

“Because of His Covenant”  
2 Kings 13:22-25  
(Preached at Trinity, June 12, 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. With **Verse 22** the author takes us back to the time of Jehoahaz that was recorded in **Verses 3-7**. Jehoahaz was the son of Jehu. We read, like so many before him, that his reign was evil. **2 Kings 13:2 NAU** - "He did evil in the sight of the LORD"
2. This resulted in God giving him into the hand of Hazael, the king of Aram. **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, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael."  
**2 Kings 13:22 NAU** - "Now Hazael king of Aram had oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz."
3. This was consistent with what had already been told from the mouth of Elisha. God would use Hazael to bring judgment upon Israel. **2 Kings 8:12 NAU** - "Hazael said, "Why does my lord weep?" Then he answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the sons of Israel: their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword, and their little ones you will dash in pieces, and their women with child you will rip up."
4. The wickedness of Israel was escalating with each successive king. God had from the beginning made it abundantly clear the consequences for forsaking Him. **Leviticus 26:14-17 NAU** - "if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, <sup>15</sup> if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, *and* so break My covenant, <sup>16</sup> I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. <sup>17</sup> I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you."  
**Leviticus 26:33 NAU** - "You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste."
5. God's judgment was long overdue. They should have long ago been banished from the land. One might wonder why God had not already destroyed them. The answer is in **Verse 23**:  
**2 Kings 13:23 NAU** - "But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them and turned to them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them or cast them from His presence until now."

6. The “until now” isn’t implying that God would now destroy them. It means that God hasn’t destroyed them even until the present time.  
**Verse 23 CSV** - "Even now He has not banished them from His presence."  
**Verse 23 NIV** - "To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence."
7. The reason God had not destroyed them was because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God remembered His covenant even in the midst of Israel’s covenant unfaithfulness.  
**Micah 7:18 NAU** - "Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love."
8. God’s covenant is firm and demanding, but also full of grace. He is a gracious God who does not take delight in punishing sinners.  
 Even in the threats of Leviticus 26 there is mercy:  
**Leviticus 26:42 NAU** - "I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land."  
**Leviticus 26:45 NAU** - "I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD."
9. God is carefully working out His redemptive purpose. Notice how absolute He carries out His sovereign will.  
 Elisha rebuked the lukewarm resolve of King Joash:  
**2 Kings 13:19 NAU** - "You should have struck five or six times, then you would have struck Aram until you would have destroyed *it*. But now you shall strike Aram *only* three times."  
 Notice how the author makes sure we witness the fulfillment.  
**2 Kings 13:25 NAU** - "Then Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again from the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities which he had taken in war from the hand of Jehoahaz his father. Three times Joash defeated him and recovered the cities of Israel."
10. The question we need to ask is this: is God still maintaining His covenant faithfulness? This is where it is important that we maintain theological accuracy and integrity. We must have a proper covenant theology.
11. There are those who hold to what is called Premillennial Dispensationalism. This includes the vast majority of evangelical Christians today. This view holds that God has two plans, one for national Israel and the other for the church. They also sometimes frame it under the headings Law and Grace.
- A. They hold that God has two people – Israel and the church. They see a disconnect between Israel and the Church. They are two distinct groups under two distinct plans in God’s purpose.
  - B. Reformed Covenant theology holds that God has a single plan and purpose flowing from His eternal decree. We believe that God’s people have always been the spiritual seed of Abraham – the people of faith, God’s elect.

- C. One well known, well-respected pastor preached a sermon titled, “Why Every Self-respecting Calvinist is a Premillennialist.”<sup>1</sup> In his sermon he falsely maligned Amillennialism as teaching a form of replacement theology; that the church has replaced Israel as God’s covenant people. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, we need to understand that God has always had one covenant people. He has always had a single plan; a single purpose and it all flows from a covenant ratified before the world began.
12. God’s covenant with Abraham was based on that eternal covenant. Also, the Mosaic covenant on Mount Sinai, and the Davidic covenant promising an eternal kingdom. What was this eternal covenant and with whom was it made? This eternal covenant is referred to as the Covenant of Redemption. It was a covenant based upon the eternal council of the Godhead. It was a covenant made within the Godhead. In this covenant the Father elected a people to give to His Son as His inheritance. The Son agreed to enter into the condition of man in order to redeem His people and accomplish their salvation. The Holy Spirit was then charged with sovereignly applying this work upon the elect.
13. God remains true and faithful to His covenant promises.
- I. Who are God’s covenant people? Who are the heirs of the promise? Who is the focus of **Verse 23**?
- A. God’s covenant people have always been those who believe God’s covenant promise—those who are of faith.
1. Paul stated this clearly
    - a. Abraham believed God which was the basis of his justification **Romans 4:9 NAU** - "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness."
    - b. There were thousands of unbelieving Israelites who perished in the wilderness. They were not of the faith of Abraham. They were not of God’s elect.
    - c. Those who are saved today are still of the faith of Abraham. We are Abraham’s spiritual children, the heirs of promise. **Galatians 3:6-7 NAU** - "Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. <sup>7</sup> Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham." **Galatians 3:8-9 NAU** - "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "All the nations shall be blessed in you." <sup>9</sup> So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."
  2. God has maintained His eternal covenant. This is the promise that God confirmed to Abraham.

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur at the 2007 Shepherd’s Conference.

- B. God has maintained His elect people throughout history.
1. Elijah lamented that he was the last of the faithful. God corrected him declaring that He continued to maintain His faithful remnant.  
**1 Kings 19:10 NAU** - "And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."  
**1 Kings 19:17-18 NAU** - "And it shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death.  
<sup>18</sup> "Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him."
  2. Paul referred to God's people as "the Israel of God." This is the church.  
**Galatians 6:16 NAU** - "And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God."
  3. The church hasn't replaced Israel. It is the manifestation of God's elect people today.

II. So, how do we apply God's covenant faithfulness to Israel?

- A. God's eternal purpose will not fail
1. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had been unfaithful from day one. King Jeroboam almost immediately led Israel into sin.
  2. Why didn't God destroy them? It was ultimately because of God's compassion on the elect and His faithfulness to His covenant.  
**2 Kings 13:23 NAU** - "the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them and turned to them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them or cast them from His presence until now."
  3. Is it not true that in just a few years God did ultimately destroy the Northern Kingdom. Yes, it is true?  
**2 Kings 17:5-6 NAU** - "Then the king of Assyria invaded the whole land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. <sup>6</sup> In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria"  
**2 Kings 17:7 NAU** - "Now *this* came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God"
  4. Doesn't this mean that God ended His covenant? No! God continued to maintain His remnant.  
**2 Kings 17:18 NAU** - " the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah."
  5. Didn't Judah also reject the covenant of God? Didn't they also fall into idolatry?  
**2 Kings 17:19 NAU** - "Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs which Israel had introduced."  
 Yes, they did. But God maintained His covenant.

- B. What about today?
1. God is continuing to maintain His covenant faithfulness.
  2. The Father made His covenant with His Son who is perfect, righteous, holy. He has kept that which we have not.
  3. Are you always faithful to God. No, you are not. Is God faithful?  
Yes, He is.  
**Hebrews 10:23 NAU** - "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;"  
**2 Timothy 2:13 NAU** - "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."
  4. God is continuing to save His elect  
**2 Peter 3:9 NAU** - "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."
  5. What about ethnic Israel? They may still be saved the same way God's people have always been saved—by faith in God's Redeemer. And Romans 11 reminds us that multitudes of Jews will turn to Christ.  
**Romans 11:23 NAU** - "And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again."

#### Conclusion:

1. This is why we carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Because God is maintaining His Covenant faithfulness. We offer the Gospel to all people, whether or not they are elect. Why? Because we don't know who the elect are.
  - a. We can boldly announce to all that if they believe they will be saved. Some say we are being insincere to offer Christ to the non-elect and offer them the hope of salvation. Why offer the Gospel to those who are unable to believe? And if Jesus Christ died only for the elect, are we not being insincere to offer salvation to those for whom Jesus did not die?
  - b. We do it because this reflects the grace and mercy of God. We call this the free offer of grace, or the free offer of the Gospel.  
The gospel is freely offered to all people, regardless of whether or not they are elect. Is it not true that if any person believes he will be saved?  
Can we not say to every person, "If you will come to Jesus Christ in faith and in repentance of your sin, God will save you"?
  - c. And is it not true that every sinner has the responsibility to turn from their sin and trust Christ? The lost man is not condemned for not being elect; he is condemned for his sin and unbelief. It is the duty of every person to repent and believe.  
God is still faithful to His covenant. If you will come to Jesus Christ, he will save you.
2. God continues to be gracious and compassionate to all who turn to Christ in faith.