

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 28, To the End of Northern Kingdom Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 28, To the End of Northern Kingdom, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Phillips' lecture focuses on the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, particularly during the time of Elisha and Ahab, and its eventual fall to Assyria. The lecture covers key figures like Jeroboam, Omri, Ahab and Jezebel, Jehu, and Jeroboam II, also exploring their interactions with major international powers. It highlights the rise of Assyria under rulers like Shalmaneser III and Tiglath-Pileser III, and their impact on Israel. The lecture also addresses the spiritual state of the Northern Kingdom, their descent into Baal worship, and the judgment pronounced by prophets like Elijah and Elisha. The eventual demise of the Northern Kingdom and the reasons for their captivity are examined. Finally, the syncretistic religious practices that arose after the Assyrian conquest and their relation to the Samaritans are explored.

2. 28 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 28 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → OT Introduction → OT Lit).



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on28.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 28, To the End of Northern Kingdom

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Elaine Phillips' Old Testament Literature Lecture 28, focusing on Elisha, Ahab, Assyria, and the End of the Northern Kingdom.

Briefing Document: Old Testament Literature Lecture 28 - Elisha, Ahab, Assyria, and the End of the Northern Kingdom

Main Themes and Key Ideas:

1. Overview of the Lecture:

- The lecture focuses on the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, starting with Ahab and moving towards its eventual fall to Assyria.
- It aims to provide context for understanding the books of 1 & 2 Kings and the roles of prophets like Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, Amos, and Jonah.
- The lecture also touches on the international political landscape, particularly the rise of Assyria.

1. Ahab and His Reign:

- Ahab is characterized as a fundamentally evil king, heavily influenced by his wife Jezebel, who imported Baal worship as the state religion: *"Ahab and Jezebel are, unfortunately, best known because they were the ones who were responsible for importing Baal worship as the state religion."*
- Key incidents in Ahab's life are examined:
- His defeat of Ben-Hadad (King of Syria) and his failure to execute him, leading to a prophetic rebuke.
- His desire for Naboth's vineyard, which Jezebel obtains through deceit and murder, setting up a divine curse on Ahab's house. Jezebel uses Torah to have Naboth killed *"She's using Torah in the most awful of ways to bring about the death of Naboth, so that Ahab can have his vineyard."*
- His alliance with Jehoshaphat (King of Judah) to fight against Syria at Ramoth Gilead, where Ahab is killed despite a prophetic warning from Micaiah.

1. The Prophet Micaiah and Divine Sovereignty:

- The story of Micaiah's prophecy highlights the conflict between true and false prophets, and the complex issue of God's sovereignty.
- Micaiah sees a vision of God allowing a lying spirit to deceive Ahab's prophets: *"So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets. The Lord has decreed disaster for you."*
- Ahab's decision to go to battle despite Micaiah's warning demonstrates both his awareness of the message and his attempt to circumvent it through disguise.
- Dr. Phillips emphasizes the interplay of human deception and God's ultimate control: *"Also, God's sovereignty overrules all of it in the process."*

1. Elisha and His Miracles:

- Elisha is presented as a significant prophetic figure, inheriting a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit.
- Elisha performs numerous miracles, often exceeding Elijah in number and scope, and foreshadowing the ministry of Jesus: *"Elisha is the one who has a whole bunch of miracles that actually are more in number and more in quantity as well, quality, qualitative kinds of things."*
- Examples include:
 - Parting the Jordan River.
 - Providing food and water.
 - Raising the son of the Shunammite woman from the dead. (Mirroring Jesus raising a widow's son from the dead in Luke 7)
 - Healing Naaman of leprosy.
 - Elisha anoints Jehu as king, commissioning him to destroy the house of Ahab.

1. Jehu's Rebellion and its Limitations:

- Jehu is anointed king by a prophet commissioned by Elisha and tasked with destroying the house of Ahab, avenging the prophets killed by Jezebel.
- Jehu brutally eliminates the dynasty of Omri, including Jezebel and all 70 sons of Ahab, using cunning and violence: *"Jehu was acting deceptively in order to destroy the ministers of Baal."*

- Jehu eliminates Baal worship. However, he does not turn from the sins of Jeroboam, continuing the worship of golden calves. *"Jehu destroyed Baal worship. However, here's the problem. He didn't turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and the worship of the golden calves."*
- Because Jehu is not careful to keep the law of the Lord, Hazael begins to overpower the Israelites and begins to take bits and pieces of the northern kingdom.

1. **The Rise of Assyria and its Impact on Israel:**

- Assyria is presented as a looming international power, particularly active in the 9th and 8th centuries BC.
- Key Assyrian rulers mentioned include Shalmaneser III, Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul), Shalmaneser V, and Sargon II.
- The lecture highlights the brutality of the Assyrians, drawing on an inscription from Asher Nasser Paul II describing acts of flaying and impalement to illustrate the terror they inspired: *"I flayed all the chief men who had revolted, and I covered the pillar with their skins—some I walled up within the pillar."*
- Assyria's growing power leads to the eventual subjugation and captivity of the Northern Kingdom, culminating in its fall in 722 BC.

1. **The End of the Northern Kingdom and Syncretism:**

- The Northern Kingdom's fall is attributed to the Israelites' persistent sin and idolatry, despite repeated warnings from prophets. The Israelites worship other gods, build high places, erect sacred stones and Asherah poles, burn incense, worship idols, sacrifice their children, and practice divination and sorcery.
- Dr. Phillips emphasizes the scriptures' emphatic repetition of these sins to highlight their detestable nature in God's sight.
- The Assyrian policy of deporting and resettling populations is discussed as a means of destroying national identities.
- The lecture explains the origins of the Samaritan people, resulting from the mixing of deported foreigners with the remaining Israelites, and their syncretistic worship practices (blending Yahweh worship with other religious customs): *"Syncretism. It means the mixing together of religious beliefs and practices."*

- Syncretism created a situation where foreigners worshiped the Lord, but they also appointed their own people to officiate for them as priests.

1. **Connecting to the Prophets:**

- The lecture sets the stage for understanding the messages of the writing prophets, Hosea, Amos, and Jonah.
- Jonah's reluctance to go to Nineveh is linked to the Assyrians' reputation for cruelty.
- Jeroboam II's reign is presented as a prosperous but morally corrupt time, during which Hosea and Amos prophesied against the kingdom's evils.

Important Figures and Locations:

- **Ahab:** King of the Northern Kingdom.
- **Jezebel:** Ahab's wife, responsible for promoting Baal worship.
- **Elijah:** Prophet who confronted Ahab and Jezebel.
- **Elisha:** Prophet who succeeded Elijah, performed many miracles.
- **Jehoshaphat:** King of the Southern Kingdom who allied with Ahab.
- **Micaiah:** Prophet who warned Ahab of his impending death.
- **Jehu:** King anointed to destroy the house of Ahab.
- **Shalmaneser III, Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul), Shalmaneser V, Sargon II:** Assyrian rulers.
- **Assyria:** The rising superpower that eventually conquered the Northern Kingdom.
- **Ramoth Gilead:** City where Ahab was killed in battle.
- **Samaria:** Capital of the Northern Kingdom.
- **Nineveh:** Capital of Assyria.
- **Shunem and Nain:** Towns near the Jezreel Valley, relevant to the miracle of raising the dead.

Overall Significance:

The lecture provides a historical and theological overview of a critical period in Israel's history. It examines the reigns of key kings, the ministries of important prophets, and the rise of Assyria as a major international power. It emphasizes the consequences of idolatry, the importance of faithfulness to God's covenant, and the complex interplay of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. It also highlights the importance of understanding the historical context of the Old Testament in order to fully appreciate the messages of the prophets and the origins of later religious developments.

4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 28, To the End of Northern Kingdom

Old Testament Literature: Elisha, Ahab, Assyria, and the Fall of the Northern Kingdom

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each:

1. What were the names of the first three dynasties in the Northern Kingdom?
2. What act was Ahab and his wife Jezebel most notably responsible for?
3. What international powers were significant during the time of the divided kingdom?
4. What important text discovered at Tel Dan makes reference to the "house of David?"
5. What actions did Jehoshaphat take to reform the Southern Kingdom?
6. Why was Jehoshaphat's alliance with the Northern Kingdom a point of concern?
7. Briefly describe the events surrounding Ahab's acquisition of Naboth's vineyard.
8. What is significant about Elijah's prophecy concerning Jezebel's death?
9. What miracle is Elisha known for that Jesus also performs in Luke 7?
10. What criticism does the biblical text make about Jehu despite his zeal in destroying Baal worship?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The first three dynasties in the Northern Kingdom were the dynasty of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, followed by the dynasty of Baasha, and then the dynasty of Omri.
2. Ahab and Jezebel were most notably responsible for importing Baal worship as the state religion of the Northern Kingdom.
3. Assyria, Syria, and Egypt were the significant international powers during the time of the divided kingdom. Assyria was the dominant force, gradually expanding its control over the region.

4. The Tel Dan inscription, discovered in 1992, is a fragment of a victory stele erected by Hazael, the king of Aram-Damascus (Syria), that contains the phrase "house of David" (Beit David).
5. Jehoshaphat reformed the Southern Kingdom by sending out Levites and priests to teach the Torah throughout the land, removing high places, getting rid of Asherah poles, and appointing judges.
6. Jehoshaphat's alliance with the Northern Kingdom was a point of concern because the North was awash in Baal worship, imported by Ahab and Jezebel as the state religion.
7. Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard, but Naboth refused to sell it. Jezebel then devised a scheme involving a false accusation of blasphemy against Naboth during a proclaimed fast, resulting in Naboth's execution and Ahab seizing the vineyard.
8. Elijah prophesied that dogs would devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel, leaving her unburied. This signified a shameful and dishonorable end, as a proper burial was considered important.
9. Elisha raised a widow's son from the dead (implied from the information) in Shunem, a miracle Jesus replicates in Luke 7 when he raises a widow's son in Nain, near Shunem.
10. Despite Jehu's destruction of Baal worship, the biblical text criticizes him for not turning away from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, particularly the worship of the golden calves, and for not keeping the law of the Lord with all his heart.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the role of prophets in the Northern Kingdom during the reigns of Ahab and Jehu, and analyze their impact on the political and religious landscape.
2. Compare and contrast the reigns of Ahab and Jeroboam II, focusing on their political strategies, religious policies, and the prophetic responses to their leadership.
3. Analyze the rise of Assyria as a major international power and its impact on the Northern Kingdom of Israel, including the political, economic, and social consequences.
4. Discuss the concept of syncretism in the context of the fall of the Northern Kingdom, and explain how the mixing of religious beliefs and practices contributed to the nation's demise.
5. Trace the recurring theme of idolatry in the history of the Northern Kingdom, from Jeroboam I to its fall, and analyze the consequences of this idolatry as presented in the biblical text.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Ahab:** King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, known for his wickedness and the influence of his wife Jezebel in promoting Baal worship.
- **Asherah Pole:** A religious symbol associated with the Canaanite goddess Asherah, often erected at high places and considered idolatrous by biblical authors.
- **Assyria:** A major Mesopotamian empire that rose to prominence and conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE.
- **Baal:** A Canaanite deity often associated with fertility and storms; his worship was introduced into Israel by Ahab and Jezebel.
- **Ben-Hadad:** A common name for the king of Aram-Damascus (Syria), frequently involved in conflicts with the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Elisha:** A prophet in the Northern Kingdom, successor to Elijah, known for performing numerous miracles and influencing political events.
- **Hazael:** King of Aram-Damascus (Syria) who assassinated Ben-Hadad and made war against Israel.

- **Jehu:** King of the Northern Kingdom who violently overthrew the dynasty of Omri and eradicated Baal worship, but continued to practice idolatry himself.
- **Jehoshaphat:** A righteous king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah who made an alliance with Ahab of the Northern Kingdom.
- **Jeroboam I (son of Nebat):** The first king of the divided Northern Kingdom, known for establishing idolatrous practices, including the worship of golden calves.
- **Jeroboam II:** A king of the Northern Kingdom during a time of prosperity, but also a time when the prophets Hosea and Amos preached against the people's sins.
- **Jezebel:** The Phoenician wife of King Ahab, known for her zealous promotion of Baal worship in the Northern Kingdom.
- **Jonah:** A prophet who lived during the reign of Jeroboam II.
- **Micaiah:** A prophet who told Ahab the truth that he would die in battle.
- **Omri:** King of the Northern Kingdom, founder of a dynasty.
- **Shalmaneser III:** An Assyrian king to whom Jehu paid tribute.
- **Syncretism:** The mixing together of different religious beliefs and practices, often resulting in a hybrid form of worship.
- **Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul):** An Assyrian king whose expansionist policies significantly impacted the Northern Kingdom, leading to deportations and tribute payments.
- **Tel Dan Inscription:** A fragment of a victory stele erected by Hazael, the king of Aram-Damascus (Syria), that contains the phrase "house of David" (Beit David).

5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 28, To the End of Northern Kingdom, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Northern Kingdom and Assyrian Influence: An FAQ

Here's an FAQ based on the provided lecture notes, designed to cover the key themes and concepts:

1. What were the key dynasties in the Northern Kingdom leading up to its fall, and what was significant about the reign of Ahab?

The four key dynasties to know in the Northern Kingdom are: Jeroboam (son of Nebat), Baasha, Omri, and Jehu. Ahab, son of Omri, is particularly significant because he and his wife Jezebel were responsible for importing Baal worship as the state religion, which led to confrontations with prophets like Elijah.

2. What international powers were influential during the period covered in the lecture, and how did they impact the Northern Kingdom?

Assyria was the dominant international power during this period. Key Assyrian rulers include Shalmaneser III, Tiglath-Pileser III (also known as Pul), Shalmaneser V, and Sargon II. Assyria gradually exerted control over the Northern Kingdom, demanding tribute and eventually leading to its conquest and the exile of its people in 722 BC. Syria and Egypt were also important regional powers, involved in alliances and conflicts with both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.

3. What was the significance of the Tel Dan inscription, and why is it important in biblical studies?

The Tel Dan inscription, discovered in 1992-93, is significant because it contains a reference to the "House of David" (Beit David). This is important because it provides extra-biblical evidence for the existence of the Davidic dynasty in the 9th century BC, which is when the inscription dates to. It contradicts the views of biblical minimalists who argue that David and Solomon were not historical figures of significance.

4. How did Jehoshaphat of the Southern Kingdom interact with the Northern Kingdom, and what were the consequences of his actions?

Jehoshaphat, a good king of Judah, made an alliance with Ahab, the wicked king of the Northern Kingdom. He did this possibly for political and economic gains, as the Northern Kingdom appeared more prosperous. One of the key consequences of this alliance was the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son to Athaliah, a woman from the North, which set the stage for negative developments in the Southern Kingdom later on. The alliance itself was viewed unfavorably by God, given the pervasive Baal worship in the North.

5. What are some notable events and prophecies associated with Ahab's reign?

Ahab defeats Ben-Hadad of Syria, but lets him go, angering a prophet. Ahab desires Naboth's vineyard, and Jezebel arranges for Naboth's murder so Ahab can acquire it. This leads to Elijah's prophecy of doom upon Ahab and his house, including Jezebel's gruesome death. Ahab participates in a battle at Ramoth Gilead with Jehoshaphat, where a prophet, Micaiah, warns Ahab of his impending death. Ahab disguises himself, but is killed by a random arrow, fulfilling the prophecy.

6. What role did Elisha play in the history of the Northern Kingdom, and how do his miracles relate to the ministry of Jesus?

Elisha succeeded Elijah as a prominent prophet in the Northern Kingdom. He performed numerous miracles, including providing food and water, raising the dead, and healing Naaman the Syrian of leprosy. Elisha anoints Jehu as the King of Israel to take over for the Dynasty of Omri. These miracles foreshadow and parallel the kinds of miracles performed by Jesus in the New Testament, suggesting a continuity in God's work through his prophets.

7. Who was Jehu, and what actions did he take as king of Israel?

Jehu was an army general who was anointed king by a prophet commissioned by Elisha. He was tasked with destroying the house of Ahab. Jehu was known for his ruthless actions, including the gruesome deaths of Jezebel and the king. Jehu orchestrated the slaughter of Ahab's 70 sons, and he deceitfully eliminated the prophets of Baal. While he destroyed Baal worship, he did not fully turn away from the sins of Jeroboam (golden calf worship), leading to continued divine judgment.

8. What were the reasons for the fall of the Northern Kingdom, and what was the Assyrian policy toward conquered peoples?

The Northern Kingdom fell because the Israelites repeatedly sinned against the Lord, worshiping other gods, building high places, setting up idols, and engaging in wicked practices. They ignored the warnings of the prophets. The Assyrian policy toward conquered peoples was to remove them from their land and resettle them in other areas, while also resettling other populations into the conquered territory. This was designed to break down national identities and assimilate the conquered peoples into the Assyrian Empire. The resulting religious syncretism in the former Northern Kingdom, with the mixing of Yahweh worship with pagan practices, laid the groundwork for the later Samaritan issue in the New Testament.