

The school of the prophets



Laindon Bible Study

27 December 2017

Is this actually a Bible idea at all?

- Yes, but it requires a bit of digging to uncover it...

KJV phrase	Number of mentions	Relevant verses	Other versions
“ company of (the) prophets ”	3 OT (times of Samuel)	1 Samuel 10 v 5 & 10 1 Samuel 19 v 20	“group” (<i>New King James Version</i>) “band” (<i>NRSV</i>)
“ sons of the prophets ”	10 OT (times of Elijah and Elisha)	1 Kings 20 v 35 2 Kings 2 v 3, 5, 7 & 15 2 Kings 4 v 1 & 38 (twice) 2 Kings 5 v 22 2 Kings 6 v 1	“guild prophets” (<i>Complete Jewish Bible</i>) “disciples of the prophets” (<i>God’s Word Translation</i>) “Seminary” (<i>Living Bible</i>) “prophetic guild” (<i>New English Translation</i>) “company of the prophets” (<i>New Revised Standard Version</i>)
“ children of the prophets ”	1 OT (times of Elisha) 1 NT (Acts of Apostles)	2 Kings 9 v 1 Acts 3 v 25	Mostly as with “sons of the prophets”, line above

The beginning in the times of Samuel (the Prophet)

- The **origination** of this ‘prophetic guild’ or ‘Seminary’

1 Samuel 19 (see also 10 v 5, 10)

¹⁹ And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. ²⁰ And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw **the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them**, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. ²¹ And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.

2 Chronicles 35 (times of Josiah)

¹⁸ And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of **Samuel the prophet...**

Hebrews 11 (about faithful)

³² And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and **Samuel, and of the prophets:**

Acts 13 (Paul at Antioch)

²⁰ And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until **Samuel the prophet.**

Acts 3 (Peter’s speech)

²⁴ Yea, and **all the prophets from Samuel** and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

The continuation in the times of Elijah and Elisha

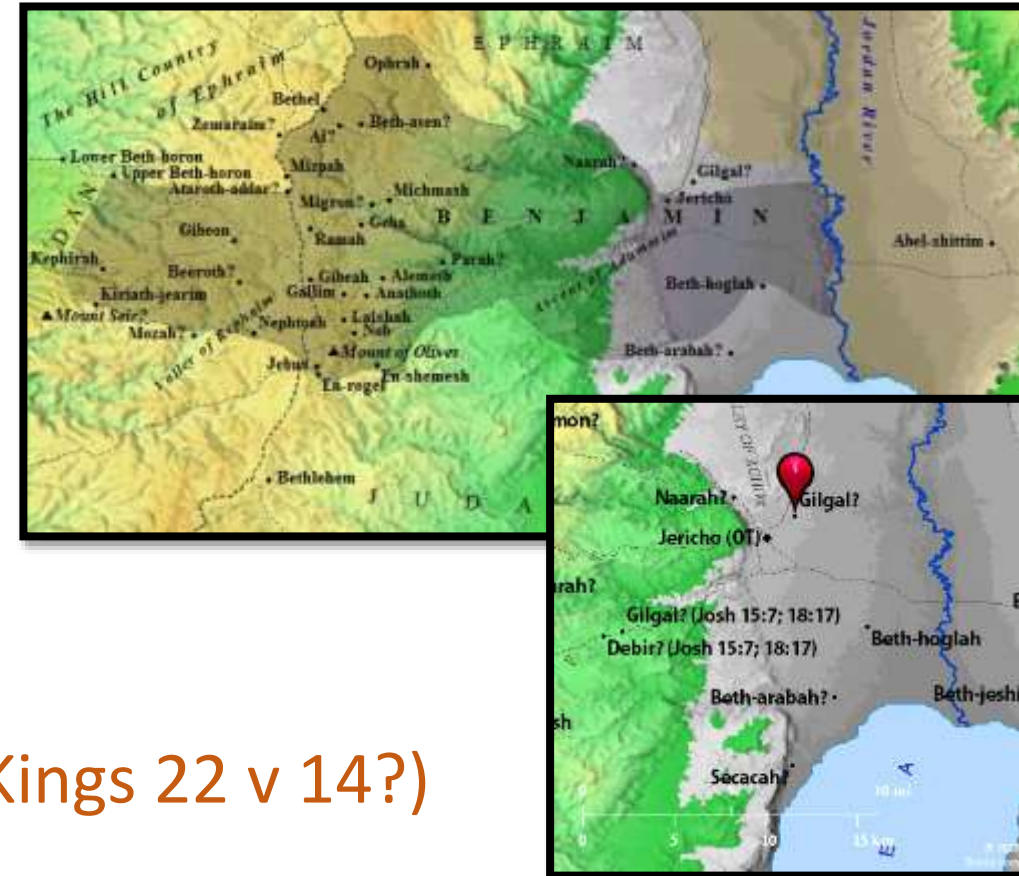
- More than 100 years later, the heritage of Samuel continues

<u>1 Kings 20</u> Battle of Israel & Syrians	<u>2 Kings 2</u> Taking up of Elijah into heaven. Elisha established as his successor	<u>2 Kings 4</u> Two miracles (multiplied oil, poison in pot is cured)	<u>2 Kings 6</u> Floating axe head	<u>2 Kings 9</u> Anointing of Jehu
<p>³⁵ And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD...</p>	<p>³ And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day?...</p> <p>⁵ And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha...</p> <p>⁷ And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went...</p> <p>¹⁵ And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him...</p>	<p>¹ Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead...</p> <p>³⁸ And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.</p>	<p>⁶ And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.</p>	<p>⁹ And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead:</p>

*What will be **our legacy** for the truth?*

A critical part of the preservation of God's Word

- Different **communities set up** through Israel & Judah, *e.g.*
 - Ramah / Naioth (1 Samuel 19 v 20-22)
 - Gilgal (2 Kings 2 v 1 *cp.* 2 Kings 4 v 38)
 - Bethel (2 Kings 2 v 3)
 - Jericho (2 Kings 2 v 5)
 - Hill country of Ephraim (2 Kings 5 v 22)
 - Carmel? (2 Kings 4 v 25?) Jerusalem? (2 Kings 22 v 14?)



Is this actually a Bible idea at all? (cont'd)

- Other **possible side references** to such an arrangement...
 - **1 Kings 18** refers to the prophets saved by Obadiah, even “an hundred prophets” (**v. 4**, see also **v. 13**) (*times Ahab/Jehoshaphat*)
 - **Amos 7** refers to prophet lines of inheritance, he being “no prophet, neither... a prophet’s son” (**v. 14**) (*times Uzziah/Jerob. II*)
 - **Isaiah 8** refers to “my disciples” (**v. 16**) and then “the children whom the LORD hath given me” (**v. 18**) (*times Uzziah to Hezekiah*)
 - **Ezra 5** refers to the support of the “prophets of God” (**v. 2**) in the rebuilding efforts, following the return from the exile (also note **Nehemiah 6 v 7** “appointed prophets to preach”)

Piecing together a possible timeline

1 Kings 18 & 20
2 Kin. 2,4,5,6 & 9

~920 BC

Times of
Ahab,
Elijah &
Elisha

Ezra 5
Nehemiah 6

~520 BC

Times of
Ezra &
Nehemiah

Covers a period of more than 500 years!

Times of
Saul &
Samuel

~1050 BC

1 Sam. 10 & 19

Times of
Uzziah &
Isaiah

~720 BC

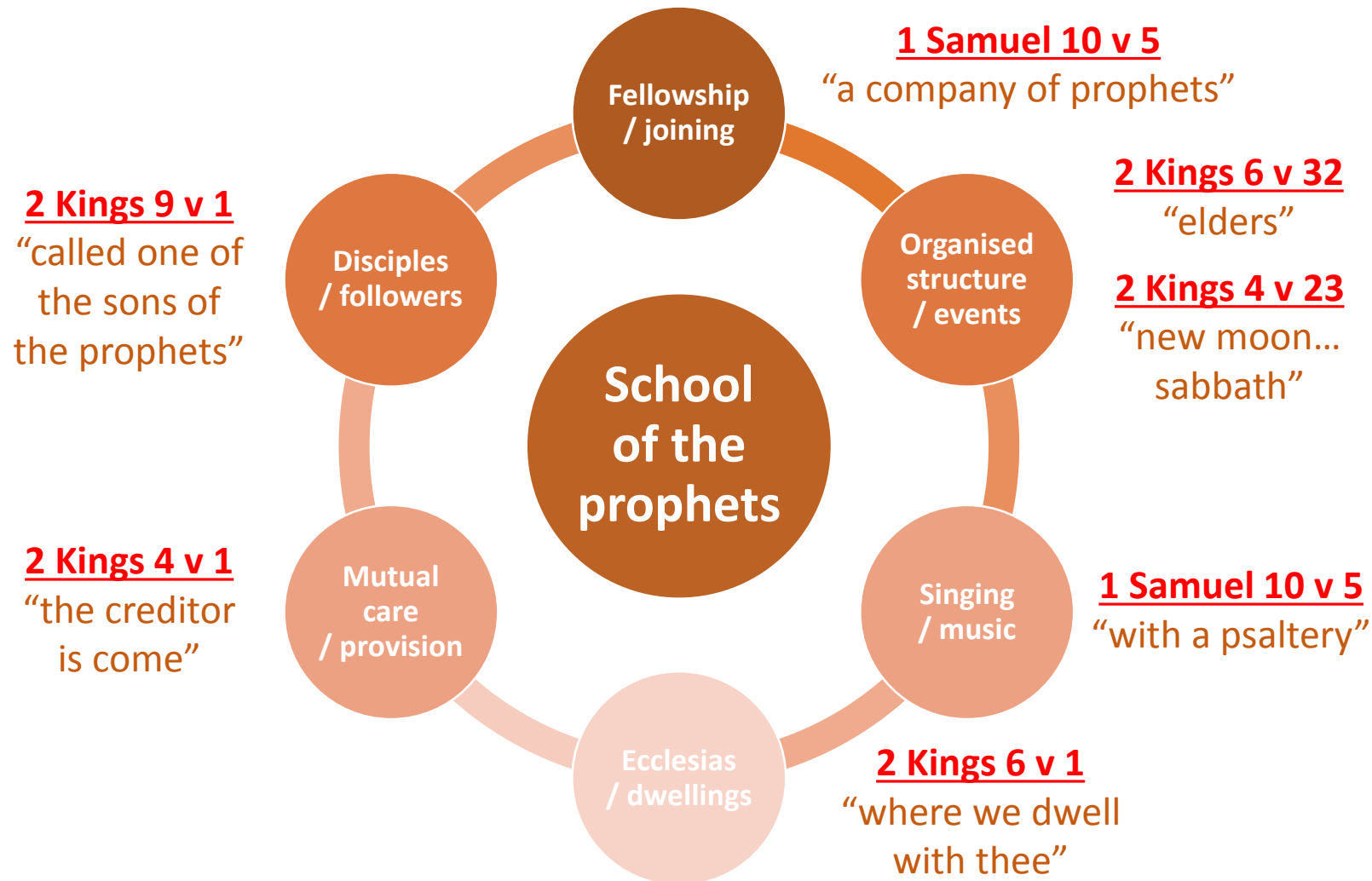
Amos 7
Isaiah 8

Acts 3

The whole period of the monarchy (and beyond)

The school of the prophets as a template

- This was a means to a certain end, **education in God's ways**



Suggested lessons **for us today**

- God's truth is **preserved through communities**
- The **principles for ecclesial life** long predate the 1st century
- We must **continue the work** of those that have preceded us

Acts 3

²⁴ Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. ²⁵ **Ye are the children of the prophets**, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. ²⁶ Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Let us continue this work **together...**

