

Kings and Prophets 15-06-05b

Let's pick up our study now in 2 Kings 15-16, 2 Chronicles 26-28. We're in this pivotal time. Now, let me just back up and say this.

Here we are, we're New Testament believers, we live in the modern age, we've got cell phones and computers and internet and cars and air conditioning, and praise God for air conditioning. Those of us born in Barstow appreciate air conditioning, especially the real kind instead of the water pouring over the straw kind, which is better than nothing. But we have all of this modern day life.

Our paradigm of existence is radically, radically different, no question. You try to go back and enter into these dusty days of the past, halfway around the world from us, in a completely different kingdom, speaking a different language, a whole different basis of their economy. Everything is different.

And you think, you know, there's a lot of this chapterage, there's a lot of these pages in my Old Testament, and what's it really good for? I need answers to my life. I need to know how to move forward. I want the time I spend here to be meaningful.

And I know, you know, God is good, be faithful, be obedient. I can get that without slogging through 28 chapters of 2 Chronicles and the parallels in Kings. And gracious sakes, Isaiah, I mean, couldn't he have boiled it down? Couldn't he have said, be good, don't sin, Jesus is coming, get ready? You know, why all of this tremendous freight car loads of detail? Well, I ask myself this question because, you know, it would be easier to skip it.

It would be easier to bypass it. And actually, this is what a great fraction of the Christian world does today. You have to kind of look to find an in-depth study of the historical books of the Old Testament, to find a detailed verse-by-verse, phrase-by-phrase, in some cases word-by-word treatment of the major prophets.

It's just too much. Well, people will never stick with you. They won't last, is the thinking.

We are convinced of better things of you, brethren, things that accompany salvation. And to your credit, I think we all here recognize that every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God is something that we can live by, that is an opportunity for us. And we're not put off, we're not distracted, we're not those who faint, who fall away, but those who by faith and patience inherit the promises.

So believe me, when I say turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 26, and there's a part of your mind that says, great God in heaven, how much of this is left? Be aware, this is the test. Are you of those who fall back under perdition, or who by faith and patience inherit the promises? Patience only comes when there's a need for it, right? You can't be patient when everything is going great. So all I'm saying is, hang in there and help me, let's together discover why God felt that this

material was important enough to preserve it for 2750 years, so that you and I could look at it.

There is a reason. And if I fail to discover it, don't give up, keep pushing, ask, seek, and knock. If you lift up your voice, if you cry out for understanding, you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

That's God's promise. If there is a God in heaven, then that promise is true. And these things are written for our instruction, they are preserved for our instruction.

So let me just quickly commend you for your faithfulness in sticking. This has already become somewhat of a lengthy series. But if you trust God for the value of it, you will get the value of it.

God will not listen to a child asking for bread and let us walk away with a rock or a snake or a scorpion. So at the same time, I will tell you that these are some of the most challenging sections to teach. And so we together will look for God's truth and God's purpose in these passages.

With that in mind, let's just take one step back and look at this time in history as we have been doing and as we did in the first section. We know the economic situation, we know the kind of life that people were living, kind of like now. We are not on hard times, we are not living in Haiti, we are not living in some part of Africa or God forbid Ethiopia where there is a horrible famine.

You look at these refugees, you see and hear the reports about people who are going over trying to help the people in other parts of the world who through no fault of their own are caught up in these tremendous sectarian conflicts and political struggles. There is corruption, the aid can't get in, it's all taken away and resold on the black market. Whole families have children who need medical care and they can't get it.

They need to get out and get away and they can't. Whole villages are slaughtered wholesale over things that the people who get slaughtered don't even fully understand and aren't invested in. I just want to live my life, I just want to work quietly with my hands and try to have an existence.

There are huge areas of the world where you can't do that because of the evil, the corruption and the widespread vicissitudes of sin and man's corrupt and fallen nature. Nowhere worse than when it is aggregated, when it starts forming groups as you find in so many places in the world. This is that sort of time.

It has been going on in both the northern and the southern kingdom. God after using it to try to prevail on the hearts of his people to return to him has said let me try a different tack and he has ameliorated it, he has pushed it back. It's like the eye of the hurricane.

I will abate it for a while, give you a chance to collect your thoughts, to evaluate, to meditate, to reflect and cogitate and try to get back to the covenant relationship that is their historical and spiritual heritage. It's an opportunity. We live in a time of such opportunity ourselves and if you

look at the malaise and the deception and the misdirection and the misapprehensions and misunderstandings in the Christian world, the false objectives, the false understandings of God's purpose for us in this life, get involved in this, be thinking about that, program after program, fad after fad, send money to this ministry, we'll fix your problems.

I see so little difference anymore between a fun drive on PBS with somebody purveying and parlaying wisdom about diets or dollars or whatever it may be and churches that are purveying wisdom about diets and dollars and where is the person of faith, where is the person that is dedicated on a daily basis, evening and morning and at noon to come before God in heaven, prostrate ourselves before him and say, Lord, show me what you would have me do, use what I have learned from your word to guide me, to cleanse me, to motivate me, to purify me, create in me a clean heart, oh God, renew an upright spirit within me so that we can use this valuable, irreplaceable time in this short time of short life to prepare ourselves for eternal service, eternal relationship, eternal opportunities with the God of creation and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. That's what this is about. This material, difficult though it may be, historical and draggy in places though it may be, is oddly enough the wheat germ that will strengthen us.

It is the gruel that will give us the fortification that we need to move forward and it is faith and patience that inherits the promises. Well, God gives these people a respite, much as we have now, and unlike them, we want to avail ourselves of this opportunity. I want to show you something really interesting because this today is a time of judgment on the house of God.

The house of God is in the process of judging Christians now, judging the nation, our nation, the United States now. We are already paying the price for departure from the values upon which our nation was founded, that the founding fathers understood, that guided the general direction of our nation for almost 200 years. We have departed from that.

We are consciously with malice aforethought shedding, ridding ourselves, don't want to see the Ten Commandments. Are you kidding me? The Ten Commandments? We don't want anybody seeing an exhortation to not murder one another? Can't have that. We don't want anybody seeing a public exhortation to honor your father and mother? Oh, no, can't have that.

Good spoken of as evil, trying to maintain a moral standard, trying to separate from and protect our children from perversity. They ought to just change the bumper sticker. Celebrate perversity.

That's what it ought to say. Celebrate perversity because that's what we're doing. If you've seen the events of the past couple of weeks, what's on magazine covers and so on, and people rushing, falling all over themselves to be the first to congratulate, to feat, to heap accolades on perversion and deep troubled psychosis of the soul.

We're celebrating psychosis. We're celebrating those who have serious personal issues that need mending and need fixing. It's tragic, and this is the judgment that comes on that nation whose God is not the Lord.

We're in a time of judgment now, just as these kingdoms were in a time of judgment then. Now, you say, well, I'm in the Tea Party, I'm a conservative, and I want to take the country back for God, for Jesus, for church, for Christians. Get that monkey dissent out of my textbooks for the kids.

We're taking the nation back. We're going to go back to the days of the Puritans. Aside from being unrealistic, let's look at something in this passage that gives one pause with regard to that attitude.

In the first place, you can't take back something as a tiny minority that a majority of people are having and holding and running into the ground. There's no taking back something that you wouldn't want to be holding onto when God judges it. I say, you people take it, you run away with it, you go way over there, I'm going to stand over here, because what you have a hold of, God is going to judge.

I don't want the nation back. I want to stand at a safe distance as God needfully and rightfully and righteously judges perversion and evil and corruption. Do you think if the conservatives and the Tea Party and the God-fearing fundamentalist Christians all managed to get the country back that they could solve the inherent problems of widespread perversity, widespread evil, widespread corruption in education and in government and all of the horrific immorality that is going on, do you seriously think if they had control they could then fix it? There's only one thing that will fix this problem, and that's the Lord God in heaven living and breathing fire into the souls of His people.

And He can do that with a nation or without it. I want to be one of those people. You want to be one of those people.

And we can do that. I've got my hands full taking this little nation inside my chest back for God. I want God to dwell there.

I want my little nation to be the nation whose God is the Lord. And that's a full-time job for me. The rest of these folks, as far as I'm concerned, I am disinvested from what happens in the next election.

I'm going to vote my conscience. I'm going to vote on principle. But I have no expectation that if we just get the vote to go the right way, happy days are here again.

We're 30 years from 721 B.C. We are a few years from 586 B.C. It's coming. And like the people in Judah who understood it in their day, we should understand it, be prepared for it and not be discouraged. Let me show you something here.

I pointed out verse 11 of 2 Chronicles chapter 26. Do you remember? This is a really interesting key passage. Do you see it? 26:11 of 2 Chronicles.

Moreover, Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies according to

the number on their roll as prepared by J.L. the scribe. How did this work out? Was this army the basis of deliverance for Judah? They had them all carefully numbered, had their ranks down, had the muster rolls all complete, all present and accounted for. How did this turn out? What part did this play in the deliverance, preservation, fortification, and long-term spiritual survival of Judah? Nothing.

What comes right after that? Who is the second guy after J.L.? What's his name? Say it out loud. Ma means from. The center part of that is from the verb asah, which means to make.

And of course the A-H is Yah. So from the making or manufacturing. Remember asah, the Lord built a woman, the Lord manufactured a woman, asah barah, to create allegedly something out of nothing, to create with no reference to where it came from.

Asah is to manufacture, take the dust to the ground, take a rib, manufacture a thing. Ma-ah-say-yah. This is something my Lord has built.

That's the guy's name. He's a young man here and he's going to be mentioned again. Turn the page to chapter 28, verse 22.

Remember those were the days of Uzziah. He's the grandfather. He actually started reigning way back in like 791 as a co-regent.

His father is assassinated in 767 and Uzziah comes to the throne. And he's going to reign all the way down to, what did I say? 743, right? Uzziah. 739.

Yeah, he overlaps five years. He's going to reign all the way down to 739. Long time, 52 years total, whatever the math is.

He's up there 52 years. He's gone. Ahaz is now the king.

Ahaz is his son. In the time of his distress, King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord, this King Ahaz. He sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them, I will sacrifice to them so that they will help me.

But they were the ruin of him and all Israel. So Ahaz gathered the articles of the Lord and burned incense and did all of that. You remember, his end was to go further and further from the Lord.

Now, where did that come from? Did he suddenly take a right turn and go to the gods of Assyria? Or was that something that had been building as a pattern of decisions for a long period of time? This didn't come out of the blue. He didn't just drop his faith in the Lord and go elsewhere. In the beginning of chapter 28, he was 20 years old when he became king, reigned 16 years in Jerusalem, did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord.

He walked in the ways of the king of Israel, made molded images for the Baals. He burned incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom and burned his children in the fire according to the

abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. We don't know how many children Ahaz had, but some of them he sacrificed in a Molech child living sacrifice fashion.

This is this guy's idea of good leadership and good policy. So the Lord his God in verse five delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. This is what he's referring to at the end of the chapter.

The gods of the Syrians seemed to really help them. Maybe I should worship those gods. They had to have had some kind of divine help to beat me because look at what a great general I am.

They defeated him and carried away a great multitude of them as captives and brought them to Damascus. Then he was delivered into the hand of the king of Israel who defeated him with a great slaughter for Pekah the son of Ramali. Remember there was Pekahiah and he gets assassinated and then Pekah takes over up in the north.

This is after Jeroboam the second and we see them mentioned in Isaiah when Isaiah says Pekah and Rezin that coalition is going to dissolve. This is in those days. Pekah is not on the throne up in the north all that long.

Killed 120 Eliphs of Judah. Remember these are not literal thousands. These are battalion sized groups.

They flex to meet the need. It is just convenient groups of indeterminate size. 120,000 Eliphs in Judah in one day all valiant men because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers.

Zichri a mighty man of Ephraim killed who? Maseah the king's son. This is not a common name in the Bible. The grandson is being groomed.

You know how they take the princes over in England and put them in the army and they are kind of blooded and given their war stripes so to speak so that later on should they become king why they have got some kind of credibility. They haven't just been effete marshmallow eaters. They have actually gone out and done stuff.

Well they were grooming Maseah for the throne. Maseah. Now it doesn't sound like Mashiach in Hebrew but it kind of does in English doesn't it? But they were grooming him for the throne.

Now why is this defeat inflicted on Judah? It tells us in the preceding verse because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers as a judgment they are defeated and Zichri kills Maseah right? It's judgment from God and Maseah is killed. Maseah has been being groomed from the days of his grandfather on the throne to be what? The next king. Now because Maseah is killed who is going to be the next king? And because some other sons got burned in the fire by their father.

Combination of the perpetration of heinous evil by the king and the judgment from God in the

death of Maseah who comes to the throne after Ahaz? Look at your next chapter. Chapter 29 who became king when he was 25 years old? Good king Hezekiah. So here's my suggestion in terms of a thought for application.

Do not cringe and do not quail and do not be fearful as a faithful child of God in the face of divine judgment. Divine judgment is a good thing. Maseah I think would have been a horrendously bad king.

He is getting steeped in the ways of his father Ahaz from his youth. He's a part of the problem. He's initiated into this whole military strength, strength by works, strength by what I do.

Remember those names kind of work in two directions. Yahweh and the M in front of his name, it doesn't mean the Lord is the one who makes. The Lord manufactures.

My God manufactures. This is more like everything I do is God like. Everything I do is divine from manufacture of the Lord.

Well just take anything I do as an act of God type of thing. I think there's a hint in his name of the kind of king he would have become. But in the judgment of God he is slain and the scripture makes a note both of the fact that he was in the infrastructure of his prideful grandfather Uzziah struck with leprosy and his wicked father Ahaz, the child burning Syrian God worshipping father.

And remember the three generation curse. If you get three in a row God's going to wipe you out. But because of the judgment of God on Maaseah before he gets to the throne there is a space and room that you think for Hezekiah.

Now you think about being a faithful believer in Judah during these days and you see the incredible evil perpetrated by the king and of course all of his cronies, everybody close to him is going to be equally evil. And then suddenly in the judgment of God there is this purge. We read about it.

The son Azrican, the officer over the house and Elkanah who was second to the king in verse 7 of chapter 28, they're all wiped out. This is a judgment from God and it looks like a disaster. This is like a bomb going off in the Pentagon or in the White House during a meeting.

And so the king and several key players are all wiped out at once. Terrible defeat, embarrassing, people are taken captive. It's a disaster.

It's a disaster and it is from God and yet this disaster as bad as it is for those believers who are faithful, who know that God controls history say let's just wait. Let's bide our time. Watch and see what the Lord will do.

And in the turning of time, in the circumnavigating of the sundial with the shadow in the passing of the years, you end up with Hezekiah on the throne. Now you know the broad outline

of King Hezekiah. You remember in the days of Isaiah that he gets really sick and Isaiah goes to him with what message? See I can do this because you all know the story.

Other guys would have to preach all the way through it to get there. But you know what happens. You remember the story with Hezekiah getting sick and Isaiah comes and says what? Set your house in order buddy, you're going to die.

So what does Hezekiah do? Turns his face where? To the wall and cries out to God and says, I can't believe this is happening to me. Right? He is under the gun because he has had some failures but he turns and he asks God to not execute that judgment. Right? I'm not ready to die.

Please don't judge me now. Don't take me out. God says, ah ha.

So your sense of timing is better than mine. Your plan is better than mine. My judgment is a bad thing.

Your continuing to live is a good thing. Okay. Let's see how that turns out.

I will not take your life. I'll give you another 15 years. Suspension of the judgment of God.

Oh God, please don't judge the nation. Oh God, please don't bring your righteous and holy anger down on what needfully needs to be judged. Please just give us a little more time.

God gave him 15 more years. What had not yet happened at the point that he was about to die that happens in those next 15 years? The most wicked king that Judah ever has is born, Manasseh. So now let me ask you, having given this quick survey, do we want the judgment of God or do we not want the judgment of God? Yes, we want the judgment of God.

Bring it on, oh faithful and righteous Lord. The question to ask ourselves is not, is there a way to suspend, avert, or deflect the judgment of God? The question to ask ourselves is, can I ensure that I am not a target for the judgment of God? Let the bomb go off, but let me be sheltered safe in the arms of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, dwelling in the shadow of the Almighty, sheltered by the wings that gather and protect the world. This is the answer.

Let me tend to my nation. Let me ensure that my nation's God is the Lord. This nation out here has made its choice.

Oh, heavenly and holy Lord, judge the living fire out of this evil and perverse nation. I'm with you. I share your heart.

I share your purpose. I share your grief at the corruption of a generation whose blood has been shed all the day. If you can't bring a flood, I know you've got plenty of other options.

Judge it, oh God. There is a time to pray for the security and prosperity and longevity of your nation. And there is a time as an artillery forward observer to call in fire on your own position so that you can wipe out the enemy.

I would submit to you this is that time. I don't want to see a nation called the United States characterized by the type of gross, evil, and inherent sin of the high hand corruption that currently defines the United States of America. I am ready to say fire mission, fire for effect, my location, as soon as you can load it.

Look at the example of Judah. When God judges, good things emerge. The phoenix has got nothing on the people of God coming out of judgment from God.

Look at what happens to the nation after they go into the Babylonian captivity. Do they ever again have a problem with idolatry? Have there ever been any idolatrous Jews since they got out of Babylon? No. That thing has been purged, has been cauterized.

The idolatry thing is over and done. That limb was cut off and there is not even a prosthetic there. That's just gone.

The judgment of God is righteous, timely, holy, and good. We have a loving heavenly Father. He will not suffer the righteous to be moved.

So I say all that to say this. I think one of the major applications of this section of the Word of God is do not fear the wrath of God when you are on God's side. It is our opportunity, our responsibility, and our challenge to be on the right side of God's justice.

And when we are, we have nothing to fear. In fact, we should be ready for and praying for the righteous expression of God's judgment because when He suspends it when it ought to be given, this is what happens. You get Manasseh and you get the decline and fall of Judah.

Who knows what might have happened had Hezekiah died when God scheduled him to die and how much longer that nation might have lasted. It's one of the imponderables of Almighty God. What we do know is by suspending this judgment, God demonstrates that His ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and His purpose and His timing are always perfect.

We trust in Him. We appeal to Him. We pray to Him not only for judgment on our external environment, but how about the nation within? Purge me.

Whom the Lord loves, He chastens. He scourges every son whom He receives. Do not dodge, do not fear, do not try to get out from under the chastening of the Lord because it brings forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness and that's what we want.

If it takes judgment so that I can be fruitful, if I need to be pruned so that I can bear more fruit, oh Lord, prune away. We have to trust God. This is where faith becomes real.

Trust God that He will judge effectively and that the fruit of His judgment will be good. We don't have to fear our Heavenly Father unless we are miscreants and malfunctionaries. If your heart is right, you can always trust your Heavenly Father and even in His judgment there is mercy,

there is grace, there is healing, there is restoration, and there is ultimately benefit, blessing and fruit.

Well, you can see both sides of this on the pages of 2 Chronicles 26-28 and we'll have a bit of a hiatus. We're going to be gone next Sunday so there will be one of our previous studies available to listen to for the next two Fridays at this time, thanks to our faithful stewards of the archives. But we'll resume our study in about three weeks from tonight.

We'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the rest and the peace and the confidence that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ because He is our righteousness, He is our peace, and He is our sanctification.

And our standing before You depends entirely on the extent to which we avail ourselves of those wonderful, limitless resources that we have in Him. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will keep us ever mindful of both our responsibilities of our opportunities and the dangers that beset us if we take our eye off the prize, if we begin to falter and let ourselves be distracted. We see the examples in Your Word so faithfully preserved and recorded for us.

And we pray that as we reflect on these things that we'll have a renewed sense of motivation and encouragement to live the life to which we have been called so that we can reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. We pray these things in His name. Amen.