

Kings and Prophets 13-03-29b

We pick up our study now, if you'll turn to 1 Kings chapter 9. After looking at the great start that God gives to Solomon, through his father David, through his own personal blessing, God appears to him the first time and says, if you'll walk in my ways and keep my statutes, I will lengthen your days. I've given you all of these wonderful things. In chapter 9, it came to pass when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, that the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time.

Now, one of the difficult tests for you and for me is when we have reached a goal, when we have accomplished a purpose. We struggled and sweated and strained and now we have graduated. We work and strive towards some particular accomplishment or achievement and we reach it.

It's done. We finish. Finish a big project.

Reach a target of some kind. That is a decision point because the decision is, well, what now? Many times people in secular pursuits, whether they're an actor or they're an author or they're a businessman, they say, well, I want to get to this place. I want to reach this level of success.

And they reach it and there's a looking around from the top of that mountain and, well, is there some other mountain that's higher? Where can I go from here? And sometimes there's nowhere to go but down. After the pinnacle has been reached, you think, well, you're never going to top that. And in some cases it destroys people.

They live in the shadow of their one great accomplishment and they can never match it. And they're constantly, it becomes a thorn in their side. They're constantly disappointed.

But this is the point at which God appears to Solomon a second time. And this is the advantage. Hear me now.

This is the advantage of your relationship with God. You're not left at a pinnacle or at a place of achievement to your own devices. We don't have to sit there and say, well, now what do I do? Where do I go from here? Whether it is a bereavement, whether it is a loss.

There are people who are married a long time and suddenly their spouse is gone through death or departure, whatever it might be. And they say, well, what do I do? We are never alone. You are never alone.

You're never abandoned. You don't ever have to figure these things out without resource and without guidance. We have a permanent, eternal relationship with God.

And whether it is the height of success or the depth of despair, we're never alone. God is there to speak to our hearts, to give us guidance. This is your birthright.

This is your heritage. You belong to the royal family of God. You have throne room access.

It's permanent. Don't forget about it. Don't squander it.

Think about it. And at this point where Solomon has hit all of the marks, he's wealthy beyond imagination. He is wise beyond imagination.

He is accomplished beyond all imagination. God doesn't leave that vacuum for something to get sucked into. God appears to Solomon a second time.

He was with him at the beginning of these things. Now that they are complete, God returns. What does he say? The Lord appeared to Solomon the second time as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.

I wish we could talk about Gibeon and the significance of that. The Lord said to him, I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before me. I have consecrated this house which you have built to put my name there forever, and my eyes and my heart will be there perpetually.

Now, remember a few weeks back we had a little study on what does forever mean? You know, they will be tormented day and night forever. Has God's name been in the temple in Jerusalem on Mount Zion? Perpetually and forever? Well, not without some interruption. The temple of Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586.

Remember that? They built another one in its place and Herod enhanced it, but the glory of God never returned to fill that temple. Solomon's temple, the one where God came down and consumed the sacrifice by fire, the one where God spoke, the one where God said, I have heard your prayers and dedication, the one where God's glory filled the holy of holies, and God said, my name will be here and my presence will be here perpetually and forever. That hasn't been true since 586 BC.

That's what, 2600 years ago, give or take? So, what does perpetually and forever mean? Well, you've got to look at passages like this to make up your mind. Now, verse 4, if you walk before me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep my statutes and my judgment, does this ring a bell? God say anything like this the first time? Believe he did. Then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying you shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.

But, if you or your sons at all turn from following me, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes, which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and this house which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And as for this house which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished, and will hiss and say, why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?

Then they will answer, because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them. Therefore the Lord has brought all this calamity, that's the word evil, on them.

It happened at the end of 20 years. How long did Solomon reign? 40 years? It happened at the end of 20 years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house. Hiram, the king of Tyre, had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress and gold, as much as he desired.

King Solomon then gave Hiram 20 cities in the land of Galilee. Hiram went from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, but they did not please him. Can any good thing come from Galilee? Hiram didn't like Galilee.

So he said, what kind of cities are these which you have given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Kabul, which is good for nothing, good for nothing, as they are to this day, good for nothing. Hiram sent the king 120 talents of gold. This is the reason the labor force which Solomon raised, to build the house of the Lord, his own house, the millow, which is the landfill, this was to increase the usable area on Mount Zion.

It was a mountain, and so they built out, as one does. I remember they did this in a lot of different places. They did it at Annapolis, at the Naval Academy.

They built out into the Chesapeake Bay. They just filled it with landfill, and that's what the library sits on. They used to be shallows and water and stuff, and now there's land, and that's where the library sits.

I don't know if it's true or not, but they say that they forgot to take into account the weight of the books, and after they built that library, and then put all the books in, the thing started sinking. They had to go back in and reinforce, because the thing was three times as heavy with all of the books. Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Giza, and burned it with fire, killed the Canaanites who had dwelt in the city, and given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

They have found that burn layer in Giza, by the way. Solomon built Giza, lower Beth-horon, Baalot, Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, all the storied cities and so on. All the people which were left are the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel.

Their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel, verse 21, had not been able to destroy completely. From these, Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day. Of the children of Israel, Solomon made no forced laborers, because they were men of war, and his servants, his officers, captains, commanders of his chariots, and his cavalry, chiefs of the officials, and so on.

Verse 24, Pharaoh's daughter came up from the city of David, to her house, which Solomon had

built for her, and he built the millow. Three times a year, Solomon offered burnt offerings, and peace offerings on the altar, which he had built for the Lord, and he burned incense with them, on the altar that was before the Lord, and he finished the temple. He did fine for the first twenty years.

But, chapter 11, he loved the foreign women, and in verse 7, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem. What is the hill that is east of Jerusalem? What's the name of the hill due east of Jerusalem? The Mount of what? Mount of Olives. On the Mount of Olives, where the Lord Jesus will one day sit, where his father David had had to depart, remember, across the Kidron and up, and you know, rocks and dust being thrown at him.

Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the people of Ammon. He did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. Now, if he did this for all of his foreign wives, how many foreign wives did he have? Seven hundred? That's a lot of high places.

That's a lot of smoke and sacrifice going up to false gods. This is Solomon. The Lord became angry with Solomon, surprisingly enough, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

Appeared to him at the beginning, appeared to him at a place of maturity and prosperity and accomplishment, and had commanded him concerning this very thing twice. Warned him twice that he should not go after other gods, but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded. How many passages of Scripture have you and I looked at together over the years? How much warning have we had from the lips of the Lord God himself, through the mouths of his apostles and his prophets? How much warning have we had? How much excuse do we have for foreign wives to worm their way into our affections? Therefore, the Lord said to Solomon, because you have done this.

Now, let me ask you just from a, and I don't want to digress here, but just from sort of a, let's try to be Calvinists for a moment. How did this come about? Whose idea was it for everything to be great and wonderful and blessed and obedient and high and glorious, and the name of the Lord is radiating forth from Mount Zion? Who messes this up? And behold, God did mysteriously withdraw his presence and his spirit from Solomon, and Solomon suddenly without this pervenient grace did fall into this. Whose idea is this? Whose fault is it? Did God withdraw from Solomon or did Solomon depart from the Lord? What does the book say? After he was warned, after he's, but what more could God have done for Solomon than what he did? Gave him even stuff he didn't ask for.

Because you have done this, you have not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded you. I will surely tear the kingdom away from you. The Calvinist view is that it diminishes and demeans God to respond to human decisions.

God would never do that. God's got to be in charge. God's going to be the one that decides what happens.

But over and over and over again in scripture, you do not see that pattern. God himself says, because of what you have done, I am going to do this. Because of the decision you have made, I am going to do this.

Over and over again. So if anybody starts talking Calvinism, ask them to explain this. Who moved here, God or Solomon? It's indisputable.

There's nothing more God could have done for Solomon than what he did. Nothing more. You have done this, God says.

I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Not your son, your servant. Nevertheless, I will not do it in your days.

This is a fascinating modification to the judgment. It could have happened on that day. Could have been like Belshazzar, finger of God, and away she goes.

Could have been any number of armies that appeared at the gates of Jerusalem, overwhelmed it, took Solomon captive, put out his eyes, slew his sons. Could have been over on that day. But it wasn't.

Why? Because of your father David. For the sake of your father David, I will tear it out of the hand of your, I think that says son. This is a very interesting Bible.

There are several places where the letters just disappear and this is one of them. It says out of the hand of your S blank. The rest of the line is blank in my Bible.

The Word of God is inspired, inerrant, infallible, and indestructible. But human copies of it are fraught with errors. Does that say son or sons? Son.

Yeah. Take it out of the hand of your son. I will not tear away the whole kingdom.

I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen. So he basically gets a 12th or a 10th. If you figure the Levites, there's still some Levites.

You've got Benjamin and Judah. So out of 13 tribes, he's going to have this small remnant. Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon.

Does this chill your blood? After everything God has done for Solomon and Solomon goes his own way, gets enamored with the seductive pleasures of women and riches and so on, this just chills me to the bone. Would you like to have this announced in heaven? Would you like to have it written in the book recording your life? God raised up an adversary against, fill in your name here. I do not in any way, shape or form want anything anywhere saying, and God raised up an

adversary against Samuel Hall.

If God raises up an adversary against you, what chance have you got? If God be for us, who can be against us? That's a wonderful promise. That goes on the refrigerator. How about the reverse? If God be against us, who can be for us? God raised up an enemy against Solomon.

Hey, dad, the Edomite. When's the last time we saw the Edomites wreaking havoc? What happened in the days of Solomon's father David, when David was fleeing from King Saul and he went to the priests at Nob who were kind to him, who gave him Goliath's sword, gave him the shewbread to sustain himself and his men? What happened to those priests? Who slew them? Doeg the what? Edomite. The Edomite.

Who are the Edomites descended from? Esau, the twin. Jacob and Esau, twins. Remember, Rachel was told, there are twins in your womb.

Esau, the red man. Hey, dad, the Edomite. He was a descendant of the king in Edom.

It happened when David was in Edom and Joab, the commander of the army, had gone up to bury the slain after he had killed every male in Edom. Because for six months, Joab remained there with all Israel until he had cut down every male in Edom. This is the great days of Joab.

Kill them, kill them all. Hey, dad, fled to go to Egypt. This is kind of like the stories of, you know, the little boy that is rescued when the rest of his brethren are being slain.

Well, he escapes and goes to Egypt. He and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him. Hey, dad, was still a little child.

It's sort of a reverse story of deliverance. So they arose from Midian and came to Paran. Now, do these names ring any bells at all? Egypt, Midian, wilderness of Paran.

This is sort of reversing, this is retracing the exodus and the deliverance of Israel, isn't it? Israel went down to Egypt to escape the famine and Moses brings them back. Moses comes out of Midian. They dwell in the wilderness of Paran for a while in the wilderness wanderings and come back up.

And so what is God doing? God is sort of granting the blessings of deliverance to the adversary. There is an exchange. The blessings that are supposed to go to you are given to your enemies and the cursing that's supposed to be on your enemies comes on you.

Gave him a house, a portion food for him, gave him land. Hey, dad, found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh. It's like Joseph when he went down there.

Great favor in the sight of Pharaoh so that he gave him as wife, the sister of his own wife, the sister of Queen Tophanias. And great hash has been made out of trying to date this based on who was Queen Tophanias. We don't have time to go into all that.

But the sister of Tophan bore him Genubath, his son, whom Tophan weaned in Pharaoh's house. Weaned in Pharaoh's house. I mean, does this not just clang a big bell that God is granting deliverance and blessing and growth and potential down in Egypt to not-Israelites, to the alternate to the Israelites, to the Edomite instead of the Israelite? There is sort of an anti-Israel.

There's an anti-Exodus. There's an anti-deliverance. There's an anti-blessing.

Following on the heels, God has brought Israel to the very pinnacle under Solomon. And here's its antithesis coming after it. So when Adad heard in Egypt that David rested with his fathers and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Adad said to Pharaoh, let me depart that I may go to my own country.

Pharaoh said to him, what have you lacked with me that suddenly you seek to go to your own country? What have you lacked with me that you want to go back to your own country? What did Solomon lack from God that he wanted to go back to satisfying the carnal desires of his heart? This is just fraught. He answered, nothing, but do let me go anyway. I haven't liked anything here, but I just, I gotta go.

I got no good reason. I'm just going anyway. God raised up another adversary.

And notice you don't get the, what's the conclusion of Hadad? It just breaks off. God raised up another adversary because the details are what we're supposed to be concentrating on. God cuts off the story so that you say, well, what? And you go back and read it again and look at all these details.

Another adversary, reason the son of Eliadah, who had fled from his Lord, Hadad, he's your king of Zobah. He gathered men to him, became captain over a band of raiders. When David killed those of Zobah and they went to Damascus and dwelt there and reigned in Damascus.

Notice these things go back to the days of David. Things that David had done and that Joab under David had done are being undone. The fabric is being unraveled.

The tapestry is being de-threaded here that was woven in the days of David. God is sponsoring this. God is allowing this.

God is bringing it to pass. Why? Solomon makes a bad shift in priorities. This isn't just a sin.

This is evil. This isn't a one-time failure. David had some spectacular one-time failures, didn't he? Nothing worse than the murder of Uriah and the adultery with Bathsheba.

But was this a pattern in his life? Did he get down in dust and ashes and repent? Did he mend his ways? Yes, he did. The only thing that was a pattern in his life was not raising his sons properly, not disciplining his sons. And that resulted in perpetual discipline.

Same thing here. Solomon establishes this pattern. He has these wives and he keeps them.

And he dotes on them and he caters to them. And he sponsors their idolatrous worship. So God brings these adversaries.

He was an adversary, verse 25, of Israel all the days of Solomon, beginning at about the 20-year mark when the critical mass is reached and all of this false worship and this building of high places. All the remaining days of Solomon. This guy is an adversary.

Trouble. He abhors Israel and he reigns over Syria. Now, Syria doesn't invade.

Syria doesn't conquer. Syria doesn't burn and pillage. But it's building.

There's this hatred. There's this festering potential building. Then in verse 26, Solomon's servant Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zereda, whose mother's name was Zerua, a widow, also rebelled against the king.

This is what caused him to rebel. Solomon had built the millow and repaired the damages to the city of David. The man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor.

Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, made him the officer over all the labor force of the house of Joseph. The labor force of the house of Joseph. It happened at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem.

The prophet Ahijah, the Shilonite, met him on the way. He had clothed himself with a new garment and the two were alone in the field. Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him and tore it into twelve pieces.

When's the last time we saw a garment torn? And when Saul reached out, tried to grab Samuel, the garment was torn. Samuel said, God is tearing the kingdom away from you and giving it to a better man. Shades of torn cloaks.

He said to Jeroboam, take for yourself ten pieces. For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you. He shall have one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem.

That's one tribe beyond his own. He actually, Ahijah keeps two of the pieces. He gives Jeroboam ten.

He gets Benjamin. And of course, Ephraim, who are the sons of Rachel? I'm sorry, of Leah and Rachel with Jacob. There's the ten sons with Leah and there's the two sons of Rachel.

I think I said Rachel earlier when I met Rebecca, the mother of Jacob and Esau. But who are the two sons? Joseph and Benjamin. And Joseph gets the double portion.

And so he divides into Ephraim and Manasseh. Jeroboam is from the tribe of Ephraim. So that's a Joseph tribe.

But the Benjamin tribe stays down there with Judah. So, because they have forsaken me, verse 33, and worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, Milcom, the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways to do what is right in my eyes, keep my statutes and my judgments, as did his father David. Why were these people under condemnation from God when the Israelites came to this land under Moses and Joshua? For worshiping these very same deities, for sacrificing their children to Molech and on the high places to these false gods.

I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of my servant David, whom I chose because he kept my commandments and my statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you, ten tribes. To his son I will give one tribe that my servant David may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for myself to put my name there.

I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires. And you shall be king over Israel and shall be, if you heed all I command you, walk in my ways and do what is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as my servant David did. I will be with you and build for you an enduring house.

Now, who was the first guy to get this promise? If you keep my statutes, I will be with you and build you an enduring house. Who was the first king to get that promise? King Saul, who was from the tribe of Benjamin. David gets this promise.

Solomon gets this promise. Now who's getting the promise? Jeroboam. And what tribe is he from? Ephraim.

Is it a foregone conclusion that it's a matter of birth and it's a matter of what tribe you're from? What determines your fate in God's plan? If you keep my statutes, if you walk on my ways. Doesn't matter what you were born with. Doesn't matter what hand you are dealt circumstantially or genetically.

What matters is what are you going to do with the Word of God? What are you going to do with the opportunity to exploit and fulfill your relationship with God? This guy is an Ephraimite. And God says, look, if you'll do what the Benjamite didn't do, if you'll do what the Judahite is not doing, your master Solomon, I'll make a dynasty out of you. I'll turn the Ephraimites into a dynasty.

Of course, Jeroboam is not going to do it either. I will be with you and build for you an enduring house as I built for David. And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.

Solomon, therefore, sought to kill Jeroboam. Where have we seen that before? God promises somebody the throne and the currently sitting occupant of the throne decides he's going to kill him and thwart the purposes of God. Solomon knows that Ahijah the Shilohite is a prophet of

God.

He knows this is the Word of the Lord. And what's his reaction? Does he go to God and repent and fix the cause of this prophecy? No. He tries to extinguish the guy to whom this promise is given.

So, how the mighty have fallen. How far has Solomon come from the days when he was seeking God's face and praying the prayer of dedication in the temple? And in 20 years, he goes from full to empty. He goes from far right to far left.

Now, the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? Yes, they are. Where is that book? What did God do to that book? If Solomon had stayed the course, had been faithful, we would have the book of the acts of Solomon. We'd have 67 books in the Bible.

God did to the acts of Solomon what he did to the people of Amalek. Wiped out the memory. All of the acts of Solomon and his wisdom is lost to history.

Why? Other than what's here in Kings and Chronicles, why? Had an evil heart that departed from the Lord. And God snuffed out all of that accomplishment and glory. The period Solomon reigned in Jerusalem was 40 years.

Solomon rested with his fathers, was buried in the city of David, his father. Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his place. And Rehoboam, he thinks that he's as big around as a waste compared to his father's little finger.

Not quite going to get there. That's where we'll pick up next time. But in conclusion, these things are written for our instruction.

I don't have to elaborate on how important it is for us to not just hear the Word of God, but heed the Word of God. Don't let the love of other things divert us and distract us and deflect us and ultimately defeat us like it did Solomon. Nobody had a better start than Solomon.

And nobody ends more ignominiously than Solomon. Starting with so much and ending with such a whimper, frittering away his kingdom and his wisdom and his opportunity and all of his acts, blown away. Nobody knows anymore what they were other than these little quick notations.

And the only reason these are there is for the sake of his father, David, because it is fulfillment of the promises to David. That's preserved. But it's only the fading glory of David that overshadows Solomon.

And Solomon on his own falls apart and God cuts it off. We have infinitely greater promises. We have infinitely greater potential.

And it is up to us to make the decisions that will allow God to bless us and to give us an

inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. This life is short. Eternity is long.

It is worth thinking about that investment. Let's close here in prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for these powerful examples that rebuke and correct and instruct us. As we face our own distractions and our own temptations, we pray that God the Holy Spirit will bring these things to our mind at the point of decision, at the point of application, so that we will have every opportunity to live our lives in a way that is pleasing in your sight and glorifying to the Lord Jesus. We pray it in his name.

Amen.