

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE GOLDEN KINGDOM

A Study of First and Second Kings

Session 2 - Elijah and Elisha

1 A brief review: Since it has been a month since we last met in session, permit this look
2 back: I and II Kings are a continuation of the story of the history of Israel started in I and
3 II Samuel. These four historical books of the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) give us
4 basically the whole history of the nation of Israel from its inception under Samuel the
5 prophet to the Babylonian Empire (which we recently studied in Daniel). *The moral*
6 *teaching of these four books is to show man his inability to rule himself and the world.*
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8 We ended session 1 with Elijah's dramatic encounter with God and the prophets of Baal
9 on historic Mount Carmel. With the death of those prophets, Queen Jezebel, wife of
10 wicked King Ahab, swore to kill Elijah and he fled for his life. In this study, we will
11 look back at the amazing ministry of this man and his training his successor, Elisha. It is
12 astounding to me the differences in these two man, as we shall see from scriptures.
13

ELIJAH

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16 The story of this great man took place in the northern kingdom of Israel and began under
17 the reign of wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.
18

19 1 Kings 16:28-30

20 **So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son**
21 **reigned in his stead. [29] And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah**
22 **began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned**
23 **over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. [30] And Ahab the son of Omri did evil**
24 **in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.**
25

26 The Phoenicians were remarkable but had the fatal flaw of being idolaters who regarded
27 Jehovah as only a local deity. Their primary gods were Baal and Ashtaroth (also known
28 as Astarte). Ahab installed 450 of their pagan priests in a magnificent temple to the Sun-
29 god he erected in his capital city of Samaria. Baal had no more dedicated devotee than
30 Jezebel. In Israel she did all she could to turn the people away from God and toward
31 Baal. Really the only thing standing in her way was God's prophet ELIJAH.
32

33 But she DID succeed in turning Ahab into a brutal, sadistic follower of Baal as scripture
34 notes:
35

1 1 Kings 16:31

2 **And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him (Ahab) to walk in the**
3 **sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of**
4 **Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.**

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6 We will see several of the vicious acts of this wicked couple in the next few minutes.,

7
8 **ELISHA**

9
10 Elijah's protégé was Elisha He had a stunning debut with the older prophet as recorded
11 in II Kings 2:

12
13 2 Kings 2:8-12

14 **And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and**
15 **they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.**

16 **[9] And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha,**
17 **Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I**
18 **pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. [10] And he said, Thou hast**
19 **asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall**
20 **be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. [11] And it came to pass, as they still**
21 **went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire,**
22 **and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.**

23 **[12] And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel,**
24 **and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own**
25 **clothes, and rent them in two pieces.**

26
27 Elisha had witnessed astounding acts in his mentor's ministry. When Elijah asked what
28 he could leave him, Elisha responded, "A double portion of your spirit!"

29
30 The two men crossed the Jordan into what we call today the Hashemite Kingdom of
31 Jordan, just east of Israel - just a few miles from Jericho.

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33 We read in the Old Testament of just two men who escaped physical death: Enoch in
34 Genesis 5:24 and Elijah here in II Kings 2. They were translated from this life right
35 into the presence of God as one day an entire generation of Christ's followers will be
36 taken!

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38 **THE MINISTRY OF ELIJAH**

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40 We first encounter this remarkable man as he makes an astounding declaration of doom to

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DRAMATIC DRAWING OF ELIJAH BEING TAKEN TO GOD IN A FIERY CHARIOT

wicked King Ahab:

1 Kings 17:1

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

“Gilead” - a region in old Israel, located from the south end of the Sea of Galilee to the north end of the Dead Sea, east of the Jordan River

“Tishbite” - a tiny town in Gilead

Elijah’s proclamation to King Ahab that there would be a severe drought was not some pie-in-the-sky prophecy. Elijah knew the Torah and he was well aware of God promise to Israel which carried conditions:

Deut. 11:8-18

Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; [9]

1 **And that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord sware unto your**
2 **fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.**

3 **[10] For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt,**
4 **from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy**
5 **foot, as a garden of herbs: [11] But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of**
6 **hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: [12] A land which the**
7 **Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the**
8 **beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.**

9 **[13] And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my**
10 **commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to**
11 **serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, [14] That I will give you the**
12 **rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou**
13 **mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. [15] And I will send grass in**
14 **thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. [16] Take heed to**
15 **yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods,**
16 **and worship them; [17] And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he**
17 **shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and**
18 **lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you.**

19 **[18] Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and**
20 **bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your**
21 **eyes.**

22
23 ✓ God's commitment of rain upon the land came with a caveat: and that was
24 obedience and loyalty to Him. Elijah knew that command from God and since
25 Israel had long since forsaken God and His dictates, the prophet knew that there
26 would be an extensive period of drought.

27
28 ✓ You perhaps have seen some Israeli men wearing little boxes strapped to their
29 foreheads. Verse 18 explains why they wear them. Part of the Torah is
30 contained in those black boxes. On the next page you will find a picture of a
31 young man at his bar mitzvah at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Note the little
32 box on his forehead - once again the explanation is in verse 14 on line 19.

33
34 So Elijah was not just pulling down a prophecy out of nowhere. He knew that God
35 meant business with Israel and He would do exactly what He said.

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37 Ahab in his deeply carnal way blamed Elijah for the drought. Which brought about the
38 well-known challenge on Mount Carmel:

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40 1 Kings 18:17-19



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And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? [18] And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. [19] Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

Mount Carmel is a lofty ridge located at the western end of the Valley of Jezreel - better known as the Valley of Armageddon. I almost always take our Holy Land pilgrims to this place where a monastery is located at the summit. From the roof, the view is just incredible. Before your eyes you see Armageddon, Nazareth, Mount Tabor, Mount Gilboa where Saul was killed by the Philistines and so much more. I conduct a Bible study there, right where all the encounter with the 450 prophets of Baal took place.

1 Kings 18:30-40

And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. [31] And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: [32] And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench

1 about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. [33] And he put the
2 wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill
3 four barrells with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. [34]
4 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do
5 it the third time. And they did it the third time. [35] And the water ran round about
6 the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. [36] And it came to pass at the
7 time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and
8 said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou
9 art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at
10 thy word. [37] Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art
11 the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. [38] Then the fire of
12 the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and
13 the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. [39] And when all the
14 people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the
15 Lord, he is the God. [40] And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let
16 not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the
17 brook Kishon, and slew them there.

18
19 At this point, Elijah prayed for rain. (I Kings 18:45 And it came to pass ... that the
20 heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was great rain.)

21
22 But even as the outpouring of rain happened, the vicious Queen Jezebel swore on her life
23 that she would kill Elijah. Word reached Elijah and he ran for his life:

24
25 1 Kings 19:1-4

26 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all
27 the prophets with the sword. [2] Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying,
28 So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of
29 them by to morrow about this time. [3] And when he saw that, he arose, and went
30 for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant
31 there.

32 [4] But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat
33 down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said,
34 It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

35
36 Here Elijah showed us his human side. Fear and depression reached him and he hid in
37 the wilderness. But God took care of him with shelter and provision. Perhaps it was
38 now that Elijah realized a helper was needed.

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40 1 Kings 19:19-21

1 **So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing**
2 **with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by**
3 **him, and cast his mantle upon him. [20] And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah,**
4 **and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow**
5 **thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? [21] And**
6 **he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their**
7 **flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat.**
8 **Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.**

9
10 More about Elisha in a moment.

11 NABOTH'S VINEYARD

12
13 Nothing showed the viciousness of Jezebel more than this sorry saga of her life:

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15
16 1 Kings 21:1-14 (Living Bible)

17 **Naboth, a man from Jezreel, had a vineyard on the outskirts of the city near King**
18 **Ahab's palace. [2] One day the king talked to him about selling him this land.**

19 **"I want it for a garden," the king explained, "because it's so convenient to the**
20 **palace." He offered cash or, if Naboth preferred, a piece of better land in trade.**

21 **[3] But Naboth replied, "Not on your life! That land has been in my family for**
22 **generations."**

23 **[4] So Ahab went back to the palace angry and sullen. He refused to eat and went**
24 **to bed with his face to the wall!**

25 **[5] "What in the world is the matter?" his wife, Jezebel, asked him. "Why aren't**
26 **you eating? What has made you so upset and angry?"**

27 **[6] "I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard or to trade it, and he refused!" Ahab**
28 **told her.**

29 **[7] "Are you the king of Israel or not?" Jezebel demanded. "Get up and eat and**
30 **don't worry about it. I'll get you Naboth's vineyard!"**

31 **[8] So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and addressed**
32 **them to the civic leaders of Jezreel, where Naboth lived. [9] In her letter she**
33 **commanded: "Call the citizens together for fasting and prayer. Then summon**
34 **Naboth, [10] and find two scoundrels who will accuse him of cursing God and the**
35 **king. Then take him out and execute him."**

36 **[11] The city fathers followed the queen's instructions. [12] They called the**
37 **meeting and put Naboth on trial. [13] Then two men who had no conscience accused**
38 **him of cursing God and the king; and he was dragged outside the city and stoned to**
39 **death. [14] The city officials then sent word to Jezebel that Naboth was dead.**

1 Dr. J. Vernon McGee wrote an interesting description of Naboth's vineyard:

2
3 *A few years ago I was in Samaria and I must confess that it is one of the most beautiful*
4 *spots in Israel. You can stand on the hill of Samaria where Ahab and Jezebel's palace*
5 *stood, and you can see Jerusalem to the south, and the Sea of Galilee to the north, the*
6 *Jordan River on the east and the Mediterranean Sea on the west. I would like to have a*
7 *home there.*

8
9 *Ahab does not get his way, so he goes home and pouts like a little boy. Ahab, wicked as*
10 *he was, is like a spoiled bra and won't eat now because he cannot have what he wants -*
11 *he can't have Naboth's vineyard.*

12 THROUGH THE BIBLE / MCGEE / VOLUME II / PAGES 295-6 / NELSON PUBLISHING

13
14 Jezebel had Naboth framed and executed and Ahab had his vineyard. But God had the
15 last word - again through Elijah:

16
17 1 Kings 21:17-23 Living Bible

18 **But the Lord said to Elijah, [18] "Go to Samaria to meet King Ahab. He will be at**
19 **Naboth's vineyard, taking possession of it. [19] Give him this message from me:**
20 **'Isn't killing Naboth bad enough? Must you rob him too? Because you have done**
21 **this, dogs shall lick your blood outside the city just as they licked the blood of**
22 **Naboth!' "**

23 **[20] "So my enemy has found me!" Ahab exclaimed to Elijah.**

24 **"Yes," Elijah answered, "I have come to place God's curse upon you because you**
25 **have sold yourself to the devil. [21] The Lord is going to bring great harm to you**
26 **and sweep you away; he will not let a single one of your male descendants survive!**
27 **[22] He is going to destroy your family as he did the family of King Jeroboam and**
28 **the family of King Baasha, for you have made him very angry and have led all of**
29 **Israel into sin. [23] The Lord has also told me that the dogs of Jezreel shall tear**
30 **apart the body of your wife, Jezebel.**

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Next week we enter the book of II Kings and the incredible stories of the prophet Elisha.
