



ELIJAH AND ELISHA

MESSENGERS IN WORD AND DEED

Follow Him

- God calls us to follow Him with our whole lives and never look back.
- 1 Kings 19:19-21
- The Lord told Elijah to anoint Hazael to be king of Syria, Jehu to be king of Israel, and Elisha to be his own successor.

Follow Him

- So Elijah went and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who was plowing a field with 12 yokes of oxen (24 total).
- This was indicative of substantial wealth and status in ancient Israel.
- This number of oxen would have been very expensive, and meant they had a lot of land to plow.

Follow Him

- Elijah passed by Elisha and threw his cloak on him, a sign of choosing him as his successor. Elijah's cloak was a symbol of his prophetic authority. While the cloak was not magic, it symbolized the power of God given to His chosen prophets.
- Elijah used it to part the Jordan (2 Kings 2:8) and after his death, Elisha picked it up and also struck the Jordan with it and the Jordan parted (2 Kings 2:14).

Follow Him

- Elijah's throwing the cloak on Elisha creates a visual of Elisha's taking on Elijah's role.
- As a robe symbolized the authority of a king, Elijah's cloak represented his prophetic authority.
- Stories such as this from the ancient world are where the modern phrase "pass the mantle" comes from.

Follow Him

- The meaning was clear. He wasn't just asking Elisha to follow him as his servant or a disciple; he was asking him to take over for him.
- But Elijah didn't choose Elisha as his successor of his own initiative; he may not have even known him before.
- He was simply following God's instructions.

Follow Him

- In the moment, Elisha left the oxen in the field and ran after Elijah.
- But he asked Elijah if he could say goodbye to his parents first.
- Elijah allowed it and Elisha sacrificed the oxen (just the 12th pair), using the yoke as the firewood on which to burn them.

Follow Him

- Elisha didn't destroy all his family's oxen; his intention wasn't to make his whole family destitute. He was making a statement about his own life and calling.
- By destroying the oxen, he was committing to leaving his life of farming and never looking back. This was a costly sacrifice; he was leaving a very comfortable life for an economically uncertain one.

Follow Him

- But he didn't just kill the oxen; he offered them as a sacrifice to the Lord, demonstrating his commitment to follow God's mission for his life as a prophet.
- And he didn't burn up all the meat like the burnt offering, grain offering, or sin offering. He gave the meat to the people, and they ate it together as a celebratory meal, making it a peace offering or fellowship offering.

Follow Him


- Elisha was celebrating his vow with his family, his commitment to follow God's call on his life.
- His sacrifice points ahead to Paul's call to all believers to offer our whole lives as a "living sacrifice" to the Lord (Romans 12:1–2). It also points ahead to the Lord's Supper, where we celebrate Christ's sacrifice for us together as a sacred celebratory meal.

God Forgives

- God forgives the repentant, but there are always consequences to our sin.
- 1 Kings 21:17-19
- We will skip 1 Kings 20-21, but will note the story of Ahab wanting to buy Naboth's vineyard, but he wouldn't sell it. Jezebel had him put to death.


Naboth's Vineyard

October 30, 2017





DISCOVERING NABOTH'S VINEYARD

Another Find of Biblical Proportions



BREAKPOINT

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Naboth's Vineyard

- Norma Franklin (University of Haifa) and Jennie Ebeling (University of Evansville) led excavation in the Jezreel Valley and found wine presses and olive presses.
- According to *Biblical Archaeology Review*, they found Naboth's vineyard by using the details in 1 Kings 21 that provides an account of the plot by Jezebel to kill Naboth when King Ahab coveted his vineyard.

God Forgives

- Elijah was sent to Ahab to hold him accountable for killing Naboth and taking his vineyard.
- Through Elijah, God told Ahab that in the same place where Naboth had been stoned and dogs had licked up his blood, so dogs would lick up Ahab's blood.
- Ahab still considered Elijah his enemy, which is telling considering he was the true prophet of God.

God Forgives

- But Ahab's greeting to Elijah shows a role reversal: Instead of Ahab and Jezebel's searching for Elijah to kill him, Elijah "found" Ahab to pronounce his death by God.
- Elijah was no longer afraid of Ahab and Jezebel; he boldly confronted them. God's presence and comfort in the "still, small voice" worked. He gave Elijah a new confidence in his mission and in His power to guide and protect him.

God Forgives

- Elijah not only prophesied Ahab's individual death but also the end of his dynasty. When Ahab heard that, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and fasted, cultural expressions of mourning, humility and repentance.
- The text specifically tells us there was no one before in Israel who had done as much evil as Ahab, yet when God saw he had finally humbled himself, He relented on Ahab's punishment.

God Forgives

- His oldest son, Ahaziah, became the next king and followed in the idolatry of his parents.
- He died after falling through the lattice of the upper room of his palace (1 Kings 22:51–2 Kings 1:18).
- Because he had no children, another son of Ahab, Joram, became king in his place.

God Forgives

- He also followed in the idolatry of his parents, and it was during his reign that Elijah's prophecy came true.
- He was killed by Jehu, whom Elijah had anointed to be the future king as God had commanded in the still, small voice on Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:15–17).
- By this, Jehu avenged the blood of the prophets Ahab had killed (2 Kings 9:6–7).

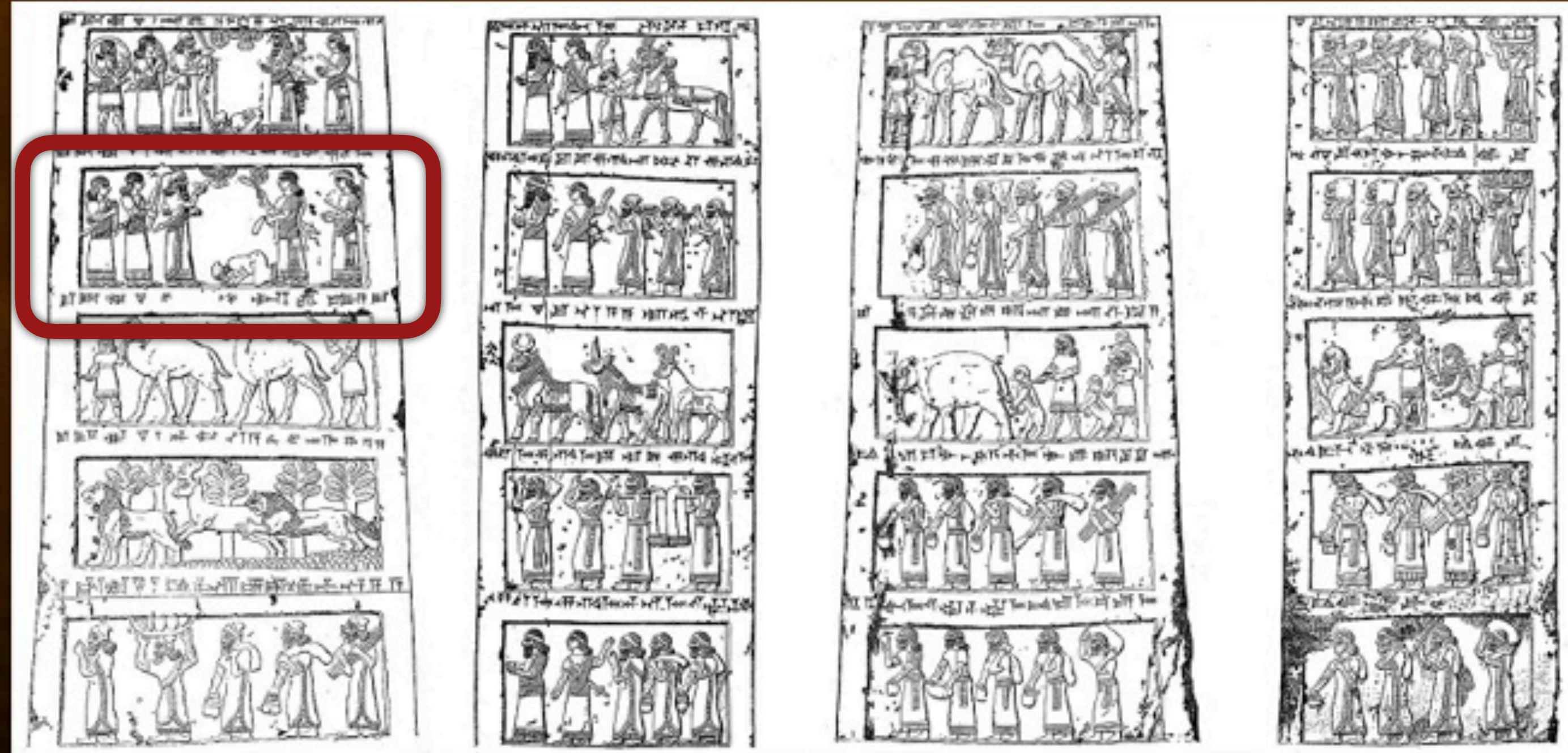
King Jehu

THE
BLACK
OBELISK



FAITH
AFFIRMING
FINDINGS
WITH DR. PAUL D. WEAVER

The Black Obelisk



Shalmaneser



Jehu



God Forgives

- Ahab's repentance story shows us that the invitation to repent and turn to God is open to all, even the most wicked king in history.
- But it also shows us that even when we repent, there are consequences to our sin.
- Even though Ahab repented, his sons continued in idolatry because of what they had seen their parents do.

God Forgives

- Even though Ahab repented, his sons were killed and his dynasty ended.
- Though God may have forgiven Ahab, the consequences of his actions played out in his family and in the nation.
- We can trust that there is never anyone too far gone to be reached by God's love and grace, but there are still consequences to sin.

Turn to God

- When the future is uncertain, the only place to turn is to the Lord.
- 2 Kings 1
- Ahaziah was Ahab's oldest son. He became king when Ahab died, and he practiced idolatry as his parents had done.

Turn to God

- After he fell through the lattice in his palace in Samaria, he sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub (“lord of the flies”), the local god of Ekron, one of the five major cities of Philistia, whether he would die
- This is not the same god as Baal, the chief male god of the Canaanites, whom Ahab and Jezebel had worshipped with Asherah, the chief female goddess.

Turn to God

- God told Elijah to go meet those messengers and asked a rhetorical question – are you going to Baal-zebub because there's no god in Israel to ask?
- Then he pronounced that Ahaziah would surely die.
- These messengers didn't know who Elijah was, because when they returned, they had to describe him to the king instead of just saying his name.

Turn to God

- But Ahaziah immediately knew who he was as soon as they told him about the garment of hair and leather belt.
- The king sent a group of 50 soldiers to ask Elijah to come down from the hill where he was sitting.
- To prove Elijah was a “man of God,” fire came down from heaven to consume the men.

Turn to God

- This is similar to God's sending down fire on Mount Carmel, but not exactly.
- Both events proved Yahweh's superiority over other gods and showed that Elijah was Yahweh's prophet.
- But this time, instead of the fire's lighting the altar, the fire consumed Ahaziah's army.

Turn to God

- Elijah's question, "Is there no god in Israel?" also echoes the standoff at Mount Carmel, when Yahweh showed Himself but Baal did not.
- Mount Carmel proved there was a God in Israel – Yahweh – but these other "gods" didn't even really exist.

Turn to God

- The consuming fire happened twice, but the third time, the captain fell on his knees before Elijah and begged him to spare their lives.
- The angel of the Lord told Elijah it was safe to go with him to the king.
- When Elijah arrived, he repeated the same prophecy, that Ahaziah would die. And he did.

Turn to God

- At the end of his life, Ahab had repented, but his son still worshipped false gods.
- Ahaziah knew who Elijah was.
- He knew about Elijah's victory over the prophets of Baal and his prophecies about Ahaziah's family, yet he still inquired of false gods instead of Yahweh about his future.

Turn to God

- God had proven Himself to be the one true God, so why did Ahaziah still consult these false gods, who were no gods at all?
- Because Ahab had repented, God gave his family another chance, but they continued to chase after empty idols.

Turn to God

- This story exposes a human pattern that is still painfully familiar today.
- People still turn to empty substitutes even when God has repeatedly shown Himself to be the one true God.
- Most people today don't worship pagan gods or wooden idols, but we still chase functional idols that promise security, control, success, blessing or happiness.

Turn to God

- Elijah would ask us today: Is it because God isn't real that you trust money more than Him? Is it because God isn't good that you look elsewhere for happiness? Is it because God isn't powerful that you depend on your own strength?
- Those things may bring temporary security or happiness, but they can never give us real, abundant, everlasting life.
- The things of this world will eventually end in death.

Archaeology

