

The Story Behind the Story

Immorality and idolatry.
Empire and injustice.

The downfall of Saul, of David, of Solomon, and that of the kingdom of Israel.

The two sources, the stories behind the story of the rise and subsequent fall of the united kingdom of Israel, may show us different excerpts or perspectives. These two accounts, written at different points in Israel's history, place certain themes in contrast to the other, but what if we can learn a similar lesson from each—bringing to light a story behind the ones we tell with our lives?

When we are creating space for God in our own lives, not just in a temple, God fills it. When we *kiddush HaShem*, our own desires become more like His. Still our whole, unique selves, but with the same desires for the world and the Kingdom as God sees possible.

But when we forget those lessons we have learned, like David as a shepherd with his sheep or staring down Goliath with a stone and a sling, we begin to let the space intended for God be filled with other things. We begin to feel that the power God placed in our hands, and even anointed us for, as something we have earned or deserve rather than gifted as a responsibility.

We sit at the crossroads with the purpose to bless, but begin to wonder what we can get out of this place we are in. *Can it turn a profit? What can we control? How can we ensure our own success with all of these people and resources that just happen to cross our paths?* A kingdom of promise and abundance for all of God's creation begins to crumble in a mindset of fear and scarcity.

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And as we choose to remember or not, or if we just get too busy with doing the things we believe God wants us to do rather than actually spending time with God, what are the consequences? What begins to fill that space?

Is this where, or are these the moments when, immorality and idolatry, empire and injustice, worm their way into the spaces that we intended our love for God and others to be?

Just like in the story of Cain, there is a beast crouching at the door (thank you for this imagery, Rabbi David Fohrman). Something that seeks to make us distrust God, forget where we've come from, or live in a mindset of scarcity that even the heroes of the Text fall prey to—the anti-story to God's Story.

What will future generations recognize in us?

We may feel ourselves slowly become a little bit more like empire, and a little bit less like shalom. And those who come after us take notice, just like the sons who followed after David. What will our children and young people take note of in the moments that follow us? What will future generations recognize in us after hundreds of years of hindsight?

Are we more like the empire of Solomon, accumulating weapons, wives, power, slaves, at the expense of those seeking help at the crossroads of the earth? *But we're doing what God wants, right? We built Him a beautiful temple!* But at what price?

What kind of leaders do you choose to follow? What kind of leader are you? Because we all are in one way or another. Are you one who hears Goliath dishonor the name of God and does everything within their power to stop it, or one who lets their own hubris and desires control their actions?

One who blesses all those who come across their path, or is willing to sacrifice even their own people, to grasp hold of the power that was never theirs to take in the first place?

These may not be the happiest moments in history, but the story that lies behind them teaches us something important.

There will always be a temptation to start building empires and fortresses and forget what it means to create space for God and honor Him within it. So, remember your days in a field, the shade in the desert, your slavery in Egypt, or you may just become the pharaoh you, and the people you sought to lead and protect, need rescuing from.

Remember to *kiddish HaShem*.

PRAYER

Hallowed Father In Heaven,

*May we never sacrifice Your Name for empire
or take Your Name in vain for power.*

Rather, may we be those who kiddush HaShem.

*In the face of, and in spite of, the empires that will rise and fall,
may we continue to stand at the crossroads of the earth
and trust the plot of the Story*

*to not oppress, but to bless—all humankind
and Hallow Your Name.*

Amen

THE FOUR PILLARS

BEMA Discipleship is built on four pillars; a **Four-Pillared Perspective** to help us remember **to elevate the words of God** (not ours) and help us identify the principles that we see recurring in the story of God's people.

Here are some applications for this episode echoing the ideas of the four pillars:



TEXT

What Text might you spend more time in from these two source perspectives? What stories appear in both, and how might they differ?



COMMUNITY

How are you, or your community, choosing to lead others? How are you meeting others at the crossroads to bless them? How are you creating space for God in your community?



DISCIPLESHIP

Who are you modeling this kind of leadership for? A leadership of peace and blessing and trust versus empire and injustice? How can you walk alongside someone and kiddish HaShem?



WRESTLING

What are you wrestling with in these two perspectives? What other themes or lessons do you see? What are you left wondering at the end of each source?



Are you a music listener?

Listen along to our BEMA Music Playlists on Spotify.

Song suggestions? Send them to bemabesorah@gmail.com.



BEMA SESSION 2



MEDITATION & PRAYER

REFLECTION, APPLICATION & IMPACT

There are three emphases that we are always thinking about in terms of application at BEMA. These may be stated explicitly at times, but often we will want you to do the work of finding ways to connect the dots to the things we are learning. Much of this is what makes the work of BEMA distinct as a ministry of Impact Campus Ministries.

CREATING A SPACE SPIRITUAL FORMATION

*True success is developing intimacy with God. In Session 1, we encountered the idea of “Creating Space for God” in our lives. We believe that **if we do our part of creating that space, God will fill it** as He desires. You’re already doing this as you dive into the Text and jump into a place to discuss. God will meet you in these places! Look for places the Holy Spirit can do work in and through you as you go about your everyday life.*

CONSIDERING CAMPUS YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS

***We believe that young adults are shaping the future of this world.** Jesus modeled a ministry of discipling young adults, and that approach has and will work. If you are a college student who is listening, we want this material to be directly helpful to your pursuits. If you are not a college student, we want to challenge you to come alongside one and work together.*

SACRED STATION THEOLOGY OF WORK

*This isn’t only for church or Bible study; this is about what we do every day. How we do our job and how it may take advantage of or bring life to others is something God says is central to our presence in the world. Justice is very much something God cares about. Does our physical work (our 9–5 job) bring shalom or chaos? Does it exploit creation? The way we manage our employees, interact with customers or coworkers, care for our children, or create products can provide relief to others. **The work we do every day is sacred and matters!***