

## **Kings and Prophets 15-05-29a**

This is Friday, the 29th of May, 2015. We continue our study of Kings and Prophets. We will be in 2 Chronicles chapter 28, and it's parallel in 2 Kings chapter 16.

We're picking up tonight with the Southern Kingdom and the reign of Ahaz. Let's take a moment as we begin to pause for a moment and go before the Lord in prayer. It gives us a chance to sort of set aside distractions, recognize the critical presence and ministry of God's Holy Spirit so that our time is well spent and the Word of God can have its effect in our souls, in our conversation, in our fellowship, and in our future thoughts and actions.

Shall we pray? Father, it is a wonderful comfort to recognize that the life we live before you is not in our might or by our power, but by your Spirit, which you have so graciously imparted to us. And in His divine hands, your Word becomes effective and meaningful and transformative in our souls. We thank you for the unique privileges that we enjoy as members of your family through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you for Him. We thank you for the status that He has conferred on us. We thank you for our opportunities and our challenges, and it is a great opportunity for us tonight as we look at this portion of your Word to learn new things, to be freshly encouraged and motivated, to, we hope, be a blessing to each other and to the world that impinges on us as we seek to shine like lights in the midst of our generation.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will superintend the delivery and the reception of your Word this evening and that our conversation and our fellowship and our lives as we live them before you will reflect your glory and reflect credit on the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in His name. Amen.

Well, we skipped a week, but two weeks ago, we sort of polished off the Northern Kingdom. We followed it through to its gory end, and it was actually kind of three weeks ago, and then we began resuming the history of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. We rewound a little bit to catch back up with the account, paying particular attention, beginning a couple of chapters earlier in 2 Chronicles 26 with Uzziah succeeding Amaziah, and Judah.

We noted that there is, along with the misbegotten idea of going to war against the Northern Kingdom and whatnot, we have some extended co-regency where a son will rule along with or instead of his incarcerated or absent father. The father returns but is not really up to his former abilities and glories, and so you have the other sons ruling. But I just wanted to note in passing that it is somewhat unusual for women to be mentioned, for mothers of kings to be mentioned, and so on, unless they are of some significance.

Of course, Jezebel in the North, you could understand why she would be mentioned. She was so tremendously influential. Ahab and Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah, coming down to be the queen in Judah, it's understandable that she would be mentioned, and her attempted purge of the

royal family almost succeeded from a human point of view.

But many times the succession, the sons of the kings, are so many years old when they come to the throne and they reign for so long, and we don't have a whole lot of background on their history. It is, therefore, somewhat eye-catching that we have two queens of Judah mentioned in these chapters. And other than their names, there is pretty much nothing said.

So that tells me that their significance is, in fact, in their name. Otherwise, if there was some other significance, we wouldn't be given it. So given only the name, that's what we work from.

So you will notice that beginning in chapter 26, all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was 16 years old, and made him king instead of his father, Amaziah. He built Elath, restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers. Uzziah was 16 years old when he became king, and he reigned 52 years in Jerusalem.

Remember, a big part of that was sort of a co-regency after Amaziah's foolish campaign. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. We have two details about Uzziah's mother, her name and where she's from.

Her name is Jecholiah, and if you check a Bible dictionary or a lexicon or whatever and find out the Hebrew origin of her name, the first part of it, yachal, has the idea of strength, and it's strength in the sense of ability. We've been through the Greek words for power and strength and ability. You have exousia for authority, and you have dunamis for inherent or potential power, and you have kratos or krato.

Well this is ability strength. This is ableness. I am able to tote this barge or lift this bale.

I am able to accomplish this task. Yachal has the idea of ability. So this is Yacholiah, and depending on how you understand this, and these names are purposely poetic, meaning that you can sort of turn them in the light and get more than one meaning out of them.

But obviously Yahweh is the second part of this. Yacholiah could mean my strength is of the Lord or my ability is from the Lord, or it can also mean the Lord himself is able. But there is the idea that the Lord is the source of ability.

If you're going to get something done, that ability, that strength comes from the Lord. For somebody whose task and accomplishment is going to count for something, you can do many things that ultimately don't count. Empires have been built, and then they have crumbled.

Cities have been built, and they have been buried beneath the sand. Species of animals have come and gone. There's a lot of things that can exist and can come into being, but ability in the sense of accomplishing something that has lasting significance, I use that phrase on purpose.

Accomplishing something of what? Lasting significance. This is the only real accomplishment is something that lasts, right? Yacholiah. So that's his mother's name.

Where is she from? Jerusalem. Jerusalem. Could have been from anywhere.

Could have been from Magdala. Could have been from any village, Zarephath, Jericho, Hebron. Could have been from any place, but she is of Jerusalem.

Why are we given this information? There is an emphasis here on the power of the Lord, on His ability to impart that accomplishing power, and where is He located? Where is the glory of His presence found? In Jerusalem. She is from Jerusalem, and her name is the Lord is able, or ability comes from the Lord. When you have that double entendre, God has ability, and it is coming to me, to us.

He is the source. He possesses it Himself. He is the source of it for others, and where is He to be found? In Jerusalem.

This is the connotation. This is the suggestion I would offer for the reason this lady's name is mentioned, above and beyond the fact that she must have been a wonderful woman for her name to be preserved in Scripture in a positive light. He is a great builder, and you get the idea that perhaps His abilities in the positive realm may have been credited to His mother.

His father was gone a lot, busy with other things, was not the sharpest knife in the drawer when it came to military judgment and so on, political judgment, and so you get the idea that perhaps Uzziah, in his good things, he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done, but you get the idea that his mother must have been somehow involved in this to be mentioned. Well he sought God in the days of Zechariah, and we've seen before where kings are doing well when they have some guidance, and then later on they kind of fall off the wagon. So, Uzziah made war against the Philistines in verse 6, and we reviewed all of this last time.

He built towers in the desert, he dug many wells, he had an army of fighting men, total number of chief officers, all of this stuff is really great. However, he is the guy that got kind of full of himself and decided that he would just take unto himself all the important functions in the land. And Azariah, the priest, has to chase him out of the Lord's house, he's struck with leprosy, and remember that story.

So Jotham, his son, reigns in his place at the end of the chapter. Then in chapter 27, Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He reigned 16 years in Jerusalem.

His mother's name was Yerusha, the daughter of Zadok. We have another name and another additional detail. It doesn't say where she's from, but it tells us what her family is, who is Zadok.

He's a priest. So, interestingly, if Jotham's mother's family is from the tribe of Levi, you could understand how Azariah, having married her, might say, well, I'm a Levite-in-law. Maybe this was part of his rationale.

Well, I'm in tight with the Levites, I've married a daughter of Zadok from the priestly family, so

you know how they do in Israel now where you're Jewish if your mother is Jewish. Well, you know, my wife is priestly, so what's mine is yours and what's yours is yours, or however that works. You get the idea that his close association may have helped to blur the line in his mind of what was and wasn't allowable.

But Yerusha is also an interesting name because it means, Yerush has the idea of taking possession of a thing. It can mean to be taken captive or to take captive. And in this particular vowel construction, it has sort of the suggestion at least of being passive, having been taken or having been taken.

It could be used when someone took a wife. He took a wife of the daughters of Canaan or whatever it might be. And so in one construction, her name could simply mean she who was taken to wife.

But it really has this central idea of taking possession, and it is often associated with taking possession of an inheritance, not just a wife, but taking possession of inheritance. And so first of all, you have Jecholiah, the previous mother, the previous queen, talking about the presence and power of God in Jerusalem. With the presence and power of God in Jerusalem conferring ability, opportunity, potential.

Then here you have Yerusha to take possession, to have ownership of, to take unto oneself something. And she is associated with the priestly tribe. So if God has ability and is willing to pass it on to His people, if He is present in Jerusalem, how is He approached? At the temple, through the proper function of worship that is supervised by the Zadok priests, by the priestly family.

And when that is properly done, there is blessing, there is possession, there is inheritance, there is ongoing existence and the reflection of the glory of God. When it is improperly done, you have leprosy breaking out on your forehead and living separate and apart. So even in these names there is a reminder, there is an echo, there is an implication of what is central.

So many things propose themselves in our modern day as important. What would you think of as far as things that suggest themselves as being important? When we look around, what are people after? You listen to commercials on TV, what do people want? They want health. You get all these medicine commercials, take this pill and it will fix this one problem.

However, in the fine print, here are 19 problems it might cause, but it will certainly fix this one. I saw one of those, I can't even tell you what it was about, what symptom it was addressing, but it's not worth it. I don't see how anybody would be interested in the putative benefit of this when you are having strokes and bleeding out your eyes and the rest of it, that can cause this, that and the other, dementia among other things.

I thought, well, okay. But that's one thing people are interested in, is longevity. Allegedly our generation, the baby boom generation in particular, we are living longer, 40 is the new 30 and

50 is the new 35.

Everybody is trying to just extend it out and we are more and more surprised as we age at how bad we feel because we think, but wait a minute, youth is supposed to just last. Look at all of the aids and supplements and exercise programs and vitamins I'm taking, so all this good low-fat, non-sugar diet I've been eating, I ought to just last indefinitely. But people are after health, right? Physical well-being, financial well-being, financial planning, get some savings, manage your taxes, manage your expenses, hold down your debts, cut up the credit cards, be wise, lay something aside for the future, take out insurance.

We are looking for physical security, so bodily security, physical security, and entertainment, stimulation. I want something to make me feel good, make me laugh. There's nothing that will go viral more quickly than something that gives people a warm, either a chuckle or a warm fuzzy feeling.

I saw where there's a guy standing on his porch teaching his kid the Pledge of Allegiance and it's the most popular video on the World Wide Web today. Yesterday it was somebody's little terrier doing handstands or whatever, but people love to see something that is amusing or entertaining or somehow pushes aside the clouds and burdens of the day and gives you something happy. So stimulation, entertainment, these are things that people seek for.

And we have to be careful because this is the draw of the world. The problem with those things, what's one thing they all have in common? They are temporary. They are ephemeral.

They are earthly. They don't and can't last. Your physical well-being can't and won't last.

Your financial well-being, even if you make it all the way to your coffin, your assets will quickly disperse. Your furniture, everything in your house, your possessions will scatter. I have watched this happen to well-off people in my near periphery where they've got fantastic collections in antiques and paintings and furniture and all kinds of stuff.

And it's like an explosion at goodwill. It just goes in all directions. That stuff is scattered to the winds.

There's currently one of the foremost coin collections in the world. It's been amassed over 40 years. And it's the premier collection of private hands.

It's on the auction block. Well, we've had it long enough. I only feel like we're custodians of it.

It's going to go somewhere else, as they inevitably do. All things that we possess, we are just watching over. It will all go to somebody else.

Solomon said this 3,000 years ago, right? Temporary, temporary, temporary physical well-being, temporary health, temporary security in material things, temporary possession of goods, temporary stimulation and happiness. Why is it that the same video isn't viral every day? Why

isn't there one best Macarena video that people are still watching? Macarena guy at his desk. Remember when that was the number one viral video on the internet? Macarena guy.

Numa Numa guy. Whatever. I can honestly say I never saw it.

I just heard about it. Numa Numa Macarena guy. But how come nobody's still watching that? Do you suppose that's even getting any hits anymore? Do you think anybody's even pulling that up? Or, you know, well, maybe that's the wrong question to ask.

A lot of people are not pulling it up anymore. People are staying away from it in droves. Temporary.

Now, think about these two ladies' names. Ability residing in and coming from the Lord God. Temporary or permanent? Permanent.

The city of Jerusalem, the location of God, his throne and his glory. Temporary or permanent? Permanent. It may go through some morphs, but what's the name of the eternal capital city of God? What's its name? Jerusalem.

Where is Jecholiah from? Jerusalem. It's permanent. It's permanent.

It never fades. Yerusha. What does it mean? Something taken possession of.

I will take possession of these eternal, immutable, lasting things. This is offered in the southern kingdom. What has happened to their brethren and sistren up in the north? You met another and, pfft, you was gone.

Gone. Syrians, Assyrians, whoosh. It is interesting.

Did you ever think about the division of the northern and southern kingdom? I mean, I know you've thought about it. It's in our study. But doesn't it seem a little lopsided? How many tribes in the north? How many in the south? Ten in the north, two in the south.

You've kind of got Levites in both, right? There's Levites up in the north. They're corrupt and can be bought and go awry and astray. But there's Levites largely serving because Jerusalem is their workplace.

That's their office. That's where they do their stuff. So you kind of have three tribes down in the south.

You've got Judah and Benjamin. By the way, the legitimate prophet-anointed kings of Israel came from what tribes? Judah and Benjamin. Interesting, no? The two tribes from which, when God spoke the name of the king and told the prophet to anoint them, those are the two tribes in the south.

And the Levites, the silent third. The tribe of Judah, you've got the two tribes in the south. The

original Judah, the namesake, who was his mother? Leah.

Remember? Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah. First four, all from Leah. Who is Benjamin's mother? Rachel.

Joseph, Benjamin. Joseph splits into two tribes, so Rachel has how many tribes from her? Rachel. Yeah, you got Ephraim and Manasseh and Benjamin.

Where are Ephraim and Manasseh in the divided? They're up in the sad north. But Benjamin, so after all the smoke clears, Leah's got a son named Ephraim. And then you've got Levi, who is also a Leah.

Remember? Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah. But Levi is the non-land-possessing tribe there. From them come the priests.

They're all the same. So you've got Ephraim, who is the non-land-possessing tribe. And then you have the three disciples.

So how many did Jesus have? In the course of His normal three plus year ministry, how many disciples were with Him? He had the twelve. When He wanted to do anything important, how many did He have with Him? Three. And of those three, What do you hear and see from James, the son of Zebedee? Not a lot.

Gets killed early. All of that investment, the Lord taking him into those upper rooms. And when Jesus goes to Gethsemane before His crucifixion, the night that He is going to be arrested, after the upper room, and He says, let's go to the garden and watch and pray.

Who does He take with Him? When you read Matthew and Mark, who does He take with Him? He takes the disciples into the garden. Of course, Judas has left, so he's got 11. And then He leaves eight of them behind.

And who does He take further into the garden to watch and pray with Him? Peter, James, and John. And when He comes back after an hour and finds them sleeping, who does He talk to? When He says, could you not watch with Me one hour, who is He talking to? All three? Peter. He said to Simon Peter, could you not watch with Me one hour? My point here in comparing the old and the new, when you realize at the sheep and goats judgment, before anything is said, He has already put the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left.

Before the judgment, it seems to me if it was the sheep and goats judgment, He would line everybody up and say, come forward, sheep, you, goat, you, goat, you, goat, you, goat, you, sheep, you, goat, goat, goat, goat. There's going to be a lot more goats than sheep, right? But He would bring them up. It's a judgment.

But at the judgment, He assembles them. They are already known. Jesus knew His disciples, and even in the earlier phases of His ministry, when He wanted to go up the Mount of

Transfiguration, when He wanted to go into the upper room, Talitha, Kumi, and these other things, He already is taking just those three.

God works with, the Lord Jesus worked with, those that He knew had the potential to, by faith, lay hold of righteousness, lay hold of possession, lay hold of inheritance, because they have that potential, because they are of that mind and of that heart, they are already known even before they do anything. John is going to be a tremendous apostle. Simon Peter is going to be a tremendous apostle.

There's no sign of that in the disciple days, seemingly. Simon Peter is kind of almost the class clown. Some people characterize him that way.

I think in reality, he had a lot of energy, and he had a lot of zeal, but not according to knowledge. He's kind of like Israel itself. And when the Lord Jesus finally gets it through His head what's going on, He's terrific.

God takes His weaknesses and turns them into strengths. But He works with them separately from a very early time. They are, by the way, the first ones to be called.

Remember that? Down by the Jordan, it's Peter and James and John that are down there listening to John the Baptist and Andrew. Remember that? My point being, why the division, northern and southern kingdom, into ten tribes and two tribes? Remember when Samuel is leaving and he says to Saul, the kingdom is going to be torn from you and given to another. And that tearing of a cloak has import in terms of separation and division.

Then later on, in Solomon's day, the kingdom is going to be split. And they tear up the cloth and Jeroboam gets the ten northern tribes. Why that division? Why not six and six? Why not all the Rachelites in the south and all the Leahites in the north? Because it is Judah and the little tribe of Benjamin that have potential.

They have that Peter, James, and John potential. And they are still clinging by their fingernails to that opportunity when the ten northern tribes go out. Who is it that are at least in the courtyard when the Lord Jesus is being tried for His life? Who are the two disciples that are still near Him? Peter and John.

Interestingly, silent James, we don't know where he is. But John is actually inside the building and Peter is right outside. And in the same way, we see these two tribes in the south.

God is still working with them. God is calling them. God says, here is my presence.

I give you ability. And there is a means of approach. There are priests here.

You can pursue worship. You can hang on to possession and inheritance. You can reflect the glory of God even though you are a small minority.

And it's just interesting to me that God seems to split off that small remnant, that small

minority that has the potential. And He works with them and He is patient with them. This is who we want to be, don't you think? Sure, we can fail.

We can pull as many Simon Peters and more as Simon himself. We can be like the southern kingdom of Judah and make serious mistakes. We can get proud.

We can get distracted. We can get fooled. But it is in the return.

It is in recognizing the things represented by these two queens mentioned in Scripture. There is ability. There is always ability from God.

Remember, what's Rush Limbaugh's little tagline there? Talent on loan from God. Well, we have ability that is given to us by God. He is the source and author of it and He is the grantor of it.

And because of that, we don't have to operate in our own strength. Ability is from the Lord. And through that and from that comes possession, inheritance, Yerusha.

This is what is being set up in the palace in Jerusalem. This is what is being held out to the people, reflected in these ladies' names and in the opportunities that their sons have to be good kings. To walk in the ways of their father, David, not following the sins of Jeroboam.

Now, here's what's really interesting. When we pick up after the break in 2 Chronicles 28, we are going to see specific things mentioned right at the beginning that directly tie to everything we have just covered in this first session. Directly, indisputably, big, bright, thousand-watt searchlight directly on this.

What are those things? We'll look at them when we come back from the break.