

The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan

# THE BIBLICAL WILD

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Biblical Wild, pioneers in the Christian wilderness.

WEEK XIX: I Kings 22-II Kings 15 / Psalm 110

From Psalm 106. Let us pray.

Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people; help me when you deliver them; that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory in your heritage. Amen.

I'm Todd Ousley Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan, and this is the

Today we find ourselves outside the former U.S. post office for the city of Saginaw, now known as the Castle Museum. As we consider the books of I and II Kings, we find ourselves in a history, a history that we should put in quotes. A culmination of all the Deuteronomistic perspective that has been concerned with the interactions of the people with the land, the provision of the land promised by God and the role of Torah obedience in the occupation and possession of the land. Specifically, we see a history once again I'd place that in quotes, that seeks to illuminate the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, and the result of deportation of its residence. An illumination that is presented to the land of God's rule. It's a way of trying to understand across the course of both I Kings and II Kings, exactly what it means for God to be involved in the lives of the people who have seen the ups and the downs and have seen the destruction of their holy city Jerusalem. Overall I and II Kings seeks to reinterpret or to reimagine the remembered past of Israel with references to a God who makes promises and issues commands. And we examined the first portion of these two books last week by focusing on King Solomon and his time of reign as the King, following the reign of King David. And there was striking contradicts of the received notion of Solomon as one who is wise and several unwise actions that he took that exhibited his failure to obey the Torah. This week and next week, rather than diving into particular passages, we will be looking at the overall sweep of I and II Kings, an opportunity to skim across the surface that will help us to see the first of two perspectives in considering these final words of the Deuteronomic history. A surface reading reveals a certain narrative concern with the united kingdom of Solomon after the death of King David. The course of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the course of the kingdom of Judah in its last years after the destruction of the northern kingdom. We should be aware of two things as we skim across this surface that presents themselves as tracing the paths of the people of God, to the death of David, to the deportation of Judah, to a final reference to Jehoiachin, the last Davidic king. First, there is information that is presented as being historical, but has no independent corroboration or verification and assessment of its significance. Second, the historian has pieced together a sweeping account of the long history in the land that is not historical reportage, but rather serves as a theological and interpretive commentary upon the history. This theological and interpretive commentary could be understood to be frame or reframe a retrospective understanding of the destruction of Jerusalem as an act of divine judgment in response to long-term disobedience. Or, it can be understood as a word to the exilic community about a way forward from exile by a return to an embrace of God's Torah commandments. Next week we will

consider yet a third possibility, and begin to consider the implications for our lives. Meanwhile, as you skim the surface of I and II Kings, I invite you to consider these questions:

1. In your life and in your reading of Holy Scripture, are you drawn more to the specific details of a particular person or story OR do you find the "grand sweep," the metanarrative, to be more compelling?
2. Why do you think this is so and how does it matter?

May God bless you, and I will see you next week on the Biblical Wild.