

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 21.1, 2 Kings 8-9, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 21.1, 2 Kings 8-9, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture focuses on 2 Kings 8-9, specifically the appointments of Hazael as King of Syria and Jehu as King of Israel. He explores the fulfillment of God's plan through Elisha's actions, interpreting them as a continuation of Elijah's ministry. The lecture analyzes Elisha's interaction with Hazael, emphasizing the distinction between knowing God's will and being commanded by God. Oswalt considers themes of trust, temptation, and waiting for God's timing, using Hazael's actions as an example of taking matters into one's own hands versus trusting in divine guidance. He concludes by foreshadowing Hazael's future role as a tool for punishing Israel.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 21.1 – 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 → Historical Books → Kings).**



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on21_1.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 21.1, 2 Kings 8-9, Part 1

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 2 Kings 8-9 (Part 1):

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 2 Kings 8-9 (Part 1)

Source: Excerpts from "Oswalt_Kings_EN_Session21_1.pdf"

Date: Analyzed November 7, 2024

Main Themes:

- **Fulfillment of Prophecy and God's Sovereignty:** The lecture focuses on the execution of God's command to Elijah to anoint Hazael as king of Syria and Jehu as king of Israel (1 Kings). Oswalt emphasizes that Elisha completes the tasks that Elijah was originally instructed to perform, suggesting a single "Elijah-Elisha ministry." This underscores God's plan unfolding even when individuals don't complete tasks within their lifetimes.
- **The Ambiguity of God's Will and Human Choice:** A central theme revolves around interpreting God's will and the balance between trusting God's timing and taking action. The story of Hazael's rise to power highlights this tension. Oswalt repeatedly asks the questions: "Did God want him to do that? Did God want him to kill Ben-Hadad?"
- **Character Development and Moral Responsibility:** The lecture explores the idea of individuals shaping their own character through choices. Hazael's reaction to Elisha's prophecy, specifically his lack of remorse for the predicted violence, serves as an example of a person becoming a certain type of character. Oswalt quotes Patrick O'Brien: "...a person starts out merely human and then they become a character. Yes, yes. We are developing into who we are going to be and in the end of the days, we will not be able to be anything other than what we've made ourselves, except by a miracle of God."
- **Waiting on God's Timing and Discernment:** Oswalt stresses the importance of waiting for God's guidance and timing, cautioning against impulsively seizing opportunities. He uses the analogy of a sailing ship needing to catch the tide: "there is a moment when you must catch your tide. And if you don't, if you miss your tide, you're going to have to wait 12 hours until it goes out again."

- **God's Use of Unrighteous Individuals:** The lecture touches on the idea that God can use even unrighteous individuals to accomplish his purposes. Hazael, despite his violent actions, becomes an instrument of God's judgment against Israel: "Oh, the sin of Israel is going to be punished. And one of my tools will be Hazael."

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Elijah's Instructions:** God instructed Elijah to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and call Elisha (1 Kings).
- **Elisha's Role:** Elisha fulfills the anointing of Hazael, thereby completing Elijah's unfinished commission.
- **Ben-Hadad's Inquiry:** Ben-Hadad, king of Aram (Syria), sends Hazael to Elisha to inquire about his recovery from illness. He acknowledges Yahweh as a source of truth, showing he has learned from his previous encounters with Elisha.
- **Elisha's Prophecy to Hazael:** Elisha tells Hazael that Ben-Hadad will recover but will ultimately die, implicitly foreseeing Hazael's role in his death. "Yes, tell him he certainly will recover. But the Lord has revealed to me that, in fact, he'll die."
- **Hazael's Actions:** Hazael murders Ben-Hadad by smothering him with a pillow, thus seizing the throne.
- **Hazael's Moral Blindness:** Hazael's lack of concern for the evil he is about to commit is highlighted. When Elisha foretells Hazael's brutality, Hazael asks, "How could your servant, a mere dog, accomplish such a feat?" but doesn't express moral opposition to the acts themselves. Oswalt stresses that "a dog in the Hebrew Bible is not man's best friend," but are scavengers on the edges of society.
- **The Difficulty of Discerning God's Will:** Oswalt acknowledges the challenges in discerning God's will, noting that God doesn't "send telegrams" but that guidance can be found through Scripture, counsel, and inner impressions.

Quotes:

- "I believe it is a single ministry, the Elijah-Elisha ministry. And as Elisha carries out these two appointments, Hazel and Jehu, he is fulfilling God's plan for their ministry."
- "I'm a mere dog. I'm nobody. How could I do such a great thing?"
- "We are developing into who we are going to be and in the end of the days, we will not be able to be anything other than what we've made ourselves, except by a miracle of God."
- "there is a moment when you must catch your tide. And if you don't, if you miss your tide, you're going to have to wait 12 hours until it goes out again."
- "Oh, the sin of Israel is going to be punished. And one of my tools will be Hazel."
- "Don't you dare say God tempted you. Don't you dare say that God induced you to do evil."

Implications:

- The passage raises complex theological questions about God's sovereignty, human free will, and moral responsibility.
- It challenges listeners to consider their own character development and the choices they make.
- It emphasizes the importance of patience and discernment in seeking God's guidance.

This briefing document provides a concise overview of the key themes and ideas presented in the lecture excerpt.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 21.1, 2 Kings 8-9, Part 1

Study Guide: 2 Kings 8-9 (Part 1) - The Anointing of Hazael and Jehu

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What were the three tasks God originally commanded Elijah to do in 1 Kings?
2. Why does the speaker refer to Elijah and Elisha's ministry as a "single ministry?"
3. Why does Ben-Hadad seek counsel from Elisha, a "man of God" representing a foreign deity?
4. How does Elisha's prophecy to Hazael highlight the tension between divine knowledge and human choice?
5. What is significant about Hazael's reaction to Elisha's prophecy concerning the atrocities he will commit?
6. How does the speaker use the metaphor of a sailing ship leaving port to illustrate a point about discerning God's timing?
7. According to the speaker, is God tempting us when we do evil?
8. According to the speaker, what can we base our decision that we are following what God wants?
9. How does Hazael become king of Syria?
10. Why does God choose Hazael to punish Israel?

Quiz Answer Key

1. God commanded Elijah to anoint Hazael as king of Syria, Jehu as king of Israel, and to call Elisha to follow him. Elijah only completed the task of calling Elisha to follow him.
2. The speaker suggests that the Elijah-Elisha ministry is a single ministry, a single plan of God, because Elisha carries out the remaining tasks that Elijah was originally instructed to do, indicating a continuous prophetic work.

3. Ben-Hadad seeks counsel from Elisha because he has learned from past encounters with Elisha and his army that Yahweh holds power and influence, suggesting a pragmatic recognition of Yahweh's potential impact on his health.
4. Elisha's prophecy reveals that Ben-Hadad would naturally recover, but Hazael will intervene and kill him, demonstrating that God knows the future while human actions still determine the outcome, thus illustrating the interplay between divine foresight and free will.
5. Hazael doesn't question the morality of the actions but rather his own capacity to perform such "great" acts. He sees the potential for power and status rather than focusing on the evil involved, revealing his ambition and moral indifference.
6. The metaphor illustrates the need to discern the opportune moment for action, similar to waiting for the tide to turn, but emphasizes the importance of being sensitive to God's timing rather than impulsively seizing every opportunity.
7. No, the speaker says James tells us, "don't you dare say God tempted you." However, God does test us.
8. We can base our decision that we are following what God wants by using the Bible, advice from others, and our gut feelings.
9. Hazael murders Ben-Hadad by soaking a pillow in water and placing it over his face.
10. God chose Hazael to punish Israel because of Israel's sins.

Essay Questions

1. Explore the complexities of interpreting divine will in the context of Hazael's actions. How does the lecture navigate the tension between God's knowledge of the future and human responsibility for moral choices?
2. Analyze the significance of the title "man of God" as it is applied to Elijah and Elisha. How does this title shape our understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the Books of Kings?
3. Discuss the speaker's interpretation of the Elijah-Elisha ministry as a "single ministry." What are the implications of this interpretation for understanding the prophetic tradition in the Old Testament?
4. Examine the theme of discerning God's timing in the lecture. How does the speaker encourage listeners to balance proactive action with trust in God's guidance?
5. Compare and contrast the characters of Hazael and Elijah, considering their responses to divine communication and their respective roles in fulfilling God's purposes.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Aram:** An ancient kingdom centered in Damascus, often referred to as Syria in the Bible.
- **Hazael:** Anointed by God through Elijah to be the future king of Aram (Syria), known for his brutal reign and oppression of Israel.
- **Jehu:** Anointed by God through Elisha to be the king of Israel, tasked with executing judgment on the house of Ahab and Jezebel.
- **Man of God:** A title used to describe Elijah and Elisha, emphasizing their close relationship with and representation of God, suggesting a deeper connection than simply being a prophet.
- **Prophet:** A person chosen by God to communicate His message to the people, often involving warnings, guidance, and predictions.
- **Elisha:** The successor to Elijah as a prophet in Israel, known for his miraculous deeds and his role in anointing Hazael and Jehu.
- **Elijah:** A major prophet in Israel, known for his dramatic confrontations with idolatry and his eventual ascension to heaven in a whirlwind.
- **Anoint:** To ceremonially apply oil to someone, signifying their appointment to a special office or role, such as king or priest.
- **Ben-Hadad:** King of Aram (Syria) who was ill and sought counsel from Elisha through Hazael.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 21.1, 2 Kings 8-9, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

FAQ on 2 Kings 8-9 (Part 1) - Oswalt's Interpretation

- **What is the main focus of Dr. Oswalt's interpretation of 2 Kings 8-9?**
- Dr. Oswalt's interpretation focuses on the fulfillment of God's instructions to Elijah through Elisha, specifically the anointing of Hazael as king of Syria and Jehu as king of Israel. He emphasizes the nuances between God knowing future events and directly commanding them, and the importance of trusting in God's timing rather than taking matters into one's own hands. The overarching theme is the balance between human agency and divine sovereignty.
- **Why does the text refer to Elijah and Elisha as "men of God" rather than prophets?**
- Oswalt suggests that the title "man of God" carries a deeper meaning than simply being a "prophet." He interprets "prophet" as more of a profession, while "man of God" represents a deeper, more fundamental identity rooted in their relationship with and service to God. It signifies that their prophetic actions stem from their very being and connection with the divine.
- **What is significant about Ben-Hadad consulting Elisha, a "foreign" man of God?**
- Ben-Hadad consulting Elisha indicates that he has learned from previous encounters with Elisha and with Israel's God, Yahweh. It shows a recognition of Yahweh's power and influence, even in a foreign land. It contrasts with Ahaziah's consultation with Beelzebub, highlighting the acknowledged power of the God of Israel.
- **How does Oswalt interpret Elisha's prophecy to Hazael regarding Ben-Hadad's recovery and subsequent death?**
- Oswalt interprets Elisha's prophecy not as a lie or deception, but as a recognition of two possible outcomes. He suggests that Ben-Hadad would have recovered naturally from his illness. However, Elisha, knowing Hazael's intentions, foresees that Hazael will kill Ben-Hadad, resulting in his death. Elisha is simply stating what he sees is going to happen, not necessarily commanding it.

- **What is the significance of Hazael's response, "How could your servant, a mere dog, accomplish such a feat?"?**
- Hazael's response reveals his ambition and moral ambiguity. Oswalt points out that Hazael doesn't question the *evil* of the acts Elisha describes, but rather his own *ability* to commit them. He sees himself as insignificant, a "dog," but is also intrigued by the potential for greatness (becoming king) through violent actions. This reveals a developing character open to the possibility of committing terrible acts to achieve power.
- **What does Oswalt mean when he discusses "fine lines" in this passage?**
- Oswalt highlights the "fine lines" between God knowing the future and commanding actions, between trusting God's timing and taking matters into one's own hands, and between God testing and tempting individuals. He emphasizes the difficulty in discerning God's will and the potential for misinterpreting circumstances to justify personal desires.
- **What is the "tide" analogy, and how does it relate to trusting God's timing?**
- The "tide" analogy illustrates the importance of discerning God's timing. Just as a sailing ship must wait for the tide to turn before leaving port, individuals should be sensitive to God's prompting and guidance before acting. Rushing ahead without God's leading can lead to missed opportunities and wasted efforts, requiring a long wait for another opportunity.
- **How does the story of Hazael relate to the concept of God testing individuals?**
- The story of Hazael exemplifies the concept of God testing individuals, not in the sense of tempting them to do evil (which James forbids attributing to God), but in presenting them with choices that reveal their character. Hazael's decision to kill Ben-Hadad demonstrates his lack of trust in God's timing and his willingness to pursue power through violent means, revealing his true character. This highlights the human responsibility to discern and follow God's will, even when faced with difficult or ambiguous circumstances.