

Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 23, Part 3

2 Kings 11-13, Part 3

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Hazel and Jehoahaz, verse 17 of chapter 12. About this time, Hazel, king of Aram, went up and attacked Gath and captured it. Then he turned to attack Jerusalem.

But Joash, king of Judah, took all the sacred objects dedicated by his predecessors, Jehoshaphat, Joram, and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, and the gifts he himself had dedicated, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the temple of the Lord and of the royal palace, and sent them to Hazel, king of Aram, who then withdrew from Jerusalem. What's the irony of that? What has just happened? What have we just been talking about? The temple and all the money spent to refurbish and redecorate the temple. And here it goes to Hazel.

Wow. Now, what happened? Kings only hints at it. And the hint was back there at the beginning of the chapter.

He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord as long as Jehoiada instructed him. Turn over to 2 Chronicles, chapter 24. I don't have an easy answer as to why this isn't included in Kings.

I've got an answer, but it's not an easy one. Verse 17, after the death of Jehoiada, the officials of Judah came and paid homage to the king, and he listened to them. Oh, my goodness.

Oh, my goodness. Such a few words and such a deadly implication. What did they do? What does it mean to pay homage to? Maybe some other.

Yes. To worship. We have some other translations here.

Bowed down. What were they doing? They were buttering him up. Exactly.

Oh, you're the best king we've ever had. You've been so faithful. You've been so even-handed with all of us.

Oh, we just think you're wonderful. And what did he do? What does it say? He listened to them. Oh, my goodness.

My line for myself is never to believe your press releases. He listened to them. Now, why did he do that? Let me ask you that.

You say, does the Bible tell us? No, it doesn't. But you're all mature people. Why did he do that? He liked it.

He liked it. We all like to be buttered up. So, what's the defense against that? Good.

Get your identity from God and no one else. Yes, you are worth the death of the prince of heaven. If that's not worth it, I don't know what is.

What else? That's the positive side. How about a negative side? All right, he never had strong convictions. Yeah, he did it because of the joy he felt from being under pressure.

Yes, yes, yes. The other side, it seems to me, is to take a long look in the mirror and say, I'm the guy that put Jesus on the cross. I'm the woman who put Jesus on the cross.

Oh, you're wonderful. Thank you very much. But I know who I am.

I know what I'm capable of. He listened. So, we go on.

We don't have time here. We're running out of time. But they, now, I notice it says them.

It doesn't say Joash did. They abandoned the temple of the Lord, the God of their ancestors, the one that they put all that money into—worshipped Asherah poles and idols.

Because of their guilt, God's anger came to Judah and Jerusalem. Although the Lord sent prophets to the people to bring them back to Him, though they testified against them, they would not listen. Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, the priest.

He stood before the people and said, this is what God says. Why do you disobey the Lord's commands? You will not prosper because you've forsaken the Lord. He's forsaken you.

But they plotted against him. And by order of the king, they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the Lord's temple. King Joash did not remember the hesed.

Zechariah's father, Jehoiada, had shown him but killed his son, who said as he lay dying, may the Lord see this and call you to account. As far as the Bible is concerned, Zechariah is the last prophet to be killed. So, we have Jesus saying, well, Jesus did know English, but he didn't speak English.

The blood of the prophets is upon you from Abel to Zechariah. A to Z? Anyway, no, no, he's not the, that Zechariah comes considerably later. Zechariah, the writing prophet, considerably later.

OK, so here it is: a divided heart. I want what God wants, and I want what I want. The result is disaster.

The northern kingdom was weak at this point because, presumably, of the slaughter of Jehu. And so Hazael comes from Damascus to Gath of the Philistines to capture it. Obviously, Israel was not strong enough to prevent him from just stomping through their land and coming down here.

And when he got done with Gath, he bounced back and said, I believe I'll take Jerusalem. And so all the stuff that Jehoshaphat had dare I say it, proudly devoted to God and God's temple, is given to Hazael to buy him off. A divided heart.

A divided heart. Then we have the brief little episode of, well, I should say, it's on your sheet here: he was wounded in the struggle with Hazael. And while he's lying wounded, his enemies finish him off.

But once more, once more, the general who carried out the coup d'etat did not put himself on the throne. They put Joash's son on the throne—the promise to David. Whatever you say about the Judeans, that thing just ran through their DNA.

May that be true for us as well, that we refuse to allow the dynasty of David and Jesus to be set aside or dragged aside or played down. We'll keep that promise as long as we're able. All right, so we come to Jehohaz, the king of Israel, the northern kingdom.

King during Josiah's time. And once again, we find somebody with a divided heart. It's clear that Jehu and his sons did worship Yahweh.

There's no question about that. They're not going to succumb to Baal worship. And yet, it is the Yahwism that is tainted with idolatry.

And so, we read, verse 3 of chapter 13. So, the Lord's anger burned against Israel, and for a long time, he kept them under the power of Hazael, king of Aram, and Ben-Hadad, his son. Then Jehohaz sought the Lord's favor.

Wow. And the Lord listened to him, for he saw how severely the king of Aram was oppressing Israel. The Lord provided a deliverer, and they escaped from the power of Aram.

So, the Israelites lived in their own homes as they had before, but they did not turn away from the sins of the house of Jeroboam. Divided heart. Will God listen to a person with a divided heart? Oh, yes, he's gracious, but there's a price to be paid.

Nothing had been left of the army of Jehohaz except 50 horsemen, 10 chariots, and 10,000-foot soldiers, for the king of Aram had destroyed the rest and made them like the dust at threshing time. Mm, mm. God is gracious.

Give him half a chance, and he'll bless us. But we dare not use that as a cover. Well, it's all right.

It's OK. God's blessing me. I'm fine.

I want to be careful here. But how many, how many evangelists have fallen into that trap? Yes, I'm not true to my wife. I'm not true to my promises, to my vows.

But every time I preach, hundreds of people come to the altar. It must be all right. No, no, it's not all right.

God is gracious. God is not short-tempered. He is slow to anger.

But just because we're enjoying the Lord's blessing for a time is no, no replacement for a heart that is wholly his, wholly his. So, we see the point. There is a price to be paid for a divided heart.

And it's a price that is way, way too high.

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, you have shown us what it is to be wholly the Father's, to say, to do nothing but what your Father told you.

Thank you. Though our devotion cannot be of the same extent as yours, it can be of the same quality. We can be all yours, without a limit, without a rival, all yours. Help us, Lord. We are so good at deceiving ourselves. So good at pretending, at playing.

We here tonight open our hearts to you and say, Lord, is there any wicked thing? Is there anything that has a hold on us that would prevent us from leaping up at a moment's notice grabbing the baby, and running? Is there anything, Lord, that would substitute a symbol for reality? Help us. Whatever is true of anybody else in the world, could it be true of us that we 30 people are all yours? Why not? In your name, we pray. Amen.