

1 Kings

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[0 : 00] The first book of Kings Chapter 8, verses 41, 42 and 43.

The first book of Kings, chapter 8, verses 41, 42 and 43. Moreover, concerning a stranger that is not to thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake, for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm.

When he shall come and pray toward this house, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for, that all people of the earth may know thy name to fear thee, as do thy people Israel.

And that they may know that this house which I have builded is called by thy name. This is a part of the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple.

And I felt that I must read the three verses, but I want to try once more to consider chiefly the first phrase in the 41st verse, moreover concerning a stranger.

[2 : 12] Perhaps it would be wise if I read the two chapters in Isaiah, or a few verses from them that we read this afternoon.

Because in the 56th chapter of Isaiah, the prophet speaks, by the inward motions of the Holy Spirit, the words of the Lord.

And there we read, Neither let the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people.

Neither let the eunuchs say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and that take hold of my covenant.

Even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls a place, and a name better than of sons and of daughters. And I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

[3 : 33] Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servant. Everyone that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant.

Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar, for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.

The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

This sets then, as it were, the context to those things that we try to speak about this afternoon. And we notice first of all, the faithfulness of God.

These gracious promises that are written in the prophet Isaiah, the Lord fulfills, and still fulfills.

[5 : 02] Dear friend, if you and I have a concern, or we have a hope, then here's a word for us, a word concerning the stranger.

We have sung in our hymn of the pathway in which we have walked, walking as strangers.

And I spoke this afternoon a little concerning the alienation that is upon everyone because of sin, and that we are indeed far off by reason of those very things.

Yet the Lord hath set before us a hope. And I mention the hope as it is declared in the book of Genesis in the Garden of Eden.

Right there the Lord sets before a hope, before the sinner. And he speaks that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and he shall bruise his heel.

[6 : 31] And in the last chapter of Malachi we read, And unto you that fear my name shall the Son of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.

God is faithful. And we try to look a little at some of the aspects of that faithfulness. Declaring that he is faithful unto himself to every attribute of the Godhead.

That there is no change, no variation, no withdrawing, no withholding, no altering in him. For he says, concerning his covenant, covenant, and he is faithful unto his covenant, as every decree, every word, every promise, I will not alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth.

And therefore there is set before us a hope, but also that view of the faithful God.

He that hath begun this good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. And what a mercy that those things have written.

[7 : 48] Particularly in the last twelve, eighteen months I've had cause to take hold upon those words that are written in Job.

From my youth I've been made thankful many times for God's appointments for me.

I'm not always like them. Sometimes I've rebelled against them. But in looking back I've been made thankful that it has been so.

But in this last few months that which Job speaks concerning God's appointment has been made more precious.

Inasmuch as the word says he performeth the thing that is appointed for me and many such things are with him and the mercy and the faithfulness of God is seen in this.

[8 : 55] He performeth the thing that is appointed for me. What a mercy that it's in his hand and that it is by his performing.

We can never be in doubt or in question when the Lord reveals his hand in a matter. or there may be many oppositions rise up within our heart within our mind but there comes a time and a place when the Lord is so teaches brings us into pathways makes us know his appointments and then as we see that he hath done it no one can take these things from us Satan will try but he can't.

There will be a time when in certain matters the Lord will enable us to say but I know. Job came there there was given unto him a confidence though worms destroy this body yet in my flesh shall I see God but upon what ground I know that my Redeemer liveth.

Well I want to just mention this one further thing we spoke of God's faithfulness in all his decrees in all his word in all his promises and also his faithfulness unto his son God gave unto his son a people and he said respecting his son and his people wherein his faithfulness is manifested he shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied there is set before us in those things the faithfulness of God and this is a word surely that concerns us if we know what it is to be far off strangers because of sin alienated and the apostle said and you who sometime were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death death and if you meditate upon those words all the faithfulness of God that is manifested in those very things in the body of his flesh through death reconciliation is made and see the faithfulness of God unto his holiness and his righteousness because he cannot pass by overlook sins against his law against himself they must be met and paid for every one of them

I sometimes wonder how long it was before I really understood that but every sin that has been committed will be charged and required at his hand and dear friend if it hath not pleased the father to lay upon him our iniquities oh how solemn for they will be required of us but the hope that is set before us is that he hath reconciled us in his own body bearing our sins in his own body on the tree and he and the lord is faithful to his love and the people that he gave unto christ he loved them and chose them before the foundation of the world he did not have recourse to man or to any created being or matter or force when he chose a people before the foundation of the world and this people he gave unto christ and he has loved them in him continually perfectly fully we sometimes sing once in him in him forever thus the eternal covenant ran and he brings his people into those places where he shows them that love and shows them in such a way that they can only wonder we spoke a little concerning

[14 : 52] Ruth this afternoon a stranger brought from a strange land even as god's word declares and that the blessings that came upon her and this evening I want to try and speak a little concerning the eunuch who also was spoken of in those verses that we read to you at the commencement and see how that the love of the lord unto his people his faithfulness to them though they're strangers though they're alienated enemies in their minds by wicked words yet he is faithful faithful to his son to whom he has given them faithful unto those that are his for his purposes are plain and clear and left for us for they shall stand holy unblameable and unreprouable in his sight and that's the measure of his love unto his people though because of sin they have so grievously dishonored him yet his love is true he is faithful and he fulfills his every word and every decree he's faithful in every matter and in every circumstance unto them while they may not even be aware that they're subjects of that love in this eighth chapter that we read together we read of Saul and Saul was consenting unto the death of

Stephen we read how that he made havoc of the church and yet the Lord says concerning that man he is a chosen vessel unto me if you think of all the advantages that Saul had if you think of the wisdom that he supposedly held the knowledge his upbringing his standing in family in sect in attendance upon the law and yet he was a stranger to God and yet the same man supposed that he did God's will dear friend if you like me have been brought up in this way being blessed with godly parents under the sound of the word from our earliest days attending the

Lord's house many things in our minds and in our understanding supposedly concerning God concerning the doctrines of grace concerning redeeming love the forgiveness of sin aren't we a little bit like Saul all the advantages but can we say we've all been brought where Saul was to have our eyes open or are we still strangers but even if we are so the Lord has a word concerning strangers see how he dealt with Saul he speaks and that almighty voice took away all that Saul had by nature solemn thing but what a mercy what a mercy for each one of us this night in this place should be favored to have our eyes open to see the inadequacy and the inability the foolishness of our own heart and mind and understanding by nature and to see that chiefly like

Saul we worship ourselves and our abilities and our knowledge and not the almighty well Saul was brought to know the Lord and we know that in consequence he had to say concerning himself in looking back oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death and there are those times when we feel our nature and our mind and all the things that we formerly held are a dead weight upon us and we need to be delivered from it and he says I thank God through

Jesus Christ our Lord you see that love unto his own in the covenant of grace in his gift unto his son of sending his son of laying upon his son the iniquities of all his people in Christ bearing them in his own body in the body of his flesh in all these things we see the faithfulness of God and the faithfulness of God unto his love even to those that are strangers because of sin and then we come to this eunuch here we have a man a black man not of Israel and yet it's evident that he has heard the name of the

[22 : 00] Lord and it's evident that he was an inquirer and that he sought to go up to Jerusalem to be a partaker with others in other things of God now when he got to Jerusalem because he was an Ethiopian literally he was a Gentile and could if the law was strictly absurd have had no place amongst the congregation of the Lord's people and also he was a eunuch and therefore was blemished and doubly so he could have had no place there he may have been in the court of the Gentiles but those things that perhaps he most desired were not to be his portion and yet it's evident that he had obtained while he was there or had obtained previously the book of the prophet

Isaiah now there must have been a certain disappointment in him as he returned and nevertheless in spite of the disappointments he was diligent for he took up the word of God to read it one thing we noticed about Ruth this afternoon was her diligence dear friend on every occasion when you and I have the ability do we take up the word of God to read it or is there something else that seems to come to our hand far more easily or that there were that diligence in each of us to take up God's word and you see he was disappointed also in this that though he read the word he couldn't understand it and I believe it is so with us from time to time we take up the word we absorb the letter and the meaning of the word but we don't understand it and yet we know from God's word that the eye of the

Lord was upon this man black blemished ignorant unsatisfied does any one of those or all of them describe you in the song of Solomon we read of one representative of the church and she said the king hath brought me into his chambers and she speaks of herself she says I am black I wonder whether we have been brought there to know what it is to be black you see if the king brings us into his chambers there will be no complacency left in us when the light of truth is brought unto us we shall know what his holiness is and our unholiness we shall know it is to be black when that word is applied we shan't only say that we are black we shall be like that woman she says look not upon me because I am black she felt it she felt the shame there was a stigma felt within her because of those very things but nevertheless the eye of the Lord was upon that man

God's faithfulness to his covenant decrees to his covenant purposes to his son and to his love is manifested in that the spirit comes forth and commands Philip to leave that prosperous place Samaria for the word was received with great joy there many were baptized days and that he should leave Samaria and go to Gaza which is desert I sometimes wondered what Philip must have felt when the spirit commanded him to go there he must have thought well there aren't going to be many people if any there it's barren it's desolate what purpose what end I can't see the purpose but led of the spirit he went and God's faithfulness in all these things surely runs through every line of the record when he comes near where the eunuch is he hears him reading the word now I've always been impressed by the question that Philip asked the eunuch of old understandest thou what thou redest of all the many things of all the many states and frames and degrees of understanding that that man might have had he comes to the very point to the chief matter the chief complaint of the eunuch at this time was that he couldn't understand and when the spirit moves

Philip and brings him there he comes and he puts his finger immediately on the most pressing matter understandest thou what thou readest dear friend I believe that in the Lord's dealings with his people we see his faithfulness in those very things we read this afternoon my thoughts and not your thoughts neither are my ways your ways said the Lord and he sets forth the grandness the largeness the glory of his own thoughts and of his own ways above ours and oh how he shows his understanding and his love and his wisdom and his grace and he comes and he touches the very matter and I'm sure that the eunuch must have looked up as it were when this man that has appeared immediately touches the thing that concerns him most of all but see the spirit of willingness and of understanding or desire to understand in that eunuch's breast how can

[30 : 19] I dear friend are there times when the Lord has brought you to confess your own impotence your own inability and to plead for need to be satisfied as the eunuch did for he said how can I accept some man should guide me there's much in our own heart that would rise up against these very things but there is a time in God's faithfulness when he removes all those matters out of the way they shall be willing and in those things also we see his faithfulness to his decrees to his purposes to his song to his covenant to his love they shall be willing and it is perhaps necessary to just mention this that our

Lord points out no man cometh unto me except the father draw him oh how necessary that the faithfulness of God is both seen and acknowledged in every step of the way the father the son and the holy spirit each equally and of one heart and purpose are engaged in the salvation of every one of his dear children well when Philip had so questioned and the man required that he should come up and sit with him and he was reading at that place he was led as a sheep to the slaughter and like a lamb dumb before her shearer so open and he not his mouth and the word that the eunuch says then to Philip

I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this of himself or of some other man now it was obvious that he had no knowledge or understanding of God's covenant purposes in Christ Jesus the Lord then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus you see the purposes of God concerning the stranger I will gather or does it encourage you to hope and then to plead with the Lord concerning your own self though a stranger it brings to my mind some of the lines in hymn 199 Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering from the fold of

God he saw this black man he saw every one of his children in their need and has provided for them and those to whom he will bring unto himself holy blameless unreprouvable in his sight in Christ Jesus the Lord he draws he appoints he's faithful to his love and they are brought to come and hope and trust and depend upon Christ Jesus the Lord now it's impossible in one service to try and express the things that Philip must have spoken concerning

Christ but I believe he must have spoken unto him of the atonement of the reconciliation that is made ye who sometimes were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death and there is another word and it seems to be most sweet to me at times he his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree what a word that is he his own self oh and in those words we see the faithfulness of God concerning a stranger we see all the mercies of God we see all the compassion of God we see all the wisdom of God we see all the love of God

[36 : 09] I believe that Philip would have spoken also unto the eunuch concerning the testimony that John gave concerning Christ when he came into the world and the authority upon which these things were spoken for we know that John declared that he that sent him to baptize with water said unto him that upon whomsoever the spirit descended in the form of a dove and abode upon him this was he and John said and I saw and bear record that this is the son of God God now Philip must have spoken of all the fullness of the God head that was in Christ

Jesus the Lord and I believe there is a wondrous joy when the spirit enables us in some measure to perceive that fullness that is in Christ Jesus the Lord I know that we often think of that fullness in Christ relationship unto the church a fullness resides in Jesus our head and ever abides to answer our need but you know there is a fullness in him that does not consist in that particular aspect he is the fullness of the God head bodily that is every essence of the God head every attribute in all its fullness he is unto his people he is in all things

God God has purposed that his children shall have everlasting life and the scripture says and this life is in his son now the essence of life is in the God head and the fullness of that essence is Christ Jesus the Lord by his word we are begotten but not only the fullness of life the fullness of light he is that true light that came into the world but not only the fullness of light he is the fullness of truth when he came into the world it is written concerning him full of truth and grace dear friend if you meditate upon those things what faithfulness

God hath manifested in sending his son the essence of the God head not a shadow of it not a part of it but the fullness of the God head he is and therefore those words that he speaks consider that they are the father's words I find a particular joy in reading some of those things that Jesus said unto the poor and needy sinners that had resorted unto him when he said unto that woman thy sins have forgiven thee he declares the words that thou gavest me

I have given unto them the father's words the essence of the Godhead is in every matter in every respect and so it was Jesus the lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world he whom John perceived and saw in that draw glory behold the lamb of God and I believe also he was brought to perceive and see Jesus the son of God the essence of the Godhead for when he came to the water and he said to Philip see here is water what doth hinder me to be baptized and

[41 : 26] Philip says if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest and he answered and said I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God oh what a wondrous thing that the Lord hath brought the stranger to see and to know the fullness of the Godhead bodily in Christ Jesus to perceive him as the redemption of his people to trust in his precious blood and when they had fulfilled the ordinance the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip and the eunuch saw him no more but he went on his way rejoicing the stranger the disappointed the black the ignorant the

Lord had gathered him the Lord had shown him the Lord had blessed him he wasn't dependent upon Philip for his joy his joy was in the son of God the Lord in his faithfulness have gathered in the stranger all that you and I might be so favored if it is his will Amen God you