

Kings and Prophets 15-08-13

This is the 13th of August, 2015, we're studying Kings and Prophets. We're in the reign of Hezekiah and the ministry of Isaiah, so we have both a king and a prophet of a worthy and notable character. And we will pick up our study tonight in 2 Kings chapter 20.

2 Kings chapter 20. We have a parallel in 2 Chronicles in chapter 33, but we'll be spending most of our time, actually chapter 32, but we'll be spending most of our time here in 2 Kings chapter 20. You'll remember of the three different accounts that we have.

Each has a different emphasis and purpose, and we'll be reviewing that as we begin. Let's take a moment to go before the Lord in prayer. Father, thank You for giving us another opportunity to spend time together in fellowship, in the mutual edification and upbuilding that comes from spending time looking at the truth of Your Word, receiving the blessings and benefits of the work and presence of Your Holy Spirit.

We pray that the truth that is contained in these passages, knowing it to be transcendent and to be living and powerful, will accomplish its perfect work in each one of us, that we will be more motivated and better informed as we live our lives before You until the day when the Lord Jesus returns to take us to Himself. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

We saw last time that the account in Chronicles, in particular, gives us the news for public consumption with God's editorial commentary included, so that if I were to only have one of the three accounts with me on a desert island, and some angel came up and said, well you have a choice of four chapters of Isaiah, 2 Kings, or 2 Chronicles, I would pick Chronicles because the explanation is there. This is God's view, God's editorial opinion, and what He considers to be important is included there. The becauses, the whys, the wherefores.

This happened because. And there are some things that are given a light touch in Chronicles that are more extensively covered in Chronicles, and vice versa, because all of it is important. It's equally valuable, it's equally good for our study and application, especially when we understand the differing perspectives.

It's like if I only had one gospel to take with me, there's one I would pick, but I would be sorry to lose the other three. I don't necessarily think the other two accounts aren't as valuable, but if you have to pick one, you have to pick one. You might like four different kinds of fruit in the basket, but you may only be able to pick a banana before you go off on your journey.

So, what we have also seen, and especially coinciding with and complementing our study on Sundays, is that God is not a God of disorder. He's not a God trying to bring order out of chaos. He has a plan.

He has a purpose. He has a grasp of things that is infinitely greater than our own. And we think that in the abstract, but when you see it in the Word of God, it really is a reminder that we have

earthworm brains, and God is omniscient and omnipotent, and He knows what He's doing, and there is structure and there is order, even though it is often not apparent to us.

You'll remember on Sunday, as we have been looking at Christ and the sacrifices, and we looked specifically at Passover, and we saw that there is a reflection of this kind of structure in the history of Israel. The original Passover on 14th Abib, or 14 Nisan, where the Passover lamb was slain at God's command, at God's time, in God's way, according to God's instruction, and then the blood was placed on the lintel. I've corrected a number of transcripts where someone has typed this as L-E-N-T-I-L.

It is not blood on the lentils, it is blood on the lintels. Lintels, as in door posts and the piece that goes across over your head. The blood forming that three-fold pattern, two on the side and one higher in the center, is very evocative of what it foreshadows in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, which also took place at the same time that the lamb was slaughtered each year.

The ceremonial lamb down in the tabernacle and later the precinct of the temple was slain between the evenings, between 3 and 6 p.m., on 14 Nisan. This is when, and by the way, it's really fascinating, there's a lot of information we get from Jewish tradition, and we don't assign it the same authority as Scripture, but it is interesting. And one of the things we know, not from the Bible, but from Scripture, are some of the details of the rituals that took place at the temple.

We find this in Josephus and other early sources that describe Jewish ritual worship. And it's interesting to me that one of those descriptions indicates that the Passover lamb on 14 Nisan was brought, of course, it was selected and penned up on the 10th and observed for four days, the 10th being the day that the Lord Jesus came into Jerusalem in what's called the triumphal entry. And as the lamb was ceremonially led down to the court of the temple to be, this is the national lamb, the one that represents all the people, there were quotations from Psalm 118 that describe, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And many of the same things that were being said as the Lord Jesus followed the very same path from those precincts where the sacrificial lambs were kept, and we've looked at that in some detail, our Christmas special recently, and looking at our first minor prophets, and Amos talking about the keeping of these lambs and so on. Well, Jesus followed the very same path that perhaps earlier in the day that lamb had followed and was taken down to the temple. He himself goes to the temple after people shout the very same thing.

They waved palm branches as the Passover lamb was brought to the temple. They waved palm branches for the Lord. Then he goes to the temple and then he looks around and then he leaves.

And it's going to be later that he's going to stand on the brow of the hill and weep over Jerusalem because they did not recognize that the genuine lamb had come. They're still making over the ritual and they can't see the meaning. This is on the 10th, four days before the crucifixion, four days before.

And one week before the resurrection, seven days. So you have the introduction of the lamb on the first day of the week, much as the animal skins in the sacrifice for Adam and Eve were in appearance. Animal sacrifice began in that first day of human history, so to speak.

And four days later, 4,000 years later, you're going to have the fulfillment of that type. By the way, all of this, if you lose me, it's because I too have an earthworm brain. And what I am describing is the superstructure, the degree of order and forethought that God has put into human history.

That's what we're talking about. God anticipated the Lord Jesus coming and dying for our sins on the cross before the foundation of the world. He began to predict and to give anticipations of it from the garden onward.

There is a tree of life and there is a tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And the Lord Jesus, of all the different forms of execution that were available, is going to die for our sins and bear those sins in His body on the tree. And it is a man-made tree, just as the altar is a man-made structure.

You can follow God's instructions or you can try to do it yourself. You can be Cain, you can be the architects of the Tower of Babel. There's only one way to reflect worship and respect and the love of God, and that is to be obedient.

I desire mercy and not sacrifice. I desire obedience more than the fat of rams. So there is this structure.

And as you come to 14 Nisan and the Lord Jesus is crucified, He is placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea on the 15th of Abib, the 15th of Nisan, just as the day is changing from 14 to 15. And we saw that in the Exodus, after the original Passover, and waking up in the early dawn to find that the firstborn in Egypt have died and Pharaoh's firstborn son has died. And you can not help but picture Yul Brynner as the Pharaoh.

Go! God predicted that the Egyptians would drive the Israelites out. And that's what they did. The very first thing they do is they go to, this is the day after Passover, which in the Feast Schedule of Israel is now the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

All eight days are called both the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the Gospel of John, the whole eight-day thing is called the Passover. The terms were interchangeable because they were so intermixed.

But on the 15th, Moses takes the children of Israel, and they don't head straight for Canaan, they go where? To Suqot, S-U-C-C-O-T-H, Suqot, which means booth, which is the town in Egypt where Joseph's bones had lain for a couple of centuries, waiting for the day when Israel would go to the land. Leave my bones unburied and above ground. When God calls you up from this place, take my bones with you and put them at Machpelah with Grandpa and Dad.

So that's where they go. The tomb of Joseph. Where is Jesus buried? The tomb of Joseph.

Where is Joseph from? The Lord Jesus is residing in his tomb. He is Joseph of where? Arimathea. Ramah is at the heart of that.

And that's kind of where we left off on Sunday. And the reason I'm reviewing this now is because it pertains directly to our study of Hezekiah. And you'll see how in just a minute.

But let me continue and expand just a little bit what we covered last Sunday because it pertains, it connects. As is so often the case, there is an interweaving of our two studies. And it has to do with Passover specifically.

You remember in Jeremiah, it says that there was the voice of Rachel weeping for her children. There is a question, why Ramah? Because when you read the Genesis account about the death of Rachel, it says that they were real close to Bethlehem when she died. And you say, well, Ramah, what do we know about Ramah? Why would Joseph of Arimathea, why would Joseph of Ramah be connected to the death and specifically the burial of the Lord Jesus? And so one clue is to go to Jeremiah and read his prophetic announcement about Rachel weeping for her children in Ramah.

And you think, well, what has that got to do with it? It's Jeremiah 31.15. A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, with Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are no more. Well, if you go back to the Genesis account in the 36th chapter, I believe it is, 35th chapter, 35 of Genesis. Genesis 35, verse 16.

They're journeying from Bethel. We know where Bethel is. This is where Jacob originally left from.

Rock for a pillow, angels ascending and descending, Jacob's ladder, covenant made. If I return, I'll give you a tenth and so on. So they journeyed from Bethel.

They've gone, they've had many adventures. This is years later. Jacob is now possessed of two wives, Leah and Rachel, and two handmaids, Bilhah and Zilpah.

He has got 11 sons at this point. Joseph being the youngest. Joseph being the youngest.

And as they journey, there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath. This is the region Ephratha where Bethlehem is. Now keep in mind that Jerusalem isn't a landmark at this time.

It's not the city of David. David's many generations hence. This is Jacob, and he's coming from Bethel, and he's heading south toward Ephrath, Bethlehem Ephratha.

But it's a region. Rachel labored in childbirth and had hard labor. And it came to pass when she was in hard labor, the midwife said to her, Do not fear, you will have this son also.

So it was as her soul was departing, for she died, that she called his name Ben-Oni, son of my

pain. But his father called him Ben-Yamin, son of the right hand. And in Benjamin and those two names, there is a reflection, of course, of the Lord Jesus.

There is great suffering, but there is great power and glory. The son of the right hand. Where is Jesus seated as we speak? The right hand of the Father.

But Rachel is the mother of Joseph. And as she dies, she gives birth to Joseph's full brother, Ben-Yamin, Ben-Oni. Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem.

Now it sounds like she was buried at or near Bethlehem. And if you go to the Holy Land, people that have gone tell me, that there is, in fact, a tomb of Rachel, prominently marked by all of your Byzantine flower gilders over there, all of your monument makers and your church builders and money gatherers and all the people that have bronzed and monumentalized the Holy Land to death. There is a tomb of Rachel down there by Bethlehem.

And they say, oh look, see, this is where Rachel died, this is where Rachel buried. Okay, fine. It is on the way to Ephrath.

It is on the way to Bethlehem. It is not at Bethlehem. How do I know this? Turn to 1 Samuel, chapter... Let me just find it here and make sure I don't lead you astray.

1 Samuel, chapter 11. Even before that. 1 Samuel, chapter 8. Israel demands a king.

The people, in verse 19 of 1 Samuel 8, refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles. Samuel heard all the words of the people.

He repeated them in the hearing of the Lord. The Lord said to Samuel, heed their voice, make them a king. So Samuel sends them all home.

And in chapter 10, if you skip over a page or so, Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on the head of Saul, kissed him and said, Is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over his inheritance? Now, pay attention. When you have departed from me today, you will find... Now, what's Samuel's headquarters? This is what Ramah is famous for, right? It's the headquarters of Samuel. Samuel at Ramah.

That's what put Ramah on the map. When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah. That's where Rachel's tomb is.

It's up near Ramah. It's up near Bethel. That's where Rachel was actually buried.

Samuel knew where Rachel was buried. And this is Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin. This is north of Jerusalem.

This is in the southern part of the northern kingdom, or past the northern part of the southern kingdom. Either way you want to look at it, it's up there. There are about 11 miles between

Bethlehem and Ramah.

It's north, north of Jerusalem. The donkeys have been found. Your father ceased caring about them.

Then, look at verse 3. You shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. Let's count the objects, shall we? What do these men have with them? Three goats, young goats, three pieces of bread, one skin of wine.

What do you get when you add that up? Seven, right? Three goats, three loaves of bread, one skin of wine. And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. They give you no goat meat.

They give you no wine, only the bread. What does bread represent? What did Jesus say the bread represented in the upper room when he had bread and wine? This is the flesh, right? Unless you eat this, eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no, but Jesus said that way before the crucifixion, back in John chapter 7, right? 6 or 7, along in there. So these are harbingers of doom for the reign of Saul.

Samuel didn't make this stuff up. This came through Samuel from God to Saul. If Saul had had his spiritual ears on, if Samuel had been listening to what he was saying to, the future king, he would have been deeply troubled.

Because these places, and we're back, we're still talking about God's structure in history. We're talking about his foreknowledge, about the careful way that he, in unfolding revelation, teaches us things. We are not smart enough to see and to know.

He is and he does. And very few people then and very few people now have even compiled these clues and put them together, much less understood what God understands about history. The tomb of Rachel.

What happened there? Well, this is the place where Rachel died, giving birth to Benjamin. What did it say in Jeremiah 31? There's a voice of weeping. Who's weeping for whom? Rachel is weeping for her children and will not be comforted.

What's the tragic story of Rachel? It's Rachel dying and the children weeping. Can you imagine a little baby Benjamin there and his mother has died in childbirth? Who's weeping for whom in the original story? Benjamin and no doubt Joseph weeping for their mother Rachel. Yet Jeremiah says, Rachel is weeping for her children and will not be comforted.

And where is she weeping? Ramah. Ramah is where she died. Ramah is where her tomb is.

It's very near there. It's on the road from Ramah to Bethlehem. Let me say that again.

On the road from Ramah, from the town of Samuel the prophet to Ephrathah, to Bethlehem, to the place where David and later the Lord Jesus are going to be born. On that road, Rachel dies and the children weep. But Jeremiah says, it is Rachel who is weeping and will not be comforted because of the loss of her children.

And then this is quoted by Matthew when the Lord Jesus is born and Herod slays the two years old and under children, that it might be fulfilled. It was spoken by the prophet. Voice of weeping in Ramah.

Rachel weeping for her children. Joseph of Arimathea. This is the son of God and the son of man.

And even though initially Joseph, who is a type of Christ, is weeping over the death of his mother and Benjamin, who is also a type of Christ, is weeping for his mother, it is reversed. And it is Rachel now, Jeremiah says, and Matthew says, who is weeping and will not be comforted. And this is at the birth of the Lord Jesus.

And you remember the prophecy, a sword will pass through your heart, Mary, because your son is born to die. But his time is not yet. God knows the timing.

Herod is not going to get him. Why couldn't the baby Jesus have died for everybody's sins? Caesar, essentially, puts him on the cross. Why couldn't Herod put him to the sword and God make that the sacrifice? It's in God's timing.

It's in God's way. It's according to God's foreshadowing. But it is significant because as you now step back and realize the connection to Rachel, the connection to Joseph, the connection to Benjamin, the connection to Ramah, but especially Joseph and the tomb of Joseph on 15 Nisan, when Moses went and collected the bones of Joseph to take them to the promised land, Jesus is in the tomb of Joseph of Ramah, 15 Nisan.

This is the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. What is unleavened bread? Bread that is uncorrupted, isn't tainted with leaven, purge out the leaven. It also means we can't wait.

We are starting a journey. We are on the way somewhere and we are leaving and the bread is unleavened because we leave in haste. We can't wait to get out of Egypt for the bread to rise, right? So, that's the 15th.

Both in the original Exodus and in the life of the Lord Jesus, 14 Nisan, those years, Moses' year and Jesus' year, fell on Thursday. Friday is the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. Moses and the Israelites go to Sukkot, which coincidentally is the name of the last and final feast in the feast schedule to get the bones of Joseph.

Jesus is where the bones of Joseph would be laying if Joseph was in his own tomb, but he's not because Jesus has taken Joseph's place in the tomb, right? Who's supposed to be laying in Joseph's tomb in the abstract? Joseph. Who's laying there instead? The Lord Jesus. Joseph of

Ramah.

Joseph from Rachel. Joseph, it's God did this 1400 years before. 1460 years before the Lord Jesus.

Here is Moses. Here are the Israelites, previewing the events. And I think this is how the Lord Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen.

This is how the Lord Jesus knew that as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish, the Son of Man would be in the heart of the earth, three days and three nights. There are innumerable patterns of this, Hezekiah being another to which we will get, Lord willing. So, 14 Nisan, Passover.

15 Nisan, tomb of Joseph. Day of unleavened bread. The first of eight.

The first of eight. What does the eighth day always mean in Israel? New life. This is when the leper rejoins the community.

This is when a baby is circumcised. This is when you are for real in the community and a card-carrying member of the nation of Israel as a young baby male is on the eighth day. What does Paul say? The Hebrews circumcised the eighth day.

There is an eighth day. It is seven plus one. The seven is complete.

Now there is a new day. Kind of like a 7,000 year model of human history and the kingdom of the Father is the eighth day. It begins on the eighth day.

Six days of creation. The seventh God rests. And then on the eighth, He would do something completely new.

That thing is all finished. He did it in six. He rested on the seventh.

The model, at least, of 6,000 years. And then the seventh. Well, 14 Nisan Passover.

15 Nisan. Tomb of Joseph. 16 Nisan.

What's happening on Saturday? Thursday was the 14th. Friday is the 15th. Friday is Tomb of Joseph Day.

I think we should just put it on the calendar and have a little celebration. It doesn't have to be fish on Friday. It can be Tomb of Joseph on Friday.

Saturday is the weekly Sabbath. And this is critically important because the Saturday Sabbath puts two Sabbaths in a row. This is why nobody could go to the tomb until the third day.

You have the High Sabbath on Friday. The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is one of the High Sabbaths. By the way, there are exactly seven High Sabbaths in the calendar of Israel.

And this is the first one. The first High Sabbath, the Sabbath that is a Sabbath whether it's Saturday or not, is 15 Nisan. It is always a Sabbath.

Wanted to get him down off the cross because the next day was a Sabbath. Well, then you have the regular Saturday Sabbath. And the Sabbath that follows Passover is definitional.

What if some year Passover is on a Tuesday? Well, you do not start counting the 50 days to Pentecost until the day after the Saturday Sabbath following Passover. It's not two days after Passover and then you start counting 50 days. It is from the... And this is in Leviticus chapter 23.

I don't have time to turn there. But look at Leviticus 23. You will see in verses 9-11 and then verses 13-17, somewhere in there, in Leviticus 23, it describes how you count the days.

And there was a huge controversy in the days of the Lord Jesus between the Pharisees who said it's the third day after Passover. It's the second day into the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That is when you should start counting 49 days and then get to Pentecost.

Pharisees said it's directly tied to whenever Passover hits. Sadducees, wrong about resurrection and some other things, were right because the Sadducees said no. Look at what it says in Leviticus 23.

Because Pentecost should always fall on a Sunday. It is the day after... You count seven Sabbaths and then you have Pentecost. Well, you don't get seven Sabbaths if you started counting on a Thursday and you went, you know, seven times seven, 49 Thursdays.

Those aren't Sabbaths. Leviticus says from the first day after the Sabbath after Passover, you count seven Sabbaths. The next day is Pentecost.

So, in the year of the original Exodus, in the year of the Lord Jesus fulfilling Passover, 14 on Thursday, Passover. 15, first day of Feast of Unleavened Bread is Friday. Saturday is the 16th.

It is a Sabbath in which we can't see what's happening. It's a day of rest. Everybody is at home, indoors, doing no work.

What's happening with the Lord Jesus? It is invisible. He is behind the sealed door to the tomb. Early in the morning on 17 Nisan, which, by the way, is the day that the Israelites are crossing the Reed Sea, baptized into Moses, baptized into the sea, coming out on the other side alive and free from bondage because of the death of Pharaoh and Ramses and Huqat Tanatan and all, whoever else they think was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

The guy died. This is the freedom of the Israelites. Pharaoh and his horses and riders perished in the sea.

And with Pharaoh's death, those who were owned by Pharaoh are free. They are free upon the death of the testator, so to speak. Pharaoh died.

And it wouldn't have mattered anyway because the Hyksos were on the way in to take his whole land over. But they come alive and free having been baptized in and through the sea. They went in and they went out and what delivered them destroyed the others.

And it is that baptism into the Lord Jesus Christ, baptizing us in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. John, the baptizer, says, I baptize you with water. The one coming after me, mightier than I, I'm not worthy to touch his sandal strap.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. And it is that baptism and that deliverance that is one of the things foreshadowed in that crossing of the Red Sea. And the Exodus on the other side to new life and freedom.

The day that the Lord Jesus emerged from the tomb, came out of death into resurrected life is the day that the nation of Israel was born coming out of the water on the far side with their slavery and their ownership and their captivity forever canceled in terms of Egypt. So the calendar is important. And starting on that Sunday, you count seven Sabbaths from the Saturday before and then Pentecost was a Sunday.

Resurrection Day is Sunday. The day of Pentecost, Acts chapter 2, is a Sunday. Now, what has all that got to do with our study of Hezekiah here? What's the very first thing that Hezekiah does on day one of his reign? We have two chapters all about the celebration of Passover.

And what is one of the major features of that as you look at it in the account that is given to us here in Chronicles? Remember that? We had all of those chapters talking about the restoration of worship in Judah, the restoring of temple worship. And what was the major feature of that? What was the unusual thing about his restoration? When he came to the throne, it's displaced, isn't it? They can't get everybody sanctified, can't get the priests cranked up, can't get the temple and everything clean in time to be ready for Passover. So what did they do? It was celebrated in a displaced manner.

There is a displacement of a month, right? And why does God accept their Passover sacrifice when it is not according to the feast calendar? In verse 17 of 2 Chronicles 30, 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. They couldn't do their own lambs, so the priest did it for them. Priest did it for them.

Multitude of the people from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulun had not cleansed themselves, but Hezekiah, look at verse 18, did what? What's the verb there? Hezekiah did what? Prayed for them. Does Jesus want to eat the Passover and celebrate the Passover with His disciples on 14 Nisan? Does He not specifically say, with great desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you? Where is He going to be at the formal time of the Passover? Unavailable, shall we say, to celebrate the Passover in the upper room with the disciples. So what does He do? He displaces it.

Hezekiah slips it back a month, Jesus moves it ahead a day, so to speak. And at the same time that it is celebrated differently in Hezekiah's day, but God accepts it based on what? Hezekiah prayed for them saying, May the good Lord provide atonement for everyone. May the good Lord provide atonement for everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he is not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.

And the Lord listened to Hezekiah and healed the people. What does Jesus do in John chapter 17, John 16 and 17? Do we not have like a chapter and a half of what has been called His high priestly prayer? What does He do? He prays to the Father for the disciples, for those who not having seen will believe, for the atonement of those whose hearts are seeking relationship with God, whose hearts are right. He invests the bread and the cup with new meaning.

There's no mention on that last supper of the lamb. Why? You think back to Saul meeting the guys who have the goats and the bread, young goats. They interchange lambs and kids as sacrificial animals in Israel.

And the wine. Saul doesn't get the wine. He gets two loaves of bread, not three.

And no goat. The Lord Jesus is the ram with its horns caught in the thicket. And Saul is not the forerunner of the ram sacrifice of the lamb for Passover.

All he has to show for his encounter is bread, the flesh. The wine, the life, the spirit. This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

The atonement is provided in the blood. Saul does not access that. The essentials of the goat and the wine pictured aren't there.

What's bread made of? What's bread made of? Kind of like a tiller of the soil would produce and bring as a sacrifice? You can offer a grain offering before the Lord after you have offered a sin offering or a whole burnt offering or you have observed the formal need for atonement. Then you can bring your cereal, grain, sheaf and wave. They're perfectly good sacrifices.

The sanctified flesh is a wonderful thing, but it isn't sanctified and there is no atonement without the blood, without the animal sacrifice that qualifies you to then partake and present these other sacrifices. Well, there are so many of these structural elements in Scripture. I don't have time to give you all of them, but if you think about the model of seven.

How many feasts are there in Israel on the feast calendar? How many feasts? There are seven. How many in the spring? How many in the fall? Four plus three. How many months are there in the year to celebrate these feasts? Twelve.

Twelve months. And there are four times three months in the year. So in a four times three set of months, you have four plus three feasts, four and three, four and three.

If you look, by the way, all the way at the other end of God's schedule, at Revelation, and you

see the seven seals and the seven trumpets and the seven thunders, parenthetically, and the seven bowls, the seven vials. If you look at the way those are structured in broad overview, there are four that come together. Remember the seals are broken and the four horsemen come out, and then the remaining seals are something different.

When you get to the trumpets, there is a set of four. The first angel, second angel, third angel, fourth angel sounds. Then there is a break before you get to five and six, and then there's another break before you get to seven, and you have the great earthquake.

There is four plus two plus one, really, but four plus three in those. It's not an accident. It's not just seven.

There's a four and a three. Just like there are four and three feasts, there are four times three tribes in Israel. There are four times three months in the year.

It is a significant number. The seven-fold fullness is pictured in many things. How long was Noah in the ark before the rain fell? Seven days.

How many days does John give us in the life of the Lord before the transfiguration? Or look in Matthew 17, verses 1-9. It's seven days. If you look at... We'll see this in a little bit.

Turn to 2 Kings 11. Actually, we've already seen this. 2 Kings 11.

Remember baby Joash? How long was he hidden away before Jehoiada the priest brought him forth? He was in hiding for six years. And in the seventh year, verse 4 of 2 Kings 11, Jehoiada sent and had him crowned. Who is on the throne during the six years that the rightful king is not? Athaliah.

Who is the god of this world for the 6,000 years that the Lord Jesus is not the king? By the way, this is one of the ways that Mel Gibson got the bald-headed snake woman in his Passion of the Christ, whatever that movie was that he made. People said, why is it a bald-headed woman representing Satan? She keeps appearing in the crowd. I've never seen the movie, but I've seen some short clips from it.

Well, one of the ideas is that Athaliah is an adumbration, a foreshadowing of Satan. She sits on the throne illegitimately through her own machinations. She's not supposed to be there.

And the rightful king is out of sight, awaiting the day of his revelation in the seventh. 2 Samuel 13-18, and you think about Absalom. When you add that up, it's seven years.

You look at Isaac, and you look at the age of Ishmael, and the whole Hagar, Ishmael, Isaac, circumcision, and so on. You get another seven-year picture. The steps of when Solomon ascends up to his throne after the temple is built, and so on.

There are six steps that he ascends before he gets to the throne. I mean, it is throughout. It is shot through.

God knows what he's doing. And we see through a glass darkly. We pick up a clue here and put two and two together there.

God has this woven into this perfect fabric. And we, with our imperfect perceptions, just get the hem of that garment, can see a few of the threads. But what's the bottom line? What is the application from these observations and this interpretation that there's more going on in Scripture than just an account of past events? What is God telling us when He reveals these patterns, when He builds in these prophetic foreshadowings? What's He telling us? Who do you trust? In whom do we place our faith? Who knows the end from the beginning? Who has a perfect plan for the resolution of sin, deliverance from captivity, freedom and life, a bright future in a promised land and a promised kingdom, and inheritance to those who by faith and patience qualify themselves to inherit? If we could see it all, if it was all laid out and you could do the math and see every different thing just laying right out on the surface, how much faith would it take? God gives us these assurances and these revelations of His control of history, of His knowledge of the smallest and tiniest details in our lives.

Your life is just as open, just as certainly planned and provided for by God as any biblical character, as any epoch. Whether it is the galaxies or the molecules, God's knowledge is detailed, it is perfect. He arranges for provision and for protection.

And anytime we begin to think that we've been lost in the shuffle or somehow God doesn't seem to be paying attention to our situation, to our challenges, to our provision, to our needs, remember, this is the God with whom we have to do. He is the one that has not only created these patterns, but He has revealed them to us. He has shown them to us and you see it over and over again.

I thought about trying to do the three-day pattern, but you know, do a concordance study on the phrase three days in Scripture, or third day, or after two days. After two days, we will rise. On the third day, we will live again, the prophesied of these bones.

The third day, Hezekiah, as we're going to get to, and this is my last point here, when you look at the accounts of Hezekiah's illness and he turns his face to the wall, look at just real quickly in closing, 2 Kings chapter 20, In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, said to him, Thus says the Lord, Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live. He turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord.

He prayed to the Lord. Hezekiah prayed to the Lord and the people were sanctified and there was atonement made for them at a technically wrong time. The disciples are going to scatter.

Peter is going to deny the Lord and yet Jesus prayed for him that his faith would not fail and that afterward he could turn and strengthen his brethren. Here Hezekiah prays and wept bitterly. It happened before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court that the word of the Lord came to him saying, Return and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people.

This is his context. Return and tell Hezekiah, the poor man weeping so bitterly isn't what God says. He is the leader of my people.

He is a part of the structure of my plan. Thus says the Lord God, Of David your father, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears, Surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord.

On the third day you shall go up. You're sick, you're near death, your death is predicted but evidently reports of your death are exaggerated because on the third day you're going to go back up. And I will add to your days 15 years.

Stepping back and looking at that 7,000 year pattern. Where are we on the calendar? This is, remember, when does the Northern Kingdom go out? 721, right? And they're going to go into captivity in Babylon. They're going to remain captive with the Medes and the Persians.

When they eventually return they're going to have another 500 years of national life. By the time they get back from captivity, rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, rebuild the temple, they have about 500 years. From then until 70 A.D. when the legions of Titus utterly destroy it all again.

500 years. How long are they going to enjoy the land in the Millennial Kingdom? Sort of gives it away when you name it, doesn't it? That's 1,000 years. What's 1,000 plus 500? I will extend your life 15 years or 1,500 years.

What happens at the end of Hezekiah's reign? Who is in the wings to take over Manasseh? What happens at the end of the Millennial Kingdom when you get to year 999? Gog Magog, Satan is released and you have the potential for a Manasseh-like reign. God knows what He's doing. He is aware.

There is structure. There is order. There is purpose.

And it is so beyond our comprehension that we must rely on it by faith. There's a reason we're not smarter than we are. There's a reason we don't have brains like the angels and that we don't have a vast scope of perception into eternal things.

God has purposely limited us and what does that force us to do? To trust. When we choose to trust, God reveals. When we choose to believe, God assures us.

The evidences of Scripture are not designed to persuade the unbeliever. They are designed to provide assurance to someone who has already chosen to believe, who has chosen to pray, who has chosen to go to God with a problem or with a challenge or with bitter tears. Hezekiah may have a lot of faults, but he knows where to go when there's a problem.

We need to worship and the people aren't sanctified and not all the priests are ready and we've got a whole bunch of people here who have a willing heart but are not technically qualified. What does he do? He doesn't say, hey, priests, can we find some technicality here? He goes to

God. He prays to God.

When he himself is at death's door, he goes to God and he prays to God. He may have a zeal for God that is not according to knowledge, but what is God's promise to Israel? All Israel shall be saved. And that means the Pharisees, that means the chief priests and scribes, the very ones that put Jesus on the cross.

What did Jesus say from the cross? A prayer. Father, make atonement for them. They don't know what they're doing.

This is our merciful, our benevolent God. And we can't always understand what's going on. We don't always have the clues, but we can always have a heart of faith.

We can understand that God has integrity from before the foundations of the world to the foundations of the kingdom of the Father. It is of a peace. It is known to Him.

He's got it all figured out. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. So is the Lord Jesus Christ as a reflection of God the Father.

So is the Holy Spirit as the empowering agency that reveals these things to us. And we are in good hands. When I was a little boy, Allstate had a commercial.

And these hands had a couple and some kids. And they come down from the sky. And they just come right down and they set these people in a convertible.

It's a good thing it was a convertible. And the announcer intones, You're in good hands with Allstate. And he just sets them right in the car.

And they're just cruising down the highway. And I often think of that. When I think of the hands of the Lord Jesus, when I think of the hands of God, Be not dismayed, for I am thy God.

I will strengthen thee. Yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

My righteousness, atonement is made. The Lord Jesus is our high priest. He has prayed for us.

He has provided for us. And to see the affirmation of God's careful construction of history, the provision that he has made, the revelation that he has made to affirm and to assure our faith and the hearts of those who have turned to him is a wonderful thing to behold. It was laid out in Israel in the feasts and in the sacrifices.

It is reflected in the practice of those kings who went to God in faith and obedience and practiced those things, who restored that ritual worship during their reign and got rid of the false idolatrous and evil worship in the high places and with the idols and the Canaanite practices. And we similarly can focus on those revelations of God that remind us of who we are and why we're here in Christ, in him. We'll see more.

And this, by the way, is the introduction to the sign that is given to Hezekiah that he is going to recover. There are some numbers and some steps there. Do we think that this ties into all of the structure that we've just reviewed in great overview and brief detail tonight? Absolutely.

It's not an accident that the dial or the steps are what they are and the shadow moves where it moves and how far it moves. It's of a piece with these things that we've seen and we'll look at that next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the wonderful fatherly comfort that you give to us, none of which we deserve or earn or merit. But because we are in your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we enjoy these wonderful familial benefits, the privileges of coming before you boldly through the new and living way that the Lord Jesus provided for us as he made atonement for our sins and perfected us, gave us the qualification to come before you on that fulfilled Passover day. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these things on our hearts in a way that is meaningful and helpful to us as we negotiate our daily responsibilities and tasks, that we can redeem the time and invest it in the eternal future where we hope to be of service and to reflect your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus.

We pray these things in his name. Amen.