

ROOTED ACT IV



Fragments

glimmers of hope



YOU MAY MISS A DAY;
JUST PICK IT UP WHERE
YOU LEFT OFF OR SKIP
AHEAD TO CATCH UP.

KEEP GOING!

The point isn't to accomplish a task; the point is to spend meaningful time in Scripture. The Bible is the living word of God meant to shape us as we read it. Full of thought-provoking material, it can be beautiful and challenging, comforting and violent, sensual and, occasionally, boring. The redemptive arc of the Bible points to the core message: That a man, Jesus, who was fully God, came to live among us, die on our behalf, and rise in a cosmic act of love and redemption so that we can have a restored relationship with God.

You may have many different reactions to the material: hope, confusion, comfort, shame, and even fear. To supplement your learning and engage the tough questions, there are weekly interviews with pastors and scholars, sermons, and additional resources found here:



Email questions: staff@churchbcc.org

DAILY READING GUIDE

JANUARY 7 – FEBRUARY 17

Week 1: God's King

- Jan 7 Sunday Worship
- Jan 8 1 Samuel 1–4
- Jan 9 1 Samuel 7–10
- Jan 10 1 Samuel 12–14
- Jan 11 1 Samuel 15–17
- Jan 12 1 Samuel 18–20, 22
- Jan 13 1 Samuel 24, 28, 30

Week 2: Pits and Peaks

- Jan 14 Sunday Worship
- Jan 15 2 Samuel 1–3
- Jan 16 2 Samuel 5–7
- Jan 17 2 Samuel 9, 11–12
- Jan 18 2 Samuel 14–17
- Jan 19 2 Samuel 18, 19, 21
- Jan 20 2 Samuel 22–24

Week 3: The Temple

- Jan 21 Sunday Worship
- Jan 22 1 Kings 1–2
- Jan 23 1 Kings 3–5
- Jan 24 1 Kings 8–10
- Jan 25 1 Kings 11–13
- Jan 26 1 Kings 14, 16, 17
- Jan 27 1 Kings 18, 19, 21

Week 4: Covenant Failure

- Jan 28 Sunday Worship
- Jan 29 2 Kings 1–2, 4
- Jan 30 2 Kings 5–8
- Jan 31 2 Kings 9–12
- Feb 1 2 Kings 17–19
- Feb 2 2 Kings 20–22
- Feb 3 2 Kings 23–25

Week 5: The Prophets

- Feb 4 Sunday Worship
- Feb 5 Hosea 1–4
- Feb 6 Hosea 5–8
- Feb 7 Hosea 9–12
- Feb 8 Hosea 13–14, Amos 1
- Feb 9 Amos 2–5
- Feb 10 Amos 6–9

Week 6: Devoted Faith in Dangerous Times

- Feb 11 Sunday Worship
- Feb 12 Daniel 1–3
- Feb 13 Daniel 4–6
- Feb 14 Daniel 7–9 (*Lent begins*)
- Feb 15 Daniel 10–12
- Feb 16 Zephaniah 1–3
- Feb 17 Malachai 1–4

ACT IV: KEY PEOPLE AND PLACES

David: David is one of the most prominent figures in the Bible. He is known for his bravery, piety, and leadership and is considered one of Israel's greatest kings.

Saul: Saul was the first King of Israel. His reign is historically set in the late 11th century BC and designated a development from a tribal society to statehood.

Samuel: Samuel was Israel's last judge (1 Sam 7:6, 15-17) and first prophet (1 Sam 3:20; Acts 3:24; 13:20). He functioned as a priest (1 Sam 2:18) and was a great man of faith (Heb 11:32).

Nathan: Nathan was a prophet during King David and Solomon's reigns. He is best remembered for his dramatic speech to King David, confronting him about his adultery with Bathsheba.

Solomon: Solomon was the third king of Israel. He was the son of King David and Bathsheba. He ruled Israel for forty years, ushering in an era of peace and prosperity for his people. He is famous for building the First Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem: Jerusalem is the Jewish nation's eternal capital city and the place God chose for the Holy Temple. Inaugurated by King David and sometimes referred to as Zion, it has been the beating heart of Jewish life for 3,000 years.

Israel/Judah: After the death of Solomon, the ten northern tribes revolted and established the kingdom of Israel in the north. The remaining tribes remained loyal to the son of Solomon and formed the Kingdom of Judah in the south.

Assyria: Assyria was an ancient nation that was a significant world power for about a thousand years (1700–727 BC). As part of the punishment for Israel's persistent idolatry, God handed the northern kingdom of Israel over to the Assyrians in 722 BC.

Babylon: Babylon is a city that is mentioned throughout the entirety of Scripture. We first learn about it in Genesis 11, and we'll learn more about it in Revelation. In 530 BC, Babylon captured the Kingdom of Judah and held them captive for 70 years.

Exile: Exile isn't just about location; exile is about the state of your soul. Exile is when you fail to convert your blessings into blessings for others, when you yourself a stranger to the purposes of God.

HOW'D WE GET HERE?

If you remember, the book of Judges ended with this ominous statement: *In those days, Israel had **no king**; everyone did as they saw fit* (Judges 21:25). A king was vital to the life of a nation. The king would ensure that God's will was done among the people and that Israel lived according to its calling as a nation of priests.

In this critical period of Israel's history, the people of God transformed from a loosely affiliated group of tribes into a unified nation under a government headed by a king who was supposed to deliver the people from their enemies and lead them in the right paths.

But what happens when the people of God stop acting like the people of God should act? What happens when we forget to live into the identity that God has given us? What happens when we return to the bondage we've been rescued from?

Exile.

Our prayer for all of us is that we'll be able to find our stories within these stories. I pray that we will become entirely secure in our calling to be God's representatives to the world around us so they will be drawn into the love, care, and peace that only comes through Jesus.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

The books of Samuel and Kings are grouped with twelve other books in what is called the "Historical Books." They were written not only to record history but, more importantly, to teach the lessons that history teaches us. Like other historical books in the Old Testament, the history recorded here was meant to preserve essential events and spiritual truths learned through those events.

In the Hebrew Bible, the books of 1 and 2 Samuel form one book, and the books 1 and 2 Kings formed another. The book of Kings continued the narrative that had begun in Samuel. The Septuagint (the earliest Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) separated Samuel and Kings into four parts.

WEEK 1: GOD'S KING

► 1 SAMUEL

1 Samuel chronicles the beginning of Israel's monarchy following the lives of the prophet Samuel, the ill-fated King Saul, and God's ultimate choice of David as king.

Key Themes

God Uses Common Events: God uses everyday events for His purposes. He used Hannah's contentious relationship with Peninnah (1 Samuel 1:1–28), led Saul to Samuel during Saul's search for lost donkeys (9:1–27), and led David to fight Goliath while running an errand for his dad (17:1–58). These are just a few examples of how God incorporates everyday events into His ultimate goal.

Kingship: God designated David to rule over His people. This history validates David's house as the legitimate rulers of Israel. It also fulfills Jacob's promise that the scepter will never depart from Judah, David's tribe (Genesis 49:10).

So What?

God is still sovereign today. He will accomplish His purposes with or without our cooperation. But, as was true in the lives of Samuel, Saul, and David, our response to God's call affects our outcome. Will we obey Him as Samuel and David did and live lives marked by blessing? Or, will we, like Saul, try to live on our own terms? "To obey is better than sacrifice," Samuel told Saul (1 Samuel 15:22). That truth still speaks to us today.

Reflection Questions

1. What do the descriptions of Hannah's prayer, God's response, and Hannah's song reveal about God, and how does this revelation speak to your life today?
2. Why does Israel demand a King, and how does the story of Saul's kingship reveal both the hope and the dangers of human kings?
3. The anointing of David and his rise as a leader reveals how God looks at the heart rather than mere appearance. How is this both a comfort and a challenge for you?
4. How does the friendship between David and Jonathan reflect God's covenant love and inform our covenant relationships with God and others?

WEEK 2: PITS AND PEAKS

► 2 SAMUEL

Second Samuel chronicles the Davidic dynasty's establishment and reign and Israel's expansion under God's chosen leader.

Key Theme

Davidic Covenant: "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16). This promise marked the beginning of an additional covenant, called the Davidic covenant, in which God promised an eternal throne to the house of David.

Because of David's faith, God did not treat [David's] descendants as He had treated Saul's. Sin would be punished, but David's line would never be completely cut off.

Lawrence O. Richards, The Teacher's Commentary.

So What?

David is known as a "man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). David was far from perfect; however, he acknowledged those failures and repented before God (Psalm 51). God knows we are not perfect, either. So, God sent His Son, Jesus, who paid the price for our sins so we can become righteous in God's sight. When we confess our sins, turning to the Lord in humility, He will forgive us and restore our relationship with Him (1 John 4:7-8).

Reflection Questions

1. How does the story and rule of King David point to the story and rule of Jesus?
2. How does David's story turn in the middle of 2 Samuel, and why do you think this happens?
3. What can David's successes and failures teach us about ourselves and God?

WEEK 3: DIVIDED KINGDOM

► 1 KINGS

1 Kings opens by describing the final days of King David. After David died (1 Kings 2:10, around 971 BC), Solomon ascended the throne and established himself as a strong and wise leader. In the early years of Solomon's reign, Israel experienced its

“glory days.” Its influence, economy, and military power enjoyed little opposition; its neighbors posed no serious military threat.

Shortly after Solomon died in 931 BC (1 Kings 11:43), the kingdom was divided into northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms. 1 Kings follows the history of this divided kingdom through the year 853 BC.

Key Themes

Divided Kingdom: Shortly after Solomon died in 931 BC (1 Kings 11:43), the kingdom was divided into the Northern kingdom, Israel, and the Southern kingdom, Judah. 1 Kings follows the history of the Divided Kingdom.

Solomon’s Wives: Besides his divine wisdom, Solomon is notorious for numerous marriages and extensive harem, but they led to his wandering faith in later years. Solomon did not follow God’s command for a king not to “multiply wives” (Deuteronomy 17:17). 1 Kings tells us that, “When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods” (1 Kings 11:4).



Kingdoms of Israel and Judah map | jewishvirtuallibrary.org

So What?

Solomon was the wisest and wealthiest man of his day. Yet, his legacy was tarnished by his lack of obedience. The author gives us subtle hints that Solomon began to rely on his fortune, military might, and political alliances instead of Yahweh, who gave all of those blessings to him. He focused on the gifts, forgetting the Giver.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

Psalms 20:7 NIV

Reflection Questions

1. What can we learn from the successes and failures of King Solomon?
2. What is the significance of Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal for Israel? What significance might it have for you?
3. In 1 Kings 19, Elijah experiences God's presence in quiet and stillness. How does this narrative bring you comfort?

WEEK 4: COVENANT FAILURE

God is looking for a body, flesh, and blood to show the world what it looks like to in relationship with Yahweh. However, what happens when the people fail to live into their new calling?

► 2 KINGS

Second Kings continued with the history of the Northern Kingdom until Assyria invaded in 722 BC. The books show that Israel suffers repeatedly because of its great sinfulness (2 Kings 17:7–23; 24:1–4). Yet, there is still hope for the nation because God's chosen family of kings has not ended (2 Kings 25:27–30), and God remains ready to forgive those who repent (1 Kings 8:22–61).

Key Themes

God's Judgment: God will judge His people when they disobey and turn their backs on Him. The Israelites' unfaithfulness was reflected in the evil idolatry of the kings and resulted in God exercising His righteous wrath against their rebellion.

God Keeps His Word: The words of God's prophets always come to pass. Because the Lord always keeps His word, so are His prophets' words always true.

God is Faithful: He remembered His promise to David (2 Samuel 7:10-13), and, despite the disobedience of the people and the evil kings who ruled them, the Lord did not bring David's family to an end.

So What?

Second Kings teaches an important life lesson: actions have consequences. "Repent! Sin will incur judgment," God warned, in effect, through the prophets. Israel and Judah learned the hard way that God means what He says.

How will we learn? Consider your heart. Is it hard, resistant to God's call? Or can you acknowledge your sin and turn back to Him.

Reflection Questions:

1. According to this reading, what led to the downfall and exile of Israel?
2. How does God respond to the rebellion and unfaithfulness of the Israelites, and why does this matter?
3. How do the failures of Israel's kings point to Jesus?

WEEK 5: THE PROPHETS**Background on Prophetic Books**

The Old Testament prophets spoke to Israel and Judah in times of historical and moral crisis. They saw themselves as part of a story that God was weaving throughout history—a story of repentance, encouragement, and a coming Messiah. The prophetic books are divided into “Minor” and “Major.” These terms have nothing to do with the achievement or importance of the prophets, but have to do with the length of the books.

Minor: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Major: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel

Summary

Meet the powerful prophets who warned of the inevitable consequences of Israel's failure. The prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Hosea came to remind the people of God's covenant at Sinai. They point out how it was broken to bring the people back to their God, to help them remember that God is looking for people to embody His hope. This is the arc of Hosea, where God will “re-marry” Israel again. Israel's husband will call her back.

Even in our sins, God always hopes for our redemption.

► HOSEA

Hosea was a prophet during the time of Jeroboam II, one of the worst kings in Israel's history. Hosea's name means “salvation.” His position in Israel was a beacon of hope for them to repent and turn to God because of his message. Hosea linked his message closely with his personal life more than any other prophet. Throughout the book, Hosea's life pictured the people turning away from the Lord and turning toward other gods (4:12–13; 8:5–6).

Key Theme

God is faithful, even when we aren't: Hosea communicates God's despair over their perpetual idol worship and dependence on outside nations. Though **the people have failed** to be faithful covenant partners to God, His commitment to them remains.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does Hosea depict Israel as God's family, and why does it matter in light of their covenant faithfulness?
2. What are the consequences of Israel's idolatry in this story?
3. How does God hold together judgment and hope for restoration in this story?
4. What's an ache or comfort for you from this reading?

► AMOS

The prophet Amos lived among a group of shepherds in Tekoa, a small town approximately ten miles south of Jerusalem. Amos announced God's coming judgment on the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Even though Israel had great military and economic success, they had failed to uphold the commands of the covenant. They began worshiping pagan gods, lost sight of righteous living, and failed to embrace and practice **God's idea of justice**. (Amos 2:6–8; 3:10; 4:1; 5:11–12; 8:4–6).

His prophecy concludes with only a brief glimpse of restoration, and even that is directed to the southern kingdom of Judah rather than the northern kingdom of Israel (9:11–15).

Key Theme

Justice: "Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5:24).

Justice is a central theme in Scripture grounded in God's character, actions, definitions, and desires for His Creation.

Reflection Questions:

1. What kinds of injustices does God condemn in this story, and how do they connect with what we see in our world today?
2. God's judgment and God's justice are key themes in this story. How are they connected?
3. How does this story end, and what does it reveal about God?
4. What's an ache or comfort for you from this reading?

WEEK 6: DEVOTED FAITH IN DANGEROUS TIMES

► DANIEL

Daniel is jam-packed with apocalyptic imagery that reveals the world from God's perspective, offering hope to Israelites living in exile under Babylonian rule. Amid exile and idolatry, Daniel remains faithful to the God of Israel. Daniel's words give guidance for faithfulness and hope of a future where evil hearts and rulers will one day come under the authority of the one true God.

Key Theme

Son of Man: In a vision (Daniel 7:13), Daniel sees a figure called the Son of Man, which means "human," who will confront and defeat evil without giving into its lures. Daniel foretells the arrival of Jesus, who resisted and defeated evil on the cross.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does Daniel's life in this story teach us about living faithfully during exile?
2. What is the hope found in Daniel's "Son of Man" vision, and why would Jesus use this term to describe himself in the Gospels?
3. How does the story of Daniel in the lion's pit both encourage and challenge your faith?
4. How does this story help us think about God's relationship to the "kingdoms" in our world today?

► ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah mentions the day of the Lord more than any other book in the Old Testament, clarifying the picture of Judah's fall to Babylon and the eventual judgment and restoration of all humanity in the future. Zephaniah wrote that the day of the Lord was near (1:14), that it would be a time of wrath (1:15), that it would come as a judgment on sin (1:17), and that ultimately, it would result in the blessing of God's presence among His people (3:17).

Key Theme

The Day Of The Lord: The day when God will bring his judgment against evil and allow a new creation to flourish.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does Zephaniah describe “the day of the Lord,” and what does it reveal about God?
2. Where do we see God’s mercy and hope for restoration in this story, and how does this challenge and encourage us?

► MALACHI

Malachi’s unique position as the final book of the Old Testament offers a glimpse into the hearts of Israelite men and women, members of a nation specially chosen by God, descendants of Abraham, and inheritors of the rich tradition of the Jewish people. Their history told of glories like the exodus from Egypt and the faithfulness of God to King David. But they had also experienced the judgment of wandering in the desert and the shame of exile from the Promised Land.

Key Themes

The Temple: The temple is a rich Biblical image describing where God and humanity overlap.

We Can’t Do It: The book of Malachi sums up what the Hebrew Bible has been pointing to—God’s people cannot be faithful to the covenant. They’ve failed again and again. And while God will deal with their sin, He will not abandon them. He promises to redeem a remnant and send a Messiah to fulfill his covenant promises.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is God’s concern with Israel in this story?
2. What is God’s invitation to Israel?
3. How does the reference to the sending of Elijah (4:5) point to Jesus, and in what way is this a hopeful message?
4. How does God’s unchanging nature (3:6) challenge and encourage us?

BEHIND THE DESIGN

"Fragments" are broken pieces of something that used to be whole. In this section of Scripture we find the slow breakdown of the Biblical kingdom of Israel, eventually leading to their exile in Babylon. However, a piece of the kingdom is left, reflecting the beauty of God's covenant that he would not abandon nor forsake his people.

Christ comes from this "fragmented" people.

We have depicted this with a broken mirror, cast aside on the ground. Its environment is dismal, yet it reflects the beauty in the distance, a glimmer of hope.

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