notice Adonijah does not go to Solomon, who has the decision-making ability. Why? He knows Solomon is not going to fall for this.

What he figures is, I'll go to Bathsheba. I will appeal to the woman. Whose ploy is this? Whose strategy is this? This goes back to the garden.

Find the weak link and see if you can overturn the good judgment of the man. Well, he won't deny his mother. Just like Adam won't deny his wife.

It just has the stench of evil all around it. This is not an innocent request. If it was innocent, Adonijah would have just gone straight to Solomon.

It's not innocent. By the way, it is a conspiracy. We know this when we pick up the account in verse 22.

King Solomon answered and said to his mother, Why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is my older brother. This is the human argument. For him and for Abiathar the priest and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.

This is a conspiracy. Abiathar and Joab are in on this. And Solomon knows it.

Either because he's already got wind of this before his mother came to him or because he perceives it. He divines it from the circumstances. But he knows that these three are still in cahoots.

And he names them here. Not without cause. Now, why does he name Abiathar and Joab? As I say, perhaps he's already got information.

But what has not happened since the enthronement scenes that we previously noted? Has Joab come to Solomon and said, O King, live forever. I was wrong. I picked the wrong side and I see my error.

And I swear my allegiance to you as I served your father David, so I will serve you. By the way, we are blood. Remember, Joab is a relative.

You sons of Zeruiah. Zeruiah is David's sister. David's nephew.

So I'm not quite sure how that works out. Nephew once removed or whatever to Solomon. But Joab is Solomon's father's nephew.

So it's a cousin thing. And Joab did not do that. Abiathar the priest could have said, I have made a wrong choice.

I have erred. I was blinded by tradition or whatever, but I see now, and as I have served your father David, so I will serve you. Neither one of these men, even after David himself has declared Solomon and has ensured that he's enthroned before his death, neither one of these men came and swore any allegiance, made any change of mind, showed any remorse at all for backing Adonijah.

They have just retreated. They've receded. And now Adonijah is making another play.

So he who is not for me is against me. They've had plenty of time, and they do not recognize

this. Now, why would this be? Why would it be? Think back.

You can understand Adonijah thinking, well, what am I going to be if my younger brother is the king, and I'm going to be what? What am I going to be? I'll just be a hanger-on. I'll be like the king when the queen is the major monarch in England, and he's just kind of married to the queen. He's not really the king.

He's sort of just an adjunct. Maybe I'll be the ambassador to Moab or something. I mean, what am I going to do? So he figures he's got an angle, and he chooses to believe the human aspect of this.

What about Joab? Why would Joab not recognize Solomon? Draw on your knowledge. Go back to the Bathsheba episode. Who was used by David to kill Uriah? Who never liked Bathsheba because that whole thing had a bad smell? Who could not see that she was the right woman gotten the wrong way? God has blessed the union and has blessed the offspring Solomon even though David sinned in the way.

I firmly believe David would have ended up married to Bathsheba regardless, but David jumped the gun. David recognized her. There was that affinity that God had built in for them to be a great couple, but David couldn't wait on God's timing.

David sinned. He jumped God's timing. He bypassed and short-circuited God's way.

You don't get God's will, even if she's the right woman, and she manifestly was because look at Solomon. He's a type of Christ. You don't get that from a woman that should have never been there.

She's probably the one woman David should have been married to, but because he horsed around and did a bunch of other things, he ended up with extra sons he shouldn't have had. He ended up with women he shouldn't have been with, and he got the right woman in the wrong way, and it was a grievous error. Well, Joab is blinded by this, and he feels righteously indignant that Bathsheba has been the queen for lo these many years, and that Solomon, the offspring of what he considers to be in his self-righteous judgment, he's not content to let God judge.

He's going to judge. He's going to hold it against Bathsheba, and he's going to hold it against Solomon, and he cannot bring himself, he cannot reconcile himself to God's obvious choice. God has spoken through the prophet Nathan.

God has spoken to David himself. God has clearly made evident his choice of Solomon as king, but Joab has got this grudge he cannot shake, and you can see how he would hold it. He was unwillingly brought into that thing.

He didn't want Uriah to die. He tried to stop it. He feels vindicated and justified that he tried to stop a bad thing, and it was a bad thing.

There's a great lesson here in looking at Joab. Joab is right in his judgment of what was wrong, but he is wrong in making himself the judge that is going to pass and execute sentence. You can recognize that someone has done wrong, but judgment belongs to God.

Sentence belongs to God. You cannot go beyond recognition and get into the personal punishment mode. That's not our place, and Joab is going to die for this mistake.

He is blinded to the will of God. He's blinded to the fact that God can bring good out of evil. Joab doesn't remember Jacob and the whole Leah-Rachel fiasco.

He doesn't remember Jacob big-dealing Esau out of the inheritance. Jacob is supposed to be the man to inherit. He does the right thing in a wrong way, but God is going to bless Jacob anyway.

This lesson is known in Israel, but Joab cannot see it. He's blind to it, and so he's got a false loyalty, and because of that, he can't bring himself to come to Solomon. What do they do? They want to use Bathsheba.

They figure this is sort of poetic justice. We'll use that Bathsheba to unseat Solomon. We'll knock the two of them out in one blow.

Solomon sees it. Solomon knows about this bad blood thing with Joab, and he sees right through it immediately. So what does Solomon say? He says, look, may God do so to me and more also, in verse 23, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life, because wickedness is found in him.

Wickedness is found in him, and that was the arrangement. Look, you show yourself worthy, no problem. Show yourself wicked, you will pay with your life, and he doesn't get months into the reign of Solomon before he betrays himself against his own life.

Joab is also going to pay with his life. Why? Look at chapter 2, verses 28 through 30. The news came to Joab.

Joab had defected to Adonijah, though he had not defected to Absalom. So Joab fled to the tabernacle of the Lord and took hold of the horns of the altar. King Solomon was told that this had happened.

Solomon sent Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, saying, go strike him down. So Benaiah went. Come out.

No, I will die here. They brought word back. Joab says he's going to die hanging on to the horns of the altar.

Why? He still thinks he's right. He thinks the proper place for him to die is at the altar. He just cannot see it.

He is blinded by this conviction that is not susceptible to the word of God. Hear me now. We can

be so possessed of a self-righteous conviction that the word of God itself does not penetrate.

And we go and say, I am holding on to the horns of the altar. I am right. And I am standing on the word of God in my rightness.

And we can be just as wrong as we can be. Why is it? There is a hardness of heart. And we have to look for it.

We have to take it before God and say, Lord, don't let me be blind. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, and the ends thereof are the ways of death. This is a scary thing to me that Joab holds on to the horns of the altar and says, if you're going to kill me, you're going to kill me holding on to the horns of the altar because I think you're wrong.

And you're going to have to spill my blood right here in front of the Lord. That's how right I think I am. And Solomon says, go right ahead, because he's wrong.

There will be Pharisees who come to the door and say, Lord, Lord, in your name, look at the righteousness we did. And he's going to say, go away. I never knew you.

And they still won't get it. They're going to leave, as it were, holding on to the horns of the altar at the inception of the kingdom, cast out, cut in two and apportion their lot with the hypocrites in the kingdom because they just can't see past their self-righteous belief that they're right. It takes humility to admit that we're wrong.

It takes humility to recognize that, well, yes, there was an error here, but God has corrected it. God has brought good out of evil. And I must be submissive to the will of God.

You can't stand on ceremony. You can't stand on principle. You can't stand on some verse you rip out of its context.

We have to look at what God's word says, and we have to be teachable. We have to be correctable. We have to have a mind that will change.

But there's people who won't change their mind, and they base their unchanging mind on the word of God. They hold to the horns of the altar, and they're wrong. This is a scary thing.

How can we avoid this? How do you not end up like Joab, being slain at the altar, believing that you're right, and saying that Uriah thing was wrong? Who executed judgment for the Uriah murder and the Bathsheba adultery? Has punishment been meted out by God for that? God took their first son. God brought violence into the house of David. God executed sentence.

Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord. Joab knows this history intimately.

He saw David crushed as his infant son was dying. Rebuked him for it. Rebuked him for weeping over Absalom.

Violence in the house. But Joab wants to reserve punishment to himself. He wants to punish Bathsheba.

He wants to punish Solomon. He hasn't let it go. He's got a grudge.

He's got a burr under his saddle, and he cannot let it go. This is arrogant. This is reserving to ourself something that belongs to God.

This is why Joab dies. Joab could have gone on. Look at his military experience.

Look at the loyalty the army has to him. And one of the reasons he must die is because he does have significant sway with the army. And if Solomon permits him to live, he's going to continue to try to unseat Solomon.

If he can't do it through Adonijah, he'll do it through a military coup. Joab can easily co-opt the military and lead them in revolt against Solomon. Solomon is young.

He's got no sway. He's got no pull. He's got no combat experience.

Who are they going to follow? Solomon or Joab that they've been through countless battles with? Joab seals his fate here. He makes the wrong choice. He does not repent.

He is not humble. He is not teachable. He's not amenable to the word of the Lord.

Won't even listen to David. He says, well, David is senile. He doesn't know what he's doing.

He's got to be wrong. And he carries this grudge and it costs him his life. Well, these deaths, we have four individuals that are dealt with at the inception of the reign.

Adonijah is one. Joab is another. We have two more to look at.

And that is Shimei. Why? There is an incredible amount of space devoted to Shimei in the word of God. This guy has got more verbiage than these other guys put together.

Why? Well, we're going to come back from the break and we're going to look at Shimei. Why all of the falderal? Why all of the space devoted to Shimei? We'll see that when we come back.