

Kings and Prophets 14-07-25b

We pick up our study now and we're synthesizing a little bit, reaching back a bit to the commission that God gave Elijah to set in motion these things that are in fact judgments. And we've tried to trace these sets of three as they go through that passage. And Elijah being a prophet, regardless of his state of mind, even the high priest in Israel can say something that is meaningful.

We've noted that Elijah may not have been quite at the top of his game at this point. Nevertheless, as a prophet of God, even the statement he makes to God after he observes these phenomena are fraught with prophetic significance, I think. Well, it made me think about other famous threes.

There are two very prominent sets of three things in the New Testament. When you think of three things that are sort of unlike, what comes to your mind? If you think New Testament, you've got Peter, James, and John. You've got the Mount of Transfiguration.

Let's think about that for a moment. You've got a set of three figures being observed. You've got a set of three guys observing, right? How does James die? Who makes sure James gets killed? He is incited to kill them by the religious Jews.

James is the first to go, right? You have Peter in the middle, and you have John at the end. And who does John see before he passes away? What is it to you if he should last until I return? But you've got that set of three observers. Look at the three on the mountaintop.

Moses, what does he represent? The covenant. It's the law of Moses, right? Elijah, for patently obvious reasons. He's the primordial national prophet in Israel.

And the Lord Jesus, right? And it's interesting to me that it's who could have been there that was closely associated? Who is Moses' successor? What's his name? Yeshua. What is Elijah's successor's name? Elishua. Who is standing in the middle? Yeshua.

It is about what is to come. There is the purging away of that which does not comport, leaving behind the remnant that is going to go forward. There is a faithful remnant in Israel that will go into the land under Yeshua.

There is a faithful remnant in northern and southern kingdom that is going to benefit from the ministry of Elishua. And the ultimate salvation is in Yeshua at the center. Those are a couple of sets of three.

What's another set of three? I used to think about this when we would go home in Rockwall and pass this particular church that had this out on its lawn. I called it the Church of the Two Thieves. You've got the three crosses on Golgotha, right? It's not one.

There's three crosses there. You've got the Lord Jesus, and you've got two different kinds of

thief, right? You've got one who looks to Jesus and says, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And you've got the other one that says, it seems to have no interest, right? But you have that triad going on as well, where the guy, he says, you know, what are you pestering the guy for? And this guy says, look, we deserve what we got.

This man has done nothing wrong. And then he says, Lord, and he turns in repentance. And the Lord Jesus says what? Based on your attitude, I make you a promise.

I enter into a covenant with you. This guy is strictly dying in a judicial penalty at a national law level, right? This guy enters into covenant relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, in a sense, right there at the crucifixion. So these things seem to be universalized somewhat in Scripture.

There is another set of three here that's less obvious. And that has to do with the date. Does anybody remember the date that I gave you for the beginning of Jehu's career, last time or time before? Does anybody have their year written down? Well, I'll tell you.

It's 840 B.C. Remember that? 840, ring a bell? 840, 841, somewhere in there? Yeah, 840. Now, is it on your diagram? Yeah, 841. Now, because you have a great grasp of history in the Old Testament, what is the date of the disappearance of the northern kingdom of Israel? When does the northern kingdom go out under the Assyrian captivity? What's the date? 721.

721 B.C. You've got to know that date. 721 for northern kingdom, 586 for the southern kingdom. And remember, in the southern, Nebuchadnezzar comes three times.

Comes at the beginning in 605, comes again in 597, comes again in 586, three times. Nebuchadnezzar, southern kingdom, three times. But the date for the northern kingdom, the kingdom that we are looking at here with the accession of Jehu, it goes out in 721.

Now, if you subtract those two numbers, what do you get? How many years? 120 years. My spirit shall not strive with man, for that also he is flesh. Nevertheless, his days shall be.

Genesis 6, how long? 120 years. What kind of curse did God pronounce in the law of Moses for them that hate me? How many generations? It's the three generation curse, right? How long is a biblical generation? 40 years. So, if the father, the son, and the grandson all reject God, and they each get a 40-year generation, how long is it going to be before God cuts off that line in Israel? 120 years.

Three generation curse. Starting with Jehu, the three generation curse clock is running. God gives notice.

God gives fair warning with Jehu, shape up or ship out, literally. It's no accident that Jehu is anointed and takes over exactly 120 years before the northern kingdom gets the boot, because those subsequent three generations are on God's clock, and God's clock never needs winding. It doesn't lose time.

It doesn't fail. This is my observation. So, let's think about now back to our 1 Kings chapter 19, mighty wind shattering the rocks, the great earthquake, and the fire, and then after that, there is a sound that draws Elijah out to converse with the Lord.

And if you remember, there is a bit of repetition there. But let me point out one thing that I purposely skipped, and nobody really asked me about it, but I'll ask you about it, because I think it's an intriguing notation here. Back in 1 Kings 19 again, go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord.

Now, you remember that this is the end of a conversation. If you go back earlier, after Jezebel sends a message to Elijah, and he sees that, he rises and flees for his life back in verse 3, and he goes where? Where does Elijah go when he's fleeing for his life? What is his destination in verse 3? Beersheba. What does Beersheba mean in Hebrew? Beer is well.

Sheba is seven. Seven wells. Beersheba.

Right? Right? Beersheba. Seven wells. Beersheba, Beersheba, Beersheba.

Remember it. It will come back to haunt us a little later. Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

But he himself, on a day's journey into the wilderness, came and sat down under a broom tree, and he said, he prayed that he might die. It is enough. Take my life.

I am no better than my father's. No view of the nation, the ministry, the prophetic call. I might as well die.

My life is over. The jig is up. I had enough.

Just kill me now. It's very subjective. So, as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him and said, arise and eat.

Take in some, what is the antidote for this kind of depression? Not just physical food. Get up and take in some sustenance. Eat some manna.

Partake of your spiritual resources, metaphorically speaking. That's why the angel serves it. God didn't send a raven by, dropping a piece of tasty beef on his head, which had happened, right? I was, I don't know if I still, I don't think I still have it here.

I was actually thinking about, this is a little bit of an aside, and I apologize in advance for it, but when we were covering Elijah the first time, I had that song in my head, the Hank Williams song about Kalija. You remember that? Poor old Kalija. And I started writing a new set of words for it.

And I ran across it, if I can find it here, let's see. Yeah, maybe I can't find it. It, oh, I know where it is.

It's on this machine. Anyway, the conversation continues, because arise and eat. So he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals and a jar of water.

So he ate and drank and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back the second time, touched him, arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you. He arises, eats and drinks, and he went in the strength of that food 40 days and 40 nights, as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

That's where this stuff is taking place, right? Horeb, the mountain of God. Here's my little verse. I only got the first verse done, and then I got distracted.

But you can just imagine the tune. I'm not going to sing it for you. But Elijah was a man of God in northern Israel.

He shouted out, there will be a drought and famine here as well. The people knew the covenant, but didn't heed its words. Elijah got his supper from the birds.

That was the beginning. That was the first one. But notice that there are three heavenly conversations here.

The first one, arise and eat. The second one, arise and eat. Then the third time, he's at the cave, and the Lord comes to him and says, what are you doing here, Elijah? I've been zealous for the Lord.

Children have done these three things. So he says, go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord. So remember, Elijah has already made this observation identical.

Forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, killed your prophets with the sword. Elijah said that beforehand. God does the natural phenomena demonstration, comes back to Elijah, and Elijah says the same thing afterwards.

So it's a little three-fold triple-decker sandwich there. Well, we've drawn a line through the covenant, the wind. We've drawn a line through the earthquake, the altar, worship.

And now we're looking at this, the third idea, which is the fire and the word on the lips of the prophet and the commission that seems to correspond. Hazael is going to redress the breaching of the covenant with respect to its promises of land, of nationhood, of prosperity, of peace, of bounty, and gain, and security, and all of those things. Hazael is going to see to it that that is largely taken away up in the north.

Jehu is going to see to it that the second part, worship, is redressed. And those who have transgressed, it's not the Baal worshippers coming in and killing the Israelites. It is the sword.

Because remember now, these are people who are under the covenant. And so they are judged inside the covenant. So they are literally in the temple of Baal, many of them, when that particular episode takes place.

And Jehu is going to purge out and eliminate this false worship. And remember, why is the house of Ahab judged? You say, well, doesn't that seem to be the political structure? What is the great, great sin of Ahab and Jezebel? Promoting Baal worship and slaying God's prophets. That's what they're on the hook for more than anything else.

Well, now we've got the third thing, which is the fire, the word of the Lord, and Elisha being anointed. And if somebody escapes the sword of Hazael, the world and its judgments don't get them. Judgment for false worship in the sword of Jehu doesn't get them.

It says the sword of Elisha is going to get them. And yet we never see Elisha swing a sword. He doesn't even come back at the Mount of Transfiguration.

It's his predecessor, Elijah. And of course, there's an interesting bracketing of the career of the Lord Jesus, because who is routinely called Elijah in the New Testament, in the Gospels? John, the forerunner, who comes and prophesies to the people. He doesn't do any miracles at all, but he calls them back in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Will Elijah come? Jesus says, if you would have him, John was Elijah. Elijah has come already. So we're looking at this third one.

Well, what is the order of anointing? Because the very next verse in chapter 19, 19, 19 of first Kings, so Elijah departed from there and found Elisha. He does the last one first. And you have this little episode of him leaving the oxen and, and let me kiss my father and mother.

And then I will come back, go back. What have I done to you? Elisha turns back, the oxen slaughters them, boil their flesh, using the oxen equipment, gave it to the people and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and became his servant.

So Elisha, at the time that he is called to apprenticeship, if you will, uh, is already at work plowing what the ground he's, he could have been doing anything. He could have been building. He could have been, uh, he's, he is working in the ground.

He says, let me kiss my father and my mother. And then I will follow you. Why is that? Because he has a relationship of responsibility to his father and mother that he has to discharge before he can leave.

This is the son honoring his father and mother that your days may be long in the land, which Lord your God gives you. It's a part of covenant. He takes the yoke of oxen, slaughters them, boils their flesh, uses the equipment, gave it to the people and they ate.

Then he arose and followed Elijah, Elijah and became his servant. So that happens first. God said, Hazael, Jehu, Elisha.

But the first one to get anointed, so to speak, is Elisha. Then Hazael, then Jehu, right? Now, if you think about the law of Moses representing the covenant, and if you think about the

commissioning of the Levitical system of worship under that covenant, those things happened in the Old Testament, right? You start with God making promises to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, I'm the God of your fathers. Under that covenant relationship, God delivered them out of the land of Egypt, baptized them in the deal under the blood of the Passover lamb.

Then they come to Sinai and they have that covenant, right? That's numero uno. That's the great wind and all that the Lord has said we will do. Subsequent to that, in the subsequent instructions, you have the commissioning of the priesthood, you have the anointing of the sons of Aaron, you have the building of the tabernacle, and later of the temple, and you have the instructions for worship.

You have Leviticus chapters 1 through 7 for the sacrifices. You have the ordination of the feasts in Israel. This is the way that you approach.

This is the way you deal with sin and so on, right? So, what is the order there? You have the covenant, then you have the ordination of worship, and the Levitical and Deuteronomical regulations for worship. And if Elisha is, as we have suggested many times now, a foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus, he, in the order that God gives to Elijah, you have Hazael, you have Jehu, and then you have Elisha, who is going to square away that third element of the Word of God, right? But, as it so happens, Elisha gets commissioned first. Now, what is it about the Lord Jesus Christ? Does he come after or before the law and tabernacle temple worship? Yes.

He is both after and before, because he is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He was ordained before any of this came into existence, God's plan for him. He is anointed, he is the Mashiach, before there is a people to deliver, right? But he comes afterward.

He is anointed beforehand, but his ministry comes afterward, and John 1,1, he is the Word. He is the fire, right? So, as this third element of the Word of God, the fiery element on the lips of the prophets, the proclamation of the truth of God, the Lord Jesus is the embodiment and fulfillment of that, and Elisha is the metaphorical foreshadowing of that, and that's why everything with him is doubled. Everything is doubled, everything is doubled.

And we've seen that over and over again. So, when you think about history, and we said, you know, let's back up and see if this isn't kind of a general principle, that when people go the way of the world, God uses the world to judge them. Romans 1, it turned over to those things.

They exchanged the glory of God for animals and beasts and common things. You remember the scripture we saw, it's kind of funny, where the guy cuts down a tree and makes a log, splits it in half, cooks his dinner over half of it, carves the other into a totem and worships it. You know, you will be judged by those things that you choose in the world.

If you go the religious route, and you corrupt and distort and profane and defile the worship of God, remember those that were in the temple weeping for Tammuz, God takes Ezekiel by the

hair of the head and drops him in there, there is going to be judgment for that of a different kind and from a different source. And then we say, well, if these are judgments, if these are all swords, where is the sword of Elisha? We're back to the question we ended the first session with, where is the sword of Elisha? What do you think? Judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns. Elisha is the double guy.

How many returns of the Lord Jesus are there? Two. The rapture of the church, where he is going to judge his church, judgment seat of Christ, and the second coming, where he is going to judge the world. Double.

That's the sword of Elisha. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. If you escape judgment in time from the world, if you escape judgment in time because you get away with corrupt, profane defilement and perversion of the worship of God, even if you escape judgment in time, you will not escape, as a believer, the judgment seat of Christ, or as an unbeliever, the great white throne, which is foreshadowed at Armageddon, blood running as high as the horse's bridles.

You cannot, anybody that escapes the first two swords, and there are people that do. Why do the wicked prosper? You know, remember the song, Farther Along? If you listen to the words of that song, it says, why is it I'm suffering, and there's others who are never molested, though in the wrong? Farther along, we'll know all about it. Farther along, we'll understand.

You don't have to wait until farther along. We can understand it right here from this passage. The sword of Elisha is the sword of the Lord, which is alive and powerful, sharper than any earthly sword.

It is the word of God, capital W, personified in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the sword of Elisha. Elisha doesn't need to pick up an earthly sword, because the one standing between Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration is the one from whom no one escapes, judgment.

All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth, the Lord Jesus said. And it is he who will return to judge his people, and it is he who will return to judge the nations. And he is going to subsume to himself and under his authority everything else.

God has raised him up above all covenants, all forms of worship. And the Lord Jesus Christ is going to subsume and be the head of all of those things. So, application.

What does that mean to us? We have a threefold identity, right? What are the three hats we wear? A little bit of review here. We are priests. This is our relationship to God.

What does that partake of? That's the worship function, right? That's approach to God. Claiming the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for the cleansing of sin. This is the altar.

The cross is our altar, right? Priesthood. Ministry. This is our relationship to one another.

What did the prophets call the people to? What's the message of Isaiah and the message of

Ezekiel? Look at the way you're treating each other. Where's your application of the word of God in your one another's? And then, ambassadorship. To reflect the glory of God out to the world.

It's these same three areas. We have a covenant relationship with God through Christ. Jesus held up the cup to his disciples and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Drink it. We have the potential for wonderful function and fulfillment in these three areas. We also have the potential for the sword in these three areas.

If we do not maintain our covenant relationship with God, if we do not maintain our worship relationship with God, and if we do not honor and respect the word of God, all three of these swords are going to be headed our direction. All of these things were written for our instruction. So, it is helpful.

It's another reminder. It's another cautionary tale looking at northern Israel and seeing that God had to send Hazael the Syrian to deprive them of their temporal blessings, their security, their safety, their possessions, their crops, their ancestral lands. They lost it to Hazael.

Because of their apathy and indifference to worshiping God and honoring him, they lost friends, relatives, even their own lives in the purge of Jehu. It's like the sin unto death in this life. For believers, for people who ought to know better, these people are nominally believers because they are Israelites and that's where believers go.

This is gross falling away from everything that God offers in covenant relationship, in worship relationship, and the penalty is severe for neglecting the altar. And then finally, what do you do with the word of the Lord that calls you to love one another, love your neighbor as yourself? Your neighbor in Israel is your fellow Israelite. In the New Testament, the one another is those who are of the household of faith.

And interestingly, there is a sort of judgment for neglecting the covenant. The world is going to carry you off. How many kinds of soil were there in the parable of the seed, the sower of the soils? How many different kinds of soil? Go back and look at that parable in the light of these principles.

Three different areas to examine, three different areas of responsibility, three different areas of great potential and wonderful opportunity to bless and be a blessing, to enjoy the riches and the fruit of God's grace, of relationship with God, of nearness to God, fellowship with God. These things matter, and God doesn't send a sword casually. God doesn't rip the top off of a mountain with wind and earthquake and fire without putting significance into it.

And the significance is for us. It is a no-kidding, genuine, real, spiritual connection that we have to the Lord God in heaven through the Lord Jesus Christ. And God demands respect.

He demands honor. He demands obedience, and He deserves it from us. And if we neglect our

so great salvation of how much sorer punishment shall He be thought worthy, that does those three things.

Counts the blood of the covenant with which He was sanctified a common thing, tramples underfoot the Son of God, the Word of God, and does despot to the Spirit of grace. Remember the wind? Jesus talking to Nicodemus compared the Holy Spirit to the wind. So, these things resonate, they connect, and they're all designed to focus our attention on who we are and why we're here, the tremendous potential that we have on the positive side, the tremendous responsibility that if we neglect it, there will be a connected, concomitant, and proportionate judgment.

And it's a serious thing. It is not to be taken lightly. People in the north who thought it was a light thing, the sword of Hazael, the sword of Jehu, and ultimately the sword of Elisha is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

How is He pictured in Revelation? What's coming out of His mouth? A sharp sword. That's, I think, the sword of Elisha. How many edges has it got? Two.

Because everything with Elisha is two. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the wonderful, creative, and memorable ways that You communicate truth to us and in the hands of the Holy Spirit how easy it should be for us to remember to live in the light of these things. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will remind us of them and press them on our hearts, help us to see how they pertain in our seemingly normal and mundane lives. We know that everything counts.

We know that every day is important, every moment that You have granted to us, that You have decreed for us in eternity past has its purpose, and that even the common things that we do can be done in the light of Your Word and in a way that has eternal consequence. We pray that both individually and as a fellowship we can reflect Your glory now and in the ages to come. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.