

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 14, Elijah and Elisha, Absolute Chronology Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 14, Elijah and Elisha, Absolute Chronology, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Vannoy's lecture examines the absolute chronology of Elijah and Elisha's work within the books of Kings. **It reviews key events**, such as Elijah's confrontation on Mt. Carmel, his experience at Mt. Horeb, and the anointing of Elisha, Hazael, and Jehu. **The lecture addresses Ahab's involvement** in the Battle of Karkar and its importance for establishing absolute dates for Hebrew kings, utilizing sources like the Assyrian Eponym List and the work of Edwin R. Thiele. **Finally, the lecture transitions** to the reigns of Ahab's sons and Judah under Jehoshaphat and Jehoram.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created based on
Dr. Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 14 – 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 → Exodus to Exile).**



**Vannoy_ExtoExileK_
Session 14.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 14, Elijah and Elisha, Absolute Chronology

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture notes, including direct quotes where relevant:

Briefing Document: Dr. Vannoy's Lecture 14 on Elijah, Elisha, Ahab, and Chronology

Overview:

This lecture focuses primarily on the narratives surrounding the prophets Elijah and Elisha, the reign of Ahab (and his sons), and introduces the complexities of establishing an absolute chronology for the Hebrew Kings, particularly utilizing Assyrian records and the Battle of Qarqar as a key anchor point.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Elijah's Ministry and Encounters with God:

- **Redemptive-Historical Approach:** The lecture emphasizes approaching the Elijah narratives with a redemptive-historical lens, drawing on M.B. Van't Veer's work.
- **Elijah at Mt. Horeb (Sinai):** The lecturer highlights the significance of God's appearance to Elijah through wind, earthquake, fire, and a "still, small voice" (1 Kings 19:11-12). This episode illustrates that "God does not always operate in spectacular ways," contrasting with the more dramatic displays of divine power in the past such as the burning bush and the manifestation of God to Israel at Sinai.
- **The Commission at Horeb:** God commissions Elijah to anoint Hazael king over Aram, Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha as his successor. While the anointing isn't always literal, the actions are carried out.
- **Elijah's Ascension:** The lecture interprets Elisha's cry, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" (2 Kings 2:12) not as a direct reference to the fiery chariot, but as a recognition that Elijah was the true strength of Israel. "The strength of Israel was not in their military establishment. The strength of Israel was in their allegiance to the Lord, and their trust in the Lord and their obedience to the Lord." This concept is reinforced by the same phrase being used at Elisha's death (2 Kings 13:14).

1. Elisha as Elijah's Successor:

- **Double Portion of the Spirit:** Elisha's request for "a double portion of your spirit" (2 Kings 2:9) is interpreted not as a desire to be twice as good as Elijah, but as a claim to the right of succession, analogous to the eldest son's inheritance.
- **Proof of Succession:** Elisha's parting of the Jordan River with Elijah's mantle serves as a demonstration that he is, in fact, the successor.
- **Carrying out Elijah's Commission:** Although not explicitly mentioned, Elisha's actions contribute to fulfilling Elijah's commission to anoint Hazael and Jehu, further solidifying his role as Elijah's successor.

1. Ahab and the Battle of Qarqar:

- **Ahab in Assyrian Records:** The lecture highlights that Ahab is "the first Israelite mentioned by name in Assyrian writings." Shalmaneser III recorded Ahab's contribution of "2,000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers" to a coalition of kings defeated at the Battle of Qarqar. This battle is not mentioned in the Old Testament.
- **Chronological Significance:** Despite the battle's omission from the biblical narrative, it's crucial for establishing absolute dates in Hebrew chronology.

1. Chronology of the Hebrew Kings:

- **The Problem of Absolute Dating:** The lecture explains the challenge of moving from relative dating (the length of each king's reign in succession) to an absolute chronology (tying events to specific years).
- **Assyrian Eponym List:** The Assyrian Eponym List is the core tool for absolute dating: "This is a list of important officials after whom the years were named." The list spans 892-648 BC and overlaps much of the period of the Hebrew monarchies.
- **Assyrian Eponym Canon:** Tablets give the names of the eponyms, their titles and positions, and principle events during the various eponymys (853 to 703 BC). This Canon is valuable because it can link specific events (like a solar eclipse) to a particular year, allowing for fixed dates in Assyrian history.

- **Battle of Qarqar and Jehu's Tribute:** The lecturer states, "One of these is the eponymy of Daian Assur. The date is 853 of that eponym year...Ahab of Israel is named." Also states, "Twelve years later, in the eponymy of Adad Memani, which is 841...Shalmaneser received tribute from King Ia-Au who was ruler of Israel. Scholars have long identified this king as Jehu." These two dates are the "hooks on which Old Testament chronology rests."

1. The Dynasty of Omri and Parallel Reigns:

- **Ahab's Sons: Ahaziah and Joram:** Ahaziah reigned briefly and continued his father's policies of idolatry. Joram, while removing the sacred stone of Baal, still adhered to the sins of Jeroboam.
- **Judah under Jehoshaphat and Jehoram:** The lecture notes that this period in Judah's history runs parallel to the dynasty of Omri in Israel.

Important Quotes:

- "God does not always operate in spectacular ways." (referring to the still, small voice at Mt. Horeb)
- "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" (Elisha's cry upon Elijah's ascension, interpreted as recognition of Elijah's role as the true strength of Israel)
- "The strength of Israel was not in their military establishment. The strength of Israel was in their allegiance to the Lord, and their trust in the Lord and their obedience to the Lord." (explanation of the meaning of Elisha's cry)
- "Ahab the Israelite contributed 2,000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers to the coalition." (Shalmaneser III's record of Ahab's involvement in the Battle of Qarqar)
- "This is a list of important officials after whom the years were named." (definition of the Assyrian Eponym List)
- "...hooks on which Old Testament chronology rests." (referring to the dates calculated using the Assyrian Eponym List, specifically 853 BC with Ahab's death, and 841 BC when Jehu began his reign.)

Conclusion:

The lecture provides a comprehensive overview of key events and figures in the books of Kings, emphasizing the importance of interpreting these narratives through a redemptive-historical lens. It also sheds light on the challenges and methods involved in establishing an absolute chronology for the Hebrew Kings, highlighting the significance of extra-biblical sources like the Assyrian Eponym List.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 14, Elijah and Elisha, Absolute Chronology

Elijah, Elisha, Ahab, and Chronology in Kings: A Study Guide

I. Key Concepts and Themes

- **The Role of the Prophet:** Explore the authority and responsibility of prophets like Elijah and Elisha in Israelite society. Consider their relationship with the kings and their role in calling the people back to covenant faithfulness.
- **Covenant Faithfulness vs. Baal Worship:** Understand the conflict between worshipping Yahweh and the allure of Baal worship, and how this struggle manifested in the lives of the kings and the people.
- **Divine Commission and Fulfillment:** Analyze how God commissions individuals for specific tasks and the various ways in which those commissions are carried out.
- **Redemptive History:** How can these narratives be approached to discover their lasting significance for the church?
- **Chronology of the Hebrew Kings:** Grasp the complexities of establishing an absolute chronology for the Hebrew kings and the significance of the Battle of Qarqar.
- **The Significance of Miracles:** Consider the meaning of miracles and spectacular events in communicating God's presence and power, and the importance of recognizing God's presence even in the "still, small voice."
- **National Strength:** Differentiate between military might and obedience to the covenant as the true source of Israel's strength.

II. Quiz (Short Answer)

1. What three specific tasks did God commission Elijah to do at Mt. Horeb, and how were they eventually carried out?
2. Explain the significance of Elisha's request for a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit, and how it relates to Israelite inheritance laws.
3. What does Elisha mean by saying, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" when Elijah ascends to heaven?

4. Describe the events surrounding the anointing of Hazael as king of Aram, and explain why this event was significant.
5. What is the Assyrian Eponym List, and how does it help establish absolute dates for the chronology of the Hebrew kings?
6. Why is the Battle of Qarqar, though not mentioned in the Old Testament, considered a crucial event for understanding biblical chronology?
7. Who was Ahab fighting when he died, and how did he die?
8. Describe Ahaziah's short reign as king of Israel, and what factors led to his demise.
9. How did Joram, another of Ahab's sons, compare to his father in terms of his religious practices and leadership?
10. What was significant about Jehu killing both the king of Israel and the king of Judah at the same time?

III. Quiz Answer Key

1. Elijah was commissioned to anoint Hazael as king of Aram, Jehu as king of Israel, and Elisha as his prophetic successor; these tasks were carried out later by Elisha and other prophets, not necessarily through a literal anointing, but through actions that established their positions.
2. Elisha was not asking to be twice as good as Elijah, but rather asking to be recognized as his successor. The expression "double portion" relates to the laws of inheritance in Israel where the eldest son received a double portion.
3. Elisha meant that Elijah was the true strength and protector of Israel, not in a military sense, but in his commitment to calling the people back to covenant faithfulness and obedience to God.
4. Elisha prophesied that Hazael would become king of Aram, but Hazael then assassinated King Ben-Hadad. This was significant because Hazael became an oppressor of Israel, attacking and causing harm to the northern sections of the kingdom.
5. The Assyrian Eponym List is a list of important Assyrian officials after whom the years were named; each name represents a year, and the list helps establish absolute dates because it overlaps with the period of the Hebrew monarchies and contains references to events that can be astronomically dated, such as eclipses.

6. The Battle of Qarqar is crucial because it is mentioned in Assyrian writings and references Ahab of Israel, providing a fixed point in Assyrian chronology. This allows scholars to tie the relative chronology of the Hebrew kings to an absolute timeline.
7. Ahab died fighting against Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram, at Ramoth Gilead. He disguised himself to try and evade being targeted, but was struck by a random arrow between the sections of his armor.
8. Ahaziah's reign was short, lasting only two years, and he continued the evil policies of his father, Ahab. He followed the ways of Baal and sought revelation from a heathen deity, ultimately dying after a fall from his roof.
9. Joram did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not as his father and mother had done. He got rid of the sacred stone of Baal that his father had made, but he still followed the false worship of Jeroboam.
10. It was significant because it happened in 841 BC at the hands of Jehu. It marked a shift in power, as Jehu instigated a new dynasty and eliminated Baal worship in Israel.

IV. Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the prophetic ministries of Elijah and Elisha. How did their approaches differ, and what impact did they have on the political and religious landscape of Israel?
2. Discuss the significance of the miracles performed by Elijah and Elisha. What do these miracles reveal about the nature of God, and how did they function within the broader narrative of the books of Kings?
3. Analyze the relationship between the kings of Israel and Judah during the reigns of Ahab, Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram. How did their alliances and conflicts shape the political stability and religious identity of the two kingdoms?
4. Evaluate the role of covenant faithfulness in the lives of the characters discussed in the lecture. How did their adherence or lack of adherence to the covenant impact their personal destinies and the fate of the nation?
5. Explore the challenges and methods involved in establishing an absolute chronology for the Hebrew kings. Why is this endeavor important for biblical interpretation and historical understanding?

V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Baal:** A Canaanite deity often associated with fertility and nature; the worship of Baal was a constant temptation for the Israelites and a source of conflict with the prophets.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between God and his people, outlining responsibilities, blessings, and consequences; faithfulness to the covenant was central to Israel's relationship with God.
- **Eponym:** A person (or thing) after whom a period of time, event, or place is named. In the context of Assyrian history, it refers to high officials after whom the years were named.
- **Hazael:** King of Aram (Syria) who oppressed Israel.
- **Jehu:** King of Israel who instigated a revolution, killing Joram and Ahaziah and eliminating Baal worship.
- **Jezebel:** The Phoenician wife of King Ahab, known for promoting Baal worship and persecuting the prophets of Yahweh.
- **Karkar (Qarqar):** A city in Syria where a significant battle took place between an Assyrian king and a coalition of kings, including Ahab of Israel; this battle is important for establishing biblical chronology.
- **Mt. Horeb (Mt. Sinai):** The mountain where God revealed himself to Moses and gave the Ten Commandments; Elijah also had a significant encounter with God at Horeb.
- **Prophet:** A messenger of God who speaks truth to power, calls the people to repentance, and often performs miracles to authenticate their message.
- **Redemptive History:** The study of how the bible tells the story of God redeeming his people.
- **Shalmaneser III:** An Assyrian king who fought against Ahab at the Battle of Qarqar and later received tribute from King Jehu.
- **Still, Small Voice:** The way God communicated with Elijah on Mt. Horeb, emphasizing that God's presence is not always manifested in spectacular displays of power, but also in quiet and subtle ways.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 14, Elijah and Elisha, Absolute Chronology, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

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

- **What is the significance of Elijah's experience at Mount Horeb with the wind, earthquake, fire, and the "still, small voice"?**
- The experience at Mount Horeb illustrates that God does not always operate in spectacular, overtly powerful ways. While God manifested in powerful ways to Moses at the burning bush and to Israel at Sinai with thunder and lightning, this was not how he manifested to Elijah. The still, small voice demonstrated that God's presence and power could also be found in quieter, more subtle ways, offering Elijah reassurance and a different perspective on God's working.
- **What three tasks did God commission Elijah to do at Mount Horeb, and how were they eventually carried out?**
- God commissioned Elijah to anoint Hazael as king over Aram, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as his successor. While Elijah himself did not literally anoint all three, the tasks were fulfilled. Elisha indirectly anointed Hazael by telling him he would become king. Elisha commissioned a prophet to anoint Jehu. Elisha succeeded Elijah after witnessing his ascension, signifying his role as the new prophet and successor to Elijah.
- **What does it mean when Elisha cries out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" as Elijah ascends to heaven?**
- This exclamation does not refer directly to the fiery chariot that took Elijah to heaven. Instead, it signifies that Elijah was the true strength and protector of Israel. The "chariots and horsemen" symbolize the nation's reliance on God and covenant faithfulness, which Elijah championed, rather than on military might. This interpretation is reinforced by the same phrase being used to describe Elisha at his death, despite him not ascending in a chariot.

- **What is the significance of the Battle of Qarqar (Karkar) for understanding the chronology of the Hebrew kings?**
- Although the Battle of Qarqar is not mentioned in the Old Testament, it is significant because Ahab is mentioned by name in Assyrian writings. The Assyrian Eponym list, along with the astronomical event of a solar eclipse, helps establish absolute dates for the Hebrew kings, by connecting relative dates to the fixed point of this battle. The battle also helps to link Ahab to a specific year in the Assyrian records, and this point can be worked forward and backward to construct a more complete chronology.
- **How does the Assyrian Eponym List work, and why is it important for dating events in the Old Testament?**
- The Assyrian Eponym List is a record of important officials after whom each year was named. Because the Assyrians meticulously maintained this list from 892 to 648 BC, it provides a consecutive record of Assyrian years. By cross-referencing events in the Old Testament with mentions in the Assyrian Eponym Canon (which includes significant events for some years), historians can establish fixed dates for certain events in the Hebrew monarchies, helping to anchor the entire chronology. The mention of an eclipse in 763 BC in conjunction with the eponym Ur Sadalu is of immense value for Assyrian chronology because that date can be mathematically verified.
- **How did Ahab die, and what was the context surrounding his death?**
- Ahab died in battle against Aram (Syria) at Ramoth Gilead. He disguised himself to avoid being targeted, but was struck by a randomly shot arrow. This occurred after a period of peace between Israel and Aram, when Ahab joined Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, in an attempt to reclaim Ramoth-Gilead. His death followed the warning of the prophet Micaiah.
- **What were some of the key characteristics of Ahab's sons, Ahaziah and Joram, who succeeded him as rulers of the Northern Kingdom?**
- Ahaziah, who had a short reign of two years, continued the evil practices of his parents, following the ways of Jeroboam and worshiping Baal. He attempted a shipping alliance with Jehoshaphat, but the ships were destroyed. Joram, who succeeded Ahaziah, showed some improvement, removing the sacred stone of Baal. However, he still clung to the sins of Jeroboam, maintaining false worship.

- **How do the reigns of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram in Judah relate to the dynasty of Omri in the Northern Kingdom of Israel?**
- The reigns of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram in the Southern Kingdom of Judah roughly parallel the timeline of the dynasty of Omri (specifically, Ahab and his sons) in the Northern Kingdom. This means that when studying this period of history, it's necessary to consider the events in both kingdoms and move back and forth between the narratives to gain a more complete understanding.