Kings and Prophets 14-08-08a

This is Friday, the 8th of August, 2014. We're prosecuting our study of Kings and Prophets. We are currently at the 11th chapter of 2 Kings at verse 4 with Joash who has been preserved from the purge, about to come to the throne in Judah.

Let's begin by going to the Lord in prayer and we'll pick up where we left off last time and actually reach back a bit to examine things having to do with the unusual use of numbers in this section of God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, it is always a comfort to remember that it is not by might nor by power but by Your Spirit that we are enabled to fulfill our calling and accomplish the purpose that You have assigned us in this life. We thank You for Your grace, Your faithfulness, the provision that You make for us, all because of the Lord Jesus Christ and the position that we enjoy with You through Him.

We thank You for the opportunity to look in detail at the truths that are found in this portion of Your Word. We ask Your blessing on us as we look at them together. May each of us find the applicable and pertinent truths that will help us to walk in the light, to make our decisions and set our priorities and pursue our goals in a way that reflects Your glory and fulfills Your will in our lives.

We pray that we can be an encouragement to each other. We pray for all those that are facing special challenges this week, whether known or unknown, spoken or unspoken. We know that these are for our good and although it is difficult to see the end when we are in the midst of some of our tests, we know that whether it is in this life or in the next, Your perfect plan and purpose is being fulfilled for those who love You and who are the called according to Your purpose.

Again, we ask Your blessing on us as we fellowship and spend this time and study together. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, the impression that grows in my heart week by week as we go through this narrative history of the divided kingdoms of Israel is how fulsome and compactly organized the truths here are. And I am, as I have said many times, valiantly endeavoring to move forward so that we can finish this study in our own lifetimes. But on the other hand, the longer we look at these things, the more really amazing truths unfold.

As we are going to see tonight, there are, I think, here some clues as to how the Lord Jesus Christ knew what He knew about Himself and about God's specific purposes for Him in His earthly ministry. This has long been a tantalizing mystery to me that the Lord Jesus, if my surmise is correct, that He figured out almost everything by looking at the Old Testament Scriptures as they prophesied about Him, then where was He looking? That's the question. It's one thing to go to Isaiah and find a clue or go to one of the major prophets and find He will be in Nazarene and so on.

But specific things that the Lord Jesus did, we have to assume that perhaps God the Holy Spirit just imparted a sudden revelation to Him if He's living His life as a human being and not accessing His omniscience or His divine capabilities. Then how did He discern and determine so many of these things that are remarkable in His life and in His service to God and in His service to us during His earthly ministry? Well, I am beginning to suspect that we may be standing near the hem of the garment and not by any means at His level of perception, but I think we can begin to at least, if not know something, at least suspect something here. So I'll make that observation this evening.

You can see what you think. But there is more going on here, I think we've already seen, than meets the eye. And it is a little bit closer to the surface.

I think it's a bit more exposed. Here at the juncture, we find in Chapter 11 of 2 Kings, and this causes me, although I'm manfully resisting the temptation, to realize that some of the things we've already looked at are threads that are woven through this passage and are going to go forward. So I am just going to perhaps quickly allude back to some things we've already talked about, but not in any sort of an extensive or comprehensive way.

But I'll suggest them to you. You can see what you think, do with them what you will. But there is a lot, a lot, an awful lot going on in the book of Kings, which we have in our Bibles as first and second.

Let me begin by just moving forward in our story. I will get that much done before I get dragged back into taking a fresh look from a slightly different perspective at what we have covered to this point. But you remember the situation.

Our current organizing principle for looking at these things are the three anointings, Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha. 1 Kings chapter 19, and the outworking of God's plan, particularly for the northern kingdom of Israel. Who borders the northern kingdom? Syria, Hazael.

Who is anointed king of what kingdom? It is Jehu in the northern kingdom. Where is the ministry of the prophet Elisha focused? The northern kingdom. Yet we keep finding interactions and intermingling with the kings and the people of the southern kingdom of Judah.

But think about those anointings. God spoke first person to Elijah and said, when you leave here, go to Damascus, which Elijah did not do, and anoint Hazael king. Elijah did no such thing.

God specifically told him, go to the wilderness of Syria, go to the desert where Damascus is. It's a flat out command. It's an imperative.

Elijah did not do it. Then he said, go and anoint Jehu king of Israel, and Elijah, flat, did not do it. Didn't go anywhere near Jehu, son of Nimshi.

Specifically identified, did not do it. Then God said, anoint Elisha as prophet in your place, and Elijah didn't do that either. He did none of the three specific commands, and we reviewed that a

bit over these last few lessons.

But that was the commission, and God's will and God's commission is going to be accomplished. And point one of our application tonight, just by way of review, God's plan and purpose is never thwarted by human failure. There's nobody that fails to make it to the kingdom because you didn't provide a good enough witness.

There is no action. There is no task. There is no purpose.

There is no goal. There is no accomplishment. There is no part of God's plan that fails because humans don't hold up their end.

God is in His heaven. All things work together for the good. Ta agathos.

Tov. It cannot fail. It will not fail.

God sees the end from the beginning. He anticipates failures. He will place challenges in front of us.

Sometimes we pass them. Sometimes we fail them. We're going to see that in a specific instance tonight.

I doubt that you will have seen this coming, because I didn't see it coming, but we're going to, and although it's getting harder and harder to stay ahead of you all, but there is going to be a specific instance tonight where we are going to see God purposely put a test in front of some of His people. Sometimes God puts the test there and we fail and it is a revelation of what's inside. Sometimes He puts a test in front of us.

We pass. It is a revelation of what is inside. The purpose of the test is not to cause us to fail.

It is to reveal what we are made of. Throughout the Scripture, when obstacles or difficulties or stress points hit, it reveals what is inside the person facing that circumstance. And this, if you think about it, is sort of a helpful way to address our daily circumstances, good or bad.

When we enjoy a period of prosperity, a period of restfulness, a period of blessing, a period of bounty, our reaction, our response, what we do with that time or with that material is a reflection of what's inside us. It shows our thinking. When we're faced with a challenge, a difficulty, a test, it shows what is inside.

It shows what we're made of. That's the great thing about this life. It is going to be of an entirely different order and nature after the resurrection.

We won't be facing the world, the flesh, and the devil the way we do here. So, recognizing that every circumstance is placed in our path, is woven into the fabric of our lives to reveal what we are doing with the Word of God in our souls. That's what it's for, good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, short duration, long duration, for the people of God, for believers, especially in this

age, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, given the gift of the Word of God, given the gift of the Holy Spirit, every moment is a reflection of what we are doing with what we have been given.

And we see the foreshadowing of that. We see the outworking of that in God's dealing with the nation in the Old Testament. It's a reflection of what God does with the individual in this age.

So, those three anointings, Hazael, strange circumstance that God commissions the anointing of a Gentile king. I don't know of any other like example. Jehu, who is in some ways like the rod of mine anger and the staff of mine indignation of the Assyrians, raised up to accomplish God's purpose and given a space of four generations and then removed.

No longevity. He's there as a scourge. He is there as a cleansing fire of judgment.

And then Elisha, who as we have already seen is unique in so many ways. Well, we have seen the commissioning of Hazael not by Elijah, but by Elisha. We have seen the anointing of Jehu not by Elijah or Elisha, but by the son of the prophets that is commissioned to accomplish that task.

And for the last couple of chapters, Elisha himself has been conspicuously absent. A lot of things have been going on and Elisha is not visible. And this brings us to the death of Jehu.

Hazael is still up in the north wreaking havoc. He actually lasts for quite a long time. But we saw at the end of chapter 10 of 2 Kings that the Lord began to whittle Israel away.

Hazael conquered the Israelites in all different parts of their territory from the Jordan eastward. There's a summary of the acts of Jehu commending us to the record of Chronicles. Jehu rested with his fathers, buried them in Samaria.

And Jehoiaz, his son, reigned in his place. The period Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was 28 years. More on the particulars of the length of reign a bit later.

Brings us to chapter 11. When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. As we saw, Ahaziah was already the youngest son.

All of his brothers, the sons of his father, had already been killed. He was the last remaining one. That's how he became king.

They had been killed by the Arabians in a previous purge. These are anybody with a blood claim to the throne. Whether or not they are descended in or through Athaliah herself, most of these are going to be perhaps the children of other wives of the king or whatever.

But Jehoshavah, and as I said, this is a close analog of Elishavah or Elizabeth. This is just an alternate. Instead of Eli, my God, this is the Lord.

Yahweh has promised. Jehoshavah. That's no accident.

It doesn't say one of the maid servants. It doesn't say one of the king's daughters. It lists her by name because there is a promise in view.

Despite the fact that Athaliah has been purging descendants of David who have a claim to the throne, despite the fact that Jehu has done a lot of Athaliah's work for her by slaying 42 of Ahaziah's brothers in the previous chapter back in verses 12-14 because they foolishly went up to try to avenge the sons of Ahab and the sons of Jezebel. And in case I didn't make that clear last time, verse 13, when they say, we are the brothers of Ahaziah, we have come down to avenge the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother, those sons, that's Ahab and Jezebel. That's why they have come north to avenge those individuals.

At any rate, when Athaliah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. But Jehoshua, Yahweh the Lord, has promised, daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered, and they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom from Athaliah so that he would not be killed. And he was hidden with her in the house of the Lord for six years while Athaliah reigned over the land." Athaliah reigns over the land.

This, as we have seen in previous instances, different books of the Bible back in the days of the judges, when you have women usurping authority over the men or necessarily having to take charge because the men are panty wastes and milk sops and insipid, effete, cowardly, shrinking cowards, then you have a Deborah who steps in, and rightfully so. Nothing wrong with Deborah. There is something wrong with Athaliah, but she steps into a vacuum left despite the intensive teaching and call to the Word of God a generation earlier under Jehoshaphat.

By this time, Judah is weak, weak in the knees, feeble. And the fact that Athaliah can take over and reign for six years unchallenged is an indictment of the spiritual insipidness of Judah, allowing themselves to be driven by fear. It is spiritual malaise.

But young Joash is hidden away. In the seventh year, Jehoiada, who is the priest, sent and brought the captains of hundreds of the bodyguards and the escorts and brought them into the house of the Lord to him. He made a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of the Lord and showed them the king's son.

The priest showed them the king's son. Jehoiada is what? What's his office? Priest. Just in case you weren't really attaching any significance to that, Jehoiada is the priest in the house of the Lord.

Joash is what? The king. Who is the prophet? Elisha is up in the north, but we haven't seen or heard from him in a while. Does he have any part in this activity? The prophet is off the scene.

Interesting come to pass. There's a priest involved. There's a king involved.

No prophet. So, he commanded them saying, this is what you shall do. One third of you that come on duty on the Sabbath, what day of the week is the Sabbath? Saturday.

What day of the week is it numerically? Seventh day. Six days, shout thou labor into all thy work. Seventh.

Sabbath day of rest. What year is this after the purge? Seventh year. Seventh year.

This is the seventh day. Sabbath. One third keep watch over the king's house.

The king's house. One third shall be at the gate of Sur. One third at the gate behind the escorts.

You shall keep the watch of the house, lest it be broken down. Going to keep watch of the house, guarding the house of the king. The house, there's a couple of different houses here.

We have the house of the Lord. That's where they're taking the oath in verse four. The guards are detailed to keep watch over the house of the king.

Two contingents of you who go off duty on the Sabbath shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord for the king. How many contingents have we got? Three. One of them provides forward security.

One of them provides rear security. And one of them is going to surround the king himself. One of them is in the vanguard.

One of them is following after. And one of them surrounds the king. So if you were looking at them walking by, perhaps going from the house of the king to the house of the Lord, you'd see the ones in front.

You'd see the ones surrounding the king. You'd see the ones behind. Pretty much in that order.

You shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapon in his hand. Whoever comes within range, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king as he goes out and as he comes in.

Can you think of anything else that if anybody got close to it, they would die? Ark of the Covenant. Remember Uzzah when he approached too closely? It's sort of reminiscent of this, isn't it? Even when they would have a procession with the Ark, you would have Levites in front, behind, and they're in the middle. They're carrying the Ark.

And the Ark is sacrosanct. Not to be approached. Not to be touched.

So the captains of hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Each of them took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath. With those who were going off duty on the Sabbath, they came to Jehoiada the priest.

The priest gave the captains of hundreds the spears and shields which had belonged to King David that were in the temple of the Lord. There's been a lot of stuff coming and going. We've seen over the kings of Judah paying tribute and taking stuff out and putting stuff in.

There's really only one set of shields that are left in the house of the Lord that belonged to David. These are the ones that are employed by these captains of hundreds. These were basically used as decoration because they were gold.

Gold. Gold shields. And spears.

He brought out the king from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple by the altar and the house. And he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him and gave him the testimony which is the law. He's got the crown and he's got the law.

They made him king and anointed him and they clapped their hands and said, Long live the king. This particular set of circumstances is unique in all of the annals of the kings of Judah and of Israel. You don't have anything like this any other place but here.

And I think if you look at some of the details, you begin to realize that this account is so detailed and so specific for a reason. It's not just a record of what sort of took place by happenstance. It is recorded this way specifically as we've begun to realize is the case with pretty much every verse of the Old Testament because it impinges on the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

How does it do so? Well, just by way of quick overview, go back to the beginning of the chapter. There is a pretender ruler, in this case Athaliah, anxious to hold on to political power who decides that the way to hold on to that power is to slay all the children. Right? Slay all the children.

But there is a child who escapes the purge and is hidden away for a certain length of time to be revealed and crowned at a later time. The means by which this child is revealed is not the child himself stepping forward and saying, Hello there, I'm Joash. Let me ask you this.

What are the three identities that the Lord Jesus Christ combines into one person? He is prophet, priest, and king. Many times in Scripture, for the purposes of illumination and forward harbingering or whatever you want to call it, for the purpose of prophecy or the purpose of reflecting what's going to happen, those identities may be divided among different people in the same story. It is the priest who brings about the circumstance that enables the king to come to his throne.

What happens, as we have described for us in great detail in the book of Hebrews, in the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is his priesthood and the offering of himself that makes possible his coming to the throne. This is what Satan tried to subvert when he offered him the throne without the cross. Fall down and worship me, I'll give you the kingdoms of the earth.

You can have the throne without the sacrifice. Jehoiada, here, is the priest. And it is through the priest and his care and guardianship for the house of the Lord there is a contingent on one side and there's a contingent on the other side.

There's a contingent at the front door and there's a contingent at the back door. When the Lord

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, he cleanses the temple at the beginning and he cleanses it again at the end of his ministry because he has zeal for the house of the Lord, as does Jehoiada. Notice that there is a covenant mentioned in verse 4. Jehoiada makes the covenant.

Jehoiada is the priest. What does Jesus say on the night before his arrest and trial and crucifixion? This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Jehoiada makes a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of the Lord.

There is a commitment. There is an expression of faith and obedience here on the part of these captains of hundreds, these individuals who are going to accompany, who are going to be in the presence of the king. He commanded them saying, this is what you shall do.

One third of you coming on duty on the Sabbath. What does the Sabbath prophetically suggest to us? The millennium. And in the millennium, you're going to have three different companies that are going to all be in the presence of the king.

There are the Old Testament saints who came before. There are the saints who will come to a relationship with God in the millennial kingdom itself. The children who grow up, those who make their decision throughout the millennium.

And there are also those who reject. That's where you get all your Gog Magog types at the end of the thousand years. And you have that cadre that is in the immediate presence and surrounds the Lord Jesus Christ himself, which I would suggest is us, the church, in his immediate presence.

There are those three groups. Old Testament saints, New Testament saints, and millennial saints. Some come before, some are in the presence of, some come after.

This is in the seventh year, and it is on the seventh day. The operative function here is priesthood. God could have arranged this to where Joash came at the age of 21 and took over the throne.

But no, how old is he here? Seven going on eight? It tells us later on when he comes to the throne that he's eight. What is eight the number of in Scripture? Circumcised on the eighth day, which means what? You are now, you have entered into what? The covenant. You've entered into the covenant.

Leviticus 14, the cleansed leper, eighth day. It's the day of new life. It's the day when you're reborn if you're a cleansed leper.

You're born into the fellowship and the community of Israel on the eighth day. The eighth day in history, after the seven days of history, the six days, 4,000, 2,000, 1,000, at least symbolically speaking. What is the eighth day? That's the beginning of eternal life that's entering into the whole new phase.

And so this is no accident that Joash comes to the throne at this time, at this age. You've got to have the priest there as an adult to do the things that reflect on the priesthood of the Lord Jesus. But the king himself, his kingship is prototypical.

It's symbolic in that way, I think. And you'll notice that the company led by Jehoiada the priest come in. The escorts stand at verse 11.

Every man with his weapon in his hand all around the king. Even though all of this is taking place, they're standing with weapons in their hand. Why? Because the conflict is not over.

And we know that even in the millennial kingdom, the conflict is not over. Satan is removed, but he's not gone. Athaliah is not yet dead when this is taking place.

Couldn't they have assassinated Athaliah, then brought out the king? They don't. They bring out the king while she is still around. And there's going to be a direct confrontation.

He brought out the king's son, verse 12. It doesn't say he brought out the king. It says he brought out the king's son.

And the language here is no accident. What is the primary identity of the Lord Jesus Christ? He is the son of God. He is the son of man.

He is the king, the unique king, because he has both of those identities. In both cases, he is the son. And it is the king's son that is brought forth.

It doesn't even say he brought out Joash. He could have said that. But I think it's phrased under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit this way for a reason.

Put the crown on him, gave him the testimony. Can you think of it? Even in the anointing and coronation of David, there's no mention of him being given the testimony. Why this? Why here? It's unique.

They made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, Long live the king. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, so to speak.

So, this suggests to us that the personages, their offices, and the time signatures that are in these stories are significant. And that makes me want to go back and reflect on the ones that we've already seen just briefly. And so, we'll pause here and take our break.

And when we come back, we'll do that. But here's the thing. Despite Ahab and Jezebel, despite the rather furious driving of Jehu, both in his chariot and with his sword of judgment, God is in his heaven.

There is no Jezebel. There is no Athaliah that can extinguish the lamp of David, that can confound or thwart the purposes of God. God uses people that you wouldn't expect.

Who knew? Certainly Athaliah didn't know that there would be a Yahashua there to preserve the life of Joash. Little did she know that that is one of the narrow, slender threads that connects the line of David to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Her action on a single day, at a single time, an act of bravery by a woman, secures the throne of David in accordance with the plan and purpose and promise of God.

We never know in the moment the repercussions and the weight that God may hang on our faithfulness, on our recognition of reality and what is important. Respecting the priorities of God, living in the light of the word of God, even when there is a risk, even when it isn't easy, even when the clouds of darkness are stormy and threatening, to remember greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world, to trust in the Lord and not lean on our own understanding. It doesn't mean don't use your understanding.

It says don't lean on it. Don't have it be the entire support for what we do. We have to be impressed with the way God illustrates those truths in this section.

So we're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to see if this picture that seems to sort of emerge with the preservation and enthroning of Joash is typical of the things that we have seen before. It will help illuminate the things that are coming after to sort of see if we can break the code.

But we'll pause here and take our break.