

Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 25, Part 2

2 Kings 15-16, Part 2

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We turn then to Jotham and his contemporaries. Look at verses 32 to 38. That's the Jotham account. Once again, what does verse 34 tell us? He did what was right, but according to what standard? His father.

So, we're third down the line now. We've got Amaziah and Uzziah, who did what was right according to him. And now Jotham has done what's right, according to Uzziah.

That's a very dangerous progression. I told the story here years ago, and I built a bookshelf. I very carefully measured the first shelf.

It was right. So, I used it to measure the next one and used the second one to measure the third. And the third to measure the fourth.

When I got done with six shelves, the sixth shelf was a whole quarter inch shorter than the first one. I'd forgotten to allow for the saw cut. I should not have measured the shelves by the shelves.

I should have measured them by the yardstick. And that's what we see here. I think good people, good people, but according to whose standard? And so, I say to you, do not measure yourself by Oswalt.

Do not measure yourself by your pastor. Do not measure yourself by grandma. Measure yourself by Jesus.

That's the unfailing gold standard. And that's the call. Now we're told one thing that Jotham did.

The end of verse 35. He rebuilt the upper gate of the temple of the Lord. Hmm.

Okay. It's kind of interesting when you think of a reign of some 20 years. And that's the one thing that you mentioned.

Hmm. We'll come back to that. Now, we're told here in verse 37.

In those days, the Lord began to send reason, king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah. Now what's going on here is. Here's this Assyrian pressure building.

Building. And these guys, Pekah, who has now made himself king of the whole shebang in the North. And his buddy reason, the king of Syria.

Let's see. You're looking at the map. Syria is up here.

Israel's here. They say we've got to have a coalition. The only way we can stand against a serious might is if we all group together, as had happened about 150 years earlier.

If we do this about a hundred years earlier, if we do this, maybe we can, maybe we can hold him off. Well, Jotham with his son Ahaz on the throne with him. Ahaz being pretty clearly an Assyrian supporter.

Say, no, I don't think we want to do that. And so Pekah and reason say, oh yes, you're going to. And we're going to come down there, and we're going to take you people off the throne.

We're going to put our own man on the throne. And they came and chronicles again, tells the story of the battle. Now, my question is, if Jotham is a good man and that's, that's clear enough.

He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He's a good man. Why does God allow this to happen? Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? That's in fact, one of the big arguments that the missionaries have made.

Modern atheists use, you've got a good God. Well, why do bad things happen to good people? How do you answer that? Pardon? Okay. Incomplete obedience is disobedience.

All right. What? The rain falls on the just and the unjust. Yes, that's a very, very important point.

The question is, sometimes God intervenes. This is the world. This is the world of nature, but he doesn't always intervene.

Maybe we can even say he doesn't usually intervene. So, what's going on? So, one answer, incomplete obedience. What else? It strengthens a person.

Yes, God tests us. God doesn't tempt us, but he tests us. All right.

What else? You don't have it because you don't ask for it. Okay, okay. Didn't turn to the Lord and depend on him for deliverance.

All right. It shows where your security is. Yes, yes.

Though I don't understand why this is happening to me, I trust the Lord in the middle of it. Yes, yes, yes. If God always intervened for the good guy, then again, the whole issue of, will I choose to obey God no matter what, becomes nullified.

Oh yeah, I'll obey him because it's a good deal. This is the tough question. And finally, we have to take the Job answer.

I cannot explain what God is doing. I cannot explain why he intervenes in some cases and not in others. I can't explain why he heals in some cases and not in others.

But I'm going to trust him anyway because that's the best option by a long shot. And that's, it's often, Job is often called a theodicy, which is the justification of God, but it really doesn't justify him. It simply brings us to the place, and I love the picture.

God basically says, Job, you want to run the world? Do you think you can do a better job than I do? And the Christopher Dawkins of the world says yes. But my answer, and I hope yours, is, no, Lord, you can run the world. And I've got enough evidence here to believe that you're a good God and that you run it for good salvific purposes.

And I'm going to trust you. Before we leave this, what lessons should we learn from the instability in the Northern Kingdom? During all these years, the years of Uzziah and of Jotham, you've got this terrific instability in the North. What should we learn from that? We best not place our security in earthly kings or presidents or earthly security.

Yes, yes, yes. Anything else? Yes, yes. If you don't go all the way with God, as, for instance, in the case of the Northern Kingdom, getting rid of those idols, then you've got a divided heart, and it's not going to work.

Absolutely. Again, in my example, if you put one foot on the boat and one foot on the dock, you're going to get wet, you've got to have both feet on the dock or both feet on the boat.

So yes, we're seeing, we're seeing a kingdom which has worshipped God partially, which has worshipped him with crossed fingers, when it pleased them, when it served them. And the result is, you're depending on humanity and if you're depending on humanity, you're depending on sand. And that's what we see happening here.

And it's what we'll see happening then in Judah a hundred years later, tragically.