

Sunday – April 23, 2017

Preparation

Preparing for the upcoming week of Daily in the word, we'll come to the end of 2 Kings and embark on our journey through 2 Chronicles. Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles we face in reading through the Bible is lack of prayer. It's simple to read through the words of scripture, and by doing so even gain some knowledge of the Book. However, by not submitting ourselves to the Holy Spirit through prayer, we limit our comprehension and, therefore, simple keys to this Christian life of which we will all stand accountable before God. John 16:13 tells us, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." Be reminded of the purpose of Daily in the word. It is not only for us to go through the Bible, but rather that the Bible would go through us. As we prepare to enter into the Book of 1 Chronicles, let's be reminded that "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him." (Proverbs 30:5) And again in Psalm 12:6, "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." That being said, as we read through the chronology of the names listed in the upcoming Books, there is a pure reason that God chose to have them penned. Satan would have us to skip over, or even blow through, the names, not taking any account of what we're reading. To combat Satan's tactics, let's commit our minds to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit, praying earnestly that He will, through our reading, guide us into all truth.

As we close out the Book of 2 Kings, let's be reminded of what was mentioned in our Devotional on Friday. We've read, and will continue to read, of Israel's downfall. In doing so, we should be reminded of our responsibility to live as Elijah, being a light in a dark world. Matthew 5:14 tells us that "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Further in our New Testament, John 8:12 tells us, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." That being said, in order for us to be lights, we have to submit our lives over to Him, being "living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1), allowing Him to shine through us. Of course, Biblical salvation is the first step, however, after receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we then have the responsibility to "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16) This dark world truly needs to see true Light through Christianity as we know it. Their lives could very well depend on it.

TODAY'S READING: I KINGS 20-22

OVERVIEW:

Syria attacks Israel twice; Ahab spares the Syrian king; Ahab's "purchase" of Naboth's vineyard; Israel and Judah unite against Syria; the death of Ahab.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The Syrians, led by Ben-hadad, come against Israel during Ahab's reign. Ahab agrees to Syria's demands, but then Syria simply requests more. Ahab cannot accept the second request and war follows. Sometimes it seems easier to give in to little things because "it's not that big of a deal." However, as we've seen before, the world, sin, and the flesh always want more. Sooner or later we realize the price is too high and we must fight. God reveals He will deliver the victory to Israel. It is amazing that even when we're walking in the flesh, like Ahab, God is still willing to work in our life to bring us back to Himself. Syria is defeated, but comes against Ahab and Israel a second time. God once again enables Israel to gain the victory. However, despite God proving Himself and giving Israel the victory, Ahab still rebels against God and does not kill Ben-hadad, the Syrian king. This will cost Ahab his life. We see the same thing today in believers and unbelievers alike. God proves Himself in their life, but they're still not willing to obey God. Ultimately, it will result in death as well.

Ahab is a bewildering character. He is king, and as we have seen, he is a very wicked king. However, when his offer for Naboth's vineyard is rejected, he doesn't do anything other than sulk about it. It is his wife Jezebel that schemes Naboth's death, and then gives the vineyard to her husband. He's excited about the vineyard until Elijah meets him and pronounces God's judgment upon him for his deeds. Ahab then humbles himself before God, though he never truly repents.

In Chapter 22, Jehoshaphat is king of Judah and makes an ally of Ahab so they can join in battle against Syria. Ahab's prophets prophesy great victory, but Jehoshaphat can see these are not prophets of God. Ahab doesn't want to hear from the true prophet of God because he never likes what the prophet says – because it's never good things concerning him. We, too, live in a time where most people (saved and unsaved) do not want to hear the truth, especially about themselves. They would rather hear a positive, uplifting message. They want it to be spiritual, just not negative (II Timothy 4:1- 5). That's why God says we live in a time of famine of hearing the Word of God (Amos 8:11). Sadly, like the false prophets Ahab liked, most of God's prophets today would rather be liked by the

people, than obey God and preach His Word. Ahab is killed in this battle and the prophecies against him in chapters 21 & 22 are fulfilled.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As MICAH, the prophet of the Lord, speaking whatever the Lord (Father) wants him to speak. I Kings 22:14 (John 3:34; 14:10).

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 1-4

OVERVIEW:

Ahaziah sends 102 men to their death; Elijah is taken up; Elisha established as prophet; Moab revolts; the miracles of Elisha.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The stubbornness and rebellion of man has no better example than Israel's King Ahaziah. He has seen and heard Elijah and the condemnation of Baal. He knows of the fire falling from heaven in judgment of Baal. And now, when he has a need in his life, he turns to Baal, the god of Ekron. Even when confronted by Elijah, he sends two captains and their 50 men to their death, pursuing "wisdom" from Baal. How could a man be so blind? Could we ever be so blind?

An interesting insight into the mind of Elijah is shown in verse 15. After calling down fire from heaven, the Lord tells Elijah "Don't be afraid of this man." Elijah, the Prophet of Fire that confronted kings and religious leaders with the Word of the Lord, was a man with thoughts and passions like us. James 5:16-18 reveals that his greatness wasn't the confrontation and the fire; it was the effective prayer of a righteous man.

In Chapter 2, Elisha follows and serves his leader to the end. Elisha had seen the fire, but he wanted the spirit! He wanted what was inside! Zechariah 4:6 proclaims: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The Lord Jesus Christ gave us the promise of the Holy Spirit living and abiding in us in John, chapters 14, 15 and 16. Paul writes that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30), we have the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23), we are led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14), taught by the Spirit (I Corinthians 2:10) and strengthened by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:16). We have already been promised what Elisha asked to receive.

Elijah is taken into heaven. Elijah's mantle is left to Elisha and the Spirit of the Lord works through Elisha now. The miracles and the work of the Lord will continue, because Elisha will be doing the work of God, not the work of Elijah. God's work continues as He brings another man into His place of service. In the last part of chapter 2, Elisha is confirmed by God in the sight of other men. Interestingly, Elisha asks for a double portion, and the number of his recorded miracles is double that of Elijah!

Chapter 3 details the deliverance of a good king (King Jehoshaphat of Judah) that gets involved with other evil kings. After the death of Ahaziah in chapter 1, his brother Jehoram begins to reign over Israel. He put away the image of Baal, but kept the golden calf of Jeroboam (I Kings 12:28). Moab revolts from the rule of Israel and Jehoram calls on Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom to help. Soon, the three kings are in a desert with no water and no hope. Jehoshaphat is in the wrong place with the wrong people. Only then, does Jehoshaphat ask for counsel from the Lord. Elisha comes in and the Lord brings deliverance with the reflection of the sun on water. In a place of no water, the Lord brings victory through water.

Elisha miraculously helps individuals in chapter 4. After Elisha gives a widow instruction, the Lord multiplies her only possession (a pot of oil) to pay her debts and meet her future needs. A woman who takes care of Elisha, is given a son. When the son later dies in the field, the Lord brings him back to life through Elisha. A poisonous meal is purified and given to hungry men. Firstfruit offerings are multiplied to meet the needs of many people. In the Old Testament and New Testament, the Spirit of God abiding in and controlling a person, brings blessing, joy and hope to men and glory to God!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As JUDGE OF THE UNBELIEVERS – II Kings 1 (Revelation 19:11-20:15).

As GIVER OF THE SPIRIT – II Kings 2:9 (John 14:16-17).

As THE ASCENDED SAVIOR – II Kings 2:11 (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9).

As THE GIVER OF LIVE – II Kings 4:17 (John 6:33, 10:28; I John 5:11).

As THE MULTIPLIER OF FOOD – II Kings 4:42-44 (Matthew 14:16-21; 15:32-38).

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 5-8

OVERVIEW:

Healing of Naaman; miracles of Elisha; a great famine and deliverance; further decline of Israel and Judah.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The healing of a leprous Gentile is one of the best known stories of the Old Testament. All of the great things about Naaman in verse one, mean nothing after reading the last phrase of the verse: *"but he was a leper."* None of these things could overcome or heal leprosy, the picture of sin. None of our accomplishments or greatness can overcome sin, either. The cure is a gift from God, revealed by a servant of God.

After Naaman is told of healing in Israel, he packed up his great possessions, assembled his entourage and departed for the places of power and influence. But there was no remedy there. If Elisha had not called Naaman to his house, Naaman would have had no hope. Though Naaman's pride initially rejected the remedy offered to him, his obedience brought healing. Naaman went home in peace. Romans 5:1 tells us: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

The rest of the story reveals the heart of the servant Gehazi. Compare two words in chapter 5 and verse 20: *"But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him."* His heart is revealed when he says he will take it from him. After the deception and lies of Gehazi, the judgment of God came on him. The Word and Work of the Lord are still today tarnished by greed, deception and lies of some "servants" of the Lord.

II Corinthians 4:18 reminds us that if you can see something, it is temporary. Eternal things are seen through spiritual eyes. Though we often only think in terms of the things we see, we are in the middle of a real, eternal spiritual battle. Spiritual beings live and work on this earth. Job chapter one tells how they can cause physical effects and influence people. But I John 4:4 assures us: *"greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."* The Lord Jesus Christ has conquered all. Now in II Kings chapter 6, Elisha and a young servant are in a city

surrounded by bands of Syrians. Elisha had previously warned King Jehoram of the locations of the Syrians multiple times. The Syrians had now compassed the city, terrifying the young man. Without fear, Elisha tells him, *“They that be with us are more than they that be with them.”* With his eyes opened, the young man saw the reality of the battle that Elisha had already seen. The attackers are drawn into the city, blinded, and led to the middle of Samaria. The Syrian bands are surrounded by Israel, given provisions, and sent back to Syria.

A famine comes to the kingdom of Israel and is blamed on Elisha. King Jehoram blamed Elisha, just as his father Ahab blamed Elijah for the troubles in Israel. But in chapter 7, the Lord will cause the Syrians to hear noises of a great army and flee, leaving a surplus of food and provisions. God provides plenty for all the people of a nation, but judges the one man who rejects Elisha’s prophecy in unbelief. Note that the Lord can deal with groups and individuals simultaneously.

Chapter 8 continues with the decline of both Israel and Judah. Benhadad, the king of Syria, is murdered by Hazael. Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, begins a short, evil reign. The chapter ends with Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram, over Judah; and Joram, the son of Ahab, over Israel. As promised in I Kings 19:15-17, judgment is coming! The wicked house of Ahab will soon be destroyed. God’s judgment is sure.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As ONE SENT TO THE GENTILES – II Kings 5:1-14 (Luke 4:27).

As HEALER OF LEPROSY – II Kings 5:10 (Matthew 8:2, 3; Mark 1:40, 41).

As POWERFUL PROTECTOR – II Kings 6:16 (Luke 12:7; I John 4:4).

Thursday – April 27, 2017

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 9-12

OVERVIEW:

Jehu executes judgment; Joash is spared and becomes king; Joash repairs the temple.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Two chapters of today's reading deal with Jehu and two deal with Joash. Both men will do God's work, but neither with a pure heart for God. The results will be short-lived and self-promoting; the Lord won't get the glory and praise.

Jehu was prophesied by name years earlier by Elijah (I Kings 19:16) to completely remove the lineage of the wicked Ahab. The promised avenger could have given great glory to God to show the trustworthiness of God's promises, but did not because of extreme cruelty and pride. In chapter 9, Jehu executes judgment on Joram, the king of Israel, Ahaziah, the king of Judah and Jezebel, the wife of Ahab. In chapter 10, Jehu continues with all of the descendants of Ahab and all of the Baal worshippers in Israel. He accomplishes the tasks with intimidation (II Kings 10:3, 4), ruthlessness (II Kings 10:14), pride (II Kings 10:16) and trickery (II Kings 10:18, 19). Jehu is rewarded for removing Baal and the house of Ahab, but because he continued with the worship of the golden calves and disregarded the law of the Lord, Israel moves closer to captivity (II Kings 10:32).

Chapters 11 and 12 take us to the other kingdom, Judah. When Ahaziah is killed by Jehu, his mother, Athaliah, kills all of her grandsons, in order to take the throne. The Lord hides one baby boy, Joash, from the slaughter. A faithful priest, Jehoiada, raises the boy for six years and then orchestrates his coronation as the king of Judah at the age of seven. Athaliah is removed and Joash (also called Jehoash) is a good king all of the days of Jehoiada. But the demise of Joash is explained in II Chronicles 24:17. Joash followed the Lord while Jehoiada lived, but after his death, Joash listened to the wrong counsel. His spiritual discernment and commitment to the Lord, came from another man. Sadly, Joash didn't have that personally and it led to the severe judgment of God, not just in Joash's life, but in the entire land of Judah.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE AVENGER – II Kings 9:7 (Revelation 6:9).

As THE INTERCESSOR – II Kings 11:17 (I Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34).

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 13-16

OVERVIEW:

Israel delivered into hand of Syria; Death of Elisha; Three good kings in Judah; Final kings of Israel

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

During this period of time, it is tricky to keep the kings of Judah and Israel straight. Both kingdoms have a king named Ahaziah. And, both kingdoms have a king named Joash, whose name is sometimes spelled Jehoash. They can be identified by carefully reading the name of their kingdom or their father. King Joash of Judah, the son of Ahaziah, began his reign in chapter 12 and did right in the sight of the Lord. King Joash of Israel, the son of Jehoahaz, began his reign in II Kings 13:9 – 11 and did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. Another awkward aspect to our mind is that the stories of two kingdoms are being told in parallel. Everything cannot be recorded in chronological order. The history of one king may overlap one or more kings in the other kingdom. The death of Joash, king of Israel is told in both II Kings 13:13 and II Kings 14:16, because chapter 13 is telling the story in Israel and chapter 14 is telling the story in Judah. Careful reading of the context is required.

At the end of chapter 13, we have an example of the enduring faithfulness of the Lord. Though Israel has worshipped Baal repeatedly and the golden calves continually, the Lord is gracious and has compassion on them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The beginning of chapter 14 gives an interesting insight into the effect of a father on his son. Joash had started his reign as a good king, through the influence of the priest Jehoiada. Evidently, the teaching of Jehoiada not only affected Joash, but was also given to his son Amaziah. Verse 3 says he did as his father did and in verse 6, he followed the commandment of the Lord from the book of Deuteronomy.

Chapter 15 continues with two more good kings of Judah: Azariah, also called Uzziah and Jotham. Both did right in the sight of the Lord as his father had done. II Chronicles 26 tells us that as long as Uzziah sought the Lord, God made him to prosper, but warns that after much success, Uzziah's heart was lifted up to his destruction.

Though Judah has a series of good kings, Israel is spiraling downward. Though Jeroboam has outward success, he did that which was evil and never departed from idol worship. Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah and Pekah continue in the evil and bring Israel near captivity. Most of these kings are murdered, one after only one month on the throne. Menahem is a ruthless and cruel leader. Pekah and his army kill 120,000 men in one day of battle. Yet, in such a dark time, Isaiah prophesies that a virgin will conceive and bear a son, Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). Isaiah 9 is written at this time to a people in darkness that have seen a great light. *“A son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As SAVIOUR – II Kings 13:5 (Luke 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23)

As THE RESURRECTION – II Kings 13:21 (John 11:25)

As THE BRASEN ALTAR – II Kings 16:14 (Hebrews 9:14)

Saturday – April 29, 2017

Reflection

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” (Psalm 12:6-7)

“Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.” (Psalm 119:140)

“Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.” (Psalm 99:9)

“The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.” (Psalm 145:17)

“I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.” (Isaiah 43:15)

To serve as a reminder of the purity and holiness of God and His word, the above verses have been inserted for our edification. Without doubt, reading through the Books of the Kings reaffirms that only God and His word are pure and holy. It can almost get discouraging reading through the various accounts of the kings of Judah and Israel. No less than twelve times throughout our reading this week, the phrase “he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD” shows up. King after king continues in the way of their “father” (John 8:44), or the king before them, not giving consideration to God’s will or commandments, much less His promises and blessings to the nation of Israel. It sounds all too familiar to Judges 17:6 and 21:25 which says, “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Sure, there were literal, physical kings; however God was not their king. In fact, in reading through 2 Kings 1:16, we find God confronting king Ahaziah with the following question: “And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to enquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.” What a sad statement to be made from the God which made Heaven and Earth, considering He delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt, brought them through the wilderness, and into the promised land of Canaan. As we read through these accounts, it’s as if we’re reading the same story over and over, each ending with the same result. Reading through the Books of 1 and 2 Kings, and gaining an understanding of the apostasy of the nation of Israel, it really does prepare us for the days ahead as we’ll read through the Books of Jeremiah

and Lamentations, and will see God pleading with Israel, yet again, to get right. It definitely adds weight to Lamentations 3:22, “It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.”

Isn’t it sad to have all these promises and blessings from God, and then turn around and throw it in His face? Isn’t it? It actually sounds exactly like modern day Christianity living in this Laodicean age. God has been more than good to each of us by providing us His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That being said, do we live lives reflective of the grace and mercy that He has shown us? Or do we relate to the nation of Israel, and continue down a path of apostasy, perpetually slapping God in the face despite His blessings of love, redemption, grace, and mercy. Our prayer and desire should be to live lives that truly bring glory and honour to God. Truly becoming as “living sacrifices” (Romans 12:1), for He deserves no less. May we all be sickened by the acts of both Israel and Judah, and learn from their wicked ways, provoking each of us to “Walk in the Spirit”, therefore, not fulfilling “lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

1 Kings 20:28 “And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

2 Kings 3:18 “And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.”

2 Kings 6:15 “And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?”

2 Kings 10:31 “But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.”

2 Kings 13:23 “And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.”