Kings and Prophets 14-07-18a

This is Friday, the 18th of July, 2014. We're in the book of 2 Kings, going through our study of kings and prophets. We'll be picking up tonight in 2 Kings, in the vicinity of chapter 8 and chapter 10.

We'll take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we'll begin. Father, we thank you again for the many ways you've expressed your grace and your compassion toward us. Most of us have a very busy schedule and are caught up in the events of the day and the week, and it is a privilege for us to set aside the cares and the demands of this life and to pause for refreshment at the oasis of your word, to spend time in fellowship together, mutual encouragement, recognition of the blessings that we have as a group of believers who share an appreciation for the Lord Jesus Christ, for the truth of your word, and for the tremendous blessings that you have bestowed on us in placing us in Him and giving us the standing and the opportunities that we have to learn and to grow in this life so that we can be prepared for an eternal life with you and with the Lord Jesus.

We pray that tonight as we study this portion of your word, that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to each heart, may each of us find it meaningful and pertinent and a source of strength and encouragement as we seek to live in a way that is pleasing in your sight. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. We have been looking at the divided kingdom of Israel.

There is the northern kingdom with its capital in Samaria. There is the southern kingdom with its capital in Judah. And beginning with Jeroboam in the north and Rehoboam in the south, these dynasties have proceeded down through the ages, down through the years, not really ages so to speak, but there are phases or dynasties that have taken place in each one.

There is a chart that I have assembled from scattered pieces that I borrowed from James Smith. And if you're viewing remotely, you can see this. You know the wonderful thing about Windows is you can keep two things going at once.

You can listen to the mellifluous sound of my voice even as you go back to the GTBC website page. And on the live class schedule tab there, down below the two hymnals, I put a link for tonight that has the chart. For those of you here, Laurie is graciously printing out some hard copies which will be here shortly.

Basically what this is, is three boxes that show the northern and southern kingdom dynasties side by side so you can kind of see who's reigning where in what years. It's just a helpful graphical reminder. And it brings us down to the current case where we've got the two Jorams or Jehorams.

You've got Ahaziah in the northern kingdom preceding Joram. You've got Ahaziah in the south following Joram. And this then leads to the next section where we end up with Athaliah down in Judah.

And that's about where we end. And Jehu in the north. And this is about where we're picking up tonight.

So you can kind of glance at that for reference. This is one case where the people far away have an advantage over us here because they can see it before we can. But we'll have ours shortly, Lord willing.

And there will eventually be a link for this chart in the listing for kings and prophets. I just had to do it in a hurry tonight. But we're interested in the rise of Jehu because God has anointed him as part of the kingdom of Israel.

Triple sword anointing. God has decreed, God has ordained three swords of judgment. We saw this back in the days of Elijah.

God gave this final commission to Elijah to anoint who? Anoint Hazel, king up in Syria. Oddly enough, how many times does God anoint a foreign king? This is about the only time I can think of. He certainly ordains all of the kings.

He raised up Pharaoh in Egypt. But this is an actual divine ordination of a king. And it's quite unusual.

But Hazel, king in Samaria. Jehu, king in northern Israel. And Elijah as prophet.

He ends up dropping his mantle on Elijah and that's about as far as he got. So we've seen that Elijah has taken up this call and has seen to it that Hazel came to power in Syria. We saw that in great detail.

This is the tale of the twisted towel. As I like to call it. Or extreme waterboarding ain't no fun.

This is Hazel smothering to death his ailing predecessor and taking over. So now we've come to the third of these swords and you don't think of Elisha as a sword. We can understand Hazel.

And we can understand that. And let me just again refer you to 2 Kings 10. We're not quite there yet.

But Israel, northern Israel has really sold out for calf worship. You remember the golden calves that have been in place almost from the beginning. And because of this the Lord God in heaven is unhappy with northern Israel.

They have expanded from this into Baal worship, especially in the house of Ahab. Ahab and Jezebel were big promoters of Baal, Mount Carmel, etc. So, Hazael has undone much of the earlier victory and territorial acquisition that took place in the heyday of the United Kingdom, under David in particular.

So, the Transjordan. What does trans mean? Well, Trans Am, the car, was a car that you could drive across America, right? Trans Am. Transcontinental Railroad goes across, right? The

Transjordan is the other side of the Jordan.

If you're in Israel, what's the other side? Which direction? It's east. Who's over on the east? Who decided to stay over there? Yeah, you've got, and this is back even in the days of Moses, it's the area of Gilead and Bashan, right? Well, that's been taken away now. Guess who took it away? Hazael.

Hazael has conquered and removed, this is the first, we talk about 721 and the northern kingdom going away under the Assyrians and later on the Babylonians. The first part of Israel to get chopped off and eliminated is the Transjordan, Gilead and Bashan, and Hazael is the guy that does this. The sword of Hazael chops off the eastern part of Israel, takes it, and they'll never get it back.

Hazael was going to cross the Jordan and come on into northern Israel, but Jehu is going to stop him. We see this in 2 Kings 10. But it is only going to go downhill, especially after the days of Jehu.

So that's the sword of Hazael. Now we're looking at the second sword, which is the sword of Jehu. The sword of Jehu.

And he comes to power. As you see now, if you look at your chart, we've got the hard copies handed out here. You can see the top box here shows the beginning in circa 930.

You have the divided kingdom, Israel and Judah, Jeroboam, Rehoboam. You go across and you have Baasha in the north and Asa in the south. And that closes circa 885.

Everybody see that? It's about 50 years worth of history there, give or take. And I don't necessarily hold with the labeling there. I just didn't have time to white it out or anything.

It says the hostility phase, the harmony phase. You can think about that if you want to. But I'm mainly interested in the graphic.

In the second box there, you'll see Omri in the north and the continuing reign of Asa in the south. They end roughly the same time. You can see that little dog leg at the end of Asa.

And that indicates a co-regency. And we talked about the co-regency at the end of Jehoshaphat as well, with his overlapping with Jehoram. And you can see Ahab and Jehoshaphat above and below.

Those pretty well correspond. And we're now down at the end of that second box where Jehoram in the north, Jehoram in the south. You can see Ahaziah just precedes Jehoram in the north.

Ahaziah follows Jehoram in the south quite briefly. And this brings us to the beginning of the third box. And up in the north, the reign of Jehu.

Down in the south, Athaliah. So that's where we are. We're right at the beginning of the third box.

Just kind of give us a quick reference here, a little bit of a visualization. I don't know about you, but all of these kings coming and going, it's tough to keep straight. And these graphics help, I think, to sort of organize the material.

So we're down there right at circa 840 B.C. This is roughly 150 years after the days of David. David's right around 1000 B.C. So Jehu has taken over. We saw the fierce riding of Jehu last time and the ailing king looking out.

You know, Jehoram got wounded in his back and Ahaziah is up there visiting him. And the outcome of that, both kings end up checking out as a result of this. And this sort of brought us to verse 25 of 2 Kings chapter 8. Ahaziah came to the throne in northern Israel and Ahaziah comes to the throne of Judah in the south.

And he's only going to be there for one year. His mother's name is Athaliah. He goes up and the more detailed account that we saw in Chronicles ends up with chapter 9. So 2 Kings chapter 9, this is where we're picking up.

We saw the parallel in Chronicles. Elisha called one of the sons of the prophets, anoint him in secret, which he does. You know this man and his babble.

Yeah, but what's that oil dripping off your ears? Well, I've been anointed king. They throw their clothing under him and they blow the trumpet saying Jehu is king. So 2 Kings 9.14, Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, conspired against Jehoram.

And we saw the fierce riding through the chariot. What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me. Verse 23 of 2 Kings 9. Joram turned around and fled, said to Ahaziah, Treachery, Ahaziah! Jehu drew his bow with full strength, shot Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow came out at his heart and he sank down in his chariot.

You don't often get this level of detail. And that's pretty vivid. Pretty vivid.

Drew his bow with full strength and shot Jehoram between his arms, between his shoulder blades. Shot him in the back. Didn't say turn around and face me.

Didn't say, you know, I never shoot a man in the back. Absolutely shot him in the back. Came out the front.

And understandably enough, he sank down in his chariot. But he didn't die. But he said to Bidkari's captain, pick up, no Jehu said to Bidkari's captain, pick him up and throw him in the tract of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite.

Remember when you and I were riding together behind Ahab his father, that the Lord laid this burden upon him. One of the things we want to notice about Jehu tonight is he is mindful of the

word of the Lord. He is not necessarily a great believer on the order of Asa or Jehoshaphat.

But one thing you will notice, and it's important to note about Jehu, when he hears the word of the Lord, he remembers it. And he will quote it back later. Just bear that in mind.

He quotes here. The Lord laid this burden upon him. Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, says the Lord.

And I will repay you in this plot, says the Lord. So therefore, take and throw him on the plot of ground according to the word of the Lord. Three times Jehu says, this is according to the word of the Lord.

Three times. And he remembered this all the way down. He is mindful of it.

He quotes it. Of course, when Ahaz, king of Judah, sees this, he flees to Beit Hagan. Jehu pursued him and said, shoot him also in the chariot.

Help me, I've been shot in the chariot. Ahaziah said. In my apocryphal imagination.

So they shot him at the ascent of Gur, which is by Ibliyam. Now, here's something, sort of put it in the curiosity column. Ahaziah saw the arrow come out the front of his fellow king.

And he flees. Where does he go? Beit Hagan. Hagan is often the name of the, this is the house of the garden.

But Hagan is often a reference to the garden of Eden. But Jehu pursued him and said, shoot him. And so they shot him at the, at the ascent of Gur.

Ascent is Ma'ala. Ala means to go up. Ma is from.

So it is from the going up. And then instead of gone, you have Gur. Gur means sojourning, means to pilgrim, to dwell in a non-permanent way.

So if you're thinking back to say, the early part of Genesis, you start out with all the potential of the garden. But because of failure, you end up being cast out. And now you're sort of a sojourner in that sense.

Then when they finally, it says that this is near Iblayim. Or Yiblam is Iblayam. Which in Hebrew literally means devouring the people.

Am is people. And Yibal means to consume, to eat up, to devour. So it's the devouring of the people.

So you go from the idyllic garden to being cast out and sort of impermanent to being eaten up and devoured. I'm just saying, I don't think these place names are accidental. There is a reminder here in the account, in the story.

Remember in Hebrew, these are like Indian names. They look like just odd names to us. They don't have a meaning until we go look them up.

But in Hebrew, you know how in Indian stories, and I'm going to say Indian because nobody can get after me for not saying Native American. They're Indians. We're Indians.

Those of us who can claim some long lost feather wearing ancestor, we can say Indian and get away with it. So look, the Indians. The Indians tell stories and they name each other.

And what do they call themselves? Running bear, yowling coyote, you know, broken broom, broken arrow, broken bow. You know, just they give each other names that are little mini stories or little word pictures, right? You know, soaking rain or stalking moon, something like that. By the way, if you want to see sort of a dark western sometime, Gregory Peck, stalking moon.

Anyway, this is the way names work in Hebrew. As you know, I mean the names are in Hebrew. The language is Hebrew.

So when you give a place name, it's like these place names I just mentioned. Broken arrow, broken bow. They're very clear.

So I don't think this is accidental. The palace, the house of the king in Jerusalem next to the house of God. Remember, they're side by side.

Could have been like the garden. Could have been blessed in the way God blessed Adam and Eve with protection, with provision, with His presence. It's the three Ps.

But they lose that through disobedience, through ignorance, through indifference, through pursuing the fallen way. This starts out by making you a sojourner outside the presence and the provision and the protection of God. And ultimately, the other picture is breaking down the wall around the vineyard and it is consumed.

Finally, you'll notice he flees to Megiddo. Well, what does Megiddo mean? Again, you have the significance meaning something. If you look this up in Strong's, it'll tell you that Megiddo or Megiddon is the place of crowds.

Why would this be significant? What's going to happen to the majority? What happens to the people on the wide way going through the broad gate? What happens to most of the human population? Do you want to share the fate? Do you want to be not the special people of God, not blessed, not unique, not that few that find the way? You might as well be with hordes of fallen Gentile nations. You end up sharing their fate. And God told Israel this at Sinai.

If you will keep the covenant, if you will follow my way and follow my words and be obedient, all of these blessings will come upon you. If not, you've got the cycles of discipline ending with you will share the fate of the nations that I am sending you into the land of Canaan to drive out. You

will be just like them.

You'll be just like the crowds. People are always saying, well, I want to be unique, but they want to be unique like everybody else. We want to truly be unique in the sense of not sharing the fate of the uninterested masses.

So this is where Ahaziah dies. His servants carried him in the chariot to Jerusalem, buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the city of David. In the 11th year of Joram, the son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king over Judah.

Now, here comes the second sword, the sword of Hazael. I've given you sort of a preview. We'll see a little more in chapter 10.

But Hazael is, and I mentioned last time, he is undoing the victories that David and earlier kings had achieved. And he's even taking land that has belonged to Israel ever since the days of Moses. Well, the second sword, those who escaped the sword of Hazael, the sword of Jehu is going to take.

Now, when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it. 2 Kings 9, verse 30. So she called the guards.

She assembled the army. She got ready for a pitched battle. No, she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out the window.

As Jehu entered at the gate, she said, Is it peace? Zimri, murderer of your master. Now, what is this hark back to? Zimri, murderer of your master. Zimri, murdered the massively famous king, Elah, that ruled for seven days up in the northern king.

Do you remember him? Actually, Elah got trapped and so he immolated himself in his own castle. Zimri, murderer of your master. So she's making an allusion.

This is like calling somebody, so are you spying on me, Mr. Nixon, or something to that effect. Harking back to an earlier leader and his his crime, so to speak. And this brings up an interesting question that I have been asked several times over the past few weeks, and I thought I would answer it because really this murdering trend is prevalent in the north.

You remember Baasha, and there are a series of assassinations and takeovers and non-contiguous dynasties that get started by it. It's not hereditary. And so we want to ask ourselves as we look at Jehu, Jehu is a murdering son of a gun.

He is going to utterly exterminate and wipe out the house of Ahab. Previous murdering sons of guns, and when I say sons of guns, they're not sons of the king. These are generals.

These are outsiders who come in and pretty much take over by military fiat, by coup, so to speak. And many of them are rebuked and destroyed by the Lord because of what they have done. We've seen this very recently with Joram.

So why does Jehu not share that fate? Well, let's look first of all at what Jehu does, but we want to see if we can determine as we go through the story of Jehu anything different about him compared to these earlier guys. I've already pointed out one. Do you see Baasha? Do you see Zimri, Omri, or Elah, or any of these other ne'er-do-wells quoting the word of the Lord? Are any of them anointed by the prophet of God for their mission of destruction? No.

This is something different. Right? When Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard, painted her eyes, adorned her head, looked through the window. Jehu entered the gate.

She says, Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master? He looked up at the window and said, Who is on my side? Who? So, two or three eunuchs looked out at him. Remember, not too long ago we were talking about the word saris, sar, S-A-R in Hebrew, translated as minister or steward. This is the very same word.

Here it's translated eunuch. And these words are interchangeable. It's hard to know, are these ministers of state or are they actual physical eunuchs? The word is used because they were often both, sometimes not.

But was this a practice in northern Israel? Did it get imported by the house of Ahab? You wouldn't expect in the house of Judah that high cabinet members would be eunuchs in the physical sense. Seriously, this is what you're going to do for somebody to be qualified for high office? This is what you expect in Gentile nations. This is what you expect in Babylon when Daniel and his three friends are taken there, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah.

They are emasculated. They are deprived of their ability to reproduce in harmony with that common practice. But does God ever suggest, recommend, or encourage this practice in Israel? But the fact that there are such, or apparently are such, in the northern kingdom, in Samaria, in the capital, attending the queen or queen mother here is another indication of the extent to which Israel has left the house of the garden, northern Israel, has gone sojourning, and is now indistinguishable from the nations in terms of their practices, their worship, their royal house is indistinguishable from the Gentiles that surround them.

So, Jehu tells the eunuchs to throw her down. And, interestingly, they do. You know, the old words to the Stars and Stripes Forever, you know, it says, be kind to your web-footed friends.

It is good to be kind to those who serve. Otherwise, at the first opportunity, they will throw your painted face out the window. And, apparently, it didn't take much cajoling for these long-time, how long has Jezebel been up there now? Years and years and years.

And the guy says, throw her down. And they heist her out the window, and down she falls. They threw her down, and, of course, she hit the pavement outside, and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses.

Do you think God is reminding us of His intense displeasure with gross, high-handed disobedience? The king has an arrow protruding prominently from his chest as he sinks down

in his chariot. This lady splats on the ground outside the palace. God says, if you shed innocent blood, you are going to pay.

If you violate your covenant responsibilities in a gross, selfish way, as these have done, this is the wrath of God. This is not just the abstract consequences of sin. God sends Jehu to wreak havoc and destruction on the house of Ahab.

It's His commission. It is His anointing. He has been formally commissioned by God to assassinate everybody associated with Ahab.

It is a command of God. When's the last time we saw such a command? A formal command from God to kill them, kill them all. What did God tell Joshua and the Israelites when they came into this land? What did God tell Israel would happen if they abrogated, if they fell away from the covenant? What did God say He would do? I will treat you like the nations that you came in to displace.

I sent you in to destroy them for their 400 years of Amorite sin. And if you disobey, and after a six-fold warning, you do not turn, I will treat you like I treated them. God anointed the nation of Israel to come in and purge and cleanse the land that He had contract deeded to Abraham.

These people were squatters in the land. The Amorites were in the land of Abraham. Remember how they kept running Isaac off and Jacob off from the wells that Abraham had dug? Remember that? They're interlopers.

They're trespassers. That land was deeded to Abraham in 1800 BC. Here we are a thousand years later, and the descendants of Abraham are in the land, but because they have violated their covenant with God, trampled underfoot the covenant with God, God has anointed Jehu to do to them what Joshua did to the Canaanites.

And arrows are sticking out of chests, women are being murdered in splashy fashions. Why? It is a sign. It is a graphic novel because these people can no longer read literature.

So it's a comic book. God doesn't send the prophet to proclaim, they won't listen to a prophet. So He says, look, I'll let you all tell the story of the destruction of these disobedient people.

And these stories circulated and were eventually included in these accounts in Kings and Chronicles. But it's a comic book. It's all the people can understand at this point are these graphic demonstrations of the fulfillment of the word of God.

Jehu quotes the word of the Lord and attributes it to the Lord three times. Do you remember that this is what God said? Do you remember what God said? This is what God said. And that attaches to the story as it rapidly circulates by word of mouth throughout the Northern Kingdom.

Jehu is on the rampage and he's waving a Bible as he does it. He's waving the word of the Lord.

He's proclaiming and citing the word of the Lord as he reeks judgment, the sword of Jehu.

Well, is he going to be condemned as Ahab and Baasha and Omri and many of these other ne'er-do-wells that wiped out their predecessors? We'll see. We're going to pause here and take our break. We'll come back and look at the further career of Jehu, his exploits.

And we're watching to see is there something that distinguishes him because his fate is different. His evaluation by God is different. But it looks to me like he's doing some pretty violently murderous things as some of the previous kings did.

We'll see that when we come back.