

The Story: Chapter 15 God's Messengers

This is the time we're in...

Asa is King of Judah – remember he's the one last week that did what God wanted him to do. He showed us a picture of repentance.

Ahab is King of Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Here's how that's going...

I Kings 16:29-33

²⁹ In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. ³⁰ Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. ³¹ He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. ³² He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. ³³ Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.

In chapter 15 we cover four messengers of God that were each sent for a specific purpose and a specific group.

Messengers of God, also called prophets, were people that God would raise up to warn His nation about where they were going wrong and what God was going to do about it if they didn't get back in line with His plan.

Elijah is the first messenger introduced: **875-848 BC**

- He ministered during the time of King Ahab.
- His purpose was to confront the worship of Baal and anyone who had taken part in that worship.

This is how they met Elijah:

I Kings 17:1

17 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

Why would he choose a drought to make his point?

- Because Baal was the god of fertility and of rain.
- Stopping the rain was the first step in proving that Baal had no real power.

Chapter 18

We see Elijah on Mt. Carmel

- Challenges the 450 prophets of Baal to see who served the true God!

(tell the story)

I Kings 18:36-38

³⁶ At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. ³⁷ Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.” ³⁸ Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

**Second, we see [Elisha](#)’s Ministry:
[848-797 BC](#)**

Elisha is walking with Elijah.

God takes Elijah home to Heaven and then we see Elisha come on the scene.

II Kings 2:13-14

¹³ He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. “Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

His cloak represented the mantle of God, and the authority, that God had placed on Elijah.

Elisha, literally and figuratively, picked up the mantle, or the ministry, of Elijah and went to work.

His ministry was a little different than Elijah's. Elijah was more about the warning about their pagan worship. Elisha got to take over after that and show people how God really wanted them to live going forward.

II Kings 4:1-6

4 The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."

² Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?" "Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil." ³ Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. ⁴ Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side." ⁵ She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. ⁶ When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one." But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

Boy there is so much we can learn from that story...

Third was [Amos](#): (Old Testament Professor)
[760-750 BC](#)

He spent most of his ministry around Bethel, which was a major point of worship in the Northern Kingdom.

His message was a harsh warning of judgment because of a lack of righteousness in the people.

Amos 5:24

²⁴ But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

Fourth we have [Hosea](#):
[750-715 BC](#)

Here's the crazy part. Amos was all about the tough warning. Here's what's coming your way.

Hosea was all about God's love for His people.

Here's how we see that:

Hosea 1:2-3

² When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord.” ³ So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

God actually tells his prophet, Hosea, to go and marry a prostitute.

He marries a woman named Gomer.

This is for the purpose of showing the people of Israel what God's love looks like.

He does this. Then they have sons that God also uses as part of the message to His people.

Chapter 2 gives a picture of Gomer's unfaithfulness as God's picture of Israel.

She had basically become a slave at this point...

Then the Lord says this:

Hosea 3:1-5

3 The Lord said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

² So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. ³ Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you.”

⁴ For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. ⁵ Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.

Through Hosea, God shows His children just how far He is willing to go for them because of how much He loves them.

- He even gives us a picture of Jesus when Hosea has to go buy back a wife that actually already belongs to him
- This is just like Jesus shedding His blood on the cross to buy back you and me when He created us in the first place!

Now, what is the challenge for you and I today?

Question: Has God sent a word to you through these 21 days?

- Is He showing you a warning about where you're headed and challenged you to turn around and come back to Him?
- Has He shown you how much He loves you and would like to see you grasp a full understanding of that?
- Has He spoken sharply to you because that's the only thing that will work?
- Or has He reminded you of how special you are because He created you and has a great plan for your life?

No matter what God has spoken or how it's come across to you, it takes us back to Elijah and Elisha.

I Kings 18:21

²¹ Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

It was time for the people to make a choice. **Who are you going to follow as your true KING as of today?**

Elisha faced this question:

I Kings 19:19-21

¹⁹ So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.

This was Elijah's way of saying, "You're next. It's time to go serve the Lord!"

Elisha's first response:

²⁰ Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother good-by," he said, "and then I will come with you." "Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"

Elijah's statement: Hey, listen, this is God's call on your life. Whether you follow or not is up to you!

Now, watch this...

²¹ So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant.

Elisha goes all in:

1. He left his stuff behind to follow God's call on his life.

What are the things that have become idols to you?

Are their things in your life (tv, porn, addictions, snapchat, etc.) that are holding you back?

Are you willing to set those at the feet of Jesus this morning?

2. He left his past behind to follow God's call on his life.

He kissed his mom and dad goodbye, had a party for his friends, and was gone.

What are you carrying from your past that you need to kiss goodbye this morning?

3. He made it impossible to go back.

Here's the truth about fasting: It is a short term action that shows us where we may need to adjust our focus.

- Helps us get back on track.
- Remind us of what is most important.

It's not suppose to be forever. That's the point of making it a short, intense time of seeking the Lord

So, I'm not challenging you to continue the fast for the whole year.

- I'm not saying you should never get back on facebook.
- Or don't ever eat sugar again.

I am saying this: "If you have grown toward Jesus in these last 21 days, do you have to give all of that up and go back to exactly the way things were before the fast?"

There are some oxen we need to burn.

There are some things we need to give away.

There are some patterns or issues that we need to kiss goodbye today and never go back to...

So here's where we are...

Same question for us today:

“How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if ‘something else’ is God, follow that.”

Today's the day to make that call.