

Kings and Prophets 15-07-09

This is Friday, the 9th of July. No, this is Thursday, the 9th of July. Friday just flows forth from my lips in a natural fashion for some reason.

This is Thursday, the 9th of July, 2015. We continue our study of kings and prophets. We resume tonight in 2 Chronicles, Chapter 29.

We're looking at the reign of Hezekiah in southern Judah. We'll pause as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer individually and ensure that we're susceptible to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, without which the talking and hearing are somewhat pointless because it just will be water off of our spiritual ducks. And we prefer to line up our ducks and have our ducks quack and swim like they should.

And we know that God, the Holy Spirit, is the one that enables us, both in the presentation and in the reception and understanding, memory, and ultimately application of the truth of God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, it's a blessing for us to spend time together in fellowship, in the study of Your Word, worshiping through music and through instruction and seeking a better understanding of Your plan and purpose for our lives as we see timeless principles reflected in the pages of Your Word. We pray that as we look at this section tonight, from this time in the history of the southern kingdom, that God, the Holy Spirit, will minister it to each heart, that each of us who hears will understand that the truth of Your Word will be impressed in our hearts and be a resource that God, the Holy Spirit, can use to cleanse us, to transform us, to energize us, motivate us, and guide us in the execution of our duties and the fulfillment of our opportunities in this life as we prepare ourselves for life with You in the ages to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We have come now to the time of the reign of King Hezekiah.

We got started last week looking formally at the beginning year, the first year of his reign. We have seen that his father was not a good king. Ahaz was quite the bad king, as a matter of fact.

He, among his chief evils, blocked worship of God in the temple, locked the doors, got rid of the instruments, got rid of the staff and the Levites and the priests who functioned and basically put them on an indefinite unpaid furlough. And God saw to it that he left the scene and was replaced by his son, Hezekiah. All of these kings being lineal descendants of King David.

And when Hezekiah comes to the throne, he is called a son of David, not just genealogically, but spiritually. And so we began enumerating last time the good things that Hezekiah did. Now, why do we care about this? Wonderful thing, Judah had a good king centuries and centuries ago.

Hooray, but that's all gone and over. Why do we care now? The reason we care now is we want to be kingdoms where God is honored and worshiped. We want individually to have a soul that

mirrors what the kingdom of God should be.

We are living in some ways and in a sense already in the realm of eternal life. We are already practicing and honing our skills in life in the presence of God. That's what we're headed toward.

We are inevitably destined to be in the presence of God accompanying the Lord Jesus Christ. This is our goal. This is our prayer.

This is our purpose. And everything that goes on in this life, however it may seem to be related to profession or education or health or recreation or tasks and duties, family, friends, whatever it may be, everything here provides grist for the mill, provides an occasion to practice, to become proficient in living in God's kingdom according to God's purposes and principles, in the light of God's promises with the expectation of the fulfillment of the potentials that are ours in Jesus Christ. Everything, everything, everything pertains to our future life with God.

We are in a 24-hour school. We are in saturation training because, and not a lot of people think about this. This would be a good time to think about it.

The upcoming kingdom of Christ is not perfect. You ask yourself, well, if it's heaven and it's streets of gold and angelic choirs and light glinting off of gold everywhere you look and pearly gates, why do I need to learn skills in resisting temptation and finding the right path in a myriad of confusing alternatives and so on? Why do I have to worry about that? I'm going to heaven. It's going to be holy, heavenly, sanctified, can do no wrong, run around and do as you please heaven.

Why all of this practice and preparation if we're going to glory and it's just all going to be glorious? Well, here's the thing. It's not going to be all glorious and it's not going to be perfect and it is going to require people who are skillful in discerning good, better, and best. Skillful in recognizing evil in its subtle forms, recognizing that while something may be lawful, it is not edifying.

Subtleties, refined calculations and conclusions, differentiating, sifting, spending time reflecting and analyzing and drawing proper conclusions, charting valid and correct courses through obstacles. That does not end when this life ends. What does end is the corruption of our nature, the limitations of our human intellect and our faulty memories and so many other things that are related to our fallen flesh.

That will drop away. We will have resurrected bodies. We will have enhanced capabilities to the extent that we have been faithful.

We will have new and glorious opportunities. But the skills that we learn here are essential to service and to function in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here's a question for you.

If, as so many people think, it's everybody will be happy over there. There's no challenge. There's no real.

It's just all holy and happy and there's nothing really to be done except just wander around in the celestial beams of the light of the Lamb. Why does it say that there are those who will rule with Jesus on his throne? Why? Why is there a throne? And why is there rulership? If everybody's perfect and nobody does anything wrong and everybody knows everything they need to know and does everything they're supposed to do. What's the point of a throne? And what's the point of ruling and reigning with Christ rule and reign over who exercise authority? Why? If everybody is beneficently perfect and all totally in tune with the plan and purpose of God, a throne is superfluous.

Is this like the British monarchy? Jesus is going to kind of sit there and look glorified, but he doesn't actually function. He doesn't do anything. Not at all.

The reason he is going to rule with a rod of iron and he is going to shatter in pieces like pottery the nations for a thousand years is it is not perfect. And it is going to require judgment and discernment and skill sets, patience, perseverance, self-control, all of the fruit of the spirit that we are learning and cultivating and practicing and getting proficient in, just like you do with story problems and with quizzes and with assignments and with tests in school, so that when you go out to become an actual engineer, drawing a paycheck and building real buildings and real bridges and designing real aircraft and real spacecraft and real cell phones and real computers, you learned what you needed to know to do that well and to be a benefit and an asset to your firm, the people who pay you. You learned that in school.

And the better student you are and the more firmly you grasp the truth, the more useful and functional, well-paid, profitable, and living a wonderful life you will be later on. It is the same thing now. People think, well, I have just got to kind of grind along and get by, get by, get by.

Jesus will come back and there is going to be a giant flashbulb blast of glory and then it is all just wings and halos and harps in heaven. Not at all. Not at all.

So, in that light, knowing that we are here to learn skills, to practice the principles and promises and doctrines of the word of God and learn them so that they are second nature, so that they are reflexive, so that we have an instinct to serve, we have spiritual muscle memory when it comes to choosing the right thing, having self-control, having patience, having endurance, sticking when someone needs to stick and stay and stand and continue to stand, stand therefore having girded and so on. This is the task. This is our purpose.

This is why God gives us breath day by day by day as mercies are renewed every morning. We are resurrected every time we roll out of bed. It is a new day.

It is a new life. It is a new opportunity to prepare for that life. This life is brief just like school is usually relatively short compared to your career in your chosen profession.

You learn those skills and then you continue to refine them and we are going to continue to learn in vastly expanded and glorious ways in the kingdom of the Son moving into the kingdom

of the Father which is so advanced and so multi-dimensional that the Bible can only hint at it, can only suggest just a few things that our little earthworm brains can even begin to comprehend. But it is very clear that as the angels are currently serving and functioning and overseeing and carrying out the will of God in invisible ways in human history, they are going to move on to some grand new project that God has for them. We are going to in some ways take their place in the millennial kingdom.

So knowing this, brethren, that Jesus is going to look to us and expect us to know how. This is what always used to sort of scare me when I was a butter bar second lieutenant, went to Quantico and they started teaching us about interlocking fields of fire and here is how you field strip a .45 and an M16 and here is how you lead a platoon and whether you are on the parade deck or you are out trying to take a hill or establish a security perimeter or deploy mines or whatever it might be, all the different missions that you might get as a second lieutenant and then going to the artillery school, how do you do a call for fire? What is the difference in an area fire mission, a precision fire mission? What is the difference in a shift from an own point or a grid coordinate method or whatever it might be? All of these little fine details and I thought, well, but when I get to the fleet, this is what all Marines both anticipate and fear when they are new. You are going to the fleet, you are going to be out in the fleet, you are going to go out to a unit and they are going to ask me to do something and I am just going to draw a complete and total blank.

I am going to embarrass myself, I am going to shame myself, my family, my ancestors, my school, my uniform. I am just going to want to go out and hang myself from the nearest tree because they are going to say, okay, Lieutenant Hall, do X and I won't even know how to make that mark. It is just terrifying and so you pay attention even when some lockstep instructors up there droning on as you hear them do.

You think this is essential, I need to know this. That is what this is. When you look at 2 Chronicles 29, this is a guy that is running the kingdom right.

What a boon. Have you ever wanted to fix something? Well, I don't know. Most of you all that I see before me are kind of fixers anyway and we do a lot of things ourselves.

Well, for example, I have got an odometer in my car that is digital. It is supposed to glow green and show you how many miles you have gone and how far you have gone on a trip. Well, it winks out and so when you fill up the car and you want to write down, okay, what is my mileage? You can't read it and you hit the button and you don't see the trip meter and you don't see the odometer.

You can't tell your mileage. You take it in for repair and they say, how many miles on that car? I have no idea. Last time it lit up, it was some number.

Well, I wanted to fix that and I thought there is probably a way to do it. You go onto the World Wide Web, you go to YouTube and you search on Ford Expedition Odometer Repair and here is

a guy that has done it and he filmed it. And he said, here is your dashboard.

There are two little screws under here that you won't see unless you know they are there. Get a Phillips screwdriver and take those out. You are going to need a 13-millimeter socket to get to this, that and the other.

You are going to pull this out. Be careful now as you are pulling this out that you don't yank the wires out because otherwise you are going to have to pull the entire dash. He just goes step-by-step all the mistakes that he made.

He says, don't do what I did because I had to stop the camera and spend an hour and a half fixing what I just broke. He takes it apart step-by-step and you watch this and you say, ah, so that's how you fix it. You get a little hot water dispenser on your sink and you say, well, it's not working right anymore.

Somebody has fixed it. Somebody put it on YouTube. Go watch the video.

This is how a guy who learned from his mistakes and did it right, did it. I'm going to look at what he did. I'm going to benefit from his experience.

That's Hezekiah. In these first 14 years, in this first year, Hezekiah does it right. His kingdom is our soul.

His priorities are our spiritual objectives. What he is doing here, like David his father, according to all that David did, what does God say about David? A man after God's own heart. I don't often think about God having a heart, but David couldn't be after it unless God had one, right? God appreciates, God loves in a personal and significant way those who live their lives to please Him, who work at it.

Even if they err and come short again and again, they're out there in the arena with their face marred with dust and sweat and blood, but they're not quitting. They're getting up and trying. That's what David did.

David made grievous mistakes, as we all know. They're detailed in Scripture. Why? For our instruction.

Hezekiah, like David, is going to start like a flaming meteor across the sky. Like David, he's going to make a tragic mistake, but like David, he is still revered as one of the great kings, second only to David, really, in the Old Testament record. Hezekiah is as close to David as any king ever got, and that's why Scripture has slowed down here to give us chapter after chapter after chapter of detail on Hezekiah.

That's why we're looking at it. That's why it's important. As we look at what Hezekiah did, think, my kingdom, my soul, my priorities, my order of march, my business, my tasks.

What he did is what I need to do. It's direct. It's profound and effective as an example for us.

So with that in mind, I want to go back and look at chapter 29 of 2 Chronicles, verse 1. And Hezekiah became king when he was 25 years old, and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. And we know that this breaks into 14 years and 15 years, right? 14 and 15. The first 14 years are one thing.

The second 15 years are something else. His mother's name was Abiyah. My father is the Lord.

If your father is the Lord, who are you? You're the son of God in some sense, right? You're a child of God. And she was the daughter of Zechariah, remembering the Lord, Zachar, to remember. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done.

Now, it says he did right in the sight of the Lord. What exactly did he do? The very first thing he does in verse 3, and I've got these listed out. First thing he does, he opens the doors of the house of the Lord and repairs them so that they will continue to provide access.

What do the doors of the house of the Lord represent? What would be analogous? If God's presence is inside the temple and people are outside the temple, how do people come into the presence of God? Through the door. Formerly, under Ahaz, the doors were shut and barred and locked. The first thing Hezekiah does is, number one, reestablish access.

For those who want to come into the presence of the Lord, obviously this is through the Levitical priestly function, he opens the doors, a way to the presence of God. What was the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that's detailed in Hebrews 10? He made a way for us through the veil, through the door, which is His flesh, to do what? Let us come boldly before the throne of grace with a pure heart, hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience, bodies washed with pure water. Let us come boldly into the presence of God.

This is a harbinger, a foreshadowing of what the Lord Jesus is going to do in the real and true sense for us, right? First thing He does, open the door, make a way to God. Unblock it, unbar it. Many times, and you notice, it isn't God that shut the door.

God didn't say, these people have become so wicked. High priest, go lock my door, and don't unlock it until I tell you to. In the history of Israel, do you ever see God saying, go close the gate to the tabernacle, shut the door to the temple, and don't let anybody in? Does God ever do that? It's always people who disassemble the tabernacle, disassemble the accouterments of worship, who bar it, who gate it, who corrupt it, who pollute it, who defile it, who ignore it, who let it fall into disrepair.

It's always us. God doesn't say, destroy my temple. I don't want people coming to worship me anymore.

It's never God's initiative. It's people who fumble it away, who actively corrupt and defile it. That's the first thing He does.

So the physical temple is opened. The second thing that He does in verse 5, He calls the priests and Levites. He doesn't call secular workers.

He doesn't call contractors. He doesn't call your caravan I passersby who might be willing to work for money. He knows who is supposed to do what.

Now how does He know this? How does He know to call the priests and Levites? What has He been doing during the time of His co-regency? What has He been doing while He watched His Father corrupt, defile, and perpetrate evil all over the place in His rule? What is Hezekiah doing? He has schooled Himself in the Scriptures. He knows not only what needs to be done, He knows who it is that does it. This has to be done according to Scripture, according to Torah, according to the law of Moses, by priests and Levites and by them only.

And even within that group, priests are allowed to do certain things, Levites are allowed to do certain things. Some things a Levite can't do. You have to be not just a Levite, but a priestly Levite.

You've got to be of the sons of Aaron to go into the sanctuary and do certain things. Hezekiah already knows this. And guess what? He knows it on day one.

On day one, he knows this. Meaning, he learned it in the past. He prepared.

Before he became king, he knew he was going to be called upon to be the king. He has been in the shadows and in the wings during the time of his father Ahaz, but he's ready. Now at the point that the authority is granted to him, first day, on the very first day of the very first month, he gets busy and he knows who to call and he knows exactly what they need to do.

So, he calls the priests Levites, he exhorts them and he instructs them. He doesn't say, well, you Levites do your Levite thing and you priests, you do your priestly thing and just let me know when you're done. He knows what they're supposed to do, even though he can't do it.

He can supervise and instruct them and he may know it better than some of them do because they're so out of practice. So, the physical temple restoration begins and then the spiritual worship begins. Now, what would be the analogy in our lives? If we have let our temple fall into disrepair and if the worship of God and the priority of God in our lives isn't what it ought to be, there is an order of restoration.

The first thing is structurally. If I've made commitments that interfere, let's just say that as I understand my responsibilities, I need time for instruction in the Word of God. I need to make sure that I am exposed to sound beneficial instruction in the Word of God and I need time on a daily basis to reflect and to review and to think about and to pray on and in and through the things that I have learned.

I need to spend some time with God. Structurally, the first thing I need to do is open the doors of my temple. I need to structure my day.

I need to structure my life so that that open door exists. If I'm too busy to pray, if I'm too busy for class, if I'm too busy to review the things that I learn, then I need to restructure. I need to get my temple doors open again.

That would be an analogy. Then secondly, Hezekiah calls the priests and Levites and says, you guys need to get busy and get the... I've got the hardware part going. We've got the doors working.

We've oiled the hinges. We've taken the locks off. The physical plant is coming back online.

You are the software guys. You do the rituals. You make sure that the instruments and the furniture and the accouterments and the shovels and the pans and the vessels and the operation of Levitical worship takes place.

You need to be sure you've got the right vestments. You need to be sure that you're doing it according to the procedures set out in the Law of Moses. Review it if you don't know it.

Get the furniture and tools and equipment you need and get the ritual prepared. Be prepared to resume the functions. So if I set aside time and I restructure my life so that my priorities have an open door, the priority of my fellowship with God, my instruction and reflection in the Word of God, those doors are open.

Now I need to implement the actual observance and function of those things. I need to be sure that once I've set aside the time, I actually spend time in instruction and reflection and meditation on the Word of God. I need to do it if I need a notebook, if I need a computer, if I need a Bible, whatever it is I need.

I need to be sure that those things are available and ready. I need to systematize and organize my study and my time of worship so that it's not haphazard and chaotic and hit and miss and catch as catch can. God is a God of order.

God is a God of consistency. God is a God who appreciates faithfulness, regularity, prioritization, organization. So Hezekiah gets that underway.

Then look at verse 6 and 7. He says, Our fathers have been unfaithful and have done what was evil in the sight of the Lord our God. They have forsaken Him, have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord and turned their backs. Notice, they turned their faces first, then they turned their backs.

Their attention was directed to other things and ultimately they were walking away from the Lord. So what's the reverse of that? You've got to turn your face toward the Lord and your back will follow. There's an order here.

You can't be distracted and you can't be overly interested in prioritizing worldly things, earthly things, temporal things and expect to make a recovery. Our fathers first turned their faces and

then they turned their backs. One follows the other.

It's small things followed by larger things. So we need to be faithful in that which is least so that we can also be faithful in that which is much. Be faithful with your face and you won't end up turning your back.

But notice, what would you call this in verses 6 and 7? This is what our fathers did. They forsook Him, turned their faces, turned their backs, they shut the doors of the vestibule, they put out the lamps, they have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy place of the God of Israel. Identification and acknowledgement of sin.

That's number three. The first thing is He opened the doors and repaired them, made sure they would stay open. Secondly, He called the priests Levites and exhorted and instructed them in spiritual worship.

Thirdly, He identifies and acknowledges. Notice, not just acknowledge. Oh Lord, forgive me where I have failed you.

Oh Lord, I have sinned. Specifics. How did we sin? Where did we sin? Where did we go wrong? Identification and acknowledgement.

This used to be a real popular sort of a rebound and keep moving idea. It's a good principle, but you've got to be careful that it doesn't become flippant or casual or superficial. Identification of the specific sin.

You can't eliminate a target if you don't identify it. You can't shoot a bullseye if you don't look at the bullseye. Identification and acknowledgement of sin, verses six and seven.

He also recognizes in verse eight and verse nine that God has already identified and recognized these sins. Therefore, the wrath of the Lord came on Judah and Jerusalem and He has made them an object of horror, of astonishment, of hissing, as you can see with your own eyes. We are just now acknowledging this and trying to rectify it.

God saw it and God rained judgment down on it already. Our fathers have fallen by the sword. Our sons and daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.

So our fourth point here, Hezekiah recognizes the circumstantial judgment of God on these failures, on these sins, on these evil practices. And by the way, this is corporate. Hezekiah is identifying, acknowledging and rectifying corporate sin, corporate evil.

It wasn't on his watch. This is something the fathers did. This is something his father did.

But he doesn't say, well, you know, that was them, we'll just do something different. It has to be acknowledged. It has to be recognized and it has to be actively set aside.

And he recognizes the judicial response that God has had on that. So what's next? After those

four steps, structural change to the house of the Lord, functional, spiritual, restoration of worship in that house, identifying, acknowledging sin, recognizing that God judges that kind of sin and God, the wrath of God descends on that kind of function, looking at it through God's eyes, looking at it with divine viewpoint. The next thing he does in verse 10, look at that.

This, it is in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord, the God of Israel, that his fierce anger may turn away from us. It's in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord. Now, don't they already have a covenant with the Lord? Isn't there an Abrahamic covenant? Isn't there a Davidic covenant? Isn't there a Palestinian covenant? Aren't there all plenty of covenants? The covenant of Sinai, all these things we will do and so on.

Why doesn't he just say, it's in my heart to keep the covenants. It's in my heart to return to the covenants. It's too general.

Hezekiah makes a commitment to personal obedience. It is in my heart that I myself will make a covenant with the Lord. This is my personal commitment.

Not the covenant with Abraham, not the covenant with Moses, not the covenant with David, not the covenant regarding the land. I'm not just going to claim old promises. It is in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord.

A commitment to a personal set of priorities, spiritually. Commitment to a personal pursuit of the narrow way leading through the straight gate to life. I am personally going to commit.

As for me and my house, Joshua said, we are going to serve the Lord. It's a personal commitment. It's the kind of commitment Hezekiah makes in verse 10.

Look at verse 11. My sons. Who's he talking to here? Priests and Levites, right? He called the priests and the Levites and he calls them my sons.

What tribe is Hezekiah from? Judah. What tribe are they from? So in what sense are they his sons? He is the king. They are the priests.

The king in the previous administration shut the priests down. This is the king who is bringing the priestly function back into full orb operation. And he says, you are my children.

I don't look on you with disfavor. I am not cutting you off and shutting you down and locking your temple. This is a functional father.

Many of these guys are older than Hezekiah as he's 25 years old. He's looking at a bunch of gray bearded priests and Levites. But he says, my sons.

Why? Because it is with fatherly concern and fatherly care and fatherly provision that he is encouraging them to return and restore and renew the spiritual life. This is the sovereignty of the authority that we have over our own souls to govern our spiritual life. We are accountable.

We are kings of the country of our soul. We are also the priests. But it is our sovereign decision whether or not we are... Don't let anybody say, well, you know, I would have been a better Christian, but I had all of these... You're the king.

And you're the sovereign over what happens on your own spiritual life. Whether you're a child, whether you're a parent, whether you're an employer, an employee, whether you're a student, whether you're a teacher, whether you're whatever other levels in human life you may occupy in the kingdom of your own soul, you say, and that's why God holds each of us accountable for what we do. So in verse seven, he says, My sons, do not now be negligent for the Lord has chosen you to stand in His presence to minister to Him and to be His ministers and burn incense to Him.

Hezekiah has first recognized his own call and his own potential and opportunity as the king to set these things right. And he tells, this is kind of like Peter telling the Diaspora Jews, God has chosen you for this time and this place and this function. Stand tall, fulfill your potential, acknowledge and fulfill your divine appointment, your divine call.

It is God who ordained that you would be a priest or a Levite. It is God who ordained that I, Hezekiah, would be born as a son of David and have this opportunity at this time to restore and renew the worship of the Lord God in heaven in this land. Hezekiah recognizes and commits to his own call and he exhorts his sons, in this sense, to do the same in their calling and their commitment.

Now, then you have this real interesting section, verses 12 and following, Levites of Rose, Mahath, the son of Amasai, Joel, the son of Azariah, the sons of the Kohathites, sons of Merari, Kish, the son of Abdi, and Azariah, the son of Jehalel, the Gershonites, Joash, the son of Zimah, and Eden, the son of Joah, the son of Zimah. This is a son and a grandson there. Interesting.

Then the sons of Elizaphan, Shemri, and Jewel, and of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mataniah, the sons of Heman, Jehuel and Shimei, the sons of Jeduthim, Shemiah, and Uzziel. What's significant about this? In a nutshell, here's what I would suggest is significant. Who are these guys? Well, look at the first three.

You've got the Kohathites, you have the Merarites, and the Gershonites. Okay? Who are the Kohathites? Keep in mind what Hezekiah has just detailed by way of instructions. The Kohathites were charged back in Numbers 3 and 4. Numbers 3 and 4, who's talking in those days? Who's the big leader in Israel in Numbers? Moshe, Moses, right? In the days of Moses, these guys were established as leaders among the priests and Levites.

The Kohathites had the charge of the holy vessels of the tabernacle, the most holy stuff. They handled all of the stuff inside the tabernacle proper, including the Ark of the Covenant. Read Numbers 4. The Kohathites, they handled the most sanctified, most holy things.

They're mentioned first. The Merariites, the sons of Merari, I don't know if you call them

Merarites or Merariites, but the sons of Merari is what I'm going to call them, they carry the structural parts of the tabernacle. When the camp would move in the days of Moses, they carried the roof coverings, the skins dyed red and the poles and the rings and the sockets and all of the things that you build the tabernacle out of.

So the Kohathites had the interior furniture, the gilding over wood, the table to show bread, the altar of incense and all of those things. Kohathites, they put the poles through the rings on the Ark of the Covenant and carry that, make sure it's covered and uncovered properly. They're the ones who failed when Uzzah reached out and touched the Ark.

That was a Kohathite failure. They should have ensured that nobody touched that thing and that it was carried properly, not on an ox cart. So the sons of Merari, transportation and care of the structural components.

Gershon is measured there. The Gershonites, you've got Joah and his son Aden. The Gershonites had the outer tabernacle accouterments, the tent, the screens, the doors, the hangings, the fence that surrounded the outer court and all of that.

So you've got the interior structural members. You've got the outer things and some of the coverings of the coverings and the outer things. So these guys had specific functions.

And guess what? Hezekiah knows them all. He knows exactly what the Kohathites are supposed to do. He knows what the sons of Merari are supposed to do.

He knows what the Gershonites are supposed to do. Those three are from the days of Moses. They were set up and established and given their authority as families and as clans in the days of Moses.

Who's the next one that's mentioned? Of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemri and Jewel. Elizaphan is a son of Kohath. And that's all we know.

He's another Kohathite. And the Bible doesn't detail what he's going to do, but Hezekiah evidently had a special function for the sons of Elizaphan. And they've got some juice.

They've got some authority in the temple precincts because they are also Kohathites. They can get in to deal with the most holy things. And these guys may have been intermediate supervisors to coordinate the work of all of the other clans and make sure that it all flowed smoothly.

So those are the first four. Kohath, Merari, Gershon and Elizaphan. Now who's mentioned next? You've got the sons of Asaph, you've got the sons of Heman and you've got the sons of Jeduthun.

Now this is extremely important work, right? Rehabilitating the temple. And you can understand the Kohathites with the most holy place, the most holy things, the things in the holy

place and the holy of holies. You can understand the Merari guys who are dealing with the structure of that.

And then you can understand, and of course these would have their analogs in the temple days. And then the Gershonites and Elizaphan as sort of monster men, maybe they send these crews wherever they need an extra hand. These guys are qualified to do anything.

Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, you know what they all do? Music. All of them. The sons of Asaph, these guys, there's a lot of the psalms that are attributed to them.

They were poets and singers. The most talented in Israel. And so you find a psalm of Asaph or the sons of Asaph over and over again in the Psalter, in the hymn book of Israel.

Heman and Jeduthun were choir masters and orchestra leaders. They orchestrated the instrumental music. And notice what Hezekiah does when he's restoring temple worship.

Out of the seven clans that are assembled to do this, how many clans? Seven. Kohath, Merari, Gershon, Elizaphan, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. Seven clans to do this work.

Three of the seven are musicians. Asaph, the lyricists and the vocal presenters, the singers, and Heman and Jeduthun, those guys seem to concentrate on instrumental and choral music, support, undergirding. Three out of seven musicians.

Look at the timing here. They gathered their brethren and sanctified themselves and went in as the king had commanded by the word of the Lord to cleanse the house of the Lord. Verse 16, the priests went into the inner part.

We talked about this. We talked about how long it took. They did eight days and then they did another eight days.

You remember that? They began to sanctify. Look at verse 17. They began to sanctify on the first day of the first month.

New Year's Day. First day of the first month. Now, when did Hezekiah come to the throne and call these guys in to get this work done? Remember not long ago we saw a king try to rehabilitate the temple and how long it took? Like 21 years later he says, well, did they ever get it done? How did it work in the days of Hezekiah? What day did he call these guys together? Look back at verse 3. First day of the first month.

When did these guys start? That day. Did they waste any time? Did a blade of grass grow a single micrometer longer before these guys got to work? The king commissioned them and they did it immediately. They began on the first day, the same day they got the instructions, they began.

Now, they worked for 8 days, right? Then they began to sanctify on the first day of the month. On the 8th day of the month, verse 17, they came to the vestibule of the Lord. Then for 8 days

they sanctified the house of the Lord and on the 16th day of the first month they finished.

And they went in to Hezekiah the king and said, we have cleansed all the house of the Lord, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the table of the showbread, all its utensils, all the utensils which king Ahaz discarded in his reign when he was faithless, we have made ready and sanctified and behold, they are there before the altar of the Lord. Now, let's just do a little quick review. We're almost out of time here.

What is the first month in the calendar of Israel? Nisan. What's the first thing that happens in the spring feast schedule in Nisan? It's Passover on the 14th day of the month, right? When was the Lord Jesus crucified? Between the evenings at the close of the day on 14 Nisan, same time as the Passover lamb, because Passover begins at twilight, right? Everybody goes in their home, staffing their hands, they stay there, all of that, right? So Thursday, 14 Nisan, between the Lord Jesus is on the cross and he's going to die right around the time that they're slaying the actual symbolic Passover lamb all over the place, especially down at the temple. That's on 14 Nisan, right? That's Thursday.

What's the date on Friday, the Lord Jesus' first day in the tomb? 15 Nisan. What's the date on Saturday, the Lord's second day in the tomb? 16 Nisan. Everything is ready.

Everything is prepared on 16 Nisan in Hezekiah's day, right? Eight days, eight more days. It's 16 Nisan. Now look at what it says in verse 20.

Then, after they have come on 16 Nisan and given their report that everything is in readiness, what does it say? Hezekiah the king rose early and gathered the officials of the city. Now, if it took them eight days and they finished up on the eighth day and they came at the end of the eighth day, the end of 16 Nisan, because it didn't take seven days, it took eight days. So at the end of that day, they come to Hezekiah and they say, it's all ready.

Hezekiah says, great, thanks a lot. Then he rose early. It's the next day.

He rose early the next day on 17 Nisan. Hezekiah the king rose early. The whole key here is early, not late.

Not before sundown. Early on 17 Nisan. The same day that the Lord Jesus, early in the morning on the third day, early in the morning on 17 Nisan, the Lord Jesus arose because His work of sanctification, of opening the door, of making a way through the veil which is His flesh, and sanctifying and making approach to God possible was finished on 17 Nisan.

That's when King Hezekiah rose early and gathered the officials of the city and went up to the house of the Lord. What does he bring? Seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven he goats. Seven, seven, seven, seven.

In our Sunday study as we're reviewing Christ and the sacrifices, we're already beginning to remember again, if we forgot, what the significance of the different sacrificial animals is, what

is the bull, the tractor of the ancient world, it is strength, it is the whole burnt offering of a bullock, was a dedication of all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind to the Lord. The bullock offering. Strength, perfection in physical life, physical service, getting things done.

The ram, this is the spirited, authoritative, combative in many ways, seeking to dominate. The ram with the horns, this is what was caught in the thicket when Abram did not have to slay Isaac. There was a ram caught by its horns in the thicket, and that became the offering on Mount Moriah.

Seven lambs, this is innocence, this is purity, this is what was offered on Passover. A lamb without spot and without blemish, the emphasis is on innocence. It's a lamb, not a sheep, because it's not old enough to have done any wrong.

It is innocence, purity, spotlessness, no sin. That's the emphasis there. And then the he goats.

What's the difference in a he goat and a ram? I'm out of time for tonight, but in a nutshell, you've got sort of a duplication of the ram, and you think, well, why are there two sets? You've got seven rams and you've got a he goat. It kind of is a ram, isn't it? How does that work? Well, look at what these are for. He brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven he goats for a sin offering for what? There's three things listed here.

For the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah. Is there any repetition there? For the kingdom, I get that, for the sanctuary and for Judah. Isn't Judah the kingdom? Evidently not.

Hezekiah offers the rampant rams, the authoritative, combative, spirited rams, perhaps for the kingdom, looking at all 12 tribes. Hezekiah is not limiting the opportunity for approach. Well, if you're Judah or Benjamin, come on in.

But if you're one of the northern tribes, God's obviously got you under judgment. He is on behalf of the entire kingdom, the entire kingdom of Israel, offering perhaps the ram offering. And then for Judah, the he goats.

It sounds like maybe they're a little younger. They're not the full mature rams. And this is Judah, little Judah, though you're released among the tribes of Israel, you know, and so on.

So, he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the Lord. They killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood and threw it against the altar. They killed the rams, and their blood was thrown against the altar.

And they killed the lambs, and their blood was thrown against the altar. Then the he goats for the sin offering were brought to the king in the assembly, and they laid their hands upon them. Notice, sin offering.

He can't have people lay their hands on the rams because as that symbolizes the entire

kingdom and the ten northern tribes are gone and out. But for Judah, the he goats, the sin offering, this is identification, my personal culpability. One is general for the nation, kind of like the Day of Atonement.

Everybody, there's a general repentance and a general sacrifice. But then they come and they lay their hands on the he goats, specifically. Why? This is more personal.

This is more immediate. This is me, myself, and I. And I acknowledge my personal part in all of this. So, they lay their hands on the heads of the animals, all the assembly.

And the priest killed them and made a sin offering with their blood on the altar to make atonement for all Israel. For the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel. So, there's a double.

There's one that everybody can't lay their hands on, and then there's another one that they can lay their hands on. So, again, going back to what we can do in the kingdom of our own soul, open the doors of the house of the Lord and repair them. Exhort and instruct those who are in charge of spiritual priorities and spiritual function.

Recognize that these things are worthy of God's judgment, deserving of God's judgment, and in this case, have received God's judgment. Make a commitment to obedience. Acknowledge divine call and purpose.

Did I skip identifying and acknowledging sin in the land? Open the doors, spiritual priorities, confession and acknowledgement, identification of sin is the third. Fourth is recognizing that these things are worthy of God's judgment and receive God's judgment sooner or later. Fifth, make a commitment to obedience.

Acknowledge divine calling and purpose. You're not your own. You're bought with a price.

I'm not here to do my own will, but the Father's will. Then, those with specific areas of responsibility are given those specific areas. Kohathites, do your thing.

Merarites, do your thing. Gershonites, do your thing. Elizabethanites, do your thing.

And your celebratory, your appreciators, and your reminders, those who put the word of God into new forms to make it memorable and meaningful and something you can appreciate from emotion as well as from intellect. The three musicians, Asaph, Heman, and Jedethon. Get them going.

Your appreciator, your response, your emotive side. And they began as soon as he possibly could. First day of the first month.

And look how it not only harks back to the days of David as we saw last time, but it looks forward to the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who on the very same day that Hezekiah brings these offerings and makes worship possible and restores access to God in heaven, that's

exactly what the Lord Jesus is going to do later on the very same day. Let's close here in a word of prayer and we'll pick up with the rest of Hezekiah's efforts at restoration and reform next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for how powerfully it speaks to us and educates us and informs us and encourages us in our own walk before you. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will enlighten our path, will give us insight and understanding into how we can put these things into practice personally and individually so that we can be pleasing in your sight. Glorify the Lord Jesus.

We pray these things in His name. Amen.