

Read the Whole Bible with Pastor

Monday (August 14) – 1 Kings 16

In chapter 16 we read of a number of kings who reign over Israel while Asa is king of Judah. Notice that each king is evaluated by the author as either a good king or a bad king. In contrast to Asa, son of Abijam, in the previous chapter, every king of Israel is given a negative evaluation. The rationale for such negative evaluation is given regarding Zimri and Omri. Both men were said to have walked “in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat...by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols” (v. 26). The Lord holds those who lead to higher standards than He does those who follow. This is the case because those who lead have the ability to lead their followers astray if they do not remain faithful to the Lord God. This is why the apostle Paul exhorts Christians to pray for their leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2)—they need our earnest prayer to remain faithful. For God will punish those who are not faithful to His ways.

Tuesday (August 15) – 1 Kings 17

In chapter 17 the prophet Elijah abruptly enters the scene. He is given no introduction, but clearly he is a man of God. The Lord miraculously provides food for Elijah in the wilderness through the ravens, foreshadowing the way our Lord Jesus would provide food in the wilderness for crowds of 4,000 and 5,000 through the hand of the disciples. Our Lord Jesus would also raise the son of a widow to new life, demonstrating Himself to be the new and greater Elijah. Most profound of the details in this chapter is the way the prophet begs the Lord to heal the widow’s son. The prophet stretches himself out on the child, as if to say, “Let our places be exchanged.” As our Lord Jesus was stretched out upon the cross, this same great exchange took place. Through Holy Baptism, we have been joined to Christ’s death and resurrection, so that our sinfulness dies with Him upon the cross and that we emerge in the newness of resurrected life.

Wednesday (August 16) – 1 Kings 18

It would be wrong to see the conflict in chapter 18 as a conflict between Elijah and Ahab or between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The true conflict in this chapter is between the Lord and those who oppose Him. The Lord speaks and acts through the prophet Elijah, as He so often does through ordinary men, but it is the Lord who speaks and acts. It is the Lord who sends fire to defeat the prophets of Baal, and it is the Lord who sends rain to water the earth after the long drought. King Ahab and the people of Israel have made the mistake of forgetting that the Lord cares about and interacts with His creation. When the fire and water come down from heaven, they are reminded: “The LORD, He is God!” (v. 39). Because we humans are earthly, fleshly creatures, we need a God who relates with us in more than intangible ways. Thanks be to God that we have a God who became flesh in Jesus to atone for our sins upon the cross. And He continues to come to us through tangible, earthly means in the Sacraments to bring His forgiveness to us in ways we can experience with our senses.

Thursday (August 17) – 1 Kings 19

The Lord teaches the prophet Elijah that he must cease focusing upon himself and place his trust solely in the Lord. When queen Jezebel threatens Elijah's life, he takes his life into his own hands and flees. When the prophet arrives at the Mountain of God, he laments that he is the only remaining faithful prophet. When we experience difficult times, it is tempting to focus on the evil we are suffering and to lament our unique struggles. But the Lord directed Elijah to His provision of food for the journey and to companionship in the remnant of believers. So, too, does our Lord direct us away from our troubles to His Sacramental provision and the fellowship we share in His Church.

Friday (August 18) – 1 Kings 20

King Ahab is given a second chance. The prophets of the false gods Baal and Asherah having been put to death in chapter 18, the Lord gives Ahab a fresh start by delivering him from his enemies, the Syrians. However, in making a treaty with his defeated foe, Ahab invites this pagan to have influence once again over Israel. God demands that His people who live in the world not become of the world. There must be a distinct way of life for God's people so that we are not led astray from the Lord's ways. Ahab is condemned for his refusal to make this distinction. May the same not be said of us.

Saturday (August 19) – 1 Kings 21

King Ahab covets Naboth's vineyard, and so he is led into ruin. Coveting is a sin of the heart, and so it is thought by some to be less sinful and dangerous than other sins. However, coveting is one of the most dangerous sins precisely because it is a sin of the heart. King Solomon wrote in Proverbs: "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23). When a person harbors sin in his heart, it leads to acts of sin. Ahab's sin of coveting Naboth's vineyard leads to acts of murder and theft. God judges the sin of covetousness. May Ahab be a warning so that we guard our hearts from this dangerous and deadly sin.

Sunday (August 20) – 1 Kings 22

The wicked king Ahab finally meets his doom. Ahab's treatment of the prophet Micaiah reveals his perverse attitude toward the Lord. Despite his scheming and trickery, the Lord eventually brings the wicked king to an end. So, too, will the Lord do with the wicked and perverse in our generation. Though their evil actions endure and seem to be rewarded for a time, God will bring them to an end because only He endures forever. So, in a similar way to how the Lord allowed Satan to afflict Job, He now allows this lying spirit to deceive Ahab to bring about his end. Though we do not always understand the Lord's ways, we give thanks that He is consistent in His opposition to the proud and His giving of grace to the humble (cf. James 4:6). May we, by God's grace, remain in humble submission to His will and ways.