Kings and Prophets 16-09-08a

This is Thursday the 8th of September 2016. We're studying Kings and Prophets. We're coming down to the end of the Kings phase We're about to run out of Kings We've got a few prophets left as you might expect the prophets are going to outlast the Kings we'll still have prophets in Israel long after the Throne has become vacant But we find ourselves in the closing chapters of 2nd Chronicles with its parallels in 2nd Kings so you can be in 2nd Chronicles chapter 36 as we begin tonight and We find this particularly pertinent as we look at the national situation in the southern kingdom of Judah with reference to the Spiritual decline which is a nice way of putting it That is paralleled in the Deterioration of Christian values and influence in our own nation and as we see God's encouragement and his instruction for the faithful in Judah We find helpful insight for our own thoughts Especially those of you who are on the younger side and are going to see a lot more of this Unfold before your very eyes Some of us may get the chance to go to glory and not see the ugly denouement of the Current slide I Posted a Series of nine graphs this morning to one of my favorite posting places.

In fact, my only posting place and It's all of these are hockey sticks of gloom and doom in in the United States the printing of money for you the graph is like this the Median income for households and families is like this the everything that's good is like this everything that's bad is like this and You Don't typically see those spikes come back down and achieve any kind of an average that is usually followed by a cataclysm or a disastrous catastrophe of some sort followed by a complete reset and That is Almost inevitable in this nation sometime in the next One or two decades at the latest they keep shoveling In in desperate fashion and and they managed to stave it off But what they're shoveling from is the foundation that's supposed to be under the rest of it. So The robbing Peter to pay Paul type of thing is not going to last too long at any rate for us We have great comfort. We have great security because we see in this situation in the closing days of the Southern Kingdom God's watch care and The great attention that he pays and the provision that he makes for those who are faithful He will never suffer the righteous to be moved so the key for us is to be sure we understand how to be the righteous right and This goes beyond just not being the evil You know, there's a there's a spectrum and you can be a really Nefarious person you can be worshiping Milcom or Molech or Ashdart or the other pagan gods You can be setting up idolatry and doing all kinds of terrible things to your neighbor as those who are condemned in these chapters Or not, maybe you're not doing those things But not doing those things doesn't automatically classify us as righteous Righteousness is a positive Acquisition it is laid hold of by faith.

It is reflected in priorities and goals and values there is fruit there is conscious pursuit and attention and dedication and obedience that Takes us beyond the zero point, of course we're not wanting to be in the in the red in the darkness in the Line for judgment and discipline, but we don't want to be in the apathetic Unconcerned and unproductive mode either to be the righteous to be the faithful requires some Motion on our part some motivation some Attention paid to obedience and proactive faith faith that is of the Generating kind it generates Action it

generates the fruit of the Spirit and so on so we're looking for that and as we resume our study tonight, we're going to pick up in the Reign of Jehoiachin where we left off last time. Let's take a moment to dedicate our study to the Lord and then we'll pick up in the scriptures at 2nd Chronicles chapter 36 verse 10 let's pray father. We're grateful for your redeeming grace your Reconciliation and propitiation accomplished through the Lord Jesus Christ that solves the problem of our sinfulness solves the problem of our separation and Solves the problem of our inherent inability to do that, which is pleasing in your sight We thank you that we have been positioned and we've been given the potential to Produce that righteousness that we See is a requirement for those who would see you and we pray that as we study this Situation that is recorded in your word that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts Motivate us and guide us through it so that in our own day and in our own circumstance we can see clearly what you would have us do and the opportunities for Faith for production for obedience and for encouragement of one another Shining the light of the Lord Jesus to the world Will be manifest to us.

We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen So we saw that Josiah Started at the age of eight after having a wicked father Who was assassinated and There was a Seeking of the Lord he began at the age of eight and in the eighth year of his reign He began to seek the Lord. This was the age of 16.

This is when he really sort of entered into The beginnings of adult life is how we see it in our culture I think they got started a little earlier then but there is a point in teen years where all of us who are going to be successful believers in this life successful spiritually begin to be self-starting self-motivated we take responsibility for and Cognizance of our own walk with the Lord. We don't just sort of float with the family we don't just kind of get carried along in the in the spiritual station wagon of Christianity, but we recognize that our relationship with God is individual and personal and if we are going to Redeem the time if we're going to make good decisions if we're going to let God guide us and bless us and use us there's a point at which like Josiah we begin to Go before the Lord on our own and seek him as Josiah did So he does that at the age of 16 and two years later, and I'm sure that he availed himself of the of the prophets We know that Huldah is around Jeremiah is around Zephaniah is around there are other men of God that God has been sending to warn the nation to encourage the faithful believers and Hilkiah the high priest is there and Shaphan Is the scribe is there and these are godly and faithful men and so he associates with them this is another choice that we begin to make for ourselves in our transition from childhood to adulthood is we choose our associations we choose what we expose ourselves to what we socialize with what we spend our time on and If you want to know not what you think you prioritize, but what you actually prioritize as we've noted many times just Catalog your time Journal your time sit down and say all right Let me just take the past couple of days where I can remember clearly how I spent the day Where did my time go and if you? Clock that out and say okay. I got up at such-and-such a time.

I spent this much time Primping in the mirror. I spent this much time feeding myself. I spent this much time on my hobbies or my Entertainments I spent this much time in my Earning of

capital so that I can support myself and my hobbies in the manner to which I become accustomed Yeah, I spent this much time laboring on behalf of my family.

I spent this much time Just chart it out, and if you're really interested in knowing who you are That is a good perspective because where we invest our time is where our heart is and the tragic thing is to typically see how little time is budgeted in for Our spiritual priorities how much time was there for reflection for prayer for Just harking back and saying let me just see without looking at my notes How much can I remember of the last Bible class or two? With my notes if I took them how much can I remember the last Bible class or two? Let me just sit and analyze how my priorities are playing out day by day over the past few days is my Identity in Christ my connection to God the Father through him and my connection to fellow believers Evident is it showing up or are we having spiritual Formation and my spiritual life is still in the rack Didn't get up didn't put on its uniform didn't come down with shined shoes and squared away Didn't show up at all if we do not ask that question Which is another way of saying if we do not judge ourselves there is a judgment coming God in heaven is Keeping track there is an account and We will be held to account for how we invest the time God gives us. I Want to Pause here in chapter 36 of 2nd Chronicles just for a second We saw that Josiah had those four sons and three of them came to the throne in succession The people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah made him king he was 23 and he reigned three months king of Egypt deposed him and Put his brother Eliakim on the throne Changed his name to Jehoiakim Neko took Jehoahaz his brother and carried him off to Egypt. So son number one of Josiah Reigns briefly hauled off to Egypt.

Then we saw Jehoiakim. He was 25 when he became king notice. He's older than Jehoahaz He reigns 11 years in Jerusalem.

He does evil in the sight of the Lord So Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon comes up against him bound him in bronze fetters and carried him off to Babylon Nebuchadnezzar carried off some of the articles from the house of the Lord to Babylon put them in his temple at Babylon Rest of the acts of Jehoiakim the abominations that he did what was found against him written in the book of the Kings Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place So Jehoiachin, I think I said last week that he was another son of Josiah He's a son in the biblical sense, he's technically a grandson So Jehoiachin was eight years old and he became king. He reigns in Jerusalem three months and ten days How many days is that by the way Three months ten days It's a hundred days right three thirty day months and then ten days three months a hundred days At the turn of the year Nebuchadnezzar summoned him and took him to Babylon with the costly articles from the house of the Lord and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem so you have two sons of Josiah Jehoiachin and Jehoahaz Sit on the throne for a while and then taken away and then two grandsons Jehoiachin and then Zedekiah So Zedekiah is where we pick up tonight Zedekiah in verse 11 was 21 years old when he became king and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem Remember the second son You see some parallels here in the in the time Remember Jehoahaz He reigned three months in Jerusalem the first son of Josiah at the beginning of the chapter Then his brother comes to the throne after he's deposed and hauled off and he reigns

11 years Then the first grandson of Josiah Jehoiachin is eight years old. He reigns three months and ten days he beats his uncle by ten days and then he's hauled off and Nebuchadnezzar put Zedekiah his brother on the throne and he is now going to parallel Jehoiachin by reigning 11 years He did evil in the sight of the Lord did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet now Is this the What's the Bible telling us here when it says that Zedekiah did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet Jeremiah the prophet is The prophet, right? So this is a metonymy of the adjunct Which is a fancy way of saying it's a figure of speech The issue is not do you humble yourself in front of the prophet? Do you humble yourself in light of the prophets message? He rejects the message in the mouth of Jeremiah.

And so it is said he did not humble himself before Jeremiah But Jeremiah doesn't rate obeisance from the king of Judah but God in heaven does and the message that God sends through his spokesman Jeremiah does rate humility and acknowledgment and obedience and The I point this out because there Has always been and still is in in some circles. I think we're free of it here for multiple reasons, but Sometimes there is a tendency to think that they're that that the Communicator whether it's the prophet or the Apostle John and Peter had this trouble where a guy they healed wanted to worship them. They they stood him up on his feet a Messenger that talks to the Apostle John in the book of Revelation John falls at his feet.

He says no stand up Don't I'm a guy like you And It's important to always remember the distinction between the messenger and the message The message is what has authority the message is what we humble ourselves before because it is the message of God it is God's Word and The word for us is embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ and So we don't fool around getting distracted by intermediaries The Lord Jesus himself says don't focus on me. I'm the way to the father you come to the father through me there is there is one God and there's one mediator between God and men the man Christ Jesus He is the mediator we go through him to the father Hebrews chapter 10 We enter into the Holy of Holies we enter into the throne room of God by a new and living way we enter through Jesus Christ His torn flesh like the veil gives us access to come boldly before the throne It doesn't say stop at the veil cling to the veil weep on the veil You know pray to the veil it says go through the veil We have access by that new and living way to the father and It is always God the father Where we are directed that is the destination? Well Zedekiah did evil in the sight of the Lord and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke from the mouth of the Lord He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had made him swear an oath by God But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel Now people always like to go to Pharaoh and who hardened whose heart Here's a good example of a guy who ought to have known better had plenty of examples had one of the foremost prophets of the entire Old Testament in person Talking to him face to face delivering the personalized individualized timely explicit Message of God, and what did he do? Did he say well, I don't have enough evidence. I'm not really convinced.

I'm not sure that you're a prophet I don't really know if you say you're a prophet, but I don't really know if you're inspired, but How much information? Do you need? He stiffened his neck.

He hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more now. It's been What 25 years give or take you had two 11 year reigns and about six more months since the days of Josiah, right? and Before that at the beginning at the beginning or in the early part of this 11-year reign So you say well basically? From from about 12 years onward after the death of Josiah you have this guy and His stiff neck and his hard heart and is ignoring of Jeremiah Now think back this this as I speak is the year 2016 so 12 years ago is 2004 right and I think nearly everybody here can remember 10 years ago 12 years ago President Bush we had the war in Iraq we had You know things we can Detail from our own lives that were going on at the time if you were in school if you had a job if you were in a particular town or location 12 years ago is is a pretty short time living memory even even today Well 12 years before this Was the great reform of Josiah and the wonderful Passover that they celebrated in the restoration of the temple in the reading of the law Shafan and Hilkiah and and Jeremiah and all of that hold of the prophetess and all of this wonderful spiritual renaissance and renewal and revival You do know that renaissance is not the same as Renaissance, right? It's two different words renaissance r-e-n-a-s-c-e-n-c-e little free vocabulary tip there Means the same thing as renewal and revival.

It's it's a coming up out of the ashes It's the Phoenix coming out from where you wouldn't expect 12 years earlier, but look at what it says here the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more according to all the abominations of the nations and defiled the house of the Lord which he had consecrated in Jerusalem Josiah's wonderful extensive Years and years of reform don't even last a decade and a half. It is all undone. Why? Superficial Now, let me ask you this if we come to Bible class and we see things in the Word of God and we respond to them like seed in the shallow soil and it is shallow and it is not heartfelt and it isn't a Meaningful purposeful Dedication Do you think it's going to be any different with us than it was with the Southern Kingdom? These things were written for our instruction just because there's been a lot of hoopla and fall deroges because you've heard a lot of Bible class or just because you know a lot of Christians or just because There has been some recent activity of a spiritual nature Doesn't mean all is well we have to examine ourselves now if you are feeling good Does that mean that you don't have something wrong with you Something insidious something hidden something that could be growing inside you like a cancer How do people survive cancer what's the key early detection and treatment, right? If you don't get checked if you ignore small signs if you just say well, I'm feeling pretty good I was certainly healthy the last time I had a checkup five six eight ten years ago, whenever that was if you do not check you run the risk of Something that is undetected Getting such a head start that you can't get over it and that is a metaphor it is Suggestive of what happens in our spiritual life if we do not do a checkup They encourage ladies all the time with regard to breast cancer to do self checks to you know Check for lumps and find out if there's something unusual Something that wasn't there before you check your lymph nodes and see if some of them are swelling up There are signs if you got a sore on your skin that doesn't heal you got a melanoma you've got some Scaly thing that just keeps on scaling and and acts kind of funny and not like it used to what do you do? You go get checked, right? You try to diagnose the thing and treat the thing before it gets out of hand

listen These people had a wonderful superficial revival largely built on one man Josiah and his immediate surrounding faithful believers Prophet or two priest or two scribe or two But look at who's leading this decline It's the priests and the leaders of the people They weren't priests and leaders five years ago ten years ago They weren't around for the revival their priests and leaders now, and they what weren't born yet They were there for the revival it did not take it didn't stick What do we do with the Word of God that we receive? What do we do with the teaching that comes out of God's Word with the ideas the truths? That penetrate our soul whether it's listening in class whether it's researching something for yourself whether it's Thinking about things in your quiet time in your prayer life How active is that if we do not self diagnose if we do not self check Spiritual malaise will overtake us and stuff can get a start and It can be virtually impossible to recover from it you can end up at the wrong end of a bad chain of decisions and They're not unmakeable they're not reversible It is such a wonderful thing for those of you that are young that are in your teen years or your early 20s to have the influence of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God in your lives to Guide you and prevent you from making decisions that can alter the entire course of the rest of your life and to help you make good decisions that will lay a foundation for blessing and productivity and Service and potential and opportunity all the rest of your life This is a great time to know the Lord.

It is a great time to pursue the Lord. It is a great time to Establish those priorities that you can follow for the rest of your life with confidence knowing the outcome Well Zedekiah Didn't do that Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin Didn't do that Jehoahaz Did not do that and what's interesting here is you have sort of a compression of the three generation curse God said you know I will bless to a thousand generations those who are obedient those who are faithful those who love me and keep my word but There is a three generation curse if there's three generations in a row that are unfaithful and disobedient in Israel God said I will cut you off Well, it is as though by doubling the guys in each generation after Josiah You have an 11 year and then a three month and then you have Actually a three month and then an 11 year and then you have a three month and 11 year and by having two Guys in one generation and two guys in the following generation You know God said except those days were shortened. No flesh would be saved when it comes to the tribulation Well, except these days were shortened.

No flesh would be saved God's got to get him into captivity before they destroy themselves or are destroyed and The captivity in a sense is actually a deliverance This is why God instructed his people through the prophets do not resist the captors Don't fight to the death don't form an underground French resistance, you know blowing up trains and all the rest of it He said comply Obey go where you were told to go do what you were told to do. This is from me and This is going to in a way be a deliverance and these days are shortened and God shortens as goes the king so goes the nation and the the nation is reflected in the king and so this next two Generations are compressed into just 25 years Normally a generation would be 40 years But God basically gets two and a half generations if you will into this period and then he brings his man Nebuchadnezzar who by the way is going to become a believer in God and The captivity is going to begin and end with believing Gentile Kings you know the story in Daniel about

Nebuchadnezzar coming to faith through the testimony of Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, and Daniel Nebuchadnezzar is going to be in glory. He's a believer in God This captivity begins with him.

Who does it end with? Flip over the page here in Chronicles Look at you got the fall of Jerusalem, which we'll skip over just for the moment beginning in verse 15 and going through verse 21 Look at verse 22 in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia Cyrus first year of Cyrus king of Persia now remember you have the Babylonian Empire And that goes all the way through the days of Daniel and what happens at the end of that? something pretty famous Menae, Menae, Tekel, Upharsin, and you got Belshazzar who is sort of the grandson-ish of Nebuchadnezzar his father is elsewhere and Nabonidus, I think and The what happens the Medo-Persian Empire Darius the Mede comes in and conquers Babylon Darius goes on for a little while but pretty soon that in the visions of Daniel the Medo-Persian Empire is a is lopsided and the Persians become much greater than the Medes the Medes kind of fall off the earth and one shoulder is higher than the other and That's the Persians and Cyrus the Persian is the one who is going to end the captivity Look at what it says here first year of Cyrus king of Persia the word of the Lord in the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom Put it in writing saying thus says Cyrus king of Persia all the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me and He has commanded me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah Who is among you of all his people may the Lord his God be with him and let him go up Cyrus says the God of heaven that gave me all these kingdoms has commanded me to build him a house So somebody from his people needs to go up there and get that done. So is Cyrus building it? Yes, but is he building it? No someone from his people must go up and do it and that's where you have the the second temple Coming up in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah But Cyrus is a believing King. He's God's man.

Just like Nebuchadnezzar is God's man and becomes a believing King well It tells us that God looks out for his own if we judge ourselves We are not judged those who sigh and cry over the fate of Jerusalem. God will preserve God will bless and by the way God will give specific information God will lead and guide as he preserves we will know what we need to do We'll know what we need to know when we need to know it and we will be blessed as we follow it Let's pause here and take our break