

Kings and Prophets 15-05-14b

We continue our study now, we're looking at the reign of Uzziah or Azariah, depending on which book you look at, these names seem to be interchangeable. Very capable ruler, did a lot of good, and we saw when we were looking at the northern kingdom under Jeroboam II that God backed off on judgment and allowed the northern kingdom to greatly expand, to reclaim territory in Gilead and toward Damascus, and similarly, at that same time, and for many of the same reasons, the southern kingdom also expanded and solidified its territorial possessions. So these things happened simultaneously.

Remember the big expansion in the north? God said, I'm going to back off on judgment and give you a different set of circumstances to see if you will turn and see if you will repent? Well, the same thing is pertaining down in Judah, and this is the guy that does it, Uzziah Amaziah, and oddly enough, he does it in spite of his father. Now it says he was 16 years old when he came to the throne, but this is a co-regency. This basically takes place at the time that his father, Amaziah, goes up and tries to attack the northern kingdom.

I guess he figured, well, if we're all expanding and gathering territory, let's just go grab the whole country, and he went up there and got defeated by Jehoash. So evidently and possibly, he was taken captive, and that lasts about nine years, and so during that time, Uzziah or Azariah is reigning as king in the south, even though technically, it's not the king is dead, long live the king. The king is captured, long live the king.

So you've got a nominal king in captivity, and you've got a functional king, Uzziah, down in the south, and so during this period is when he does all of these accomplishments and fortifications and expansions, and then after his father is released, there's this co-regency where they're both sort of on the throne, but all of these years are counted. This is why Uzziah has the longest reign of any king in Judah, 52 years, but you take away the nine years, and you get to 43 years, and then you have another period after his father comes back and resumes his reign. However, his last 12 years are also a co-regency in the same way that he co-ruled with his father for many of those years.

The last dozen or so years of Uzziah's reign are also a co-regency. Why? What just happened? Forehead, right? We had an interesting discussion about the comparison to Cain and how God had to put a mark on Cain to keep him from being killed, and we assume that that mark was in his forehead since that's the one part that would almost always be visible, but the Bible doesn't actually say where it was. But Uzziah, his leprosy breaks out in his forehead so that he can't show his face to anyone without being identified as a leper.

It's not the kind of thing you can cover up by skillfully draping your robes. He has to separate. And so his last 12 years, his son Jotham becomes co-regent, co-ruler.

And so these 12 years will count on Jotham's reign as well. And we find this out in chapter 26 of

the Second Chronicles where, picking up in verse 21 again, he was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house because he was a leper.

He was cut off from the house of the Lord. So Jotham, his son, was over the king's house judging the people of the land. And so when they total up Jotham's reign, these years will be included.

The rest of the Acts of Uzziah, etc. He rested with his fathers. They buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which belongs to the kings for they said he is a leper.

Notice he doesn't rest with his fathers. He's just in a field adjacent to where the kings, he's not in the tomb of the kings. They put him next door.

He's one door down. So then in chapter 27 you have Jotham, his son, who is 25 years old when he became king and he reigns 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Yerusha, the daughter of Zadok.

And you'll notice that for these last three kings, the mother's names have been given. Why? They are godly women. What tribe are they from? Tribe of Judah.

And it is evident that the reason their names are included here is that they were influential on the good side. To the extent that these kings were good, it is probably the influence of their mothers. Scripture never idly includes the women in an account.

It is always for a reason. When you look at the genealogy of the Lord Jesus and you find that both Rahab and Ruth are included. By the way, and this is just an aside, you can keep your finger here in Chronicles, but if you turn over to the genealogy of the Lord Jesus, you can look at either one, either the one in Luke or the one in Matthew.

I was intrigued as I was looking at this for a different reason the other day. If you look at Matthew, let's look at Matthew chapter 1. You have the begots here, the book of the genealogy, Abraham begot Isaac all the way down. Verse 4, Ram begot Amenadab, Amenadab begot Nashon, and Nashon begot Salmon.

Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab. So Salmon marries Rahab and their son, Rahab's son is Boaz. We always remember in the Boaz-Ruth story that Boaz's mother is Rahab.

Now, just by way of genealogical bloodline genetics, what is Boaz? He's half Canaanite, right? Boaz is half his mother, and in Israel, in Judaism today, how is your Jewishness determined? Through your mother. So Boaz, technically speaking from a Jewish point of view, is a Canaanite. He's half Salmon and half Rahab.

So just try to do the math here, and it's a struggle for me, so you'll have to help me. But we've got Boaz, he's half a Canaanite, right? Boaz begot Obed by Ruth. Where's Ruth from? Moab, right? So if Obed is their son, how Jewish is he? He's going to be a quarter Canaanite, half

Moabite, and a quarter Jewish at this point, right? So he's half Moabite, a quarter Canaanite, and a quarter Jewish.

Then Obed begot Jesse, and so you say, okay, well, assuming David's mother was from Israel, and based on his Joab and his nephews and the rest of it, she seems to have been, then you figure, okay, so Jesse is going to be half of three quarters, which is what, three eighths Moabite and Canaanite, and then he gets half Israelite, right? And so then when he has David, but David's got a healthy component of Canaanite and Moabite in his immediate background, and then you start looking at David's wives, Jezreelites, and there's a lot of mixture here, which is all to say what? Does the physical circumstance of your birth, I was thinking about this in a context, because they're working on legislation, I think the Congress passed it, and they think the Senate won't or whatever, but they're back to the abortion thing, and well, we're not going to allow abortion, except in the case of rape or incest, passed so much. Now, let's say that there was no abortion, and even in the cases of rape and incest, the baby comes to term and is born. Would anybody try to argue that this child who is the product of a forced intercourse, a rape, should not be treated equally with everybody else? Well, you know, your mother didn't want your daddy to be your daddy, and so you're a lesser person.

Nobody would argue that, would they? Well, you're a diminished person. You are of lesser value because of the way in which your conception took place. Once you're in the world, you're a person, and under God in heaven, you're a human soul that Christ died for, and you have as much value as anybody else in the Christian view, right? So how is it that beforehand, determining whether or not you ever get to be born, we're going to make a distinction on whether or not you can be snuffed based on how you were conceived? What is the logic from a Christian point of view? Of course, from a Christian point of view, I don't think anybody ought to be messing with what God has joined together to let no man put asunder.

Remember that? Well, I think that probably pertains in pretty much everything. If God is putting something together, I don't think man ought to be trying to knock it asunder. That's just my opinion.

I think that's a pretty safe position. If I stand before the Lord God, and He says, why did you make a decision pro or con? I would say, well, Lord, I figured you were putting something together, and I didn't want to knock it apart. If you don't want this thing coming into the world, you can cause it to spontaneously not come to fruition.

Life and death are in God's province. This is my feeling. And I say, let nature take its course, and let God sort it out.

I am not going to proactively, unless I have a solid biblical foundation, here is somebody threatening my family. Now I will end your life. Here is somebody on my property.

You hear somebody attacking my country. Okay, now I'm going to end your life, because God has delegated the authority for me to end your life in His word. God has said, blessed be the

Lord.

You know, David says, blessed be the Lord teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight. God sends people to defend their nation in a military context. God gives us the right of self-defense.

If somebody is threatening our people and our property, we have a God-given right to defend that to the point of shedding blood. I don't see that given in birth contexts. I see it given when thinking sentient people make bad decisions, and we have to stop them because of their bad decisions.

So I say all that to say, you see this working itself out in the lineage of the kings of Judah. And you see these mothers mentioned because they are important. Well, if the mothers are important enough to be mentioned in scripture, think about these wonderful mothers that weren't even Israelite.

Think about Rahab. Think about Ruth. Think about the, and God doesn't care where you came from.

It's where you're going, right? God doesn't care that Ruth came from Moab. God doesn't care. And by the way, the Moabites are something of a aspersed category in Israel.

Aspersions have been cast in their direction. Rahab is under the general condemnation of the Amorites that God first spoke to Abraham centuries earlier. But what changes it? It's not where she comes from.

It's where she's going. Uriah is a Hittite. Doeg is an Edomite.

Is Doeg automatically condemned because he's an Edomite? No, he's condemned because he's a rascal and a murderer. Uriah is blessed because even though he's a Hittite, he's pro-God of Israel. He comes and joins himself to Israel and becomes one of David's mighty men.

And that negates all questions of origin. David himself, I was thinking about this because in the Cherokee Nation, they will figure out what your degree of Indian blood is, but they don't really care too much. Why? If you go back to the early 1800s, 1835-ish, the principal chief of the Cherokee Nation was 1/8th Cherokee.

1/8th. And he's the principal chief. John Ross was 1/8th Cherokee.

He was the principal chief. And so they can't really get too nitpicky about, well, you've got to be so much or you don't count. And I like that because that's the way God is.

God doesn't figure up how much Shemitic origin you have when it comes to whether or not you're operating in faith. Where he does draw distinctions is where you have been assigned a function. If you try to be the king and you're not from the tribe of Judah, that's a prohibited function and you're never going to succeed.

And that's the problem in the Northern Kingdom. In the Southern Kingdom, they're from the tribe of Judah, but that doesn't make them golden. It is their attitude toward God.

And even if you're from the tribe of Judah and you've got a kingly assignment, you don't go to the king. You go to the king. And that's the problem.

And that's why you're trying to arrogate to yourself the Levitical function, which is what Isaiah does. The Aaronic function of priest. You go this far and no farther.

We have assignments. And this is why you may love the Word of God if you're a gal, but you cannot become the pastor of a church. It's a wonderful thing to love the Word of God, and there are many contexts in which you can teach it, but not as a pastor.

It is no different than if you decide you're going to walk in and burn incense before God. It's just a prohibited function. And you've got to find some other way to express that.

And if that's your heart, God will give you an arena that surpasses anything you could have done as a pastor. A woman who has a heart for the Word of God can do more than a pastor can do. It's not a limitation.

It is a directional control. It's a directional instruction. It's not a limitation.

It's a direction. So never look at these assignments and prohibitions as though God is doing some kind of a disservice. He's not.

Well, so we have this co-regency. Back to our Judaic study now. But when you look at the reign in 2 Chronicles chapter 26 of Uzziah, and then leading into 27, Jotham, Jotham is 25 years old when he becomes king.

This is his co-regency the last dozen years. He's actually going to be about 37 when his father passes away. And then he'll have another four years of reign as a solo king.

His mother was Yerusha. It's one of the beautiful names of Hebrew. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

But he did not enter the temple of the Lord. This is a plus. He did what his father did, but he learned the lesson.

He saw the leprosy of his father and he thought, maybe I won't do that. Point of application. Why are we studying these wonderful Old Testament narratives? To be Jotham.

I see the mistake that was made by my predecessor. I think maybe I'll invent my own new, fresh, creative mistakes and not repeat the ones done by others. All these things have been written for our instruction.

It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in prosperity, in righteousness.

He built the upper gate of the house of the Lord. He built extensively on the wall of Ophel.

Notice he's working on the outside of the temple of the Lord. He has wisely decided not to go inside. So he works on what he has access to.

Well, if I can't go in, I'll work on the outside. This is what we do, another point of application, when we find that God, for whatever reason, has limited us. Take couples.

Some couples have been given the assignment of having and raising and launching children. Others have not, for a variety of reasons. If you're those that have not, find what you can do.

And people successfully do that and are a huge blessing in other ways. If you are not physically gifted or you have a physical limitation and there are certain things that you can't do. You can't go be a missionary on a foreign field.

You can't necessarily be and do certain ministry functions within your church. Maybe you physically just can't be there. Maybe you're located somewhere else for a reason.

We've got people that join us for fellowship and study that can't physically be here. Well, if you can't do the things that physical ability would grant, that's not a limitation. It is a direction.

It means look elsewhere. God's assignment for you is somewhere else. Find that assignment.

You're not limited. You are not hemmed in. You are being directed to something, usually something special.

Anybody can pop out kids. Anybody can come and attend church. If you've been directed elsewhere, praise God.

Pray to God. And as so many have done, find that area of special service and special function that God has for you. And I know of and can think of many examples where this is the case.

You look at blind Fannie Crosby. Okay, she's blind. So there's certain things she can't do.

She can't go minister and dish out food to the poor or whatever. So what did she do? Her inner life of reflection and meditation and communion with God resulted in hymns that have blessed untold millions of people ever since she first composed them. Was her blindness a limitation or was it a direction? Look at Jotham.

Jotham says, okay, I get it, kings are not supposed to do the priestly function. I think I've got that figured out looking at dad. So what shall I do? He does other things.

And to his credit, he builds the gate of the house of the Lord and he built extensively on the wall of Ophel. This is one of the bordering walls for the city near the temple. Moreover, he built cities in the mountains of Judah and in the forests, he built fortresses and towers.

He also fought with the king of the Ammonites and defeated them. King, yeah, defeated them

Ammonites. And the people of Ammon gave him that year 100 talents of silver, 10,000 cores of wheat and 10,000 of barley.

The people of Ammon paid this to him in the second and third years also. It was a three-year deal. So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.

Contrast this with his father and grandfather. Remember the three-generation blessing slash curse? This could have been a very big deal if he had followed in all of the ways of his father and grandfather, but he did better than they. He did not repeat their mistakes.

And because of that, God can bless him. He prepared his ways before the Lord his God. The rest of the acts of Jotham, his wars and his ways are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

25, when he became king, reigned 16 years in Jerusalem. Jotham rested with his fathers. They buried him in the city of David.

Where was his father buried? In the field nearby. Well let's go visit the tombs of the kings. Well now let's go visit Uzziah.

And we'll give it a wide berth because even though he's buried, he's still a leper. Then Ahaz, his son, reigned in his place. And the dynasty continues.

There's not a three-generation cutoff here. That brings us to chapter 28. Let's quickly see what Ahaz is going to do.

He's 20 years old. When he becomes king, reigned 16 years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord, as his father David had done.

Notice, it doesn't say his father Jotham. It doesn't say his grandfather Uzziah. It doesn't say his great-grandfather Amaziah.

He is compared to David. Who are the northern Israel kings compared to? Jeroboam. Doesn't go back to David or to Solomon.

They are compared to and likened unto the original Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. His father David. You go back to the archetype.

You go back to the best example. He didn't do as his father David had done. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made molded images for the Baals.

He burned incense in the valley of Gehenna. We think of hell, we think of Gehenna as a bad place. This was the garbage pit in the days of the Lord Jesus.

The valley of Hinnom becomes the dump, the city dump. Well, what's he doing? He's worshipping there. He's worshipping where it will eventually be the dump.

Burned incense in the valley of the sons of Hinnom. Burned his children in the fire according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. Now I have one point the Bible does not make, but it occurs to my mind and probably to yours.

How did this guy get to the throne? Who's his father? Of all the wonderful things that Jotham did, what did he fail to do? What did David do? How many sons did David have alive that were eligible for the throne as his life drew to a close? Remember Adonijah? Senior to, older than Solomon. It took a little prodding. It took Bathsheba and Joab to kind of prod the thing along, but what did David with encouragement manage to do? He ensured that the right son got on the throne and the wrong son did not.

What did Jotham with all of his accomplishments and all of what he did right, what did he fail to do? He did not ensure that his heart for the Lord and his service for the Lord was perpetuated in the next generation. Should he have had some idea of what kind of kid Ahaz was? He's 20 years old when he becomes king. Was Jotham so busy with building the gate and accomplishing all of these other things, securing tribute from the Ammonites and so on? Was he so busy with that that he didn't pay attention at home? How does a lemon squeeze like Ahaz end up getting on the throne? Look at this guy.

He's burning his own children. You couldn't be more rotten, more misguided, more completely crazy in Judah. This just goes to the opposite.

This is like rebellion, sin of the high hand to the nth degree, is it not? How does this guy get to the throne? You have to think that at least part of the responsibility is an omission on Jotham's part. Sacrificed and burned incense on the high places on the hills and under every green tree. And he's going to quickly undo everything, all of the accomplishments and advancements of his father, grandfather, great grandfather.

It's all going to come apart. Look at the next verse. Therefore, the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria.

They defeated him, carried away a great multitude of them as captives, brought them to Damascus. He was delivered into the hand of the king of Israel who defeated him with a great slaughter. For Pekah, the son of Ramaliah, killed 120 elephs in Judah.

Remember all of the expansion and building up and training of the army? It doesn't matter how much you build them up and expand them and garrison them and equip them. If you depart from the Lord, they will be defeated. A thousand of you will be put to flight by one enemy soldier, God promised.

And all of that infrastructure, all of that buildup is wasted, is useless, hopeless. It depends on your spiritual priorities. In every case, nation in the Old Testament, believer in this age, it doesn't matter how well you plan.

It doesn't matter how hard you work. It doesn't matter how diligently you invest and strive. If

spiritual priorities are not in place, it can be wiped out in a moment.

It can be destroyed, taken away, given to others, wrecked on the shoals of disobedience, apathy, indifference to our known spiritual priority. Young or old, if you ignore your spiritual accountability before God, if you disregard the Heavenly Father, if you disregard the Lord Jesus Christ seated at His right hand, if you trample underfoot the Son of God and do despot to the Spirit of grace, read Hebrews chapter 10, you are going to be spanked and spanked hard by God. You are a believer.

You belong to God. You are here for a purpose, and it's not an agenda that we invent ourselves. It's just not.

We are not our own. We have been purchased with a price, and it was a dear price. And if God pays that price for us, He expects attention.

He expects us to pay attention, to be dedicated, to be faithful, to fulfill the purpose for which we were purchased. Have you ever bought a thing? I bought a hard drive, and I stuck it in a laptop, and then it didn't work. Well, I'm very disappointed at spending the money on a brand new five-year warranty hard drive that doesn't work right.

It's extremely disappointing. Have you ever paid a mechanic to fix a thing or pay a technician to fix a thing, and you go back and use it, and it still doesn't work? Imagine the Lord God in heaven paying for us with the dear price of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we don't function. We don't fulfill the purpose.

We don't reflect God's glory. We don't emulate His Son. We're not diligent.

We're not interested. We're not faithful. What's God going to do? The Lord His God delivered Him into the hand of the enemy for having those things removed that were a part of His heritage, loss, captivity, damage to others.

Not only is He taken into captivity, but look at all these other people that are defeated, destroyed, killed, taken slave, humiliated because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. That's what we're going to pause for tonight, but it is food for thought. We aren't here to pursue the way of the world.

There's nothing Satan would like better. There's nothing the principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this age would like better than for us to act like everybody else, to prioritize and set goals like everybody else, to adopt the values that prevail in our culture. When the kings of Judah did that and said, well, everybody does the high place thing, a little bit of idolatry, and it's just traditional.

It's been going on for years. My daddy tolerated it. I'm going to tolerate it.

That attitude gets you taken captive. That attitude loses inheritance, loses heritage, loses

opportunity. Life is not going to be worth living if we don't live it for the Lord who bought us.

There is no meaningful future in the kingdom of the Son and kingdom of the Father for us if we fritter away our assets and our opportunities in this life. We have to remember who we are and why we're here, and we have a constant barrage of distraction and deflection and serpents talking out of trees trying to get us to believe a different story. This is why we have Bible class, four Bible classes a week, to remind us, to get us back to clarity, to reality, the Word of God that tells us what reality is and who is on the throne of heaven and what relationship we bear to him and what responsibility we have before him.

To neglect that, to sit under it and hear it and then walk away and forget what we saw in the mirror, as James puts it, is the course of disaster in this life and in the life to come. To him that overcomes are granted these wonderful, permanent, eternal privileges and blessings. Don't miss them.

Look at the example of others who screwed up and bejotham in his youth. I think I won't make the mistake that I have just witnessed. I think instead I will be directed into positive, productive areas of growth and accomplishment that will please the Lord.

That's the path of peace. That's the path of blessing. It's the path of reflecting the glory of the Lord Jesus to the delight of God the Father.

And there is no life better than that. Well, we'll pick up here in the middle of chapter 28 of 2 Chronicles and it's parallel over in 2 Kings next time. We'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for these passages that so clearly delineate for us both the rocks and the mountains that we dash ourselves as well as the firm footing and the upward trending path that you've laid before us and illuminated with your word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these things on our hearts in a way that will motivate us and encourage us, strengthen us for the task and for the opportunities. We know that in so doing the Lord Jesus will be glorified and you will be pleased with us both now at the judgment and in the kingdoms to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.