

READING ASSIGNMENT, WEEK 2: HISTORICAL BOOKS (for June 10 sermon)

BOOKS COVERED: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

NATHAN REBUKES DAVID | 2 SAMUEL 12:1-25

In v. 9 God puts this question to David, "Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes?" Have you realized your sin shows contempt and hatred for God's Word? Reflect on specific changes you may need to make.

Read vv. 13-14. Look at the process: admission of sin, forgiveness, consequences. How have you seen this pattern play out in your life? Is God fair with you?

Read vv. 24-25. When have you seen God bring something good to you after forgiving you?

SOLOMON'S WISDOM | 1 KINGS 3:1-15

God says to Solomon: "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!" (v. 5). We expect the Lord to reprimand the king. Instead comes this gracious, generous promise. What would you ask for if God offered?

Now read vv. 7-9. What does Solomon ask of the Lord? Why do you think he asked for this? How does it compare with your wish expressed in the last question?

What is the Lord's reaction in v. 10? God responds generously by giving him wisdom and more. What does this say about Solomon's relationship with the Lord? How does your connection with God compare?

ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL | 1 KINGS 18:16-46

Elijah's challenge is about idolatry. Elijah set up a "God contest." In your own life, is there a "contest" between Jesus and some opposing gods or idols?

Verse 38 highlights the utter emptiness of non-gods. What does that suggest about who and what we can depend on? What does that say about American culture?

JOSIAH'S REFORMS | 2 CHRONICLES 34

Josiah is serious about getting rid of faith in worthless idols and renewing faith in the true God. Have you truly anchored your life on Jesus? Do you feel you're actually following Him?

“As long as he [Josiah] lived, they did not fail to follow the Lord, the God of their fathers” (v. 33). In whom do you recognize this sort of leadership today? What can you apply to your life and influence?

ESTHER’S DECISION | ESTHER 4

Read vv. 1-8. Put yourself in that predicament. How would you react? Does your trust in God weaken or strengthen you when fear becomes real?

The second half of the story (vv. 9-17) describes how the queen and her cousin responded to the situation. When your faith is on the line, do you usually show courage? If not, how do you respond?

Can you think of events in your life where you are in position to help people in a big way, even though it’s risky? Esther put her life on the line. Does that phrase overdramatize the decisions of ordinary Christians, or does it accurately depict what’s at stake? Reference Jesus’ words in Mark 8:34-35. Integrity and courage are close kin. Esther’s story reveals both. What does your story reveal?
