

9. Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings

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Jewish traditions say the author was Jeremiah, not for sure though. The Books of 1 and 2 Kings is the narrative that covers almost 500 years from the initiation to the eclipse of their kingship. It is the story of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of high promise and abject failure, of tragedy and yet of hope.

The Book of 1 Kings starts with the end of David's kingdom, at his death bed. It quickly moves on to the reign of Solomon. After his death, the kingdom got divided into two – Judah and the tribe of Benjamin in the south and Israel with 10 tribes in the north.

As you already know that there were some good kings in Judah, but many bad, if not, downright horrible kings. For the Northern Kingdom, Israel, there was not one single godly king. These kings were often compared to David, who set the standard for Jewish kings.

In 1 Kings, the prophet Elijah was a prominent character and his successor Elisha became the main man in 2 Kings.

A. JESUS IN THE TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION

1 Kings 6:7 And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.

The entire temple was prepared off-site. The stones were cut at the quarry and transported to the site. It was prefabricated, so that no hammering and cutting would take place at the temple itself.

When you go to the Western Wall in Jerusalem, you will notice that the spaces between the individual stone are very tight. Due to the exposures to the weather elements, wars, and people's mishandling, there are many chips on the edges of these stones. But if you see them carefully, they are only surface. The late pastor Chuck Smith once told us that these stones were tailor made so tight that he couldn't even put a piece of paper through.

According to Jewish history, a stone came from the quarry. And the workers at the temple site couldn't figure out where it went. It wasn't marked, so they thought the stonecutters had made a mistake and the builders just tossed it aside. It took 7 years to build the temple. Over the years shrubbery and weeds grew up over the spot where this stone had been discarded. When the temple was almost completed, there was just one stone that was left, it was the chief cornerstone. The final stone to be slid into place was still needed and was missing. The stonecutters said that they had sent the cornerstone long ago; and as the search began, the builders finally stumbled onto this stone that had been discarded. It was the chief cornerstone.

Psalm 118:22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.

The apostle Peter expounded on this for us:

1 Peter 2:4-8 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to

God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

Peter's picture here is that God is building a spiritual temple (a spiritual house) using living stones (Christians), those who have come to the ultimate Living Stone (Jesus). This spiritual house shows that as much as Israel had a temple, Christians have one also. Yet the Jewish temple is spiritual, but Christians themselves are that temple.

1Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

As much as Israel was chosen by God, so is the church. As much as they had a priesthood by one selected tribe, Levite, so Christians are a holy priesthood. As much as they have sacrifices, so Christians must offer themselves up as living spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. However, the believer is his own priest before God. He does not need any mediator except our Great High Priest, Jesus.

Each time someone trusts Christ as the Savior, another stone is quarried out of the pit of sin and placed into place through the work of the Holy Spirit. In the OT, God dwelt among His people in a physical temple. In the NT, God does not dwell in a localized place, but in the hearts of all His children. I believe that we have a better deal than the OT people.

B. JESUS IN THE HEARTS OF HIS PEOPLE

1 Kings 8:17-20 Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel. 18 But the Lord said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. 19 Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' 20 So the Lord has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel.

I know that this portion of the Scriptures does not have the direct connection with Jesus Himself in the linkage or typology. But it deals with the hearts of the believers.

King David was the one who had the desire to build a temple for the name of the Lord, not Solomon. Everything was handed to Solomon. All he had to do was build it. Solomon's desire was fulfilling what his father wished to do. There is a tremendous difference between doing something for the Lord and doing something because someone else placed it in your hands and told you to do it. It becomes a project, not necessarily a yearning desire.

In a simple way to explain, for David, building a temple for the Lord was his earnest desire because he was grateful to the Lord in everything, but for Solomon, building a temple was fulfilling his daddy's dream. You can see in the text. He spent 7 years to build the temple, but he spent 13 years to build his own palace.

C. JESUS IN ELIJAH'S REQUEST

1 Kings 17:8-16 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." 11 And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 12 So she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." 13 And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.'" 15 So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah.

The Lord commanded Elijah to travel northeast about a hundred miles to the Phoenician city of Zarephath. This was the general region that the wicked queen Jezebel was from. In addition to that, he was instructed to live with a widow whom God had selected to care for him, and widows were usually among the neediest people in the land.

When Jesus was rejected by His own people from Nazareth, He used this example of Elijah's coming to the widow of Zarephath as an illustration of God's right to choose a person to Himself.

Luke 4:24-26 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26 but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.

Why did God change Elijah's training location from the Brook Cherith to Zarephath? Because of our proneness to look at the gift and forget the gift Giver, the Lord frequently changes His methods of supply to keep our eyes fixed on Him, not the gifts we receive from Him.

This poor widow was about to prepare their last meal and expected to starve to death. What Elijah asked her to do was more than absurd from an unspiritual viewpoint. He had the audacity to ask her to give him their last meal with the promise of the God of Israel whom she didn't serve. It sounded like the worst kind of self-centered TV evangelist's fund raising scheme. But Elijah had an assurance from God that she would provide foods for him and she would be provided, too.

God indeed chose this woman for three reasons:

- 1) **To keep her family alive from starvation with God's kindness**
- 2) **To save her from idol worship**
- 3) **To make her trust the God of Israel**

This was a training for Elijah and the woman both:

For Elijah, the Lord led Elijah one step at a time. He did not tell him to go to Cherith until he first delivered the message to Ahab. He did not tell him to go to Zarephath until the brook dried up at Cherith. God led Elijah by faith, one step at a time, and Elijah followed the Lord in faith.

Now, I have a \$50,000 question for you. If you are a pastor or Christian counselor. A single man of God comes to you and tells you that he found a room on the second floor of a young widow's home who has a son. He asks you if it is OK with you for him to move in. If you are like me, you'd slap the back of his head and tell him, "Are you out of your mind? You need to be above reproach. It will bring an appearance of evil." Then, that man might say, "Elijah moved into the widow's home, why can't I?" How would you respond?

I believe that this man of God should not move in there. First of all, he ain't Elijah and second, God wouldn't tell him to move in, like He did with Elijah.

For the woman, it was learning to trust the God of this prophet whom she had never met before.

Matthew 6:33-34 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

D. JESUS IN A TOO SIMPLE MESSAGE

2 Kings 5:9-14 Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean." 11 But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' 12 Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" 14 So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

I am sure that Naaman was a skilled warrior and brilliant strategist even though he was a pagan general. Even with all the respect, honor and prestige, he could not overcome one chink in his armor – he had a leprosy. We don't know what stage he was in, but obviously it was not at the beginning stage. But leprosy has a tendency to spread and if left unchecked, it ultimately kills. Only the power of the God of Israel could heal him.

Naaman's Jewish servant girl told his wife that there was a prophet in Israel who could heal his leprosy. So he packed up over \$2 million worth gifts to buy a favor from the God of Israel and came to Israel. When the general came to the prophet's home, the prophet didn't even go to meet the general. He sent his servant to relay his instruction – do a skinny dipping 7 times in the Jordan River. That ticked the general, because he was expecting some grandiose religious ritual to remove the leprosy from him.

The basic reason of Naaman's anger was pride, as the basic reason for the rejection to God's salvation through Jesus is pride. Great theologian the late Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse so eloquently and simply described about the men's choice for the salvation through Jesus Christ:

"Everybody has the privilege of going to heaven God's way or going to hell their own way."

Unfortunately more are willing to go to hell because they rely on their own goodness, riches, intelligence, or religion than those who simply are willing to believe in God's way to heaven.

You all know that many people have visited our church for last 15 years, but they choose not to come back. I can tell you this much. It is not because I don't teach the truth. As a matter of fact, a good number of people choose not to come back because the truth from the Bible I taught them was too much to bear.

Until they came to our church, they might have thought they were Christians and would go to heaven when they die. But the Bible says otherwise. So they choose to go to some other churches where they don't hear about the exclusive salvation through Jesus Christ. Or during my sermons they were told that they have to live according to God's way instead of their own ways. They can run, but they cannot hide from the truth of God and the Spirit of the Living God.

Naaman had another problem:

He preferred the rivers back in Damascus to the muddy Jordan River. He thought his healing would come from the water, so it was logical that the better the water, the better the healing. He would rather have his own way and travel backward 120 miles than obey God's way and go forward 21 miles from Elisha's home. He was so close to salvation and yet so far away.

Only when the Syrian General abandoned his own idea about how God should work and submitted to His way did he receive the restoration he needed.

In the same way, we must recognize that God's methods of working out His plan in our lives sometimes don't make sense to us. That's why we need to be willing to turn from our own ideas of how God works and to follow Him, acknowledging that His ways are not our ways, but they are always best.

Isaiah 55:6-9 Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

I wonder some of Naaman's men scooped up several buckets full of Jordan River water to sell as "The Fountain of Youth from Israel". It was not the water that healed their general, rather it was God of heaven and earth.

Can you imagine this respected general Naaman stripping himself down to nothing in front of his own soldiers and stepping into the muddy Jordan River with a simple faith in the God of Israel? Wonder he was asking himself, "Am I crazy enough to do

this in front of my men?" while he was dipping himself for the seventh time? By his obedience he demonstrated his faith in God's promise, he was rewarded with the healing from the Lord of lords.

Faith requires actions of obedience and obedience needs a starting point of faith in God. Before sinners can receive God's grace, they must submit to God's will.

1 Peter 5:5b God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Let's not forget that we are serving the great and Mighty God who created the entire universe and His Spirit lives in us. Let's be the living sacrifices and the royal priests for Him.

2) The next level of God's training for us doesn't start until we finish what He already has given to us.

3) Faith requires actions of obedience and obedience needs a starting point of faith in God.