

Kings and Prophets 15-05-07b

We're ready to resume our study now. We're on the threshold of 2 Kings chapter 15. Jeroboam II, a very pivotal, a very important turning point in the history of the Northern Kingdom.

This is really their last opportunity for repentance. We will see in the not too distant future that there is a similar period in Judah before Nebuchadnezzar comes to pretty much destroy that kingdom around 600 B.C. We're going to have a similar generational ministry and these are the days of Jeremiah. Jeremiah will have a 40 year ministry and there will be one last good king in Judah before they too suffer this fate.

But that's a ways down the road. But this is a time where God has backed off. He has given a season of peace and prosperity.

Having tried to beat them to a bloody pulp discipline approach to turn them, He's trying the opposite tack. And in these days the borders are extended, economic prosperity is achieved, but the hearts of people turn increasingly selfish. As we've seen in the Hosea, Amos, Micah and Jonah, all they do is aggrandize themselves.

They climb over the poor. They take advantage of the widow and the orphan. They seek to live the self-centered life to an even greater extent.

The prosperity just gives them occasion for greater sin. And God is not going to perpetuate an environment where sin just proliferates because people make that choice. So the rest of these things that he has done are not written in the books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and that was not worth inclusion in the inspired record.

And so the chapter here closes with the notation that Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. Then Zechariah, his son, reigned in his place. Jeroboam's son Zechariah is the fourth king in a row to be a descendant of Jehu.

But he's not going to last very long. What you can think about is the three-generation curse. After three generations, God evaluates, and this goes all the way back to Deuteronomy and the promise that God will reserve mercy to a thousand generations of those that love him.

But if a father and a son and a grandson, three successive generations reject the Lord, he says, I will cut off that line in Israel. Well, a generation biblically is how long? 40 years. This is 750 BC, circa 740, 750, along in there.

And as Judah looks to the north and sees what's going on up there and watches, they're going to have three more generations to make up their minds about whether they're going to follow in the wake of their sister kingdom or not. When it goes out in 721 BC, when God takes out the northern kingdom with prolific explanations of why, from the national writing prophets that we have studied, Judah has to make up their mind, and God's going to give them three generations

to do it. Three biblical generations is how many years? 120 years.

If the northern kingdom goes out in 720, then about what year is Judah going to be at the tipping point? About 600. Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion is 605. His second invasion is 597.

And the final invasion where the temple is destroyed and the remaining captives like Ezekiel are taken is 587-586. In the midst of the fourth generation, after three full generations, in the midst of that fourth generation, it starts when that generation starts and it ends halfway through, basically. Well, here in the north, in the line of Jehu, you have had three kings in a row.

It's one of the longest dynasties in the northern kingdom. But what's going to happen in the time of Zechariah? Zechariah's got a very brief career here. This is 753 by most reckonings.

And we see that we're going to skip over Judah. What we're going to do at this point, since we've seen these prophets and we see the history in the northern kingdom, we're going to piece the northern kingdom together in kings and then we'll come back and catch up Judah. So if you go down to verse 8 of 2 Kings 15, in the 38th year of Azariah, king of Judah, Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam, reigned over Israel in Samaria six months.

Not even long enough to generate an heir. Six months. Can't even have a baby in that amount of time.

He did evil in the sight of the Lord as his fathers had done. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. Then Shalom, the son of Jabesh, conspired against him and struck and killed him in front of the people and reigned in his place.

So this is the end of the Jehu dynasty. This guy is the son of Jabesh. You think, well, we're going to start a new dynasty in the north.

No. Shalom is the only representative of the house of Jabesh that's going to sit on the throne. And the rest of the acts of Zechariah are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

I imagine that's just a little paragraph. Can't do a lot in six months. This was the word of the Lord, which he spoke to Jehu, saying, Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.

And so it was. Remember that? That was back in chapter 10, verse 30, the prophecy to Jehu. Remember, Jehu did all of that cleansing and chariot rolling on the house of Ahab.

Remember that? He pretty much killed everything in sight. He was like a, he was like a, in the artillery we used to have a round called ICM. There's HE, which is high explosive.

It's just a steel case with explosive inside that explodes at such a rate that it shatters the steel and sends fragments in every direction. And you can have that same shell with different fuses so that it'll burst in the air and so on. But ICM was a new kind of round.

ICM stands for improved conventional munitions. You know what a propaganda round is, right? You fill it with leaflets and when the little tiny explosive goes off, it just blows all the paper out the back end and it comes down like confetti. And you say, give up now.

You have no hope. You know, your government is rotten to the core. You know, it's only a matter of time.

Come over to our side. We'll, you know, we'll give you band-aids and food and chocolate. And you know, you just, it's a, well, what that is, is a hollow shell that pushes something out the back end.

Well, that's what ICM is, except what gets pushed out of the hollow shell is a myriad of little bomblets. And they spread all over the place. It's sort of a backward firing shotgun shell, but each BB is its own little explosive.

Some of them are bouncing betty things. They'll hit the explode on contact. It's a wickedly bad thing to be under ICM, improved conventional munitions.

Well, this is, I can't even remember now why I brought that up. I became so enamored with my own little illustration there that I kind of forgot about it, why it even came to my mind. But Shalom is struck and killed in the midst of the people.

Why is he, why does it say that he was assassinated publicly? Because the prophecy to Jehu was public. I remember now why Jehu was like an ICM round. He just destroyed everything in view.

Everything that crossed his path, he ended up slaying it, except the one guy that he slung into the chariot and said, come along and watch. And you can write it down. You remember that? His little biographer is the only guy that he didn't kill on, on contact.

He was like raid. He just, you know, kills on contact. That was Jehu.

So the prophecy that God would honor his obedience and yet also judge his profligate killing is fulfilled. You will have a four generation dynasty. That was a public prophecy and the fulfillment of it is public.

This is a warning to the people. It's another manifestation that God is in his heaven and his word is valid and comes true. We should take the fulfillment of prophecy seriously because it tells us that God exists.

He is in his heaven and he means business. He's serious. No word of the Lord will fall to the ground.

So Shalom verse 13, the son of Jabesh became King in the 39th year of Uzziah, King of Judah. This is Azariah as we know him. He reigned a full month in Samaria.

This could perhaps be a record for the most meteoric career in the history of being a King in the

Northern Kingdom. One month. Now, if you add up Zachariah and Shalom, you get seven months.

This is pretty much the distance between the spring and the fall feasts, right? When you think about starting with the Passover on 14 Nisan, which was the first month, the beginning. And then what happens after that? You have the Feast of First Fruits and then you count off seven Sabbaths and you have Pentecost. That's a month and a half in.

And then on the first day of the 10th month, that's when you start having Rosh Hashanah, moving into the Day of Atonement, Feast of Booths. So you've got that interval. Well, you have seven months here.

So it's within a feast season, really. Shalom reigns one month in Samaria because, verse 14, Manachem, the son of Gadi, went up from Tirzah, came to Samaria, and struck Shalom, the son of Jabesh, in Samaria, and killed him and reigned in his place. The rest of the acts of Shalom and the conspiracy which he led, indeed, they are written in the book of the Chronicles.

The rest of the acts of Shalom is probably an even shorter little line in the Chronicles than Zechariah got. Then from Tirzah, Manachem attacked Tifsah, all who were there, and its territory. Because they did not surrender, he attacked it.

All the women who were with child, he ripped open. This is the guy's claim to fame in the eternity. This is what it has come to in the northern kingdom.

Manachem, now, basically, if you count Zechariah as his own little mini-dynasty, that would be the sixth. Jehu was the fifth. So you've got this little brief sixth dynasty.

And now, Manachem is the seventh representative of a family. He's going to last ten years. He comes from Tirzah.

So Tifsah appears to be a city that didn't like the fact that he came to the throne. And so he goes there and basically terrorizes them into subservience by this shocking act of violence in capturing and graphically slaughtering these pregnant women. As you continue to read in verse 17, 39th year of Azariah, king of Judah, Manachem, the son of Gadee, became king over Israel.

He reigns ten years. He, no surprise here, did evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not depart in his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Notice, not only did he not depart, but it says he did not depart all his days. This means that opportunities were given to him. Even if you start badly, there is an opportunity to turn.

But his pattern, his practice, his habituated set of decisions, all his days, he does not depart. So this implies despite opportunities. Poole, king of Assyria, came against the land.

Now notice verse 19 is a turnabout because Assyria was impotent and helpless in the days of

Jeroboam the second, in the days of Jonah going to Nineveh. That's the reason that Jeroboam was able to expand the borders. But what's happened? They have now strengthened themselves.

They're coming back. They're on the rebound. So Poole, the king of Assyria, came against the land.

Menachem gave Poole a thousand talents of silver that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his control. Menachem exacted the money from Israel, from all the wealthy, from each man fifty shekels of silver to give to the king of Assyria. In other words, he bribes him, pays him off.

He doesn't defeat him like Jeroboam would have done. This is a different day and a different dynamic. And Tiglath-Pileser the third that we know from history comes to the throne in Assyria in 745 and reigns all the way until 727.

So Tiglath-Pileser, the only part of his name that comes across in the Bible is Poole. But this is Tiglath-Pileser the third. And we have records from the Assyrian empire, extra-biblical records, and they tell us that he attacked Babylonia in the south and also the Urartu people to his north and greatly strengthened himself and then came again to the west with those successes under his belt.

And this is why Menachem buys him off. Tiglath isn't quite strong enough to come down and just capture them, so this is a bargain for both of them. But a thousand talents of silver is raised by this head tax assessed against all the wealthy in the country.

And of course this is what you do when you start weakening and deteriorating on the inside. This is what our nation is doing now, is soaking the rich to try to overcome our problems. But that basically makes the northern kingdom a vassal state.

They're under the thumb now of the Assyrians and Tiglath. Well, the rest of the Acts of Menachem, all that he did is written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. Menachem rested with his fathers and then Pekahiah, his son, reigned in his place.

Remember now we're in the seventh dynastic family if you want to count the one-month reign of Shalom. I don't really know whether to count him or not. He just seems to be like a comma, like a little, like a shim between two bigger things.

But we'll count him. So this is the seventh dynasty. And in the fiftieth year of Azariah, king of Judah, Pekahiah, the son of Menachem, became king over Israel and Samaria.

He reigns two years. He, no surprise, did evil in the sight of the Lord, did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. And remember, these keep being little closing parentheses.

What king of the northern kingdom was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat? The first, Jeroboam Rehoboam, seven dynasties back. He started the trend and they just keep echoing it and echoing and echoing it. Why does it say they didn't depart from the sins of Ahab, the son of Omri? Because they've been rotten from the beginning and it just does not change, does not change, does not change, does not change.

This is like a ringing tolling bell. Now, why do we care about this? Why does the Bible record it this way? What's it for? Who's reading the Old Testament now? Us. So what does this tell us? God knows them that are his.

Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice. They respond. Turn you at my reproof.

There's going to be a time to separate from those who claim the Christian faith or who at one time were believers and then have gone awry and astray. There is a time for speaking the truth in love. There is a time to grab the brother, you know, saved it so as by fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh and all of that.

But there is also a time to recognize that this is a person who has established a pattern and it's an unvarying pattern. And as Jesus said, if somebody has something against you and you go and you try to be reconciled once, twice, thrice in increasing groups of people involved, after a certain number of tries, you separate, you get some distance. It would be a mistake for Judah to ally herself with Northern Israel at this point, for example.

And it would be a mistake for us looking at believers who have clearly established this pattern. They do not depart from what they have done from the beginning. They've got these little flashes in the pan, but it doesn't last.

It doesn't stick. It doesn't become a characteristic. It doesn't become habitual.

There's a time where we have to step away and pray for someone at a distance and get out of the periphery of judgment. This is a national example that applies to individual believers. How does it apply? Well, think about it.

This is why we spend time in reflection. This is times that we review and we think about, what have I learned in Bible class? Why have we slogged through this unhappy history of the Northern Kingdom? Because it helps us to recognize and to identify believers. Certainly we don't want to be them, and if you're still here, you're not them.

But we also cannot afford to be judged with them, to be dragged down with them. Look at Jonathan. Couldn't separate from his father.

What happened to him? Shared his judgment. Jonathan was like unto David. He and David were knit together, the friend that sticks closer than a brother.

But Jonathan could not separate himself from his father, and he shares his judgment. These

things are written for us. Why are we studying it? We should be able to recognize the trend, the pattern, the false echoes of repentance that don't really mean anything, and the ever-downward trend.

Whether this person is challenged and disciplined, whether they are granted respite and an opportunity for renewal, they never turn. They never change. They're self-interested.

They are self-centered. They are worshiping another God, and they never humble themselves under the mighty hand of God to be exalted in due time. From such, separate.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. This is our command, Old Testament and new. Why do we get so much detail? Recognition.

Again, when I was an artilleryman, how do you know whether to call fire on a target? You have to recognize the silhouette. We used to have a deck of cards. It was nothing but silhouettes.

Silhouettes of aircraft, silhouettes of tanks, silhouettes of personnel carriers. You've got to be able to tell the difference in low visibility, in smoke and fog. All you can see is the outline.

Is that a friendly or is that a foe? Well, the only way to know is if you are familiar with what the foe looks like, with what the enemy looks like, with what something that you've got to get away from looks like. And we used to study those silhouettes by the hour, flip the cards. That's this kind of a Soviet tank.

That's this kind of a Soviet tank. That's this kind of a Soviet personnel carrier. That's that kind of a Soviet personnel carrier.

And to know them by rote and instantly so that you don't make a mistake and kill friendlies. And you don't make a mistake and walk up saying, hi there. And it's an enemy.

It's one of several reasons why we study this. Well, in the 50th year, Pekahia, the son of Menachem, becomes king over Israel and Samaria. It rains two years.

He did evil, did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin. This stuff spreads. He's a bad king.

He infects the nation. He leads the nation astray. Pekah, the son of Ramaliah, an officer of his conspired against him and killed him in Samaria in the citadel of the king's house, along with Argab and Arieah and with him, 50 men of Gilead killed him and reigned in his place.

It's probably an anti-Assyrian party that might have developed in Israel after this head tax. You're buying off the Assyrians. We don't like this.

And so some of these guys got together with the backing of the rich who didn't like being soaked in order to buy off the Assyrians. And the reason we suspect this is that when Pekah comes to the throne in the 52nd year of Azariah in verse 27, he did evil in the sight of the Lord,

did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, made Israel sin. This has just become a ringing bell.

But look at verse 29, In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, came and took Ejon, Abel, Beth, Maakah, Januah, Kadesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. Remember when Jeroboam II went and captured all of this land and took it back for Israel? Well, now they've lost it all. But why does he attack? Because Pekah is not paying the head tax anymore.

The people that said, don't pay that tax, don't soak the rich and buy this guy off. Well, when he does this act of defiance, they lose all of this territory. And of course, Pekah isn't strong enough or smart enough to fight him off.

And so because of this, now there's an anti-Pekah conspiracy that rises up. I mean, this is just Peyton Place with daggers. I don't like you, so I kill you.

So Hoshea, the son of Elah, led a conspiracy against Pekah, the son of Ramaliah, and struck and killed him, and reigns in his place in the twentieth year of Jotham, the son of Uzziah. The rest of the acts of Pekah, all that he did, are written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. So Pekah had been a resistance guy, new direction, we're going to sweep clean, we're going to do something different, but it just doesn't last.

And Tiglath Pileser had many well-known, this attack where he takes all this land, this is well-known in history. And this is circa 734-732. Keep in mind the Terminus Ad Quam of the Northern Kingdom in 721, we're just sort of a decade away.

And he goes down the Mediterranean coast into Philistia and subdues the cities there, especially Gaza. And this prevents any help from Egypt coming up, in case they decide they're going to go down to Egypt for strength and support. Remember, this is going to be Hezekiah's big idea in Judah.

So he destroys cities across all of Galilee. These cities that are named here, this is Galilee, in and around the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee. And in 732, he moves against Damascus, devastating the country, capturing the capital city.

He executes Rezan. And we're going to see the prophecy in Isaiah, the Pekah and Rezan conspiracy. And everybody's saying, oh, what are we going to do? Pekah and Rezan have allied themselves.

And you remember that whole thing in Isaiah? Well, this is that time. And remember, Isaiah says, that's not what you ought to be worried about. You've got limited human vision.

You think this is the big problem? That's not the problem. Babylon's the problem. And you better be thinking about that.

And it looks ahead. He says, God's going to give you space and give you time. You're going to have these three generations to get your spiritual act together.

Don't fret yourself over circumstances. Fret yourself over spiritual status, spiritual priorities. That's going to be the message to Judah.

But anyway, Tiglath-Pileser is going to come down and wipe out Rezan. And he doesn't kill Pekah because Hoshea does it for him. And later on, Tiglath-Pileser is going to claim to be the guy who put Hoshea on the throne.

And so we get the idea that maybe there's been some cahoots, some collusion involved. But here's the thing. All of these political maneuvers, these conspiracies, this cursed is the man who trusts in man, who makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.

He's going to be like a shrub in the desert. Even when good comes, he's not going to recognize it. Remember our memory verse.

And if you look at verse 30 of this book, Hoshea, the son of Elah, led a conspiracy against Pekah, struck and killed him. So he reigns in his place in the 20th year of Jotham, the son of Uzziah. The rest of the acts of Pekah, all that he did, written in the book of the kings of Israel.

In the second year, verse 32, of Pekah, the son of Ramaliah, king of Israel, Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign. He was 25 years old when he became king. He reigns 16 years in Jerusalem.

This is what's happening down in Judah. You've got these lengthy reigns down in Judah, right? They've got stability. They've got durability down there.

You've got these one month, six month, two year reigns happening up in the north. But as you continue, we're going to find, as we resume next time in chapter 16 of 2 Kings, that Ahaz, the son of Jotham, see it says the 17th year of Pekah, the son of Ramaliah? He's going to be the last guy with any sort of longevity up in the north. And so we've got Judah at the end of chapter 15.

We've got Ahaz in chapter 16. And it isn't going to be until 2 Kings 17, that's actually where we're going to pick up next time, where the reign of Hosea is going to resume. We're going to get a whopping six verses on the reign of Hosea in Israel.

And this is going to bring us down to 732 to 722. Hosea is going to span that last decade in the northern kingdom. So we're going to kind of follow the northern kingdom to its ignominious end.

And we'll pick that up next time. And then we're going to sort of survey and summarize the whole history of the northern kingdom. That will free us up as they exit stage left to concentrate on Judah for the next three generations.

And that will take us through the rest of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, which will bring us to a few

more writing prophets concentrating now on Judah and move us into the latter days of the formal kingdom of Judah down there in the south. And then we're going to end up in the days of the captivity. We've already studied Ezekiel and Daniel in great detail.

So we'll focus on the remaining what they call minor prophets in the Old Testament, but that's going to pretty much complete our latter half of the Old Testament study by the time we finish that. So hopefully when we finish, our goal is to have at least a few mental notes about each of these prophets. Now you'll know the difference between Micah and Malachi.

You'll know the difference between Hosea and Zephaniah. We'll have an idea, when did this guy prophesy? What was the major part and thrust of his message? How does it fit into the Old Testament testimony that is so helpful and so needful for us to understand as believers in this age? So we'll pick up there in 2 Kings 17 next time with the reign of Hosea. By the way, what is that name, Hosea? It is essentially no different than Hosea, which is essentially no different than Yeshua, Joshua.

And what an ironic title for really the last meaningful king in the Northern Kingdom. Well, we'll look at that next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the variety of ways that you communicate your truth to us. As we see in the Northern Kingdom, you are so prolific and variegated in seeking to reach our hearts in a meaningful way so that God, the Holy Spirit can educate us and teach us, rebuke us and instruct us in righteousness. We pray that as he does his work, your Holy Spirit will find soil that is ready to be plowed, that the seeds can be planted deep and they will bear fruit in our thinking, in our decision-making, setting our spiritual priorities, our goals and aligning our values more closely to those that spring most fully from the lips of the Lord Jesus himself.

We pray that he will be glorified as we learn and grow in grace and knowledge. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.