

DYNAMIC OR PROPHETIC HISTORY

We need to understand the books of Kings in the context of the former prophets as a blast against materialism and the way of “bread alone”. History is not like that! The His-story of Israel in Kings is not what passes today as “history”. We seek facts and have categories for the analysis and understanding of facts. However the missing category is “**prophecy**” and especially in Israel’s history as in that of the world indeed it is a sore loss.

Again and again the writer – possibly Jeremiah – says “it happened” but he uses the verb “to be” [yhyw] in association with the dynamism of that Hebrew verb which carries with it the notion of “God at work within” as the LORD himself used it in explaining his being to Moses saying “I will be that I will be”. He was emphasising then that all through the future He would be in action for Israel and worldwide.

There are at least 52 such references in the book of 2Kings. Let me take a few examples to demonstrate what I mean by what I have come to own as “prophetic reality” or the world as it is in God’s hands.

Go to Chapter 4 and watch the wife of one of the sons of the prophets fill her pots from the seemingly endless oil that came from her remaining vessel. The writer says “It was real” – it was happening – God was at work. What he promised was dynamically occurring – as “Word-Act”- as **prophetic reality**.

Sometimes as in Chapter 5 the LORD is dynamically at work as in the life of the maid who advises Naaman’s wife of the healing available through the prophet Elisha. The writer points out that even the king of Israel is oblivious of the blessing he has in his state but somehow the LORD got the news to Elisha – dynamically working despite this king.

In Chapter 6 another fine example can be seen in the “reality” of the opening of the eyes of the Syrians – a further dynamic miracle of these times when the LORD confirmed His word with signs following.

Later in that chapter a mighty famine gripped Samaria but God was with his people and preparing a mighty miracle which we read of as Chapter 7 opens “Behold, scripture says, “If the LORD should be making windows in heaven could this become **REALITY** that a measure of wheat and two of barley would be priced at a shekel”

In Chapter 8 we read that the LORD advised Hazael through Elisha that he had murder in his heart. He denied he would ever act in such a way but the very next day according to the word of God he smothered his monarch with a wet cloth.

In Chapter 10 Jehu brings the end of the house of Ahab about in exactly the completeness of judgment pronounced by the LORD (see verses 8-11)

The equivalent wonder of the divine preservation of life is seen in the 6 year stay of the child Joash in the temple during Athaliah’s reign of terror in Chapter 11.1-3

The rare judgment by man-eating lions in Chapter 17 brought about a situation where the Babylonian king actually sent a Jewish priest to instruct Samaria about the LORD so they might please Him and be free from this judgment.

In Chapter 20 witness the **REALITY** of divine protection and judgment as the Angel of the LORD strikes Sennacherib. Scripture says “It was real in that night”.

Take Chapter 22 and imagine the young king Josiah sitting listening to the word of God and tearing his robes as Hilkiyah read out what God expected. This deep reality of revival in the heart of the king stirred a signal “clean-up” within the realm which marked a high point in Judah’s history.

Look finally at the development of “**prophetic reality**” as the LORD disciplines His people by the judgment of Nebuchadnezzar –through the captives themselves even that king is brought low before God – and the beautiful reality of divine care is shown as the book ends by the raising of the head of Jehoiachin by Evil Merodach who must have learned so much from the story of Daniel and the Hebrew children.

There has to be a difference between secular history so-called and the story of God and God- in- Christ. Edward Gibbon in his “Decline and fall of the Roman Empire” paid attention to moral decline and divine judgment. Few historians will sue such categories and they write as if events have their own material momentum without any interposition of the Almighty. The Books of Jewish history cry out “It is not so”.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the LORD
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored
He will whet the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword
Our God is marching on

In short, everywhere in Kings you will be reminded of the Angels of Gods and the prophetic word and the fact that His service and worship matter most. No store of wealth or force of arms can stem judgment once the LORD has spoken. Sin is heinous and as ever “righteousness exalts a nation and sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14.34)

If 2Kings teaches anything it teaches that God serves warning on men and nations. He is most compassionate on those who turn to Him but his judgment on sin is inexorable. We live in an age ripe for judgment and yet one blessed without parallel by the light of divine revelation and world-wide gospel proclamation. The outworking of that is now in train is the glorious gathering home of the people of God in the harvest of the ages whilst the field of tares will abide for the bleakest of days and the severest of judgments ever to fall on man since the deluge. Man will pay a phenomenal price for being secular – for forgetting God. This book is essential reading for those who are prepared to look at history at length who have some sense as many now have of the gathering storm about to break on the human race-the **prophetic reality** of the last days of which our LORD spoke in the Apocalypse.

The conclusion we have to reach is that whilst the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel and Kings are viewed as histories they are firmly set in a scriptural context as “**the former prophets**”. The Jews believe that Kings in large part comes from the pen of Jeremiah which serves to enforce the prophetic stance of this literature.

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