

Kings and Prophets 13-08-09a

This is Friday, the 9th of August, 2013. We are studying Kings and Prophets in the Old Testament, currently located in 1 Kings in the vicinity of chapter 20. We'll take a moment, as is our custom, to dedicate our time and our concentration to the Lord and ask His blessing on our fellowship and our study, and then we'll begin.

Father, it is very comforting to know that You undergird us, You hold us in Your hands, You preserve us by Your grace, You provide for us, You encourage us, You test us, You teach us. We thank You for Your fatherly care for us and Your patience with us when we fail and as we recover. We thank You for the gift of Your Word and the presence of Your Spirit that lifts us out of the common and the ordinary and the mundane, the temporal, the ephemeral, and brings us into realms that are divine, that partake of Your truth, that prepare us for a future together with You and with the Lord Jesus.

We thank You for Him. We thank You for His work in spanning the gulf between our lowly estate and Your heavenly throne. We thank You for the forgiveness of our sins, the redemption and the reconciliation that He effected for us on the cross.

We thank You for the fact that You're personally involved in human history and in our individual lives. And we pray that as we study Your Word together this evening that You will bless us, that You will bless the truth to the encouragement of our hearts, that each of us will find something meaningful, something helpful, something motivating and encouraging in the portion of Your Word that we examine together tonight. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. We have reached a very interesting part of the forward progress of the history of the divided kingdom. And this is the eruption or the inauguration of the very visible, notable, and unique ministry of the prophet Elijah.

There have been men of God that have appeared and delivered a word sort of occasionally, but the sustained and miraculous nature of Elijah's ministry has not been seen since the days of Samuel. And we don't associate miraculous events with the first prophet in Israel after Moses. The earlier prophets in their prophetic role were imparting the Word of God, communicating, transmitting the Word of God.

Moses goes to the mountain, he comes down and says, this is what God spoke. Samuel is largely an exhorter. He calls Israel back.

He hears the Word of the Lord and he anoints the two kings. He is the conscience and the divine voice speaking largely to King Saul during his lifetime. You have the Ebenezer event.

You have the disposition of the house of Eli. But in terms of prophecy combined with miraculous intervention by God, Elijah is really an innovation. He's kind of a new thing.

We began looking last time at the relationship between the prophet and his successor. We're anticipating a little bit because we haven't come to Elijah. That will come to the fore when we get to 2 Kings.

But we noticed that there is a very undeniable and unavoidable, once you start looking at it, link between Moses and Elijah, Joshua and Elisha. And this is intriguing. It peaks our interest a little bit.

I mentioned the names last time and how those names tend to tie them together. There are so many similarities, as I mentioned last time, between Moses and Elijah in terms of their idea associations, the association of Moses not only with communicating the Word of the Lord, but with the provision of bread, the provision of water, and even the provision of meat. These things are not one-to-one parallels.

They don't come in the same way or for the same reason. But they're hooks. They're memory stickers.

When you think of Moses, anybody who knows the story of Moses knows about the manna from heaven, the bread from heaven. Everybody knows about the water from the rock. Everyone knows about the flight of quails and the meat and the people perishing with the meat between their teeth and the completely different contexts and different reasons.

But when you find those same badges associated with Elijah in terms of going to the brook Cherith and any time of hardship and a time of famine, suddenly there is bread for him, and there is water for him, and there is meat for him. But in each case, and this will make all the vegans happy, there is sort of a negative connotation with the meat. The first time the quail, people are eating the meat, and then they perish.

And it's like, uh-huh, see, you should have been a vegetarian. Then you get to Elijah, and who's bringing him the meat? The water comes through a natural stream. The bread and the meat, however, come with the ravens, which are unclean birds.

And you think, see, it's an impure, unclean arrangement. He's not getting manna from it. Why didn't manna fall? But these are basically just hooks so that we can tie a string between Moses and Elijah.

And lest there be any doubt, these things are written for our instruction. It would have been much more difficult for someone in Elijah's day to say, you know, he really seems to be a lot like Moses. It's much easier for us because of the way the account is structured.

And honestly, I care a lot more about what you and I glean from this than what the original day people might have done. It's interesting to speculate and to calculate what they would have understood, should have understood. But we live in the present, and the reason we're studying this is not to figure out what they should have done with it, but what we should do with it.

And so we have the benefit as well of New Testament hindsight. Mount of Transfiguration comes to mind. The Lord Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

But when you begin to think about this idea that there is one guy who begins a work and another guy who finishes it. And at the center of this sort of chiastic structure perhaps, you have Moses with his Joshua. You could imagine possibly David with his Solomon, maybe sort of in there in the center.

Then you have Elijah with his Elisha. Is there anything outside of that, I ask myself? And not to stretch or to press these things beyond what they legitimately suggest. You can easily get off into sort of an allegorical mode where you start seeing pairs of people behind every burning bush.

But if you go back a little bit, there is actually an interesting pair, a guy who began and a guy who finished even before Moses and Joshua. And this wouldn't immediately come to your mind, so I'll just tell you what came to my mind and you can say, I don't think so. Enoch and Noah suggest themselves to me for this reason.

Who are the only two men who are approved in the pre-flood generation? Why didn't Enoch build the ark, I ask myself? What's the matter with Enoch? Why can't he be the ark guy? Why does it fall to Noah? It was every bit as evil and degenerate in Enoch's day. And look at how great a guy Enoch is. Enoch walked with God.

And he was not, for God took him. Well, with Enoch gone, somebody has to stand up for righteousness and for truth and for obedience and for deliverance in sort of the vacuum left by Enoch. And Noah is the counterpart.

Enoch is sort of an ideal. You get the idea that if he walked with God, what would be the result of that? Does anybody walk with God and not communicate the word of God? Think about Moses. Is Moses similar to Enoch in the sense that he is closer to God than anybody else in his generation? It doesn't say Noah walked with God.

It says Enoch walked with God, right? Joshua didn't go up into the mountain and talk face to face with God and come down with a shining face. Moses did that. There is the communication, the close fellowship with God that brings the word of God down to where people can access it.

And then there are people that take that and do something with it. You see, this is the pattern I'm suggesting. And if you think it's a reach or a stretch, you may be right.

But this is how I see it. This is what suggests itself to my mind. You go back, Enoch walked with God.

Where does the information come from? How does Noah know how to do a sacrifice? How do people know anything about God at all? How can Noah be upright and perfect in his generation and be a righteous man and be grieved at the iniquity around him if somebody hasn't taught

him about God? Who did the communicating? Who would you expect would do the communicating? Is there any point in walking with God and not sharing the truth that you learn from God as you walk with Him? Because our contact with God results in knowledge. We're going to see that, by the way, in some of our supporting passages here. But bear with me at least, and just for the sake of argument, think of Enoch who walks with God.

I think there is an inevitable transfer of the glory of God and specifically the truth of God as a man walks with God. And Noah is a beneficiary of his lineal ancestors' fellowship with God. But Noah does something with it.

Noah builds the ark. Noah implements God's means of deliverance for the human race. And he's more of a doing guy.

Come down to Moses. Moses, after a lot of other things, but centrally and primarily, goes up into the mountain and comes down with the law of God and with his face shining. He has been with God.

The truth of God comes back with him. That truth is given to the people. Who's the guy that affects deliverance in the light of that truth? Who's the one that takes that truth on board and implements it in a practical, delivering way? It's Joshua.

He's the one that takes the people into the land. He's the one that generals them through their battles, through their successes and their failures, and makes that word tangible reality in terms of deliverance. Now, if you look at this, just like Noah did, you come down to the days of Elijah and Elisha.

And we're going to hold this notion, this idea, this pattern, in a prominent place while we look at the details of Elijah and then Elisha as we go through here. But let me just extend that pattern a little bit forward because, and actually I probably skipped a little bit. If you want to include David and Solomon, you think about David.

Who writes the Psalms which reflect the divine side of truth, the heavenly side of truth, the one-on-one aspect of truth? It is my relationship with God. Lord, be with me. I'm surrounded by my enemies.

You prepare a table before me. You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over, over and over again.

You have the penitential Psalms. You have the deliverance Psalms. You have the songs of David in particular that David is walking with God.

You get the sense in his ups and his downs that it is his communion with God that is precious and that is the fount from which all of this wonderful truth flows. Solomon takes that truth and makes a kingdom out of it. He inherits the things of his father David, and even his writings are practical outworkings.

He's got the Proverbs. He's got Ecclesiastes. He's taking this divine truth that has come in more of a vertical fashion through his father David and spreads it out in a horizontal fashion much as the waters of the flood spread and recede under Noah, much as the conquest of the land spreads and recedes beginning with Joshua, and much as we're going to see the truth of God come to the northern kingdom through Elijah and then Elisha in our current context, I would suggest to you that there is another very interesting manifestation of that pattern afterward.

Remember Moses, and God is with him. The spirit of God is upon him. He leads the people out of Egypt, gets out into the wilderness, but pretty soon the task is quite large, and what happens? If you remember in Numbers, there is the, let me make sure I have my passage right, I believe we're going to be in Numbers chapter 11.

Keep your finger here in 1 Kings, and just turn back to Numbers chapter 11, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers. What we're looking at here is that as the nation grows and becomes laterally spread out, if you will, there is the complaint from Moses, I am not able to bear, verse 14, I am not able to bear these people alone because the burden is too heavy for me. If you treat me like this, please kill me here and now if I have found favor in your sight, and do not let me see my wretchedness.

Remember that? The manna comes and people are weeping and so on, and Moses in verse 11, why have you afflicted your servant? Why have I not found favor in your sight that you have laid the burden of all these people on me? So what is the solution, beginning in verse 16? The Lord said to Moses, gather to me 70 men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be elders of the people and officers over there, and bring them to the tabernacle meeting that they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. He doesn't say, I will talk with them there, does he? He says, I will talk with you there, Moses.

Then what? I will take of the Spirit, capital S, that is upon you, and will put the same upon them. And they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone. Then you shall say to the people, Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat.

For you have wept in the hearing of the Lord, saying, Who will give us meat to eat? So, when you get down to verse 24, Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord, gathered the 70 men of the elders of the people, and placed them around the tabernacle. This, of course, is the origination point for your Sanhedrin, your council of 70, that persisted all the way down to the days of Christ, and somewhat beyond. That there is going to be a council of elders in the nation to which people can appeal and get decisions and guidance on matters that rise above the local level.

Then the Lord came down, verse 25, in a cloud, and spoke to who? To him. Not to them. Spoke to him.

The Lord is still speaking to Moses. And took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the 70 elders. Then what happens? This is the real interesting part here.

See if you can figure out where we're headed from this little detail. The Spirit came upon the 70 elders, and it happened when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again. It's a fascinating detail.

The Spirit came upon them, and they prophesied when the Spirit first hit them, but they never did it again. Why? Why is this? Why do you think? What would your speculation be? Well, just make a note of that. Because there is a difference made here.

They have a part of the Spirit, and when the Spirit comes upon them, as a sign that the Spirit has hit, they prophesy. But now that that point has been made, they don't prophesy anymore. The point is made.

These guys are commissioned, they are provisioned, they are enabled, if you will, by the presence of the Spirit, to help with the burden of administration and adjudication of the people. So what are they going to do now? God speaks to Moses. This is policy, this is law, this is statute, this is commandment.

These guys are going to do what? Interpret and apply. Right? That's what they're going to do. That's what the Seventy do.

Lots of people can come to them for interpretation and application. They don't come up with new truth. They don't go to God and say, Hey Lord, I've got a case here.

What do you tell me? God speaks to Moses. These guys interpret and apply. By the way, this is a tradition in Judaism down to the present day.

It is the firm belief of rabbis and people of the synagogue persuasion that God spoke to Moses and He gave the law and the early interpretations of that by the old masters, the old guys, the Rambam and the early rabbis that became Mishnah and Talmud, that that is authoritative. Think Catholic Church. Think apostolic succession.

Think Jesus spoke to the disciples and ever since then. See, in Israel, in Judaism, they have the idea that these Seventy elders are the first generation and ever after this torch has been passed on and that these particular chosen few have a special portion of God's Spirit to interpret the law and that's why their opinions are held in such high esteem in Judaism. Mishnah is held in many cases as high regard as Scripture itself.

The oral interpretation of the law handed down from earlier guys is held in very high esteem. Obvious parallel to the Catholic Church. The word of the Church is pretty much as good as the word of the Lord in the Scriptures.

And it's just a human notion. But here's the clue. Look at the end of that verse again.

They prophesied when they first got the Spirit, but they did not do so again. Why? Does this mean that as these guys die off and new guys join the council of Seventy, so to speak, that

they're going to suddenly be, you know, well we took a vote and white smoke up the chimney, you're the new elder to take the place of Ben Hadad that died here, and is he suddenly going to get struck with the Spirit and prophesy? No. Nobody prophesies again when they join this group.

What's the purpose of the Spirit coming on this group? They're the first ones. And in the course of this first generation, when everything is new, the law is new, the implementation of it is new, they have a special dispensation of the Spirit to help get the thing off the ground. Not only is prophesying not going to happen again, but this imbuing or enduing with the Spirit is not going to continue among the elders.

You can't infer or imply from this that all of the successive elders in Israel got a special portion of the Spirit. There's no scripture for that whatsoever. It's this group.

Why? Because they're the first. And they work out the protocols and establish sort of the overall policies and this is how we do it. It doesn't mean that their interpretations become inspired, but their organization and administration efforts persist.

It's kind of like the Founding Fathers put together the three branches of our government and we operate on that ever since. We don't take every decision the Founding Fathers ever made and treat that like inspired scripture, but they structured the government. They got us going.

They created the institutions that change and adapt over time and grow and expand as governments tend to do. There is a picture here. Let me just review quickly for you now.

I started with Enoch and then Noah. And Noah, even after the flood and after the deliverance, is the originator and the architect of a lot of early things in civilization. He's the go-to guy, right? He's a practical implementer.

You come down to Moses and then Joshua. Joshua doesn't write more legislation. Joshua sets up those institutions, apportions the land, makes decisions, settles disputes and conflicts in the light of the law that was given to Moses.

Solomon does much the same thing under the truth of David. Elisha is going to do much the same thing as we will see after Elijah. And interestingly, when you come down to the Lord Jesus Christ, this to me is the ultimate.

All of these other patterns lead up to this one. The Lord Jesus is Enoch. The Lord Jesus is Moses.

The Lord Jesus is Elijah, who has spent personal time with God in the ultimate sense. He is God. He's the Son of God.

In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God. But the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

It is Moses down from the mountain. It is Elijah delivering the Word of the Lord. It is Enoch

communicating to his generation what he learns as he walks with God.

But it's ultimately fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. Now, what happens afterward? Just like Enoch, just like Moses, just like Elijah, they are going to leave. And in particular, do you see why I suggest Enoch sort of a supernatural exit? Enoch disappears under mysterious circumstances, as does Moses, as does Elijah, as does the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, now you begin to see, I think, where we're going with this. Was there 70 elders who received a temporary impartation of the Spirit when the Lord Jesus left? You've got the 11, plus Paul, right? They are the ones who bear the burden when the Lord Jesus is away. He's unable to do so.

He's going to be elsewhere. So, you've got this first counsel. But just like those 70 elders didn't establish an unbroken succession of Spirit-filled, authoritative guys, they just get the thing off the ground.

The same is true of the apostles. And this is another demonstration of the understanding we have that apostolic succession, as it's understood in the Catholic Church, is not legitimate. Any more than a rabbinical succession would be thought legitimate in Israel.

This was a one-time thing. They prophesied, but they did not do so again. They got an initial kickstart.

It primed the pump. It's the capacitor button on your dryer to get the thing spinning. You don't stand there and hold the button on from now on.

You got the initial extra burst of energy to get the thing rolling. Now you can let off. You accelerate until you get up to speed.

Then you back off of the gas. That's what's happening here with the disciples. But here's the most interesting thing.

Enoch has his Noah. Moses has his Joshua. David perhaps has his Solomon.

Elijah has his Elisha. Who does the Lord Jesus have? Himself, but it's his body. He is the head of all things to who? Us.

This is where the application comes in because we look at this pattern. What does Noah do with the information from Enoch? What does Joshua do with the information from Moses? What does Elisha do with the pattern and the prophecies of Elijah? What do we do with what we have learned from the Lord Jesus Christ in this day and age? We are the implementers. We are those who spread out horizontally with the practical outworking of this message.

Where do we see the inception and the archetypal patterns? In the writings of the apostles like what the 70 elders did. That's what our New Testament is. That lays out the concepts, creates the structure within which we make those practical decisions and those practical applications

that they could never be expected to foresee.

We are not apostles. We don't need to be apostles. The Lord Jesus commissioned them to get the church rolling.

Then he and they are off the scene just like Moses and the 70 elders were off the scene but now the nation is started. So in terms of application for you and for me, we recognize that the Lord Jesus Christ is the author of our salvation. He is the one that has walked with God.

And it is the truth that he brings to us specifically in this age and in this dispensation along with all of the other truth that we inherit from the other earlier dispensations but primarily for us the Lord Jesus, he is our Moses. He is our Elijah. Moses brings the initial revelation from God.

What does Elijah do? What's the thrust of his ministry? And this kind of gets back to the whole reason we're reviewing this is so we can understand 1 Kings. What is Elijah doing? Calling for renewal and return. Revitalization, repentance, restoration.

What did the Lord Jesus do when he came in his role to Israel? I am sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I'm here to bring them back to the fold. This is why Moses and Elijah stand on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Because the Lord Jesus is Moses and he is Elijah. A good teacher in Israel brings out truth new and old. Right? That's what Jesus said.

And so he sums up all of these partial... It's an echo but it's beforehand. I don't know what you call an echo before the real sound. They're previews.

They're foreshadowings. They're anticipations. In all of these earlier... Here's the beginning where the truth is given and then here's the effect that it has.

When the spirit hits the elders they cannot help but prophesy. But they don't keep on prophesying. Now they are equipped to do a practical job.

In the church age we started out prophesying because the spirit hit. But now what do we do? We don't keep waiting for the spirit to hit. And this I think also answers a lot of questions about Pentecostalism and Holy Spiritism.

The overemphasis on pneuma and on miraculous manifestations of the spirit. They prophesied when he first hit but they did not do so again. Numbers chapter 11 verse 25.

It's the same pattern in the church. When the spirit hit the church people prophesied. But they do not do so again.

After that first generation, after the pattern is set by your elders, after the power is given in the presence of the spirit, we are now in the Noah, Solomon, Elisha, Joshua role. We are those who take the truth and bring it into practical reality, practical deliverance. That's our job.

We are the Lord Jesus' Elisha. We are the Lord Jesus' Joshua. We are his alter ego, the double portion.

Remember what Jesus said in John chapter 14 verse 12? Just before we take our break, just flip over to John 14. This will be our go to the break verse. Remember how John 14 begins? Let not your heart be troubled.

Philip said, Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. What has Jesus been doing for the entirety of his ministry? You've seen me, you've seen the Father. Have I been so long with you, and you have not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, show us the Father? Here's the Lord Jesus, the night before he's going to be betrayed, arrested, crucified.

This is the last class of the semester for the disciples, and it's as though Philip just now showed up. How can you say this, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does the works. Jesus, like Moses coming down from the mountain with the shining face, communicates this truth from the Father, and the disciples are going to be the ones who transition from that phase into the practical daily living of that truth, just like the elders for Moses.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me, or else believe for the sake of the works themselves, because the goal is to get to the works. Most assuredly, look at verse 12, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will do also, and greater works than these he will do, because I go to the Father. Doesn't that make beautiful sense in the light of this pattern? Greater works than these he will do.

Elisha is going to do greater things than Elijah. Joshua is going to effect greater deliverances for Israel than Moses did. Moses is the get the truth guy.

Joshua is the we're going to take this truth and conquer the land guy. The Lord Jesus embodied the truth of God for us, transitioned it through the council of 70, the 12 disciples, and remember there were 70 in another point that went out, and 70 that saw him after he was raised. You keep seeing that number crop up, but primarily we have the New Testament Scriptures.

We don't know the names of the other 58 guys. What we know is what's been left to us as the practical interpretation and structuring of the truth of the Lord Jesus for us. What is it we're supposed to do? We say, well, we're supposed to be the church and greater works than these.

And if you want to see an interesting set of discussions, go to Google and put in greater works than these and look at all of the ideas of what people in the modern day think Jesus meant when he said greater works than these. There's as many answers as there are people answering, but I would suggest to you that this pattern helps us understand what the greater

works than these are, because what are the greater works that Noah did after the truth that came, I think, through Enoch? What did Solomon do from the greater truth that came through David? What did Elisha do, as we will see, with Elijah? And that's what's interesting about our study because we know what to watch for as we get into Elisha looking at Elijah, and it's going to inform us that this is what we're supposed to do. These are the greater works in the light of the truth of the Lord Jesus that's been communicated through him and structured for us by the apostles.

So I think it's going to be a really fascinating study, and I'm looking forward to it. We'll get into it after the break.