

Kings and Prophets 14-09-05a

This is Friday, the 5th of September, 2014. We continue our study in the book of 2 Kings. We have paused at the threshold of chapter 11 with the onset of the reign of Athaliah in Judah to look at the structure of the account, particularly in 2 Kings.

There's much helpful information in Chronicles as well. Often you can do a synthetic study as you do with the Gospels, but the format that I'm going to follow, at least for tonight, is primarily out of 1 and 2 Kings to point out some things that are not immediately obvious in terms of how carefully constructed not only this account is, but the history is. God superintends the events in human history, and these things are not accidental, they're not haphazard.

I think most of us, if we just peruse the book of Kings, which in our Bible is 1 and 2 Kings, think that you can hardly keep track of who's going where and in what year somebody succeeded somebody else, and something happens, and the Moabites, and the Edomites, and here's a famine, and here's a lady with a cruise of oil, and here's an ax head floating, and it just seems like one thing after another, and there doesn't seem to be a particular organizing principle other than God's deep unhappiness with the idolatry that is going on in that country. That comes across pretty clearly. The power of God expressed in and through the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, I think has come through pretty clearly.

But we're going to pull together the things we've looked at the last couple of weeks and see that it is not haphazard, and it isn't adventitious at all. These things happen according to a very detailed and very carefully synchronized schedule of God's making. You know, man can make his plans, but the Lord is going to direct his steps.

And the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. There isn't anything that takes place that God has not woven into his perfect plan. And this is a great comfort for us as we look at the forward progress of our own lives and our own historical context.

But before we begin, let's pause, as we always do at the beginning, to dedicate our time and our concentration, our fellowship, and our study to God with the hope that both what we do tonight and what we do in the days that lie ahead will glorify the Lord Jesus. Shall we pray? Father, it is such a privilege to live in this age and to have the scriptures before us with the account of your workings, your glory reflected from the time of creation through the times of the patriarchs into the age of Israel and your dealings with that nation, both in its unity and in its twofold division in the subsequent return of the Babylonian exiles, culminating in the time of the Lord Jesus, his birth, his life, his death, his burial, and very importantly, his resurrection, securing our salvation, accomplishing the payment for our sins, and establishing a way through what had formerly been an impassable barrier so that we could have a relationship with you. We thank you for the revelation in the remaining portion of the New Testament that tells us who we are and why we are here as the body of Christ, the opportunities that we have to learn and to grow and to prepare ourselves now for life with you and with the Lord Jesus in the

eternal future that lies ahead.

We thank you for this portion of your word. And as we see in the Old Testament, the harbingers and the reflections of what is coming in the new, we pray that your Holy Spirit will be our teacher, will make these truths clear to us, not only as they are found in your word, but as they are pertinent and meaningful to us in terms of thought and application so that we're renewed and motivated and thoroughly equipped for every good work. We thank you for the fellowship of believers of like mind.

We thank you that we have the opportunity to spend this time together and be mutually built up and edified through the ministry of your spirit and the gifts that you've distributed in our group. And we ask that each one can be a blessing and will be blessed as we spend this time of fellowship together. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. The foundation that we have laid over the last few weeks, I know in some ways has been a little bit anticipatory. It anticipates something that we haven't gotten to yet.

And in that sense, it sort of leaves us hanging. We say, well, I understand now that there were very specific ways of doing accounting in the southern kingdom and in the northern kingdom in keeping track of the royal history. Who is the king? When did he come to the throne? How long did he reign? And we saw some technical details about that.

If you've lost a firm grip on it, it's mainly more important to know that these things do have an explanation than to remember the details of the explanation at any given moment. But if somebody says, oh, your Bible is full of errors, just look at the mathematical mistakes in the book of Kings. You can say, oh, no, those are not mistakes.

It is fully accounted for. In fact, if any one of those numbers was different, it would be wrong. They are exactly and precisely correct given the accounting methods of the time.

And they differed in the northern and southern kingdom. They started their years in different ways. One is in Tishri in the fall.

The other is in Nisan in the spring. One of them counts the first year that the king comes to the throne as year one of his reign. And down in the south, they typically don't.

And that solves all problems. If you can remember that much, you're golden. That's good enough for our purposes.

But it's important for us to recognize and appreciate the integrity of Scripture over and over and over again. The attacks on the Lord Jesus Christ from not only the unbelieving world, but from within the realm of believers who want to spiritualize the text, who want to explain away the hard truths of Scripture by saying, well, it's allegorical, it's not designed to be taken literally. You and I need to be able in our own minds to meet those arguments and those objections with knowledge.

We don't necessarily have to argue other people into silence. We don't have to win a debate. But in your own soul, it is important to know that these allegations and these criticisms and these attacks on the Word of God do not hold water if you have knowledge.

They persuade the ignorant. They carry away the casual student. It is my belief that you, fill in your name here, are in this church at this time for a very specific reason.

We could easily have been born in Africa, where the issue is, can you maintain your faith in the face of persecution? The same could be said of believers in China. The same could be said of believers in South America. The same could be said in parts of Asia and the Middle East, where it is as much as your life is worth to claim Christ as your Savior.

There is a reason that God put you and me here without any of that pressure. That's not our test. We've been seeing in the book of Ephesians that the body of Christ is composed of many parts, and these different parts have a different function and a different assignment.

It's important for us to recognize what is our assignment. Well, I would suggest to you that at least a part of our assignment, we have been given this great space of opportunity. We are free to assemble.

We have the tools to go into the Word of God in great detail, with great rigor, and to look intensively and extensively at the Word of God. Why did God give us this opportunity? Why did He give us these tools? I think He expects us to use them. And so it is our assignment, I believe, as the pastor of this group, I think part of our assignment, one of our missions, is to advance our understanding in ways that other groups and other congregations and other believers may not be called to do.

Now, why it's our assignment, I don't know, but it seems clear to me that we've got the means, we have the motive, we have the opportunity, we have the enthusiasm, we have the interest, we have the minds. As I look around in our group, each one of you is uniquely able to grasp and to build and to advance and through discussion to edify others in the group in a way that's not prevalent in other places. It doesn't make us better.

It does make us different. It defines a goodly part of our mission. God has a purpose for us gaining this understanding.

And it isn't just to navigate the obstacles of this life. Each of you, each of us has an assignment in God's kingdom. It is our MOS, our military occupational specialty.

We have been saved. We have been granted God's common grace in terms of the things that happen. You know, you can make a list.

There's anywhere from 25 to 45 different things that you can list out that happen at the point of salvation. They all happen to us. But then within the body, there are assignments.

Some of us are infantry. Some of us are cavalry. Some of us are artillery.

Some of us are air. Some of us are intel. Some of us are logistics.

There are different, equally important, but nevertheless different assignments. There are groups that do a wonderful, and I mean in all truthfulness, wonderful job of evangelism, a wonderful job of prosecuting the missionary effort. It's a wonderful thing.

That's their assignment. They've been given the means and the motive and the opportunity and the particular giftings for that. Our group has not been called to that.

We support missions. We have a wonderful involvement and fellowship with people in foreign lands who are doing the work of God, both in evangelization and in teaching. But it is very obviously not our primary mission here to be a nucleus of local evangelism.

It's just not. And if you look around our Metroplex, there are other groups who do have that specific assignment, and God bless them and pray for them. And if the occasion comes to partner with them and join along with them and do that, that's great.

But the parts of the body of Christ have individual functions. The whole body is not a mouth. The whole body is not a foot.

The whole body is not a hand. The whole body is not an ear or an eye. So as we look at ourselves as a group, what is it that God has given us the opportunity to do? Where is the obvious opportunity? Where is the obvious provision? Where is the obvious potential? It is in pushing the envelope of our understanding in the Word of God.

That's my firm belief. And for that reason, we are taking our time in trying to gain not just a working knowledge of scripture, but a detailed knowledge to observe and to hopefully meditate upon, gain a firm grasp personally on these things, and be ready to put them into application both now and in the ages to come. In so doing, like every other believer, like every other group of believers, we learn about the Lord Jesus because He did these things Himself.

He lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. He knew when to heal and when not to. He knew when to stay and when to move.

He knew when to call the disciples and when to send them out. He knew when to climb the mountain and call them to Himself. He knew when to go into the valley and preach a sermon on the plain.

He knew when to go to a community and preach, and He knew when to bypass a community. And you can see that the same in the ministry of the apostles. They recognized their assignments and their opportunities, and they did not pursue other opportunities that might have been equally possible.

We were talking earlier today when we went through the book of Acts, and you remember

when the apostle Paul was traveling and he went from one town to another? When you look on the map, there's two great big cities in between A and B, and he went right through there. He didn't preach. He didn't evangelize.

He didn't stop. They were great metropolis towns. There were thousands of people in there.

He just walked right through because it was not his assignment. It is important not only as a group, but as individuals to look around and evaluate what are the opportunities that God has given to me. We can't achieve a mission if we haven't identified it.

We can't hit a target if we're not aiming at it. And so in the same way that as a church and as a group, we look at what is it that God has given us provision, opportunity, motivation to accomplish. This is it.

We do the same thing in our individual lives. Look around. Where are my opportunities? Is there something that's an open door and I'm just not walking through? That would be a good subject for prayer.

Lord, now that I look around, I realize there's an open door here. Is this what you would have me do? Can you imagine that if we look around and evaluate opportunities and we're trying to please God and to do what he wants us to do, that if we pray and ask him for guidance, he wouldn't? No, I just want you to guess. You got some dice there somewhere.

Just keep, you know, assign a number to each option and see if you roll a seven or a three, you know, just give it a give it a shot. Of course, God is searching the earth. It tells us in the Psalms, God is roaming the earth as it were, looking for someone who is looking for him and looking to live a life that pleases him.

So with that as background, we resume our study now because this is an advanced study. It's it takes some time. It takes some concentration, but it will reward our efforts, as I think you'll see tonight, because we're going to pull some of the things together that we have observed over the past couple of weeks.

I've already reviewed that that there is a very sophisticated and very carefully annotated accounting of. The kings of Israel. So let's see how much we remember of this just and this I'm not going to go into great detail, just remember off the top of your head, leaving aside the Benjamites and starting with the tribe of Judah.

Who is the first king of Israel? You can speak out loud. Leaving aside the Benjamites. That that would be technically correct, but we're going to leave the tribe of Benjamin out, you know, the last shall be first tribe of Benjamin, last tribe, but they got the first king having done the last shall be first.

We just shovel them out of the way. We're going to start with David. So David is the first king.

How many years was David king? Forty years. But that 40 is broken up into two sections, isn't it? Very carefully tells us what? What's the first section in Hebron? He was king. How long? Seven years in Jerusalem.

He's king. How long? Thirty three. So you've got a 40 year period there in King David divided seven and thirty three.

Seven and thirty three. When David dies, Adonijah tries to become king, blows the trumpet, gets some chariots, rides around, doesn't work. Who becomes the next king? Shlomo.

I like his name in Hebrew, Shlomo. How long is Solomon king? Forty years. Forty years.

You have two kings, two Judah kings, tribe of Judah kings, 40 years, 40 years. And you can't help but think, well, I can't help but think that when you look at the life of Moses, he's got 40 years in Egypt. He's got 40 years in Midian.

Then they march out of Egypt when Moses is 80. And his third set of 40 years is the wilderness. Everybody dies.

Other than Caleb and Joshua, everybody, including Moses, dies. Forty years kills them all. Well, after 80 years of the Davidic monarchy, the kingdom splits.

And we have Jeroboam and Rehoboam. Now, Jeroboam is in the north, Rehoboam is in the south. And I thought about trying to make a big chart out of this, and I still may, but this should be something simple enough for us to follow mentally.

People listening to the reading of Scripture didn't have a chart. Somebody would stand up and read Kings and they could grasp it. So if I do my job right, this will be simple enough, you can grasp it.

Feel free to make your own chart, but I'm not going to provide you one tonight. But what's interesting is, let's look at the northern kingdom. This is what the Book of Kings tends to focus on, where Chronicles tends to emphasize Judah.

So let's start with the northern kingdom. Who's the first king once the kingdom divides? Jeroboam. And now, how is Jeroboam related to David? He's not.

So immediately in the northern kingdom, he was just a general. He's just a guy. But he is anointed by God, right? He gets the 10 pieces of cloth, and God says, you're the king.

So we have this dynasty that starts with Jeroboam in the north. Now, Jeroboam, it tells us, is going to reign 22 years. But he's wicked.

He's wicked. So the prophet Ahijah, the prophet Ahijah comes to Jeroboam and says, you're a wicked king. You're so wicked, I'm going to wipe out your whole house.

The specific nature of the curse from Ahijah, if you just want to boil it down, dogs and birds. It's dogs and birds. Dogs are going to eat whoever of your house dies in the city.

The birds are going to peck out the eyes and the rest of the entrails and stuff of anybody that dies outside the city. He gets the dogs. This is what I call the dogs and birds curse.

OK, so this doesn't bode well. The very first king of the northern kingdom, the 10 tribes, gets the dogs and birds curse from Ahijah. OK, well, he reigns 22 years and he dies.

His son is Nadab. So we think, ah, well, we've got a dynasty going here for Jeroboam. Nadab, however, only reigns two years.

Two years. And he is then murdered by Baasha. So if you're tracking the dynasties of the northern kingdom here, you've got Jeroboam, 22 years, Nadab, two years.

And then I've got a little symbol in my notes, two dashes and three X's. That's the end of the dynasty. Two generations.

He didn't even make it to the third generation. And that dynasty ends by murder. Baasha fulfills the prophecy of Ahijah and the entire house of Jeroboam is utterly and completely annihilated.

There is nobody left. Now, Baasha fulfills the Ahijah prophecy for Jeroboam, but he's such a wicked guy, he gets a prophecy of his own. The prophet Jehu comes to Baasha and says, you are such a wicked guy, dogs and birds for you.

So this is the second time that God has sent a prophet, a man of God, to a king and said, you're wicked, dogs and birds. Right. That's the prophet Jehu.

Who was the first one? Ahijah. Ahijah is the first one, Jehu is the second one. Now, interestingly, Baasha's father is named Ahijah, but he's a different Ahijah.

The first Ahijah is Ahijah the Shilonite. This is Ahijah of Issachar. But what are the odds? You know, his father is Ahijah.

All right. Dogs and birds for you. Well, Baasha dies and is succeeded by his son Elah.

Like Jeroboam's son Nadab, Elah reigns two years and then he is killed. So you have a Jeroboam, Nadab, and then a big across the neck for that dynasty. You have Baasha, who isn't related to any of those guys, certainly not to David, nor is he related to Jeroboam.

He starts a dynasty. His son Elah hits the throne. Two years after, just like Nadab, he is killed.

Now, he is killed by Zimri. Now, bear with me, because what we're looking at here is a symmetry. You've got Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah.

Right. That's a total of four king generations, if you will. Okay.

Two and two. Then comes Zimri. Zimri slaughters Elah and fulfills the curse of Jehu.

Wipes out the entire bunch. Baasha's entire house is wiped out. This is Zimri.

Remember, this is what Jezebel is going to say when Jehu shows up. Hello there, Zimri, murderer of your master. Right.

This is that Zimri. Zimri, in a matter of a few days, tracks down and kills everybody related to Baasha. How long does Zimri then sit on the throne of northern Israel? Seven days.

He gets a week. In that week, his main job, all he did, he came, he kills Elah, tracks down everybody else related to Baasha. As soon as he kills the last member of Baasha's house, he himself is then killed.

So one week. He's just there long enough. He's just a placeholder.

He's just like a line. Now, who succeeds him? Omri. And we saw last time the Omride dynasty is a four generation dynasty, right? There was four generations before Zimri.

Zimri is just a dot. He's just a comma. He's just a seven day interlude.

He's just there to kill everybody that preceded him. Then you have Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Joram. That's the four generation Omride dynasty.

Okay. But Zimri fulfills the Jehu curse on the house of Baasha. And it's interesting because in connection with Zimri, even though he's only a seven day guy, he gets all the Baasha house wiped out and fulfills the Jehu curse of dogs and birds.

But when he's killed by Omri, the people are evenly split. It tells us there is a division. Half of them are for Omri and half of them are some other guy.

But the Omri half prevails. Why does he even tell us that? If he prevailed, why do we need to know that there was ever a division? It's important. It says the people were divided.

In the days of, right after Zimri's murder, Omri killed him. They said, well, half of them say, well, let's Omri kill him. Let's make Omri the king.

The others say, no, this guy starts with a T, I think we'll make him. But Omri survives and Omri is going to be the king. He's the first of this next four generation set.

And he's going to reign for 12 years. And what's interesting about that is Omri is a guy of twos because the people are split in half. You know, he gets half of him, then he becomes it.

And he's going to reign for 12 years, six in one capital city and six in another. It tells us he reigned six years in one place and six in another. So he's a six plus six equals 12 guy.

Then he's going to die and his son Ahab is going to take the throne. And Ahab is going to reign

for 22 years. Now, if you've been writing these down, it's an interesting come to pass because Jeroboam reigned for 22 years.

Ahab is going to reign for 22 years. In fact, if you look at these, just look at the length of reign as they counted up in the north and we know why and how they count it that way. It's Jeroboam 22, Nadab 2, Baasha 24, Elah 2, Zimri a week.

Then you've got Omri 12, Ahab 22. Notice anything about those numbers? It's all even numbers. Right.

And that's going to continue when you get down to Ahaziah and then Joram. Joram is going to reign for 12 years. Joram is said to reign two, it's really only one, but it's called two because of the way they count them up there.

And so everybody all the way down to Jehu in the north, they are said to have an even numbered set of years. And remember that all came up and totaled down to 853 when Ahab is killed. You had an 86 year total, but it was really only 79 years.

And the difference is seven years. Seven kings, seven years. Now, why do we care about this? There's a set of four.

You've got this weird little week long thing with Zimri. Then you've got a set of four. And then that is going to be cut off after Joram by Jehu.

And Jehu is a big reset. So before Jehu in the north, you've got really a wonderful symmetry there. You've got two dynasties totaling four and you've got one dynasty totaling four.

And the second guy in that second set of four is Ahab. And there's going to be a split halfway through because Ahab is going to have a daughter named Athaliah and she's going to wreak some havoc later on. But it is not.

Here's the first point to notice. This is not haphazard. And if you look at the curses that have been delivered and fulfilled down to the point of Ahab, you had the Ahijah curse of dogs and birds.

You had the Jehu curse of dogs and birds. Now, when we get down to Ahab, he's going to get three separate curses. If you don't think Ahab was a wicked guy, he gets not one, not two, he gets three curses.

The first curse is when he is told that he's going to defeat the Syrians. And he does. He beats the Syrians once.

Then he defeats the Syrians again. And the third time that he faces the Syrians when he ought to just wipe them out. This is Hazadad, Ben Hazadad, that whole crowd up there that causes so much grief.

This is where Hazael is going to prevail. This is the one Elisha is going to look at and stare and weep. Because he's going to see all the destruction.

Ahab had the chance to wipe those guys out. He defeats him once. He defeats him twice.

Third time's a charm, right? What does he do the third time? He makes a treaty. And God sends a son of the prophets to Ahab. And he says, because you did not kill who I told you to kill, I gave you these victories and you made a treaty with this king and treated him like a brother instead of slaughtering him and his people.

The son of the prophet says, it is going to be your life for his life and your people for his people. That's the son of the prophets curse. Curse number one on Ahab.

Then he does the Naboth vineyard thing. And Elijah comes to him and says, you are a wicked king and it's going to be dogs and birds for you. In fact, it's thrice emphasized.

The curse of Jeroboam is coming on your house. The curse of Baasha is coming on your house. What was the curse of Jeroboam? Dogs and birds.

What was the curse of Baasha? Dogs and birds. And then what does Elijah say as the third emphasis? Dogs are going to eat you and your wife and the birds are going to peck anybody that the dogs miss. So not only does he get three curses, but he gets three iterations of this Elijah curse.

Then remember when he when he is going to go out to battle and try to prevail and Micaiah comes, they say, come on, Micaiah, preach, prophesy something good. All the other prophets have said we're going to win. What say you? You know, he's gotten his king from Judah up there.

Micaiah says, I see Israel scattered like sheep. I saw a lying spirit that, you know, God has a dialogue in heaven who will go and persuade Ahab to go to battle so he can get slaughtered. I'll be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets slap.

You know, which way did the spirit of God, you know, that whole thing? Well, because of that, that's that's the third curse. Micaiah. Says.

And very interesting. After he delivers this prophecy, what happens to Micaiah? He is sent back to Ammon, the mayor, and to Joash, the king's son. It's a little overlooked detail.

I don't think I even pointed it out when we went through this the first time. But Ahab has a son named what? Joash. Joash, the king's son.

They said, send Micaiah back to Ammon, the mayor of Samaria, and to Joash, the king's son, and feed him the water of affliction and the bread of affliction. Very important detail there. Micaiah, who spoke the truth, has to drink the water of affliction and eat the bread of affliction for telling the truth.

But the death of Ahab is foretold by Micaiah. That's the third proof. And of course, Ahab is killed.

And that that's in the year 853. 853. We've had 79 years in the north, which is totaled up to be 86 in their reckoning.

It's really 79. And in the meantime, down in the south, you've come all the way down to the reign of Jehoshaphat and down. Jehoshaphat is still alive, but he's not doing well.

And in 853, Jehoram, his son, and Athaliah, his daughter-in-law, become co-regents. The same year that Ahab dies, Athaliah pops up as a force in the co-regency down in Judah. It's as though Ahab is killed, but the Jezebel is still alive in the north and Athaliah is coming to power in the south.

You've got an evil queen in the north and you've got an evil princess in the south. The year Ahab dies, Jezebel is very much a factor in the north. Athaliah is very much a factor in the south.

853, this signal year. And that 853, this is where we really started looking closely at this account because there's going to be a 12 year period from there to Jehu. Jehu comes in 841.

This is the big reset. And there's a 12 year period from 853 to 841. And this 12 year period is fascinating.

We're going to pause here and take our break. And when we come back, I'm going to show you something about this 12 year period that you can't really see unless you sit and look at it. But it helps us see the symmetry and God's working in history.

But notice this is not haphazard. It's not incidental. It's not just happenstance.

God is superintending, even as these evil people come, even as one guy murders another, God orchestrates when and where and how these things happen. And he says in advance, your days are numbered, you're evil. And because of that, a time of reckoning is coming and it is always fulfilled.

The curse of Ahijah was fulfilled. The curse of the prophet Jehu was fulfilled. The curse of both the son of the prophet Elijah and Micaiah, all three were fulfilled beginning with the death of Ahab.

And it's going to culminate in the death of everybody else associated with the house of Ahab with Jehu. But it's going to take place. The threefold curse on Ahab and his house is going to take place over this period of 12 years.

This 12 year period is inaugurated with the death of Ahab. But the culmination of those three curses doesn't come until Jehu, 12 years later, 12 year process, if you will. God is in his heaven.

Your life is not an accident. The circumstances, the comings and goings, whether it's evil

people, whether it is seemingly random circumstance, it's not random at all. God is in his heaven.

Nation in the Old Testament, life of the believer in the New Testament. These things are all under God's control. Think about the believers that had to live through these times who loved God, but they lived in the northern kingdom.

That's where their tribal inheritance is. You can't just abandon your inheritance and go down south. This is where this is your assignment.

You're in the tribe of Issachar. You're in the tribe of Zebulun. You're in the tribe of the half tribe of Manasseh, wherever it might be.

That's your ancestral home. That's where you're supposed to return every jubilee year. You can't just pack up and leave and go down to Judah.

So you live through these evil times with this evil rulership. You think about the times in which we live today and the evil that is surrounding us. It's almost inescapable in terms of environment.

But God knows. God is in his heaven and God makes provision for his people. We've seen this, the widow with her crews of oil, the widow of Zarephath.

We've seen later on that same widow when there was a famine in the land and God gave her instructions. Now it is time to leave, but you'll be coming back. Just as Israel has been taken out of the land, but they're coming back.

The son is taken away, but he's restored. The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Those who love God, those who are called according to his purpose, we can have that confidence and it is a great stabilizing truth.

It's a stabilizing knowledge for us. Let's pause here and take a break. When we come back, this 12 year period that we've spent the last three weeks understanding the context and the surroundings, now we're going to see what that's for as soon as we come back.