

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

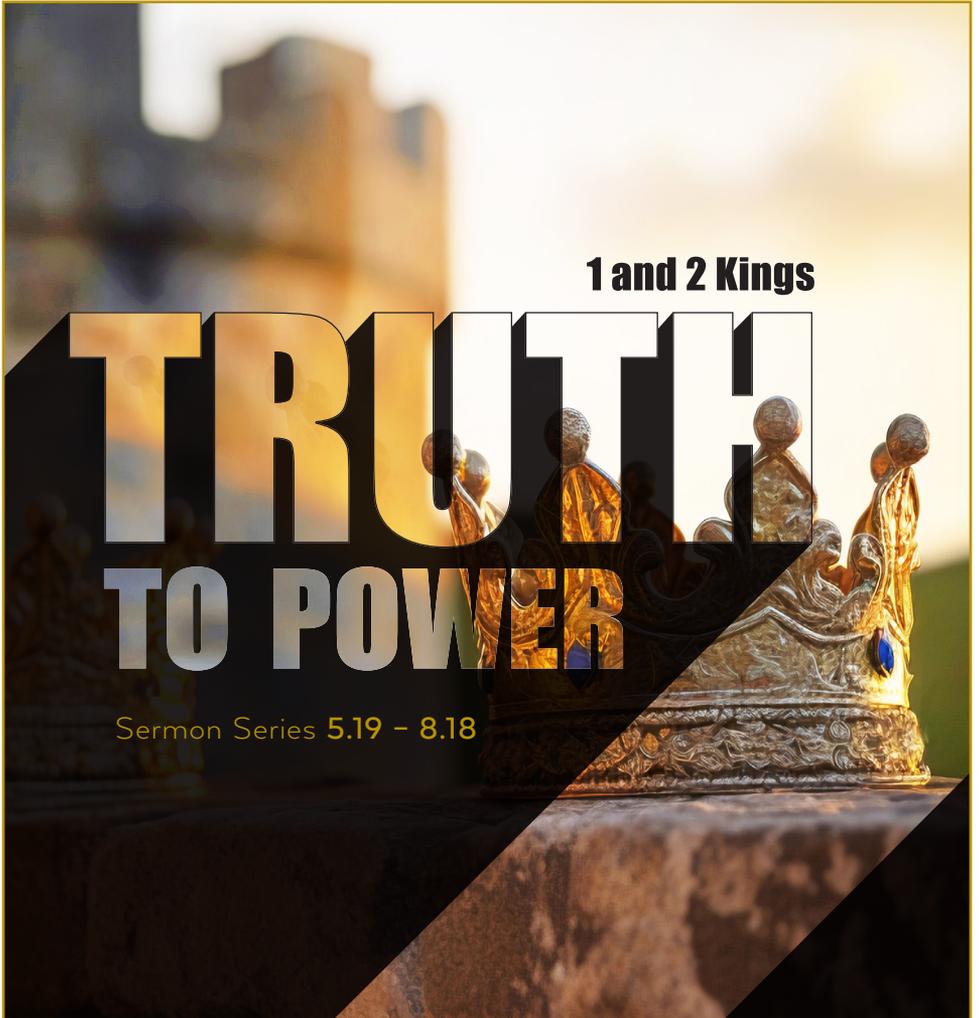
DEVO

MAY 20 - 24, 2024

1 and 2 Kings

TRUTH TO POWER

Sermon Series 5.19 - 8.18



A photograph of two ornate golden crowns with blue gemstones, resting on a dark stone ledge. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

MONDAY

Read **1 Kings 11:26-39; 10:14-29**

The Characters

This week's text is a story from 1 Kings, and we begin with an introduction of the four characters.

Solomon: Solomon was David's son who was installed as king over Israel upon his father's death (1 Kings 2). According to today's readings, he was the wisest and wealthiest king of his time (1 Kings 10:23). Solomon's wisdom was legendary as was his vast wealth. He was responsible for building a temple in Jerusalem for worshipping the LORD, and he dedicated it by sacrificing 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats (1 Kings 8:63). Despite his great wisdom, he did not follow the LORD wholeheartedly as his father, David, had done. Instead, he had 700 wives (1 Kings 11:3)—many of them foreigners—and established the worship of their foreign gods in and around Jerusalem.

Jeroboam: Jeroboam was an Ephraimite, Ephraim being one of the two tribes of Joseph, who was a trusted official in Solomon's service. He distinguished himself through his work to the point that Solomon put him in charge of all the forced labor from the tribe of Joseph (1 Kings 5:13-18 reports that Solomon had 180,000 conscripted laborers from all of Israel). The fact that Jeroboam was from the tribe of Joseph seems to have made him popular with these laborers, and he likely sympathized with their plight.

Ahijah: Ahijah was one of the lesser-known prophets mentioned only in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles. The text tells us he was from Shiloh, a city of significance in Ephraim. Shiloh was the place where the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant were located when the prophet Samuel ministered to Israel. Shiloh would have been perceived as a holy place, giving additional authority to the words of a prophet from there. The fact that Ahijah and Jeroboam were from the same tribe provides additional color for the message Ahijah brings.

The LORD: The LORD is the main character in almost every story in the Bible, even when He is not specifically mentioned. In this story, He is the One who sends Ahijah with a message to Jeroboam. He is the One who has been offended by Solomon's unfaithfulness and the One who challenges Jeroboam to live in covenant faithfulness. He is the reason for this story.

QUESTIONS

How do you see the LORD active in your own story? What does faithfulness to the LORD look like for us?

PRAYER

ECO Church Planting

Israel Gonzales is planting a multicultural church called Central City in Santa Maria, CA. Pray that they will live into their mission, values, and vision with wisdom and courage and with Christ in the center.

The image shows two ornate golden crowns with blue gemstones, resting on a rough stone ledge. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The word "TUESDAY" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

TUESDAY

Read **1 Kings 11:29-39; 1 Samuel 15:24-29**

The Prophetic Word

A common component of Hebrew prophecy is symbolic action, something the prophet does to illustrate the message from the LORD. In this week's text, we are told that Ahijah was wearing a new cloak when he met Jeroboam along the road, but he took it off and tore it into twelve pieces, giving ten of them to Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:30-31). The fact that it was a new cloak underscores the importance of the LORD'S message. The LORD was going to place ten of the tribes of Israel under his rule, essentially dividing Israel into two kingdoms (Israel in the north and Judah in the south) because of the disobedience of Israel and Solomon the king. It was probably not lost on Jeroboam that Ahijah's message and symbolic action was very similar to that of Samuel when he told Saul that the LORD was going to take the kingdom from him due to his disobedience (1 Samuel 15).

Ahijah's message to Jeroboam contained a warning and a promise. The warning was that the LORD does not take His covenant relationship with Israel lightly. The reason He is dividing the kingdom is due to a list of things Israel has done in violation of the covenant: forsaking the LORD, worshiping false gods, disobedience to the LORD'S laws, and not doing what was right (1 Kings 11:33). All these

actions demonstrated that Israel thought they knew better than the LORD how they should live. They were more concerned about appeasing other gods than pleasing the God of Israel. They chose to live by their own (corrupt) standards rather than following the LORD'S standards. The ultimate reason for the division of Israel into two kingdoms was pride—Solomon's pride and the people's pride.

The promise Ahijah delivers to Jeroboam is that the LORD will make him the ruler over ten of the tribes of Israel after Solomon's death and that he will build an enduring dynasty for Jeroboam *if* he lives in obedience and faithfulness to the LORD. Inasmuch as the LORD plans to remove most of the kingdom from Solomon's son due to Solomon's unfaithfulness, Jeroboam can expect the same kind of treatment if he also is unfaithful to the LORD. The promise of blessings is conditioned on obedience. Jeroboam will have to choose whether to remain faithful to the LORD.

QUESTIONS

How do you choose to follow the LORD daily?

PRAYER

ECO Church Planting

Pray for Central City to experience continued healing and growth and depth in faith, hope, and love as it receives and adopts more sons and daughters into the community.

The image shows two ornate golden crowns with blue gemstones, resting on a dark, textured stone surface. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The word "WEDNESDAY" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

WEDNESDAY

Read **1 Kings 11:29-39**

Grace in Judgment

While the story at the heart of this week's text took place in the 10th century B.C., the books of 1 and 2 Kings were likely not completed until much later in Israel's history, perhaps in the 6th century B.C. As such, we should ask ourselves what the message of this story was for the audience who lived prior to the exile of Judah when the kingdom of Israel had already been destroyed. Certainly, the author wanted the readers to be reminded of the LORD'S warnings and promises as we saw yesterday. No doubt, he intended that they take to heart the need to live in covenant faithfulness to the LORD. These themes come through the story loud and clear.

However, there is another theme that shines through in this story and that is the theme of grace. Even though the LORD has decided to remove most of the kingdom from Solomon's descendant, He does not completely end the Davidic dynasty. Instead, He preserves a portion of the kingdom for David's descendants, promising to preserve a Davidic ruler in Jerusalem because of His covenant with David. He also promises not to divide the kingdom in Solomon's lifetime but rather to do so during the reign of Solomon's son. This is a splendid example of divine grace, the LORD doing for His people

what they did not deserve and honoring His covenant even when His people had been unfaithful to Him.

For the readers of the books of 1 and 2 Kings, facing the judgment of exile, this would likely have offered some comfort amid their fear and anxiety. They would have seen clearly how pride led to division and disunity, with the northern and southern kingdoms often having turned against each other after their separation. If they were listening to the prophets of their day, such as Jeremiah, they would have known that the LORD was about to execute judgment on Judah and Jerusalem. But they could take comfort in the knowledge that the LORD demonstrates grace even in judgment. His goal is not to punish, but to lead his people to repentance. Even the 70-year exile was framed as a restorative rather than punitive action, giving the land an opportunity to rest for all the sabbath years that had not been observed (2 Chronicles 36:20-21).

QUESTIONS

How has the LORD demonstrated grace to you even when you were unfaithful?

PRAYER

ECO Church Planting

Gio and Indra Garcia are planting La Casa Church at Glenkirk Church in Glendora. Pray that the Lord continues to add new people every day who are motivated to know Jesus and grow in their faith through a Christian community in Spanish.

The image shows two ornate golden crowns with blue gemstones, resting on a rough, textured stone surface. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The word "THURSDAY" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

THURSDAY

Read **1 Kings 11:26-39**; **1 Kings 12:1-24**

The Aftermath

The story at the center of our focus this week is introduced with a simple statement: *“Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king”* (1 Kings 11:26). Reportedly, the story we have been reading is the account of Jeroboam’s rebellion. The text, however, provides no details about how he rebelled against Solomon. What it tells us is that after Jeroboam’s encounter with Ahijah, *“Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon’s death”* (v. 40). Something must have transpired between Jeroboam receiving the message from Ahijah and Solomon’s attempt to kill him, but the text does not give us any details.

Chapter 12 recounts the events after Solomon’s death, how his son, Rehoboam, became king. Jeroboam heard that Solomon had died and returned to Israel, whereupon the people asked him to be their spokesman to ask Rehoboam to lighten the heavy load of forced labor Solomon had established. Rehoboam took counsel from his peers rather than older and wiser advisors and refused their request. As a result, the northern tribes (Israel) rebelled against Rehoboam, asking Jeroboam to be their king. Ten tribes separated from Judah, leaving Rehoboam with a much smaller kingdom, and establishing a rivalry between the two kingdoms that lasted for several centuries.

These events were interpreted by the author of 1 Kings as evidence of the fulfilment of prophecy: *“So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the LORD, to fulfill the word the LORD had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite”* (1 Kings 12:15). God was faithful to His word that was delivered by His prophet and divided the kingdom, giving the larger portion to Jeroboam.

But it is also evident in the story that there were social and political reasons for the division of the twelve tribes. The division between the two groups was evident even in David’s time: he ruled over Judah for the first seven and a half years and ruled over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years (2 Samuel 5:4-5). A conclusion we can draw from this is that often there are multiple reasons why things happen; spiritual causes are not refuted by the existence of other causes. The LORD often works in mysterious ways.

QUESTIONS

How have you seen spiritual explanations of events in your life overlap with other explanations?

PRAYER

ECO Church Planting

Pray for the Lord to raise up the right church planter for South Orange County. We are currently assessing someone for this and it looks very promising.



FRIDAY

Read **1 Kings 12:25-33; 14:1-11; 15:25-30; Exodus 32:1-4**

The Rest of the Story

On Tuesday we saw that the LORD made a promise to Jeroboam through Ahijah—that he would make him the ruler over ten of the tribes of Israel after Solomon’s death and that he would build an enduring dynasty for Jeroboam *if* Jeroboam lived in obedience and faithfulness to Him.

Yesterday we saw the fulfillment of the first part of this promise. However, chapter 12 details that Jeroboam, like Solomon, turned away from obedience to the LORD. Prioritizing retaining political power over worshipping the LORD according to His commands (he feared worshipping in Jerusalem would change people’s allegiance), Jeroboam ordered the creation and installation of two golden calves, erected in Bethel (in the south) and Dan (in the north) and proclaimed, “*Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt*” (1 Kings 12:28). He also recruited priests from among the people (not just Levites) and proliferated places of worship (“*high places*”) throughout his land.

There was a long tradition in Israel of associating the LORD with images of calves, as evident in the story of Aaron creating a golden calf for the people when Moses delayed returning from the top of Mt. Sinai where he was receiving the Law from the LORD (Exodus 32).

The calf image was also associated with the Canaanite deity, Baal, well known in the Hebrew scriptures. It appears that Jeroboam, like Aaron before him, was attempting to depict the LORD with an image familiar to the people of Israel from their Canaanite neighbors.

The fact that the LORD had expressly commanded that the Israelites have no other gods and no images of Him (Exodus 20:3-6) makes Jeroboam's actions inexcusable. Through his leadership, Israel broke the covenant with the LORD. The LORD spoke again to Jeroboam (actually, his wife) through Ahijah, warning him of the judgment he was about to incur because of his disobedience (1 Kings 14:1-11).

Jeroboam reigned over Israel for twenty-two years (1 Kings 14:20) and was succeeded by his son, Nadab. Nadab's reign, however, lasted only two years before he was assassinated by Baasha, who then proceeded to kill off all of Jeroboam's remaining family. Due to Jeroboam's disobedience to the LORD's word to him, his dynasty did not endure.

QUESTIONS

How can we be “fully devoted followers of Christ”? How can we ensure that pride and self-interest do not destroy unity in our lives?

PRAYER

ECO Church Planting

Pray for financial support for Central City, La Casa, and the potential new church plant in South Orange County. Typically, church plants in Southern California need \$250,000 in outside funding over a period of two-four years.



These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.

Glenkirk Church | 1700 Palopinto Ave, Glendora, CA 91741 | 626.914.4833
GlenkirkChurch.org |  **@GlenkirkChurch** |  **Facebook: GlenkirkChurch**