

Sunday, August 20, 2023

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In the Age of Kings, Prophets are Needed

The Story of Israel, Episode 8 of 10

1 Kings 21

*The story of Israel is (true) history, it is sacred history, and it is our family history. We are telling this story in ten episodes: Promise, Salvation, Law, Land, Covenant, Temple, Division, **Prophets**, Exile, and Restoration. Today is episode #8, as the role of prophets grows.*

Why prophets?

- See Deuteronomy 5 and 18.

But what *is* a prophet?

- More than someone who foretells the future... Instead a prophet is a human who *delivers a message from God*.

Series review

What do Israel's prophets have to do with Israel's kings?

- Kings had immense responsibilities and dangers. So God sent prophets to *encourage* kings.
- Kings had immense power and temptations. So God sent prophets to *confront* kings.

An example: Elijah confronts Ahab (1 Kings 21)

- Ahab covets a vineyard, and his wife Jezebel frames a man to acquire it (24:1-16)
 - But the king is not above God's law...
- Elijah receives the message from God that he is to deliver (24:17-19)

- Ahab's hatred for the Lord's prophet is made clear (24:20)
 - Being a prophet is dangerous business! (See Acts 7:52, Luke 13:33)
- Elijah delivers the message (24:21-24)
- Ahab's surprising response: repentance (24:25-29)

Jesus: He's not just The King, He's also *The Prophet* (Acts 3:22)

- He comes to both encourage and confront... but will we listen?

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. Kings had immense responsibilities and dangers, and kings also had immense powers and temptations." List some of each of these.
 - a. How about you? You are not a king in the traditional sense, but do you have important responsibilities, dangers, powers, and temptations?
2. Read the account of Elijah confronting Ahab and Jezebel in 1 Kings 21.
 - a. Name a couple of things we can learn about a prophet from this passage.
3. It was God's grace to send His Word through prophets to Israel's kings, to encourage and confront. Now God has sent *the* (messianic) Prophet, Jesus, to both encourage and confront us.
 - a. List some of Jesus' words of encouragement to you/us.
 - b. List some of Jesus' words of confrontation to you/us.
 - c. Are there particular words you need to hear? (It might be the words you have been resisting.)