

## WEEK TWENTY FIVE INTRODUCTION

The kingdom is divided. The tribes of Israel, called as one people, by the Lord, now stand at animosity. To the north, the nation of Israel composed of 10 tribes follow the idolatrous leadership of Jeroboam son of Nebat. The southern kingdom, Judah and Benjamin, tread under the leadership of Rehoboam initially. The people once united against enemies outside, now war with themselves. Conflict and competition mark their border. From here on the narrative of the kings notes the division and the succession of rulers. The Scriptures often assess the character and quality of these kings as good or evil. The *standard* the Scriptures use for this judgment is the king's faithfulness to the Lord and His commandments. Fidelity to God weighs more than economic prosperity and military triumph. This week also introduces some of the most memorable to Israel's prophets, Elijah and Elisha.

### KEY SCRIPTURE

*Then Elijah approached all the people and said, 'How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him. But if Baal, follow him.'* But the people didn't answer him a word. — **1 Kings 18:21 CSB**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Read afresh 1 Kings 15 verses 3 and 11. How is the character of Abijam and Asa measured? How do you believe the legacy of previous generations affected these two kings of Judah? How do you think your character and legacy affect those who are coming after you?**

**What changes does Asa lead beginning at 2 Chronicles 15:8? What prompts his repentance and change of direction? How does his transformation impact those he leads? Verse 8 states, *he took courage...* Why is courage required here? Where in your life and spheres of influence do you need to exercise courage for the sake of the Lord?**

2 Chronicles 16:9a says, *For the eyes of the LORD roam throughout the earth to show himself strong for those who are wholeheartedly devoted to him.* How did Asa's actions exhibit a lack of dependence and devotion to God? What promise does this verse contain for us today? Have you considered that what God asks of you, He promises *to* you? Read Philippians 2:12-13.

What happens in 1 Kings 17:17-24? How does this miraculous event point to Jesus? Focus on verse 24. What is the relationship between God's miracle and God's word? Which serves the other? Consider also Mark 2:9-11.

1 Kings 18:20-40 recounts an epic confrontation. Describe the scene. What are the sides? What are the odds? What is the outcome? How does this confrontation express Genesis 3:15? How does this confrontation point ahead to the work of Jesus at the cross and the empty tomb? Read Colossians 2:14-15.

In 2 Chronicles 18:33, we see God's sovereignty on display in what seems like random events to human perception. By a "random" archer's arrow God keeps His word which came through Micaiah the prophet in verses 16 and 27. How does this truth of God's purpose amid seemingly random and chance events reshape how you approach your everyday living in Christ? Prayerfully consider God's hand even today.

2 Kings 1:3 records, *But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Go and meet the messengers and the king of Samaria and say to them, ‘Is it because there is not God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?’”* Ahaziah’s idolatrous belief births idolatrous action. What we believe about God and the gospel of Jesus is displayed in how we act. What are some ways that *functional* idolatry creeps into our hearts and lives? Where do we go for counsel and wisdom *before* going to God in His word and prayer? What do we rely on to protect us, provide for us, and make us happy *before* and *besides* the Lord? By God’s grace in Christ, seek wholehearted devotion to the Lord through repentance and faith.

**BE A DOER OF THE WORD**

“So she left. After she had shut the door behind her and her sons, they kept bringing her containers, and she kept pouring.” -**2 Kings 4:5 CSB**

**The widow in 2 Kings 4 hears God’s word, believes God’s word, and acts upon God’s word. Is there a gap here for you? Are you hearing God’s word in the Bible? Hearing it, do you believe and trust God at His word? Hearing in faith is proven and displayed through living it out. Lift up any gap here to the Lord for forgiveness and recommitment to following His way.**