

Dr. Elaine Phillips, OT History, Lit., and Theology, Lecture 27

© 2011, Dr. Elaine Phillips and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Doctor Elaine Phillips and her Old Testament History Literature and Theology course lecture number 27.

Well this seems like an opportune time to start, there is a little bit of a lull in the conversations. Peace and Christ be with you

Audience: And also with you.

This is a wonderful week that we're entering. One that we can really spend some time and contemplating. Again, I hope at the profane level the kinds of things that transpired about two thousand years ago on our eternal behalf.

From that back to the mundane one of the things that I usually do with these papers is to hand them back as I read them. The reason I am making this announcement in this regards is your friend, roommate, whatever may get his or her paper back don't start thinking she's lost mine. I just haven't gotten around to it yet. This time around I am reading a hard copy papers first. I do them in groups so the Proverbs 25 ones are just about done. But you know its going to take about a week and a half before all of them are over with. But ill get some of them back to you today and as the week goes on. But again, just so you don't think I've gone and lost yours somehow. If that happens, we'll know in a week and a half if that's true.

Well let's sing something that's old and familiar to us. Alright, Psalm 33...[singing]

Our Father in heaven, you have so richly blessed us. You have blessed us with every spiritual blessing and through Christ. And we pray that our hearts will be warmed again. Burning with desire to love you better, to know you better. Father, we know there are lots of things that entangle us. We know the busyness, the illness for some people, the frustrations, the anxieties. Please help us to bring them to the foot of the cross again and know that you are entirely sufficient for which we are so thankful. Teach us today, Lord,

we pray that your word would come alive for each one of us. Father, we know you have lessons to teach us, may our hearts be receptive. Father, we would pray not only for ourselves help us to have hearts that reach out to a world that's broken. We pray for those who are struggling for those lives in various parts of the world through hostility, famine, and all manners of others things that are so distressing. By your spirit Lord please meet our needs. Help your people to be beacons of light in those contexts. We do pray for men and women in our armed forces, that you would protect them as well. Lord, in all these things we acknowledge you are Master of all things. We are bold to ask them, in Jesus name. Amen.

Well we're going to move on, which means we are going to go back to history. We have to review just a little bit because obviously we have spent the past week talking about wisdom and in conjecture with Solomon. So let's back up. First of all, all the way back, to the period of the Judges. Why am I going back that far? Because, the same pattern we are going to see in the material today was one that was well-established back then. People were really on fire for the Lord and then they apostatized and then God brought oppression to them and then because of that they turned back to Him. He sent them deliverers but you remember that cycle just kept repeating itself? It's sort of that human nature cycle and we're going to see that goes on. We talked about the transition to the monarchy. Samuel being the key prophet in this whole enterprise and then the first king being Saul, but of course God's choice of David because Saul was disobedient in several ways. David was the one who be would be king and it's the Davidic dynasty that gets established. Now why might I go back this far? Well, as I said, we've just had a week talking about wonderful things in Proverbs and perplexing questions in Ecclesiastes and Job and having gone that route into wisdom literature. We have got to get ourselves back to thinking about history now. So, I hope you love history. I mean I enjoy the wisdom literature and history is great fun and there's lots to learn about from it as well.

So at any rate, here is a review question for you. Just to take ourselves back a week and a half. God determined to remove a large part of the kingdom from the house of David because...? This is multiple choice. David's sin with Bathsheba was

unforgiveable. There were no sons left after the sons of Solomon. How about three? Solomon gave up too much of his wealth to the queen of Sheba or D. Solomon built foreign altars to please his wives and displease the Lord? That's kind of a no brainer, isn't it? What are you going opt for? D. Anybody going to contradict that? At any rate, yes, we saw in 1 Kings 11 that what's happening here is that Solomon in spite of his wisdom, because God granted him profound amounts of wisdom, he had his human flaws. He made alliances, particularly political alliances and the political capital we've said were wives and concubines. And unfortunately he allowed his heart to go after them and he made altars for them. And the Lord informed him twice. Once in a dream and then also through Ahijah of the Prophet from Shiloh. That's kind of where we left it. So first of all, the division, Solomon's apostasy and I've just referred to that. You can go back and check that material already.

And then this prophet who actually comes to Jeroboam, son of Nebat and tells him, "God is going to take ten tribes away from the dynasty of David from Solomon's son and give them to you." So that's where we left things off last time. Now as we pick up with 1 Kings 12 and going all the way through 19 hopefully we will get that far today with the parallels in Chronicles.

There's some context we need for background information. So here we go for the background information. We are now going to have a Northern Kingdom and a Southern Kingdom. And by the way, as the lecture notes go on in the succeeding days, I am going to say a "N" and a "S" to distinguish between various rulers. And in some of the reading, you are aware that the reading sometimes becomes alarmingly confusing. There are kings of the same name in the North and in the South. And that gets to be a little bit confusing. So we'll try to sort that out by North as a "N" and South and a "S". However, the Scriptures themselves have their own names for what's going on in each of these separate kingdoms. So, just for future reference, when we're talking about the Northern Kingdom that from this point on is usually going to be, Israel. Ok? We've been thinking about Israel as a whole bunch. All the descendants of Jacob/Israel. But now the Northern kingdom will be referred to as Israel primarily not always, but primarily. And the

Southern Kingdom will be Judah because it's the tribe of Judah that really the centerpiece to the Southern Kingdom.

Now having said that, you'll want to have in mind as well that the Northern kingdom is also often called "Ephraim." Do you know why? Anyone want to make a guess? This is not a rhetorical question. Why call the Northern Kingdom "Ephraim"? Or lets back up. Who is Ephraim? Chelsea? Well actually Joseph's son who is going to get raised to the preeminence. But remember of the crossing of the hands bit? So Ephraim is going to be the prime son here and will be the dominate tribe. Not necessarily in size. Manassah just gets all sorts of acreage. Try to keep that in mind. Its kind of like saying well that plus the next one. You know, often times in foreign countries when they refer to the United Sates. They don't say the United States. They may say Washington D.C. says or something of that sort. So, its one of these prominent locations that become representative in some way of the whole political entity. That will not only be true of using the term "Ephraim," but it will also be true when they use the term, "Samaria." Because we are going to see today, Samaria will eventually become the capital of the Northern Kingdom. It doesn't start out there, but its' going to become the capital.

So often times, especially in the prophets as you're reading the prophets. They're aren't always going to say, "Israel, Israel, Israel." They're going to call this Northern Kingdom, Ephraim and sometimes Samaria. And that's going to represent the entirety of the Northern Kingdom.

As I said, the south is going to be usually called, Judah. Here's another thing you want to have in mind in terms of important things that will unfold in the next week and a half for us. Two hundred and some years for them. Excuse me. First of all, as I just intimated a moment ago as I talked about Samaria, the capital is going to change up North. We're going watch it happen it in a moment. So don't think for a moment there's stability in terms of where the capital is located. It's got at least three, some people suggest four possible location. It would sort of be like you know, Washington D.C. is under attack things kind of move inland a little bit like Philadelphia. Alright? Whereas in the South, Jerusalem is the capital, always. Even when they're under attack, and there

will several occasions when that happens, Jerusalem maintains its position as capital.

Also, sort of indicative of the instability, the potential instability we will have from time to time, some dynasty changes. And you'll want to hang on to that as well. In the North, I'm going to mention four major dynasties, as we talk through these Northern years, kingdom years in the next week or so. There's actually more than that, but I'm going to want you to know four major dynasties. And so as we go through each one, we're going to talk about them. That right away talks about some instability, doesn't it? And your reading for today, you saw there are points in time when there's so much upset notably 1 Kings 16. The people are just--there is civil war going on and military rulers taking over. Sounds contemporary, doesn't it? Not necessarily for us, but in other parts of the world. The Davidic dynasty is always the line we always have in the south. With one tiny tiny exception that we will talk about when we get to her. Her name is Athelia and she's a wicked woman, but we will talk about that later. Otherwise, it's the Davidic dynasty.

The third thing I would like you to just keep in mind and again, we are talking over two hundred years at this point, but because of its topography here is where geography becomes so interesting again. Remember we've talked about the importance of geography in a number of different contexts. Here, it's important again. When the Northern kingdom, especially when after it moves its capital to Samaria and I'll look at a map in a moment. That has opened it up to foreign influence because the topography is easier and therefore the people there are not so isolated. These things just drift in a little more. These bad influences from the North. So hang on that, it's going to be important for us. Questions? Am I speaking English so far? That's a relief!

Okay, let's go on. Here's our map! You can find this map in the reference section of the library, the *NIV Atlas of the Bible* or any other thing like that. You'll find a map that addresses the divided kingdom if you need to review this stuff because there are some important things you want to make a note of. Here we go, first of all. Northern tribes by and large, what's up here and of course it's going to be these folks over here. The two and half tribes there are pretty much going to side with the North. Now, if

you've read carefully the material for today. There are people from those Northern tribes that are so distressed at what Jeroboam does they're going to come over to the South. But by and large, the Northern tribes will be up in here and then it's Judah here. Benjamin and you will remember the tribal allotments that I forced you to memorize. Benjamin is caught in between--always caught in between.

And that leads us to our second point, border area. Because the border area is going to fluctuate. Again, if you read the material for today, you know there are points in times when the South is a little stronger and they're going to push North. And as a matter of fact they might just push so far North that it takes place even beyond Bethel. Alright? But then it's going to come back down South again. Contemporary situations are the same thing. Look at what goes on in other parts of the world. Where there is battle and strife. There's always fluctuating borders, they don't stay the same. Same thing is going on back here.

Third bullet, again looking at the map. Here's Bethel, here's Dan. What happened there? One of the most distressing things as a result of a split in the kingdom. What happened at Bethel and Dan? Yes, Chelsea? Yes, it's the setting up of the golden calves. Now, I'm making you look at the map in conjunction with us in just a moment we'll look at some other things a little later on. But here you got all these tribes we've been talking about. What were they required to do three times a year?--as people of God, as covenant folks? What were they suppose to do three times a year? This goes back to Torah. Can't forget Torah! Katie? [Katie's response] Yes, they were supposed to go on pilgrimage for those three important festivals to Jerusalem. And just stop and think for a moment. Let's say you're living...in Jezreel for a moment, which happens to be right here, which we're going to come to in a moment. Going to Jerusalem is a long and arduous journey. It's going to take you two and half to three days. And now it's enemy territory. Or let's say you're living in, in Kadesh or Hazor. Going to Jerusalem is going to be the same thing, and even longer, probably a four day journey. Isn't it easier to just kind of pick up your stuff and go to Dan and worship? What Jeroboam has done is to create a seeker friendly religion. We don't have to go to Jerusalem "just come on over here" "these are the gods

who brought you out of Egypt” pointing to the golden calf. And when you look at the map, it makes a little more sense. It’s going to be easy.

But as I’ll say to you later on because I’m going to say it twice here and then, it’s truth that’s going to set us free, not being comfortable and not being at ease. Okay? And when the people were told, “Go to Jerusalem and obey the Lord,” that’s what the covenant says.” Deuteronomy chapter 12 as well as those other places. They were supposed to do that, instead of enjoying an easy kind of religion. So at any rate, Bethel and Dan are important locations. They have a fairly significant lesson built in.

Yes, Rebecca? (Student question). Yes, the question is, why build the golden calf? Why not have a temple? It seems he had a temple as well as an altar too because when you read that whole business of the alter splitting and we’re going to look at that in chapter 13 in a moment. He’s got some of those accoutrements there. As you know, Non-Levite priests, so he’s got everything that looks good, it’s just not right. The golden calf has a precedent of course. What’s the precedent? It’s what Aaron did. And as we said when we talked about the Aaron situation. Aaron is probably not setting up an Egyptian idol. He thinks, at least if we’re going to read Exodus 32 correctly, he’s actually set up a representation of Yahweh, himself and that way, it’s going to make it easier for people to conceptualize. It’s this easy thing that’s so insidious.

Now, that may be what’s going on with Jeroboam, but I would suggest there is something more going on as well because there may be more Canaanite influences coming into this. The calf had a lot to do with Baal worship and Baal worship is no stranger to these folks at this point in time. So it’s long and complicated, but that would be sort of my quick answer, it’s a good question.

Let’s look at the capitals in the North because they’re going to be significant as well. Things start out at Shechem. That is right here. And of course, we know that Shechem has a long and traditional, veritable, venerable history here. Because that’s the place where Abraham first came into the land and other things will unfold, such as the covenant renewal. So Shechem is significant. There is going to be a short time that it’s going to move up to Tirzah, just a short time. And the reason seems to be, although you

got to read in between the lines to catch things. The reason seems to be that when Sheshaq, the pharaoh from Egypt comes to invade he not only makes things miserable for South and Jerusalem. He goes and sacks Shechem as well. How do we know this? We know this by reading his history, the things that he left in Egypt. That's probably what forced people to go up to Tirzah. It doesn't look far away, but its far enough way and more secluded. It's a safer location for awhile. It's a safer location, for awhile. And then, instances we're going to see and in about a half hour or so, there's going to be a guy who's name is Omri, who happens to be the father of Ahab, about whom we're going to talk about in a fair amount of detail. He's going to say, "Nope, you know we're moving the capital out here." Now again, on the map it looks small. It really does, I know that. But moving out to Samaria is like moving to a different world because as I said a moment ago, it's geographically more open. When he chooses to move his capital, Samaria he is making a public statement, "I embrace that culture that's out there. It happens to be Phoenician worship. It happens to be full of Baal worship." And Omri's son, Ahab is going to adopt Baal worship as the new religion. They had no separation of church and state back then. He adopts Baal worship as the state religion. And as part of it is aided and abated by this move out to Samaria, right here. You're going to want to know those three capitals and the implications of that move.

What happens on Mount Carmel? Mount Carmel as we know, is this thing that juts right out here right into the Mediterranean sea, a high promontory. It actually extends its whole lane right about in there, a high point. What happens at Mount Carmel? It's a famous story. Matt? Yes, the prophets of Baal versus the prophets of Elijah. Not only the prophets of Baal, but Baal and Asherah. They are all there in this big mess. Here is the interesting thing about this. If you look at this map, here's Sidon, here's Tyre. There's the Phoenician, technically the Phoenician area of control. But, by the time of our narratives of Elijah, Phoenicians had pretty much extended their de facto reign right down to Mount Carmel. It was a boundary. It was a natural boundary. It was a mountain. It serves as a barrier and basically you got Baal worshipping Phoenicians controlling right around down here. That means they had some Northern tribes. Right? They have overrun Asher.

The tribe that is right up here. Now, that becomes important when we talk in about twenty minutes about the contest between the Prophets of Baal and Asherah, and Elijah. So kind of hang on to that.

Jezreel, I mentioned it a moment ago, right about here. Not terribly far from Samaria and as it turns out in the period of the divided kingdom, very often in the wintertime it seems that the ruling family, the royal family would move their base of operations from Samaria, which is kind of windy and cold and high elevations, they would move it to Jezreel. Elevations are lower and warmer. They don't have central heating, the way you and I do. They wouldn't have survived in Massachusetts in February, but you get the point. Jezreel was also in some ways, a bit of a capital. A kind of a second capital. That is significant because we have Jezebel there. And that's going to be important in our Elijah story as well.

Well Mount Horeb/Sinai is off the map, right? That's way down on the Sinai Peninsula, where we're going to have Elijah fleeing there. All these three have to do with our Elijah story.

Remote Gilead is right over here and you can't read the fine print and if you can, you have really good eyes, but the fine print is important. It says, "This is a frequent battleground between the Northern kingdom and Syria. Remember Syria is our buffer zone area just to the North and the East of the Northern kingdom and beyond it is whoever is controlling Mesopotamia. Maybe it's the Assyrians, maybe it's the Babylonians, it depends on which period we're talking about. The capital of Syria or Aram is Damascus, right up here. And by the way, again another geographical issue here. This road is not just a red line on the map, that is an extremely important trade route. So whoever controls such an important significant crossroad as Ramoth Gilead, has an extreme amount of power. That's why Israel is often fighting with Syria over this. It should have belonged to the tribe of Manassah, it didn't always. They often succumbed and lost it. So, am I making sense with this? These are important places you'll want to know. Go back and catch a map somewhere in some Atlas, perhaps the back of your Bible has one.

Any questions? Yeah, Trevor? [Trevor poses question] What I said about Jezreel? It serves, interestingly enough, we don't read it in the Scriptures, but it's fairly evident as you unpack it, as the winter capital for the Northern kingdom folks. So, their capital is technically Samaria, but they spend a lot of time in Jezreel. It's warmer there and that counts for a lot. Good, thank you. How we doing? I feel like I'm being very sophomoric today. You know, for some people wisdom literature is much more fascinating for people than history. But, history has tons of lessons for us.

Here we go. International Politics, a few more things you need to know. This is just tapping into what you have been reading in *Old Testament Parallels*, by the way. So, kind of make these little bit of connections. Syria is ruled by a man named Ben-Hadad. You read about him in the text. 1 Kings 20 mentions Ben-Hadad. It's going to be an important name; it seems to be a dynastic name. There is probably more than one of these guys. Ben means "son", so this is "son of Hadad." Hadad is another linguistic parallel to Ba'al or Baal, so obviously those ruling figures have a name bound into it their gods name. You see this in the Israelite names as well. Obia and Obijah. Obijah means "Yahweh is my Father" and we go on to look at some of the other meanings too.

Well, another one we want to note, another country is super power off in Mesopotamia is Assyria not to be confused with Syria. And one of our major figures, internationally, geopolitically is going to be guy, Shalmaneser the third. You're going to read some stuff, some texts that are *Old Testament Parallels* from Shalmaneser the third. What I want you to note is what I've got up here. He mentions Ahab. Ahab being the son of Omri. Shalmaneser the third also mentions Jehu, another Northern king to whom we will refer later on this week. What that tells us is that even though these guys were really really wicked kings and if you don't know that yet you will once you read the text, on a horizontal level, they look kind of good. The rest of the other countries recognize them. Ahab and Omri get mentioned by texts outside of this because their kingdoms are a little more powerful, they're bigger, more cosmopolitan. But that doesn't cut much ice with God. 1 Kings 16 has a very very nasty word to say about Ahab, "the worst king ever," we learn. Alright?

Well, then finally the other thing we have to say about international context is probably our key in terms of what is unfolding in the Elijah narrative. And that's Phoenicia, which I just mentioned a moment ago. Now, we talked about Ba'al when we talked about the book of Judges. So let's just remind ourselves in terms of what is really going on here. Ba'al is as I have noted, the King of the gods. You got El, but then you got Anat and a few other and a few others, many in this Canaanite Pantheon. But he's sort one of these chief honcho type and the reason he's so important for anybody who lives in that area, is what I just got up on the board. Ba'al controls rain, storm, thunder, are you remembering that this is the south western edge of the Fertile Crescent is dependent for their absolute livelihood on rain and storm? It's all the storms that come off the Mediterranean Sea that makes for agricultural productivity for them. If they don't have the rain, it's goodbye because they don't have rivers to work with. So, it's awfully significant and an incredible temptation for the people. To try and do those things that would manipulate Ba'al, so Ba'al would bring rain, etc., etc., etc., and if you don't think there are contemporary parallels, think again! We do all manner of things to try and manipulate God, to try and get him to do the things we want him to do.

The sin of adultery in this case well clearly they are and we have seen this pattern over and over again, rejecting God's rule over them. And trying to make Ba'al do what they want to serve their own needs, a very self-serving kind of thing.

So those are our international politics and as we have said before, "Politics are always bound up with religion with this part of the world." Okay, don't lose sight of that.

One more awful thing and that is a chart with names and dates. Oh, heavens, we got to know some names and dates when we look at history. Here's what I want you to see, we're going to grow this. Everyday we're going to add a bit more to it. Ok, here we are at the starters. There aren't a lot of dates I want you to know, but this one I want you to know, the split in the kingdom. Depending on whom you read it may be 933 or might be 931, but you know, that's close enough, right? 931 you have the succession of the Northern ten states, if you will from the whole union. Jeroboam, Son of Nebat is going to be the ruling figure. He starts the first dynasty. These words, sorry things and colors are

dynastic names. So Jeroboam was our first dynasty, Baasha is going to be the second dynasty. Omri is going to be the third dynasty. We'll add one more in, Lord willing, next time. So, that's our first thing to keep in mind. Know those dynastic names! Notice how quick the overturn is and as you've read in between the lines, you don't have to read in between the line...you read between these lines. You know, these guys don't last very long.

Zimri well he lasts...you know how long he lasts as ruler? Trevor? Even less. Chris? Seven days. Seven days! In other words, things are incredible uproar, turmoil, and turbulent events are going on. So when Omri takes over it's after a time of just unbelievable dissention and fractiousness in the Northern kingdom. Omri and Ahab will establish some stability, we'll probably see more of that next time.

So now let's look at some prophetic names, try to get some things in place. Ahijah is the guy who actually, remember, tore the robe up and he'll have some other things to say to Jeroboam and Jeroboam's wife regarding Jeroboam's son. We're going to talk about "the man of God" a little later on. He's actually from the South, but he's going to prophesy up North and I won't mention Shemiah in lecture, but just know he's there. Hanani is important and of course, Elijah, our major figure. Today, we're going to try and make our way through the kingdoms of Jeroboam and Elijah, and Asa. And that will be about all that we do for the South. We'll save Jehoshaphat for next time and we've already noted the foreign influences that are most important in this time period. Again, this chart will continue to grow as we move through the divided kingdom period. Well, let's talk a little bit about what happens in this split of the kingdom.

What's Jeroboam's error in judgment? What does he do wrong?

Rebecca? (Rebecca answers)

Yes, when Rehoboam becomes king. He's smart in one way. He goes to Shechem. He doesn't stay in Jerusalem. He goes to Shechem, but the people there come to appeal to him and say, "You're father, Solomon, made our life kind of miserable." Taxation, forced labor, because of course, Solomon is building a temple and that takes taxation and forced labor, and so forth. And so the people are making an appeal to Solomon's son, as

Rebecca has said, “Rehoboam consults the elders who say, ‘Why don’t you be gracious?’ He consults the young folk who say, “Be tough!” Of course, he goes with the later and that drives the Northern tribes away and it’s from the Lord, but notice how Rehoboam is involved in the process. He’s not just a mindless don in this thing. He makes a wrong choice.

Well Jeroboam, unfortunately, sets up what I’ve already describe to you, and again, I know this might be offensive to some folks, but it’s really what it boils down to. He’s trying to make it user-friendly. And there are dangers in trying to make some things a little too user-friendly. As you put together both 1 King and 1 Chronicles on this, we see these things happening. They are a total affront to what God has said in the covenant. It was only members of the family of Aaron, who was a Levite, who was to be a priest. Jeroboam appoints anyone who wants to be a priest, be a priest. Now you all remember back in Numbers chapter 16, we had the whole family of Korah dying off as a result of making that kind of a decision. So we know it’s wrong. He sets up the golden calves in Bethel and Dan. We talked about that already. It also mentions in Chronicles, he sets up goat idols. So there is some idolatry that’s spreading all over here. And then he has the audacity to say, “These are your gods that brought you out of Egypt.” That’s blasphemy! Again, it’s breaking those first three of the Ten Commandments. He sets the festival in the eighth month, what’s wrong with that one? When was the festival, the fall festival supposed to be? Seventh month. Right, the Feast of Tabernacles, when they were to go to Jerusalem and all those wonderful kinds of things. He sets it up in the eighth month, very convenient. “Oh you guys haven’t made it down there yet? Not a problem, just come here it’s a month later, no big deal. Got stuff for you to worship in this land as well.”

Well, as I note for you, the faithful folks head south, they knew better and it does mention there were various tribes. Not only Levites, who were really just affected by this, but others as well go south. Now just one other thing to note and again, I know I’m preaching when I say this, but one of the reasons Jeroboam could get by with this, is the same thing as what we saw at the end of Judges. There was such a lack of Covenant literacy. The people didn’t know the terms and conditions of the covenant, and therefore,

this probably looked really good. Again, it was just easier, friendly. And of course, we have the same kind of problem today. If folks don't know the Bible, there's a lot of religion that looks just fine because it has a veneer of what's kosher about it.

Yes, Rebecca, go ahead. (Rebecca poses question).

Ok, in other words who are Rehoboam and Jeroboam? Rehoboam is Solomon's son. Solomon has a bunch of son's, but Rehoboam is the one who is going to be the king succeeding Solomon. He's therefore in the Davidic dynasty. Jeroboam, son of Nebat is the character who already back in 1 Kings 11 had been rebelling against Solomon and had to flee to Egypt. Once Solomon dies, Jeroboam comes back because he knows his time has come. He's going to be someone who's from the Northern kingdom and he will be the Northern king. Rehoboam is south and Jeroboam is north. So Jeroboam has the bigger, more powerful, more influential kingdom at this point. But Rehoboam's got the Davidic dynasty, Jerusalem, and the tribe of Judah. That doesn't mean Rehoboam is perfect, he has his own problems as well as we see when we continue to read chapter 14 there. Yes, good question.

If you've got your text, I want to read part of this man of God Judah venture in chapter 13. "By the word of the Lord, a man from Judah came to Bethel as Jeroboam"--are you noticing this, not a priest was standing by the altar to make an offering. By the way, in this chapter, if you read it or if you haven't read it, it's a fascinating chapter. But in this chapter, there are two persons who are serving as prophets. Did you notice neither of them has been named? There is a "man of God from Judah," who we will talk about in a minute and there is an old prophet from Bethel, also not named. Possibly because naming is an honor. Possibly the text is keeping them anonymous because they are both really disobedient and doing things that are totally an affront, but let's see what goes on. The man of God comes and he says, right in Bethel where the golden calf is, "Oh altar, altar this is what the Lord says: 'A son named Josiah is going to be born in the house of David and on you he will sacrifice the priest of the high places' and he's going to burn human bones there and there's going to be a sign. Verse 3, "it will be split up and its ashes will be poured out."

Well, just a couple of things to say, do you have any idea what happens when Josiah comes on the scene? It's a for piece down the line. Josiah isn't going to show up until 625 BC, that's about 300 years later. Now, if you have a prophecy that long range, how is anyone going to know? All these folks are going to be up and dead by that time, three hundred years later. When you have in conjunction with prophecies a sign given, the sign is something that happens, close-up and chronologically so these folks will know the long-range prophecies is also going to come true. Is that making sense? The sign does happen--the altar splits, the ashes pour out. Interestingly enough, there's a second sign too because Jeroboam is a little bit vexed about it. He stretches out his hand and his hand withers. And then this man of God from Judah prays and it's healed again. But those two things that are there on the spot, that people can see, when those are fulfilled, those are indicative of the long-term prophecy about a guy named Josiah who again, doesn't show up for a long time. That, that too is going to happen. Keep that in mind because that's not the only place we're going to see signs, prophetic signs. So hang on to that, it's important.

At any rate, that unfurls and then Jeroboam is temporarily smitten. So he says, "why don't you come home with me?" And the unnamed prophet from Judah says, "No, can't do that I was told I wasn't supposed to eat here or come back the same way I came, I got to get going." And then what happens? Along comes an old prophet, from Bethel! Let me read for you, I'm in verse 18 and by the way, notice he's from Bethel. Your antennas, if you're reading carefully, ought to be waving at this point. What should this guy have been doing once the golden calf was setup? Probably, he should have uttering some words of rebuke, right? Here's a golden calf, here's Jeroboam saying, "here's your whole new religion" and there's a prophet there and this is taking place on his turf and he's not saying anything or at least we don't know he is.

Now along comes somebody from Judah, somebody has had the courage to cross enemy lines, if you will, and makes this pronouncement. The old prophet, is probably a combination of ashamed and embarrassed, and now maybe challenged. Look at what he does. Verse 18, "I too am a prophet as you are and an angel said to me by the word of the

Lord, 'Bring him back with you to your house so he may eat bread and drink water,' but he was lying to him." And I would suggest to you the lying is because this prophet is, well, he's internally vexed and frustrated and he's been shamed. And so in a moment of ugliness, he's out to get this young guy, and he does because the man of Judah turns aside, he eats and drinks with him unfortunately. And then the old prophet says, verse 21, this is what the Lord says, "you have defied the Lord and you have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. You came back and ate bread, and drank water in the place he told you not to do it and therefore, you are going to die." So both of them have transgressed the commandment of the Lord. Of course, as the young man is going away, he's indeed killed by a lion. The old man's sons tell the old man that this is the case. They bury this young prophet, the man of God from Judah and the old prophet is convicted enough that he says, "when I die please bury my bones with his," but notice the impact of the story. Obedience is so absolutely essential in this context, in any context and neither was very good about doing it. So the fate of the man of Judah, we've already talked about that. And I've made a suggestion, again, I'm reading a bit between the lines, but I've made a suggestion as to why the old prophet might have been so heinously deceptive at this point. His own pride, I would suggest has been trampled, ugly stuff.

Well the sad conclusion, in spite of all of this, Jeroboam doesn't change his ways. He goes on and sets up all the false religion and he continues to be a snare for the rest of the existence of the Northern kingdom. Well, that's the split in the kingdom.

We need to follow a little bit of the apostasy and some of the things that are going on. Rehoboam, as I said a moment ago, and as 1 Kings 14 tells us, starts out pretty well, but then he really falters. And he engages in an unfortunate amount of religious apostasy. Setup in high places, sacred signs, Asherah poles setup in every high hill and under every spreading tree. That's not a very good spiritual legacy to leave. But again, it's making an appeal to folks that this is what the rest of the culture is doing, this is what the rest of the people are doing. It seems to quote "work." And so they fall for it.

Up North, same kinds of things are going on and by the way, the punishment Sheshaq invades and we have stuff from Sheshaq, the Egyptians call him Sheshonk, it's

the same person. Talking about his invasion up into Judah-Israel. Jeroboam dynasty ends pretty early as well. His son, Abijah dies. His son, Nadab is assassinated, very short dynasty. Now we're going to move on.

You now have, and here is where we are going to start our S for South and our N for North. 1 Kings 15 describes two very different kinds of things going on. Asa, perhaps you pronounce is A-sa. I'll do both just to keep us on track, here. Asa, is a good king in the line of David. Does what's right. I know I've skipped the southern king Abijah, but don't worry about him, alright. We're on to Asa because he's fairly significant and as I note some of the things he's doing. Getting rid of the idols that were setup under Rehoboam. Moving that stuff out. When you read Chronicles, the Chronicles parallel, we also find out that he has had a remarkable victory against a guy named Zarah, the Cushite. Cush is this whole area that is south of Egypt and we're told there is just a monstrous force that comes in. Huge invasion for us, something they could not within themselves, withstand. And yet, by God's help Asa, who appeals directly to God is able to withstand these people out in Shepheland area, the lowland area south and the west of Jerusalem. That's where the battle takes place. Asa is commended because in that context, he depended upon the Lord. And the prophet comes and tells him, "This is great! You have done what's right! Kudos! Congratulations! Thank the Lord, it's a good thing to have done.

But then as we often do, the next time he's threatened and this time not from a huge great force from the Cushite Empire, but this time just maneuver up North. Isn't that interesting? Big things he depended on the Lord, smaller threat thinks he can get by using his own brains and diplomacy and it's a huge mistake.

But here's what happens, again go back and read it in 1 Kings 15, if you haven't had a chance to look at it yet. Baasha becomes king, second dynasty. He thinks to himself, "you know what, let's just go south and lets take Ramah." And you're thinking, "So." Once he has Ramah, he has a handle hold on traffic out of Jerusalem. This is strangling Jerusalem. This is strangling the Northern kingdom; it is making life really miserable for them. And he's pushed the border far down into Benjamin. Well, instead of

getting on his knees and praying to the Lord, what does Asa do? It's diplomacy. Who's the big power up here? Way up there somewhere. Syria, the Benhadad, remember them? And Asa basically says, "I think I'll just pay them off...that would be very helpful." They can come and attack the Northern kingdom from the North. And that will remove all the military forces from my neck and I'll be free to do what I need to do, militarily. And so he does that. Benhadad attacks and takes some very significant places up north and names them in 1 Kings 15, an invasion route. And Baasha true to form removes himself, they go up and fight, and Asa says, "Ha ha, here's my chance. He fortifies Mizpah, he fortifies Gibeah and notice he is protecting this very vital crossroads here. Has this gone over very well with the Lord? It's a no brainer question, isn't it? No. The prophet comes back to him and says, "You have made a huge mistake. You trusted the Lord against the Cushites, you should have done it here too." The prophet's name is Hanani. You can read all about it, Chronicles flushes this out more than Kings does, that's why Chronicles are important here. Well, that's enough on that.

Yes, Kayla? It's the same kind of pattern that we saw when in the conquest, Joshua and the Israelites. Instead of consulting the Lord when the Gibeonites came, they just saw, "Okay, moldy bread, worn out shoes, let's make a treaty." I'm not at all saying it's wrong to use your brains, it's not, but they ignored the input of God on these things. They did under Joshua and that whole situation, which meant they were saddled with Gibeonite deception for centuries to come. Not least of which was the Gibeonites demanding of those sons, descendants of Saul to kill them. Here, the same thing is going to go on. Basically Asa should have consulted the Lord in this context and then carried on from there. That's the prophetic rebuke.

Yes, Rebecca? (Rebecca's question). Ramah was the one, he goes and grabs and starts taking it. And when he's got that he's got the crossroads. Okay? This road is not the best, it should go right through Rama, that's where the crossroads are. That's what Basha's trying to do. Once he's driven off to protect his northern boundaries, then Asa, very cleverly fortifies those two, Mizpah and Gibeah. Yes, instead of consulting God in terms of what should I do, when Baasha is basically knocking on my back door, he does

all of this diplomacy and pays off Benhadad as well. I mean that's the other part of it. He's making an alliance with a foreign, ungodly shall we say, political entity.

Well, lots more to do, I think. The Omri dynasty, the worship of Ba'al is not new, but Omri has a son, his name is Ahab. Who does Ahab marry? Her name starts with a "J"? Jezebel. Jezebel is a Phoenician woman, a Phoenician bride. She's also not any wallflower. She's a pretty ugly woman in terms of the kinds of things she does and the brutality she engages in. Her intent along with Ahab as I note for you, is to make Ba'al worship the state religion and that's going to have some long-term repercussions. At any rate, Baasha's dynasty ends. Elah is assassinated. Zimri reigned for seven days as we said. The north descends into absolute chaos and then Omri who is a general, he is a commanding general is going to take over, it's a military coup. Basically what is going on is a civil war and he takes over and brings order and he's the one who is going to move the capital out to Samaria. And so doing, as I've said already he is opening up that whole Northern kingdom to influence from Phoenicia, and in particularly religious influence. Ahab marries Jezebel, they reject the Lord in favor of Ba'al, God of rain, thunder, agricultural productivity and of course, that sets the stage for Elijah.

Chapter 17 verse 1, "Elijah, the Tishbite, who just jumps onto the scene with no background whatsoever, he's from across the Jordan; Gilead is on the east side of the Jordan. He comes to Ahab and says, "As the Lord of God as Israel lives, whom I serve, there shall not be neither dew nor rain for the next four years except at my word. And of course, we know that's three and a half years. The book of James fascinating, we won't look at it now, but chapter five talks about the fervent prayer of a righteous person accomplishes a whole lot. I mean that is a truth we know. Fervent prayer of a righteous person accomplishes is effective. But then James uses this as his example. Elijah, who as James goes on to say went on to pray for three and a half years, there was no rain. And of course, as we see in a moment he prays again and there is rain during those three and half years.

First of all he goes to Jordan and hides, but things dry up there as well. Then isn't it fascinating that he goes to Phoenicia? He's hiding right on Baal's turf. Did you notice

that? He's going to Baal's home territory, interestingly enough. There is a woman from Zerahaphath. In the meantime, there is a guy named Obadiah. Does anyone know what Obadiah means? "Servant of the Lord," "Servant of Yahweh", this is not the Obadiah that was written in that one chapter book in the minor prophets. This is simply a man who is working in Ahab's court and he's a godly man even in a place so awful and degenerate. There is Obadiah faithfully serving the Lord. Protecting some of the prophets of the Lord from the fierce hand of Jezebel, so keep that in mind. Elijah comes back and says to Obadiah, "You know it's about time for Ahab and me to come together, Obadiah is a little afraid, but he arranges it.

And then Elijah says to Ahab, "Gather all the prophets of Baal." Now one of the first things you see is Elijah going before the people verse 21, I'm in chapter 18 now and we're going to read some of this text. Elijah goes before the people and he says, "how long are you going to waver," in other words, how long are you going to sit on the fence. How long are you just going to sit there and not declaring your allegiance. If the Lord is God, follow Him. If Ba'al is God, follow him. And then what does the text say? The people said nothing. They thought saying nothing was a safe way to go, it's not. By the way Elijah's name means, "Yahweh is my God." Eli, "my God" Eli-jahu, Eli is "my God." That's what the people are going to say when they have this dramatic thing. Then they are going to say, "The Lord, he is God, The Lord, he is God, but they aren't there yet, they are ambivalent.

All these guys get gathered on the top of Mount Carmel, which is the perfect staging ground for this to take place. Let me just reiterate what I said a moment ago. Carmel, high elevation juts into the Mediterranean Sea. High elevations get lots of rain, usually. After three and a half years of drought, has withered Mount Carmel. In fact the prophets talk about when Carmel withers, Amos and Nahum. Then things are really bad. Now, Carmel has withered. What a perfect place because it's on Baal's turf for all these prophets to be dancing and slashing themselves and doing all sorts of things, but nothing happens. Elijah mocks them as you know, but they keep on doing this and still nothing happens.

And then Elijah rebuilds the altars and he pours water, water, precious water all over these sacrifices until it's running at the base of the altar and fire descends from heaven. And what do the people say? "The Lord, he is God. The Lord, he is God." But, it's not over yet, is it? What does Elijah have to do next? I haven't said that up here. Do you remember Deuteronomy 13? "If a prophet should come and claim to speak in my name and lead you away from me and tell you to do things that aren't part of the covenant, what are you suppose to do with him? Yes, take all the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape you and take them down to Kishon's brook there let them be slain. So 400+ prophets of Baal and Asherah are to be killed in that context because they have led the people from the Lord.

Quick picture of that. There is a wonderful Carmelite monastery up there. Here's a statue of Elijah. He is not a benign Elijah, this is an Elijah with a sword in his hand that you can barely see down there are heads of the prophets because he's keeping covenant, God's word.

Then he prays. It rains. He runs ahead to Jezreel possibly expecting that now Ahab and Jezebel are going to be convinced that he's God. Guess what? He's horribly disappointed because Jezebel says, "I'm going to fix you" she threatens him and then he runs to Mount Sinai, going to the source of the covenant. When he's there, a couple of things happen that we need to catch and I'll let you go. First of all, chapter 19, he's discouraged. And the Lord speaks to Him and interestingly enough it's not a still small voice. The Hebrew means a crushing silence after the earthquake, after the fire, the Lord is not in those things, but then the Lord speaks to him. I've got three things for you to do. The first is, you're not going to Hazael, the second Jehu, the third Elisha. We're going to see how those work out, next time. But God is basically saying I've got work for you to do and by the way there are 7,000 folks in Israel that have not yet bowed their head to Baal. You're not alone.

Well we also haven't seen the end of Elijah in terms of New Testament connections. As you know when you read the gospels, when John the Baptist is born before he's born his father receives a message from the angel, Gabriel, in the temple. And

what is said is that, “He will come in power and spirit of Elijah,” which is picking up Malachi chapter 4. Because in Malachi in chapter 4 it says, “Before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes, I will send Elijah who will turn the heart’s of the fathers to their children’s and turn the heart’s of the children to the hearts of their fathers or I will come and strike the land with a curse. And that’s how Malachi ends. We’re going to re-visit that when we do Malachi, but just remember those sections are made between Elijah, now and the ministry of John the Baptist who was the forerunner for the Messiah.

Of course, there’s lots more to say, its ten past ten, see you on Wednesday!

Transcribed by Monica Wong
Rough edited by Ted Hildebrandt