

## Week 18, Lecture 47. <sup>1</sup> From Rehoboam to Nadab, 1 Kings 14:21-15:32

### Four-fold pattern <sup>2</sup>

- I. Formulaic Introduction
- II. Theological Evaluation based on Religious Fidelity
- III. Brief Account of An Event from King's Reign
- IV. Formulaic Conclusion

Let's look at this in the RSV translation for the reign of Rehoboam, 1 Kgs 14:21-37.

#### I. Formulaic Introduction

<sup>21</sup> Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his **name** there. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess.

The formula includes:

- 1) age at beginning of king's reign
- 2) length of reign
- 3) place of reign
- 4) the name of the queen mother (for southern kings)

#### "To put his **name** there"

The Deuteronomic Historian's idea of the "Real Presence" of the LORD in the Jerusalem Temple.

The LORD dwells in heaven; but his "**name**" dwells in the Jerusalem Temple.

#### II. Theological Evaluation based on Religious Fidelity

<sup>22</sup> And Judah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. <sup>23</sup> For they also built for themselves high places, and pillars, and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree; <sup>24</sup> and there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

The Deuteronomistic Historian measures **religious fidelity** by several **factors**:

- 1) Any worship that is not worship of the LORD **alone** is displeasing to the LORD  
He regards this the practice of all Israel since the time of Moses
- 2) Any sacrificial worship that is not in the Jerusalem Temple is illegitimate.  
He admits that prior to Solomon sacrifice was offered in many places.  
Building the Temple was the will of YHWH.  
Once the Temple was built, all the ancient places of worship ceased to be legitimate places of worship.

#### III. Brief Account of An Event from the King's Reign

<sup>25</sup> In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; <sup>26</sup> he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; **he took away everything**. He also took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made; <sup>27</sup> and King Rehoboam made in their stead shields of bronze, and committed them to the hands of the officers of the guard, who kept the door of the king's house. <sup>28</sup> And as often as the king went into the house of the LORD, the guard bore them and brought them back to the guardroom.

#### "He took away everything"

One historical mystery is what happened to the Ark of the Covenant.

Many think that it was taken away by the Babylonians when they conquered Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

But it might have been taken away by Shishak centuries earlier.

The theory that it was taken to Egypt is the basis for the Indiana Jones film *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

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<sup>1</sup> Lectures are numbered consecutively. Although this is this week's first lecture, its number reflects its place in the **total** sequence.

<sup>2</sup> See the NABRE note to 1 Kings 14:21.

#### IV. Formulaic Conclusion

<sup>29</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the **Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?** <sup>30</sup> And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually. <sup>31</sup> And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

A reference to the royal annals is given. There is a summary of relations with the northern king. The place of burial is noted. The name of the queen mother is repeated. The name of his successor is given.

#### Not a Complete History

The Deuteronomistic Historian is not interested in giving a "complete history."

His main goal is to give a "theological evaluation" of the reign

-- to explain the disasters of the conquests of Israel by Assyria and of Judah by Babylon

Alas! the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah no longer exists.

There was also a Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel -- which also no longer exists.

#### Next sections

Abijam, king of Judah reigned 3 years (1 Kgs 15:1-8). Asa, King of Judah reigned 41 years (1 Kgs 15:9-24).

Jeroboam I of Israel was reigning during the beginning of the reigns of both of these kings.

Since he died during the reign of Asa, the next king of Northern Israel follows.

Let's take a quick look at the reign of his son Nadab. For brevity's sake, I'll neglect the "historical event" of his reign.

#### I. Formulaic Introduction

<sup>15:25</sup> Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah; and he reigned over Israel two years.

The name of the queen mother is generally not given for Northern Kings.

#### II. Theological Evaluation based on Religious Fidelity

<sup>26</sup> He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.

Editorial opinion of the Deuteronomistic Historian

#### "Walked in the way of his father"

For later northern kings the formula will be "walked in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

This is a reference to the two shrines he built:

one at Dan (in the north of his kingdom)

one at Bethel (in the south of his kingdom)

Each of these was equipped with a golden calf

Later, the Law of Moses would be expanded to include a prohibition of images.

There is no way Jeroboam could have gotten away with this if this prohibition actually went back to Moses.

There were also images in the temple in Jerusalem

The Cherubim (see 1 Kings 6). "The LORD is enthroned above the cherubim (Ps 80:1; 99:1)

The bronze serpent made by Moses (Num 21:9; 2 Kings 18:4)

These images of Golden Calves were meant to honor YHWH.

The DH is particularly angry because he supports the centralization of worship in the **Jerusalem** Temple.

#### IV. Formulaic Conclusion

<sup>31</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? <sup>32</sup> And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. (RSV)

Here we have a mention of the lost northern document: the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

#### Conclusion

The Deuteronomistic Historian uses this 4-fold formula to describe the reigns of most of the kings of Israel & Judah.

At times he expands Section III (the historical incident) by legends of the prophets.

The two main prophets are Elijah and Elisha, but others are also included.

I plan to take a detailed look at some of these prophetic stories before returning to the lectures by Levine.<sup>3</sup>

## Week 18, Lecture 48. Elijah Raises the Son of the Widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings 17

### Introductory Remarks.

The name Elijah means "my God" ('eli) is "the Lord" (jah) Yah / Jah is short for Yahweh).

Elijah is an early representative of the "Yahweh only movement," and a great hero for the Deuteronomistic historian.

### Points to Remember

Since the DH has written the history that has become canonical, it is easy for us to forget:

- 1) the YHWH only movement was a **small minority movement** before the Exile
- 2) they were probably admired by many Israelites, but considered "too narrow" in their views
- 3) consider the percentage of fertile Catholic couples today who rely **only** on **natural** family planning.

### Another Contemporary Analogy

Imagine a history of the post-Vatican II Church written by someone committed to the Tridentine Latin Mass of Pius V. *Baltimore Catechism*. Q. Is the Mass today the same as the Mass given to us by Jesus Christ?

A. Yes, the Mass today is the same as the Mass given to us by Jesus Christ.

Therefore, any change from the imagined "perfect past" will be seen as infidelity.

In the case of the DH, the "imagined perfect past" is an Israel who has worshipped only YHWH since Moses.

### Historically, an over-simplification<sup>4</sup>

Modern research shows that there never was a period when Israelite religion was "pure."

From the beginning of the "Conquest" Israel was a mixture:

small group / groups that had come out of Egypt

groups of disaffected Canaanite serfs who joined the worship of YHWH, the liberating God.

Early Israel was a mixture of 12 loosely joined tribes ruled by charismatic military leaders we call "judges"

Recall that the judges often ruled not "all Israel" **sequentially** -- as depicted by the DH in Judges --

but most of them ruled [only] several tribes **simultaneously**.

The "all Israel" imagery is an attempt to portray "Davidic" national unity before it actually existed historically.

For a brief period under David and Solomon they were joined into one nation.

Historically, the worship of Baal and other Canaanite gods & goddesses was not "religious innovation"

It was a continuation of Canaanite practices that had been part of the religion since the beginning of the "Conquest."

**Context: Severe Drought** (17:1-6) which brings famine

Elijah has proclaimed that no rain will fall until he gives the word from the LORD.

The LORD is going head-to-head with Baal, the supposed god of nature.

For a time he takes refuge by a wadi, where he is fed by ravens.

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<sup>3</sup> The reference is the lectures on the OT by Levine in the Great Courses series. They are often available at a considerable discount on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). Levine covers several of these stories in her lectures. I will not lecture on them. They include: 1) the story of Ahijah (11:26-41; 14:1-16) whose prophetic gesture -- cutting a cloak into 12 pieces and giving Jeroboam 10 of them -- induces Jeroboam to revolt and become king of the 10 northern tribes; 2) the story of Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18); the story of Elijah's epiphany experience at the Mountain of God (1 Kings 19).

<sup>4</sup> Recall the PBS Nova Video, *The Bible's Buried Secrets*. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html>

### The Move to Zarephath

When the stream fails, he is commanded to go to Zarephath.

This is near Sidon -- it is outside of Israel. In fact, it is on Baal's home turf!

Note the widow's response when he asks her for food:

<sup>12</sup> And she said, "As the LORD **your** God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a cruse; and now, 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." (1Kgs 17:12 RSV)

The LORD is "**your** God" (the God of Elijah). He is not the widow's God!

### Elijah Multiplies Food (17:11-16)

Elijah promises her that her jar of flour and jug of oil will not go empty until the drought is over.

She believes the prophet, and is able to feed him, herself, and her son throughout the drought.

This multiplication of food shows that Elijah is **in the tradition of Moses** (recall the manna in the wilderness)

The NT stories of the multiplication of the loaves portray Jesus as being in the prophetic tradition of Moses & Elijah.

### Gospel of Luke

But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; <sup>26</sup> and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. (4:25-26 RSV)

One of the reason I am going to spend more time on the Elijah / Elisha stories: they affect the NT portrait of Jesus.

### Miracle Story Pattern for Sickness / Death

- 1) The Situation of the sick / dead person is described
- 2) The Encounter with the Miracle Worker
- 3) The Miracle
- 4) The Reaction

#### 1) The Situation

After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; and his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him.

Would the young man be "clinically dead" by modern standards?

John Meier points out the difficulty of a scientific diagnosis across 2,000 years -- when speaking of Jesus

The historical problems are even greater when dealing with OT figures.

### Modern Technology not Foolproof

Furthermore, even modern determinations of "clinical death" are not absolutely certain.

My personal experience as a chaplain

In any case, the main point is that the LORD rules of life & death; sickness and health.

#### 2) The Encounter with the Miracle Worker

<sup>18</sup> And she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me **to bring my sin to remembrance**, and to cause the death of my son!" <sup>19</sup> And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her bosom, and carried him up into the upper chamber, where he lodged, and laid him upon his own bed. <sup>20</sup> And he cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, hast thou brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?"

### ". . . to bring my sin to remembrance . . ."

The presupposition is **not** that God is watching everything. The general idea of ancient people was:

It is not worthwhile to be "too good." It is not worth the trouble.

It is foolish to be "too bad." You will attract the attention of the gods, and they will smack you down!

Elijah's presence has changed the "normal situation."

Since he is staying with the widow, God is watching her more closely than usual.

The woman is not especially wicked. Rather God notices things he would not normally notice.

Note that Elijah himself (and the DH narrator) share this presupposition.

### 3) The Miracle

<sup>21</sup> Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this child's soul come into him again." <sup>22</sup> And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

Usually the miracle itself is recounted very briefly in biblical stories.

The "soul" of the child is not the immortal Greek soul; it is the fragile Hebrew *nephesh*, "breath of life."

### 4) The Reaction

<sup>23</sup> And Elijah took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and delivered him to his mother; and Elijah said, "See, your son lives." <sup>24</sup> And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth." (1Kgs 17:17-24 RSV)

### NT Parallels

The story of Elijah's resuscitation of the widow's son appears to have influenced two NT Miracle stories

The Raising of the son of the Widow of Nain -- found only in Luke (7:11-17)

The Raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:22-43 || Matt 9:18-26 || Luke 8:41-56)

### Similarities between the OT Story and the NT Stories

Like the story of Elijah, both NT stories regard a resuscitation.

They follow the general outline of ancient miracle stories of healing / resuscitation

The story of Nain also involves the story of the only son of a widow; Jairus' daughter is also the death of a **child**.

### Differences, 1

Unlike Elijah, Jesus does not pray to God. Rather he gives a command.

"Young man, I say to you, arise." (Luke 7:14 RSV)

Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." (Mar 5:41 RSV)

In Matthew (9:25) Jesus gives no command; he simply take the girl by the hand, and she arises.

Luke gives the command "Child, arise," but not the original Aramaic.

### Differences, 2

Elijah stretches himself out on the dead son three times.

No such action is reported of Jesus.

One explanation might be that it would be inappropriate to make such contact with a young lady.

Another explanation is that the lack of such an action puts more emphasis on the power of Jesus' word.

### Conclusion

The NT portrays Jesus in the tradition of the miracle-working prophets, Elijah, Elisha, and Moses.

It also portrays him as greater than any of these previous prophets.

## Week 18, Lecture 49. Naboth's Vineyard, 1 Kings 21.

**Context.** The royal city of the Northern Kingdom is now Samaria.

King Omri purchased the hill of Samaria from Shemer, and fortified it (1 Kings 16:24).

His son Ahab now reigns after his death.

Naboth owns a vineyard next to the new palace. Ahab makes Naboth a fair and generous offer.

### **Ahab's Offer, v. 2**

And after this Ahab said to Naboth, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house; and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money." (RSV)<sup>5</sup>

### **Naboth Refuses, v. 3**

But Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."

Literally: "A profane thing for me from the LORD, that I give you the inheritance of my ancestors."

We have here a clash of cultures.

The ancient tribal cultures considered the family's land a sacred commodity. It could not be bought-and-sold at will.

The new institution of kingship regarded such ideas as outmoded in light of the contemporary political situation.

New cities were being built.

Kings ruled over "Israel" (Ephraim / Joseph, the 10 Northern tribes)

**The Aftermath.** Ahab is in a bad mood and pouting.

His wife Jezebel, daughter King Ethbaal of Sidon (1 Kgs 16:31), asks him what the problem is, and he tells her.

She tells Ahab she will take care of the problem.

### **Jezebel's Solution, vv. 8-10**

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who dwelt with Naboth in his city. <sup>9</sup> And she wrote in the letters, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people; <sup>10</sup> and set two base fellows opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out, and stone him to death."

### **Naboth's Death**

The orders of the queen are carried out. She informs Ahab the problem is solved.

He goes to the vineyard to take possession of it.

There he encounters Elijah the prophet, who has been sent by the LORD.

### **Prophetic Condemnation against Ahab, vv. 21-22**

Behold, I will bring evil upon you; I will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel; <sup>22</sup> and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the anger to which you have provoked me, and because you have made Israel to sin.

"... cut off every male ..." Literally: everyone who pisses against the wall.

This is how you describe males you are angry with. Most translations soften the vulgar idiom.

### **Prophetic Condemnation against Jezebel, v. 23**

And of Jezebel the LORD also said, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the bounds of Jezreel.'

This prophecy will be fulfilled in 2 Kings 9, where it is repeated in verses 8-10 by a young prophet sent by Elisha.

After killing King Joram, Jehu comes to Samaria. Jezebel knows her time is up.

When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her eyes, and adorned her head, and looked out of the window. (2Kgs 9:30)

Levine notes that Jezebel has style and guts.

**After Jezebel's Death** Jehu goes inside and enjoys a meal.

Finally he decides to give Jezebel a decent burial. "After all, she was a king's daughter" (2 Kgs 9:34).

But by the time they get to her, the dogs have eaten her. All that is left is her skull, hands, and feet.

The DH narrator reminds the reader once more of the prophecy against Jezebel, recalled this time by Jehu.

Fulfillment of prophetic oracles is a major literary theme of the DH.

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<sup>5</sup> All scripture quotes are from the RSV, unless otherwise noted.

### Back to Ahab

He did not die an early death. This was a problem for the DH. An unfulfilled prophetic oracle.

Here's how he takes care of it

And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, <sup>29</sup> "Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days I will bring the evil upon his house." (1Kgs 21:28-29)

The "historical facts" are that the wicked Ahab reigned 22 years (1 Kgs 16:29), a relatively long reign.

His son Ahaziah dies childless, after reigning only 2 years.

This oracle is a literary device of the DH to "explain" this unexpected turn of events.

Ahab must have repented. But a prophetic oracle cannot go unfulfilled forever.

### The Perspective of the DH

The Deuteronomistic Historians have no belief in resurrection of the dead.

That belief is still about 500 years into the future at the time of Elijah.

It is probably 200-300 years into the future at the time the Deuteronomistic history is finalized.

All rewards and punishments are in this life.

If someone is very wicked, and for some reason they die unpunished; the punishment is inflicted on their descendants.

For most American individualists, this punishment of Ahab's son does not seem fair.

But no ancient reader would have found it at all strange.

### This is "Group Morality"

Compare this to the way that contemporary gangs think.

On a larger scale, is this so different from the way we Americans thought as a country after 9/11?

### Final Thoughts

There **is** a sense in which the sins of ancestors are visited on their descendants.

Consider how the unjust treatment of Germany after World War I led to World War II.

Consider how the after-effects of centuries of slavery continue to afflict contemporary American culture.

Today we tend to think of this as "the inevitable consequences of evil."

The DH, like many ancients, thought of it as the direct will of God.

## Week 18, Lecture 50. Micaiah ben Imlah, 1 Kings 22

**Context.** The "King of Israel" is about to make war on Aram (modern Syria).

He summons Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, to help him.

The original version of this story was probably **not** about Ahab, but about some anonymous "king of Israel."

Most of the time the story is about "the King of Israel" (v. 2,3,4,5,6,8,10,18,26,29,30 [2x], 31,32,33, 34, 44)

The name "Ahab" does not appear until verse 20.

After that it appears in only v. 39-41, obviously a concluding editorial summary.

If it had been originally about Ahab, there would not have been the problem of the unfulfilled oracle for the original DH.

Most scholars think that a **later editor** has inserted this originally anonymous story into the Ahab cycle.

### Request and Response, v. 4

And he said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to battle at Ramothgilead?" And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."

Note that the king of Judah is in effect a vassal of the more powerful Israelite king at this time.

### Preparation for Battle

The king of Israel assembles 400 prophets, and asks them if they should attack.

The decision is unanimous. The LORD wants them to attack. Here's the scene

### Prophetic Gestures & Words, vv. 10-12

Now the **king of Israel** and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. <sup>11</sup> And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron, and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" <sup>12</sup> And all the prophets prophesied so, and said, "Go up to Ramothgilead and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of **the king**." (1Ki 22:10-12 RSV)

Note that the **king of Israel** is not named!

Prophets prophesied not only with oracles (words), but also with gestures.

We will see more of these prophetic gestures in the stories of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

### New Testament Reflections on Prophetic Gestures

In the NT, some actions of Jesus are in this line of prophetic gestures

eating & drinking with sinners

the actions of Jesus with bread & wine at the Last Supper.

Prophetic gestures are "sacramental." They **effect what they signify**.

### Politicians and Religious Ministers

The 400 prophets know the answer the king of Israel wants to hear.

They see he has assembled his army, and the army of his vassal.

Any modern president knows that he can have a "prayer breakfast" and have 400 ministers support him.

President Obama could have 400 ministers telling him that Obamacare

President Trump could have 400 ministers telling him that God wants Obamacare repealed.

Back to the ancient world.

### A Second Opinion, vv. 7-9

But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here another prophet of the LORD of whom we may inquire?" <sup>8</sup> And **the king of Israel** said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, Micaiah the son of Imlah; but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not **the king** say so." <sup>9</sup> Then **the king of Israel** summoned an officer and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah."

Note that the "king of Israel" is anonymous!

When Micaiah finally arrives, he prophesies disaster.

### A Problem

**400** Prophets have said that the LORD will grant victory.

**Only one** prophet has said this is not the LORD will not grant victory.

This ratio was part of the problem that the "biblical prophets" had to face.

Since Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the others are "in the Bible" we often think of them as "the only game in town."

If we read the Bible carefully, we will see that **they were hopelessly outnumbered** by other prophets

prophets who told kings what they wanted to hear

prophets who told the people what they wanted to hear

How do we explain this?

### Micaiah's Explanation, vv. 19-23

And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: **I saw the LORD sitting on his throne**, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; <sup>20</sup> and the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. <sup>21</sup> Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, 'I will entice him.' <sup>22</sup> And the LORD said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go forth and do so.' <sup>23</sup> Now therefore behold, **the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets**; the LORD has spoken evil concerning you."

### Remarks

The solution of the DH, who has given Micaiah his lines in this scene is: YHWH has commanded this!

Recall that in ancient Israel, everything -- good and evil, comes from YHWH.

When Saul was troubled by an evil spirit, it was an "evil spirit **from the LORD**" (1 Sam 16:14,16; 19:19)

By NT times theological thinking has advanced to the point that such "dirty work" is given to Satan.

In the OT, Satan is one of the LORD's servants; basically his "prosecuting attorney"

In the NT, Satan is the ruler of a kingdom hostile to the kingdom of God.

**Post-Lecture Observation.** There is an OT tradition that nobody can see God and live. There is another tradition that Moses saw God "face to face" (Exod 33:11 Num 12:6-8; Deut 34:10), and still another tradition that even Moses could not see God (Exod 33:18-23. In this oracle, Micaiah's statement that he "**saw the LORD seated on his throne**" does not cause one whit of astonishment! (See Deut 5:4, for a similarly astonishing statement, as well as Amos 7:7 and Isa 6:1).

### **The End of Ahab, vv. 37-39**

Ahab does not taking any chances on Micaiah's words coming true. He does not wear his kingly robes.

But an archer, shooting at random, deals him a mortal wound. He bleeds to death in his chariot.

So **the king** died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried **the king** in Samaria. <sup>38</sup> And they washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood, and the harlots washed themselves in it, according to the word of the LORD which he had spoken. <sup>39</sup> Now the rest of the acts of **Ahab**, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he built, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

Notice how the editor joins an originally anonymous story about "**the king**" to his account of **Ahab** with his formulaic conclusion.

If this had been the **original** conclusion of the Ahab story, the DH would not have needed the oracle about the evil coming in the time of his son.

## **Week 18, Lecture 51. Elijah and the Three Captains, 2 Kings 1**

### **Context**

Ahaziah, son of Ahab, has had a fall. He is severely injured, and wants to know if he will survive.

He sends representatives to Ekron to inquire of Baalzebub (the local incarnation of Baal).

The biblical writer has changed Baalzebub (prince of Baal) to Baalzebub ("Baal of flies").<sup>6</sup>

On their way, the representatives are rebuked by a prophet for consulting Baal; they are told the king will die.

They report this to King Ahaziah

### **The Prophet's Identity, vv. 7-8**

He said to them, "What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?" <sup>8</sup> They answered him, "He wore a garment of **haircloth**, with a **girdle of leather about his loins**." And he said, "**It is Elijah the Tishbite**."

### **John the Baptist as Elijah**

Because of his unique manner of departure from this life (next lecture) the legend arose that Elijah would return.

This description of Elijah in 2 Kings will underlie Mark's description of John the Baptist (Mark 1:6)

Now John was clothed with camel's **hair**, and had a **leather girdle around his waist**,

After the Transfiguration scene the disciples ask why the scribes say Elijah must return. Jesus responds

I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him." (Mark 9:13 RSV)

The Marcan disciples do not get the enigmatic reference. Matt 17:12-13 helps them (and the reader!) out a bit:

but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they pleased. . . .

<sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of **John the Baptist**.

Back to Ahaziah.

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<sup>6</sup> See NABRE, note to 2 Kings 1:2.

### The First Captain

Ahaziah sends a captain with 50 men to arrest Elijah.

He finds the "man of God" on a mountain, and commands him to come down. Elijah's response:

"If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. (2Kgs 1:10)

### The Second Captain

The king has lots of men. He sends another captain with another 50 men.

He acts just as the first captain did. The result is the same.

### Story-teller's "Rule of three"

The third captain is wiser than the previous two.

"O man of God, I pray you, let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. <sup>14</sup> Lo, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties; but now let my life be precious in your sight." (2Kgs 1:13-14)

Basically he says "pretty please, with molasses on it."

Elijah is assured by an angel of the LORD that it is safe to go down.

He goes to Ahaziah, and delivers his oracle in person.

### Formulaic Conclusion, vv 17-18

So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. Jehoram, his brother, became king in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, because Ahaziah had no son. <sup>18</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

**NT Note.** In addition to John the Baptist, the NT uses Elijah imagery to portray Jesus.

We have already had the story of Elijah multiplying food and raising the widow's son [Lecture 48].

... Jesus ... asked his disciples: "Who do men say that I am?" <sup>28</sup> And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, **Elijah**; and others one of the prophets." (Mar 8:27-28)

Luke however tells us the story of the Samaritan village that did not welcome Jesus

When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to **bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?**" <sup>55</sup> But he turned and rebuked them. <sup>56</sup> And they went on to another village. (Luke 9:54-56)

This is a clear reference to our story of "The Three Captains."

Luke is at pains to show that there are **differences** between Elijah and Jesus.

## Week 18, Lecture 52. Elijah's Departure, 2 Kings 2:1-12

### Introduction, v. 1.

Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

### Part 1: From Gilgal to Bethel, vv. 2-3

<sup>2</sup> And Elijah said to Elisha, "Tarry here, I pray you; for the **LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.**" But Elisha said, "**As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.**" So they went down to Bethel.

<sup>3</sup> And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."

### Structure

#### I. Elijah

- 1) Command to wait here
- 2) Explanation: the LORD has sent him to a location

#### II. Elisha

- 1) Twofold oath: he will not leave his master

#### III. Arrival at Location

#### IV. Dialogue with Sons of the Prophets

- 1) Message from Sons of the Prophets to Elisha
- 2) Response from Elisha to the Sons of the Prophets

### Part 2: From Bethel to Jericho, vv. 4-5

- I. Elijah said to him,  
"Elisha, tarry here, I pray you;  
for the LORD has sent me to Jericho."
- II. But he said,  
"As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you."
- III. So they came to Jericho.
- IV. <sup>5</sup> The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him,  
"Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?"  
And he answered, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."

The pattern is identical. Part 3 will have a break in the pattern.

### Part 3: Jericho to the Jordan, vv. 6-7

<sup>6</sup> Then Elijah said to him, "Tarry here, I pray you; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. <sup>7</sup> Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan.

There is no dialogue with the sons of the prophets here.

### Part 4: Across the Jordan, vv. 9-10

<sup>8</sup> Then Elijah took his mantle, and rolled it up, and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground. <sup>9</sup> When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "I pray you, let me inherit a double share of your spirit." <sup>10</sup> And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if you do not see me, it shall not be so."

The miracle shows that Elijah is in the tradition of Moses. Note the similarity to the Red Sea miracle.

### Part 5: The Departure of Elijah, vv. 11-12a

<sup>11</sup> And as they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. <sup>12</sup> And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more.

This strange "departure" was the source of later legends that Elijah would return.

### NT Note on Luke

Luke is the only evangelist who **narrates** the Ascension of Jesus.

Neither Matthew nor Mark mention the Ascension. John **mentions** it, but does **not narrate** it.

The Johannine Jesus instructs Mary Magdalene to tell his brethren:

"I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God."

But John never **narrates** this ascent.

### Luke narrates the Ascension twice

once in Luke 24, at the end of his Gospel -- this is on Easter Sunday

once in Acts 1 -- here he places the narrative "40 days" after Easter, later known as "Ascension Thursday"

There are many differences in the story of Jesus and Elijah

No whirlwind for Jesus, no fiery chariot

But the **narrative** of Elijah's ascension in 2 Kings might have inspired Luke to **narrate** the Ascension of Jesus.

### Malachi 3:23 (4:5, in some translations)

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes."

Explains why the scribes referred to by Mark thought that Elijah had to return before the Messiah arrived.

### Sirach 48:4-11

How glorious you were, O Elijah, in your wondrous deeds! And who has the right to boast which you have? <sup>5</sup> You who raised a corpse from death and from Hades, by the word of the Most High; <sup>6</sup> who brought kings down to destruction, and famous men from their beds; <sup>7</sup> who heard rebuke at Sinai and judgments of vengeance at Horeb; <sup>8</sup> who anointed kings to inflict retribution, and prophets to succeed you. <sup>9</sup> You **who were taken up by a whirlwind of fire, in a chariot with horses of fire;** <sup>10</sup> **you who are ready at the appointed time,** it is written, to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury, to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob. <sup>11</sup> Blessed are those who saw you, and those who have been adorned in love; for we also shall surely live. (Sir 48:4-11 RSV)

### Remarks on Passover

The fourth / final cup of wine at the Passover Seder is called the "Cup of Elijah."

Before the cup is drunk, the door is opened to see if **this year** Elijah will be there to drink it himself.

When that day comes, they know that the Messiah will arrive shortly after Elijah!

### Post Lecture Information -- email to Rabbi Kline. (My comments are in a blue font)

David, today in my lectures (about Elijah) I mentioned the "cup of Elijah" tradition as being attached to the fourth cup of wine at the Seder. Someone asked me if there were not seven cups. I told her that I would check with a rabbi, but that I remembered four "official" cups. I also added that it was kind of like Americans and beer on July 4. As I understood it, 4 was the "respectable minimum," but often people enjoyed a few more. Any help will be appreciated. -- Pat

His answer:

Koso shel Eliyahu [the cup of Elijah, PJM] is associated with a **fifth** cup. Your July 4 approach is on the same track. The Talmud (P'sachim) [treatise on Passover] specifies that even a poor man must have enough for 4 cups. The community was obliged to distribute special funds for this requirement. Then there was a suggestion that one really ought to drink a bit more in honor of the occasion. Koso shel Eliyahu may have been a way to compromise, but as far as anyone knows, it is **a fairly modern innovation.** [I was surprised to learn this.] Here is a paragraph I found on the web;

### The Fifth Cup of Wine

However, whether or not the Maharal said that one has to drink a fifth cup, and whether or not he says that this is the *Kos Shel Eliyahu*, there are others that make a connection between the fifth cup and *Kos Shel Eliyahu*. A small introduction is needed. The Mishnah [oral tradition written down by Judah the Prince ca. 200 A.D.] in the beginning of *Arvei Pesachim* [the evenings of Passover] says that even a poor person has to have four cups of wine at the *seder* [Passover meal]. Later on, the Mishna and Gemara [later additions to the Mishnah that in the 4th & 5th centuries became part of the Talmud] discuss exactly when the cups should be poured and drunk. The Gemara (119a) says that Reb Tarfon held that the fourth cup should be drunk after we say *Hallel Hagadol* [the "Great Hallel," i.e., Psalms 113-118, which conclude the Passover celebration]. Many Geonim [medieval scholars] and Rishonim [another group of early scholars] interpret this to be referring to a fifth cup of wine. In 1950 Rabbi Menachem Kasher printed a booklet collecting all the Geonim and Rishonim that deal with this issue and he showed that many held that one should, but does not have to, drink a fifth cup of wine.[18] It is worth noting that in Teiman[19] and in Italy,[20] many people drink a fifth cup of wine at the *seder* because of this. None of the sources that Rav Kasher collected tie this fifth cup to the *Kos Shel Eliyahu*.