

Kings and Prophets 14-06-27b

We resume our study in 2 Kings, looking at the anointing of Jehu in 2 Kings chapter 9, which we find mentioned over in 2 Chronicles as well. But we have the details here in chapter 9, and before we proceed with the fate of the two kings and the forward movement of history in these kingdoms, we look at the particulars of the anointing of Jehu. This was the second of the three commissions that God gave to Elijah in 1 Kings chapter 19.

I had a very good question over the break, and the answer is something by way of review. This is something we covered several months back when we were in 1 Kings, but it's useful to bring it back to mind again. Elijah is given these direct commands from God:

Go to Damascus and anoint Hazael. Come back, secondly, and anoint Jehu. Then anoint Elisha.

Elijah did not do the first. He did not do the second. He only belatedly did the third after the trip to Jericho and across the Jordan, and you remember that whole interaction, and he seems very reluctant even at that point to release the mantle, let go of the office.

Were there any consequences? It doesn't seem as though Elijah was rebuked or in any way rapped on the knuckles for not fulfilling his commission. However, if you look at the sequence of events, because Elijah did not go and put these things in motion, because Ahab continues to reign as king in northern Israel, here's what happened. Hazael does not become king of Syria early on, and Jehu does not become king of Israel early on.

These things are going to happen later, and in the interim between when God gave the command to Elijah to effect these changes in regime and when they actually take place, there is a period of years. What happens during those years when these commands are unfulfilled? Well, Ahab is going to go up and defeat the Syrians. We don't know what that outcome would have been under Jehu, but Ahab is going to go up and defeat the Syrians, which is going to result in a treaty with Ben-Hadad.

It leaves Ahab on the throne, and of course you have the murder of Naboth, you have the continued reign of Jezebel. Micaiah would not have needed to prophesy to Ahab, because Elisha would have been the prophet for Jehu. Jezebel, the marriage and corruption of the kingly line down in Judah, the Athaliah marriage, all of these things might have been different if the regimes had changed when God told Elijah to go change them.

Because he didn't, and Ahab stayed on the throne, and Ben-Hadad stayed on the throne, history was changed. Now, God in His providences knew that Elijah was not going to do this. Nevertheless, the illustration is there.

If God had really wanted these things to fall out the way they did, why did He give the command to Elijah? He gave the command and it went unfulfilled, because it is a reminder to us. And this is just a good rule of thumb in daily life, is it not? When you are going through your day, and you run across something that needs to be done, you find something that needs to be put away. You get your car registration in the mail, and it needs to be put on the windshield.

You have a bill that comes in, and it needs to be opened and paid. Something needs to be done, and you think, well, you know, let me set that here, and I'll get back to it. In my personal anecdotal experience, it is always better, if you have any time at all, if you have occasion at all, do it now.

Do it while you're thinking about it. If you have it in your hand, and it needs to be put away, don't set it down where you are standing; put it away. That way, when you want to look for it again, it will be in its place, or someone else looking for that thing can find it.

Not in the weird arbitrary place where you secreted it, but in its actual place. Do it now. It is a biblical principle.

When it needs doing, do it now. Nine-tenths of wisdom is wisdom in time. If you wait, now you're relying on your memory.

Ask yourself the question: how reliable is my memory? Do you remember how reliable your memory is? Do it now. If Elijah had done the Word of God and the will of God at the time it was delivered, history would have been different. This is given to us as an illustration of what deferring and procrastination and rationalizing away at a more convenient season—come back at a more convenient season.

There is no more convenient season than the present. Stop and get it done now, if it's at all practical.

When these things do finally take place, Hazael is going to be king. Jehu is going to be king, but they're going to happen later, and the consequences are going to be later. The effects will be later.

Israel had the opportunity to receive the Messiah when He came the first time, but they were slow to recognize Him. How often does Jesus say to the disciples, "O you slow of heart to believe." Remember, that's one of the first things He tells them after the resurrection. "O you slow of heart, is this not the fulfillment of the prophets?" Didn't you think about this? Didn't you metabolize this doctrine, as an old pastor used to say? Didn't you process this and digest it and think of its consequences?

My encouragement is, when we come together and have Bible class and we learn things from the Word of God, the time to reflect on them and process them and figure out what they mean and pray over them is soon after the class. The next morning, the next afternoon, the next day. Sometime relatively soon to sit down and think through what we just learned.

Waiting a few days, waiting until right before the next class, a lot of it gets lost. Our hearts are like the old CRT television tubes. You scan across it and the phosphors glow, but very quickly it fades.

And very soon it is gone. It needs refreshing. It needs restoration.

It needs rehearsal and review. When you're studying for a test, one of the best things you can do is study. Go over your facts.

Set it aside for a short time, maybe a couple of hours. Come back and go over it. And that second time will really engrave it in your memory.

If you wait too long, you've lost the first pass and it doesn't do much good. If you do it too soon after, you don't get that benefit of it fading just enough that the review really sets it in memory. We cover a thing.

We let it percolate. Let it sink in, soak in. Let it germinate a bit.

Then come back and review it, water it. Think about its implications. Look up parallels.

Go over old notes that are on a similar subject, whatever it may be. The most important thing I'm going to say tonight is what I'm going to say right now with reference to Elijah and the command of God. If the Word of God is not the most important thing to us, our future, our blessing, and our spiritual progress are in great jeopardy.

God is not the also-ran God. God is not the, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with most of thy heart, with some of thy mind, and a portion of your strength." God demands full recognition, the top spot.

We can tell ourselves that God and His Word and His plan and His purpose and our relationship to Him is the most important thing in our lives. But look at where you spend your time. Look at your priority on reviewing what we learn in Bible class.

That is your actual priority. There are certain things that we have to do. We have programmed requirements in our day and in our week.

Beyond that, we have discretionary time. Look at the allocation of discretionary time. Suppose you're a fan of a television show such as Pawn Stars.

Suppose that you make sure every week when there is a new episode of Pawn Stars that you catch it. And if they happen to show one of your favorite previous episodes leading up to the new one, well, you catch that also. You've now invested, let's say, two hours of discretionary time in watching a favorite television show.

Harmless. No harm, no foul, no sin. Perfectly fine.

God gave us enthusiasms and the ability to enjoy them. There's not a thing in the world wrong with that. Here's the problem.

If I have not prioritized anywhere near that much time in thinking about what I have learned of the Word of God, in praying it out in my time before the Father, in asking God to bless it to my heart and to the nourishment of my soul, and to illuminate my path with it and help me to walk in a way that is pleasing in His sight, that glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, seriously, am I going to stand before the judgment and say, “Well, Lord, on that particular day I watched two or three hours of Pawn Stars and I spent not one minute thinking about Your Word or the truths that came out of Your Word in the previous week's Bible classes, of which I attended four. I didn't give it another thought until we reassembled the next Friday or the next Sunday”?

Think about it. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Do you think Elijah thought he was a great prophet? Do you think he thought about the top coming off of Mount Carmel any time he was thinking, “Well, have I been a good prophet?” Do you think he thought about the drought and about his faithfulness and about how he outran the chariots in the days of the persecution of Ahab and Jezebel? Do you think he went back to his great victories and justified himself and vindicated himself?

This is a colossal failure on his part. And when we get the glory, he'll be the first to tell you he should have gone and obeyed the Word of the Lord, and he didn't.

This stuff has been written down for our instruction. It's not just history. It's not just, “Wow, ain't that interesting.” It is here to correct, rebuke, and instruct us in righteousness.

There are consequences. We will be unprepared when the tests come. When it is time to be faithful and loving and supportive and an encouragement and a blessing to those in our periphery, like our family, our friends, our fellow church members, we won't be equipped.

We won't be ready, because we did not take the Word of God and have it incorporated into the fiber of our soul so that we're ready, so that we are able, so that we are enabled. God hands us the enablement; we set it there and say, “I'll get to that pretty soon, but you know my show's coming on. My favorite thing is coming up.”

“Oh, you know, I've got an appointment. I've got a date with an angel. I've got a wonderful thing I'm about to do here. I've got some stuff I really need to get cleaned up, and my tennis shoes need washing, and my stuff needs sorting. My sock drawer is just a mess.” Something is a pressing need of the moment, and that spiritual priority gets set aside.

Be wise in time. It doesn't take a lot. God doesn't require us to spend two, three, four hours a day in concentration, in meditation, in reflection.

A short amount of time yields a great benefit. Think about this. Out of a 24-hour day, take out eight hours for sleep, or however long you sleep, whatever hours are left.

Just take 15 minutes in a day. Fifteen minutes. It's a tiny fraction of the available discretionary time in the day.

If we did that every day, that's seven times 15, right? That's 105 minutes in a week, if my math is correct. One hundred five minutes, that's what, an hour and 45 minutes, something like that? Seriously? I can't find, in an entire week, an hour and 45 minutes outside of Bible class? A few minutes a day?

Ask yourself seriously, do I average even 15, 10 minutes a day sitting down without distractions, without anything else going on, in the privacy of my own soul, going to the inner chamber, going before God, thinking about what I've learned, pulling out my notes, or opening the Bible to the passage I was in, communing with God, in the power of the Spirit, being led into that truth, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, commissioned by God to live in this age, reflect His glory, walk the narrow road heading for the straight gate? That's why I'm here. That's why God gave me life and breath. Do I even average 10 minutes a day in a week, pursuing that purpose, and that identity, and that goal?

If we can't say that, Elijah is our wake-up call. The fire in the fiery chariot, I would argue, is a judgment fire. We either survive the judgment with gold, silver, and precious stones, or we contribute to a giant bonfire of chaff, wood, hay, straw. We decide. This isn't decided for us. It's not dictated. We're not strong-armed by anyone. Every single day, you and I decide.

So, think about Elijah. Think about these kings, who had all of the power, all of the service, all of the support, necessary to be Jehoshaphat on a good day. What is the epitaph? What is the result?

Well, as we turn to chapter 9 in 2 Kings, Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, “Get yourself ready, take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth-Gilead.” Remember Ramoth-Gilead in the first session. This is where the two kings went up and faced Hazael, and Joram was wounded. Ahaziah goes up trying to, you know, commiserate with him and support him.

“When you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi.” This tells us this is not King Jehoshaphat. It's a different guy. Why does this different guy have the same name? Why do we keep having two of everything? It's confusing enough with two Ahazels, two Jorams, now we get two Jehoshaphats.

What does Jehoshaphat mean? Shaphat means to judge. Yeho is Yahweh. Yahweh will judge. Jehu, the son of Yahweh will judge, the son of Nimshi. Go in—and son of Nimshi basically tells us this is not Jehoshaphat of the line of King Asa and so on—go in and make him rise up from among his associates and take him to an inner room. Then take the flask of oil and pour it on his head and say, “Thus says the Lord, I have anointed you king over Israel.” Then open the door and flee, and do not delay.

So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth-Gilead. When he arrived, there were the captains of the army sitting, and he said, “I have a message for you, commander.” Jehu said, “For which one of us?” He says, “For you, commander.”

Notice we've got the zoom lens on here. We're in real time. We're up close and personal. It doesn't say, “And behold, one of the sons of the prophets anointed Jehu, and he became king.” We're getting all of these intimate details. Years of a king's reign can be passed over in silence in Scripture, and here we're getting the blow-by-blow of this event.

And as we've seen, any time Scripture does this, there's fruitful spiritual gleanings in the details. “Which one of us?” “You, commander.” So he arose and went into the house, and the son of the prophet here pours the oil on his head and said to him, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel.”

Now, go back up to verse 3. What did Elisha tell the guy to say? At least, what does it tell us in verse 3? “I have anointed you king over Israel.” Now, Elisha actually gave this guy detailed instructions, which he is going to follow to the letter, and we're going to get the detail of the prophecy in verses 7 and following. But I just want to point out that Scripture often summarizes.

There are people who say, “Well, if Scripture says Elisha said this, then that's what he said, and that's all that he said,” when it is in fact a summary of what Elisha said, or just a topic of what he said. Elisha is going to give this young man the entire prophecy that he is about to repeat here in verse 7 and following, but it doesn't give it to us up in the preceding context, because the Bible wants us—God wants us—to see this as it strikes Jehu's ear.

“You shall strike down,” verse 7, “the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free.”

Both bond and free. Why is that included? Just hold that thought. I'll come back to it.

“So I, the Lord God, will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah.” What happened to both of those lines? Utterly snuffed out and cut off, right? “The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her.” Then the young man opened the door and fled, just as Elisha told him to do.

Remember an episode where there was a prophet that was given a message to go up to the northern kingdom and he said, “Don't stop, don't tarry,” but he got waylaid by the old prophet and great mischief followed? This young man, does he know that story, or is he just a really wise young man? He does what Elisha tells him to do, to the letter.

And because of that, he lives a long and happy life. He's not another example in Scripture.

Well, Jehu comes out to the servants of his master, his fellow captains. This is sort of a staff tent, if you will. They're up there still facing off against the Syrians. And they say to him, "Is all well? Why did this madman come to you?" Congratulations, all of you faithful believers in the Lord. Other people are going to think you're a madman.

He said to them, "Ah, you know, the man and his babble. These guys are always yacking and babbling on." Now, what's interesting to me is, this guy is recognizable as one of the sons of the prophets. He's known to these captains. Because Jehu says, "You know this guy, and you know his babble."

You know what this tells me? This is a young man who not only learned as a son of the prophets, but was known for giving Bible classes, which were ignored by these captains. And they treated it as babble. But they know this guy.

They've seen him before, and they know that not only is he one of the sons of the prophets, but he's a talker. He is a communicator. He has given Bible classes, which they ignored and treated as babble.

Right? "You know this man and his babble." They recognize him and say, "There's the madman. Still trying to teach the Word of the Lord to those of us who don't give two hoots and a rain barrel about it." Right?

It's a great sort of sideways compliment to this young man. He is faithful to his message. He's faithful to his calling.

And he has been reviled and mocked and derided for it. And when he shows up, he gets more of it from these leaders in Israel, these military captains. But they said, "That's a lie. He said something. He didn't come all the way up here and take you to the inner chamber just to deliver some abstract Bible class. He's told you something."

And they probably see something in Jehu's face. There's been a change in his countenance. They know something is up.

And so when Jehu tries to dismiss this and say, "Oh, you know, this guy's a madman and a babbler," they say, "No, you're not telling the truth. Tell us what really happened."

So he says, "Thus and thus, he spoke to me, saying, 'Thus says the Lord, I have anointed you king over Israel.'" And once again, we just get a summary. Now, this is the third time we get the message.

What's the first summary of the message? Anoint him king over Israel. What's in the middle? God's purpose in making him king. What is the thrust and the content and the import of nearly everything that the young man tells Jehu? "I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel," in verse 6. Verse 7: "You shall strike down the house of Ahab, your master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants, the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezebel."

Verse 8: "The whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free." Verse 9: "I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah." Verse 10: "The dogs shall eat Jezebel, and the plot of ground of Jezreel, there shall be none to bury her."

That's the main content of the message. And we only hear it as it is communicated to Jehu. The initial deal up in verse 3 is just a summary. Jehu is going to be king. What Jehu tells the men outside? Jehu is going to be king. In the middle, at the center of this nice little leavened bread sandwich, is God's purpose in making Jehu king.

Now, here's my question. See if you can derive an answer. One of the things in artillery school, I've told you this before, we never say, "Come up with an answer; come up with the data." It sounds like you were diving for it and had to feel around. It was one of the things you just never said as a gunnery instructor.

You don't say, "I want you to come up with the firing data." You don't just come up with it. You derive it. You calculate it.

You ascertain it. You determine the data. You don't come up with an answer.

It's like, well, you know, I just imagined it. I envisioned it. I just came up with it out of nowhere.

Here's my question. Why is Jehu anointed this way? Look at the detail. Look at the number of verses dedicated to this anointing.

Isn't the upshot of it, look, he's king and he's going to wipe out the house of Ahab? Wasn't that God's intention and design? Isn't that the two pieces of bread on the sandwich? Why all of this lengthy blow-by-blow? It's like a script for a play. You could hand this to actors and they could enact this thing without further ado.

You've got all of the details. You've got the scenery and the backdrop. You've got the setting.

You've got the people. You've got the dialogue. Why so much detail just on the anointing of Jehu? You've got a lot of kings that don't get a fraction of this.

His father died and he became king. Why? Why all of this? Why the detail? This is my suggestion.

1 Kings chapter 19. How was he supposed to be anointed? Go ahead and answer. How was he supposed to be anointed? Elijah is supposed to go, show up in person, grab the flask, pour the oil on Jehu's head. "You da king," right? That's what's supposed to happen. It's a play on words. "You da king."

But he's not. He doesn't do that. How many instances removed is this flask of oil from the hand that was supposed to hold it and pour it? This flask that Elijah carried around for king anointing, who does it go to along with the mantle? It goes to Elisha.

Who does Elisha hand it to to get poured on this guy's head? A nameless, faceless son of the prophets. You've got all this detail. We don't have this guy's name.

He's known to the captains, known as a communicating prophet, a babbler. But he's an anonymous, second cousin twice removed, pouring the flask, as it were. Why? Why?

Normally, you think about what the kingship meant to David. To be the king over all Israel, a man after God's own heart. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him.

To be a blessing to the people. To be a benefit. To have a throne that would endure until his greater Son, capital S, will sit upon it and deliver His people Israel and be the King, capital K. Right?

Who anoints David as king? The prophet Samuel, the greatest, the archetype, the father of all prophets in Israel. Samuel anoints David. Look at what the anointing has become.

And look at what the purpose of it is now. This is not Elijah. And this is not Elisha.

This is a lackey. It's not done publicly. Of course, many times it was not. David wasn't anointed publicly either.

But it is done in the house, away from everybody. It's unceremonious. Some guy dashes in and says, "Come with me." They shut the door.

He splashes the stuff on his head and says, "God's made you king. Wipe out the house of Ahab. Adios, kemosabe." He's gone.

It's the most unceremonious, slapdash, third-hand, just barely got it done thing. Why? Two things impress themselves on my heart as I look at this.

First of all, Jehu is not a man after God's heart. This is not an anointing for blessing. This is an anointing for judgment.

Jehu is going to be declared to be a bad king. It's going to tell us in—flip over to the next page here in 2 Kings—2 Kings 10, verse 28. Ten, 28.

After, you can see the intervening stuff if you just look at the headers. All of the people in Ahab's line and family are going to be killed. Jezebel is going to splatter. Dogs are going to lick the blood, etcetera. But look at the verdict in verse 28.

Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel. However, Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. Namely, the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan.

Bracketing the kingdom. Defining the kingdom. The Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation."

But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin. He's not honored by God for anything other than being the instrument of God's judgment on the house of Ahab.

He doesn't have a prophet standing by his side to answer his questions, to guide him in leading God's people, in being a blessing to God's people. His whole reign is strictly one of judgment. He is the lesser of two evils that is used to wipe out a greater evil.

Now, he is successful, and he has a kind of blessing, in the sense that his son, grandson, and great-grandson are going to sit on the throne. Because he did, in fact, carry out God's wish that the house of Ahab be utterly destroyed. But ask yourself the question, you know, in our political arena, they say, "Well, what are his accomplishments? What are her accomplishments as she gets ready to run for president? What are the accomplishments?"

So let's ask ourselves the question: what are Jehu's accomplishments? Well, he's going to murder a whole temple full of Baal worshippers. He's going to murder the entire house of Ahab. He is a great eliminator.

The great eliminator, that's his legacy. He wiped out a bunch of really heinously bad people. Terrific.

He is the axe head of God's judgment. And he holds his edge, and he does a really good job of chopping all of these very evil people down. Now, in the midst of what the young man tells him, verse 8 of chapter 9, "The whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free."

Bond and free. Here's my question for next time. Bond? The bond slaves of Ahab are going to be slaughtered by Jehu? God doesn't say anything in idleness.

Now, I can't find anybody who says anything about bond. So, I think it would be a wonderful thing for us to look at and figure out, why is it that God decrees that the bond slaves of Ahab are to be wiped out by Jehu? He didn't have to say that. Bond and free. It's a specification.

Leave no soul alive. It goes back to, why did God send the Israelites in to wipe out the Amorites? Women, children, cattle, animals—you know, hapless animals who happen to be owned by these people—to be destroyed. They are cherem. They are dedicated to the Lord for sacrifice, in the sense of being wiped out to the very last nephesh.

Why is that? There is a principle here in the bond and free, and it's very politically incorrect. Are you serious? These hapless slaves that were perhaps taken in battle and are now owned, through no fault of their own, by the house of Ahab, Jehu is to go in and slaughter them, wipe them out, when they had no volitional involvement in their location whatsoever.

Bond and free. Scripture says it. The young man is given this message.

It's been preserved for us for 2,600 years. Why? Think about that for next time. But here's the point.

Yes, God uses Jehu, just as today God uses many of us in the Christian world. God will designate and dedicate people to do certain things. It doesn't mean you're blessed.

It doesn't mean you're right. It doesn't mean you're obedient. It doesn't mean you're faithful.

It doesn't mean you're going to stand well at the judgment, just because certain things get accomplished through you or under your watch. There are so many churches who take credit for souls coming to Christ, for spiritual growth, and they say, "We are vindicated, we are justified. Look at these things that God has accomplished because we are here."

God accomplished things because Jehu was there. God designated Jehu to get certain things done. That doesn't make Jehu a good guy.

And it doesn't mean Jehu is going to stand in the judgment. He gets credit for doing the things that God raised him up to do. But the overall evaluation: he did not follow the law of the Lord.

Why did Jehu do these things? Why did he wipe out the house of Ahab? He had his own agenda. God uses a man with a personal agenda to accomplish God's agenda.

That doesn't vindicate or justify Jehu's personal agenda of getting rid of all competitors to the throne. Jehu wipes out all the house of Ahab because it suits him and it secures his throne for 28 years, and his son and his son's son and his great-grandson are going to rule after him, and he thinks that's great. But he's not interested in the things of God.

He's not trying to restore Israel to faith and obedience. He's got a purely personal agenda. God uses this man for His own purposes in the same way God uses Judas for His own purposes.

That doesn't vindicate or justify Judas. These things must come, but woe to him by whom they come. It is a dangerous thing to look at accomplishments or at successes or at results and say, "I must be doing right because look at this happy result."

The standard of evaluation is always faith and obedience. Faith and obedience only happen when we make them happen, when we decide by investing our time and our priorities in faith and obedience.

Otherwise, you're going to be the latter days of Elijah. Otherwise, we are going to be a Jehu. Yes, some things got done, but it's in spite of us.

It is us as a blunt instrument in God's hands. We're not being blessed in the process. We're not actually growing in grace and knowledge.

We're not being fitted for future service. You think Jehu is going to be useful to God for any future service in the kingdom? Is God going to need anybody murdered in the millennial kingdom? Is God going to need any royal houses wiped out in the kingdom of the Father? No. Jehu is a blunt instrument.

And all he does is hold together long enough for God to smash the house of Ahab with him. This is not the model. This is a warning.

This is an example for us to look at and realize that we can fool ourselves into thinking we are doing good when we're really not. Faith and obedience. Where do you invest your time? How fervently do you pursue personal relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ? That's the measure.

Just look over the past days. How much time? How much dedication? And thankfully, many of us can say it is there. I sat down with my husband, with my wife, with my family.

We have gone over these things. We have gone back to previous classes. We have reviewed and rehearsed.

We have had fruitful discussions. We have had meaningful reflection and review. And God be praised.

That's progress. That is genuine spiritual walk and growth. And that is in the books.

That is preserved for all time into eternity. It is eternal fruit. It is righteousness by faith.

It's a wonderful thing. That's our goal. That's what we have to go after every single day.

A day without that is a day wasted. It's a day God gave us that we let fall to the ground. The grass withers.

The flower fades. The word of our God will abide, will stand forever. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for the powerful way these examples from the history of Israel speak to our hearts and remind us of the wonderful gifts that You have given us in this age. We have the presence of Your Spirit. We have the power of Your Word.

We have it as our own personal possession. We don't need to go to the temple. We don't have to refer to a priest.

We don't have to wait for the man of God to come and teach. It is near us. It is in our hearts.

It is in our mouths. It is available to us night and day in abundance. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress the opportunities that we have on our hearts, that we will find that motivation and the courage to declare ourselves for You, to invest ourselves in Your plan and purpose, to vindicate the salvation that the Lord Jesus died to grant to us, both our salvation from sin and from death and our deliverance out of this present evil age, away from our fallen nature, into those realms where we can be of genuine service and genuinely reflect Your glory.

We thank You for these things, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.