

Kings and Prophets 13-05-10b

We pick up our study now in the Kings and the Prophets, and we're going to turn back from Chronicles, where we're trying to sort of catch up with developments down in the south, to resume looking at Jeroboam, and we find ourselves in 1 Kings chapter 14. 1 Kings chapter 14. Now, we just saw that down in the south, Rehoboam appointed his son, who? Abijah, to be the next king.

So, we'll see how he does, because we've seen that Rehoboam is going to die and be gathered to his people, and his son Abijah began to reign, reign 17 years, and so on. So, we're back up in the north now, in 1 Kings chapter 14. Let's read this and see what's going on up north.

At that time, Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, became sick. So, we potentially have two king Abijahs, sort of like one guy and then his evil twin, maybe, sitting on the throne at the same time. This would be extremely confusing, but let's keep reading.

Jeroboam said to his wife, Please arise and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I would be king over this people. Remember that? Ahijah tore the mantle.

So, he knows Ahijah is the real deal. Funny, all of those priests and things that he appointed up there, he didn't go pray to the golden calf to find out. When things get serious, he knows who the real God in Israel is.

And he knows the only place he's going to get a good answer is from Ahijah, the prophet of God. But, he also knows that he's King Jeroboam with Ahijah. Right? He's on the outs.

He's driven all of the godly people out of the land and has refused to let any of them serve as priests. And so, there's a little difficulty with going and saying, Hi there, I'm Jeroboam, or the wife of Jeroboam, or I'm the servant of Jeroboam. So, normally this would be the job for a high state official, or Jeroboam himself.

Remember when Saul went to see the witch of Endor, he wanted some information himself. Jeroboam's not going to go because Ahijah knows his face. Jeroboam's not going to send any kingly officials because Ahijah is liable to tell him to get stuffed.

So, he says, okay wife, Ahijah doesn't know you, so you disguise yourself and go there and just act like a poor woman and say, I've got a sick child, is he going to live or die? And maybe God will give him the answer without telling him who you are. What kind of a nutcase is he? Well, he's Jeroboam, he's nutcase enough to defy the living God. So, wife, go disguise yourself, go to Shiloh, Ahijah the prophet is there, told me I'd be king over this people, take with you ten loaves, cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him, he will tell you what will become of the child.

Now see, remember in Romans chapter 1, where it says that men willingly suppress the truth in

unrighteousness, what may be known of God is manifest to them, but they suppress the truth. They know the truth, but they don't like the truth, and they push away the truth. That's what Jeroboam is doing.

So, he can't send gold and a bunch of big presents, or it would give the game away. Who are you, disguised woman, that you have all of this loot? So, he says, just take some bread, act like you're a normal woman in Israel, you baked him a cake, you brought him some bread, and a jar of honey, just living off the land, you're not a royal personage, and see what he says. So, Jeroboam's wife did so.

She arose, went to Shiloh, came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age. See what time does to you? Time is evil.

And he's got cataracts, real bad. He can't see out the inside of his eyes at all. Now, the Lord had said to Ahijah, before she ever got there, this is the thing that God does for you.

If you prepare your heart to seek the Lord, God prepares in His plan and purpose deliverance in advance of the problem. Before the woman ever showed up, God came to Ahijah and said, look, here's what's about to happen. Here is the wife of Jeroboam coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick.

Thus and thus you shall say to her, for it will be when she comes in that she will pretend to be another woman. Now, thus and thus. This is a great thing.

We'll find out what it is that God said to tell her. But in the story, we're not ready to reveal that yet. So thus and thus you shall say to her, she's going to pretend to be somebody else.

So it was in verse six, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, come in, wife of Jeroboam. And of course, she probably, you know, she doesn't know the guy's blind. Jeroboam doesn't know he's blind.

This has happened. You know, Jeroboam hasn't really kept track. He's heard somewhere that Ahijah hasn't died yet, and that's about all he knows.

So this blind prophet says, come in, wife of Jeroboam. Now, why is the blindness of Ahijah even mentioned? What's better, physical sight or spiritual insight? Spiritual insight trumps physical sight every time. Man looks on the outward appearance.

God looks on the heart. God will impart to us what we need to know, what we need to say, and what we need to do, if we have prepared our hearts, if we have sought him, and it doesn't matter what external circumstances look like. You think, well, the poor blind prophet, how is he going to know which one, what if some other woman comes in? God has already told him.

She's apparently just outside where he says, here is the wife of Jeroboam. So he gets this word just seconds before she comes in. And that's all he needs.

He doesn't need his eyes. He's got something better. The Lord God in heaven is his eyes and enables him to see past appearances.

What's the point of a disguise for a blind man? If you were going to trick-or-treat without dressing up, you go to some blind person's house, you don't have to be dressed up. They can't see it anyway. So it was when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door.

Now, notice she didn't knock and he got up and opened the door. She just walks on in. This is your type of house that they had in the ancient world where there's sort of an outer courtyard and then an inner chamber.

And people could sort of freely come and go in your outer, sort of like having your patio in the front. And there's actually a doorway and windows and things, but there's no glass in the windows. So she just comes on in.

She comes out. This is like the house's reception area. We have an entry or something.

Well, this would be open, and people would come there and kind of holler, Hey, are you home? And they would come in. So that's what she does. But before she even speaks, he says, Hi there, wife of Jeroboam.

Why do you pretend to be another person? And, of course, by this time she can see his face and he's got these glazed over eyes. And she's saying, I haven't even said a word. You're blind.

A, you know who I am. B, you know I'm wearing a disguise and you're blind. I could have saved myself the trouble.

What's going on here? Well, you know, she's already going to be in an awestruck state because he clearly has sight beyond the mundane and the earthly. Why did you pretend to be another person? I have been sent to you with bad news. I want you to notice all the italics in your Bible.

If you read this without the italics, Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend another? For I sent to you bad. Kind of punchy, isn't it? It's very emphatic in Hebrew.

She thinks that she has made the trip to Shiloh to see him and he says, I am sent to you. I sent to you? That's bad. You know, you don't want to be hearing from me, wife of evil king.

Go tell Jeroboam, thus says the Lord God of Israel. This is the authority and the origination of the message. This isn't just the prophet's idea.

Because I exalted you from among the people and made you ruler over my people Israel and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you. And yet you have not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments and who followed me with all his heart to do only what was right in my eyes. Again, you see a little bit of italics in there.

Gave it to you and you have not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments and who followed me with all his heart to do only right in my eyes. What did we see in our first lesson tonight? Jeroboam did evil. Why? He did not prepare his heart to seek.

What is the judgment on Jeroboam? You did not keep my commandments and follow me with all your heart. Really the same idea, isn't it? You're either living life to serve God and please Him or you're living life to not serve God and please self. It's really the only two options.

You have done more evil than all who were before you. Now, let's stop and think. This would be something if you were down around Zedekiah or Josiah or toward the end of the whole era of the divided kingdom and you say, wow, look at all these kings, you're more evil than all of them.

Who's gone before him? Who was before Jeroboam as king of the northern tribes? He's the first one, right? So you say, well, we got to go back to the United Kingdom. Who was before Jeroboam in the United Kingdom? How many kings preceded Jeroboam? There's Saul, there's David, and there's Solomon. Now, Solomon isn't noted for doing evil.

David isn't really notable for doing evil. Saul did a little bit of evil. And so when it says you've done evil more than all before you, is this all kings or all people? Who is all? It's kind of an open question.

But look at the context. I gave you the kingdom. I took it away from the house of David and gave it to you.

He kept my commandments and followed me with all his heart to do right in my sight. You have done more evil than all who were before you for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke me to anger and have cast me behind your back. Cast me behind your back.

What did Jesus say to Satan when he was trying to tempt him? Well, he said several things. What did he say to Peter when Peter tried to keep him from going to Jerusalem and going to the cross? Get thee behind me, Satan. Right? A little trick question both in the asking and the answering.

Behind the back is disdain. Why does God call Israel a disobedient and stiff-necked people? We looked at that term stiff-necked and what does it mean? Showing the neck, which means they have put God behind them. Stiff-necked means people who have put God behind them.

It has nothing to do with whether you can turn your head or not. It has everything to do with the direction you're facing. Have cast me behind your back.

Now this, you would think, oh, I would never cast God behind my back. Well, have we prepared our hearts? Are we seeking? Are we walking in the ways of the Lord with all our heart? It's one or the other. There's not a lot of middle ground here.

We are either pro or anti. We're either on the up escalator or we're on the down escalator. You do not stand still.

The thing moves. We say, oh, well, I'm sort of maintaining an even keel here. I'm not a bad person.

I'm not a particularly great believer, but, you know, there's a lot of people who are worse than me. It doesn't matter. This is not a relative grade.

God says, look, you are not like David. I've given you this opportunity. I've given you responsibility.

From those to whom much is given, much is required, and you have failed. Therefore, behold, verse 10, I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. Now, who's talking to whom here? Why is he talking in the third person? The person changes, doesn't it? In verse 7, 8, and 9, I exalted you from among the people, made you ruler over my people, tore the kingdom from the house of David and gave it to you.

You have not been as my servant, David. You have done more evil than all who were before you. You have gone and made for yourself other gods and have cast me behind your back.

Now, that's the personal part of the message. That's second person. But look at how it changes.

Therefore, behold, I will bring disaster on your house. No, it's the house of Jeroboam. Why does it change? Because this is the format of a royal decree.

A royal decree doesn't have any second person in it, does it? This is God's policy in heaven. This is what has been announced universe-wide. And this is sort of like reading a sentence, an edict.

The house of Jeroboam is going to come under disaster. I will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free. I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam as one takes away refuse until it is all gone.

Ouch! I'm going to take out the people in your house like I'm taking out the trash. Basket by basket. Dumping it in the dumpster.

This is harsh. And you think, well, could there be some other people in the house of Jeroboam that might be okay? Keep reading. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field for the Lord has spoken.

No matter what you do in the house of Jeroboam, something is going to eat you when you die. Dogs are going to chew on you if you die in the city. Birds and buzzards and carrion eating beaks are going to have you for lunch if you die in the country.

Now, does this literally mean that every single person was eaten by a dog and eaten by a bird? What does it mean? This is metaphorical language meaning they will die in disgrace, they will

be dishonored, they will be treated like the trash they have become because of their spiritual, not just apathy and indifference, but outright rebellion. The house of Jeroboam follows the lead of Jeroboam. If you don't like where Jeroboam is going, get out of the house.

Arise, therefore, go to your own house. He's talking to the wife now. Go to your own house.

When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. Yikes, it's a child. And the child is going to die before she can see it.

She's not ever going to see him alive. As soon as she hits the city limits, the child's heart is going to stop beating. Nothing she can do about it.

It is a divine decree. Notice, all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he's the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because, now look at this, in him there is found something good toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. The only good person.

God has already researched. Why is he pronounced this judgment on these people? Is it just because of Jeroboam? Look at this closely. I would put a star by this verse.

You need to think about it. People say, well, God is just so Calvinistic and arbitrary, and one guy screws up and all of his descendants are condemned, and the second and the third generation of them that hate me, and the children are paying for the sins of the fathers, and these guys are all out of luck because Jeroboam messed up. Notice, God has already evaluated everybody in the house of Jeroboam, and he has pronounced this judgment on all of them except one.

Out of the entire house, there was one person that had some good toward the Lord, and it's this child. What is God's reward to that child? He's going to deliver him out of that family through death. This death is a deliverance.

He's going to have a peaceful death. He is going to be delivered into God's righteous and just hands for further disposition, but he's not going to have to live surrounded by, there's not another person in his family that cares anything about God. Can you imagine the lonely existence, hungering for God, nobody to tell you the things of God? All you've got is golden calves and false priests and evil upon evil upon evil, and this child, there is something in the child that is seeking the Lord, that's looking for the Lord, and the Lord says, you know what? I'm going to have to take that child in death to deliver him out of this household.

Now, God could deliver him any one of a number of ways. He could have sent a hijacker up there and say, take the child. He could have walked out, none of the guards could have touched him, could have all been paralyzed, but there's a point here for us.

It's not always a tragedy when someone dies an untimely death. This is a deliverance. God says, I'm taking this child in death because I find something good in him.

You don't find that striking. There's one person in your house that I find something good in, and he's going to die first. Human thinking wouldn't work this way.

Well, if he's good, I've got to raft him away, send a couple of angels, grab him by the hair of the head like Ezekiel, and go drop him down in Judah where he can get training and nurture and admonition of the Lord and get him out of that evil household. God says, no, I'm going to kill him. We think, harsh, cruel.

No, God gives this child a deliverance out of that time, and that child is going to be somewhere else. He's got good in him toward the Lord, so do you think he's extinguished? The whens and the whys and the hows are open to conjecture or speculation, but God says, I find something good in this child. That's why he's going to die, and he's going to be buried.

He's the only one in the household that's going to get a burial. I wasn't being totally facetious when I said in the first session, or somewhere in the vicinity of it, talking about whether being cremated or buried, I was thinking about this passage. This child isn't going to be torn by dogs, isn't going to be torn by birds, it's going to be buried.

God says, this child is honored. He's going to be buried in the earth. Everybody else is going to be torn to bits, scattered.

This child is going into a grave, and he's the only one in your household that's going to get that. Why? Because there is good in him toward me. It's a deliverance, and the grave is a memorial, it's a reminder that this child is going to be raised.

We rest in hope, hope of the resurrection. Gathered to your people. When the resurrection day comes, this is why Abraham wanted to be in Machpelah, with Sarah and all the rest of them, because raised with your people.

Rest with your people, raised with your people. It doesn't mean you have to be geographically there, guys that die in combat. There's all kinds of guys scattered across the Pacific and the Atlantic, and gone up in flames in everything from spacecraft to industrial accidents.

It is the symbolism of it. It's the idea of it. The last thing you can do with your mortal remains is leave a message for subsequent generations, if you want to.

If you choose, you can leave a little message. I'm waiting right here for the Lord, or my ashes are remaining right here, or the rock that represents my former presence on the earth is here. However you want to do it.

It doesn't change the way you're raised, depending on how your remains are disposed of. But, if you have a sense of family, if you want your family, a lot of us can go back and find anything from parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-greats, three greats, and they're in a Christian cemetery with a Christian motto on their tombstone. You know they were believers in life.

You know they rest in hope as believers in death, waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's a heritage. It's something for later generations to remember.

Well, I know what they're saying now, but all of my people believed something else. So, am I going to choose what my family and my forebears believed, or this stuff they're spewing at me out of the Internet and the philosophical liberal atheism and secularism and materialism that surrounds me today? Am I going to believe people going back into the mists of the past who lived their lives and brought about the world as we know it and loved God and tried to live to please God, or am I going to believe a bunch of strangers telling me a bunch of stuff that they made up in their own heads? So, it is an encouragement. It's not an ironclad argument just because your parents believed a thing or your forebears believed it doesn't make it true.

A lot of people had Buddhist and Muslim and all kinds of other forebears. But, there is an opportunity to leave a testimony and a witness behind us to subsequent generations. And this young child, his testimony, he's just a child.

We know his name and we know that there was something good in him toward God. But, it's a memorial. It's in the eternal Word of God.

This child, he had no idea that he'd be written down, that everybody in subsequent generations would know his name for thousands of years. He couldn't possibly have imagined it. And yet, God honored him here and said, I'm going to deliver this child out of your evil household.

It's going to be through death, but he's going to be buried and none of the rest of you are. He is going to excel, his father, his brothers, and everybody around him. Dogs are going to eat everybody else and the birds.

The Lord will raise up for himself. Let's go back to verse 13. All Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

He's the only one. Moreover, the Lord will raise up for himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam. This is the day.

What? Even now. The Lord will strike Israel as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which he gave to their fathers and will scatter them beyond the river.

That's the river Euphrates. Because they have made their wooden images, provoking the Lord to anger. Now notice, did God not make promises to Abraham and to his descendants? They have the land promises.

They have the king on the throne promises. They have the promises all the way from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses. And yet, the fulfillment of those promises is lost.

Why? They did not prepare their hearts to seek the Lord. They did not follow the Lord. When he

gave them, just like this king, he gives them so much.

Gives them the bulk of the land of Israel and he totally messes it up. He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam who sinned and who made Israel sin. It's one thing to sin yourself.

It's something else to spread the malignancy. And anybody in a position of leadership has that potential to make others sin. Verse 17, Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, came to Tirzah.

When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. Apparently, their house was right on the outskirts of the city. She thought, well, maybe I can sneak in.

Sorry. Child died. And they buried him and all Israel mourned for him according to the word of the Lord which he spoke through his servant Ahijah, the prophet.

Now the rest of the Acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel. The period that Jeroboam reigned was 22 years. He rested with his fathers.

Nadab, his son, reigned in his place. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was 41.

You have the same information rehearsed that we saw back in Chronicles 12. Reigned 17 years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. Naaman and Ammonitus.

Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they committed more than all that their fathers had done. They built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, wooden images on every high hill under every green tree. Perverted persons in the land.

They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam. Remember, he did pretty good the first three years.

Then he started kind of falling off the wagon, accumulating wives and concubines and so on. Fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak came up, took away the treasure. King made the bronze shields, the rest of Acts of Rehoboam.

All that he did, written in the books of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah, there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. Rehoboam rested with his fathers, buried with his fathers in the city of David. Then it's repeated for us again that his mother was Naaman and Ammonitus.

We've got that note at least three places in just the passages we've looked at. And Abijam, his son, reigned in his place. And so we've got Nadab up north, and we're going to have Abijam

down south.

That's where we will pick up next time. But as you look at the episodes, it doesn't really matter where these people are. The fact that the kingdom has divided doesn't excuse people in the north from their responsibility to seek the Lord.

And many of them did. They went down to Judah, but unfortunately for them, things weren't a lot better in Judah because wickedness is increasing down there. And so the righteous man seems to be sort of perishing off the earth.

You say, well, the whole reason I left the north was to get away from this idolatry and wicked practice. And here they are doing the same thing down here. What is the key? God can deliver us wherever we are.

Circumstances don't matter on the outside. Circumstances on the inside matter. So what is the key? Prepare your heart to seek the Lord.

Seek the Lord. Observe His Word and follow it with all your heart. The one who has my words and keeps them is the one who loves me.

I and my Father will come to Him, make our home with Him. The Holy Spirit is already there. What sort of life do you think is in store for someone who has got the triune God dwelling in their midst, in their household, in their heart, looking out for them, maintaining fellowship and guidance and encouragement and comfort and strength for whatever the task at hand.

It doesn't really matter what the circumstances are. You might be John the Baptist in prison. You might be Elijah by the brook chariot.

You might be Joseph in prison. You might be Daniel in the lion's den. You might be in a period of prosperity.

You might be doing well. You might be in the kingly mansion with plenty of provision. You might be Ezekiel down there at the river Kabar with the captives.

Externals really don't matter that much. When you've got the Lord God with you and in your midst, this is the path of blessing, fulfillment, genuine happiness, bright future, opportunity, preparation, potential, everything that the human heart longs for is found in God and only in God. All else is fruit hanging off the forbidden tree.

All else ends in failure and destruction, death, separation and disaster. So the choice seems rather abundantly clear. Why is it that we don't make it? We do not spend enough time meditating on passages like this.

Examples like this. Illustrations like this. This is the Word of God that is alive and powerful.

All these things have been written for our instruction. So as we think about it in the days and

weeks ahead, let's do something different. Let's rise above the crowd and be the few, the proud, the narrow road, straight gate believers that are dedicated to finding life and fulfillment of God's plan and purpose for us.

Not very many people are doing it. Let's be different. Let's make the Lord Jesus glad that He went through what He went through to redeem us and to save us.

Let's express our love and our appreciation for Him by dedicating ourselves to not making these mistakes and instead being that remnant that doesn't bow the knee to Baal and we're going to see in these coming chapters that there are those believers still scattered. Why does God not just wipe this whole bunch out? Because there are still some people and He'll preserve the kingdom so that they have a place to live. He'll preserve the kingdom so that He can bless them.

He'll preserve the kingdom so that He can give them victories. And despite the wicked kings, despite the disintegration of the society and the aberrations and corruption of worship, these people are going to be blessed and they are going to be a blessing. And that's kind of where we find ourselves in this day and age.

So we'll see that in our upcoming lessons, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for these wonderful illustrations from the historical past of how Your provision and Your blessing are available regardless of where we find ourselves, what surrounds us, what is going on above us or below us or around us. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will take these truths and use them to convict us and to exhort us and to encourage us to lay hold of these wonderful potentials and opportunities that You have made available through the Lord Jesus Christ so that we can live our lives in a way that pleases You and glorifies Him.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.