

Kings and Prophets 13-02-16b

We pick up our study now in Kings and Prophets, we're in 1 Kings 2, and we have seen the two examples of Adonijah and Joab, out of the four individuals that Solomon is required to deal with at the inception of his reign. And interestingly, the common element here is a misguided sense of what is right. Adonijah thinks it is right for him to be king because this is the human paradigm.

Joab thinks it is right to support Adonijah against Solomon because of his insistence on looking at the Uriah Bathsheba incident in a judgmental and unforgiving light. Despite the word of God that has clearly handled judgment and declared Solomon to be the next king, Joab just cannot reconcile himself. He can't get over that history.

We turn now to the third individual, Shimei. And as I said in the previous session, this is really quite astonishing. We need to go back and look at the history of Shimei.

So if you turn back to 2 Samuel chapter 16, this is where we first see Shimei appear. This is, of course, in the days when Absalom has rebelled and has basically thrown his father out. You had the Amnon-Tamar episode and Absalom gets out of sorts over that and slays Amnon.

David forgives him. He comes back. But then he begins sitting in the gate.

David has seen treachery build. You forgive someone. You give them a place.

And they take advantage of it. So by the time you get to chapter 16, Absalom has taken over in Jerusalem. David is fleeing.

And if you look at verse 5, when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out cursing continuously as he came. And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David.

And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. That's on David's right hand and on his left. And Shimei said thus when he cursed, Come out, come out, you bloodthirsty man, you rogue.

Now what's Shimei's beef? The Lord has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul in whose place you have reigned. And the Lord has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom, your son. So now you are caught in your own evil because you are a bloodthirsty man.

Does this have any similarity at all to what we have seen with Joab? This is just one step earlier. Shimei's upset because he's blaming David for Saul's death and for the decline and fall of the house of Saul, which had nothing to do with David. It had everything to do with God's judgment on Saul because Saul rejected the word of the Lord.

But David is Shimei's target. And he blames, of course, he's from the house of Saul. And so he's got bad will and a bone to pick and he vents all of his anger and all of his frustration on David and curses him continuously and is mocking him and deriding him because he is basically building his happiness on David's unhappiness.

So Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, this is Joab's brother, says, Why should this dead dog curse my lord, the king? Please let me go and take off his head. But the king said, What have I to do with you? Pay attention here in verse 10. Look at what David says.

What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? That includes Joab. Let him curse because the Lord has said to him, curse David. Why then? Who then shall say, Why have you done so? David said to Abishai and all his servants, See how my son, who came from my own body, seeks my life.

How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for so the Lord has ordered him. Let him alone and let him curse. Now, who's speaking here, Solomon or David? It's David, right? David, his familiar friend, has lifted up his heel against him.

He is rejected by his own household. And he has others who are jeering and mocking, who are not even of his tribe. The Benjamites, the left-handed guys, the house of Saul.

It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing this day. Do you not think that the Lord Jesus, in his first advent, when he was rejected, not only by his own people, but also by everybody else, thought back on these words and took comfort in them and saw the attitude of his father David? Who knows? It may be the Lord will look on my affliction and the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing this day. That attitude of bearing with and bearing up under affliction, thinking God may work good out of this evil.

I am being cursed. I'm being rejected. I'm being hounded out from my rightful throne.

But it may be that the Lord will look on me and bring good because of this affliction. And in a much grander and greater and infinitely larger sense, this is the Lord Jesus in his first advent. So, as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust.

Now, who would this represent if you think of it as a picture and you think of it as a foreshadowing? Who is the king who would like to be on the throne, but isn't? And who would like to see the potential king of the world unseated and denied his throne? Who would be kicking up dust and casting stones? Who would be saying, turn these stones into bread? Who would be sending demons? Who would be raising all kinds of cane and throwing all kinds of cursing? This is the enemy. This is the former occupant of the world's throne. Unhappy at the impending and the unseating.

Here's the throne being in place. Where is he that is born king of the Jews 30 years earlier? And

Satan says, whoa, I've been fooled. I've tried to extinguish the seed of the woman, and here he is.

He's on the earth. So, the king and all the people who were with him became weary. And part of it is this constant attack, this constant mother.

Well, ultimately, Absalom is unseated. The pretender is defeated and David returns. So, what happens then? Turn to 2 Samuel chapter 19, beginning at verse 16.

The king returned and came to the Jordan. Judah came to Gilgal to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan. And Shimei, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David.

There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Zeba, the servant of the house of Saul, and his 15 sons and his 20 servants with him. And they went over the Jordan before the king. Then a ferry boat went across to carry over the king's household and to do what he thought good.

Shimei, the son of Gera, fell down before the king. When he crossed the Jordan, he said to the king, Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart. For I, your servant, know that I have sinned.

Therefore, here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph, to go down and meet my lord the king. Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this? Remember, he's the guy that said, Can I not go take off his head? This dead dog. Shall not Shimei be put to death for this? Because he cursed the Lord's anointed.

David said, What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I am king over Israel? Therefore the king said to Shimei, You shall not die. And the king swore to him. Once again, these that have taken Satan's part, these that have in glee rejoiced, if he delights in him, let him deliver him.

You know, those that mocked Jesus when he was on the cross. What do you think their attitude's going to be when the Lord Jesus returns in triumph and in victory, and they are raised at the inception of the millennial kingdom? Oh, let not my lord the king take it to heart what I said before. Here we are, the first to come and greet you.

And Jesus says, Just as I said when I was on the cross, Father, forgive them. They know not what they do. The Lord's not going to put them to death for cursing him in his first advent and in his seeming defeat and rout from the throne.

There's a lot of verbiage. There are many verses devoted to Shimei, and I keep asking myself why, and this is my belief. This is what I think is going on.

The next time we see Shimei now is in our passage, 1 Kings chapter 2. David is giving his charge to Solomon. In chapter 2, verse 2, David says, I go the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man.

Look at verse 3. And 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. Keep the charge. In order that the Lord may fulfill his word, which he spoke concerning me, saying, If your sons, if your sons take heed, 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 of Israel.

It's a big if. Why does David lack a man on the throne? Because as we are going to see in the later history of the kings, there is nothing but departure from the law of Moses. There is nothing but departing from the truth of God.

Moreover, verse 5, You know what Joab the son of Zerui did to me, what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. He shed the blood of war in peacetime, put the blood of war on his belt that was around his waist. What is Joab's error? He can't let go of a grudge.

He's got a grudge against Abner. David makes a covenant with Abner and Joab kills him anyway. Joab can't let it go.

He can't forgive. He cannot reconcile himself that these things are in God's hands. He wants to punish.

He wants to take vengeance into his own hands. And he does it with Abner. He does it with Amasa.

Therefore, do according to your wisdom and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace. But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai, the Gileadite. Let them be among those who eat at your table.

For so they came to me when I fled from Absalom, your brother. Those who stuck with the Lord even in his time of rejection are remembered and recognized and will be blessed when the king returns. You have a couple of different echoes of that.

You have David's triumphant return to Jerusalem after Absalom is slain. And now you have Solomon. This is another echo.

They overlap. They complement one another. And see, you have with you Shimei, the son of Gera.

Verse 8, a Benjamite from Bahurim. All three times, he's the Benjamite from Bahurim. Bahar is the Hebrew verb that means to choose.

Bahurim is a plural. But you have the note here. David doesn't mention Adonijah, does he? He doesn't say, deal with your brother Adonijah.

He doesn't say deal with Abiathar, the priest. He mentions two men negatively and one positively. And that's Barzillai and his sons positively and Joab and Shimei negatively.

Well, the idea of Shimei is, as I say, unusually well documented in Scripture. And I want to focus on the next verse. Therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what you ought to do to him, but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood.

Well, I was fascinated by this. By the way, Bahar is the verb. Bahur is the noun from it.

And Bahur, the village in Benjamin where Shimei is from, Bahur means a young man. And Bahurim is, of course, a plural, actually a dual. But Bahar means to choose or chosen.

And if you're going to do something, the young men are the chosen ones. They're the ones who serve. They're the ones who have the energy.

They're the ones that get things done. It is the young men. This is where the jostling takes place for inheritance and for taking the place of the previous generation is in the young men.

So Bahar is to choose or to be chosen. Bahur is the one who is chosen. And Bahurim is the choice.

And so Shimei, in this sense, all three times, he is from Bahurim. I ask myself, why is that idea repeated and repeated and thrice repeated? Well, what kind of choosing do you want? He was a man of choice in Benjamin. He's a man of choice in the family of Saul.

He's a man of choice in the rejected line, in the human effort realm. Saul was taller than all the other men in Israel. And he was chosen by the people.

And God said, anoint the popular choice, Samuel. Go anoint him. And Shimei can't let go of that idea, just like Adonijah can't let go of it.

And he is gleeful when it appears that David has been denied the throne. And he'll take anybody. And he figures, well, this is the beginning of the end of the house of David.

And the house of Benjamin will rise from the ashes and retake the throne. This is the first step, divide and conquer. So he's gleeful.

And he curses David. And he puts out all of this bitter spite. But you come to this declaration of all of the people David could have warned Solomon about.

He picks Shimei. Now, how long has it been since David came back after the Absalom revolt and the resolution of that? It's been years. It's been decades since Shimei cast up dirt and stones.

And since he then came and tried to make amends, he saw that David was back in power and

he didn't want to be crushed and executed. So he comes and is all contrite. And David has done nothing to him.

David swore that he would not take his life. And so what has he done? He abides in the restored kingdom of David all through this time. Now Solomon comes in and David warns him against Shimei specifically.

And I thought this was kind of odd. David says in verse 9, Do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what you ought to do to him. But bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood.

Well, the Hebrew here is very sparse. There's a lot of missing words. You notice R is in italics there.

And if you read this in the original, what it says, let me see if I can get back to it here. What it says is, V'hineh, behold, look. And then it says, there's a reference to Solomon himself, you.

Then it says, Shimei, the son of Gerah, the Benjamite of Bahurim, who cursed me. This is verse 8. Then you get down to verse 9 and David says, V'atah, now you. And when you put the personal pronoun in, it's very emphatic because you can generally leave it out.

You've got suffixes on your verbs that will tell you person. But this is now you yourself. When you put atah in there, it's very emphatic.

And he says, V'atah al-tinakehu. And this verb naka is a verb that means to let go free or to be guiltless. God uses this verb when he's talking to Moses and he says, I have I reserve mercy for thousands, but he will not be guiltless.

When he's talking about the three generation curse, these that curse God will not be guiltless. It's the same idea. It's a forensic term.

It has the idea of legal guilt. That he has a sentence hanging over him. There's an unresolved issue there.

He's been promised his life. But he says, you yourself do not let him go free. Talking about Shimei that was mentioned in the previous verse.

Because, ki, for. Then the next two words are Ish kakam. And that's literally for man wise.

Now, who is the wise man? Is it Solomon or is it Shimei? The pronoun was you yourself do not let him go free. Why does David emphasize the pronoun? He says, I have not held him accountable, but you yourself do not let him go free. Do not let him be unaccountable.

You yourself. That's where the you belongs. Because, Ish kakam.

Kakam is typically translated wise, but it is also translated shrewd, crafty, skillful. Shimei, I

believe, is the Ish kakam. David warns Solomon.

He's on his deathbed of all of the things he could have said. Be sure and build that temple right, and deal with Hiram, and all of the things he could have said. He said, Watch that Shimei.

He is a wise man. He is a shrewd man. He is a crafty man.

I promise not to touch him, but you don't let him roam free. Don't hold him unaccountable. Keep him at close accounts.

And you yourself. Ata is here again. You yourself will know.

This is yada. You yourself will know, and will understand. Et asher.

And then you have asah. You will know what it is you should do. That which to do regarding him.

Then you have the word for bringing. And all it says is his gray. There's not a word for rosh.

There's no head here or anything. It's the word that means his gray. And then you have in blood, badam sheol.

So literally it says, you yourself will know what to do to him. And bring his gray with blood sheol. Now he's got a gray head.

Why? Because it's been years since he was kicking up dust. He's an old man. But David says, don't let his age fool you.

That gray crafty head, you will eventually have to bring with blood to sheol, to the grave. And David predicts it. He says, you'll know what to do.

But I'm telling you now, sooner or later his gray head is going to come in blood to sheol. Well, David rested with his fathers. You have the Adonijah episode.

Now with Shimei, skip forward to verse 36 of chapter 2. The king sent and called for Shimei and said to him, build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there and do not go out from there anywhere. Why? David said, he's a crafty man. Don't let him roam free.

Why? Everywhere Shimei went, he sows the seeds of discord and discontent. And well, you know, the house of Benjamin was the original king's and this house of Judah thing, they're interlopers and all of this nonsense. You know, why don't we raise up? There's some Saul-eyed descendants still left.

Jonathan's got a son or two left. And what about me? What happened to the house of Benjamin? We were here first. And by right, we ought to be the rulers.

And he's old now. He's got authority, his gray head. He's going to speak with some influence.

And David says, watch that guy. And so Solomon does. He says, all right, build yourself a house in Jerusalem.

Where does Solomon live? Jerusalem. Build yourself a house here. Do not go out from there anywhere.

It shall be on the day you go out and cross the book Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die. Your blood shall be on your own head. Dom, the very same word that David used when he warned Solomon, your blood, if you cross the book Kidron, will be on your own head.

By the way, what path was it that David took when Shimei started throwing up all the stones? Who was it that was crossing the book Kidron? David. Solomon says, you come into Jerusalem and you're not going to cross the book Kidron it's symbolic. If he crosses the book Kidron, where is he going to be? On the same road, in the same area where he was throwing up stones and cursing David.

He says, don't cross that book. Don't go back to where you were before. It's very potent in terms of its symbolism.

He doesn't say, don't go out the north entrance or don't go out the west gate or don't go out the south. He says, don't cross the book. If you cross that book that my father crossed where you cursed him, your blood will be on your own head.

So it happened at the end of, he says, the saying is good. As my Lord, the King has said, so your servant will do. Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

In fact, it's going to add up to three years. At the end of three years, two slaves of Shimei ran away to Achish, the son of Maakha, King of Gath. They told Shimei saying, look, your slaves are in Gath.

So Shimei arose, saddled his donkey and went to Achish at Gath to seek his slaves. And Shimei went and brought his slaves from Gath. Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had come back.

The King sent and called for Shimei and said to him, did I not make you swear by the Lord and warn you saying no for certain that on the day you go out and travel anywhere, you shall surely die. And you said to me, the word I have heard is good. Why then have you not kept the oath of the Lord and the commandment that I gave you? The King said, moreover to Shimei, as your heart acknowledges all the wickedness you did to my father, David, therefore the Lord will return your wickedness on your own head.

But King Solomon shall be blessed and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord forever. Now, King Solomon is not speaking of himself. He's still quoting the word of the Lord.

So the King commanded Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck him down

and he died. Thus, the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon, whose fate is in his own hands. Adonijah, his fate is in his own hands.

Shimei, his fate is in his own hands. Joab had the opportunity. He wasn't struck down immediately.

They didn't send assassins in the night, but they all made choices in opposition to the clear will of God. In some cases, in opposition to oaths that they had taken and promises that they made, they went back on their word. They disobeyed the commandment of the King and they suffered the consequences.

What is the application of this? It is multiple, as is so often the case when we see the word of God at this level. You think about what the future is going to hold in the millennial kingdom. Those people who dwell in that kingdom, are given a chance at the outset.

Remember what Jesus said when he told the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew chapter 13? This is our final passage for the night. Flip over to Matthew chapter 13 verse 24. He put forth a parable to them.

We'll look at this in detail in an upcoming study in our parables series. The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. When the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, the tares also appeared.

So the servants of the owner came and said to him, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares? Has David not been merciful to these men? Has he not been patient with the sons of Zeruiah? Has he not been patient with Joab? Did he not grant a reprieve to Adonijah? Did he not grant a reprieve to Shimei? There is initially mercy, and Solomon does the same. He said to them, An enemy has done this. The servant said to him, Do you want us then to go and gather them up? He said, No, lest while you gather up the tares, you also uproot the wheat with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest. And at the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn. Let them grow together.

There is this time of tolerance, but at the end, the tares are identifiable because they do not have wheat grains. They look the same initially. Adonijah is one of the sons of the king.

Joab is a nephew of the king. Shimei is all contrite. Abiathar is a priest, but Abiathar is in the line of Eli.

And these men ultimately make choices that out them. They do not have that fruit. And in the end, they are gathered and they are judged.

And it is on their own heads. God didn't arbitrarily say, Slay this one and honor this one. His blood is on his own head.

If he is found worthy, not a hair of his head will fall. Notice how it's always the hair of the head. Adonijah, not one hair will fall to the ground if you're worthy.

But if wickedness is found in you, you'll die. Your blood is on your own head. Do not let his gray head go to Sheol with blood.

Why? He's crafty. He is scheming even now. What are their characteristics? Very quickly, this is just by way of summary on these four men.

We didn't really get a chance to look at Abiathar. But Adonijah, what is his ploy? He feels aggrieved. He's using devious stratagems to obtain what he thinks is his rightful place.

He thinks he should be the king. He has no regard for the word of the Lord or the plan and purpose of God. So he is scheming and using these stratagems.

He figures the Abishag thing. He figures if he can have a feast and get himself crowned first, he'll forestall. He'll replace.

Solomon won't have a chance. He tries two different schemes and it doesn't work. What's Joab's problem? Joab has this misplaced loyalty and he cannot let go of a grudge.

He chooses the wrong son because he is blinded by his grudges. What's Shimei's problem? Shimei watches for weakness. When he sees David is weak, now he's ready to curse and taunt and throw up stones and dust.

When David comes back in strength, he's all obsequious and, oh, I'm the first to greet you and so on. But David knows that when he's gone, Shimei will perceive Solomon as weak and he's going to do the same thing in that hour of weakness. This, by the way, is God's indictment of Moab and Ammon that they swoop in when Israel is weak.

Exploiters of weakness. They're just watching for an opening, waiting until you're off guard, until you're vulnerable, and they'll exploit a vulnerability. Why? Again, it's this feeling of right and entitlement.

Shimei thinks the house of Benjamin is entitled to the throne. Adonijah thinks he's entitled to the throne. Joab thinks he's entitled to bring justice for these grievances that he has.

And then finally, you have Abiathar. And we'll have to talk about Abiathar next time. He's the one guy that lives.

Abiathar is the one guy that lives. He's stripped of his office, but he lives. But only in a sense.

He has no offspring. He's the last of the line of Eli. And that goes back to an old curse.

But Solomon leaves that alone. He doesn't take Abiathar's life, even though Abiathar is complicit in the Adonijah conspiracy. Why? Solomon knows that there is a prior curse on that house.

Solomon doesn't have to take Abiathar's life. He just deprives him of his office. Why? God has already judged.

Solomon doesn't make the mistake that Joab makes. He doesn't take vindictive vengeance on Abiathar because he says, you know, God has said, vengeance is mine, I will repay. God has already pronounced a curse on the house of Eli.

Solomon knows Abiathar is the last of that line. And Abiathar will go to his own fields in Anathoth and die there with no son and no future as a priest. No offspring.

He dies even while he lives. And Solomon leaves it in God's hands. So we see the outworking of this and you can see the reflection of these things in the millennial kingdom.

The final question is, what does it mean to us as we look at it and observe it? The lesson that shines out of these pages for us is we need the humility to be teachable and to be amenable and to be sensitive to the Word of God and the will of God. Let God work His will. God has a plan in some cases that's beyond our understanding.

We don't understand why some are promoted and some are demoted. We don't understand why it seems that some get away with wickedness and others don't. Joab cannot get over David's dalliance and his murder and adultery.

Joab just cannot get over that. He's as loyal to David as anybody but he just cannot get this out of his craw. And when David's off the scene, Joab wants to do something about it.

And Shimei cannot get it out of his craw that David is God's choice. The house of David, the tribe of Judah is God's choice. He can't get it out of his system.

Adonijah can't get it out of his mind that he's the older son and he ought to inherit. This would be like Esau making every effort to try to murder Jacob after it's manifestly clear that God has blessed Jacob, that God has chosen Jacob, that the inheritance rightfully belongs to Jacob. If Esau had just continued to agitate and had ever been an enemy and had ever tried to unseat and upset Jacob, Esau doesn't really do that.

But Adonijah can't let go. So there seems to be a common element of recognizing and submitting to the will of God. What does the New Testament tell us? Submit yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.

It may not be understandable to us. Joab might never have understood why God would seemingly overlook David's egregious errors. Shimei might never understand why God had set aside Benjamin and the house of Saul.

Adonijah might never understand why He has set aside in favor of his younger brother. There are things in our lives that we may never really understand because we can't step far enough away from it to be objective. But if we can recognize that it is the will of God and that it is His righteousness and His justice and His word that we must serve and we must recognize and we must submit ourselves to, we will understand later.

The hardness of heart and the blindness that you see in these men is a sobering example. I think you could enter into all three of them and see where they would have a case. Does it not make sense from their perspective that they could vindicate themselves and think that they were right? What lifts us beyond that limited view? What lifts us out of our myopia and our insensibility to larger things? It's the word of God.

And it takes soaking. It takes contemplation. It takes humility and prayer to let the word of God do its work in our hearts and in our souls so that we do not end up losing the opportunity.

None of these men, Adonijah doesn't see the glory that will be the Solomonic kingdom, doesn't see the glory that will fill the Solomonic temple, doesn't see the Shekinah enter and fill the Holy of Holies. Joab doesn't see it. Shimei doesn't see it.

Abiathar will see it from a distance, but not be able to enter into it and participate. Why? All of them got obsessed with their view, their idea of what was right. What a tragedy.

If we would similarly miss out on the opportunity to see and even more of a privilege to be a part of the glory of God in the kingdoms that are to come. These are powerful examples of what not to do and how not to do it. And they all occur at the beginning of this reign of Solomon.

And they're put there for a reason. They are featured for a reason. And it's before anything else happens.

We're going to see next time that there's something else that happens. There's something in the interim before Solomon goes to God and asks for wisdom and before he becomes the wise man that can expound on entomology and ichthyology and biology and zoology and all of these other ologies and the kings of the earth come to bask in his wisdom. And before he builds the temple and before the Shekinah comes down, there's a little interim.

There's a chink, there's a gap in his armor there and a lever, a pry bar is going to be put in. He leaves himself open. He leaves himself vulnerable and something happens right at that point.

And that's what we'll pick up in the study of Solomon next week. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for how powerfully it instructs us and rebukes us and corrects us so that we can, in some measure, lay hold of your righteousness by faith. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit will teach us, will illuminate our hearts and enable us to take advantage of what we see in your

word, avail ourselves of the truth, grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus so that we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We pray these things in Jesus name.

Amen.