

The Prophet Ahijah

Bible Characters

By Bob Vincent

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Trinity Presbyterian Church
2623 N Robison Road
Texarkana, TX 75501

Website: www.rbvincent.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/rbvincent

So today our Scripture is taken from 1 Kings 14, and that's on page 549, and for one part of it I put the King James Version in your bulletin, the only truly honest translation. I'll tell you why later. Page 549, 1 Kings 14:1.

1 At that time Abijah son of Jeroboam became ill, 2 and Jeroboam said to his wife, 'Go, disguise yourself, so you won't be recognized as the wife of Jeroboam. Then go to Shiloh. Ahijah the prophet is there—the one who told me I would be king over this people. 3 Take ten loaves of bread with you, some cakes and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the boy.' 4 So Jeroboam's wife did what he said and went to Ahijah's house in Shiloh. Now Ahijah could not see; his sight was gone because of his age. 5 But the LORD had told Ahijah, 'Jeroboam's wife is coming to ask you about her son, for he is ill, and you are to give her such and such an answer. When she arrives, she will pretend to be someone else.' 6 So when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps at the door, he said, 'Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why this pretense? I have been sent to you with bad news. 7 Go, tell Jeroboam that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I raised you up from among the people and made you a leader over my people Israel. 8 I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, but you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my eyes. 9 You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have provoked me to anger and thrust me behind your back. 10 Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam

every last male in Israel—slave or free. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone. 11 Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country. The LORD has spoken!’ 12 As for you, go back home. When you set foot in your city, the boy will die. 13 All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried, because he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the LORD, the God of Israel, has found anything good.

The word of the Lord. [“Praise be to God.”]

May we pray.

Lord, help me to be clear and concise and compelling to present this material in such a way that, though it has a number of points, every single person listening to this can follow along and understand. Help me, Lord, because I have no ability left to myself. Through Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Ahijah was a blind man who could see (1 Kings 14:4-5).

Well, I want you to notice the first thing here is that a blind man can see and that’s an interesting thing. It says here that Ahijah, the prophet there in the first paragraph after verse 4 on page 549, could not see, his sight was gone because of his age.

I remember when my pastor, who was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Middle Beach, South Carolina, had cataract surgery, and he had eyeglasses that looked like the bottoms of a Coca-Cola bottle. That’s because when you had cataract surgery then, they simply removed the lens and corrected it externally.

I’m really grateful that I don’t have that and that my cataract surgery works well because this special lens that they inserted about nine years ago is working well. And Sandy, thank God, will have a correction, God willing, on Monday. The glasses that have been fitted for her will be in, and she’ll be able to see with crystal clarity. I’m very grateful for that.

But in the old days, what happened when you had cataracts? Your lens became cloudier and cloudier, began to turn white, and you couldn’t see, and

so that's what the situation was with Ahijah the prophet who lived in Shiloh. He couldn't see.

But notice here, in spite of the fact that he couldn't see, by divine revelation, he could see, and so God revealed to him that the wife of Jeroboam, coming in disguised (Why disguise yourself to a blind man?), coming in. He had a message for her.

Only the good die young (1 Kings 14:13).

The second point I want to make is this, and that is what you find at the bottom of the page, verse 13, 1 Kings 14:13:

As for you, go back home. When you set foot in your city, the boy will die. All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried, because he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the LORD, the God of Israel, has found anything good. (1 Kings 14:13)

Isn't that an interesting thought? We often look at the death of a person who's quite young and we say, "What a tragedy." Have you ever thought that an early death is a blessing? I've had to bury a number of young people over the years and people say, "Why?"

And I have one answer to that, because you have no way of knowing nor do I have a way of knowing what that person might end up doing if they lived long enough. If we learn anything at all in this series that I'm doing, picking up on the kings of Judah and of Israel, you discover this: many people who began well ended poorly. Many people who began following the Lord ended up being apostates.

"Don't you believe in the security of the believer, Bob?"

I do. But part of the security of the believer is the internal working of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace, that is, sitting under the preaching of the word, singing, and praying with God's people, those things. God uses means to keep us saved. It's not like, "Well, I got saved."

I remember an atheist telling me this years ago. A person was sent to me for counseling—and a lot of people over the years, about a thousand people were sent to me for counseling for one reason: I never charged or accepted any money for counseling. So when you're free, you get a lot of clients. And so I began to talk to her, and I began to talk to her in terms of her need to commit her life to Christ. Now she told me she was an atheist. She didn't believe in God. She said, "Oh, I've done that. I walked the aisle, and I shook the preacher's hand. I'm a Christian. I just don't believe in God, but I'm a Christian."

Are you kidding me? No, she was as serious as a heart attack, and that's pretty serious. So there she was, "I took care of that, and it's kind of like I went in and did this, and it's all over. I've got my 'fire insurance policy' here. It's signed and sealed by the preacher."

But God uses things to keep us saved, and one of the things God uses to keep us saved is that he, in his providence, so engineers our lives that he keeps us from situations that would cause us to abandon Christ.

And you say, "Well, that just sounds odd."

Well, it does until you understand that God's providence is also a part of his preserving us in Christ so that we don't fall away, and so that none of God's own will ever be lost, but part of that is due to the fact that God in his providence engineers our lives.

So that you notice this with Jeroboam's son. He died young. Why did he die young? God spared him the terrible covenant judgments that were coming on the house of Jeroboam, because Jeroboam had turned his back on God, and so only the good die young.

Never forget that when you stand over the grave of a child. God took this child home to heaven, home to heaven, home to heaven, because I will tell you this, having talked with someone who's been there, heaven is a place where you forget about life on this earth, because the joy of the Lord is so intense, so great, that what was on earth no longer matters.

And so here is the deal, an early death is an enormous blessing. I pray for people, particularly I have a pastor friend down in a place called San Benito, on the Rio Grande River, and he's a pastor, Tom Johnson.

Tom was born of Southern Presbyterian missionaries and was raised in Mexico, and now he has bone cancer. That's a terrible thing to have. How do you get comfortable with bone cancer? And his wife, Rosalinda, is very small, and she's not able to lift him, and so their needs are not only in terms of money needs, but also for physical help, and they have a mentally challenged son, Tommy Jr.

So I think of that. Oh, I don't want to die of bone cancer. I'd like not to die at all. Maybe the Lord will return today on the 25th day of February. But this is the thing, never look at the death of someone who is young as a tragedy.

We hurt; they don't.

So that's the second thing that I would see here.

Why does God himself use crude language, and why do modern translations attempt to wash out God's mouth? (1 Kings 14:10).

Now we see this point three, I would say, and there in verse 10:

Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel—slave or free. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone. (1 Kings 14:10)

Now, you know, this is an interesting thing. Have you ever thought about somebody wanting to wash God's mouth out with soap? I want that to sink in for a moment. I want you to understand something: all modern translations wash God's mouth out with soap. Let that sink in.

The King James Version is the most accurate here, as it is over and over again. I love the King James Version. I realize that thou thinkest not and speakest not as those did in the days of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. But it has so many beautiful things about it.

For example, when God says to someone in the Bible, "You need to do this," is he saying, "you," singular or "you," plural? And in the King James Version, it's distinguished, "Thou needs to do this; ye need to do this." And so I like that, and I realize the language is archaic, and it goes over our heads

in some ways, and there's some textual matters that go into it, but this is what it actually says. There's this strange phrase that is found about six times in the Hebrew Bible (1 Samuel 25:22, 34; 1 Kings 14:10; 16:11; 21:21; 2 Kings 9:8).

How does the Hebrew Bible describe a male? And this has something to do with gender studies, by the way. This has something with understanding what a male is as over against a female. What is it that males do, that females—unless they're masters of gymnastics—cannot do?

And in Hebrew, it's literally, urinate against the wall: מִשְׁתַּיִן בְּקִיר.

יִשׁוּן/shyn: “to pass water, urinate, always with בְּקִיר” (Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner (1958), *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill), p. 1479)

Urinate against the wall.

What is a male? The Hebrew Bible tells us that males can urinate against a wall. And if you've ever been camping or other things, you'll see sometimes they try to mark things.

So isn't that odd? Now notice, this isn't like when David says regarding Nabal, the fool (נָבָל/nābāl), “I would have done this to Nabal” (1 Samuel 25:22). And he says it again when Nabal's wife comes riding to him and pleads with him, “Please don't kill us and wipe us out. My husband's a fool.” (1 Samuel 25:25)

And David said, “Well, I'm so glad you came here because otherwise I would have wiped out all the males” (1 Samuel 25:34). He's using this language.

But I want you to know who says this. Who says this? It's Almighty God, our Holy God, our Heavenly Father, Yahweh Sabaoth (תְּשֻׁבָה/שְׁבָא' ôṭ), the Lord of hosts, himself says this is what he's going to do and I'm going to read it there from the King James Version, which is in your bulletin, 1 Kings 14:10:

Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the

wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken it. (1 Kings 14:10-11, KJV)

So this is God. I shudder as one who reads Greek—a chapter of Greek every day—and reads Hebrew every day—I shudder when I think of translating God’s holy, infallible, and inerrant word that I would ever whitewash God’s word.

Now, it’s crude. Why would God use crude language? God uses crude language to get a point across. Think about it. God uses crude language to get a point across.

Is it cussing? No, it’s not cussing at all.

He is stating something in graphic, powerful terms to get the attention of Jeroboam who has defied God again and again and again.

Jeroboam's wife is given a horrible burden (1 Kings 14:12).

Now I want you to think about a mother’s love with me for a moment. My father used to tell me, “Boy, nobody’ll ever love you like your mama.”

And I thought, “Daddy, you mean you don’t love me?”

But he would say to me, “Boy, nobody’ll ever love you like your mama,” and I believe that’s true.

The love of a mother is a different kind of a love than a love from a father, because a mother’s love is shaped by the nine months of gestation in the womb and the birth. There is a bond between a mother and a child, whether a son or a daughter, that is not the same as the bond between a father and a child. It’s different. It’s different because God made human beings different.

It’s not simply the plumbing that’s different between men and women; it’s the wiring that’s different between men and women. And I want to say, in our time, in our insane culture today, where we obliterate this distinction,

and only a lunatic will deny this, God made males and females to be different in the wiring and in the plumbing.

And this mother's love, this love of this mother for her son—look at the burden that Ahijah the prophet has put on her. And notice what he says here as he says there on page 549, he said, verse 12, “As for you, go back home” (1 Kings 14:12).

Look at the next sentence, “When you set foot in your city, the boy will die” (1 Kings 14:12).

What would you have done? Can you imagine the burden on this poor woman? The moment you put your feet in the city, the boy's going to die. I would have been tempted to take a pilgrimage to Mecca, not to Mecca, to Jerusalem. I would have been tempted to take a vacation. I would have been tempted to do any number of things. Why?

Because we fail to understand that life in this world is nothing that could be compared in the life in the world to come (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

So while we do not mourn for the child, in terms of the child's welfare, we mourn for ourselves. This poor woman knows that the moment she sets foot in the city, though she is the queen over Israel, the northern kingdom, her son is going to die. What an awful burden that she bore. And so she goes home.

Ahijah announces the curse sanctions of God's covenant with Israel in 1 Kings 14:11 (Deuteronomy 28:26).

Now then we notice something else and what we notice here is that Jeroboam is being visited with the curse sanctions of the law of God found in the Torah, the Torah, the first five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And in Leviticus 26 and in Numbers 28, we have curse sanctions where God says to the Jewish people—well they're not really the Jewish people at that point, they're the children of Jacob, the children of Israel, the Jewish people are from the tribe of Judah, and so he says to the children of Jacob as he enters into covenant with them at the foot of Mount Sinai, he gives them covenant blessings and covenant curses.

And then just before—40 years later, after the generation that refused to obey God dies out in the wilderness, that is the males do (Numbers 32:10-13). And finally, they are able to enter in the Promised Land, there on the plains of Moab, there before they cross the Jordan River, we have a second giving of the law, the book of Deuteronomy.

It means second law (Literally “Second + Law,” δεύτερος + νόμος / deúteros + nómos. Δευτερονόμιον, ου, τό Deuteronomy title in the LXX for the last book of the Pentateuch (Frederick William Danker, ed. (2000), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Third edition (Chicago/London: Chicago University Press), p. 220).

And so he renews that, and if you’ll turn for a moment to Deuteronomy chapter 28, you’ll see this curse right here, and he says in Deuteronomy 28, and that’s page 315, that’s Deuteronomy 28 and verse 25. Deuteronomy 28:25, page 315:

The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth. (Deuteronomy 28:25)

Look at verse 26:

Your carcasses will be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away. (Deuteronomy 28:26)

Now read on:

The LORD will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind. At midday you will grope about like a blind man in the dark. You will be unsuccessful in everything you do; day after day you will be oppressed and robbed, with no one to rescue you. (Deuteronomy 28:27-28)

Wow! That’s a curse. God said that to the people of Israel, both the Jewish people and the other tribes. He said, “If you don’t live up to this, if you turn

your back on me, this is what I'm going to do to you, I'm going to clean your plow."

And that includes any promise to the land. It includes anything that any Jewish person might say, "Well, I have a right to this."

No, you do not because if you have not come under the blessings of the covenant, you're under the curses of the covenant still.

That's frightening to think about, isn't it?

How does God visit our iniquity on our children? (Exodus 20:4-6)

Can you imagine being under the curses of a covenant your ancestors entered into in the year 1446 before Christ? Can you imagine that? Can you imagine being under the curses of a covenant that was renewed in 1406, just before they crossed over into the Promised Land?

And I want to say this, of every person who claims to be Jewish or of Israel, unless they're under the blessings of the covenant, they're under the curses of the covenant, and those curses are horrible. They're terrible. "I'll make you a horror" (Deuteronomy 28:25). That's what he says.

So we come back here to 1 Kings chapter 14, and we're told this is what's going to happen, and part of that is why because he says in verse 9, 1 Kings 14:9, page 549:

You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have provoked me to anger and thrust me behind your back. (1 Kings 14:9)

Think of what does it mean to thrust God behind your back? What does it mean to thrust somebody behind your back? If you've got a leader, you want to follow the leader. God says to his people at the foot of Mount Sinai and on the plains of Moab, "Follow me." But what he's saying that Jeroboam did is, Jeroboam says, "Get out of the way, old man!"

That's really what he's saying, "Get out of the way! You're blocking my way!" God's standing in the way. God's saying, "Follow me, do this,"

because the way of following the Lord is the way of real blessing, not just material blessing, but peace in your heart.

Think of how many people who are wealthy who live in fear. I remember one day visiting an extremely wealthy lady who was a member of my church, and it was shortly before she died, and I visited her in Rapids Regional Hospital which used to be called Baptist Hospital.

And I'm there and she says this to me, "You know I've been lying here, and I realized that somebody could come in this room, and they could take a cloth with ether, and put it over my face, and then put me on a cart and cover me and take me out of here and kidnap me that way."

And I thought to myself, "You know, Mrs. Florence, I don't ever worry about that."

Just think about it. The great blessing of blessings is peace in your heart (Philippians 4:7).

It's being able to be free of fear. It's confidence God's going to take care of me.

But Jereboam wants to go his own way, "Get out of my way! Get out of my way, God!" And he thrusts him behind his back because he wants to do his own will. I'm struck with that.

So what do you do when a curse is on you?

And I'm thinking here particularly of people who may be watching this on the internet, what do you do if you had ancestors who were there when Jesus was crucified and you said, "His blood be on us **and on our children!**" (Matthew 27:25)

What a dreadful thing to say. Have you ever thought about the crazy things people say when they're mad? Have you ever thought about the crazy things you may have said when you're all emotionally upset? Wow!

What do you do if you're watching this today and you have ancestors under the curses of the covenant?

Can we stop such a curse? (Proverbs 26:2; Galatians 3:13-14; 1 John 1:8-10)

We're going to quickly look at three verses. First turn to Proverbs chapter 26 and verse 2. Proverbs 26 verse 2. How do you break a curse? God says that he will "visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me" (Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 5:9). God said that.

And then he turns around and said, "but I'll bless to a thousand generations those who love me" (Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10).

So look at Proverbs 26:2, and I've preached this before, page 1,023:

Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest. (Proverbs 26:2)

And I have a whole sermon on that that we don't need to go over, but the point is, just like a bird that would get loose in this building is going to try to find a place to light. And I would imagine, were I a bird, I'd be alighting up there just over Mrs. Wanda. And so a bird's looking for a place to light. A darting, a fluttering sparrow, a darting sparrow, a swallow, an undeserved curse.

How do you get where you don't deserve a curse? How do you do that? Well, I think there's a very clear answer to how you get where you don't deserve a curse anymore. Turn with me, if you would, to the book of Galatians over in the New Testament, Galatians chapter 3. Galatians chapter 3. Here's how you get that curse to the point where you no longer deserve it. Galatians chapter 3, and we look here at verse 13, Galatians 3:13, and that is page 1,812.

So here's the curse flying out here (Zechariah 5:1-4), flying out from 1406 BC, flying out since 1406 BC, flying out since 30 AD —AD 30, and here we are in 2024, 25th of January. How do you get out from under deserving that curse because it's passed down generationally, the third and fourth generation of those who hate me. And this is what it says, and this is so precious, Galatians 3:13, page 1,812.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.' He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.
(Galatians 3:13-4)

Think of that for a moment. Do you see what's packed into that short passage?

How can a Jewish person go from being cursed to being blessed? How can an Israeli go from being cursed to being blessed? How can a person whose ancestors follow a line down from 1446, 1406 to AD 30, living today, get out from under that curse?

And the answer is crystal clear.

This is what the Bible says, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13).

I don't know about you, but I am so glad for the Lord Jesus Christ. He took that curse that I deserve. He took that curse that my children deserve and that my grandchildren deserve passed down through the generations. He took that curse on himself as he hung on the cross because cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.

I'm so thankful for Jesus. Jesus is the only hope for a Jewish person. Jesus is the only hope for a Gentile person. Jesus is the only hope as I think about where I was this past week studying these things, he's the only hope for every nation, tribe, and people, Revelation 7:9.

He's the only hope for anyone, for our neighbors, for those who are African-American, for those who are Asian-American, for those who are Native American, and for those of us that are just **non-hyphenated in our own mind**. He's the only hope. Why?

Because he became a curse, and he became a curse with the result that what? Look at what he says there in verse 14,

He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. (Galatians 3:14)

Isn't that a wonderful thing? I'm so glad that I belong to Jesus because whether you're Jewish or Gentile, that's the heart of the matter. You know, as I pray for peace in the Middle East, having been there, as I pray for peace among the warring tribes of Abraham, the children of Abraham, because you do understand that virtually the entire Middle East, virtually the entire Middle East, all of Arabia, and the countries related to it, as well as what we call Palestine, which is Latin from Philistine (Pălaestīnă, Genesis 21:33 *et al.*), the entire Middle East, they're all children of Abraham (Genesis 25:1-6, 12-16; 36:1-43). Isn't that amazing?

And they hate each other. Have you ever seen hatred in a family where brother won't speak to brother? Like Ishmael, like Jacob and Esau.

Esau is just waiting for the old man to die, because he says, "As soon as my daddy's dead, I'm going to kill my brother" (Genesis 27:41-45), because he hated him so much.

You look at our world, what's the solution? The solution to the misery in the Middle East, which will not end—as God is my witness, it's going to go on and on and on and on—without divine intervention. The solution is at the foot of a cross because Jesus died on the cross to break those curses over Jews and Gentiles, ancestral curses and judgments, coming down my bloodline, coming down Sandy's bloodline, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children of the third and fourth generation of those who despise me. And Jesus died to take that away.

And the last verse, I'll simply quote, and that is, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

If you're watching today or you're here today in this auditorium and you say to me, "Bob, I don't have sin in my life. I had an experience with God, and I don't sin anymore."

Well, you're self-deceived. Anybody who believes they don't still have sin is self-deceived. It's a form of insanity because if you really know your own

heart, then you have to come to grips with the fact that, “I am a deeply flawed human being.”

And I’m saying that of myself. I’m deeply flawed. How about you? If I’m deeply flawed and I stand in a pulpit, how about you? We’re all deeply flawed. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. The truth isn’t in us.

But verse 9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

So right now, where you are, won’t you, in the sanctuary of your own heart acknowledge to God the sins that you are aware of and ask him to show you the sins of which you are not aware, and then will you believe the gospel and trust him that the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses us from all sin.

And then the final verse, verse 10, “If we say we have not sinned,” and there are very few people that will say that, “I’ve never sinned. I’ve never sinned.” Very few people will say that. “If we say we have not sinned, we make him to be a liar” (1 John 1:10).

If you say you’ve never sinned, you’re calling God a liar. Wow!

So here’s the whole thing in a nutshell.

Ahijah’s terrible message. What a message to a mother, “The day you walk into the city, your child’s going to die.”!

But only the good die young.

And then this man who was blind had such insight and the curses of the covenant coming down on Jeroboam and a lack of burial. Jeroboam and his male posterity were not buried. Only one descendant of Jeroboam was buried, and that was this boy, because the Lord saw something in that boy.

And would to God that you who are watching would be able to come to that point in your life where you say, “Lord, I give you everything. Not my will. Don’t ever let me push you behind me and say, ‘Get out of my way, God. I want to go my way.’”

May God grant you to say to him, “Lord Jesus, where you lead me, I’ll follow. I don’t know what you’re going to lead me to do, but I’m willing to follow you today.

Whatever you ask of me, Lord, it’s going to be hard. I don’t know how I’m going to have the strength to do it. Would you give me the grace to follow you, Lord, and not to push you behind me?

Because if I push you behind me, I’ve brought down a terrible curse on my head and on the head of those who were descended from me from this point on. God grant it not be so, for Jesus’ sake.”

May we pray.

Lord, take these feeble words of mine and write your word on our hearts that we may find in Jesus everything we need. For Jesus’ sake, amen.