

The Story of Five Kings

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Date: 30 July 2017

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0 : 00] Tonight's story begins with those five kings, the kings of Jerusalem and Hebron and Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. What do we know about them? Well, not very much. We only know what we know about all kings.

These kings had power. They weren't like you or I. They said live, and a person lived, and they said die, and the person died.

And I'm sure they didn't get everything they wanted, but I'm pretty sure they got almost everything that they wanted. They had money. They had fame. They had women. They had attention. It was good to be the king.

The rich, the poor, the farmer, the businessman, they all envied the king. If I was the king, that's the life. That would be great. Life would be grand.

And our story begins with those five kings. And yesterday had been a good day for them. They had gone to bed thinking things were going all right.

[1 : 09] Remember they had, with their five armies, with their big army, they had surrounded Gibeon. There was work to do, yes, but things were looking up. Things were going their way.

And probably, maybe, they went to bed that night self-satisfied. Things were looking up. They're dealing with the Israelite problem.

But Proverbs 27, 1 says, Do not boast about tomorrow. And there's a reason for that. Do you know what it is?

Where we don't know what a day may bring forth. You don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. You can guess. But you don't know what's going to happen tomorrow.

We're all very good at being prophets. We're not very good at being true prophets. But we're all very good at attempting to be prophets. And so when we worry, we prophesy doom for ourselves.

[2 : 14] And when we boast about tomorrow, we prophesy good things for ourselves. But either way, if the Old Testament standard of how do you know if a man's really called as a prophet from God?

Do his predictions come true? If they don't, you're supposed to kill them. If that standard of prophesying was applied to us, would anyone here be alive?

Probably not. We're very good at being prophets. We're not very good at actually predicting the future. You don't know what a day may bring forth. And there's no doubt that these five kings had no idea what was going to happen that next day.

No idea what that day was going to bring forth. You remember, the next morning started very badly. And it got worse from there. The morning started with the Israelite army crashing into their rear and destroying much of their armed forces, much of their army.

And then discipline broke. Confusion was everywhere. And this battle soon became a massacre. And the massacre became then this just running slaughter.

[3 : 28] And so down the road, they ran. Their armies. And down the road, these kings ran. And things went from bad to worse because you remember what happened next.

They would have never predicted this. Large hailstones falling out of the sky. Killing their men. Killing their horses. Killing their horses. Probably cutting down their bodyguard. And then if you're one of these five kings, you're starting to ask yourself, doesn't it seem like this day is taking forever? Never. This day doesn't seem to be going anywhere. And it seems like the sun is not moving in the sky. And maybe they, and I imagine that at first they thought it was their imagination.

But you can only imagine that for so long when the terror sets in, that that sun is not moving. This day is not ending.

You know what's great about the sun coming up and the sun going down is that bad days come to an end. And you can go to bed. And you can live to see another day. But this no good, terrible, horrible day was just going on.

[4 : 48] And on. And on. And as they went down the road, now terrified, now horrified, they see a cave, probably off the side of the road, or they knew that these caves were here.

But they saw a cave outside of Makeda. And in they went, out of the sun, out of the hail, out of the way of the Israelite army and all their swords and all the soldiers. It wasn't good, but it was something.

And maybe they thought, maybe we're going to be able to figure this thing out. Maybe we're going to be able to live through this day anyway. But what happened? Well, they were found.

Some Israelite soldiers, just whether by accident or on purpose, Israelites came into this cave. Why did they just happen to come into this cave and find these men lying there quiet as a mouse in the dark?

While the Lord was fighting for Israel. And so the Lord was on the hunt, and he directed some of his dogs, some of his soldiers to that cave. And out they came, and they pulled them out.

[5 : 54] Or they didn't pull them out. They put guards there. They rolled these big stones in front of them. And then this refuge, this hiding place, the cave that they thought was going to save them, actually now becomes their prison.

And that's where I want to pause with our five kings in prison, after having a terrible day, and just ask, what can we learn from these five kings?

Well, we can learn at least two things right off the bat. And the first is, we can see there's no hiding from God. There's no running, hiding from God when judgment comes.

There's no hiding from God's judgment. They crawled into the earth, out of human sight, and so there was earth, there was rock, there was darkness. They were there, quiet as a mouse, no doubt, lying there, hiding, hiding from the wrath of God.

But you can't hide from God's wrath. Who can't hide? Who can't hide from God's wrath when he is coming to judge?

[7 : 03] When he is now going to bring you into judgment? Well, kings can't hide. The greatest can't hide. The strongest, the smallest, the poorest, the slave.

No one is ignored. No one slips away as unimportant. No one slips away as too big. You can't hide. Listen to Revelation 6.14.

The sky receded like a scroll. We sing that. And it is well. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up. And every mountain and island was removed from its place.

So in a way, the earth is just swept clean. So now there's everywhere can be seen. And then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave, and every free man.

We're talking the entire social stratus. Every group. Every group. Free, slave, king. And every free man hid in caves among the rocks of the mountains.

[8 : 10] And they called to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the lamb. Hide us.

Hide us. Hide us. But you can't hide from God. Children, you know that.

You've played hide and seek. And sometimes you find a really good place to hide. And you can hide for a while. A good long while.

Maybe you're under the bed. And there you are in the dark. Under the bed. Quiet as a mouse. But sooner or later, we all know what happens.

The bed skirt gets pulled up. And a face appears. And they see you. And you're found. You can't escape from eyes forever.

[9 : 09] And no one can escape God's eyes forever. One day, all of the hiding. And all of the running. And all of the escaping.

Will come to an end. And angels. Will find you. And they will bring you to face Jesus. And Jesus will, with his own eyes, look upon you.

And he'll see every one of us. And some, he will look upon us with infinite love. And in response, our hearts will break forth in infinite love to him.

That meeting. Those eyes will be heaven to us. But for others, he will look at them with infinite disgust.

Infinite disregard. Disregard. I don't know you. Away from me. There's the disregard of, I don't know you.

[10:15] And then there is the disgust of, away from me. You worker of iniquity. And then, for those who are lost.

Who have been running and hiding from God all their lives. That infinite chasm will open up. And they're thrown into the lake of fire.

Where forever and ever, they will be under the eye of God. His wrathful eye. His angry eyes. Forever exposed.

Forever seen. The days of hiding. Are done. So you can't hide from God. That's one lesson that we learn.

These men, they're great men. But they can't hide from God when the judgment comes. What else do we learn? Well, we learn that God is no respecter of persons. God is not impressed with the things that we are impressed with.

[11:19] They don't register on his scale of, what should I do with this person? Is this person special or not? God is not a respecter of persons.

He is not moved or impressed by people and things the way that humans are. And so these five kings were rich. And people fawned on them.

Fawned all over them. And people hopped to when they said a word. But did their wealth save them? Their wealth was their fortified city.

And Proverbs 18 says the wealth of the rich is their fortified city. They imagine it an unscalable wall. Nothing can come over this wall. Nothing can get to me.

It goes so high that no one can get over it. No one can climb over it. And it will keep me safe. They imagine it an unscalable wall.

[12:16] But God doesn't care two pennies for how rich you are. And then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, hid in caves and called out to the mountains to cover them.

The kings were rich. And they ended up hanging dead on trees. By the day is over. And so the word is go.

Go be as rich as you can. But in the end, understand that you will lose your own soul. God is not impressed with the powerful and the wealthy, those who trust in their wealth.

It's amazing. I guess people never change. But we fawn over our movie stars. And we fawn over our politicians.

And the honest truth is hell is filled with entertainers and politicians. It's filled with generals and tycoons.

[13:24] Do you think that angels tipped their hats when Rockefeller and Carnegie came by? I guess that's, I don't know how to say it more plainly than that.

That God isn't impressed. There's no hiding from God and it doesn't matter who you are. Psalm 73 says God will despise it all like a dream. Dreams can feel so real.

But in the morning, it's nothing. Those are two sober lessons. You won't be able to hide.

You won't be able to impress them. But Hebrews 9.27, just as man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment. That is a certain thing. You can't hide.

You are going to be brought into judgment. It goes on and it says, so Christ, in the same way, so in the same way, Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people.

[14:23] And he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. So for those who believe in Jesus Christ, this coming of Christ, this being brought into judgment, this him seeing me, is not something that terrifies us.

Instead, it is something that we wait for. This is our hope. Because, and why is there hope? Well, because Christ was sacrificed for my sin. And sin is what makes death and judgment so terrible.

Sin is what makes it so terrible. We have disobeyed. We have rebelled. We have ignored. We have belittled God. Every single one of us.

And that's why, apart from Jesus Christ, death and judgment is full of terror and full of sting.

Because we haven't revered his holiness.

We haven't honored his justice. We haven't esteemed his wisdom. We haven't desired his beauty.

We haven't savored his goodness.

[15 : 33] We haven't obeyed his commands. We haven't trusted his faithfulness. We haven't loved him. We haven't prized him or cherished his grace.

And that's sin. But there to be this great and glorious God. And for us to make him little. And to think him unimportant. And sin is the sting of death. Because we have insulted and belittled the Lord of glory. And now here I am standing before him.

But there's hope. Because Christ was sacrificed for sin. He was cursed. And he was hung on the tree. For the sin of anyone and everyone who would trust in him.

And so, did you hear how that changes everything? If Christ did not, he's not coming to bear sin this time. He's coming to bring salvation. And so when I see him, that is the final, the climax.

[16 : 36] The consummation of my salvation. And so I am not afraid of death and judgment. Are you? Can you look at yourself and say, I am not afraid of death and judgment.

I am not afraid. Because Christ's coming is the coming of my salvation. It's the coming of the one I love. And when I see him, I will be like him. And when I see him, then my heart will finally break free.

And I will love him without any chains. And so where will you be? Will you be running to Jesus? Or will you be running to the caves?

Running to Jesus to see your salvation? Or running to the caves to hide? And what you do in this life, what you decide, what you do with Jesus, decides whether you're running to him or running to the cave.

Whether you throw yourself on him for salvation and confess yourself as a sinner and trust wholly in his sacrifice, then you're going to be running to your salvation.

[17 : 41] If you ignore and hide and hide and hide, you will keep on hiding and run for the caves. And just like Joshua says, bring him out.

Jesus is going to say to every single one of us, bring him out. Well, let's leave those kings for now. Joshua locks them in their cave.

And it would seem like maybe that's a good place to stop. But Joshua is not stopping for even these five kings.

He says, don't stop. Pursue your enemies. He's not fighting. He's not done fighting until his enemies are completely conquered. So Joshua didn't stop.

Sometimes we think we have won more than we have. We think we're farther down in the battle than what we really are. And so we stop. We have a victory and we stop fighting.

[18 : 42] We have a victory and we grow complacent. We have a victory and we stop pursuing holiness. But Joshua didn't stop. Joshua and Israel chased their enemies until almost to a man they were slaughtered.

They were chased all the way back to their cities. And so I guess the word for us, the encouragement, the thing that we need to hear is. As you've won.

Great. Rejoice. Thank God. Have you have you made progress in your holiness? Are you not what you used to be?

And now you're making progress. And you can look back and you can say, I have momentum in my spiritual life. Good. Thank the Lord.

But use that momentum as a reason to keep going, not as a reason to stop. Complacency.

Sometimes our greatest defeats come on the heels of our greatest victories.

[19 : 46] Have you seen that? Have you experienced that in your life? Great. Great. Victory. Followed by great defeat. So victory time is a time to double down and not to stop.

And that's what we see Joshua and Israel doing. And so verse 20 says that Israelites killed them almost to a man. And then the armies returned back to Makeda.

So now all the enemies are locked up in their cities. The army has been effectively destroyed. And so now the army returns back to Makeda, back to the cave.

And with the generals and all the people around, Joshua opens up the cave and he brings out these five kings. And he throws them on the ground. And it was time for a sacrament.

It was time for a word of promise put into visible form. That's what I mean. In the Lord's Supper, we eat and we drink.

[20 : 53] It's truth put into visible form. It's encouragement. It's a promise put into visible form. This bread is my body.

This cup is my blood. It's gospel truth that we can touch. It's gospel truth that we can feel. It's gospel truth that we can smell.

It's gospel truth we can taste. And in it, he's saying to us, your sins are forgiven. I was sacrificed for you. You belong to me. I belong to you.

All the life you need, I have and I am giving to you. It's a word of encouragement. It's a word of reminder. We remember what he did for us.

And we taste with our mouth and we experience that physically. The grace of God. Of his reminder to us. And so that's what we have here.

[21 : 49] It's not bread and cup. It's necks and feet. And it's this visible word of encouragement. Joshua throws down these five kings.

And with everyone watching, he calls for his commanders. And he has his captains put their feet on the necks of these kings. And so what did it mean?

Well, he tells us what it means in verse 25. He says, don't be afraid. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the Lord will do to all the enemies you are going to fight.

What is happening right now with your feet on their necks is what is going to happen from now on. Every king you face, you are going to walk on their throats.

It's a promise. It's a promise. But it's a promise he's already given. But now it's a promise made visible with real kings and real feet. God is saying, I will throw down every king who faces you and you will walk on their necks.

[22 : 56] You will overcome. You will win. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. And so, yes, they had a great victory. But what was in front of them?

The battle wasn't even close to being over. They had had a great battle. But all those cities were still yet to be taken. All the northern part of Palestine was still to be taken.

And what we're going to see is there were stronger armies in the north. Strong cities. Strong kings and still in front of them.

They had won the day and they had made huge progress. But they were not close to being done. And so right there, right before the battle happened, right before all of those other things were to come, right before the fight went any further, the Lord of hosts wanted his army to know that this is what is going to happen from now on.

They were going to walk over every city. They were going to destroy every king. So what happened that day was going to happen again and again.

[24 : 17] Their future was victory. Now let me ask you, is that true of you?

Is that true of you? Is that true for you, Christian? I want you to turn to Romans chapter 16. Romans chapter 16 verse 20. Now Paul is, this is the last chapter in Romans.

He's wrapping up his encouragements, his closing remarks to the Roman church. He's given them lots of encouragement in this book. Romans chapter 16 verse 20. But, they are still in an evil world. The devil is still a roaring lion seeking whom he can devour. There are enemies still in front of them. They're still living in Rome.

The home of Caesar. The one who owns life and death in the Roman Empire. And what does he say?

[25 : 28] And you can almost hear Joshua's voice echoing through Paul's words. The God of peace. He's called the God of peace here because he's the God that's going to make peace.

Not by calming his enemies. Or not merely by calming and bringing his enemies to his side. But now by destroying his enemies. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. So, Joshua's sacrament. Joshua's promise to Israel has found its way to the New Testament.

To us. Every promise is yes and amen in Jesus Christ. So, feet on Canaanite kings' necks.

That promise. That promise that Joshua gave to his army. That God gave to the army of Israel. It's a word to us. It's a picture for us.

[26 : 40] It's yes in Christ. Because who is Jesus? Who is our Savior? Well, he's the snake crusher. The very first thing that we see of Jesus in the Bible is he is the one who's going to crush the serpent's head.

Who is Jesus? He's the seed of the woman coming to destroy the works of the devil. And we are heirs with him.

Co-heirs with Christ. Co-conquerors with Christ. And so, Romans chapter 8. You are more than conquerors. We are more than conquerors.

And so now, look ahead of your life. You don't have cities and armies and kings in front of you like the Israelites did. But you have your challenges. Don't you?

You have your difficulties. You have your trials. You have your hurts. You have your pain. You have your sickness. You have your enemies. You have your sin. You have all of those things still opposing you.

[27 : 44] And so, look at them. Look at them. Will they overcome you? Or will you overcome them? Well, who are you? And what has God planned for you? Well, who are you? What are you? You're more than a conqueror. And what are you?

You're a co-heir and a co-conqueror with Christ. And again, it's not on your own. Paul immediately puts that. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

That's how it's going to happen. Not on your own. But by the grace of our Lord Jesus, his grace will make us strong. And what has God planned for you? Well, he's not planned defeat.

He's planned victory. So what will you conquer over through the grace of our Lord Jesus? Every sin. Every sin.

[28 : 53] Every sin will be mortified in this life or immediately upon seeing Jesus. But every sin has an expiration date. Every trial. We sang of those things.

God so will make those work that in them they do not overcome us. But God uses them for good. And we overcome them. And we will overcome the devil who is behind it all.

He will soon crush Satan under your feet. Not just Jesus' feet. Under your feet. Some Christians think that it's godly.

To go around thinking and feeling that all I can do is sin. That's me. I'm a big sinner. Defeat. Defeat. Defeat. That's me. Total depravity. Total depravity. Total depravity. That's me. It sounds a lot like humility. But it's really unbelief.

[29 : 55] It's saying that this promise. To crush Satan under your feet. That promise is not as strong as Satan.

Or that I am. My sin is stronger than God. And that's saying I'm not more than a conqueror. I'm not free to not sin. Or I'm not free from sin.

I'm not under grace. God didn't help me. God hasn't changed me. I'm still the same person that I used to be. God isn't going to give me the victory.

And that's nothing but a lie. And that's a lie right from the pit of hell. Because that lie will paralyze you. From going any further.

The Israelites needed encouragement with all those cities. If they were shrunken down with fear. They weren't going to go fight. And that's what Satan wants. To paralyze.

[30 : 57] To demoralize you. And Jesus Christ didn't save us. So that we could go through our whole life. Defeated and depressed. And saying. That's just. Nothing is different.

You know. People didn't follow Jesus. Because they. That he made them just feel depressed. They didn't say. Come and listen to this preacher. It's nothing but guilt. And defeat with him.

It's great. And we all go. And it's failure. Failure. Failure. And sin. Sin. Sin. Jesus Christ is the snake crusher. He's the snake crusher.

And he saves. And he sanctifies. And he indwells us by his spirit. And he loves us. And his plan is not for us. To have defeat. Defeat. Defeat.

But the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. And so the call in Joshua 10 was. Now go and fight. Now go and fight. Now finish the job.

[31 : 55] Keep going. Take this city. Or take this land. Let's finish the job. Don't be afraid. Don't be discouraged. And I guess that's my final word to you.

Don't be afraid. Don't be discouraged. Don't stop. Finish the job. This battle is not a long defeat. It's a sure victory.

Well how? The grace of our Lord Jesus. There's grace in him. Grace for my stumbling. Grace for my weakness. There's mercy for my sin.

There's help for all my need. There's pardon. There's strength. There's love in him. And the promise is yes in him. And so go and hope.

As you look out in front of your week. And your life. And the hard things. And the big cities. And the strong armies. Don't be afraid. Don't be discouraged.

[32 : 56] God has promised you victory in Jesus Christ. And for every fall. There's grace to bring you back. For every stumbling. There's a hand that will pull you up.

And say let's keep fighting. Let's keep going. So brothers and sisters. Go and hope. God has promised you victory. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

Heavenly Father. We thank you that all of your promises. Every single one of them. Finds their answer. And their confirmation in Jesus. Thank you that we have this bright hope.

And expectation. That you will put all of our enemies. Not only under. Our Lord's feet. But under our feet. That together with him.

We will conquer. Because he is this great savior. He is this Lord. Who is full of grace. Who is full of truth. Who is full of mercy.

[33 : 54] Who is full of love for us. And he has taken us to himself. He has promised us. That victory that we so long.

That salvation that we are waiting for. Lord. I also pray for those who are lost. Lord. Wake them from that deadly sleep.

Wake them from that deadly lie. That thinks I can sin. And get away with it. I'll somehow slip through. I'll somehow evade. Judgment.

Lord. Disabuse them of that lie. Bring them to their senses. Bring them to surrender. Give them a compliant. And bendable heart.

That will bow. To you. That will humble themselves. Before you. And so receive. The grace of our Lord. And receive the forgiveness of sins.

[34 : 57] As a free gift. To any who would. Call and ask for it. So please bring salvation. For my brothers and sisters. Give them great encouragement.

This week. Give them encouragement. In their trials. Give them encouragement. In their difficulties. Holy Spirit. Again and again. Point us together. To Jesus.

To his grace. To his love. To his mercy. And point us there. And let us find ourselves there. Often. In the throne of grace. Coming in the name of Jesus.

I would ask this in his name. Amen.