

Kings and Prophets 14-10-17a

Greetings from the wilds of Oklahoma. To those of you who tune in regularly we're in not our primary, not our alternate, not our supplementary, but in our completely different location tonight. And we continue our study in the book of Second Kings, the Kings and Prophets.

We'll be picking up in chapter 11 and moving very quickly into chapter 12 of Second Kings. This is Friday the 17th of October 2014. And as we continue to look at the structure of this book and this section of the book, we want to continue to move forward.

So we're going to put a comma, as it were, in our study of swords and chariots and dogs and the other significant features that are woven into these accounts and actually move forward in the account a little bit tonight. We'll see some of these thematic elements recur and because we know their value, their significance, it should help us get a little bit more out of the account. Let's take a moment as is our custom to go to the Lord in prayer and then we'll begin.

Father, we're grateful for another opportunity to spend time together in fellowship, in the study of your Word, and in having a fresh appreciation for the beauty of your plan and your purpose and the provision that you have made for us to be a part of it. We pray that as we look at these things tonight that God the Holy Spirit will minister them to our hearts so that we will be freshly motivated and have a renewed dedication and enthusiasm for living in the time that remains to us in this life, in the light of your Word and in the power of your Spirit. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, to recap, you'll remember that Jehu pretty well cleaned the slate at a very pivotal time in the history of the divided kingdom and Athaliah was on the throne down in Judah. She saw to it that all contenders to the throne were wiped out, or so she thought.

But in 2 Kings chapter 11, there was the deliverance of a baby from an effort to kill all offspring. And it isn't difficult for us from our vantage point to see the parallel with Herod's attempt to slay all of the potential rivals to his throne even at the infant level. And as has been the case elsewhere, whether it is Moses, whether it is the Lord Jesus, there is a deliverance.

And it is divinely superintended. And the upshot of that is that Joash is preserved. So in chapter 11, you saw Athaliah destroy all the royal heirs, but Yehoshua, which is very similar to Elishevah as I have mentioned, this is the Lord has promised versus God or my God has promised, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered.

They hid him and his nurse in the bedroom from Athaliah so that he was not killed. He was hidden with her in the house of the Lord for six years while Athaliah reigned over the land. Now, why the house of the Lord? When you watch these adventure movies and things, they spirit the child away to a foster family in a far distant land.

He grows up and he always seems a little different. He finally discovers, oh, I'm actually the king's son. I've been adopted.

Geppetto and his wife here that raised me, or whatever the guy's name is, actually are just my foster parents and I'm the son of the king and then I'm going to come and all is well. Everyone lives happily ever after. How come Joash is in the house of the Lord during this six year hellstorm led by Athaliah in Judah? What's the last place she would look? What's the last place she would go? The house of the Lord is in disrepair.

It's boarded up. People don't use it. Athaliah is made of the same cloth as her parents and Ahab and Jezebel were big Baal proponents.

So, Athaliah isn't going to make any provision and doesn't want any priests operating. So, the thing is just a warehouse. It's not in use.

Well, it's the safest place. He lives there for six years and, by the way, how far away is the royal palace? Solomon's palace from the temple? They're practically next door. She's living right next door.

He's right under her nose for six years but she would never set foot in the temple. So, it's the safest place and it's roomy. It's got all kinds of provisions and accoutrements for plumbing and washing for sacrifices and you know the courtyard in there and then did they dare to go into the holy place? What's the status of the Holy of Holies? We don't know during this time.

She may have been superstitious enough to not go in. You know, the stories were still circulating about the last time somebody laid rough hands on the Ark of the Covenant. You have the rats and tumors story with the Philistines and these people are superstitious enough to say, well, I'm not gonna let anybody worship but I'm not gonna go in there and mess with it either.

We'll just wrap it in shrink wrap and leave it in sort of in mothballs. So, this is where he grows up. This child and his nurse and you think about, wow, you know, what if somebody walks by and the baby is crying or whatever.

There's got to be some traffic going in across there but those precincts were large enough in Solomon's Temple that they pulled it off for six years. Nobody knew he was there and he grows up. He's a little child.

How does he learn? How does he play? Little friends and things. He had a very unique childhood growing up in the house of the Lord. We tend to just kind of blow right past that and say, oh, well, he became king when he was seven but what did he do for the first six years? It's a very odd childhood and he sort of, and of course, all of his people are dead.

So, he's raised by his nurse and superintended by Jehoiada the priest and he's sort of his godfather, his mentor. He is to Joash what Mordecai was to Hadassah or Esther, a mentor but

not necessarily related. But at the time that was right in Jehoiada's estimation, which was in the seventh year, Jehoiada sends and brings the captains of hundreds and we talked about this a few weeks ago and this elaborate bodyguard arrangement, Jehoiada is almost like the Ark of the Covenant with contingents on each side.

Remember when the Israelites would travel through the wilderness and they had that method of travel and encampment around the Ark? Well, Jehoiada almost reproduces that when he brings the little boy king in. One-third were at the gate, one-third behind the escorts, keep the watch of the house lest it be broken down. The two contingents of you who go off duty on the Sabbath will keep watch on the house of the Lord for the king.

Verse 8, surround the king on all sides, all four sides. There's some in front, there's some behind, there's some on the port, some on the starboard side. They're all four.

Sides are covered. Every man with his weapons in his hand. Normally this would be, many of us have been in parades where you wear sort of ceremonial weapons.

The sword that hangs on my wall wouldn't cut hot butter. Those are just ceremonial swords. They don't actually work if you're in conflict.

You might be able to stab your way through a couple of pieces of light cardboard but that's they're just pot metal. These guys have got the real thing. This is not a ceremonial parade.

This is the real deal parade. These guys have got their weapons and they're ready to fight and even though it's a ceremony and it is a ceremonial entrance and this is the way the Lord Jesus is going to return. When the Lord Jesus returns there aren't any ceremonial weapons.

It's the real thing and he doesn't mess around with appearances. It's reality and that's the way Joash comes in. The captains 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 are going off duty on the Sabbath and came to Jehoiada the priest. They doubled the amount. The guys that were coming off watch are still a part of this so they've got twice as many men as would normally be available and the spears and shields which David had put in the temple of the Lord.

They've got those. Now these I think had been superseded. We've seen some earlier kings who sent stuff away in tribute.

David was a military man and he had put the real deal in the temple. They were later replaced with golden spears and golden shields and we've seen the earlier kings have to pawn those basically or send them away as bribes and tribute to other kings. What's left in the temple? The real thing.

The ones that David had. David and his mighty men. Maybe they they hung those on the wall as like in a Viking Hall.

You know the great battle scarred veterans when they retired might hang their stuff up in memoriam but it's it's real stuff. That's still there so Athaliah would be sensitive to any armed group suddenly going to the armory and drawing a bunch of weapons but these are in the same place that the king has been. They're inside the temple so she hasn't made any provision for that.

The escort stood in verse 11. Every man with his weapons in his hand all around the king. This is what you want to think about when the Lord Jesus returns.

Every man with his weapons in his hand put on the full armor of God. You do it spiritually now. We'll do it for real later.

Behold he cometh with clouds. You look at the way the Lord Jesus returns at the end of the account in Revelation. Revelation 19, 20 that area.

He is coming with an armed group and hopefully that's us. If we qualify, if we learn how to put our spiritual armor on and use our spiritual weapons there will be natural skills available because our conflict is not against flesh and blood. It's principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age but there is a material component to this preparation that we undergo that is going to find its fulfillment when we come back with the Lord Jesus and this Joash appearance is of that sort.

Sort of a foreshadowing. And so Jehoiada brings out the king's son, put the crown on him, gave him the testimony. They made him king and anointed him and clapped their hands and said, Long live the king.

Now when Athaliah heard the noise, verse 13, escorts and people, she came to the people in the temple of the Lord. When she looked there was the king standing by a pillar according to custom. This is I think the only place this particular custom is mentioned that the king stands by a pillar.

Is it one of the pillars Jashon and you remember the Boaz and Jashon the two great pillars that are in each side of the gate. It says the pillar not the pillars so which one is it? Is it some other pillar? This is according to custom but one of the one of the constant attacks on the Word of God especially in the Old Testament histories is that it was all written late. But little clues like this, the author of this says according to custom and doesn't give any more explanation because at the time this was written that custom was still known and he didn't have to explain it.

We have no idea which pillar, which direction did he face, what what kind of a custom was it? Did he just walk up there and stand by it? Did he have a throne next to it? Was there some ceremony involving the pillar? Did he you know pray in front of it? There was some custom and some ceremony and it's lost but it was still vivid in the memories of people at the time this account was written which tells us it was not written post captivity. It was not written you know

long after the days that these events are purported to have occurred. It is contemporary.

These records were written down as it happened. They might have been collected and edited together later but the accounts are sound. There the information is good and that's just one of the little details that tells us so.

So the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. This is verse 14 of chapter 11. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets.

Now the Bible literalists will go to certain passages and say this is what it says so this is what it must be. It's an all or nothing and anytime the Bible says all they're ready to say everybody. I am reasonably certain that not everybody in Israel was blowing a trumpet.

I don't think everybody in Israel knew how to blow a trumpet. I don't think everybody owned a trumpet, brought a trumpet, had a trumpet. I don't think every single occupant of Judah came to Jerusalem and simultaneously blew these trumpets.

I just it's really not physically possible. You got sick people, don't have enough breath to do a trumpet. If there was even one person that didn't blow a trumpet then all doesn't really mean all does it? Did anybody leave any shepherds in the fields with the flocks? Oh no they all came and they all blew trumpets.

What does it say? All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Again just a reminder that the Bible uses standard literary device, standard literary methods for communication and you can't push it to absurd extremes and shouldn't. And to do it in a theological section and not obviously not be able to do it in a narrative section now you've got an inconsistent hermeneutic.

We have to be sensitive to context and realize that this is superbly written literature but it is literature and it uses the tools and the metaphors and the devices that are common to literature and all does not always mean all. How do I know when it does mean all? All Israel shall be saved? How many of them does that mean? Go to the context, go to the clues that are given elsewhere in that account. Obviously everybody in Judah is not included under this.

What does it mean? It was a massive celebration. This was Super Bowl Sunday in Jerusalem and people had noisemakers, they were dancing in the streets, it was pandemonium and it looked as though everybody who was anybody was there. Athaliah however tore her clothes and cried out treason, treason, which is a great irony.

Who is the treasonous person who slew all of the rightful royal heirs and has put herself illegitimately on the throne and has been engaging in a reign of terror for six years but everybody sees life as the center of their own universe and for her this is betrayal and treason and it's a bad day. And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the army, and said to them, take her outside under guard and slay with the sword whoever follows her. For the priest had said, do not let her be killed in the house of the Lord.

This ceremony is taking place in the house of the Lord. Joash is right at home, he's lived there all his life. Jehoiada is right at home.

Everybody else remembers the ceremonies from previous enthronements, previous installments of the king. So they seized Athaliah in verse 16 and she went by the way of the horse's entrance into the king's house and there she was killed. She as it were is killed in the house that she stole to avoid her blood defiling the house of the Lord.

You understand the principles of ritual defilement, blood, fluids, and she herself is such a defiling presence they carry her away so that her death does not, A, disturb the celebration and the festivities and B, does not defile the house of the Lord. Remember people used to think that you couldn't get killed in the house of the Lord or at the altar because of this principle and so they would like Joab go grab hold of the horns of the altar. Well they'll never kill me here but if you need killing bad enough then it's a wonderful sacrifice before the Lord and your blood gets spilled anyway.

Then Jehoiada and you notice who is the motive force and the person making everything happen? Jehoiada, Jehoiada, Jehoiada. He is the priest. The priest is creating the situation where the king takes his rightful throne but there's a division of power in Israel back in the days of Moses.

It was a theocratic kingdom. God is the king and the priests are the mediators between the people and the king. Give us a king we want to be like the other nations.

Warning but I'll do it. You get Saul then you get his son briefly then you get David, Solomon and this line but with that office comes a tension between the priesthood who is still the intermediate service between the people and God and the king who may or may not have a good relationship with God. Jehoiada is driving the train here.

Jehoiada makes a covenant between the Lord the king and the people. Now keep your finger here and turn back to 1st Kings chapter 7. You can see in chapter 6 and chapter 7 of 1st Kings this is Solomon building and detailing the temple. After he gets all the furnishings and the carts and the lavers and the rest of it in chapter 8 the Ark is brought to the temple and in chapter 8 verse 12 who speaks? Is it the high priest? No it's Solomon.

Solomon speaks the Lord said he would dwell in the dark cloud I have built you an exalted house and a place for you to dwell forever and then the king turned around in verse 14 of 1st Kings 8. The king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel while all the assembly of Israel was standing. Kind of reminds you that all these people with their party favor horns and they're dancing about that they've got this young lad as their king. He said blessed be the Lord God of Israel who spoke with his mouth to my father David and with his hand has fulfilled it and then he goes on all the way through verse 21 his prayer of dedication begins in verse 22 and extends all the way to verse 53.

It is a long and detailed prayer offered by not the priest but the king. Then once again in kind of a sandwich affair Solomon blesses the assembly again in verse 54 and then he dedicates the temple in verse 62 and following and with that performance God then appears to Solomon and makes him great promises in chapter 9. Turn back now to 2nd Kings chapter 11 it is Jehoiada who puts on the show it is Jehoiada who presents the king it is Jehoiada who makes the covenant between the Lord the king and the people in verse 17 that they should be the Lord's people and also between the king and the people. Now why is this the obvious reason is the king is seven years old now he's been steeped and trained by Jehoiada and he probably knows what somebody twice his age has yet to figure out now but he's still a boy and so Jehoiada is sort of the acting executive officer here until he can grow up and come into his own but there is a foreshadowing of problems in Joash's reign you can say well he couldn't help it he's just a lad well maybe that somebody had to figure out when are we going to release the king and get rid of Athaliah they figured six years was the time we don't know the factors that went into that decision I am sure there were some maybe Athaliah was about to unleash some fresh awfulness on Judah and they said we've we've got to end it and end it now it just doesn't say but ideally the king is going to be prepared to reign and he is going to be both the civil leader and the spiritual leader who do you think was in charge of the spiritual life of Israel during the reign of David was it David the king or was it the priest who reported to who did David go to see the priest and say am I doing okay or did the priest come to David and say am I doing okay David is in charge of that here you're off to a bad start because you've got the priesthood on top of the monarch and it has been so his whole life when is he ever going to overcome that and be a David type of king and there is a point of application here that I would suggest it is easy to say my spiritual life because we are our own priest we're the captain of our ship we are in charge of our own souls and we are therefore accountable for our spiritual life under our priesthood we're accountable for our decisions and actions and the priorities that we set and the investment of our time as sort of the king of our little country of the soul well we could say my priest is always going to dominate the decision-making thing it's it's the priest is going to make the decisions but biblically speaking we have to take a second look and you say well how could I go wrong operating on my spiritual priorities all the time well think about it if you're at work and you want to crack open your Bible or hear a Bible class or something and you say well that you know my priesthood says my soul needs refreshing and it's time for a break I'm going to I'm going to you know listen to the Christian radio or I'm going to listen to a sermon or I'm going to take a break and have my own devotions or something our even our spiritual life has to be subordinate to the function of our God-given will there is we have a kingly responsibility if you will and our priesthood reports to it and is subordinate to it you cannot assume that you're right just because you've got a Bible open or you're singing a hymn or you're doing something that has some spiritual connotation there are people who do this and it is very frequent and they say well you know I'm just going to go on the on the spiritual channel here and and God will bless everything I do there is a warning in the story of Joash and this is the first of a couple of warnings that it is a situation to watch where the priest is running the show and the king through really no fault of his own starts out being subordinate to Jehoiada and he is dependent on Jehoiada he is going to continue to be dependent on Jehoiada throughout his life God isn't

looking for people who will enslave their will to a spiritual purpose you see people that decide they have a call to the mission field and they'll leave their families they'll leave the education of their children they will leave financial responsibilities that I've got a call to go to the to the mission field and and it's God's call so that trumps all this is their priesthood they may actually have some sort of a call but it has got to be subordinate to wisdom and to a wider view life is more than priesthood life is also ministry life is also ambassadorship life is also responsibilities to those God has connected us with family wise work wise acquaintance wise whatever it may be and you can't operate on priesthood alone the Lord Jesus is not just our great and faithful high priest he is the head of all things to the church and that is his primary role he is our priest but he's primarily the head of the church first and foremost and we are his body and as we are his body parts why doesn't Paul always just use he's the high priest and we're functioning priest and some of us he wouldn't haul water and some of us do sacrifices and some of us wash the blood off the utensils and you don't see that what do you see over and over again I am the vine you are the branches he is the head we are the members of the body it is not primarily taking nothing away from priesthood it's an important function but watch what happens here we get we get a warning here Jehoiada makes a covenant between the Lord the king and the people also between the king and the people so Jehoiada is basically talking to this seven-year-old kid and saying I have just entered you into a covenant on your own behalf you're not in your majority yet so I'm signing the contract for you congratulations Joash you're now in a covenant with God and you're in a covenant with the people you see no peep of any kind from Joash here he could be made out of cardboard if they had cardboard in those days he's right now he's just something to hold up the crown and stand by the pillar and be celebrated he doesn't say anything he doesn't do anything it's it's a one-man show with Jehoiada all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal tore it down they broke in pieces it's altars and images killed Matan the priest of Baal before the altars this is a little bit unsettling actually mobs grabbing people and killing them is not anything that God ever commends it goes without comment here but for a mob a celebratory mob to then assault the house of Baal grab the priest and kill him this is generally not the kind of thing that people celebrate did you see the film of the guy in Libya when they captured him and the crowd basically tore him apart same thing with Mussolini mob violence doesn't reflect the glory of God in any way that I know of there is a system of authority there's a system of adjudication there is a there are elders there is justice in the gate people just picking a target and slaying him this is a little bit kind of a minor key piece of warning music in this story for a mob to go kill anybody I don't care who he is that's that is not sanctioned anywhere in Scripture the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord he took the captains of hundreds the bodyguards the escorts all the people of the land brought the king down from the house of the Lord went by the way the gate of the escorts to the king's house they took Athaliah through the horse gate but they don't follow that path this is a more celebratory and somewhat circuitous path to go by the way the escorts the king's house he sat on the throne of the kings so all the people of the land rejoiced the city was quiet for they had slain Athaliah with the sword in the king's house I won't have you turn back there but you remember in 1st Kings 19 there was a message delivered to Elijah that whoever escaped the horde of a sword of Hazael Jehu would slay and whoever escaped the sort of Jehu Jehoiada

would slay is that right no Elisha would slay where is Elisha in all of this this is a pretty big deal this is the last of the house of Ahab being expunged there's a sword involved Jehu got a whole bunch of people with his sword Hazael has dealt with a whole bunch with his sword where is the sword of Elisha here's somebody that needs a sword really bad and Elisha is nowhere in the picture it makes me wonder did Jehoiada have any contact with Elisha consult with him at all he's a priest Jehoiada is not a prophet he doesn't have converse with God that's the prophets job there's prophets there are priests and there are kings Jehoiada seems to have and it may be strong to say he has irrigated to himself but he seems to have taken all three functions he's got his toy king the seven-year-old king and he has undertaken this entire thing and we have no sign of prayer he made a covenant between the king and God and the people but was God talking to Jehoiada at the time did God did Jehoiada sign in the line for God the way he did for Joash it's if you look at this closely it's not quite a reflection of the glory of God where is Elisha he's the prophet of God he's the one that delivers the word of the Lord if I was going to unveil a king and get rid of Athaliah I think I would consult with the Lord how many times did we see these kingly predecessors go off without consulting the Lord and have real problems Jehoiada is doing everything that need a prophet and he's got a king that he can operate like a hand puppet basically so Joash was seven years old when he became king that brings us to chapter 12 and now we're going to come to the seventh year six years like six days now there is a this change that takes place in the seventh year of Jehu which is the seventh year of Joash's life his mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba Zibiah means a female gazelle it's a really pretty name in Hebrew but it's sort of that or a what they call a roe if you ever seen roe or a gazelle the other place you find this word used without it being a proper noun is in the Solomon in pictures of beautiful graceful animals they are mentioned there Zibiah but she had that name and Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him and there's sort of a quiet implication there that the spine inserted into Joash is Jehoiada and without Jehoiada time will tell what Joash will be and he will do he does fine all the days of Jehoiada Jehoiada keeps him straight but there will come a time when Jehoiada is gone because Jehoiada is an old guy he's going to pass away at the age of a hundred and thirty so he's he's around a hundred when all of this is taking place he is an old old guy nothing nothing wrong with old guys but they'd you know the implication is you've got the youngest king with the oldest priest combination old priesthood young king well we're going to pause here and take our break if this was the only part of the study that you could catch in a day and you were musing on it and thinking well how does that work itself out in application in my life the necessity to judge ourselves isn't just have I committed a sin lately it is important for us to look at the priorities that we set and the way we make our decisions are we doing what I think Jehoiada should have done which is ensure that God is on board with the plan there's no indication that he consulted with the Lord that he looked up Elisha he thinks the time is right he seems to be a very practical guy he he has the right values he's not a bad guy Jehoiada basically saves the throne of David and that line and at the risk of his life he's a good guy but you can be a good guy and still make strategic errors we think that we're good guys but when we analyze ourselves to see if we are in the faith we want to look and and see am I prioritizing the functions in my life correctly am I you know doing something in my spiritual life that is at the

expense of something that ought to be considered or am I letting my spiritual life tail off because I have overbalanced in some other area it's important to think in larger terms and the best way to figure out where we are is to pray if there's a single step that is glaringly omitted here for Jehoiada it is there's no consulting with God anywhere we have such a great privilege because we are not only ministers and ambassadors and priests but we are children and we have the rights to the throne room we can go straight into God's throne room through the new and living way that Jesus created for us and we can ask and God is I cannot imagine God being unhappy if one of us comes and asks him Lord can you illuminate my path I want to be sure that my priorities are good I want to be sure that I am not just enthusiastic but that I'm enthusiastic in the right way and with the right undertakings in view I'm not doing something at the expense of something else I'm not inadvertently fouling up shine the light of your word on my path that God the Holy Spirit speak in my heart I want to listen I want to learn I want to grow and do better there is a way that seems right and and it may be largely right there's nothing more deceptive than something that's mostly right but when you look at the example of Jehoiada trouble is going to follow in the reign of Joash and we'll see it when we come back from the break