

Kings and Prophets 13-02-22b

We pick up our study now in the book of First Kings. We're in chapter four and we are looking at the inception of Solomon's reign. And just by way of quick review, we've seen that there were many external entities in terms of people, groups, and kingdoms that David destroyed.

Why, by the way, did they need to be destroyed? Why couldn't they be subjugated and made a part of the kingdom? Wouldn't it be more the merrier? We bring these people into the fold and have some diversity in the kingdom and so on. Why did God command that these people be subdued and eliminated? The iniquity of the Amorites is full. If you remember Joshua coming in and painting the law of Moses on the rocks, these people knew ahead of time that the Israelites were coming and these were the standards and they were not amenable to that.

They liked their false God system. They liked their pass your children through the fire to Molech and so on. They were incorrigible.

They were resistant. Those who were receptive became a part of Israel, like Ruth, like Rahab, like Uriah and some of the others that came in. The Kerethites and the Pelonites, who were David's personal bodyguard, were foreigners, but David wouldn't have had them near him if they weren't believers, if they didn't share his faith and love for the God of Israel.

So when you say, well, all right, that's great for 3000 odd years ago. But what does that mean to me? When we look at the rule of God in our hearts and in our lives, when we look at acknowledging God's grace and God's provision and setting up an environment in our souls where we can prosper and serve and be fruitful and reflect the glory of God, why does God even care if Israel has a kingdom? Why is he setting up David? Why is he setting up Solomon, all these things? It doesn't God have enough glory in heaven? Hasn't he got enough angels and enough glass in the glassy sea and enough fire in the coals that surround his throne and in the burning ones, the seraphim? Why does God care whether or not Israel has a king and a kingdom and so on? It is a reflection on earth of who God is in heaven. Israel, by design, by covenant promise, is to be a light to the Gentiles.

We saw this when God made promises to Abraham. We saw it in the book of Isaiah, my servant. You will declare my name before the peoples.

You will be a light to the Gentiles. My salvation will shine to the ends of the earth through you. God has set up a witness and a testimony by securing and blessing and prospering Israel.

But it's just the same for the nation as it is for the king himself. What does God tell Solomon? If there's a big if there. If you will walk in truth.

If you walk in my ways, if you keep my statutes and my commandments as your father, David, walked, then I will lengthen your days, your end. How long will you be a witness? How long will you be a conduit for the transmission and reflection of the light of the glory of God? By the way,

what is the phrase in the New Testament? We have the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And it is his kingship and his peace and his prosperity in our hearts that similarly reflects those things.

So how do we slay the enemies round about? Well, we've got to identify them and conquer them. We've got to eliminate these outside things. If there's something coming into your heart through the eye gate.

Over the Internet or over the TV or through the ear gate by conversation with people who are not conducive, who aren't helpful, who don't belong in our circle of fellowship because their ideas and their conversation is corrosive, maybe they're incorrigible gossips. Maybe they partake of a viewpoint or a lifestyle that inevitably takes our thoughts and our minds away from who we are and why we're here. Got to go.

Got to fight that battle and eliminate that enemy from the borders of the land. These are outside influences that we've got to eliminate. You cannot have the blessing of God.

You cannot be given the wisdom of God and you cannot have length of days and prosperity if these outside evil influences are not dealt with, driven out of the land of the soul and kept at bay with a defensive perimeter like Solomon will establish in the land. We've got to identify them. Who are the Amorites whose iniquity is full? How can we keep their influence and their presence and their corrosive, corrupting power out of our internal kingdom? Well, first of all, you have to identify and know who they are.

Don't marry their daughter and bring her in. And pretty soon she's going to want a place to worship Horus and Osiris and Isis and all the other goofy deities that they have down in Egypt. Well, I needed to marry her for the safety of my southern border.

That's a cop out. That's a rationalization. That's God can't secure the southern border.

You got to make an alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Where did all these people come from? What is the crowning achievement of deliverance from Egypt? It's the kingdom. No sooner do you get the kingdom, you turn right around and get in bed literally with the Egyptians.

It just you know, this is not a good omen. This is not a good. This is not portend good things for Solomon.

But I'm thinking in terms of our application. Think of our souls. Think of our lives as this kingdom where God wants his light and his glory to shine.

Solomon isn't given a mandate to go impose the law of Moses on surrounding nations. God establishes the Solomonic kingdom as a place where people live under God's law and that light shines. And this is an important thing to remember.

All of us, and increasingly so, are coming up against a very opposite value system. In the latter days, men will call good evil and they will call evil good. They will call perversion acceptable and they will call what is acceptable perverse.

If you stand up for morality, you're a bigot and a hater. If you identify perversity as the evil and the abomination that it is, you are in the wrong. What is evil is promoted as good.

You can't be any cooler than to be certain kinds of perverse in this nation. And you can't be any worse of a nefarious type than to call it what it is. Our Christianity and biblical values are very steadily and very alarmingly being driven underground.

You can no longer take for granted that a morality based on the Bible is more or less common parlance and common understanding. Now, it is uncommon and we have to think about the battles that we fight on the outside. What are you going to stand up against and why? What is the upside? Is this a calling that we have? Are we to go picket? Are we to go raise a voice? Are we to go take a stand and skyline ourselves in opposition to something? You could say, well, but that's wrong.

But what is our calling? Is our calling to take the law of Moses beyond the borders of Israel and impose it on other cultures and other peoples? Should Solomon march down to Egypt and say, all you Egyptians, here's a copy of the Ten Commandments. All of you Egyptians, here's the feast schedule. Y'all better start observing Passover down here.

You'd better start doing the Day of Atonement. You better be doing the, how do you show up? How do you shine a light? How do you shine in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation? Is it by standing up and saying, you crooked and perverse people ought to be living by the standard that I understand in the word of God? Or should we be concentrating on living that standard out and letting that light so shine before men? It's actually sort of a passive. When Jesus told the disciples, let your light so shine before men, he didn't say shine your light before men, and he didn't say make men hold on to and shine your light.

Hand them a lamp and make them hold it up and accept it and live in its light. He said, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works. He didn't say shine your light on men and make them comport to your idea of good works.

And it's an important distinction. Don't sacrifice yourself for a non-essential, for a false cause. We are not called to impale ourselves on the sharp stakes of public opinion for its own sake.

There is a time to take a stand. There is a time to speak out. That time is in our periphery.

If the government came to our church or to our Christian organization where I work and said, you will hire a pervert or we're going to revoke your tax status, I would say revoke away. Now you're on my ground. Now you are I am not pushing my standards on you.

You do not push your standards on me. And, you know, there's a gray area, am I going to allow

my tax dollars to be spent? You know, everybody can figure that out in their own mind. But I am not going to go picket an abortion clinic.

I am not going to picket a gay bar. I am not going to make a lot of social commentary about current events of any kind. Because our place is to live in the land in the provision and the grace of God and let the light of God shine from that.

Many, many people, you know how they got evangelized. They look at someone in their periphery and they say, there is something about that gal, about that guy. He's got a piece.

He's got something in his relationship with God that I don't have. I want that. I wish I could have whatever it is he's got.

It is a drawing, it is an attraction, it is a shining of a light and people who are drawn to the light will be drawn to us and ask us a reason for the hope that is in us. And we have the privilege of explaining it and they are drawn. We don't throw the pearls at the retreating swine.

They are not going to turn and kiss us. They are going to return and tear us to pieces. We are not called to be torn to pieces by swine.

I'm sorry, but we're not. And don't get a misguided crusader, arrogant thing going where, well, I'm sacrificing for Jesus by taking a big public stand. And guess what? I got fired.

And guess what? I got kicked out. And guess what? I'm a pariah and do not let your good be spoken of as evil. The kingdom is the place where these values are lived out.

The kingdom is the place where God has made provision. The kingdom is the place where God has placed the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol and the piece of furniture that represents and contains his presence in Israel. They didn't tell the Israelites, and behold, once a year on the day of parade, thou shall take the Ark of the Covenant and march it in all the lands round about and get people to bow down to the Ark.

And if they will not bow down, slay them and cut them in pieces and scatter them in horror and confusion, because behold, they shall bow before my Ark. The Ark is in the land. The people in the land have a commitment.

The people in the land have a responsibility. The nation of Israel is going to shine as a beacon and as a light in the days of Solomon. And guess what? The Queen of Sheba is going to come and visit.

The kings of the earth are going to come to observe and possibly be influenced by the wisdom of Solomon. He doesn't have to go out and tell their kings what they ought to do in their countries. They are coming to him and asking because they can see the manifest peace and glory and prosperity that God has granted to Israel.

This is a point of application. Live in the kingdom of Solomon in our souls. It will draw those

who are drawn to light.

Men who love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil are not going to want to come to the light. And that's good. You stay over there and do your darkness evil thing.

I'm going to stay over here and follow my call. I'm not going to interfere with you. Please don't interfere with me.

At the point that you intrude yourself in here, now you're dealing with a child of God and you've got to deal with me and the God I serve. But I didn't start it. I didn't pick the fight.

I didn't try to tell you how to live your life. You're answerable to God. Joab decided he would get people to live according to the standards he thought were right.

And you see how he ended up. It's not our call. It's not our place.

Be careful of crusades. Social crusades. People justify them with a lot of faulty application of scripture.

This is the model. We are in a preview spiritual foreshadowing of God's kingdom now. And it is something that is personal and individual.

And within our fellowship, we speak the truth to one another in love. It doesn't say go to the Agora and speak the truth to the hostile in forceful moral terms. Where in the New Testament is there a call to go to the Romans and tell them God's moral code and try to get them to live by it? Go to the palace of Caesar and tell him that all of this fooling around with little boys in the bath houses of Rome is a bad idea.

Where is that in the New Testament? You do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together. You encourage one another to love and good works. You speak the truth to one another in love.

You fellowship and create that preview incipient spiritual value form of the kingdom in you and among you. Don't get distracted into social action or a false sense of obligation. Well, aren't we supposed to shine our light before the world? It doesn't say shine your light before the world.

It says, let your light shine. You don't have to put it under a bushel. You can say, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Great statement by Yeshua in the Old Testament. Choose you this day whom you will serve. Me and my house, we're serving the Lord.

You want to join with us? We can have great fellowship. If you want to come into the kingdom of Solomon and live and bask in the glory, great. So if you will walk in my ways, keep my statutes and my commandments.

As your father David walked, I will lengthen your days. And this is really the model for the kingdom. Look at verse 20 of chapter four.

Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. This is ever the picture of prosperity and plenty, isn't it? Back when Israel was first coming out of Egypt, what was God's promise? I will take you to a land that does what? Flows with milk and honey. What do you do with milk? You drink it.

What do you do with honey? You eat it. And you don't have to plant and you don't have to harvest because the cows do the work and the bees do the work. It is a land flowing with milk and honey.

It is available. It is nutritious. By the way, if you're going to eat honey, find the un-homogenized natural honey.

In fact, there's a guy right here in Plano who is a believer and has one of these natural honey things. His offices are down in the Hope Center. There's all kinds of places.

Honey has amazing medicinal properties. If it's actual, raw, un-homogenized honey, the stuff on the store shelves is homogenized. Its power is gone.

Its magic has been removed. But get that natural honey. But God knew this thousands of years ago and said the land flows with it.

We're going to see this in just a minute. So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river to the land of the Philistines. As far as the border of Egypt, you can look in the back of your Bible at the maps and see the kingdom in the days of David and Solomon and what its extent is.

I was going to try to copy this map for you, but the map in your Bible is actually better. But here's sort of a depiction of the kingdom of Solomon all the way up north to Lebanon, all the way down. You can see the coast curving around.

Here's Egypt. And here's the Red Sea. And you've got the Gulf of Aqaba.

You've got Ezean-Geber down here, which was a very prosperous port. More about that shortly. But it's really the maximum extent to which Israel has ever expanded.

The secular state of Israel recovered a lot of this land in 67 and 73. And everybody's irritated and upset about it. They got attacked.

They won. Now everybody says, you should give that land back. If you didn't want your land to get lost, you shouldn't have attacked.

Solomon's provision for one day was 30 cores of fine flour, 60 cores of meal, 10 fatted oxen. You can read down through this. I want to point something out here.

Look at verse 25. Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. Keep your finger here.

Hope I can remember this passage because I don't have it written down. Keep your finger here and turn to Micah. I believe it's chapter 4. Yes, Micah 4.4. Wow, it's amazing.

Once in a while, my brain actually still works. Micah 4.4. Now look at the beginning of the chapter in Micah. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and peoples shall flow to it.

Many nations shall come and say, come and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways and we shall walk in his paths. For out of Zion the law shall go forth and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

What latter days are we talking about here? This is the millennial kingdom, right? The millennial kingdom. He shall judge between many peoples and rebuke strong nations afar off. This wasn't the case in Solomon's day.

Solomon didn't try to rule over Egypt or the actual northern Hittite empire or any of the other nations that were abroad and beyond, but it will pertain. The whole earth is going to be subject to the kingdom in Israel in the millennium. He shall judge between many peoples and rebuke strong nations afar off.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore.

If you've ever been to my office and seen the artillery lamp on my desk, there's a 75 millimeter shell from World War I that's been turned into a lamp. And on the rotating band, the copper rotating band, this verse is inscribed because they thought WWI was the war to end all wars, the great war. And that's what they stamped.

And I love that lamp for many reasons. One of which is the folly of thinking that man could say, I'm so horrified by this war, we'll never fight another one. *Au contraire mon frere*.

And they said, look, we've turned our sword into a plowshare. We've turned this 75 millimeter artillery shell into a lamp. An instrument of war has become a piece of illumination.

Isn't, you know, kumbaya? No, World War II dwarfed World War I. And there are upcoming wars that will dwarf both of them. But look at verse four, that everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. Look at it again.

Everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree. Keep your finger there. Turn back to First Kings chapter four, verse 25.

Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree. Is the kingdom of Solomon a foreshadowing of the millennial kingdom? Where every man sits under his vine, his vine, his fig tree. This is not collectives.

This is not kibbutzim. This is not socialism. I'm going to sit me under my vine, my fig tree.

You go sit under your vine and your fig tree, neighbor. This is my vine. This is my fig tree.

Not collectivism, not socialism, not a commune, not a bunch of long haired hippie types. God will give inheritance to those who have qualified for it by faith and by obedience, and they will have their own orchards. That's the idea.

But there is a clear link here. First Kings 4.25, Micah 4.4. And we know that the millennial kingdom is a literal fulfillment of things that can be spiritually fulfilled for you and me. Now, Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses, verse 26.

You can leave Micah now, for his chariots and 12,000 horsemen. Now, what's interesting to me about this? Do you think David ever had 40,000 horses and 40,000 chariots? David won all of these battles like Gideon with the 300 men with the lamps and the pitchers. And Solomon has got this gigantic chariot core that he never has to use.

They're ceremonial. These guys never chuck a spear into an enemy. They never shoot an arrow into a foe.

They never overrun infantry troops from anybody. And there's 40,000 of them. I like to think that a lot of these are retirees from Joab's army that had been stumping along, you know, walking to all of these battles.

And when Solomon comes in, he says, you know what? How'd you like to be a charioteer? How'd you like to drive instead of walk? How'd you like to ride in a six-by instead of, you know, humping 85 pounds of gear down the road for 16 miles? I like to think that these are veterans because it's all ceremonial. It's proactive. It's preventative.

I'm sure they drilled. I'm sure they could fight, but they never need to. They never have to fight a battle.

They're going to be defensive troops. They're going to be watchers at the borders. They're going to be stationed in places where they can wrap it.

This is a quick reaction force. If anybody ever does decide to disturb the peace, there are 40,000 horses and chariots that are going to respond, and they can be there in no time. Now, here's my question.

David has accumulated a lot of loot in his conquest, and a great portion of it is dedicated and budgeted for the building of the temple. I'm sure some of it went to building the palace and refurbishing and glorifying Jerusalem as the capital city. This costs a lot more than that.

Building these fortified cities, paying all of these officials, setting up these governorships, walling and building. There's a huge amount of resources involved in this that would have immediately emptied any coffers that David managed to fill by his earlier conquest. Where does the money come from? Where does Solomon get his wealth? We're going to look at it next time because there is a spiritual truth there.

It is going to come from the kingdom itself. It is going to come from God himself. It is in the book of Deuteronomy.

It is in the promises that God made to Israel long before they ever got to this place, hundreds of years earlier. And it's a fascinating story. It is in the pages of 1 Kings and it has a direct application to us because here's the progression.

Stay with me now. I've only got one minute. There's a progression and this order is important.

What's the first order of business? Attack, slay and eliminate the external enemies. You cannot overcome your internal demons if you court and marry and get in bed with the external ones. You're never going to solve personal problems of self-discipline, of personal morality, of personal integrity, if you actively leave the gates open for outside enemies.

These enemies have got to be slain. They've got to be cut off. They've got to be destroyed.

If your internet access is a problem, limit or cut off your internet access. If the television is putting filth into your household, then turn the television off. If associations with people, if conversations, if time spent is a drag and a weight and a discouragement and a damper on your spiritual growth, then limit or eliminate those contacts.

If activities put us in places where we easily fall prey to temptation or to sin, well, change your path. Never forget about this story they told us in seminary about this guy that had such a problem with going into adult bookstores and buying all kinds of... This is back before the internet. You know, he'd go into adult bookstores because he passed by one every day.

Well, they looked at his route. He was going out of his way on the way to and from work to drive by this adult bookstore and then he couldn't stop himself from going in and buying magazines and things and corrupting his mind with them. Well, dingbat, change your route to and from work.

Don't drive by the store. You're leaving yourself. You're standing in the way of sinners.

So surprise, surprise, you're giving in to sin. This is cutting off the external enemies. When we have problems of worry, why are we worrying? Are we obsessing? There's people that worry about world events.

Well, maybe you need to turn off the international news. Are you worried about the Koreans? Are you worried about the terrorists? Are you worried about this and the other? Well, quit

exposing yourself to those things. If you say, Lord, I just can't stop worrying about what will happen to my children in the next generation.

Well, quit looking at that so much. You can't do anything about it anyway. With worry, you can't change one hair white or black, although your hair will probably turn gray if you worry.

But we need to look at our external enemies. We need to fight them. We need to subdue them.

We need to eliminate them. We need to drive them out of the land of our internal kingdom. And that is first.

Don't worry about other things until you do that. This is the order in the Bible. Find external influences that are detrimental, that are harmful, that represent evil, that are incursions of evil into your territory and defeat them, cut them off, do whatever you have to do to leave them bleeding in the sand.

Get them out. Do that first. Secondly, what are the internal potential enemies? This is stuff that belongs to me.

This is in my own household. Joab is Solomon's cousin, right? Son of Zeruiah. Zeruiah is David's sister.

What does that make Solomon and Joab? First cousins. He kills a member of his own household because the man represents a huge potential threat and he is incorrigible. We have internal threats.

We've got something in our own mental household. And I'm not talking about, look around at your brothers and sisters and people in your household. This is our spiritual household.

This is inside me. There are things that I hold dear that are a part of my makeup that I've got to identify and eliminate as threats. This isn't some other person causing me a trouble.

This is me causing myself a problem. And I've got to find and kill those internal enemies. That's the next order of business.

Then don't marry a daughter of Pharaoh. Don't get those first two things done and turn right around and throw the garage door open and say, come on in and take all my stuff. Come on in and lay the foundations for my later corruption and demise so that I'm not just going to have one foreign wife.

I'm going to have 700 foreign wives and 300 concubine prostitutes to boot. How did the guy end up with a thousand illicit wives and concubines? Well, he started in chapter three. He let that stuff slip in before he talked to God.

God tapped him on the shoulder and said, you know, we do have a kingdom thing going on here. Wouldn't you like me to give you something before you start collecting any more wives

and stuff? What would you like from me? And Solomon answers rightly and God is pleased with his choice, but wouldn't it have been great if he had done it four verses earlier? Wouldn't it have been great if he'd been sacrificing to God in Jerusalem when God came to him? God finds him in Gibeon. What are you doing in Gibeon? And what's the next thing? Solomon goes to Jerusalem where he's supposed to be, but he's compromised himself.

He's let something in that's going to bite him later. So, you know, point three, after point one, get the outside enemies identified and slain. Point two, identify and slay the internal enemies.

Point three, don't marry the daughter of Pharaoh. Put point four ahead of point three. Have the conversation with God where we ask him for wisdom, where we ask him to enable us to rule well our internal kingdom, to make those decisions that will perpetuate his glory, his peace, his blessing on us so that we can be fruitful and prosperous, and that our righteousness will be like the inhabitants of Judah and Israel, as innumerable as the sand, which harks back to God's promise, if you remember, to Abraham, I will make your descendants like the sand on the seashore and like the stars in the sky.

And it begins here. They become numerous, they're prosperous. Why is it there can be so many people? Because poverty is not a problem in the kingdom.

Why? Because the kingdom itself is blessed by God and prosperous. That's why they can have as many kids as they want and nobody starts going hungry and baking bread, and they don't have inner city slums, and they don't have welfare, and they don't have crime running rampant with the multiplication of people. This is a blessing and not a curse to have all of these people as the sands of the sea, because the kingdom is full and overflowing with abundance to support them and to bless them and to make them even more fruitful and more multiplicative.

So we want to do that next. Don't start looking... Yes, I know it's not a word. Don't start looking to Egypt for safety.

Why would he do this Egypt thing? Security. I'm worried about my southern border. That's the only reason to make an alliance with Egypt.

You're worried that they're going to come up and imperil things. It was a worry. It was a concern.

And he said, well, I'll marry their daughter and he can't come up and attack me now. Well, that's not the right answer. Well, this idea of why the kingdom is so prosperous, how it is so prosperous, is what we're going to be looking at next week.

And trust me, it's fascinating. And not only is it fascinating historically, it's fascinating when you look at the interpretation application and what it means for us. There is a prosperity in our souls that we are largely unaware of.

And once we see this picture in Solomon's day, it is going to instruct us and give us the location.

This is like a pirate treasure map. This is like a big Maltese cross on a map.

Here's the treasure. And we're going to literally, I will give you a copy of the treasure map next week. So don't miss it.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for how elegantly and beautifully and effectively you communicate your truth to us in ways that are understandable and meaningful and memorable for us.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit will be our teacher, will remind us in the hours and days ahead of these things so that we will reflect on them and take them to heart in a way that results in transformation, that results in fruitfulness, that results in our being able to present ourselves as a living sacrifice that is holy and acceptable in your sight. And that enables us to truly shine as a light in the world that reflects the same thing that the Lord Jesus himself did. When he was lifted up, he drew all men.

He draws all men. And in this day and age, he draws through our presence in the world. We pray that we can be that light.

We can be that drawing influence so that people will come to Christ, come to faith, come to relationship with you and enjoy the same opportunities and potentials that you have granted to us so graciously in this life. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.