

“Mercy in Christ Alone”
2 Kings 13:1-13
(Preached at Trinity, May 22, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We've spent the last several chapters on the affairs of the Southern Kingdom. Of Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram who married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. After the righteous reign of Jehoshaphat, Judah began a rapid slide towards the wickedness that had plagued Israel since Jeroboam.
2. With the death of Ahaziah, Athaliah manipulated herself to the throne and killed all of the heirs to the throne. God's covenant would not be undone and Joash was seated on the throne. At the close of **Chapter 12** we read that Joash's forty-year reign came to an end as he was assassinated in retaliation for the death of the son of Jehoiada.
3. As we enter **Chapter 13** our attention is directed back to Israel—the Northern Kingdom.
2 Kings 13:1 NAU - "In the twenty-third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu became king over Israel at Samaria, *and he reigned* seventeen years."
 - a. This will be the pattern through **Chapter 17**. The author directs our attention to the northern kings with only brief digressions to cover the parallel history of Judah. Each of Israel's kings were described: "He did evil in the sight of the LORD." The main purpose of this section is to cover the last days of Israel.
 - b. As this chapter begins, we are taken back in time to the twenty-third year of Joash's forty-year reign to describe the reign of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu. His reign lasted 17 years.
His reign was typical of Israel's kings:
2 Kings 13:2 NAU - "He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel sin; he did not turn from them."
 - c. God's anger continued to be kindled against Israel. He gave them over to the Arameans.
2 Kings 13:3 NAU - "He gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Aram, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael."
4. In **Verse 9** the author tells us of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, who succeeded him to the throne. We again find kings of the Northern and Southern kingdoms bearing the same name.
2 Kings 13:9 NAU - "And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria; and Joash his son became king in his place."
 - a. His reign lasted for sixteen years.
 - b. And like the other Northern kings, his reign was characterized by wickedness. In fact, that is the full sum of his sixteen years on the throne – "He did evil."

2 Kings 13:11 NAU - "He did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not turn away from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel sin, but he walked in them."

- c. The author does include two episodes in his reign. First, the author tells us briefly us about the war between Joash and Amaziah, king of Judah – **Verse 12**, but he doesn't elaborate. Second, in **Verses 14-19** were told of the interchange between him and Elisha as the prophet lie on his deathbed. We find his half-hearted response to Elisha and his implied warfare with Syria.
5. These were wicked kings. We must remember the reason God did not destroy them. He remembers covenant. We also need to remember the promise that God made with Jehu for his faithfulness in destroying the house of Ahab.

2 Kings 10:30 NAU - "The LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in executing what is right in My eyes, *and* have done to the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in My heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel."

These verses cover the first two generations. In the midst of God's anger over their sin, He demonstrated mercy and forbearance.

6. We read in **Verse 3** that the affliction of Hazael, king of the Arameans, was the direct result of God's judgment.

2 Kings 13:3 NAU - "So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Aram"

- a. But then we find something that seems unusual. Jehoahaz prayed for God's favor and God heard. Does God hear the prayers of the wicked? What does Proverbs 28:9 tell us?

Proverbs 28:9 NAU - "He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination."

- b. What we see here is consistent with what we saw during the period of the judges. **Judges 2:13-16 NAU** - " So they forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. ¹⁴ The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around *them*, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. ¹⁵ Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed. ¹⁶ Then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them."

Judges 2:19 NAU - "But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways."

Judges 3:9 NAU - "When the sons of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them"

- c. This pattern was repeated over and over. Israel would fall into sin. God would bring His judgment upon them through the raising up of an enemy to oppress them. Israel would cry out to God for relief. God would show mercy in raising up a deliver to defeat their enemy. They would then enjoy a season of peace. But when the judge died the pattern would repeat.

7. The amazing thing is that God would come to them in the midst of their idolatry. God sent the adversary to bring them to repentance and He would hear them when they cried out. So, does God hear the prayers of the wicked today?

I. We have to understand the nature of the Old Covenant

A. The Old Covenant had one primary purpose. It was designed to point to God's redemptive purpose.

1. God made a series of covenants. Each were foreshadows to the fulfillment in Christ.

The Adamic Covenant – the covenant of works.

The Noahic Covenant – in the context of a sinful world God would show mercy by not destroying it until the coming Messiah.

The Abrahamic Covenant – the promise of a people, a land, and a deliverer

The Mosaic Covenant – God gave His Law to His covenant people – a Law they could not keep. He also gave the ceremonial law that pointed to the work of Christ.

The Davidic Covenant – The promise of an everlasting Kingdom – also fulfilled in Christ.

2. Israel was designed as a picture of God's elect people and a picture of God's covenant faithfulness even in the midst of a sinful people.

Israel also pointed to the reality of a faithful remnant in the midst of a rebellious people.

3. The Old Covenant contained foreshadows, all of which were designed to point to the fullness in Christ.

a. For example, the sacrificial system pointed to the matter of sin and forgiveness, of the need for atonement through the shedding of blood, of the matter of substitution. This was foreshadowed through the sacrifice of bulls and goats. These were not meant to be the fullness. They were only foreshadows.

b. The fullness was Christ.

Hebrews 9:7-15 NAU - "the high priest *enters* once a year, not without *taking* blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. ⁸ The Holy Spirit *is* signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, ⁹ which *is* a symbol for the present time. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, ¹⁰ since they *relate* only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. ¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; ¹² and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will

the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹⁵ For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant,"

- B. In the Old Covenant God's people obeyed according to the knowledge they had
1. They obeyed the ceremonial law because it was handed down by God. They did not yet understand the fullness.
 2. This is testimony to God's progressive revelation. God showed mercy as they obeyed according to the knowledge they had.
 3. So, when they prayed God heard them according to His covenant relationship with them. When they cried out to Him he heard.
Exodus 3:9 NAU - "Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel (i.e. the sons of Jacob=covenant) has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them."
 4. We know of God's words to Solomon on the day he dedicated the Temple:
2 Chronicles 7:14-15 NAU - "and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ¹⁵ "Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer *offered* in this place."

II. What about today? What impact has the New Covenant had?

- A. The New Covenant contains the fullness
1. All the types and shadows have been accomplished in Christ. All has been revealed in Christ. God's people are drawn near through Christ.
Jeremiah 31:31-34 NAU - "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
 2. We are the people of God in Christ
- B. In the Old Covenant God was patient towards their ignorance
Acts 17:30 NAU - "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent"
1. Today men are held to a higher accountability because they have greater knowledge. It in no way implies that the Gentiles were innocent of their idolatry. It does remind us that for thousands of years the revelation of God was cloaked in mystery from the Gentiles – the Gospel of Christ was not known.

2. Now, however, as He has made His redemption plain in Christ, He commands all men everywhere to repent.
 - a. The time of ignorance is over.
 - b. To refuse to bow now is to make a mockery of Christ.
If God holds those who have received greater knowledge at a greater accountability how terrible will it be on the day of judgment for those who have heard the Gospel today?
- C. Jesus Christ is fully declared to be Lord and King
The Gospel is plainly revealed. God commands all men everywhere to repent.
 1. The Gospel declares there is only one way of redemption and reconciliation.
Acts 4:12 NAU - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."
 2. Jesus declared there is no path to the Father except through Him.
John 14:6 NAU - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."
 3. Today, God's people are those who follow Christ by faith. There is no way to the throne of God except through Christ.
If anyone has a desire to pray, the prayer must be offered up through Christ. There is no other way.

Conclusion

1. Multitudes fancy themselves as being able to pray when and where they please.
A national tragedy occurs and our politicians ask us to pray but have no intention of submitting to the God of prayer.
It is just further evidence of their sinful heart that insists on approaching God on their terms. It is pride that demands the ear of God.
2. Prayer is coming before God and humbly submitting to His divine authority.
"Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done."
3. How did God respond to Jehoahaz? He gave him a savior, a deliverer.
2 Kings 13:5 NAU - "The LORD gave Israel a deliverer"
 - a. This deliverer isn't identified. Elisha? One of the subsequent kings who delivered Israel from the Syrians. The immediate answer isn't significant. Their greatest oppressor was within—it was sin, and they needed a Savior who could deliver them.
 - b. This deliverer may have rescued them from Syria, but their true oppressor remained.
2 Kings 13:6 NAU - "Nevertheless they did not turn away from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, with which he made Israel sin, but walked in them; and the Asherah also remained standing in Samaria."
4. We too need that Savior. And God has sent Him in the person of Jesus Christ.
Matthew 1:21 NAU - "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."