

Kings and Prophets 13-02-22a

This is Friday, the 22nd of February, 2012. We are continuing our study of kings and prophets. We're in the book of 1 Kings.

We'll be picking up tonight in chapter 4. Let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we'll begin. Father, it is a comfort to us beyond all compare, beyond imagination, to know and have assurance that our salvation, our provision, our future depends on you and not on us. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ, who has granted us this incredible gift of eternal life and relationship with you, hope for the future, encouragement, direction, and meaning in life at present, and a wonderful expectation of things to come.

We thank you for this portion of your word that we look at together tonight and ask your blessing on each one as we examine these records of events and people that were in existence so long ago. We know that it is more than history. It is more than an account.

It is your divinely inspired word, and it has the power to change us, to transform us, and renew our minds, and to equip us for the work and the tasks that you have called us to, that you have prepared beforehand for us, that we should walk in them, that we can learn and grow in grace through them, and be prepared for that eternal life with you, to which we look with such great anticipation. We pray that each one will find in the study this evening a pertinent and meaningful truth that will accomplish those things in our soul in both the near and the far term, and that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified. We pray it in his name.

Amen. We saw last time through the fate of four individuals the preparation that David gives to Solomon as he hands the authority for the kingdom to his son. And there is a principle that is threaded through scripture.

We have seen it before, and it is illustrated and evidenced again here that for there to be a peaceable kingdom, you remember that painting, that American primitive painting, the peaceable kingdom's got the cow and the lamb, and it's that flat kind of early American looking style? The peaceable kingdom, and everything is calm and serene and kind of two-dimensional, and a lot of people have that view of heaven, you know, that it's just kind of all the lions are laying quietly and the snakes are smiling and nobody's mad at anybody and it's just everybody will be happy over there. But if you think about the examples and the echoes through the word of God and into our present experience, how does it work? There is a hostile environment. When Abraham got him up from Ur of the Chaldees and went to the place that God showed him, there were people already there.

God said, I'm going to give you all of the land on which your sandal treads, but there were people living there who didn't take kindly to being uprooted and upsodded and displaced. And of course, it has ever been that case. There are people today who are in that very same country and are equally upset at being displaced.

And historically, if somebody got there before you, they don't want to be elbowed aside so that you can occupy where they once were. And it is a picture in human history. It is also a picture in human life.

When Christ comes into our lives, when we accept him as our Savior and we are entered into new relationship with God through him, there are occupants in our kingdom. There are Ites, Amorites, Hivites, Hittites, Archites, Edomites, Moabites, various other inhabitants who occupy the territory. This is the detritus and the leftover influences of our fallen nature.

We have habits, we have associations, we have ways of thinking, and our land of Canaan needs to be cleaned out just the way Joshua did when he went into the land. Just the way after the period of the judges and the early days of monarchy under King Saul, where it was not effectively done because God's power wasn't in it with Saul, except to the extent that David was serving. But when King David came to the throne and he was a man after God's own heart, what did he do? He accomplished the military conquest and a military victory-based peace so that Solomon never fought a campaign, never launched a military battle in his entire kingly career.

Why? Those wars were fought and won in the days of David. That created the environment in which peace and prosperity could exist. It was begun under Joshua, it was carried through ups and downs, Gilgal, Gilgal in the days of the judges, finally brought to fruition in David as the Lord Jesus Himself is called the Son of David.

Why? Because in the spiritual realm, He has done the same thing. It is His victories that enable us to clear the enemies out of our soul kingdom and have an environment in which we begin to enjoy those blessings that will have their more tangible and more permanent fulfillment in our resurrected future. So you see this pattern.

You see how there's conflict, there's enemies, there's warfare. There are things that must be attacked and removed so that there can be this environment. And this is one of the primary illustrations in the Old Testament of this principle.

So what has David done? He did two things primarily when you look at Solomon taking over the kingdom. What two things did David do? He established the foundation of the kingdom based on military conquest and he laid the groundwork. He gathered the resources and got the plans and the coordination, did everything except actually begin the building of the temple, the dwelling place for God, collected the Ark of the Covenant, brought it to Jerusalem, commissioned his son Solomon, talked to the Lord about it, got everything in readiness.

He did everything except put on the hard hat and go out and supervise the construction. That's what Solomon is going to do. But David did all of the prep work, all of the groundwork, all of the resources, coordinated with Hiram, king of Tyre, and everything else and said, look, Solomon, my son, all you've got to do is blow the whistle for the work day to start and this thing is going to go.

That's what David did. What are the things that David did not do? In terms of removing opposition, he established peace on all of the borders of the kingdom so that Solomon doesn't have to worry about that. Solomon will build some fortifications, some defensive perimeter security to maintain it, but David established it.

What did David not do? Who did we look at last week? David did not remove Joab. David did not remove Adonijah. David did not remove Abiathar.

David did not remove Joab. I think I mentioned him twice. He did not remove Shimei.

These are things that Solomon, he commissions and reminds and warns Solomon, this is something you're going to have to do. At the beginning of his reign, you could say David dealt with the external threats. Solomon, at the inception of the kingdom, must deal with the internal threats and he gives them a choice.

Shimei has a choice. Joab had a choice. Adonijah had a choice.

Abiathar had a choice. After exercising that choice, their fate is basically determined by their own decisions. In three out of the four cases, it is fatal.

Abiathar is an exception. As I said, his line was already under judgment from God. Solomon recognizes he doesn't have to end Abiathar.

God has ended Abiathar's entire family line. Interestingly, Solomon specifically mentions, because you served as a priest with my father during the days of his wandering. There is something about priesthood and serving as a priest that is an extenuating or mitigating circumstance.

He says you're worthy of death, but because you wore the ephod before my father, because you served as a priest with my father David, I'm granting you your life. You can imagine that if Abiathar had ever aligned himself with any other pretenders to the throne, that deal would have been off as well. But Abiathar seems content to go to his home and live out his days as the last representative of the house of Eli and not make any trouble.

He's the one guy that figures out, if my life is in my hands, I choose to live. So, internal threats. David warns Solomon, Solomon deals with them, and he gives each of them a chance.

So, now what is going to happen? Solomon asks God for wisdom, and God grants it, but only after he marries an Egyptian woman. And you get the idea that there's one priority. It's almost a picture.

Look back at chapter 3. Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter. Then he brought her to the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the Lord and the wall all around Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the people sacrificed at high places because there was no house built for the name of the Lord until those

days.

Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places. Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

Now, where did this wealth come from to launch this phase of the kingdom, the glory days of the kingdom? When David started out and he was just king in Hebron, and he had a kind of a ragtag family conglomeration, eventually the other tribes come on board. But that's how David starts. He's a fugitive.

He's at the cave of Adullam. He eventually becomes king. How did he get from those ragged early days to being prosperous enough and having the resources to lay in store everything necessary to build the temple, and that Solomon at the beginning of his reign can afford to offer a thousand sacrifices on the altar as just sort of a routine.

He's sacrificing all over the place. When he gets to Gibeon, he offers a thousand animals. If you went over here to Fort Worth to the stockyards and decided you were going to buy 4,000 legs of beef, a thousand bulls, a thousand cows, you know what you would have to lay out for that? About \$300,000, \$400,000, \$500,000.

Bulls, last time I looked, are going for \$300 to \$500 a piece, and that's just your run-of-the-mill meat bull. That's not a blooded animal that's worth more. This is huge amounts of money.

Where did it come from? Where did it come from? Where did David get it? What would you just figure? Did we just say David accomplished? What happens when you conquer people? You take their stuff. It's spoils. Conquer cities.

Take all of their wealth. Empty all of the gold and accouterments out of their temples, just the way much later, conquering kings are going to march into Jerusalem and strip the temple. He has conquered everybody all around.

This is the fruit of conquest. This is the spoils of victory. This is God's reward to David and through him to Solomon and to the kingdom for faithfully trusting God and accomplishing these victories.

By the way, who is the general that won most of these actual battles? Joab. What is it that Joab does not get to stick around and see? The fruit. The days of peace where he can lay his sword aside and dwell in Jerusalem in a palatial mansion and have servants peeling grapes and bringing him trays of pomegranates and dates and figs and olives and anointing his head with oil and living out his sunset years in glorious retirement being recognized and appreciated and seeing the fruits of all of those hard-fought, hard-won battles.

He fritters it away for the reasons we talked about last week. Be aware. Be warned from the example of Joab.

It's not so much how you run the race. It's how you finish the race. How many Olympic races have you watched of all different distances where somebody sprints out early, they're going great guns, they're in the lead, but they don't plan, they don't finish.

They don't plan their expending of energy. They burn it all up early, and they fade, and they're gone. And nobody remembers.

We know he led for the first nine laps, but boy, on that tenth lap, he just absolutely was gassed. He just couldn't get his breath. He faded out and finished staggered across after they were sweeping up.

Everybody was gone. This guy finally crawls across the line. Nobody cares how well you did in the early laps.

Who crosses the finish line? Who? This is what the Apostle Paul says. I have run my race. I have finished my course.

And there is laid up for me a crown, because I finished it in a victorious way. Joab, for years, at the risk of his life, hardship, living in the field, out there when David wasn't even out there, for years, and he never gets to reap the benefits of it. In the latter days of David, I'm sure he had some respite.

But he's the general of the armies up to the end. And when he could have basked, he's not there. We have to finish well.

And why did he not finish well? It's one thing to say, hey, finish well. You say, okay, I will. Well, how do we do that? How did he not do it? There was a root of bitterness that went unaddressed.

It wasn't plucked. It wasn't nipped. It wasn't expunged.

It wasn't confessed. It wasn't acknowledged for what it was. It wasn't uprooted and removed and cast away.

He took God's prerogative into his own hands. He decided he would make sure that what he felt was right would happen. It's a scary, scary thing.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man. There is a way that seems right to you. There is a way that seems right to me.

And the ends thereof are the ways of death. How can we make sure that something that isn't right is identifiable to our mind and our soul as not right? And we don't think it is right. How can we not be fooled? We do what we're doing tonight.

That's why you're here. I listen to the Word of God. I reflect and meditate and think about and analyze the pertinence and the meaning of the Word of God to my own life.

How should I live in the light of these truths? And we have to make a conscious, considered, serious effort to do that. If you go with the knee jerk, if you go with the instinctive response, what are our instincts? Holy or unholy? Our instincts are conceived in iniquity and born in sin. If you go with your gut, what's-his-name Gibbs can go with his gut on NCIS and he's usually right.

Everybody says, well, you've got to trust Gibbs' gut. Well, you can't trust your own gut because it's fallen. It's corrupt.

We look to God's Spirit, not our instinct. We look to God's Word, not our rationales. And Joab felt so justified and so vindicated, but he's not here.

That was internal enemies. So now Solomon, David's gone. He has followed the instructions.

He's got copious amounts of provision. The plans are already laid for the temple. The provision has already been made.

He is prosperous beyond imagination just based on what David has done. And he is going to exponentially increase the wealth of the kingdom after this. But there is an interlude after Joab, Shimei, Adonijah and Abiathar and before he observes the priority of going to God in light of this enormous responsibility that has been placed on his shoulders, he does a few things ahead of talking to God and asking for wisdom.

Does Solomon love the Lord? Yes. Does Solomon do a wonderfully great thing in asking for wisdom? Yes. Where did he mess up? He didn't do it first.

He didn't do it first. It was a high priority for him. He loves God.

He recognizes that he needs wisdom and he needs divine aid. But something came first. What is it? Look at chapter 3, verse 1. Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

Which king should you be talking to when you have just inherited the throne and these enormous responsibilities and all of this wealth for which you are now the steward and the overseer and the one to decide how it is going to be allocated, spent, invested, everything that is going to be procured. Who should you be talking to? The king of Egypt or the king of heaven? And why doesn't chapter 3, verse 1 say what begins down in verse 5? Solomon began. Now, who initiates the conversation? Let's read this.

We said in verse 4, the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there. That was the great high place. He offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

At Gibeon, Solomon appealed to the Lord and said, O God, I have been given this crown and this great responsibility. Is that what it says? Who had to tap Solomon on the shoulder and say, Hey, appreciate all of these dead animals. But God in His grace so often does not rebuke us.

He asks us questions. What did Jesus do with the disciples so many times? Ask Him a question. So, this is not a reward for bringing so many sacrifices.

This is a little bit of a wake-up call. You know, you've already gone and started doing stuff and we have not talked. We haven't had a consultation.

You've been all over these high places. You've finally come to Gibeon. And so, you know, shall we talk? So God says, what shall I give you? Solomon said, You have shown great mercy to your servant David, my father, because he walked before you in truth, righteousness, uprightness of heart with you.

You've continued this great kindness for him and you have given him a son to sit on his throne as it is this day. And Solomon rightly acknowledges that everything that is currently in existence is because of God's grace and relationship to and with David. Right? Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king instead of my father David, and I am a little child.

I do not know how to go out or come in. Your servant is in the midst of your people whom you've chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore, give to your servant an understanding heart to judge your people that I may discern between good and evil for who is able to judge this great people of yours? Now, we consciously began the session tonight looking at two aspects that we've seen in the earlier couple of chapters.

What is it that David did? What kind of threats did he address? External. What did he encourage Solomon to deal with, which he did? Internal. Solomon, when God taps him on the shoulder and says, what shall I do for you? What are you going to be asking of me? Is it external or internal that Solomon asks for? Internal.

What shall I do? Give me wisdom to rule this people. What has he decided he's got squared away and doesn't need to ask God about? External. My father's wiped them all out.

No worries there. I can go down and talk to the king of Egypt on equal terms because we're sitting on top of the heap here in military victory. And to me, now, it may be slightly stretching the point, but it seems odd to me how clearly delineated the king of Egypt is, Pharaoh's daughter entering into a marriage marriage with this gal.

Permanent alliance with Egypt through marriage, which is an external thing. When Solomon responds and starts a conversation, starts entering into this conversation that God starts, he says, give me wisdom internally. That's where he feels insecure.

That's where people know him and know that he's young. He can put on the cloak and the crown and go forth and talk to the external people. Well, you better be nice to me because my daddy licked your daddy and so on.

But there seems to be a clear line drawn. And what it reminds me of is how we can look to the strong parts of our lives and say, well, I'm doing okay. Look at how well I'm doing here.

Joab could look and say, look how faithfully I've served as general of the armies. Abiathar could say, look how faithfully I've served as a priest. Adonijah could say, well, I've been a good son

and I haven't made any waves until now and all I'm asking for is this little bit.

Shimei could say, I've lived under the grace of David's covenant with me all of this time and I haven't stirred up any trouble. We tend to look to our strengths and we overlook our weaknesses. And even when it comes time to converse with God, we are selective.

And we're not comprehensive in our view. This I think is one of the things that made David great. You remember in the Psalms where he asks God in prayer, show me my secret faults.

Examine my inward self. Show me what I cannot see. That is the prayer of humility.

That is the prayer that God will honor when we ask and seek and knock. Show me what I am unwilling to look at myself. If Solomon, I think, had prayed that prayer in chapter 3, verse 0, the precedent that is set, why does he end up with 700 wives and 300 concubines? Because the first one slipped under his guard before this covenant conversation with God.

Before he asked, and God said, because you have asked this, I will not only give you wisdom, but I'll give you a lot of things you didn't ask for. But Solomon has already let the enemy in the gate. He's already left the door unlatched with this daughter of Pharaoh, with an alliance with the king of Egypt that was done before this.

So it's a foreshadowing. When you look at the order here, I make an alliance with the king of Egypt, that's going to secure my southern border. Oh, and look how much I love God, and now God is talking to me.

And God very graciously doesn't say, why in the blazes did you marry Pharaoh's daughter? You know, God doesn't throw our faults up in that way. He will ask a question hoping that we will recognize them, because it's our will where we come and confess our sins. We can be convicted.

We can be reminded. It can be illustrated in the presence of God. If we recognize that we're in the presence of God, we're like the prophet on our face.

We're like Simon Peter, I am a sinful man, Lord, depart from me. That's what ought to be the case. But give to your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and evil.

Who is able to judge this great people of yours? He doesn't say, give me wisdom to deal with all of these enemies that are for the moment subdued, but could be a threat in the future. It doesn't occur to him that it's a threat. He doesn't identify it as a threat.

He doesn't see Egypt as a potential weakness. The speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing. So God said to him, because you have asked this thing and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for your self-understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words.

I have given you a wise and understanding heart so that there has not been anyone like before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honors, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. So, and now look at verse 14, just as we saw with Adonijah, just as we saw with Shimei, just as we saw with Joab, just as is implied with Abiathar, if you walk in my ways to keep my statutes and my commandments as your father David walked, then I will also lengthen your days.

I've given you wisdom, which you'll have till the day you drop. But how long you live to use that wisdom and to reign over this people depends on how long you walk in my ways. This is the same thing David told him in the charge that we saw last time.

Be faithful to the Lord and walk in his ways. Then Solomon awoke, and indeed it had been a dream, and he came to Jerusalem, stood before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, offered burnt offerings, offered peace offerings. Notice, after his encounter with God, does he offer more sacrifices at Gibeon? Does he go to some other high place? He goes where you're supposed to go.

Where does the law of Moses say sacrifices are supposed to be offered? In the proximity of God's presence at the Ark. God's presence isn't in a place because it's got an elevation. It is God's designated place.

So it's as though this encounter sort of purges his judgment a little bit, and when he's got this wisdom from God, he goes to Jerusalem to do his offerings, which is good. But there's just a little bit of a minor key in the music in those first couple of verses in chapter 3. It hasn't reared its ugly head yet, but the sequence is significant. Then you have some examples of Solomon's wisdom.

We're going to skip those in the interest of time. You're familiar with the baby episode and all Israel heard of the judgment, verse 28, of the king. They feared the king, for they saw the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

Internal or external situation, these women and the baby. Internal. Chapter 4 is where we're going to pick up after the break, where it says Solomon was king over all Israel, and it's going to give his officers, it's going to give his staff, it's going to talk about the organization.

Then we're going to pick up in verse 20, Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. We're going to pause and eat and drink and rejoice. And when we come back, we're going to look at the description of Solomon's kingdom, keeping in mind what we initially looked at this evening.

What is this a picture of? What is this a result of? Why is it that people can eat and drink and rejoice? What is the closing of the interpretive loop there when we think about ourselves? What is a necessary prerequisite? What is it that follows? There's a lot about the kingdom of Solomon

that is really fascinating, not just because of the greatness of Israel, but because of the reflected spiritual truth that echoes all the way down into the kingdom that is in our souls, the dwelling place of the Lord Jesus in our hearts. And whether or not the battles have been won, whether or not the prosperity is legitimate, whether or not the wisdom is there to preside over and maintain and prolong that environment. So it's going to be a very interesting set of observations that we'll make when we come back from the break.