

Today we will return to the Old Testament for another emphasis on the *Trustworthiness of God's Words*, this time in the book of Kings.

"No other book of the Bible goes so out of its way to cite God's words as the driving force and explanation behind the events of human history as the record of 1 and 2 Kings."

[189]¹

Recurring phrases:

"the word of the Lord" in Kings: 51 times (Chronicles: 13 times)²

"thus says the Lord" in Kings: 33 times (Chronicles: 12 times)

These references highlight God's word, often in prophecy, and many times include the fulfillment of these prophecies. Some fulfillments are immediate, "others take years, decades, or even centuries to materialize." [190]

The theological point: "*all God's words are totally trustworthy.*" [190]

The Man of God and The Word of the Lord (1 Kings 13)

Elijah & the Word of the Lord (1 Kings 17-21)

Last
Week

Elijah & the Word of the Lord (1 Kings 17-21) (cont'd.)

Elijah vs. Ahab in the matter of Naboth's vineyard:

Background: Naboth owns a vineyard in Jezreel, next to one of Ahab's palaces. Jezreel is in the region of Samaria. Ahab secures the vineyard treacherously through the agency of his wife, Jezebel. The plot is theft, though thinly disguised.

The Word of the Lord:

1 Ki 21.17-18 ¶ Then **the word of the LORD came to Elijah** the Tishbite, saying, ¹⁸ "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone down to take possession of it."

¹ Layton Talbert, *The Trustworthiness of God's Words: Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2022), 189 (All other quotations will be noted merely by a page number [in brackets]).

² Chronicles is 14% longer and covers essentially the same material.

Note: Jezreel is in the region of Samaria. Samaria is both a city and a region.

1 Ki 21.19 “You shall speak to him, saying, ‘**Thus says the LORD**, “Have you murdered and also taken possession?”’ And you shall speak to him, saying, ‘**Thus says the LORD**, “In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will lick up your blood, even yours.”’”

And the Lord has a word for Jezebel also:

1 Ki 21.23 “Of Jezebel also has the LORD spoken, saying, ‘The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.’”

Conclusion:

Ahab died in battle (with Jehoshaphat fighting by his side) fighting against Ramoth-Gilead. When the army returned to Ahab’s palace:

1 Ki 22.38 They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood (now the harlots bathed themselves *there*), **according to the word of the LORD** which He spoke.

Jehu, one of Ahab’s officers, rebelled against his son, Joram, ordering his body cast into Naboth’s vineyard.

2 Ki 9.25-26 Then *Jehu* said to Bidkar his officer, “Take *him* up and cast him into the property of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, for I remember when you and I were riding together after Ahab his father, that the LORD laid this oracle against him: ²⁶ ‘Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,’ says the LORD, ‘and I will repay you in this property,’ says the LORD. Now then, take and cast him into the property, according to the word of the LORD.”

As Jehu consolidates control, he orders Jezebel’s retainers to cast her out of a tower where she is hidden, where she is trodden to death under Jehu’s chariot. Jehu leaves her lying in the street, later:

2 Ki 9.35-36 They went to bury her, but they found nothing more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. ³⁶ Therefore they returned and told him. And he said, “**This is the word of the LORD**, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel;

Elisha and the Word of the Lord (2 Ki 1-9)

In the story of Elisha, the word of the Lord finds direct and indirect fulfillment Ahab's son, Ahaziah, dies according to the word of the Lord from Elijah. (2 Ki 1.17)

2 Ki 1.17 ¶ So Ahaziah died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And because he had no son, Jehoram became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

Elisha inherits Elijah's ministry, and the word of the Lord comes either as "the word of the Lord" (direct) or "the word of Elisha" (indirect)

2 Ki 2.21-22 He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "**Thus says the LORD**, 'I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.'" ²² So the waters have been purified to this day, according to **the word of Elisha** which he spoke.

2 Ki 2.23-24 ¶ Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!" ²⁴ When he looked behind him and saw them, **he cursed them in the name of the LORD**. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of their number.

The Word of the Lord:

Delivers on the battlefield (2 Ki 3.16-27)

Provides miraculously for his people (2 Ki 4.42-44, 7.1, 16)

Calls for the anointing of kings (2 Ki 9.1-13)

Executes kings (2 Ki 9.24-26, 10.8-11)

The Lord's word through his prophets:

Grants children to childless women (2 Ki 4.14-17)

Cleanses lepers (2 Ki 5.14)

Silences critics (2 Ki 7.2, 17-20)

A closer look at the last passage

^{2 Ki 7.1} ¶ Then Elisha said, “Listen to the word of the LORD; thus says the LORD, ‘Tomorrow about this time a measure of fine flour will be *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.’”

^{2 Ki 7.2} The royal officer on whose hand the king was leaning answered the man of God and said, “Behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven, could this thing be?” Then he said, “Behold, you will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat of it.”

Elisha doesn’t explain how the Lord’s word will be fulfilled, but adds a word of his own for the scoffer.

In the twilight, the Lord sends a panic through the besieging army.

^{2 Ki 7.7} Therefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents and their horses and their donkeys, *even* the camp just as it was, and fled for their life.

First some lepers, then the whole city feasted on the spoils left behind.

^{2 Ki 7.16-17} ¶ So the people went out and plundered the camp of the Arameans. Then a measure of fine flour *was sold* for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel, **according to the word of the LORD**.¹⁷ Now the king appointed the royal officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate; but the people trampled on him at the gate, and he died just **as the man of God had said**, who spoke when the king came down to him.

“God will always do exactly what He says, however inconceivable the mechanics of a prediction may seem to us on this side of fulfillment.” [198]

Hezekiah and the Astonishing Exception (2 Ki 20)

Hezekiah encouraged some northern Israelites to return to the Lord and celebrate the Passover. It turned out they were not properly cleansed to participate, so Hezekiah prayed that the Lord would forgive. The Lord responded to Hezekiah’s prayer (2 Chr 30.18-20)

Later, the Assyrians besieged Jerusalem. Again, Hezekiah prayed (2 Ki 19.15-19), and through Isaiah, “the word of the Lord” came, promising deliverance (2 Ki 19.20-21), which came when 185,000 Assyrians “woke up dead” (2 Ki 19.35-36)

At about this same time, Hezekiah became very sick, and a message came from the Lord:

2 Ki 20.1 ¶ In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’”

Hezekiah immediately turned to God in prayer:

2 Ki 20.2-3 Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, ³ “Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Before Isaiah left the palace, a new word from the Lord came to him:

2 Ki 20.4-5 Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁵ “Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

This seems a contradiction, but God explains it in Jer 18:

Jer 18.7-10 “At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy *it*; ⁸ if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. ⁹ “Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant *it*; ¹⁰ if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.

Even when God pronounced judgement against Ahab, Ahab responded with humility, and God delayed the judgement until after Ahab himself died (1 Ki 21.27-29)

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How to explain God's exception? Omnipotent God choses to hear our impotent prayers and according to his own purposes may set aside or alter his own pronouncements.