

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Kings, Lecture 15

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Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Israel from Jehu to Hoshea

E. Judah Under Jehoshaphat and Jehoram

1. Jehoshaphat's Accession – 1 Kings 15:24

Let's look at Judah under Jehoshaphat and Jehoram. You read of Jehoshaphat's accession in 1 Kings 15:24. You read in 1 Kings 15:24, "Asa rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the city of his father David. And Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him as king." But then you see the narrative shifts to the north so you don't read much about Jehoshaphat; you have to go to 1 Kings 22, verse 41. There you read Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king of Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. He was 35 years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem 25 years. So from 1 Kings 22, verses 41 through 50, you have a discussion of Jehoshaphat, and as you notice, there's not much told in Kings about Jehoshaphat. It's only a few verses.

Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles

There's quite a bit more told about him in the book of Chronicles. You look at the parallels 2 Chronicles 17:1 through 20:37, and you can see there's a great deal more told about Jehoshaphat in Chronicles than there is in Kings. I think the reason for that probably is that in Kings the emphasis at this time is on the situation in the north with Omri and Ahab, the entrance of Baal worship, the ministry of Elijah, and that sort of thing. In comparison to what's going on there in the north, Jehoshaphat is of relative minor importance. So the writer of Kings doesn't give us a great deal of information about Jehoshaphat. Chronicles, however, tells the history of Judah alone.

Remember in Chronicles you don't have many references to the Northern Kingdom. Chronicles is interested in really the dynasty of David and the line of

David. So you just have the history of Judah. The north is only mentioned when something happens in the south that's related to what happens in the north. So Jehoshaphat is of greater interest to the Chronicler than the writer of Kings.

Just in connection with that, Elijah, for example, is mentioned only once in Chronicles, and Elisha is not mentioned at all. So you see how a focus on the north was not the interest of the writer of Chronicles. But if you compare the kings in Chronicles that count, Jehoshaphat stands out as an important king. He was true to the Lord. He had a long reign. He was 35 years old, and reigned in Jerusalem 25 years. So he had a long reign. He was basically a godly man, but he did make some serious errors if you look at his life. Both Asa and Jehoshaphat maintain peaceful relations with the Northern Kingdom.

Jehoshaphat's Son Marries Ahab's Daughter and His Alliance with Ahab

I don't think that in itself is objectionable, but Jehoshaphat goes further than that and makes a close alliance with the north. Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram marries Athaliah, who is the daughter of Ahab and probably Jezebel, although her mother is not explicitly mentioned. Athaliah is probably the daughter of Jezebel and certainly the daughter of Ahab. You read of that in 2 Kings 8:18; this is speaking of Jehoram King of Judah who is Jehoshaphat's son. "He walked in ways the kings of Israel as the house of Ahab had done, for he married the daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord." So, Jehoshaphat's son marries Athaliah. The ultimate outworking of that, if it hadn't been for God's intervention, would have been the destruction of the house of David. Eventually Athaliah attempted to wipe out the house of David, and only Joash was preserved so that the line of David continued.

In 2 Chronicles Jehoshaphat is rebuked by Jehu the seer for his alliance with Ahab. If you look at 2 Chronicles 19:2, you read Jehu the seer, the son of Hanani, went out to meet him (Jehoshaphat) and said to the king, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, the wrath of

the Lord is on you.” In the context, the point of that statement to Jehoshaphat was his alliance with Ahab. That alliance is described in 1 Kings 22. We already looked at that chapter briefly where Jehoshaphat joins Ahab in going to Ramoth Gilead to fight against the king of Aram, or Syria.

Jehoshaphat & Ahab at Ramoth Gilead, Ahab’s Death

Now in that chapter, that is 1 Kings 22, you have that interesting interchange when Jehoshaphat says he wants to hear from the Lord as to whether they should go up against Ramoth Gilead or not. Ahab wants to go up, and Jehoshaphat’s not so certain it’s a good idea. Verse 5: Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “First seek the counsel of the Lord.” So the king of Israel brought together the prophets, about 400 men, and asked them, “‘Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead or refrain?’ ‘Go,’ they answered, ‘for the Lord will give it into the king’s hand.’ Jehoshaphat asked, ‘Is there no longer a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?’” And that’s where Micaiah comes, and Ahab says, “I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. Jehoshaphat says, “The king should not say that.” But they call him and ask him what they should do, and in verse 15 when he arrived, the king asked him: “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?” ‘Attack and be victorious,’ he answered, ‘for the Lord will give it into the king’s hands.’” Now, he must have said that with an expression of sarcasm that was evident and clear because the response is: “The king said to him, ‘How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?’”

Then he gives the real message, and it’s quite clear what the real message is. He says, “I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd; and the Lord said, ‘These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.’” The King of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Didn’t I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?”

God Sends a Lying Spirit in the Mouth of Ahab's Prophets

It's in that connection, finally, that you come to that verse that you wrote your little discussion on of the lying spirit in verse 22: "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets. 'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the Lord. 'Go and do it.'" I don't know that we should take a lot of time going into that; I think you all did a pretty good job on it. I think the point is this: the prophets of Ahab were already committed to the lie, and it seems that what happens here is they are hardened, and they are already predetermined in their evil way. Whether Micaiah sees a vision or not, if you go back to verse 19, Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the hosts standing around him." It's a visionary context where he sees this unnamed lying spirit go forth. Whether the vision is to be taken symbolically or literally, commentators disagree. I think in either case the lying spirit sent by the Lord is to be understood as signifying that even what Satan does is ultimately under the sovereignty of God's decrees. That means the evil actions of men and angels are not excluded from God's decrees.

The text that I feel is always clear on that is Acts 2:23: "This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross." Now here you have wicked men who nail Christ to the cross, and they're responsible for their actions; and yet that is done by the set purpose and foreknowledge of God. Now, I think you're immediately up against a problem of how to reconcile divine sovereignty and human responsibility, and particularly you have to be careful when talking about the evil acts of man: that they don't make God the author of sin. I think ultimately there's a mystery there that you cannot fully explain. Scripture makes it clear that all things are under God's control, including the evil acts of men. Yet, man is responsible for his evil actions, and certainly God is not the author of sin; yet he's sovereign. So, I'm not sure you could do much more than leave some of those things in a certain tension, you might say. In a sense that

you cannot fully harmonize, or explain all this, yet Scripture is very clear that God is sovereign; yet man is responsible.

Following up on this Ezekiel 14:9 says, “If the prophet is enticed to utter prophecy, I the Lord have enticed that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel.” I think, again, it’s the same sort of thing as divine hardening, much like Pharaoh’s heart was hardened. He was set in his evil ways. Much of Romans 1 says that God gives people over to their evil lusts where their continuation in that course is, in a certain sense, God’s judgment upon them. But to get into that Ezekiel passage would take us another half-hour. So I think we better leave it at that.

2. Jehoram – 2 Kings 8 and 2 Chron. 21

Alright, those were some comments about Jehoshaphat. Let’s go on to Jehoram his son. 2 Kings 8:16-24 are paralleled in 2 Chronicles 21:1-20. In 2 Kings 8:16 you read, “In the 5th year of Joram son of Ahab king of Israel, when Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat began his reign as king of Judah. He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years.” So he’s thirty-two years old when he succeeds Jehoshaphat, and he reigns for eight years. His wife, remember, was Athaliah the daughter of Ahab. And in his reign the results of Jehoshaphat’s compromise with Ahab begins to be realized.

Jehoram Kills His Brothers

When he took the throne, we learn from 2 Chronicles 21:2-4, Jehoram killed his brothers. 2 Chronicles 21:2: “Jehoram’s brothers, sons of Jehoshaphat, were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, Michael, and Shephatiah. All these were sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. Their father had given them many gifts of silver and gold and articles of value, as well as fortified cities in Judah, but he had given the kingdom to Jehoram because he was his firstborn son. When Jehoram established himself firmly over his father’s kingdom, he put all his brothers to the sword along with some of the princes of Israel.” So he kills his brothers.

Edomites Revolt & His Ignoble Death

During his reign, the Edomites and Libnah revolted. 2 Kings 8:20: “In the time of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against Judah and set up its own king.” Down in verse 22: “Libnah revolted at this time.” That seems to be a place near the Philistine border. We read that Jehoram died by an incurable disease sent by the Lord. We learn that from 2 Chronicles 21:18. It’s interesting; 2 Chronicles 21:18 says, “The Lord afflicted Jehoram with an incurable disease in the course of time. At the end of the second year, his bowels came out because of his disease, and he died in great pain. His people made no fire in his honor as they had for his fathers.” And then verse 20 makes this statement: “He passed away, to no one’s regret, and he was buried in the City of David.” Not a popular king; he passed away, as Chronicles says, “to no one’s regret.” That’s 2 Chronicles 21:20.

III. The Divided Kingdom from Jehu to Hoshea – Israel

Alright, Roman numeral III is: “The Divided Kingdom from Jehu to Hoshea.” Now, just to orient ourselves again, this is a major dividing point. “1” is: “The United Kingdom under Solomon, 1 Kings 1-11,” and then you get the Divided Kingdom before Jehu as the second major dividing point, you might say,

in the kingdom period of Israel's history. At 931 B.C., after Solomon, is a major dividing point. So we go from the beginning of the Divided Kingdom up to Jehu.

We start with Jehu and take the Divided Kingdom forward to Hoshea. Hoshea's the last of the kings in the north and that brings us to the fall of the Northern Kingdom. So under this we have two dynasties: We have the dynasty of Jehu and then the succession of those last kings after 841 B.C.

So first the dynasty of Jehu: not a whole lot other than that 841 revolution. That gives you sort of a dividing point that is the same for both the north and the south because Jehu killed the king of the north and the king of the south in 841. So you're starting over in both kingdoms subsequently.

A. The Dynasty of Jehu

Alright "A" is "The dynasty of Jehu." Jehu's dynasty is the fourth dynasty of the Northern Kingdom. Remember, in the South you've had one dynasty all the way through, but in the north you first had Jeroboam I, then you had Baasha, then Omri, and now Jehu as far as kings that established dynasties that had successors. Jeroboam I, Baasha, Omri, and Jehu. This is the fourth, and Jehu's dynasty is the longest one. It lasts about 80 years.

When Jehu took over the Northern Kingdom, the Northern Kingdom was quite weak, but by the fourth king in his line, which is Jeroboam II, the Northern Kingdom is a prosperous, strong nation. So under Jehu's dynasty, things in the Northern Kingdom develop in a very positive way as far as strength and prosperity is concerned. Not, however, as far as spiritual things are concerned.

1. The Revolution of Jehu – 2 Kings 9-10 & 2 Chronicles 22:7-12

a. Jehu Anointed King – 1 Kings 9:1-13

Alright "1" is: "The revolution of Jehu, 2 Kings 9 and 10, 2 Chronicles 22:7-12." We've already looked at "a" "Jehu Anointed King, 2 Kings 9:1-13." That's where Elisha sends one of the company of the prophets to Jehu and

announces to him that the Lord has chosen him to be king.

b. Jehu Kills Joram and Ahaziah – 2 Kings 9:14-29

“b” is: “Jehu Kills Joram and Ahaziah, 2 Kings 9:14-29.” We touched on that already. That occurs after a battle with Hazael at Ramoth Gilead in which Joram was wounded. There are a number of fulfilled predictions in this chapter. If you look at 2 Kings 9, verse 26, you read: “‘Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will surely make you pay for it on this plot of ground,’ declares the Lord. Now then, pick him up and throw him on that plot in accordance with the word of the Lord.”

Prophecy and Fulfillment

It seems what you have is a prophecy fulfilled intentionally. It completes the fulfillment of the prophecy against Ahab. You go back to 1 Kings 21:19 where Elijah says, “This is what the Lord says: ‘Have you not murdered a man and seized his property? Then say to him, “This is what the Lord says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth’s blood, dogs will lick up your blood- yes, yours.”’” But Ahab repented and the Lord said that his son would suffer. 1 Kings 21:29: “Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son.” Here in 2 Kings 9:26 you find the ultimate outworking of that when Joram, Ahab’s son, is cast on the plot of ground.

In 2 Kings 9:30-37 you have fulfillment of the prediction concerning that of Jezebel, and that goes back to 1 Kings 21:23 where Elijah says, “And also concerning Jezebel, the Lord says: ‘Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.’” And then you see here in 2 Kings 9 Jehu went to Jezreel, and Jezebel is there, and he has her thrown from the window, and she is killed. And verse 36 says, “This is the word of the Lord that he spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite: On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs will devour Jezebel’s flesh.”

And as we also noticed earlier, Jehu's revolution affected Judah as well; it wasn't only the Northern Kingdom. Jehu killed Ahaziah king of Judah. 2 Kings 9:27: "When Ahaziah king of Judah saw what had happened, he fled up the road to Beth Haggan. Jehu chases him, shouting, "Kill him too!" They wounded him in his chariot on the way up to Gur near Ibleam, but he escaped to Megiddo and died there."

So both Joram and Ahaziah are killed, and then Jehu attempts to wipe out Baal worship, although in the first part of chapter 10 you have the rest of Ahab's family killed, including some relatives of Ahaziah from the south. Look at 2 Kings 10, verse 13: "He met some relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah and asked, 'Who are you?' And they said, 'We are relatives of Ahaziah, and we have come down to greet the families of the king and of the queen mother.' 'Take them alive!' he ordered. So they took them alive and slaughtered them by the well of Beth Eked--forty-two men. He left no survivor." So he not only wipes out Ahab's family, he also kills a number of the relatives of Ahaziah's line.

Then he turns on the Baal worship, and under the pretence of himself honoring Baal, he gathers all these followers of Baal; and when he has them altogether, he turns on them and has them killed. That's the latter part of the chapter 10. The result is Baal worship is destroyed by Jehu in Israel. You read that in 2 Kings 10:28: "So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel. However, he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat." But remember, Athaliah is still in the south, and the influence of Ahab through Athaliah of false worship still remains.

Assyrian Black Obelisk – Jehu bowing

In Assyrian records as well, we mentioned that earlier, there is an inscription of what's known as the "Black Obelisk." in which Shalmaneser III tells of taking tribute from Jehu. That's where, I mentioned this earlier, Jehu was called indirectly "The son of Omri." He wasn't really the son of Omri; he began a

revolution, and he started a new dynasty; but Omri was so well known among the Assyrian people that since Jehu is the king of the Northern Kingdom, he's referred to as "The son of Omri." But the Black Obelisk was found in 1846. It's six and a half feet high. It tells of the military achievements of Shalmaneser III. It has pictures of the payment of tribute from five different regions in relief on this obelisk, and one of those five pictures--I think we passed this along before--was of Jehu bowing before Shalmaneser to pay his tribute to him.

C. Jezebel is Killed

D. Ahab's Family is Killed

So Jehu kills Joram and Ahaziah, and "C" is: "Jezebel is killed." "D" is "Ahab's Family is Killed." I've been discussing all this and didn't mention "C" and "D." So Jehu's revolution was successful. I think we would say he did a good thing in destroying the house of Ahab, but it seems that at a certain point he went beyond what he was commissioned to do. He was commissioned to destroy the house of Ahab, 2 Kings 9:6 and 7, but I think when he slew the forty-two relatives of Ahaziah visiting Samaria, it certainly was unwarranted. When you look at Hosea 1:4, you have a reference that indicates judgment on Jehu in spite of the certain good things he did. There was a mixture. Hosea 1:4 says: "Then the Lord said to Hosea, 'Call him Jezreel because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel.'" So even though he was commissioned to wipe out the house of Ahab, he went beyond that, and for that the Lord says the judgment is going to come on the house of Jehu.

2. The Successors of Jehu

a. Jehoahaz – 2 Kings 13:1-9

Alright "2" is: "The Successors of Jehu," and I have four listed there: Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Zechariah. I'm not going to say much about

these kings. Jehoahaz is in 2 Kings 13:1-9. In the nine verses there we're told he reigned 17 years. He did evil; he followed in the sin of Jeroboam's son Nebat. During his reign, Israel was threatened by Syria under Hazael and Ben-Hadad. So during the time of Jehoahaz, Syria is a threat. There's not a whole lot told about Jehoahaz.

b. Joash or Jehoash – 2 Kings 13:10-14:16

“b” is Joash, or Jehoash; both forms of the name are used. 2 Kings 13:10 to 14:16 is parallel to 2 Chronicles 25:17-24. Probably the most significant thing during his reign is that Elisha died. 2 Kings 13:20, we looked at that verse earlier “Elisha died and was buried.” But it's in that same chapter where Jehoash says of Elisha, “My father, my father”; that's in verse 14, “The chariots and horsemen of Israel.” But Elisha died, you see, in verse 20 during the time of Joash. Prior to his death, he had prophesied that Joash would have partial success against the Syrians. See, the Syrians had threatened in the time of Jehoahaz, his father, and Elisha says Joash would have partial success against them.

That was after he had struck the ground only three times instead of five or six times, which seems to then have been symbolic of moderate success rather than complete success. He didn't seem to have enough enthusiasm, and so you read in verse 18 “Strike the ground,” Elisha tells him, but he struck it three times and stopped. The man of God was angry with him and said, “You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times.” So he'll have moderate success rather than complete success.

Joash of Israel Defeats Amaziah of Judah

Another significant thing during his reign is his defeat of Amaziah of Judah. Amaziah of Judah had challenged Joash to battle, which was a foolish thing to do because the Northern Kingdom is stronger than the Southern Kingdom.

But Amaziah sort of became proud because of the victory over the Edomites and thought, this is in 2 Kings 14, and thought because of that victory he could go up and fight the Northern Kingdom successfully. Jehoash warned him about that, but Amaziah foolishly persisted. So you read in verse 12 of 2 Kings 14, “Judah was routed by Israel, and every man fled to his home. Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, and he broke down the wall of Jerusalem, a section 600 feet long. He took all the gold and the silver and all the articles found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace. He took hostages and returned to Samaria.” So that’s one of the low points you might say in the relationship between the north and south. But Jehoash is successful in turning back this attack of Amaziah of Judah and even takes plunder from Jerusalem.

C. Jeroboam II Success and Time of Jonah – 14:23-29

That brings us to “C” “Jeroboam II.” Again, we’re not told much about Jeroboam II. Notice 2 Kings 14:23-29 seven verses. Yet, if you look at verse 23, you read: “In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel became king in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years.” That was a long reign, 41 years. You were told about it in six or seven verses. Much like Omri who was a very significant northern king but about which the scripture tells us very little, Jeroboam was very successful. You notice what it does say he extended the power of Israel territorially to its earlier frontiers. Look at verse 25; he did evil in the sight of the Lord, but verse 25 says, “He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hopher.” Now Lebo Hamath is way above Damascus to the north and the Sea of the Arabah is the Dead Sea. So he extended the Northern Kingdom’s borders way to the north and to the south to the Dead Sea, about parallel with Jerusalem. That was done in accordance with

a prophecy of Jonah son of Amittai, which is the Jonah of the book of Jonah. You read Jonah 1:1 and it says “Jonah son of Amittai.”

On Jonah as Historical – 2 Kings 14:25

Now I think it’s significant that you have this reference in historical narrative in the book of Kings to the prophet Jonah as being a historical figure. There is a great tendency, even among certain Evangelical scholars, to take the book of Jonah as fiction rather than history. And I think one of the strong objections to doing that is the fact that 2 Kings 14:25 makes it very clear that there was a man named Jonah, son of Amittai, who lived during the time of Jeroboam II, and who prophesied, and his prophecy was fulfilled. So he’s not just an imaginary figure, or some sort of fictional story, told to make a theological point, or whatever. He was a historical individual.

Jeroboam II in Amos, Hosea and Jonah

But Jeroboam II became the outstanding king of the Northern Kingdom. I don’t say that from a spiritual standpoint, but from an economic, political standpoint. He extended the borders, and Israel prospered. During his reign, Amos, Hosea, and Jonah were prophets. Not only Jonah, but also Amos and Hosea. We learn a lot more about what was going on in the Northern Kingdom from reading the books of Amos and Hosea than we do from this narrative in Kings; because it’s so brief in Kings. But when you read Amos and Hosea, you find it all was not well. There may have been prosperity, but the prosperity was at the expense of the poor. There was a lot of dishonesty, oppression, social injustice, and religious apostasy. I mean, that’s the picture you get in Amos and Hosea.

D. Zechariah – 2 Kings 5:8-12 (753-752 BC)

Alright, “D” is: “Zechariah, 2 Kings 5:8-12.” He had a very short reign. You notice that in verse 8: “In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah son of Jeroboam became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned six months”--only six months. “He did evil in the eyes of the Lord as his fathers had done. Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against Zechariah. He attacked him in front of the people, assassinated him and succeeded him as king. The other events of Zechariah’s reign are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel. So the word of the Lord spoken to Jehu was fulfilled.” Here’s another fulfillment of prophecy. “Your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.” So you have Jehu, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam and Zechariah--just four generations.

Northern Kingdom’s Final Days of Instability

It’s interesting that with the downfall of Jehu’s dynasty, the Northern Kingdom enters a period of political instability. You have five more kings in the Northern Kingdom, and all but one of them was assassinated from this point on--the one exception is Menahem. And the other thing is that from the strength and wealth of the reign of Jeroboam II, you move very quickly in the Northern Kingdom to the decline and fall at the hands of the Assyrians.

Zechariah would have been 753-752 B.C. The end of Jeroboam II’s reign was 753 B.C. The Northern Kingdom is gone by 722 B.C. You see, you’re speaking 30 years and the Northern Kingdom goes from the height of its prosperity and strength into captivity. So Zechariah rules six months, Shallum one month, and Menahem ten years, Pekahiah two years, Pekah twenty years, Hoshea nine years, but in thirty years the Northern Kingdom is gone and wracked by a series of assassinations.

B. Judah During the Century after 841

Alright, I think maybe we better stop at this point. “B” is: “Judah During the Century after 841.” We’ll pick up with Judah in the century after 841 and then go on next week to the final days of the Northern Kingdom and the last century of Judah and see how far we can get. I think we can get pretty well along next week. Not sure we can do all of it, but I think we can do most of it.

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