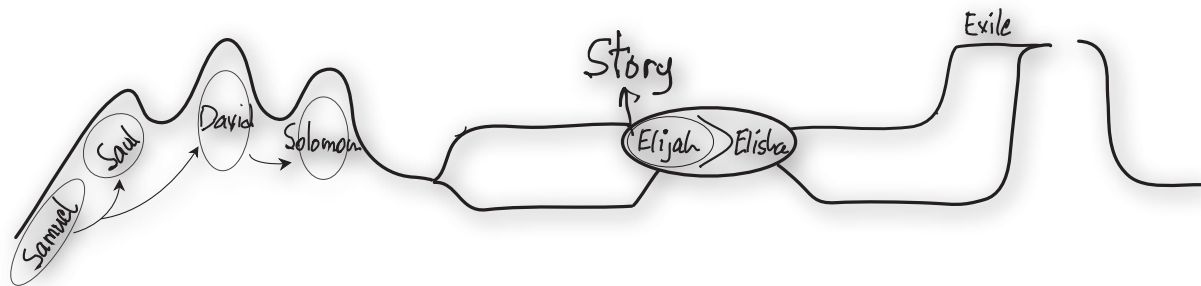


22– The Prophet Elijah Confronts Corrupt Kingship in Israel

(1 Kgs 16:29-18:46)

Draw out existing perspective

- What situations do you know of where corrupt leadership is ruling the day? How does God bring about his kingdom rule in such situations?



Introduction and Context


From the days of Jeroboam and the division of the kingdom to the reign of King Ahab in this story, ten kings have arisen in Israel. Every king in the northern kingdom (of Israel) walked in the ways of Jeroboam and their house (kingship) was destroyed. In each case God raised up a prophet to confront the king. If a king did not pay attention to a prophet's rebuke, his house was destroyed.

We now come to the most corrupt king of them all, King Ahab.

Elijah and Elisha confronting this corrupt kingship of Ahab. Ahab ignores their prophetic rebuke and suffers the consequences. His house and kingdom is destroyed.

This story begins the confrontation. It is part of the greater poetically structured story of Elijah and Elisha's prophetic work. Their work, like true kingship, comes from heaven and is not built by human hands. It is very parallel with the work of John the Baptist (like Elijah) and Jesus (Elisha) in the new testament confronting the corrupt house of Israel. Only the house built on heavenly rule stands.

The Story of Elijah and Elisha (poetical structure)

- 1 Covenant violation--curse (16:29-34)
 - 2 Prophet (Elijah): hidden-->revealed (17:1-18:15)
 - 3 Prophets—True vs False: Baal worship destroyed (Elijah); covenant blessing (18:16-46)
 - 4 Elijah's work preserved by God (Elijah prepares) (19:1-18)
 - 5 Prophetic ministry sustained (Elijah calls Elisha)--discipleship (19:19-21)
 - 6 Prophetic word reveals—"I am Lord" among Gentiles! (Aram) (20:1-43)
 - 7 Prophetic word announced (Elijah)—judgment on Ahab's house (Ch 21)
 - 8 Prophetic word fulfilled—Ahab killed (22:1-50)
 - 9 Prophetic Sign: (Elijah) "There is a God/Prophet in Israel (Ahab's son dies) (1 Kgs 22:51-2 Kgs 1:18)
 - 10 Prophethood is from God: Elijah  Elisha (2 Kgs 2:1-18)
 - 9' Prophetic Sign: (Elisha) "There is a Prophet in Israel?" (healing; curse) (2:19-25)
 - 8' Prophetic word fulfilled—deliverance from Moab (2 Kgs 3:1-27) [Ahab's son]
 - 7' Prophetic word fullfilled (Elisha)—house restored (4:1-44)
 - 6' Prophetic word reveals—"There is a God in Israel" for Gentiles! (Naaman--5:1-27)
 - 5' Prophetic ministry sustained (Elisha)-discipleship (2 Kgs 6:1-23)
 - 4' Elisha's work preserved by God (6:24-10:17)
 - 3' Prophets--True vs False: Baal worship destroyed (Jehu); did not turn from sins of Jeroboam (10:18-36)
 - 2' King's son (Joash): hidden-->revealed (11:1-21)

Step 1: What is God revealing?

 (Read 1 Kgs 16:29-18:46)

1. How is Israel's covenant with God being violated?
2. Describe the process God uses in confronting Ahab?
3. What is the relationship between prophethood and kingship in this story?
4. What determines a true prophet of the Lord?
5. What does God reveal on Mount Horeb that will lead the work Elijah began to completion?

[Foundational Revelation]

- Marriage alliances with idolatrous women were the downfall of Solomon's kingship. Through them his heart was led astray. Any kingship that does not root itself in the reign of God will not stand.
 - God raises us prophets to correct and rebuke corrupt kingship. To the degree a king heeds the word of the Lord through the prophet, his kingship stands. If he ignores the word of the prophet his house does not stand.
 - God purposes to fill the land with his rule and reign. Kingship on earth must be an expression of kingship in heaven.
-

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

6. Why does the Lord use drought to confront corrupt Kingship supported by Baal worship?
 7. What can we learn from the *means* God uses to provide for his prophet in the wilderness (17:3-7), in the house of the widow of Zarephath (17:8-24), and in the house of Ahab (Ch 18)?
-

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

8. What does this story teach us about relating to rulers?
 9. What type of suffering and conflict can we expect in bringing God's kingdom (his rule) near in situations where kingdoms of darkness exist?
-

Training Topics in the Story

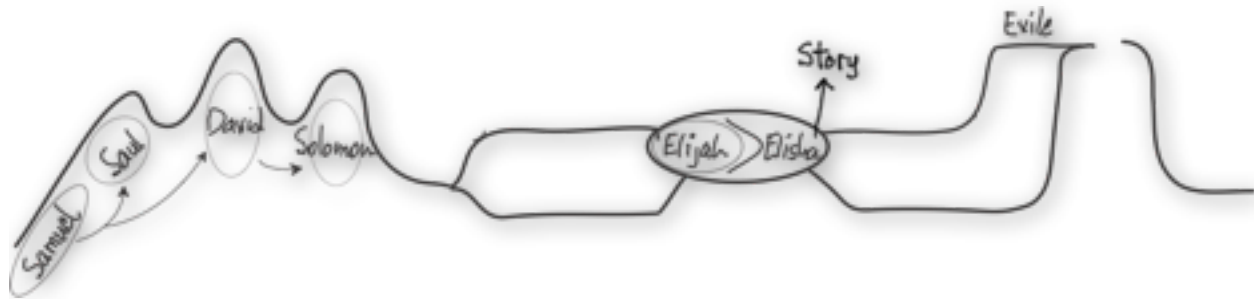
- covenant
- obedience
- prophethood
- idolatry
- provision
- confrontation
- hidden
- reveal
- unbelief

23– Elisha Completes Work of Elijah–Destroy’s Ahab’s House

(2 Kgs 8:7-13:25)

Draw out existing perspective

- Sometimes a prophetic word or work takes a long time before there is fulfillment. Can you think of an illustration?



Introduction and Context

Central to the book of the Kings (1,2 Kings), is the work of the prophets, particularly Elijah and Elisha. They confront corrupt kingship in Israel. Elijah and Elisha confront the corrupt kingship of Ahab and his house. A corrupt kingship can not stand before the kingship of God. Elijah *begins* a work that will result in the house of Ahab being destroyed. Elisha *completes* that work.

This is a recurring theme throughout the story of the kings. Kings that follow in the idolatrous ways of King Jeroboam, that do not heed the word of the Lord, face judgment and the destruction of their own kingdoms. God’s purposes on earth will extend his rule and his kingdom.

The confrontation with Ahab’s idolatrous kingdom begins with Elijah. After many great victories Elijah flees to Mt Horeb where, in the midst of great discouragement, he receives three instructions from God that would bring his work to completion. “Anoint Hazael king over Aram (a Gentile enemy king)...anoint Jehu (king over Israel)...and anoint Elisha to succeed you as prophet (1 Kgs 19:15-18). These three instructions will be brought to fulfilled through the work of Elisha..

Step 1: What is God revealing?

📖 (Read 2 Kgs 8:7-13:25)

1. What is God’s purpose in anointing Hazael as king?
2. What is God’s purpose in anointing Jehu as king?
3. What can we learn from the way Elijah fulfills the instructions given to Elijah (1 Kgs 19:15-18)?

[Foundational Revelation]

- Elisha completes the work that Elijah began, much like Jesus completing the work that John the Baptist began or Joshua completing the work of Moses. There is continuity and fulfillment through the generations in God's work on earth.
- God uses prophets to correct and rebuke corrupt kingship on earth. The church in many ways is a prophetic community in relationship to "secular" governments.
- Building kingdoms (or a house) on false images will not withstand the work of God's kingdom on earth. The gates of hell will not withstand the coming of the coming of God's kingdom.

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

4. What did Hazael do that fulfilled God's purpose?
5. What did Jehu do that fulfilled God's purpose?
6. What did the final days of Elishah's life reveal about true prophethood in relationship to kingship?

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

7. What does it take to be faithful as a prophetic community of God's kingdom?
8. What role or function do people of the kingdom have in relationship to the kingdom's of this world? How do we live this out more effectively within the people's God sends us among?

Training Topics in the Story

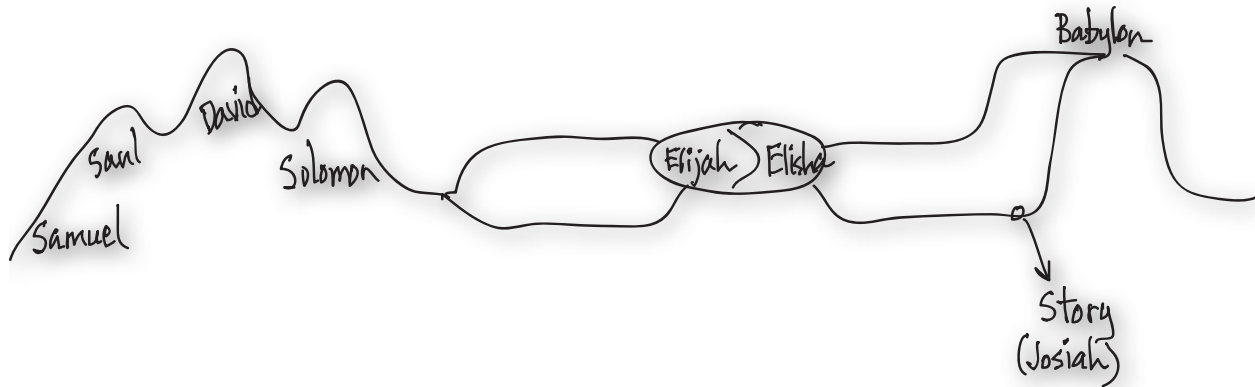
- discipline
- anointing
- discouragement
- listening
- fear

24– Restoration in the descendant line of Judah—but too Late!

(2 Kgs 22:1-23:30)

Draw out existing perspective

- Can humbling oneself, repenting, and making things right be something that can be done too late?



Introduction and Context

The Kingship in the norther tribes of Israel became so corrupt God decided to remove them from the land. 2 Kgs 17:7-23 summarize the reasons to God’s conclusion.

Israel’s sister to the south (Judah) saw all this but did not fully learn the lessons God was trying to teach through all the prophets and seers sent to them.

One king however, Josiah, did listen and turn, but it was too late. Imagine being in Josiah’s shoes in the days of his kingship. Here is the account of what happened and the conclusion God came to about the southern tribe of Judah.

Step 1: What is God revealing?

📖 (Read 2 Kgs 22:1-23:30)

1. Describe the step by step process that led to the restoration under Josiah’s kingship.
2. How would you describe the kind of repentance that occurs in this story?

[Foundational Revelation]

- Listening to God’s word is foundational to the restoration of a people in the purposes and covenant of God.
- Violating God’s covenant and purpose has life-loss consequences. Taking steps of faith-obedience results in life and restoration.

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

3. What can we learn from the responses people had to the words of the Book?
4. What did it mean to inquire of the Lord in this story?
5. How would you describe the response of Josiah's heart in relationship to the Lord?

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

6. What causes us to neglect and "loose" God's word among us?
7. It was said in the early days of Samuel that the word of the Lord was rare in Israel (1 Sam 3:1). What are the consequences of a people no longer listening to the word of the Lord?
8. Why did God choose to remove Judah from the land?

Training Topics in the Story

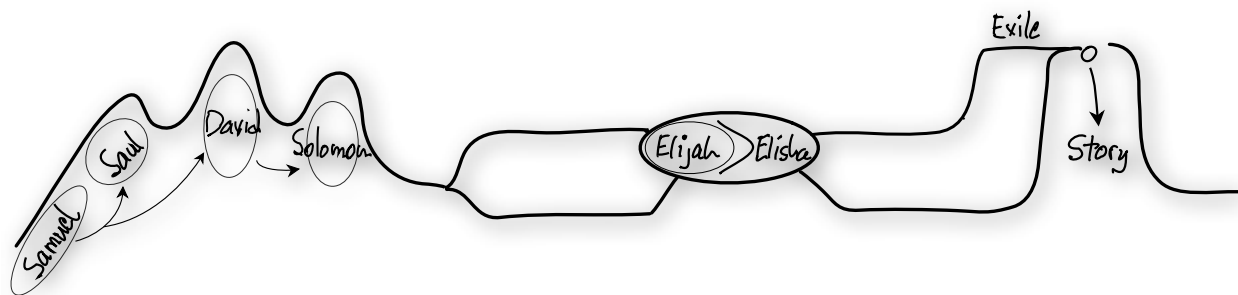
- renewal
- covenant
- stewardship
- prophet
- inquiring of the Lord
- passover
- obedience

25– God Will Be King Among All Nations

(Dan 4)

Draw out existing perspective

- What role does the people of God play in relationship to corrupt godless leaders and kingdoms in this world?



Introduction and Context

Even though God’s people are removed from the land, there still remains a remnant who remain faithful to God. They play a prophetic role among godless Gentile nations. Daniel and his three friends function as a prophetic to correct corrupt kingship in Babylon in King Nebuchadnezzar. Even foreign Gentile kings are accountable to the rule of the King over all creation. God will use his prophets to make that known.

God had been using Daniel and his three friends to correct the kingship of Babylon, but Nebuchadnezzar was not listening or heeding their message.

Finally God gave Nebuchadnezzar one last vision of his Kingdom. Would Nebuchadnezzar listen to its meaning? Would Nebuchadnezzar submit to heaven’s rule?

Step 1: What is God revealing?

📖 (Read Dan 4)

1. What is the meaning of the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar?
2. What is the lesson in how this dream came to fulfillment?
3. What brought about Nebuchadnezzar’s restoration?

[Foundational Revelation]

- All men must know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.
- God's kingdom is entrusted to those who acknowledge that *heaven rules* (Dan 4:26)
- If corrupt kingship renounces its sins by doing what is right, and being kind to the oppressed, their kingship can be restored.

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

4. What kind of heart is able to handle the stewardship of God's kingdom?

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

5. What role did Daniel play in restoring God's kingdom to the Kingdom of Babylon?
6. What kind of life did Daniel live that enabled him to fulfill God's purpose in this land?

Training Topics in the Story

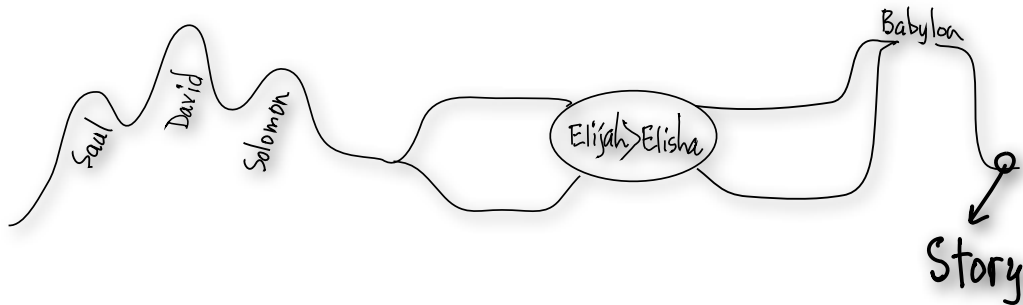
- vision
- pride
- humility
- kingship/rulership
- kingdom

26– Restoration of A House with Surpassing Glory through God’s Servant

(Haggai)

Draw out existing perspective

- If you had been among those Israelites taken away into Babylon, what would your thoughts have been about your future and the future of your people?



Introduction and Context

The prophet Jeremiah sent a letter to some of the exiles who had already been taken captive to Babylon. The word of the Lord for the exiles was: ““When the seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,’ declares the Lord.”” (Jer 29:11)

Seventy years later Daniel begins to pray before the Lord and the Lord hears his prayer. In 538 BC the Lord moves the heart of King Cyrus of Babylon to issue a decree in fulfillment of the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah. The beginning of the decree reads:

“The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah....” (Ezra 1:2)

Daniel’s prayer for the restoration of his people, the city, and the temple are about to be fulfilled. A remnant of Israel is led back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple by Zerrubabel (Ezra 2). Upon their arrival immediate opposition arises to the rebuilding effort (Ezra 4). Their plans are frustrated. The surrounding peoples criticize and discourage the people. They become disillusioned and eventually the work on the temple foundation is stopped.

God sends his prophet, Haggai, to call the people to renewed faith and effort. In the book of Haggai, the prophet gives four words, or prophecies, to the remnant in Israel. The first three begin with a prophetic word in the form of a question; the last prophecy is a final proclamation.

The significance of this renewal and rebuilding of the Temple in the city of Jerusalem reaches its fulfillment in the final revelation of the biblical story. There we see coming out of heaven, a city and in the midst of this city is a temple, and the temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, now dwelling in the midst of his people. The nations walk by its light, the kings of the earth bring into it their splendor. The gates are never shut. The light never goes out. What God began is now complete. His story reaches fulfillment!

Step 1: What is God revealing?

 (Read Haggai)

1. There are four main prophecies given to the remnant from the Lord through Haggai. What would you say is at the heart of each prophecy?
2. What was the occasion (festival) during which each prophecy was given?
3. What is the greater message God is revealing through the work begun by this remnant?

[Foundational Revelation]

- As a people of God co-missioned in God's purpose for us on earth, His house, His purpose must have first priority over all other priorities.
- We must work in light of the future fulfillment God is bringing rather than looking back at past accomplishments.
- Faith-obedience cleanses a guilty heart and mind and opens the door to covenant blessings.
- The word of the Lord through Joshua (high priest) and Zerubbabel (ruler) to restore God's house in His city reveals a larger work of God through his chosen servant fulfilled in Jesus and his house (followers) in future generations.

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

4. What is at the heart of the 4th prophecy? How does this relate to the gospel of the Kingdom reaffirmed in the NT?
-

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

5. What must have first priority in our work among the nations?
 6. What lessons of renewal can be learned from the prophecies of Haggai?
 7. What does this book teach us about community in mission?
-

Training Topics in the Story

- priorities
- cleansing
- priesthood
- rulership
- authority
- glory
- house/temple/kingdom
- discouragement