

Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 28, Part 3

2 Kings 20-21, Part 3

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Now, a die is what they use in a foundry to pour the molten metal into to get the shape that you want. The die is being formed here. It's going to be 110 years before Jerusalem falls, 586, but what happens here with Manasseh forms the die that's going to be poured out 110 years later?

I think about America. Will we have 110 years? Not at the pace, things are moving. We may have considerably less than 110 years.

But my point here is I want to suggest that Hezekiah's revival is a good Hebrew word, a blip on the screen. When we see the description of Ahaz's sins and then the description of Manasseh's sins, they're essentially identical. Nothing has been learned.

It's going to be even more clear when we get to Josiah next week. Now this is going to sound heretical. Don't throw me out yet.

Revivals can be very dangerous because we overdose on the emotion and real change of behavior does not occur. I got a first glimpse of this from Dr. Appleby, who was for many years, the end of his life, the international pastor for World Gospel Mission. He was a Baptist pastor from England.

He had had a church in Wales. The sanctuary of his church seated 1,200. His congregation was 36 in Wales in 1905, there was one of the greatest revivals the world has ever seen.

And he said today, Wales is the hardest place in the world because they overdosed on religion. He said you have never heard guide me. O thou great Jehovah, until you've heard 100 drunk Welsh miners sing it.

O God, yes, revive us again, but do something in our characters that goes beneath our emotions. Upstate New York is called the burned-over area because of the revivals that occurred during the second great awakening. So I say, I think Hezekiah here embodies the problem in Israel.

Oh yes, in a moment of crisis, they would turn to him in trust and he, because he's so patient and so gracious and so merciful, would be kind to them and deliver them and bingo, they're right back. There we are. So what God is calling me to and you to is this life of trust.

Day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, we're living with that consciousness. Lord, if you abandon me for a moment, all is lost. So, we see 52 years.

That'll be one of my questions for God. Why in the world did you leave that guy on the throne for 52 years? I suspect the answer will be that's what they had coming to them. I hear the line: a people gets the kind of government they deserve.

Dear God, have mercy on us. The people were clearly quite happy and look at it there. Look at it in chapter 21, he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites.

He rebuilt the high places his father, Hezekiah, had destroyed. He also erected altars to Baal, and made an Asherah pole as Ahab, king of Israel, had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them.

He built altars in the temple of the Lord, of which the Lord had said in Jerusalem, I will put my name in the two courts of the temple of the Lord. He built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his own son in the fire to practice divination, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists.

He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger. Yeah, I guess so, I guess so. Now my question is, how was he able to get away with that? Because the people were right with him.

The people were quite content for that to happen. There was no high priest who would stand up and say, that's not going to happen in the temple when I'm in charge. And if it does, you'll have to deal with me.

So, I say again, a one-shot trust is not enough. There has to be a life of trust. Now, let me ask you another question.

Look at the repeated statement; I got the numbers wrong on the handout. Look at verse two. What kind of evil did he do? Yes, he practiced what the Canaanites who had been in the land before Joshua were doing.

Verse nine, Manasseh led them astray, so what? Here it is again, isn't it? When something is repeated, God's trying to make a point. So you go on in verse 10 and 11, the Lord said through his prophets, the servants, Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. The word is abominable, abomination.

That's a lovely Hebrew word, to-eh-vah, to-eh-vah. And it refers to something that is contrary to the creation order. You should not be surprised that this is the word that is used to describe homosexual relations.

Manasseh, king of Judah, has committed these abominable sins, these detestable sins. He has done more evil than the Amorites, that's the Canaanites, who preceded him and led Judah into sin with his idols. Therefore, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: I'm going to bring such disaster to Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle.

What's he going to do? He's going to drive them out. Now, do you see the connection? As long as you were not doing what those people did, you could have possession of the land. But now that you're just doing that same stuff, the land can't stand you.

So many people, and we'll talk about this more next week, many people say, now, wait a minute, God says, because of the sins of Manasseh, the exile is going to come. Well, what about Josiah's revival? We'll talk about that. But what's the logic here? The logic is Manasseh has led them back into the stuff the Canaanites were doing, and even worse, the land can't stand them any longer.

There's almost a sense that no matter what happens to them after this, they have already taken the step that has formed the die. It's already. Now, one last thing, and I'll let you go.

Chronicles gives us a lovely story of Manasseh's repentance at the end of his life. He was taken into Assyria in chains and kept there for some years. And while he was there, he saw the light and repented a good foxhole conversion.

Came back and Chronicles says he got rid of all this stuff. Kings don't tell us a word about that. Look at what it says about his son, Ammon.

Verse 20, he did evil in the eyes of the Lord as his father Manasseh had done. He followed completely the ways of his father, worshiping the idols his father had worshiped, bowing down to them. He forsook the Lord, the God of his ancestors, and did not walk in obedience to him.

What do you think the repetition of father in that verse means? Exactly. So, what does that say about the repentance that Chronicles reports? Now, I'm not playing Kings off against Chronicles. I'm quite content to say that Chronicles is right.

He did repent. Too late. Too late.

He perhaps saved his own neck. God is amazingly gracious, but he had set the die so that his personal repentance did not change the direction of the nation. I think that's why the Kings don't tell it.

Because you see, Chronicles is talking to people after the exile, and it's talking to them about, hey, if you will repent, God will turn and bless you. So, learn that lesson. And that's an important lesson.

That's not the lesson that Kings is trying to teach us here. It's saying he set some stuff in motion, and that motion carried right on into his son's life. I said one thing, one more, and now I am done.

What happened to Ammon? Verse 23 and 24. He was assassinated. Interesting.

You wonder why? My guess is that by this, he had sold himself out to the Assyrians completely. He was an Assyrian vassal all his life. My guess is by this time, it's about 744, Assyrian power is beginning to wane.

Ammon is killed about 742. I suspect that the anti-Assyrian party got the upper hand for a while, and they killed this vassal of the hated Assyrians. But I want you to notice what happened to them.

What did the people of the land do? Killed them. And they put an eight-year-old on the throne. Now, I've said this a couple of times before.

We talked about it with Joe Ash and some others. In the history of the world, when there is a coup de gras, who becomes the next King? The strongest guy, the guy who killed the last ones. But no, what does that say about the people and their attitude toward the Davidic promise? They still respected that promise.

Forgive me, I'm a fifth-generation Methodist, but I've met a lot of nice people who are very far from the Lord, who say I've been a Methodist all my life. I've been a David-eyed all my life. What is it that makes Judah special? We have a descendant of David on the throne.

Do you know anything about Yahweh? Yahweh who? Are you committed to living for Yahweh? Why would I do that? But David, we're going to have a David-eyed on the throne. I rather suspect that their religion had become David. And I rather suspect that's why God took David away from him as a physical human king sitting on the throne in Jerusalem.

Well, as I said last week, it gets darker. But the story here is that Danny keeps asking me for the takeaway. The takeaway is right there.

Trust has to be a continued way of life. And if it is, God can be trusted.

Let's pray.

Father, thank you for these moments. Thank you for your word, its power, its beauty, its capacity to penetrate. Thank you.

Thank you, Lord, for these examples that we have in the Bible of human glory in you and human fallibility without you. Have mercy upon us, Lord. Give us that whole heart.

Give us that faithful walk. Give us the ability to do what is good in your eyes day after day, but in it all, make us trust people who will trust you in everything, for everything, through everything, because you are trustworthy. In your name, Amen.