

Kings and Prophets 14-08-01a

This is Friday, the 1st of August, 2014. If you can believe it, seven entire months of the year have gone by, and I was just getting adjusted to putting a four at the end of the year instead of a three, and it's already more than half over. We continue tonight our study of kings and prophets.

We'll be resuming in 2 Kings 10, in the vicinity of verse 12, with its parallel over in 2 Chronicles, in the vicinity of chapter 22. Let's take a moment to dedicate our time and our concentration to the Lord Jesus and ensure that God the Holy Spirit will have prepared and willing pupils with which to work, not to mention a prepared and willing teacher. As we look at these passages together, shall we pray? Father, we're so grateful, week by week, as we assemble together and spend time in fellowship and in the study of your Word, in exchanging the words of encouragement and the experiences that you have led us through during the week, in our shared enthusiasms, our hopes, our challenges, in navigating the road that is before us.

We thank you for the families that form the assembly of our church and for each individual within them. We thank you for the blessings that you distribute in our midst through our spiritual gifts and through these times where we can spend time together, remembering the Lord Jesus Christ, recognizing His preeminent place in our lives, and looking forward to learning new things about your plan and purpose for us as we study your workings with the nation of Israel in days gone by. We pray that as we look at this portion of your Word tonight, that God the Holy Spirit will be our teacher, that each of us will find the truth that you have for us, that as a result we will be better equipped to perform those acts of service and of faith that form your perfect plan and will for our lives.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We have come to the time in the Northern Kingdom where Jehu is fulfilling his commission, his anointing.

His is the second of three anointings that were given to Elijah to fulfill. Elijah sort of accomplished the last one first and then was taken away on the retirement bus to parts unknown. We will be reviewing a bit of his final days of ministry tonight.

But what we have seen is that Jehu took up the mantle of his commission with great relish, with great enthusiasm, with great energy. He is specifically told in the inner chamber by the son of the prophets that it is his mission to wreak God's justice on the house of Ahab and to avenge the blood shed by Ahab's wife Jezebel. That's his specific commission.

When I say specific, that's a handy detail to remember. If you review a few pages back when he receives that back in chapter 9, the young man in verse 4, the servant of the prophet went to Ramoth Gilead, arrived, there are the captains of the army, I have a message for you, commander. Jehu says, for which one of us? He says, for you, commander.

Then he arose and went into the house and he poured the oil on his head. This is into the inner

chamber of the house there, out of sight of the others. Pours the anointing oil on his head and says to him, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord over Israel.

You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master. Avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, the blood of the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezebel. The whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free.

Whether they are voluntary and willing supporters, or whether it is an accident of enslavement, or even an accident of birth, those associated with the house of Ahab are all destined for death. And the house is a pretty big place. How many lineal descendants of Ahab do you think are bondmen? If you're a son of the king, are you a slave? Not in the normal sense of the word.

So when he says the house of Ahab, he's talking about both the direct heirs and assigns, and anybody else with even a glancing association. This would be cabinet ministers, functionaries at various levels in the administration or in the governance of the house, to include the house slaves, anybody else who is a servant in the house or in the affairs of Ahab. Anybody that has an association or an affiliation with Ahab is in the house, whether bond or free.

This is a pretty sweeping generalization of target. And Jehu wastes no time, as we have seen in the next couple of pages in your Bible. Joram is killed, Ahaziah is killed, Ahab's 70 sons are killed, their heads are placed in baskets.

This is sort of insult to injury. It seems that the message continues after their death, which is a reminder to us the fate of Jezebel's body. Once she hits the pavement, being thrown out the window, all further events in terms of what happens with her blood and what happens with her body and so on, is something to which she is oblivious.

It's everybody else who is getting the message, right? The death is far more than simply, well, you can't be allowed to continue to function, so we're going to give you some sort of euthanasia, we'll lay down and drink this potion and you just won't wake up. God's judgment in taking the life of someone like Ahab or Jezebel isn't primarily to punish that person, although that's certainly one of the central issues, but it is a message. It is a communication from God to the people who observe and who hear about it afterwards, right? And this is important to remember in the career of Jehu, because it's not just eliminating these people that is the issue.

It is the resonating message that reverberates throughout the northern and southern kingdoms about the justice of God and about the attention that God is paying to His people and whether or not they are obedient. It is a message that continues to resonate and should be alive in our souls. God has a vested interest in our lives, in the truest sense of that term.

He purchased us. The Lord Jesus Christ bought us with His own blood. It is an incredibly valuable commodity.

It was a high price that was paid to purchase us. We are not ornamental. We are not casual.

We are not an afterthought. We are not lost in a sea of anonymity. If God knows every sparrow in the air, He certainly knows each one of us.

And there is a no-kidding element to the call according to God's purpose. We are called and it is no light thing to treat that as a common thing. You can read that last part of Hebrews chapter 10.

God takes these things very seriously. So, this is a very useful passage for us to not only read and be reminded of its content, but to interpret and apply in the light of our responsibilities. This happened a long time ago.

Do you remember the approximate year that this takes place? It's important. 841, 840. 841, 840 before Christ.

Just keep that number in your mind. Well, as we resume in verse 11 of 2 Kings chapter 10, Jehu killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, all his great men, his close acquaintances, his priests, until he left him none remaining. None remaining in Jezreel.

Doesn't mean there aren't others in the woodwork. Now we have a real interesting little pericope beginning in verse 12. This is 12 through 14.

Jehu is going to leave Jezreel. Now, if you want to observe my air map, one of these days I'm going to have a green screen and I'm going to have Matt and Dan put in a map behind me. When I do this air map thing, they're going to have to move the cities around so that my hand hits right on them.

But on the air map, you remember how the land of Israel is organized. Chinnereth, which will eventually be called the Sea of Galilee. Jordan River heading straight south.

Dead Sea down below. And somewhat to the west and south is the area we're talking about. Jezreel is up there.

It's northeast of Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. There is a road that runs southwest because he is going to try to head down to Samaria. He's up in Jezreel and he wants to go down to Samaria.

So to do that, the road doesn't just, they're not straight line roads. They follow the terrain. They don't have bulldozers and terraforming equipment like we do today.

So he's going to head generally south but a little bit west. He's going to go through a town called Ibliyam. Ibliyam.

And he will continue and the road is going to curve a little bit more westerly. It's kind of south-southwest to go all the way back down to Samaria. Well, as he is on the way, he, in verse 12, is departing to go to, it says he went to Samaria but this is like Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. It says he went to Samaria.

Now it's going to back up and tell us what happened while he was going to. It doesn't say he started to go to Samaria, does it? It says he went to Samaria. In our minds, okay, if he went to Samaria, where is he now? He's in Samaria.

But in Bible storytelling and most ancient Near Eastern literature, you say what you're going to say and then you go back and give more detail. Genesis 1, he created man in his own image, male and female, created he them. Then in Genesis 2, you get the details, right? Same thing here.

And I just point this out because over and over again you hear people saying, oh, multiple authors. You know, you've got the JEPD theory of non-mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. It's all based in really pretty fundamental ignorance of how ancient literature from this area works.

And I just from time to time will point out examples that are often overlooked when people get into that discussion. And this is one of them. It says he went to Samaria.

Well, what does the next verse say? It says he met with, it says on the way at Beth Eched of the shepherds, Jehu met the brothers of Ahaziah, king of Judah. Well, I thought he went to Samaria. Now we're back up on the way.

You see my point. In small ways and in large ways, this is how the ancient Near Eastern mind worked. So just so you know.

On the way at Beth Eched of the shepherds. This Beth Eched means the house of shearing. The house of shearing of the shepherds.

Kind of makes sense, right? The shepherds bring the sheep in, get them sheared. It's not too far from Jezreel. This is before you get to Iblium, which is Iblium is maybe a third of the way from Jezreel back down to Samaria.

Well, long before it gets to Iblium. This is not far from Jezreel. This is a very fertile area.

There's abundant grazing land. And so there's a lot of goat and sheep raising flocks and herds and so on up there. So anyway, it is no accident.

It doesn't just say on the way he met. It says on the way at the house of shearing of the shepherds. You don't shear the shepherds.

This is where the shepherds get the sheep so they can be sheared. It's a lot of genitives. Jehu met.

It says met with the brothers of Ahaziah. That's not exactly right. It literally says he found.

Jehu found them. Jehu found the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah. Now, before we go any further, does anybody see any problem with this? Anything strike you about that? Yeah, Ahaziah had been the king.

Of course, he's dead. He's sort of a dead king. Yeah.

Just flip back a page and keep in mind that Joram, back in chapter 9, lost all of his sons. You remember that at all? It might be helpful to look at it over in Chronicles. 2 Chronicles 21 16.

The Lord stirred up against Joram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who were near the Ethiopians. This is when Joram is alive and Ahaziah has not yet become the king. This is his daddy.

Joram. You remember Joram? I'll say one word and you'll remember Joram. Intestines.

Okay? Joram. Joram of the intestines fame. 2 Chronicles 21.

The Lord stirred up against Joram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who were near the Ethiopians. And they came up into Judah and invaded it and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house and also his sons and his wives so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz. This is Ahaziah.

You just put the Yah on the front and it's Jehoahaz. If you put Yah on the end, it's Ahaziah. Right? Same guy.

Jehoahaz is the only son left. If there's any doubt, you say, well, maybe they were carried off and they escaped and came back later. Look at 2 Chronicles 22, verse 1. The inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his youngest son, king in his place, after the whole intestinal lack of fortitude, for the raiders who came with the Arabians into the camp had killed all the older sons.

Ahaziah is the youngest. So how many brothers, quote-unquote, has Ahaziah got for Jehu to meet? They're all dead, right? He's the youngest son. All the brothers of Ahaziah are dead.

So who is Jehu meeting on the road when it says the brothers of Ahaziah? Because this is later, right? Ahaziah has already come and gone. He was the king. Now he is no more.

So it says he met the brothers. Well, what does this tell you about the use of the term brother in Scripture, or son for that matter? These are used in a very general way to mean relatives. You can be a cousin and be a brother.

You can be an uncle and be a brother. You can be a nephew and be a brother. Right? Because these are kin.

Sometimes I think in cases where it's not a literal brother, they ought to just say the kinfolks. Here's a second thing that is interesting about this. Back to 2 Kings 10.

Jehu met, doesn't say met with, it says he found. He found them. This is a Hebrew verb, m-a-t-s-a.

And it doesn't mean to meet. It means to find, to stumble upon. You can meet them accidentally.

You can reach. You discover. But one of the primary meanings is to find what was sought.

The clue to this is buried in a misunderstanding in your English translation. Jehu met the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah and said, Who are you? And they said, We are the brothers of Ahaziah. We have come down, Le-shalom.

Le-shalom. Which you have translated, We have come down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother. What do we know about the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother? Who's looking up at the sky from inside of a basket? And what's happened to the descendants and surrounding brothers, quote unquote? And if you think about it, where were those baskets? This is why I gave you the map.

Where were the baskets? You remember Samaria, Jezreel? There's been some traffic back and forth. You think these guys who are between Jezreel and Samaria don't know about the slaughter? You think that word hasn't traveled all over the place? What's even more interesting is, Le-shalom here, in my opinion, has been mispointed. It is not Le-shalom.

It is Le-shalom. Which is the Piel intensive from the verb, which means to avenge. Same consonants.

It's all the way the Masoretes pointed it. The pointing is like your chapter and verse divisions in the English. It's not inspired.

It wasn't in the original. It was done later. It's their best guess as to what it means.

And they're right a whole lot more often than they're wrong. But occasionally they get it wrong. I think they got it wrong here.

These guys know the jig is up. It's over. They've been found by Jehu.

They already know what has happened to their other kinfolks. They weren't going up there. By the way, this shearing place of the shepherds is off the road.

It's 100 meters off the road, back on the other side of a ridge. They were hiding up there. And they were looking for an opportunity to avenge the deaths that Jehu had perpetrated all over the place to their kinfolks.

They're on a Hatfields and McCoy type of thing. They want to go make this right. And you can see the derivation from Shalom because, well, you know, they're not going to rest in peace until I kill the guy that killed them kind of a thing.

They're going to make peace. And this came to mean to avenge, to get justice. These guys aren't just up there with a picnic basket saying, oh, we just came up to visit the sons of the

Queen Mother.

Why so many people? You're going to visit all of them at once? No. This is a posse. This is a vengeance party.

They're sneaking up into northern Israel trying to get the drop on Jehu and assassinate him. But Jehu is on a mission from God. And so Jehu finds them, and they know that it's over.

There's no point in trying to lie. You know, they've got all these swords and ropes and garrots and whatever else they thought they were going to kill him with, and they don't have a picnic basket. They don't have any presents for their relatives.

They're a band of assassins, and they're caught. So they say they're defiant. At this point, you might as well be defiant.

You may have seen that picture of a mouse just before the eagle swoops down and takes him away. You might as well be defiant because you're going to be gone no matter what you do. So when he says, who are you, they confess.

We're the kinfolks of Ahaziah. We have come down to avenge the sons of the king and the sons of the Queen Mother. This is why Jehu says, take them alive, and they drag them down to the well of the house of Shearing.

Forty-two men, and he left none of them. How many of them are there? How many people did the bears kill in Elisha's early ministry? Forty-two. Forty-two has a significance in terms of getting rid of the avengers.

Why did those youths come out to harass Elisha? They were unhappy with him because he took their jobs away. He healed the water. Now they don't have to haul water all the way from, and so they're just a gang.

And they're coming out and they're trying to get back at him. They're not grateful. They're vengeful.

And the two bears come out and kill the 42 youths. Everything with Elisha seems to have a double, so there's two bears. But there's also the former Elisha and the latter Elisha, right? You also had the anointing of Jehu for God's retribution, God's judgment.

And here, Jehu, specifically in Judah now, this is the southern kingdom. This isn't Ahaziah's kingdom of Judah, right? These people are coming up into the northern kingdom to avenge the deaths because, of course, Ahaziah is all tangled up with the house of Ahab. His mother is Athaliah, right? So sons of the queen mother and so on.

This whole, the queen mother. Who's the queen mother? Athaliah. That's who the queen mother is.

And Jezebel is the queen mother up in the north. So you've got two nasty queen mothers. And these guys are sticking up for her.

So they are slain. He left none of them. Now, when he departed from there, he met Jehonadab.

This is 2 Kings 10, verse 15. Jehu finishes up wiping out these 42, quote-unquote, brothers. They're not literal next of kin in the house, sons of Joram brothers, because those guys have already been killed.

But by one means or another, you will notice that God has been sectioning off and eliminating these groups. The immediate sons were taken out by the Philistines and the Arabians. Jehu has taken out the house in Samaria and the house in Jezreel.

The parts of the house of Ahab that had sort of slithered down to the south, they are being sectioned off and slaughtered. So when he departed from there, he met Jehonadab, the son of Rachab, coming to meet him. And he greeted him and said to him, Is your heart right as my heart is toward your heart? Now, do you remember the question or actually the statement that Jehu made when he was outside the gates and they brought the 70 heads and lined them up on each side of the road? And he said, You are righteous.

And he used tzaddik. But he wasn't talking about their moral righteousness. He's saying, You are in the right.

You've done a good thing. You are loyal. You've shown me that you're not a threat.

You're in the clear, so to speak. Tzaddik, you're in the clear. There's no charge to be brought against you.

Righteous. Here he asks the question and he uses the term yashar, which means upright, true in its original meaning. When we say something is true, what is true? What's the etymology of that? True means straight.

When you go buy lumber at Lowe's or Home Depot, you take the boards, if you're smart, and pull them out, if you're getting anything other than six-foot studs, you lay one end on the ground and you sight along it to see if the board is true. Is it warped? Is it curly? Is there something the matter with it? We talk about truing something, making sure that it is straight. We talk about an arrow flying true.

It flew straight. And when you say, well, you've made a statement and that's true, we're saying that it's straight. It hits the mark.

It's not deviant. It doesn't fall away. It's true.

Well, this is the idea, although in a more vertical sense, with yashar. To be upright has that same locus of meanings. It means it's reliable.

It's not going to fall over. It is loyal. It is trustworthy, and so on.

That's yashar. So Jehu asks Jehonadab here, is your heart true as my heart is toward your heart? Jehonadab answers and says, it is. If it is, and it's implied here, Jehu says, give me your hand.

So he gave him his hand and he pulls him up into the chariot. Then he said, come with me and see my zeal for the Lord. So they had him ride in his chariot.

And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria till he had destroyed them. According to the word of the Lord, which he spoke to Elijah, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke to Elijah. Well, what are we to make of all this? Do you find it interesting at all that the focus zooms in on Jehonadab? Why do we need to know that he reached out and grabbed him by the hand and pulled him up into the chariot? Why this back and forth, is your heart true? And he says, it is.

Then he's pulled into the chariot and taken down and he says, come see my zeal for the Lord. Well, there's a reason why we've got this close up, this little special scene inserted. Could you imagine this chapter without the meeting with Jehonadab just blowing right on? What difference would it make? Why is it here? This is a question we want to answer for ourselves.

So we're going to go ahead and take our break and we'll come back and address that. But for this first session to summarize and conclude and distill what we have seen, it makes a difference what we decide to be loyal to, what we decide to associate with, what we decide to support. These kinsmen of Ahaziah chose badly.

I am sure that 42 guys all talking to each other had a lot of enthusiasm, had a lot of righteous indignation, justified their actions, felt righteous and felt upright in going to avenge the deaths. They could have probably quoted some scripture. They could have said, you know, we're going to have to be the avengers of blood here because our kinsmen have been murdered and this isn't right.

How would you know, if you're a brother of Ahaziah, how would you know that you were in the wrong and in line to come under the sword of the judgment of God? Is it easy to imagine that these men would have had a feeling of moral high ground and righteous indignation and justification to go up and make this right? I think so. I think up to the last, they felt that they were in the right. That's why they don't even bother to disguise their mission once they are caught.

We are here to avenge because our cause is just and they go down in flames, as it were, in a wrong-headed way. What should they have known that they didn't? What can we learn from their example ourselves? It makes a difference. It's not enough that the circumstances seem to warrant a reaction or a response.

It's not enough that we feel vindicated and justified in our own minds that we have the idea that something needs to be done, something must be stopped. There's this element called the

word of the Lord that says Jehu is on a mission from God and you're not. Vengeance is mine.

I will repay, saith the Lord. Now, there's a fine distinction here. I'm not real sure how to make of it, but I'll leave you this to think about over the break.

The house of Ahab is associated with Ahab, descendants of Ahab, people that Ahab corralled and brought in. The maternal side, the Athaliah side, she's related, but people that come through the mother, you don't typically call them the house of the grandfather. This would be, in other words, is Ahaziah from the house of Joram, Jehoram, Jehoshaphat? Isn't that how he is assigned when you say he's the house of? Joram and Ahaziah both are going to be treated with some respect because they are descended from Jehoshaphat, their house of Jehoshaphat, and as bad apples as they were, they are given some respect in their deaths because of their father-slash-grandfather, Jehoshaphat, who was a good king.

That's their house assignment, their house of Jehoshaphat. So the question I leave you with is, has Jehu exceeded his commission in not only wiping out as anointed king of the northern kingdom, the house of Ahab up in the north, but has he exceeded his commission by slaughtering Ahaziah and the house of Ahaziah? You could make good arguments either way. So what we want to look for is, where is the word of the Lord? So you can chew on that between chewing on snacks, and we'll address it when we come back from the break.