

# Lessons from the Life of Elijah



THE HEART OF THE  
OLD TESTAMENT  
AND NEW, THE  
WORD OF THE  
LORD



THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW,  
THE WORD OF THE LORD

*Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have insight, I have power. By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just; by me princes govern, and nobles--all who rule on earth. I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.* – Proverbs 8:14-17

- Proverbs was written by a king for a prince (for his son, the future king).
- Ecclesiastes was written for the same purpose.
- So too was the Song of Songs (Solomon).
- Even Job is the story of an ancient, wise ruler who learned wisdom through tragedy.
- Wisdom literature in the Bible is written by kings for kings. They are not manuals on how to administrate a kingdom or lead an army.
- Wisdom literature is odd and therefore surprising to the American mind. To understand the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, we must understand when it was written.
- God inserts wisdom literature in the King stage of Israel's history.



## THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW, THE WORD OF THE LORD

In the history of Israel, there are at least three fairly obvious stages in Israel's development.

**PRIESTS** → **KINGS** → **PROPHETS**

- This sequence is important. As a nation covenanted to Yahweh, Israel begins her life as priests. The Mosaic Law is largely concerned with regulating His people's priestly role.
- A "priest" is a household servant of Yahweh, serving in His tabernacle (His house).
- Exodus 19:3-7, Exodus 13:2 cf. Numbers 3:45, Deuteronomy 32:8-10, Jeremiah 2:1-3
- The priestly duties were very detailed and fairly easy to administer. To be faithful, Israel simply had to obey the Mosaic Law very carefully.
- So Israel began her life in Yahweh's house learning rules laid out by God for her priestly duties. She was called on to obey even if she did not understand. She needed to mature as she obeyed. Wisdom literature would come later in her national life.



## THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW, THE WORD OF THE LORD

**PRIESTS** → **KINGS** → **PROPHETS**

- The example of Adam in the garden. The promise of royal wisdom which God held out to Adam was embodied in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- The example of Abraham. Abraham and his alters gave way to Jacob ruling an entire family of families.
- The example of the Church. Like Adam, Abraham, Israel – we begin as priests and we reign in the future.
- Example of Christ. As last Adam, Christ did not grasp kingship before it was given to Him. This is the very definition of the "kerygma" – suffering first, future reigning.
- Note how the story of the Bible begins with priests who have a limited service in God's sanctuary, then so the priests progress to become kings of their own land, and finally ends with a flurry of prophetic activity addressing the whole world.



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What about the prophets?

- As we noted before, prophets entered the life of Israel when there was a failure of the priest-king.
- The role of prophet was more than repeating and appealing to the people based on the Word of God
- Prophets were elevated to the rank of advisor and council member. God allows them to deliberate in the heavenly court's deliberation before He makes a decision.

Abraham negotiating over Sodom – Genesis 18

Amos 3:7, Amos 7:1-7

Luke 9:29-31

Jeremiah 1:9-10



## THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW, THE WORD OF THE LORD

We know the significance of the Word of the Lord = 231X in Scripture, 44X in 1 and 2 Kings. But what does the Bible mean by the Word of the Lord?

- Let's start with this verse, Colossians 1:24-28
- Note that the sufferings of Paul are "filling up" the maturity of believers, the Church.
- Note that this maturity enables Paul "to present the Word of God in its fullness" and to fathom the "this mystery, which is Christ in you."
- Note that this maturity through suffering is what gives Paul wisdom.
- Note that Paul's objective is to "present everyone fully mature in Christ."



## THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW, THE WORD OF THE LORD

The evolution of the Word of the Lord in Scripture. We see that the Word of God grows from . . .

- Words that God spoke
- To the Law of Moses
- To the Words of Jesus (an acknowledgement that Jesus is God and His words deserve to be canonized)
- To the entirety of Scripture
- To the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- In this way, the locus of the Word of God shifts from the Mosaic Law in the OT to Jesus Christ in the NT. But why?



## THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW, THE WORD OF THE LORD

The locus of the Word of God shifts to the gospel of Jesus Christ because Christ has “fulfilled” the Law of Moses. What does this mean?

- Matthew 5:17, *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish them but to fulfill them”*.
- The phrase “the Law or the Prophets” refers to the OT, Israel’s Bible in Jesus’ day. The “Law” comprised the first 5 OT books, and the “Prophets” captured the rest.
- The word “abolish” means “invalidate.” Jesus did not come to “do away with” or “repeal” the OT. Jesus respected the authority of the Law and the Prophets.
- The word “fulfill” is the hinge on which the meaning turns. This is not a reference to Jesus’ obedience to the law, the verb translated “fulfill” does not mean “obey.”
- Rather, the word “fulfill” meant to bring to a designed goal, to fill up and complete, to bring to full expression. Jesus was declaring that He fulfilled the prophecies and even the patterns of Scripture; he showed forth their true meaning.



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This interpretation is consistent with NT usage.

- Matthew uses “fulfill” this way. Jesus’ virgin birth “fulfills” Isaiah 7:14 (Matthew 1:22–23) and “fulfills” the pattern that a divine ruler will bring God’s salvation (Isaiah 7–12).
- The slaughter of the innocents under Herod “fulfills” the pattern established in Jeremiah 31:15 when the mothers of Israel wept at Judah’s exile (Matthew 2:17–18).
- Matthew writes that Jesus’ deliverance from Herod “fulfills” Hosea 11:1, “Out of Egypt I called my son” (2:15). And in Matthew 2:23 : Jesus’ humble origins in Nazareth fulfills the OT theme of the Messiah’s humble origins (e.g., Isaiah 11:1).
- Therefore, Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the OT and also fulfills the storyline of the whole OT including all the types hewn out like cisterns waiting for Christ to fill them up.
- That is why he represents Israel when he is baptized and like Moses going up Mount Sinai, Jesus “goes up on the mount” to deliver his famous Sermon on the Mount.



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Jesus fulfills—fills out—the entire OT.

- γίνομαι *gínomai*, *ghin'-om-ahēe*; G1096, to cause to be ("gen"-erate), i.e. (reflexively) to become (come into being), used with great latitude (literal, figurative, intensive, etc.):— arise, be assembled, be(-come, -fall, -have self), be brought (to pass), (be) come (to pass), continue, be divided, draw, be ended, fall, be finished, follow, be found, be fulfilled, + God forbid, grow, happen, have, be kept, be made, be married, be ordained to be, partake, pass, be performed, be published, require, seem, be showed, × soon as it was, sound, be taken, be turned, use, wax, will, would, be wrought. (636X in NT)
- πληρώ *plērōō*, *play-ro'-o*; from G4134; to make replete, i.e. (literally) to cram (a net), level up (a hollow), or (figuratively) to furnish (or imbue, diffuse, influence), satisfy, execute (an office), finish (a period or task), verify (or coincide with a prediction), etc.:— accomplish, × after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfil, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply. (90X in NT)



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*Now all this was done, [G1096] that it might be fulfilled [G4134] which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. –*

Matthew 1: 22-23

*Now all this was* [brought into being, generated, brought to pass, assembled] *that it might be* [verified, finished, completed, crammed full, ended, perfected, supplied] *which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, . . . –* Matthew 1: 22