

Kings and Prophets 15-07-02

This is Thursday, the 2nd of July, 2015. We continue our study of the Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah. We will be resuming tonight in the vicinity of 2 Chronicles chapter 31 and its parallel in 2 Kings chapter 18.

Let's take a moment as we customarily do to individually go before the Lord in prayer, prepare our hearts and our souls, focus our concentration and cultivate the ministry of God's Holy Spirit so that the things that we see from God's Word will be meaningful to us, helpful to us, be retained in our memories, be stored up in the treasure house of our souls and be the soil in which fruit that redounds to the praise and glory of God can grow. Shall we pray? Father, thank You for granting us Your constant grace, the expressions of Your faithfulness in protecting us, providing for us, preserving us, granting us challenges as well as blessings to stimulate our growth and our productivity as we move ever closer to the days when we will leave this earthly life and this mortal body and dwell in Your presence with all of the wonderful privileges and potentials that pertain in the Kingdom of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, and Your own Kingdom that follows His where we will with unrestricted gaze be able to behold Your glory and see the further progress of Your plan and purpose. We thank You for the record of Your past dealings with Your chosen people, Israel.

As we focus now on the history of the southern Kingdom of Judah, we ask that God the Holy Spirit will illuminate the pages of Your Word that we can see beyond the simple details and find that divine and powerful truth that cleanses us, that enables and empowers us, and that gives us the spiritual sight to live our own lives before You in a way that pleases You and glorifies the Lord Jesus. We ask Your blessing on us as we spend this time in fellowship and study together in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, we have come to the days of King Hezekiah, and as we saw last week, the greater movement in the national sphere has initially produced a time of great prosperity, a time of opportunity, which the northern Kingdom did not recognize, did not exploit, did not see as coming from God. They frittered away that opportunity, to put it mildly, and they are in the process of disappearing from history. Just by way of review, in the northern Kingdom, we started with King Jeroboam, and this is going to be like a good old-time gospel church, gospel song, call and response type of affair here.

I'm going to call out a king of the northern Kingdom, and I want you all to say, bad or good, okay? Just bad or good. Well, I'll give you a clue. We're talking about the northern Kingdom to start.

King Jeroboam, bad or good? Bad. King Nadab, bad or good? Bad. King Baasha? Bad.

King Elah? Bad. Zimri? Bad. Tibni? Bad.

Omri? Bad. Be careful now. Ahab? Bad.

Ahaziah? Bad. Joram? Bad. Jehu? Bad.

Bad. God got a sign-up done with him, but he was an evil guy. He was a bad king, right? Jehoahaz? Bad.

Joash? Northern Kingdom King Joash? Bad. How many goods have we had so far? Just checking. Okay.

Jeroboam II? 751 BC, remember Jeroboam II? Right. And then the quick run down, Zechariah? Bad. There is a good Zechariah, a prophet Zechariah, but King Zechariah in the north gets a bad review.

Shalem? Bad. Manakim? Bad. Pekahia? Bad.

Pekah? Remember Pekah that made the alliance with Syria? And then Hoshea in the north? Bad. Yeah. And that's the end.

So we have not doing too well there. Now, got to be a little more careful here. Kings of Judah? Rehoboam? Bad.

Abijah? Bad. Asa? Good. Okay, let's keep track of the good kings.

Keep fingers out for the good kings. Asa was good, right? That's one. Jehoshaphat? Good.

Jehoram? Bad. Watch my face and you'll know which ones are good and bad. Okay, Jehoram was bad.

Ahaziah? Bad. Athaliah? Queen Athaliah? Let's hear it for women on the throne. Okay.

Joash? Well, what did David do to Uriah? I mean, good point, but overall, he's okay. He's in the good camp. King Joash.

Baby Joash. Amaziah? Good. Amaziah was good.

Uzziah? Leprous, but good. Jotham? Jotham was good. Okay, then Ahaz? The one right before now.

Okay, so how many good kings in Judah have we had up through Ahaz? Okay, count them. Six, right? Who is the next king after when Ahaz dies, comes out of regency to become king? Our guy in the present, Hezekiah. What number king is he in Judah? No accident.

No accident. How many more kings are going to be judged good in Judah? Well, that's just Manasseh, Ammon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah. Thumbs down, thumbs down, thumbs down.

So, of the good kings in Judah, Hezekiah is not seven of nine, he is seven of eight. Okay, just keep a grip on that idea. Six good kings and then a second good king.

Okay, so seventh followed by an eighth. Just let that percolate as we're going through the reign of Hezekiah here. In 2 Chronicles chapter 31, where we resume tonight and a bit of review, we've already covered the previous two chapters beginning in 29.

Hezekiah became king, 25 years old, reigned 29 years in Jerusalem, mother's name was Abijah. It's usually a pretty good sign when you get the mother's name. Generally, she's getting credit for having raised a son that becomes a good guy.

He did what was right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father David had done. If you're not shy or bashful about marking your Bible, I would circle that because it is key. According to all that his father David had done.

These next sections, and I wish we had time to go through it verse by verse, we could easily just camp here and pick the fruit off the trees for weeks on end. But we're going to summarize what's going on here because Hezekiah is like David 2. He's like the sequel. You know how they like to make a movie and then they make a sequel? I understand Terminator 5 is coming out now.

Find something that works, keep working it until you drive it into the ground. The principal actor in that thing is grandpa age and they're still trotting him out to fight the machines and so on. But there is this idea of an echo or a reminiscence of something that was good in the past.

We're given the introduction there in verse 2, according to all that his father David had done. Now, as I mentioned last time, why is there such a sudden zoom in and focus and great detail on the first 14 years of Hezekiah's reign? Because they are very similar and they are consciously echoing what happened in the days of David. For example, how many kingdoms are there now for a king to rule over in Israel? For the first time since Solomon died, there's just one kingdom that you call Israel, right? Northern kingdom is gone.

So Hezekiah is the first king of a sole Israelite kingdom since the days of David and Solomon, right? Interesting, no? And so just as the remnant of a, remember how the kingdom was kind of starting to break up under Saul and Hebron and the ten northern tribes, David had to kind of, Judah was behind him, Benjamin was with him, but he had to kind of get the ten northern tribes together to make the kingdom. And that's how David became, you know, David really had a much more powerful alliance and coalition even than Saul did. Well, now that in sort of a mirror fashion, the ten northern tribes have gone away, but the faithful remnant has all come down to Judah to join with and live under Hezekiah.

And so there is an echo, there is an adumbration, there is a reminiscence of the days of David in this situation. And the Bible sort of consciously suggests this parallel to us, I think. So what was David's first concern when he came to the throne? What did he want to do? Go back, keep your finger here and turn back to 2 Chronicles 1. And we're looking at really both David and Solomon here.

But in 2 Chronicles 1, when Solomon comes to the throne, his first order of business at David's behest and with David's plans and provisions, it's all about the temple, right? It's all about the temple. What was it that David had done when he got the ark brought to Jerusalem and established the capital city? What did David do surrounding the ark of the covenant? You remember all of the detail in 1 Chronicles having to do with lists of, in chapter 24 of 1 Chronicles, the division of the priests, what the Levites would do, who are the singers, how will they rotate? He organized the worship life. That was David's main priority once he had established peace and didn't have to be out fighting all the time.

He wanted the ark brought to Jerusalem and he greatly elaborated, established, and detailed the worship life in Israel, right? Copious chapters in 1 Chronicles giving name after name after name after name. You say, why all these names? If you just look at 1 Chronicles chapter 24, these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eliezer, and Ithamar.

Nadab and Abihu died before their father and had no children and therefore Eliezer and Ithamar ministered as priests. David with Zadok of the sons of Eliezer and Ahimelech, the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to the schedule of their service. There were more leaders found of the sons of Eliezer and he goes in all of this just agonizing detail, name after name after name.

Well, there is a reason for that and you can spend a lot of time here just as you can in the genealogies. However, let's step back as we have been doing as we sort of need to do in this synthetic study of kings and prophets and take a look now at the early days of Hezekiah's reign in chapter 29 of 2 Chronicles. In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them.

He brought in the priests and the Levites and gathered them in the east square and said to them, Hear me, Levites, sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house. We saw this last time, right? So it is very David-like. It is very Solomonic in the sense of prioritizing the house of God, the presence of God, the worship of God and getting these things done, right? Hezekiah appoints these priests to their divisions and duties.

If you turn now to chapter 31 and we are going to move a little back and forth here because I am going to compare these to the days of David. Look at chapter 30. Hezekiah keeps the Passover.

Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the Passover of the Lord God of Israel. For the king and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. This is really fascinating to me.

When is the Passover supposed to happen? 14 Nisan, this shall be the beginning of months to you going all the way back to the days of Moses, right? Well, Hezekiah as second David here

couldn't keep it in the first month. He can't return to the days of David per se and so symbolically speaking here, suggestively speaking, he is going to institute it in the second month. He is going to hold it a month late, a month after when it should have been held, but he is going to get it done.

So in the second month, they could not keep it at the regular time because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem. But this is a classic biblical case of better late than never. We don't want to wait a whole another year before we keep the Passover.

Hezekiah is pressing to restore proper function of worship and he is going to catch up the feast schedule. Now, you start at Passover, a countdown clock, right? Passover and first fruits and the clock is ticking to what is the next feast? Pentecost. Remember that? Passover, feast of first fruits, you countdown seven Sabbaths and on the 50th day, sort of the Jubilee day, it's Pentecost.

Well, this is a month late. How long is a month? 30 days. So out of 50 days, how many days are left? 20 days.

It's just under three weeks, right? It's two full weeks and a six-day week and then you'd be there. So they could not keep it at the regular time because they weren't qualified. The priests weren't ready.

The worship hadn't gotten geared up and at the time that he acceded to the throne, he didn't have time to give these orders and tell all these guys, sanctify yourselves. They've got to make all the preparations. And this stuff is all cobwebs and dust and where is the stuff? It's been in storage.

It's been under lock and key. It's been closed up in the days of Ahaz, right? So the matter pleased the king and all the assembly so they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba to Dan that they should come to keep the Passover. From Beersheba to Dan.

Dan is where? What kingdom? What have they been worshipping up there for generations? One of the two golden calves. Remember that? Dan to Beersheba. This harks back, this evokes the United Kingdom, doesn't it? He says, anybody, anywhere that can make it down here, we're going to do it like it was done in the old days.

And Hezekiah is so evocative of David in giving this proclamation. Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem. They had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner.

Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his leaders and spoke according to the command of the king. Children of Israel, return to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. Then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hands of the kings of Assyria.

Do not be like your fathers and your brethren who trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers so that He gave them up to desolation as you see. Learn a lesson from the present situation. When your spiritual priorities are fouled up, your circumstances will follow.

Now, do not be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the Lord. Enter His sanctuary, which He has sanctified forever, and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. For if you return to the Lord, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land.

For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him. So the runners passed from city to city throughout the country of Ephraim and Manasseh as far as Zebulun, but they laughed at them and mocked them. Why do you think that crowd got sacked, destroyed and led captive? Bad attitude.

Nevertheless, some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun were humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. The key, the first step to faithfulness and obedience is humility. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

If we do not humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, He will use people and circumstances and discipline and eventually judgment to humble us. God will break the back of pride one way or another. Pride was the original sin.

Pride is what corrupted God's holy, heavenly civilization with the angels. It is what corrupted the first couple in the Garden of Eden and it has been the source and root of sin ever since. Humble themselves and came to Jerusalem.

Also the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders at the word of the Lord. Because in Judah they are humble and because they are interested and because they are obedient, God is uniting them. He is enabling them to work together, to resolve differences, to lay aside disputes, to have one heart and one mind and come together for a glorious time of worship together.

This is what God will do in a relationship. This is what God will do in a marriage. This is what God will do in a family.

This is what God will do in a church, in any community of believers. When we humble ourselves before the Lord and we seek His face and we endeavor to obey His truth, we will find that conflict and difference of opinion and those things that tend to divide us, God will lay His hand on us and resolve those. He will give us wisdom.

He will give us insight. He will show us where we are wrong. And because God is doing it, I was just listening to Chuck Swindoll on the way down talk about how difficult it is even when we ask somebody to tell us the truth, how am I doing? Where am I falling short? Tell me the truth.

Well, even when we ask somebody to do that, if they are truthful and say, well, here's where you're falling down, here's where you're coming short, here's where you're not doing such a hot job, it's hard to take. We have a real difficulty. It hurts.

And he quoted that well-known scripture, you know, faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy, not so much. Remember that? And even when in love and in friendship and in fellowship, someone shares with us a shortcoming, a failure, a bad syndrome, it's tough. We immediately get defensive.

It's our human pride, humbling ourselves, being willing to acknowledge. It's much easier and, by the way, many times much more accurate if we let God point out to us our faults, our flaws, our failures. It's very difficult to take from each other.

So God laid his hand on them. God enabled them to see where they needed to let go, where they needed to disinvest, where they needed to be willing to be flexible and to be accepting and to promote unity over strife and division, being inflexible about nonessential things. So the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart.

Even though they were in favor of the king and wanted to do this thing, God laid his hand on them to give them singleness of heart. We can pray for this. We can ask for this.

Lord, give us in our marriage, in our family, in our group, in our fellowship, in our friendship, in our working environment, whatever it may be, where there are believers involved with believers, Lord God, give us singleness of heart. And he can answer that prayer and he can accomplish that request when we are humble, when we are objective, when we have acknowledged our sins and laid them before the throne to be erased and washed away in the cleansing blood of Christ. Now, many people of very great assembly gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month.

What kicks off the Feast of Unleavened Bread? What's the opening day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Passover. Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread. Many times they are called by one name or the other.

Keeping the Passover is to stay for the week of Unleavened Bread. Talking about the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to start with the Passover. They arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem and they took away all the incense altars and cast them into the Brook Kedron.

What valley does the Brook Kedron run through? Let me put it another way. What is associated with and unites with the Brook Kedron? The Brook Kedron comes down the valley. It's between Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives and it joins the valley of Hinnom, Gehenna, where it would eventually be the trash dump for Jerusalem.

And so down the mountainside, out of the city, out of the environment where they are going to worship God, they first clean out the trash of idol worship, of bad priorities, of false appeals to power and influence. These things that don't work, that are offensive, that partake of the

nations that God drove out before them, they look at these and they say, I can't be looking at these altars of incense and these things that are dedicated to the false gods of the nations surrounding us and celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We can't do that.

So they get that stuff and they carry it out and they roll it down the hill into the creek. Then they slaughtered the Passover on the 14th of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves and brought the burnt offerings to the house of the Lord.

When it says they were ashamed, what does it mean? They humbled themselves. They did what they were supposed to do in the way that they were supposed to do it as they had not been able to do it, certainly not with the king's support in decades. They stood in their place according to their custom, according to the law of Moses, the man of God.

The priests sprinkled the blood received from the hand of the Levites, for there were many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves. Therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover for everyone who was not clean to sanctify them to the Lord. For a multitude of the people, from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written.

But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, May the good Lord provide atonement for everyone." I would suggest to you that this portends, foreshadows the coming of the uncircumcised before the Lord in acceptability and in unity with the first generation of Jewish Christians that Paul talks about in Ephesians when he says, You who are far off were brought near. We who were the first to hope in Christ, you also. Remember that pronoun interchange in Ephesians chapter 2 that is often kind of overlooked? And Paul says, We who were the first to hope in Christ, you who were far off, we have been made one, we have been united in Christ.

And these who weren't qualified, who for various reasons wouldn't or couldn't sanctify themselves in advance, Hezekiah prays for them. Hezekiah the second David intercedes for them and they are made acceptable in God's sight in the second month without the rituals of the law. Outside the law, beyond the law, special provision is made for these people who have come from what is now a manifestly compromised area.

Already the intermarriage with Gentiles is taking place, but these people who have come will not be turned away because they are humbling themselves, they desire to worship the Lord God and Hezekiah finds a way. We'll celebrate in the second month. We'll have the priests slaughter the Passover on your behalf.

Christ our great high priest has offered the Passover himself on our behalf, right? And we have been made acceptable in the beloved. So there's a wonderful foretaste of things to come. You would expect that some of the first century Jewish Christians might have heard Paul teach on this passage and explain, do you not see that God is willing for those who want to come? He will find a way to make them acceptable.

The Lord Jesus as the great high priest has made us acceptable as Gentiles, as those who weren't qualified under the law of Moses, those without the law, their conscience bearing witness and so on. It's a wonderful detail here that these who came and couldn't slaughter the sacrifice, Hezekiah and the priests figure out how to get it done. The king priest combination gets it done.

Are you hearing what the word of God is saying? The king priest combination makes those who weren't acceptable under the law acceptable at this time and on this occasion. So, Hezekiah prayed for them saying, may the good Lord provide atonement for everyone, and it's an unfortunate verse break here, I'm really sorry that they put the 19 in between, provide atonement for everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, even though he is not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And the Lord listened to Hezekiah and healed the people, made them acceptable, made them qualified.

Outside the law of Moses, there's no such provision in the law. The law says 14th Nisan, this isn't 14th Nisan, the law says you've got to get the lamb four days in advance, you've got to purify your house, you've got to cast out the leaven, you've got to make yourself clean and pure. None of that is the case.

And yet, God hearkens and outside the law of Moses, 700 years before Christ, you have people purified, cleansed, healed by the Lord God. So, the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem, verse 21, 2 Chronicles 30, those present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness. And the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing to the Lord, accompanied by loud instruments.

Hezekiah gave encouragements to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of the Lord. And they ate throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers. Then the whole assembly agreed to keep the feast another seven days.

And they kept it another seven days with gladness. Now, they were 30 days late already, right? Running up to Pentecost. And they kept a seven-day feast, which gets them down to 23 days, right? And then they kept it another seven days, which leaves just two weeks and two days until Pentecost, right? If they're going to catch up the calendar.

So, just keep that in mind. For Hezekiah, king of Judah, gave to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep. And the leaders gave to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep.

And a great number of priests sanctified themselves. The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced. Also the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel and those who dwelt in Judah.

So, there was great joy. How many times has it told us they were joyful and rejoiced and celebrated and were happy? Great joy in Jerusalem. For since the time of Solomon, the son of

David, king of Israel, there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.

In case you missed the point, he states it explicitly. Not since the days of Solomon, son of David, king of Judah, king of Israel, had there been anything like this in Jerusalem. The priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people and their voice was heard and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place unto heaven.

So, we have numerous parallels. The observance of Passover is specifically compared to the time of Solomon. Hezekiah points the priests and Levites to their divisions and duties just as David had done.

The celebration and dedication of Solomon's temple, do you remember how long it lasted? Keep your finger here and turn back to 2 Chronicles 7, 8 and 9. 2 Chronicles chapter 7, Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that was in front of the house of the Lord. He offered burnt offerings, the fat of peace offerings because the bronze altar which Solomon made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat. At that time Solomon kept the feast seven days and all Israel with him, a very good assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of Egypt.

And on the eighth day they held a sacred assembly for they observed the dedication of the altar seven days and the feast seven days. So, there was a 14 day celebration at the time of the dedication of Solomon's temple just as Hezekiah does this 14 day celebration. You remember the great wealth that David amassed due to his conquests in the booty and he passes it on to Solomon who amasses even more wealth? Turn back to 2 Chronicles chapter 32 and look at verse 27 and following.

Back to Hezekiah. 2 Chronicles 32 starting at verse 27, Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. He made himself treasures for silver, for gold, for precious stones, spices, shields, all kinds of desirable items, storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine and oil, stalls for all kinds of livestock, folds for flocks, provided cities for himself, possessions of flocks and herds in abundance for God had given him very much property, just like Solomon.

You remember how the Gentile kings brought gifts to Solomon back in chapter 9 of this book? The kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, mules, set rate year by year. So too Hezekiah, great wealth, gifts and is highly regarded by the nations.

You look back up in verse 23 of this chapter. Many brought gifts to the Lord at Jerusalem and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah so that he was exalted to the sight of all nations thereafter. It becomes pretty obvious that the strings tying this back to the days of David and Solomon are very obvious and very strong.

David did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh. Hezekiah does what is right in the eyes of

Yahweh according to all that David his father had done. We saw that at the beginning of chapter 29.

You remember Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple in chapter 6 of this book? Solomon spoke, I have built you an exalted house and a place for you to dwell forever. The king said, bless me the Lord God of Israel. He goes on to say, if thy people who are called by thy name will humble themselves, hear from heaven, heal the land, do you remember that? Intercessory prayer.

Look at Hezekiah's prayer in chapter 30 verses 18-20 here. As I said, we are skipping around just a little bit to make the point. The prayer that we just reviewed where he ensures that these people are acceptable in God's sight and when Solomon said, hear from heaven and heal them and it says here that as a result of Hezekiah's prayer the people are healed.

It's the same word. So why all of this? And this is the culmination now of these observations. There is a picture here going back to David and Solomon.

There have been six good kings in Judah and now Hezekiah is the seventh and in so many ways he is a reminder of the original kingdom. There is going to be a son here as you move forward. Remember that Manasseh is going to reign in Judah in chapter 33.

You are going to have the death of Manasseh in the middle of chapter 33 and his son Ammon is going to reign in his place. Ammon is 22 years old in 2 Chronicles 33-21. He is going to reign only two years.

He does evil in the sight of the Lord. His servants conspire against him and kill him in his own house. So the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

So you have Hezekiah, you have one bad generation in Manasseh, you have a second bad generation in Ammon, but at the point of the three generation curse when the line would be cut off you have Josiah. And Josiah after two bad kings is the eighth and final good king in Judah. What does eight represent in Israel as a number? Newborn babies are circumcised.

Newborn male children are circumcised on the eighth day. They formally enter into the life of the nation. They will go on to be bar mitzvahed when they are 12 or 13, but circumcised on the eighth day.

The cleansed leper rejoins the fellowship on the eighth day, shaves off his eyebrows and all the hair on his body so that he looks just like a newborn child and it's new life. The eighth day of human history, you have the 7,000 years so to speak and then on the eighth you have the new heavens and the new earth. It is newness, it is renewal, it is restoration, it is a fresh start and that's what Judah is going to get with Josiah.

Think about this, you have these six kings after David and Solomon and then the seventh is Hezekiah. You think about the, at least in symbolic terms, the 6,000 years of human history

followed by the seventh which is the millennial kingdom when the Lord Jesus Christ, the sons of David, both are stated in Scripture as ruling on the throne and then when the new heavens and new earth come and the kingdom of the Father as on the eighth day or the eighth king and you have the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb who is the Light on the throne in the New Jerusalem and there is that reflection of the son of David, restoration and renewal followed by what's going to happen after Hezekiah, you have Manasseh and you have Ammon, what's going to happen toward the close of the millennial kingdom? You have this great Magog rebellion, Satan is loosed and then after that is resolved then you have the Josiah reign, if you will. So there is an interesting similarity, there is an interesting pattern here that God seems to be foreshadowing as He looks both to the past in the days of David and forward to the days of the Lord Jesus Christ who in some ways is both David and Solomon.

He wins the victory and leads captivity captive in his first advent and he brings in the days of peace and prosperity that are ultimately going to end badly as the days of Solomon. Hezekiah is sort of in between, Hezekiah and Josiah are kind of in between. Hezekiah is going to start well and end badly and then you have Josiah and of course inevitably the picture is going to close, history can't end after Josiah and so you are going to have some denouement afterwards but it's an interesting pattern.

So what does all of this mean to us? It's very interesting to see how the reign of Hezekiah mirrors what David did in the past and looks forward to what the Lord Jesus is going to do in the future. But if you step back and look at it, how many pictures do we have of this opportunity? The United Kingdom under David and Solomon, that the kingdom began badly under Saul but comes to its pinnacle and its maximum potential under David and Solomon. The kingdom goes badly but comes to its pinnacle under Hezekiah and Josiah.

It's going to have another opportunity in the millennial kingdom under the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and the sons of David ruling on the earthly throne of David in Jerusalem and ultimately looking forward to that final great kingdom where the new Jerusalem is the capital and the Lamb is on the throne. And as you look at those repeated opportunities and see that they are fumbled and see that they are lost and see that people can't keep their focus and can't keep their eye on the prize, what does it tell us? We don't have to wait for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for there to be a millennial kingdom and one that we can break the pattern. Don't let it devolve.

Don't let it degenerate. We're going to see next time when we look at Hezekiah that his reign itself is a picture of a wonderful start followed by a stumbling and embarrassing finish. You ran well, Paul says.

Who hindered you from crossing the line? Who tripped you? What Zola Budd ran across and knocked you off of the Olympic track here? How did you mess that up? You were running so well. Well, let's not be that. The difference between us and them in the Old Testament day, we have God's Holy Spirit.

We have the clear picture in Scripture. We have the warning. We have the cones with the yellow and black tape on it saying, danger, don't step in here.

Don't come in here. Bridge out. This is a bad road.

This ends awfully. Don't do this. Don't go this way.

Many of us can look back on a long history of study and of learning and of God's grace and God's blessing on us over time. And the challenge for us now is to finish well, to sprint to the tape, not to stumble and fall short. You know, it doesn't matter how well the beginning of your race goes if you don't finish, if you pace yourself badly, if you get distracted, if you go off the course.

There are tragic cases where guys were running marathons and were just doing extraordinarily well, but they missed a turn sign and ran off the course, just weren't familiar enough with it. Maybe the weather's bad. Maybe they were a little dizzy and just didn't stay on the course.

This is such a powerful, compelling picture for us. Don't finish badly. The investment of your life, the investment of time and study, the investment the Lord Jesus Christ made in us when He bought us with His blood, presented us to God the Father, made a way into the throne room of God.

Why would we let ourselves fumble that away? Finish well. Hezekiah is forever going to be the man who began well and finished badly. Let's learn from that.

Find new and inventive ways to be chastened and corrected and instructed, not repeat the tragic mistakes of Solomon who began well and ended badly, Hezekiah who began well and ended badly. Many of the other allegedly good kings, you remember there are some caveats. You know the running epitaph for those other six kings that precede Hezekiah after David and Solomon? All six of them have a running theme through their summary.

He did not remove the high places. Six times he did not remove the high places. Knock, knock.

Who's there? Man looking at high places. What are you going to do, man looking at high places? Remove them? Good answer. Hezekiah is the first king since Solomon to remove the high places.

Let's be rebuked, corrected and instructed in righteousness from this wonderful, powerful passage in God's Word. The kingdom is our soul. The throne awaits the seated Lord Jesus Christ.

But can we take the altars and roll them down the hill? Can we celebrate the Passover? It doesn't matter if we're getting started a month late. Let's get it done. If we're starting late then let's celebrate twice as long.

Why do they celebrate twice as long? For joy and recognizing that well, I may have come to the

party late but I'm partying twice as hard as everybody else. Right? So let's do that. God has given us such tremendous opportunities in Christ.

What better thing have we got going on? What's going to take the place of this that redounds into eternity, that reflects the praise, honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, that qualifies us to stand in the presence of God the Father in both of the kingdoms to come? Who doesn't want that? Are we willing to humble ourselves, qualify ourselves, sanctify ourselves, get the priests and the king together to make this happen in our soul? There's nobody pulling for us harder than the Lord God Himself. The Lord Jesus at His right hand interceding for us. It's just decisions on our part.

It's policy on our part. It's priorities and goals and values on our part. What's more important? What could be more clearly presented than this detailed multi-chapter picture of the reign of Hezekiah? We have His opportunity.

Let's not blow it. Let's not turn our face to the wall. We don't have to get sick.

We don't have to be reminded by God. We've got this beautiful picture in God's Word. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer, and we'll pick up looking at Hezekiah next time.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word and the wonderful, powerful ways that You, in so many multifaceted presentations, call us to Yourself and encourage us to take advantage of the presence of Your Spirit and the power of Your Word. We pray that the example of the Lord Jesus Christ will motivate us. The example of these kings of the Old Testament will motivate us.

The hazards that are pictured and illustrated for us so clearly will encourage us and motivate us to live our lives in a way that pleases You, that glorifies the Lord Jesus, and that exploits all of this wonderful potential that is ours by grace. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.