

Kings and Prophets 13-12-13b

We pick up our study now in the book of 2 Kings, and we're at the threshold of chapter 3. And just as a reminder of what's on the other side of our chiastic structure, if you recall that center point in verse 11 with the chariot of fire and the horsemen of fire, I think those horsemen are probably some of the most neglected guys in all of Scripture, because chariots of fire running on the beach, and you've got Vangelis and the whole thing. But what about the horsemen? Well, just remember them for now. We're going to see them again.

You know the episode that we will eventually come to in the career of Elisha. These guys are not lost and forgotten. We're going to set them aside for now.

I'm going to save the discussion of the horsemen. But just keep in mind it's no accident that they're mentioned. Why isn't it just a chariot? Can God not make a chariot that can guide itself or can supernaturally be guided? Why are there horsemen? And here's the thing, if there's a chariot and there are horsemen, what else must there be? Horses.

The horsemen are not pulling the chariot, right? So you've got chariots and horses and horsemen all deployed in a fiery conflagration here to exit Elijah, stage left. Fire universally in Scripture represents one thing. It's kind of two things depending on which side of the fire you're on.

If you're in the cursed fallen world, what does fire do? It judges, it removes and eliminates that which is unholy. You remember your gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble, right? Some things can pass through the fire into God's holy future kingdom, other things cannot. What is God's throne surrounded by in symbolic terms? And perhaps in more literal terms that we can't comprehend.

What surrounds God's throne? Coals of fire, the seraphim, the burning ones and what is their job? What's our understanding of what these beings do? They are the guardians of the holiness of God. What do they say all the time? Holy, holy, holy. Nothing gets through the fire except holiness coming out.

Sin and evil don't go in. So, if a fiery chariot with fiery horsemen and fiery horses comes to take Elijah away, what does it mean? Why isn't it a golden chariot? Why isn't it a winged feathery chariot? Why isn't it a brass chariot? Why isn't it a wooden chariot? Why isn't it a cloud? A stormy tempest with no chariot? Why isn't it just the whirlwind? Why a chariot? Why horses? Why horsemen? I just give you that to chew upon, to digest, to work on. You'll have it figured out by the time we get to our next chariots and horsemen passage and it'll just be review.

So, here's the thing. As we come to chapter 3 and we see Jehoram and we see the revolt of Misha, we come upon some great extra-biblical material because this king, if you just read the first few verses here in 2 Kings 3, now Jehoram, the son of Ahab, became king over Israel. Who is Ahab's father? A little trivia question here, Bible trivia for extra credit.

Who is Ahab's father? Quick, quick, quick. Starts with an O, ends with Mri. Omri.

Omri. Very good. Omri.

His father is Omri. Omri is the father of Ahab. Ahab is the father of Jehoram, sometimes known as Joram.

Jehoram, Jehoram. It gets confusing because there are multiple guys in this time with the same name. Now, of all of the times to have people walking around with the same names, why does it have to be now? When is the last time you can remember that guys with the same names kind of showed up? Raise your hand at least mentally if you were here for the Genesis study.

Genesis study. If you haven't been there, you should go there. And one of the best parts of that study is the begats.

These are the generations of. Do you remember the Lion of Cain and the Lion of Seth? And do you remember that we kept running into guys with the same name on opposite parts of the branch there? And it had significance. And I don't have time to go back, and I can't frankly remember all of it now.

I need to go back and listen to it as well. But I remember this much. There was a great deal of significance in looking at the succession of names.

You remember what a fascinating study those generations were, those lines of descent and what the meaning of the names were and how it showed up over here and showed up over here. But it meant a different thing because of who begat whom, right? It is significant when the same name shows up. There's nothing in the Bible that is not significant.

There is not a particle. There is not an article. There is not a jot.

There is not a tittle that is not significant, purposeful, meaningful, and relevant. And we're just barely able to scratch the surface. We rub a little bit of the darkness off of the glass to see through.

One of these days we're going to be able to see face to face, and I can't wait. But right now it would just explode our heads. If we could see everything that's in God's Word, your head would explode.

Sometimes I think my head is going to explode just with the little bit that we're able to discern. But back to my point. In this time, things are complicated because there are two Jehoshaphats.

There are two Jehorams. There are two Ahaziahs. Now I ask myself, Self, why are there two Ahaziahs? Why are there two Jehoshaphats? And why are there two Jehorams? At this particular point in history where the prophet has a double portion of the spirit and a name almost exactly like the prophet that just went before.

And then I think, oh, that's why. Right? To emphasize, to draw attention to the fact that God is doing something special. There is this overlap.

And it's doubly confusing because these guys aren't in the same kingdom, are they? There's one in the Northern Kingdom and one in the Southern Kingdom. There's a Jehoram in the North and a Jehoram in the South. North and the South and North and the South.

And I think, hmm, why would this be? Well, there is a King Jehoram in Israel and there is a King Jehoram in Judah. There is a King Ahaziah in Israel and there is a King Ahaziah in Judah. And coincidentally, it is at this very time and in this very era where we have this double stuff going on with Elisha.

So, to answer the question I asked before the break, is our pattern and our concentric ring of emphasis around the fiery chariot with the fiery horseman and the fiery removal of Elijah to be replaced by Elisha with a double portion of the spirit? Is it going to continue? The bobblehead in the back of the car says, yes. Yes, it is going to continue. It is going to be significant.

This is a major point of emphasis in the Old Testament Scriptures. This is not a minor thing. This is a major thing.

If you put this on Letterman and he said, is it something or is it nothing? He and the guy leading the band would say, it is something. This is an important thing for us to know. Now, the next question I ask myself, okay, this is something.

I get the bull's eye effect. I see this. So what? Let me make a suggestion about the application and the meaning and the pertinence and, if I can use the term, the relevance for you and me of this.

Think about our other concomitant, coterminous, parallel, simultaneous study in Ephesians and, coincidentally, in Chapter 2 of that book, what have we seen? You Gentiles were way over here. We Jews were here. But we suffered an equal problem and were under the same condemnation as the others.

But at the confluence of the ages, at the perfect time, at the juxtaposition, at the concentric center, at the crossroads of history, God sent the Lord Jesus Christ and He broke down the wall of partition and He made the two one. What should happen in Israel at the coming of Elisha the prophet? What ought to happen? If there was ever going to be a reconciliation and a reuniting of the kingdom, not back in the days of the first Jehoshaphat, not in the days of Jeroboam and Rehoboam. It is at the time when God's prophet is given a double portion of the Spirit.

Why a double portion? Why not a triple portion? I want a quintuple portion of your Spirit. I mean, as long as you're asking, let's ask big. If I've got to forgive my brother 70 times 7, why not ask for a 70 times 7 manifestation? Why is it a double portion of the Spirit? Because there are two halves of the nation that need ministry and need to be reunited.

Where is Elisha when he comes back across the river? When he has gotten the mantle and has become the prophet with the double portion, where is he? He is on the line. He is in Benjamin. He's right on the line.

He's on the scene. He's walking this stitched scar between the northern and southern kingdom. What was the line that Elijah and Elisha traversed on that last day? Where were they? Were they in the northern kingdom or were they in the southern kingdom? They were right on the line.

They traced the border as they went from Jericho and Bethel and to the Jordan and back. That whole traverse is right along the line. What is it that could have and in typological terms should have happened with the coming of Elisha? It should have become one.

But what happens? There's double vision. There should only be one Ahaziah. There should only be one Jehoshaphat.

There should only be one Jehoram. But there are two because the two have not been... Have you ever done this with your eyes? You know how stereoscopic things work where it's on a flat sheet of paper. If you cross your eyes just right and if you get the two images... I don't want to scare you by crossing my eyes too hard.

But if you can get those two images to merge, you suddenly see depth. You suddenly see three dimension. You take what is flat and you make it three dimensional when you get those two things to merge.

Well, this is like double vision. This is... And it means something. What should have happened is not happening.

And hard on the heels of that observation comes the question, Why didn't it happen? We've seen this wonderful symmetry in this foreshadowing that... Here's Elijah with the law and Elisha with grace. Here's Elijah with condemnation and Elisha with healing and restoration. This is the first revelation of God through the Shekinah and through the law and Mount Sinai.

Here's the second revelation of God in the Lord Jesus Christ standing on the Mount of Transfiguration, on the Mount of Crucifixion, resurrected and in glory on the Mount of Olives. You've got this Elisha representing everything that is potential with the double portion of the Spirit. So what's supposed to happen then? There is healing.

There is the kingdom. And in the same way that when the Lord Jesus came the first time, the kingdom did not come in, Elisha comes and the kingdom doesn't come in. It's not restored.

The sons of David don't rule. It isn't a land flowing with milk and honey and plenty. Instead, you have 2 Kings 3. What ought to happen didn't happen.

Now, back to my earlier point in Ephesians 2, when Paul says, what has Christ done? What has happened that isn't happening in our passage when the Lord Jesus came? The middle wall of

partition is broken down. That which separates the old and the new has been broken down. And from the two, he makes one new thing.

One body. One Lord. One faith.

One baptism. One God and Father. Not 2 Jehorams, not 2 Ahaziahs, not 2 Jehoshaphats, not 2 kingdoms, not 2 rivaling factions with 2 different destinies and 2 different fates and 2 different judgments.

One. And that's what Paul is describing and we're going to see it on Sunday again as we continue in that chapter. The beautiful thing that God does in Christ in taking that separation away.

Now, think about the pattern. You want to talk about a pattern and emphasis. Let's start at Ephesians.

You had God's original Old Testament people of Israel and you have the new creation, the mystery that was never revealed before, which is the church. That God and Christ would reconcile the world. And so now you've got an old demonstration that is failure and judgment met with grace and restoration and opportunity and potential.

That's law versus grace, Israel versus church. You've got that there. And the Gentiles who were far off have been brought near.

Think about the grander picture, what has been called the angelic conflict. You have the old angelic order and you've got angels ascending and descending the ladder. They've got access to God.

They've got all of these things. And then here's mankind, created, almost immediately falls and is separated and is far off. And the angels looking at humankind is very parallel to Israel looking at the church.

There is some question and even some resistance. What do you mean that those who have been made lower than the angels are going to be raised with Christ to be crowned with glory and honor? To which of the angels said he at any time? Remember Hebrews? To which of the angels said he at any time, sit at my right hand? Angels have never had that privilege. There's a man sitting at the right hand of God the Father.

The pattern is the same. Angels and man, Israel. What do you think the angels are learning when they watch the church? What do you think the angels are learning when they watch women in church? You've got the man and you've got the woman and yet the woman is the glory of the man.

The bride of Christ is glorified in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. You think about the husband-wife thing that we're going to be

coming to in Ephesians.

When the man, Ken and I were talking about this, when the man comes into being, comes to life, his mother gives birth to him and he's raised in his household, everything is family, right? You're under the tent of the patriarch, you're under your father's house. You're the son of your father, right? You're ben adam, son of man, right? And your loyalties and your affinities and your affections and your duty and your service is all to that family, right? And it's built in. You inherit it.

You're born with it. You're born into your family. Your loyalty to your family is a given.

You don't get a choice of your family. What does Scripture say? For this reason shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife and the two shall be one flesh. The wife is like the Gentiles.

The man has no obligation to the wife by birth. This girl that he meets, this is by choice. This is by covenant.

This is a new thing. The two shall become one. She was on the outside.

She was a far off. That family, that household, that patriarchal tent had no obligation to this gal of any kind. But husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

Not as Christ loved Israel, not as God loved the chosen people. As Christ loved the church. Those who were far off.

Ephesians chapter 2, separate, in the grip of the world. Christ died and brought them into the fold. Now that girl who was a complete foreign unknown entity is now family.

Is now in and under all of that provision. It's the same picture. Whether it is marriage, whether it is Israel church, whether it is the angels and the human race.

These things all speak of what? What is the picture? What is the point of all of these things? What does God want to do with the northern and southern kingdoms? Where is the throne? Where is the holy of holies where God's Shekinah resides? Which kingdom? Judah. Who is He appealing to and who is He working with, with His prophets? All through kings. Israel.

Trying to bring them who have estranged themselves back in. It's part of the same picture. This ring of concentricity doesn't just restrict itself to this book.

It's the Bible. It's history. It's God's plan and purpose throughout the ages.

How great is the grace of God? How great is the love of God? The ninety and nine can be in the shelter of the fold. Where does the shepherd go? Well, ninety-nine percent. I mean, that's an A plus in my book.

Where does he go? The one who is outside the fold. And he rejoices more over what? The one that he rescued than over the ninety-nine that were safe. Because that's the heart of God.

That's the nature of God's grace. So, to answer the question, so what? Elijah, Elisha, so what? Israel and the church, so what? Angels and man, so what? Husband and wife. Think about what it means when Scripture says, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.

That he might present it to himself, a glorious church. The glory had always been in Israel. Where is the Shekinah? In Israel.

That he might present it to himself, a glory-filled church. A glorious church. Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

All of that which separated the Gentiles. The goyim, the uncircumcised, the unwashed, the unworthy. I shake the dust off.

Israelites wouldn't even go through Samaria, their kin. Much less the Gentiles. Without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

But that it should be holy. Holy, holy, holy. Qualified to walk right through the fire, unscathed and unharmed.

Why do the three friends of Daniel stand and the fourth, like a son of God, in the fire? The fire doesn't harm them, why? They're qualified. They are obedient. They are holy.

Their righteousness survives the fire test. Doesn't scorch their garments. They don't even smell like smoke.

Unscathed and unharmed in the fire. Then incinerates the guys that threw them in. It's all of a piece.

It's all the warp and woof of the fabric of God's plan. So what does it mean to you and me? How merciful and how kindly disposed should we be toward one another? Regardless of what our perceived level of spiritual attainment or advancement or position is. Look at what God did for the ungodly.

Look at what God did for sinners. For those who were far off and have been brought near by the blood of Christ. It is sacrificial love.

It is beneficial love. Completely unmerited. Completely unworthy.

That is how Christ loved the church. That's what God is trying to do in Israel. What is the missing element? Why doesn't it work? If this is the pattern and if it's working in history and it works in Israel church and it works in husband and wife and it works in all of these other areas.

Why doesn't it work in Elijah and Elisha? What's the demonstration? What's the missing piece here? It's two-fold. Because everything in this section is two-fold. In the first place, the people in these days do not have the Spirit of God as a gift and a blessing from God.

You can't get there with just the prophet having the Spirit. The prophet can have the double portion. The prophet can have the 70 times 7 fold.

But the Lord Jesus had as much of the Spirit in His humanity as any human body can possibly contain. What was the response of the people? Crucify Him. Because what did they lack? Only people who were obedient.

Only people who had advanced had the Spirit. There were so few. Jesus granted the ministry of the Spirit to His followers, to His immediate circle of disciples.

And in that power they went and did mighty things. But the nation, it wasn't a nation of Spirit-filled people, of Spirit-baptized people, of Spirit-empowered and enabled people. It wasn't a nation.

And couldn't be. And that is the problem here. So in this time, it doesn't fall within the realm of possibility for people to appreciate what God is offering.

They can't. And this is the ultimate demonstration. When you go out to the largest thing, what is the problem with the fallen angels? Satan says, I will be like the Most High.

I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I can run an alternate civilization. We don't need to be connected to God.

What is the Holy Spirit after all? He is our connection to God. When you have the Spirit of God, you are a son of God. That's a connection.

That's the connection. My relationship to God is through the Spirit. The Spirit cries out, Abba, Father, right? These people don't have that.

They have a formal connection. They have a covenant connection. But they don't have a spiritual connection to God.

And because of that, it is impossible. Carnal mind is at enmity with God. Carnal mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit because they are spiritually discerned.

And it is impossible. What do the angels learn when they look at this? When they look at Satan's best efforts? You know what I find fascinating is, in my view, with all of the unbelievers in generations before Christ, before Pentecost, what about the Chinamen? What about the Aborigines? What about the hot and tots and the people wandering around in Africa? All of these isolated places in the world. You think, this is a real problem for the Christian view that prior to Christ, you had all these people living and dying, just generations and dynasties of Chinamen and people throughout Asia and the muckluks up in the Arctic and everything else.

And what about these people? How could they possibly get saved? Are they just supposed to stare at the stars and somehow internalize Christ and express faith? No, they were never going to be saved. They are negative at the point of God consciousness. God gave Satan all of the people he could possibly use, gave him all the continents of the world, all of these different races, sizes, shapes, colors of people, gave the God of this world the entire planet full of people who aren't interested in God.

They've got the very same attitude Satan has. God didn't give them that attitude. God knew they would have it and had them be born and distributed them so that Satan could work his will with them.

Remember when Paul says, I'm going to turn the man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh? Why? Because the guy is negative, totally uninterested in the things of God. Paul says, this uninterested guy belongs in Satan's realm. So, give him to Satan, let Satan play with him.

See if he can make something out of him. God gave Satan all of the people of the earth, all over the earth, for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years. Why do you have the Inca? Why do you have the Maya? Why do you have all these other ancient civilizations rising and falling? Satan is trying, frantically it seems, to achieve what he can never achieve because there is no connection to God.

You watch that Mel Gibson movie with the blue paint and the hearts being cut out and the blood running down the ziggurats in South America and all of that? That's Satan's efforts. Look at the Chinese, look at the, everybody glorifies the samurai. The samurai were brutal, bloody, head chopping, arrogant.

Guys, you irritate me. I execute you with my wonderful samurai sword. It's bloody, it is authority without balance.

All of the ancient civilizations of the world fail, fall and crumble to dust because Satan has tried to do what he cannot do, which is succeed apart from God. God said, you know what, I'm going to take one tiny little postage stamp, I'm going to take this little tiny corner on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, I'm going to take one guy, what you can't do with the entire world, with billions of people in countless civilizations over eons of time across seven continents, I'm going to take one guy, I'll take one man, I'm going to take Abraham. You get everything else, this is like starting a chess game and saying, I'm going to take this pawn, you can have all 16 of your guys and I'm going to beat you with this one pawn.

And that's what God does because with the descendants of Abraham and the children of Israel and just those few, just the Daniels, just the Davids, just the Moses, just the Joshua's, just the few in those limited days with just a touch, just a portion of the spirit, just an endowment, just a, what am I trying to say, intermittent, just intermittent contact with the spirit. They don't keep the spirit all through their lives. They're not born with it and come out of their mother's womb and have it their whole life.

They're touched with it. They come in contact with it. It's just a moment, just these little touches, just a spark from God and the people of Israel are unconquerable, indomitable, undestroyable by everything else in the planet.

God has to deal with them because they're largely unfaithful and they don't take advantage of the things that God gives them. But just that little touch and then at the right time, God brings the Lord Jesus Christ and He says, all right, enough of this demonstration. Now let me show you what will happen with a spirit-filled people, a spirit-indwelt people and that giving Satan the whole world deal is over.

Now God says, I am going to make available to everybody in the world what I have done for the people of Israel and the sons of Abraham. I'm going to make it available to everybody and let's see what happens. And the gospel spread like wildfire through and across the entire world.

God no longer restricts people who are potentially going to be believers in Israel. Now they're all over the world and look at what happens. Lights shining in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

This is why your life and my life are so important in this age. We are salt and light. Salt, the salt in the bowl that gets thrown into the water and the bad water becomes pure and healthy.

A little salt. Looking at the covenant, looking at grace. We think, well, I'm not moving mountains.

I'm not evangelizing. I'm not making a big splash. I'm not publishing.

I'm not making an impact. People aren't being impacted by me, impacted by my life. You are that salt.

Your life counts every day. Every decision counts in this huge tapestry of history. This is the time where God is upturning and overturning all of the previous demonstrations of Satan.

All of his efforts, little old you and me in our fallen flesh, but we have the spirit of God just like Elisha. And in and through that spirit and with the word of God, our lives are not just dynamite. They are nuclear explosions in the demonstration of God's grace, God's love, and everything that God is going to do.

That's what's going on, believe it or not. And in this often neglected little part of the Old Testament, 2 Kings. Next time, when we come back and we look at one of the two Jehorams and we see his war with Misha, if you want to do a little bit of homework, look up the Moabite stone.

You've heard of it. You remember vaguely, oh yeah, Moabite stone, isn't that some kind of archeology? Misha is the guy that made the Moabite stone. So if you get a chance to look it up, read the content of the Moabite stone because we're going to be talking about it next time.

But this 2 Kings 3 is dynamite in the divergence from the optimum and the ideal of what Elisha could have accomplished had those people seen the opportunity. And this is the mistake you and I don't want to make. Don't be blind to the opportunity.

Don't miss the precipitous potential, the verge, the cusp, the edge of what you and I stand on through Christ. This is not the time to be blind. This is not the time to miss it.

This is the time to grab it. It's rare. It's precious.

It's unique. And you and I live in the greatest of all times with the greatest of all potentials. And if you want to see what happens when you miss it, read this chapter.

Because this is where, without the Spirit, without the vision, without the understanding, this is the catastrophic failure that ensues. And this is our warning. This is our don't go there, you know, the dumb criminal show.

Don't try to climb down the narrow chimney to rob somebody because you'll get stuck and die and be found as a desiccated corpse years later. This is our warning. Don't do this.

That's what's coming up in this chapter. But what tremendous blessings we have in Jesus Christ. The words of Scripture just tear and strain to try to give us the import of everything that we have in Christ.

And we'll be looking at it again Sunday morning in Ephesians chapter 2. But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ and for the inconceivably great blessings.

The expressions of your grace toward us are beyond our imagination. But the accommodation that you have made to us, the expression that you have given us is adequate and sufficient. We pray that we will not be distracted, that we will not be deflected, that we will not be led away from entering through this great door that has been opened through the veil, through the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To make those of us who are far off near, near to you most of all and near to all of the potential and opportunities that you have for us through the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in his name. Amen.