

PREACHING THROUGH II KINGS

IN THIS BOOK WE SEE

Continuance of the history recounted in the books of Samuel and First Kings, providing parallel accounts of two kingdoms—Israel with its capital at Samaria, and Judah with its capital at Jerusalem. The period covered is roughly three hundred years, leading to Judah's captivity in Babylon. Judah was ruled by the descendants of David, according to God's promise. Israel was ruled by many kings from many families, with brief reigns and frequent assassinations.

The historic background for the prophetic ministries of most of the Old Testament prophets.

A contrast between Elijah, the rough-hewn prophet from the open country, and Elisha, the gentler prophet in the cities, with a program of teaching and with manifold miracles of healing, provision, and even raising of the dead. It foreshadows the contrast between John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and Jesus, who came with teaching and with miracles of life and healing.

WRITING OF THE BOOK

It is a part of the Samuel-Kings history of kings and kingdoms among the children of Israel. Combining research and inspiration it shows that God is the ultimate judge and ruler of His people.

ARCHAEOLOGY CONFIRMS THE HISTORY

The "Moabite Stone," found in 1868 at Dibon, east of the Dead Sea, and now in the Louvre Museum in Paris, is inscribed with an account of Moab's rebellion against Israel (II Kings 3), in the words of Mesha, king of Moab. This is only one of many inscriptions found to corroborate names, places, and relationships among nations, as they appear in the inspired record.

Most important are discoveries at the sites of Nineveh and Babylon, major cities long lost but recently found to have been as the Bible indicated them to be. These were capitals of the nations that took captive Israel and Judah.

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK

Chapters	1,2	Last days of Elijah.
	3-8	Doings of Elisha.
	9,10	Jehu destroys the house of Ahab and Baalism.
	11,12	Reign of Joash in Judah, repair of the Temple.
	13	Death of Elisha.
	14-16	Brief records of 60 years; 6 kings of Israel, 2 in Judah (Time of Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah).
	17	Hoshea, and Israel's destruction by Assyria.
	18-20	Hezekiah's good reign in Judah (Isaiah and Micah).
	21	Manasseh's evil reign.
	22,23	Josiah's reforms (Nahum, Jeremiah, Zepha- niah, Habakkuk).
	24,25	Last twenty years, captivity (Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah).

Sermon Outlines Provided:

- "Silent in a Day of Good News" (II Kings 7:13-17)
- "The Wrong Wife" (II Kings 8:16-19, 25-27)
- "Come and See My Zeal" (II Kings 10:15-31)
- "They Feared Jehovah and Served Other Gods" (II Kings 17:23-33)

Other Suggested Sermon Topics:

- "Given to Hospitality" (II Kings 4:8-13)
- "A Mighty Leper" (II Kings 5:1-4, 10-14)
- "Severity and Mercy" (II Kings 13:14-19)
- "We Have Found a Book" (II Kings 22, 23)

QUESTIONS OVER II KINGS

1. First Ahaziah sent messengers to inquire of whom to see if Ahaziah would recover? (1:2)
2. Who was the captain of the army of the King of Syria? (5:1)
3. Who had 70 sons in Samaria? (10:1)
4. In what city did God place His name? (21:4)

PREACHING THROUGH II KINGS

SILENT IN A DAY OF GOOD NEWS

(II Kings 7:3-17)

INTRODUCTION — The story:

Seige of Samaria, with indescribable suffering and hunger. King sends to destroy Elisha; he replies to captain that a measure of fine flour shall sell for a shekel tomorrow. Disbelief. The lepers venture out, and find the camp deserted. (The Lord sent sound.) The king suspects a trap, investigates and finds Syrians gone. The people feast; the captain dies.

I. THE WORLD IN DYING NEED WITHOUT CHRIST, AS ISRAEL IN SAMARIA.

A. John R. Mott said: "In all my many years of service, never have I been called upon to enter into fellowship with so much of tragedy. I find it impossible to decide where the area of starvation, of disease, and of despair is the greater—in Europe and the Near East or in Asia from India to North China and Japan. It still haunts me in the watches of the night." The "have" nations are in a sense but little better off, for fear and distrust.

B. Gen. MacArthur: "Military alliances, balances of power, the League of Nations, all in their turn have failed. We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advance in science, art, literature, and all the material and cultural developments of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh."

II. THERE IS RELIEF PREPARED BY GOD AND PROVIDED BY HIM.

A. Satan has besieged the souls of men with:

1. The weight of dead past hanging about their necks.

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE

2. Sin and the power of it.
 3. Selfishness that enslaves me and puts me at my neighbor's throat.
 4. Death.
- B. Christ has provided relief. "Who shall free me from the body of this death? I thank God through . . ." (Rom. 7:24, 25). — Come out and be free.
- C. Christianity works.

III. HAVING FOUND THE GOOD NEWS WE MUST TELL IT.

- A. "Into a tent where a gypsy boy lay, dying alone at the close of the day
News of salvation we carried, said he, "Nobody ever has told it to me."
Smiling he said, as his last sigh he spent, 'I am so glad that for me He was sent.'
Whispered while low sank the sun in the west, 'Lord, I believe; tell it now to the rest.'
Tell it again, tell it again. Salvation's story repeat o'er and o'er,
Till none can say of the children of men, 'Nobody ever has told me before.'
- B. We must tell it for our own sakes. When Jerusalem stayed home, Jerusalem died.
- C. But the greatest need is for men rather than money.

CONCLUSION —

Go ye! *Then* I am with you.
Shall the days find us feasting, while our brothers starve?

PREACHING THROUGH II KINGS

THE WRONG WIFE

(II Kings 8:16-19, 25-27)

INTRODUCTION —

The story of a tragic and busy forty years in the history of Judah.

I. THE STORY:

- A. Started when Jehoram was seven years old, and his father came to throne. Jehoram remembered Asa, his godly grandfather; perhaps Jehoshaphat taught of God. Now there was not time for that; Jehoshaphat was busy shaping a strong kingdom. Jehoshaphat visited Samaria, and King Ahab; joined in treaties and battles. Did Jehoram go along, and play with little Athaliah, daughter of Ahab?
- B. The marriage took place when Jehoram was not more than seventeen . . . Probably a great state occasion; the couple were in both courts. A year later little Ahaziah was born, "Jehovah preserves"—(Named for uncle in Israel) Jehoram became steeped in the idolatry and wickedness of Jezebel's court.
- C. Jehoram comes to the throne at age 32. His brothers are given charge of cities. He kills his six brothers. Brings the worship of Baal to Judah, with all the wickedness attached.
- D. Troubles in the kingdom. (Men would rather have happy home than congenial work.) Edom, east of Jordan revolts; Jehoram makes a fruitless foray against them. The Philistines rise up and take the cities southwestward. Elijah, in his last days sends a letter, telling that Jehoram will die of bowel consumption. Later days in complete misery; dies at age forty. "Died without being desired."
- E. Ahaziah reigns one year (age 22). "His mother was his counsellor to do wickedly" (II Chron. 22:3) He made league with the idolatrous king of Israel, and when Jehu destroyed the family of Ahab, he killed Ahaziah also (on visit to Samaria).

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE

- F. Athaliah destroys the seed royal, i.e. her own children and grandchildren. Reigns for six years—no indication it was a weak rule, but cruel. Joash, Ahaziah's baby boy, born about time Jehoram died, saved.
- G. Joash placed on throne, and Athaliah, aged about 45, destroyed at Kidron.

Here is the story of domestic tragedy that became national tragedy. It is the story of the wrong marriage, chosen apparently by a good man, Jehoshaphat.

II. WHAT WAS WRONG?

- A. The over-privileged son. "To get the right partner, be the right partner." (Woodrow Wilson, at Princeton, was asked "Why do you not make more out of our sons?" Answered, "Because they are *your* sons.")
- B. The match was one of policy, for political advantage. Set the sense of values all wrong to start.
- C. Like it or not, Jehoram *did* marry Athaliah's family. He probably thought Athaliah would have all Jezebel's charm and looks, but none of her devilish temper and disposition.
- D. There may have been a real romance; that didn't save the marriage or home. cf. Samson and Delilah.
- E. The marriage was made too soon; maturity of judgment had not been reached by either. (Successful homes come from more mature personalities; some succeed.) Their home was dominated by the in-laws' influence—"Leaving and cleaving."
- F. God and His law were not at all consulted . . . (Minister, going to visit prison, was asked by elderly woman to take a small package to her son. He did. It was her picture. Boy looked at it, said "Take it back; I don't want it." Later told story. Mother had social ambitions, required of him that he learn the "social graces." Wanted to join church, and delayed, that she might be present. She couldn't; he learned that she had a bridge date. He drifted; finally killed a man in a fight over a poker game.)

PREACHING THROUGH II KINGS
COME AND SEE MY ZEAL
(II Kings 10:15-31)

INTRODUCTION —

- A. There is lack-luster and lack-power in a life with no zeal.
- B. Zeal is the motor in the car. It makes it go. But sometimes "hooked to nothin'." Every life must have the drive of some great enthusiasm. Every other enthusiasm than Christ is bound to disappointment.
- C. Zeal gets a bad name from the excesses of such as Jehu. His story. Anointed by the messenger of Elisha, goes at once to Jezreel, slays Joram and his guest, Ahaziah. Causes death of Jezebel. Leads in destruction of Ahab's seventy sons. Tricks the worshipers of Baal into gathering, and slays all. Twenty-eight years' reign.

I. BEWARE OF A ZEAL FOR GOD THAT
ADVERTISES ITSELF.

- A. "When thou prayest, be not as the hypocrites are . . . (Matt. 6:5). "When thou givest alms, be not as the hypocrites . . . (Matt. 6:2).
- B. There is evidence that it is actually a zeal for self, finding expression in acts that are associated with the service of God.
- C. Can one imagine Christ calling conscious attention to His acts of zeal?

II. BEWARE OF ZEAL THAT DESTROYS MORE
THAN IT BUILDS UP.

- A. There is sometimes need for the wrecking crew, but weed-grown vacant lots add nothing to beauty of a city — one must also build.
- B. No evidence of a consistent constructive policy on part of Jehu. "I prove that I love God by hating everybody else."
- C. See the policy of Christ: Twice cleansed the Temple, faced the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (but how many acts

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE

of mercy more than can be counted) twice fed the multitude. His was the feeding, healing, helping touch.

D. Let ours be a blazing, constructive zeal.

III. BEWARE OF A ZEAL THAT DOESN'T ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIVING.

A. Jehu "departed not from the sins of Jereboam." Took no heed to "walk in the way of Jehovah with all his heart."

B. A certain preacher and his black cigars. "First take the beam out of thine own eye; then shalt thou see clearly to take the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5).

C. Much better is the fiery passion of an Isaiah or a Jeremiah, or an Amos.

CONCLUSION —

First beware of these things within ourselves! Paul, the "Christ intoxicated man" said "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

THEY FEARED JEHOVAH AND SERVED OTHER GODS

(II Kings 17:23-33)

INTRODUCTION —

In this passage: (1.) Explanation of “The Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” (2.) Insight into one of greatest difficulties of the Christian life.

HISTORY

The victorious Assyrians do a resettlement project in Samaria, bringing to replace absent Israel the citizens of four conquered cities of Babylonia. They in turn introduce their own gods.

Babylon — Succoth Benoth — guardian goddess of Babylon,
Cuthah — Nergal — *Assyrian* god of war,
Ava — Nibhaz and Tartak,
Hamath — Ashima,
Sepharvaim — Adarmelech and Annumelech.

I. THEY FEARED JEHOVAH — BUT FEAR IS NOT A SUFFICIENT MOTIVE IN RELIGION.

- A. It drives to negative, empty life, rather than real service.
- B. It drives to a minimum sort of religion — “How far must I go?” (Illus. with the pigeon on the city street, moving just a step to avoid auto.)
- C. Presently, it causes many to join the church, but that is all. (Conversation with Charles Williams, once active, long inactive “What is greatest motive in Christian life?” “Fear and desire.”)
- D. The Christian motive is love. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God” (Matt. 22:37). “If you *love me* ye will *keep my* commandments” (John 14:15). “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37). “The love of Christ constraineth us” (II Cor. 5:14). This is the motive that draws people all the way. “Perfect love casteth out fear” (I John 4:18).

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE

(But lacking this motive, the Samaritans gave a good example of what others have done.)

II. THEY SERVED THEIR OWN GODS. TOOK THE FORM AND NAME OF JEHOVAH, BUT *DID AS ALWAYS HAD.*

A. In religion.

1. Family tradition—"My parents were thus, that is what I will be." "If you were shown by New Testament that your program is wrong—"?
2. Denominational authority.
 - a. Campbell says of many religionists, "The Bible is on their lips, but the creeds are in their heart."
 - b. Closer home "That church representative should be recalled—but we must stay with the organization."
3. The memory of a preacher. How about the memory of Christ?
4. The church back home. How about the church in Heaven?

B. In life.

1. Business success: "No man can serve two masters, for either he will love the one and hate the other or he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).
2. The thing that is being done, socially. What sets the standards for your conduct? and your family?
3. Self interest—promotion of the ego—this enters religion. "Pride of life."
4. Lusts of the flesh.

If you love Him, why not serve Him?