

Prophets and Kings Discussion Questions

5.1.16

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

Questions

Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.

1. Share a story of a time when how you were thinking impacted your external reality?
2. Do you agree or disagree with the statement, "Our inner lives will become our outer reality"? Why?

Background

This story relays the end of Solomon's reign and makes clear that the end of the united Kingdom of Israel is also soon to end. Throughout 1 Kings 1-10 it has been clear that Solomon's reign was a period of unprecedented peace of Israel chapter 11 makes equally clear that peace is about to end. We are introduced to three characters who are featured in the dismantling of the peace - Hadad, Rezon and Jeroboam. Rezon will bring challenges from the north (he has taken control of Damascus), Hadad will bring pressure from the south and Jeroboam from within Israel itself. Hadad and Rezon both survived the wars fought by David's armies and are not fans of Israel. The story of Hadad has echoes of the language of Exodus as he two fled from Israel to Egypt, found favor with the Pharaoh, married and then when he heard that David died asked to be "let go" so he and his family could return to their homes in Edom. The text is not entirely clear when Pharaoh allowed Hadad to return to his home in Edom, but unlike when Moses asked Pharaoh to let his people go God did not harden Pharaoh's heart toward Hadad.

The story of Jeroboam and Solomon contains echoes of the Saul and David story. Much like when God chose to remove his blessing from Saul for his lack of obedience God removed the blessing from Solomon because he worshiped the gods of his wives. Before trying to have him killed Solomon recognized what a great worker and leader Jeroboam was and made him head of all the laborers from the tribes of Joseph. Jeroboam, much like Saul and David, looked like a warrior (which was one of the few qualifications we are told about him). Jeroboam fled to Egypt (like Hadad) when Solomon tried to have him killed.

Read 1 Kings 11:1 – 26; Deut 17:14 – 20

Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.

1. What did God say in Deuteronomy that kings should and should not do?
2. Why do you think the Lord gave these instructions?
3. Look at 1 Kings 10:14, 26; and 11:3. What should we be thinking of Solomon at this point?
4. What was the consequence for Solomon and all Israel for turning away from the Lord?
5. Who did God raise up, as enemies in the north and the south, to eventually fight against Israel?
6. What was Jeroboam told by Ahijah, the prophet of Shiloh, about what would be taken from Solomon and given to him?

Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.

1. What does it look like to be single minded in our devotion to God?
2. What things draw our attention away from God?
3. What is the equivalent in our world today of Solomon building temples to the gods of his wives?
4. Solomon was very wise and yet, even he could not manage to stay focused on the one True God. How can we avoid repeating his mistakes?

Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.

1. What are the things in our lives that we hold dearly to, as Solomon did his wives, that draw us away from the one True God?
2. How can we keep our hearts focused on Jesus without being so detached from the world that we are no longer willing to take action as Jesus's hands and feet in our world?
3. What practical steps can we take to safeguard against worshiping other gods (whatever they might be for each of us)?

Closing

As you finish your time together spend time lifting one another up in prayer. Especially, pray for the wisdom to identify those things that are distracting you from worshiping the one True God and the strength to remove them from your life. Spend some time praying for the leaders in our community, state and nation as the political season continues to super charged. Pray for wisdom for people to know the truth and to see the reality of the internal lives because the internal will become external as Solomon's live shows.

Reminder: We are called to live in such a way that those around us recognize that we are patterning our lives after someone who is different. When we choose the world over our compassionate God we are on a path that leads us nowhere good. Even then, our God chooses to pursue us with love and call us back to relationship with him.