

Kings and Prophets 13-04-19a

This is Friday the 19th of April 2013. We continue our study of Kings and Prophets. We'll be resuming in 1 Kings chapter 12 and also be in 2 Chronicles chapter 11.

Let's begin as is our custom by going to the Lord in prayer. Father it is a pleasure for the express purpose of studying your word for enjoying fellowship and the mutual encouragement that comes when we gather in the name of the Lord Jesus. We thank you for him.

We thank you for his work on our behalf, his ongoing intercession and his representation of us in your presence and for his soon return to take us to himself and to you. We pray that as we study this portion of your word tonight that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts, that each of us will find motivation and application in the things that we see, that it will make a difference in the way we live in the time that remains to us in this life. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. It has been two weeks since we met. I was sort of non-vocal last time, so if you remember two weeks ago when we looked at the decline and fall of the Solomonic Empire, Solomon began so well with so much from God and fell so far.

This is the scary thing. If you take your left hand and look at it, just take your left hand and look at it. Put your left hand out, look at it.

You see that flesh and bone right there? That's what Solomon was made of. It's the very same stuff. What we are made of, he was made of.

What he's made of, we are made of. We have been given so much in this age in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and we can fumble it away just as surely and just as certainly as King Solomon did. Two weeks ago, we looked at the remedy, the preventative, the thing to remember to not let this happen.

Do you remember what it was? It came in three parts. If you want a nice alliterating memory aid, you can use the letter A. The first step is to analyze. You can't figure out what the status is if you don't stop and analyze it.

Businesses subsist on reports. How much cash did we take in? What was our expense? What's our balance sheet? What's our profit and loss? What does the accounting system tell us? Are we gaining or are we losing value or ground or opportunity or success? So step one is analyze. Step two is ask.

Our perception is flawed. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? Who can understand their own heart? We fool ourselves.

We tell ourselves convenient fictions and make things better than they are. So to gain an accurate picture when we are analyzing and when we are in need of God's viewpoint, we ask.

Ask and it shall be given.

Seek and ye shall find. Knock and the door shall be opened unto you. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.

My son, if you will receive my words, you remember all the rest of Proverbs chapter 2. That's the key. Take some time. Set aside.

How important is it? Do businesses spend any time at all looking at their P&L and looking at their balance sheet and looking at the receivables and payables and that to the extent that they don't spend time on that? To that extent, they are going to fail and disappear. It needs to be a priority. You look back over the last day, the last week.

How much time have we spent in self-judgment? If we judge ourselves, we would not be judged. We love to judge others whether they are near or far. We look on the TV and we judge people.

Look around in our periphery and we judge people. Scripture says the judgment that you are using to judge others is the judgment that is going to fall on your own head. So, one idea is why not be a lot more conservative with judgment and not be so quick to judge, not be so quick to punish, to be judge, jury, and executioner.

And maybe if we are more reserved in that regard, God will be more reserved in judging us. Ask is the second step. Analyze is the first step.

We've got to stop and allocate that time. Set aside some serious time to say, in the different areas of my life, in my family relationships, in my social relationships, most importantly in my relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, am I living out the priorities that I tell myself I have? Analyze, number one. Ask, number two.

And then, number three, apply. If God answers that prayer when He answers that prayer and shows us our hidden faults, shows us the wicked way that He has found in us, we've got to make a change. This was based on our passage last time, 2 Chronicles 7.14. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, humble themselves.

That's the analyze stage. Humble means I'm not looking out for number one. I'm going to subordinate and subjugate my wishes and my desires and look for something higher and something better and something more eternal.

I will humble myself under the mighty hand of God. Let Him exalt us in due time. If my people who are called by my name, God says, I own you.

You belong to me. Therefore, your priorities should be my priorities, capital M. If my people who are called by my name, that double statement of possession and identity will humble themselves, that's the first step. You're not going to get anywhere with the rest of them if

humility doesn't pertain at the beginning.

And then do what? Pray, and seek my face. That's the analysis, the asking God for wisdom as we look at ourselves. We need God's insight.

We need God's Holy Spirit to convict. We need God's word to divide to the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow and to judge the thoughts and intents of our heart. So we begin with that goal of self-judgment, self-analysis.

We ask God. We pray and seek His face. That's the second step.

And then the third step, apply and turn from their evil ways. We don't need to turn from good ways, do we? We turn from evil ways. We turn from our wicked ways.

God says, then I will bless. I will heal. I will build up.

That's what we covered last time. That's our review. Second Chronicles 7.14. Don't forget, if you tune out at this point, remember that class.

This is part of the basics. This is part of the fundamental skills. When you say, I am a Christian, I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, this is our basic functional task to stop and remember who we are and why we're here and perform these three simple operations.

We'll never succeed in pleasing God in our life if we leave any one of these out and if we don't do them in this order. Well, we saw what happened in the life of Solomon. He did not remain faithful, started out great, given so much, given more than any king, past, present or future by way of not only physical wealth and attainment and prosperity and opportunity and peace, but also wisdom from God, insight, the ability to perceive, to ascertain, to judge, to know what is the better thing.

And he frittered it away, fumbled it away, got it out of his head. He got distracted, distracted himself. You cannot have 700 wives and not be distracted.

You cannot have 300 concubines and not be distracted. You can't marry the daughter of Pharaoh and not be distracted. And he did all of these things.

And so we saw that he comes to a bad end, a sorry end. And then in chapter, depending on if you're in 1 Kings or in Chronicles, you have the death of Solomon. God says, I'm going to tear the kingdom, but I will not take it out of prosperity and out of peace in Solomon's time.

For the sake of David, Solomon gets a pass. And so in chapter 11, the rest of the Acts of Solomon, all that he did and his wisdom was written in the book of the Acts of Solomon, a book which has perished. We do not have, and you can see the reason why.

So we pick up in 1 Kings chapter 12, Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. What do we know about Rehoboam? Well, you have his name to

begin with, Rehoboam, and in Hebrew this means, you can look at the end of it, Am, A-M, that's the word for people. Am means people in Hebrew.

And Rahab, R-A-H-A-B or V, there are a couple of different meanings or homonyms you might say for that construction, but the best construction of this name is the people are numerous. The people are numerous. And I think this is quite an ironic name for Rehoboam because the nation of Israel really reaches a zenith of population in Solomon's day.

And Solomon is looking around and when Rehoboam is born he says, you know, my wives are numerous, my concubines are numerous, my children are numerous, the people of Israel are numerous, I'm going to name this child, the people are numerous. And so he does, Rehoboam. But pop quiz, what's the first time in the Bible there's a statement about the people are numerous? First time in the Bible, when men began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born unto them, Genesis 1, sons of God, daughters of men, situation arises which causes God to bring the flood, right? When men began to multiply, you've had a whole bunch of genealogy and multiplication and guys that are creating industries and musical instruments and founding cities and all of that, but it doesn't say men began to multiply outright until Genesis 1. So I think there's a little bit of a harking back.

You've got to watch out when there's too many people. This is my instinct from childhood on. Lots and lots of people, this is the wide road going through the broad gate that leads to destruction.

I just think if there's lots and lots of people, if something is exceedingly popular, there's probably something wrong. That's just my personal sort of fear. I don't like being in crowds, I don't like being shoulder to shoulder with lots of people, I don't like parades, I don't like movie theaters, I don't like malls, I don't like aggregations of very many people.

I mean that's just me personally, it just gives me the willies. Here you have biblical support for that very healthy instinct. The people are numerous.

When the people are numerous, watch out. When your church gets too big, watch out. When a crowd gets too big, watch out.

When huge swarms of people all think something is good, like television programs, political parties, you name it, there's all kinds of evil with which crowds are fraught. They take on a life of their own and it's typically not of God. You find God in the minority and in the small places and in the simple things and in that which is least in so many cases.

I can't think of a case where you find God because that's where the crowd is. Usually the crowd is drowning outside the ark while the six people inside are being delivered. That's the motif.

So it's a caution at least. It's not a surefire rule. There's many times when all the two million march out of Egypt and that's under the blood of the Passover lamb.

That's a good thing. Of course they all die in the wilderness except two. So crowd dies, two go in.

But there's significance here. Rehoboam's name means something. As you follow this in chapter 12, we saw Rehoboam consulting the elders and he got the advice that he did not follow.

He consults the young men and they say, your father was harsh, you be harsher and this is a recipe for disaster. Who did he not ask for advice? He asks the elders and he asks the youngers. Who does he not ask? Who's available in the periphery that might be a good guy to ask? Ahijah.

Ahijah is a prophet. What's the name of our series? Kings and Prophets. We've had the prophet Nathan ministering to David.

Now we have another prophet on the scene. We saw this at the end of our study last time. The king in verse 15 of chapter 12 of 1 Kings, 1 Kings 12.15, the king did not listen to the people for the return of events was from the Lord that he might fulfill his word which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

And we saw that word. He tears his cloak into 12 pieces and he gives 10 of them to Jeroboam and he says God is going to take the kingdom away from the house of David. But he's going to preserve part of it for David's sake and to fulfill the promise that he made to David that he would not lack a son on the throne.

When all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, they rebelled. What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel.

Now notice, of all of the possible things that they could say, what do they say? When they depart and leave, what's their beef? We have no inheritance. In Greek, what would the word be? Meros. No inheritance.

What's the motivation to stick with the son of David? Recognizing that with him there is a future. There is inheritance. What is it that's the quickest path to losing sight of God's will and God's plan and God's purpose? I don't see the inheritance.

I don't see the upside. I don't see a future. When they say inheritance, they're talking about the future, aren't they? We have no future with the son of David.

And of course, they've got a legitimate beef. This guy is a bad king. He's bad out of the box.

He's David's grandson. Grandpa David, he says. And he's a rascal.

He's unwise. It is as though God took the wisdom for the next several generations, gave it all to Solomon, and these guys are born without two neurons in their head to rub together. Now why would this be? Here's a question for you.

Of the 700 wives and the 300 concubines and all of the offspring that no doubt arose from these too many to count or list, there is a list of the descendants of Solomon in Chronicles. Which one is going to be his heir? Well, if he had a son with the daughter of Pharaoh, there's tradition and fables saying that she left and took the son with her back to Egypt and he's not around to become the next king of Israel. I don't know.

The Bible is silent on that score. But apparently Rehoboam has been identified as the eldest and therefore the next in line. Who is Rehoboam? Where does he come from? Out of the 700 wives, who's his mother? Well, she is Naama.

Naama. What is her heritage? Is she from a family in Bethlehem? Is she from the tribe of Judah? Where is she from? We know from 1 Kings 14.21 and 31 and 2 Chronicles 12.13, she is an Ammonitess. Where do the Ammonites come from? Moab and Ammon are brother nations by incest.

Lot's daughters, remember that? Moab, Ammon. Well, Naama is an Ammonite gal and her son is Rehoboam. So, you begin to see why Rehoboam is such a complete flake.

Now, here's my question and I promise you, you will not have probably seen this coming. There are lineal descendants and this is just the first of a long line that we're going to have in both the northern and southern kingdoms of bad kings that are nevertheless descendants, right? And then there are good guys who don't end up with the throne, who are also descendants. We go back to, remember several weeks back when we were looking at Perez and Zerah and Zerah really seems to have the wisdom and the heart for God and his sons, the Zerahites, seem to have been the teachers in the tribe of Judah and perhaps wrote these Psalms that we looked at.

Yet, it's Perez that ends up getting the status of first born. You come down to this time and are you telling me that out of 700 wives, Solomon didn't have a son? Well, it's not that Solomon didn't have a son like himself. Remember, David had several older sons that God moved out of the way.

Absalom does not take the throne. Amnon does not take the throne. Adonijah does not take the throne.

God ensures that Solomon gets the throne. Well, why didn't God continue to do that? Why didn't he do it for Solomon? But here's my real question. If you turn back, there is a wonderful prince in Israel that we know by name.

This prince is a brave and courageous warrior. He is faithful to his father. He is faithful to the nation.

He loves God. He loves the people of God. There is not a bad word said about him anywhere in Scripture and his name is Jonathan.

If Saul is a bad king and Jonathan is a wonderful man of God and God has made these initial

promises to Saul and said, if you'll be obedient, I will establish your throne and your dynasty in Israel and you say, well, he's a Benjamite. Well, leave that aside. God could have easily had Jacob pronounce the throne for Benjamin instead of Judah.

God says Judah because he knows what's going to happen down the road. Why doesn't God give Jonathan a shot at the throne? He could have let Jonathan reign and then switched it over to Judah. What about Jonathan? You've got these rascals like Rehoboam and Jeroboam and on down the line, they're terrible kings.

Manasseh, Ahab, these guys are awful. Here's Jonathan, a man after God's own heart and you say, you know, when God finds a good man and a man who loves him and is faithful and has character and integrity, he'll move heaven and earth and bless that guy. What's Jonathan's fate? He suffers the exact same fate as his father Saul.

He dies on the slopes of Mount Gilboa. So is God fickle and arbitrary? Does God bless some good guys and not others? Are we fated by birth to be out of the line of blessing and no matter how good you are, you can be a Jonathan who David loves like a brother, but sorry, born in the wrong tribe, got the wrong father, can't quite overcome that family heritage. Sorry Jonathan, you die an ignominious death, get your head cut off, hung on the wall just like your father Saul, who is one of the worst kings Israel ever had as well.

So what do we say about this? Why is there a Rehoboam and there's not a Jonathan on the throne? Well, this question is actually pertinent and it has an answer. We're going to pause and take our break and when we come back, we're going to look in scripture and see because are we stuck because of our family or our circumstance or our genetical heritage? Genetical is not really a word. Our genetic heritage, our heredity, are we limited by the deal of the cards and well, if you happen to be a Jonathan, it doesn't matter how faithful you are, you're just never going to quite get there.

Is that what we learn from that example and in comparison to Rehoboam? Rehoboam has the right family. He's got the right genes. It doesn't matter that his mother is an Ammonite.

He's a son of Solomon, so on the throne he goes. What is God up to here? Well, I think it's a really interesting question and it's one that does have an answer and so we'll look for that when we come back from the break.