

ELIJAH CONFRONTS AHAB

1Kings 17:1-7

Westend Bible Chapel

May 22'2022

We are here at an exceptionally low point in the history of God's people as the prophet Elijah is brought before our attention.

He is one of the greatest personalities in the Old Testament. He lived in a time of the greatest apostasy and idolatry , a time in which people of God totally rejected the Word of God.

In his day , he stood as a true man of God for the righteousness of God and bore witness to Him as the living and true God.

Today , if we care about the welfare of God's people , Elijah is the man we should like to identify with . We too live in a time in which the Word of God is rejected, and not only in the world, but in Christianity as well.

Elijah Appears Before King Ahab

In midst of spiritual darkness and moral degradation , suddenly out of nowhere, Elijah, the man from Tishbi appears as a powerful witness to the living God. We know nothing of his origin, his family, his education. Only the place of origin is given. In a way he is a type of Melchizedek .

It is clear that he lives in close fellowship with God because he confronts the wicked king of Israel with such boldness. His prophetic message is short and powerful . His first words are a testimony to God. He says, **“the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand , there shall not be dew nor rain these years , except at my word .”**

Elijah was the most powerful prophet in land . Prophets were sent by God when His people deviated from Him. God spoke through the prophets to prick the hearts and consciences of the people. Prophets were God's representatives , who were responsible for bringing God's people into the light of God.

They put their finger on their deviations, their sin . And Elijah does it with boldness. He announces a great drought that would last three and a half years. He does so because the nation of Israel worshipped and served Baal, the god of the Canaanites . Baal was the god of his evil wife , Jezebel, who was a Canaanite from Sidon. She brought and promoted Baal in the land and sought to exterminate the worship of Jehovah altogether by killing the prophets of God.

Jezebel held 950 false prophets and priests in her power . She had a temple for Baal erected in Samaria , and where prostitution was practiced in the worship services .

Her wicked husband was more of a compromiser. He would tolerable combined worship of both Baal and Jehovah.

God would have none of it. No more rain (blessings) for three more years , but drought (wrath) with no chance of relief of any kind. God Almighty will judge to get the people's attention and to bring credit to his prophet . It would also be a great judgment against Baal , who was believed to be the god of the storm , naturally the god of the rains and crops. The great controller of the harvests.

But the God of Israel was and is the LORD, *Yahweh*, and not Baal. The LORD God is the God who lives. This testimony is necessary in an environment where the living God is excluded.

Elijah says, "**Before whom I stand.**" Elijah is aware that he is in the presence of God, that he is with God. And that God is with him. He has a blessed, personal relationship with God. It is the living God that he

communes with and serves , but Ahab was serving a dead god called Baal. Elijah then states that God will reveal Himself as the Living One by withholding rain from the people. Elijah knows God's Word and so he knows God's thoughts. He has read in God's Word that there will be drought when the people are unfaithful.

Deut. 11:16-17. *Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.*

James says this about Elijah:

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit."

Elijah claimed the promises of God. Because he knew the word of God .Do you claim the promises of God? We cannot claim them if we do not read our bibles and learn His promises.

In a recent Life Way Research study , the reading habits among church goers were surveyed and these were the results :

- 19% read everyday
- 26% read a few times a week
- 14% read once a week
- 22% read at least once a month
- 18 % read rarely or never

Which group are you in? Elijah in his prayer asked God to live up to this word. He asked God to withhold rain and God withheld it . He asks God to send the rain and God send rain. Elijah was great man of prayer . To

be strong and effective in public , we must study and pray much in private.

Israel must suffer the years of physical famine before they will listen to the word of the Lord. There would also be a spiritual famine of God's word for Elijah was leaving . Elijah's leaving would be a " second draught " in the land . The barrenness of the absence of the Word of the Lord is a terrible thing .

Amos 8:11 – *The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign LORD, “when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD.*

God's word is likened unto rain that goes forth and blesses the soul. No word , no blessing.

Isaiah 55:10-11 –*“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me [c]void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

Elijah Hides by the Brook

Elijah gives Ahab the latest weather report and tells him I am leaving town. He disappears from the stage as suddenly as he appeared on it. He must hide in a place where God will take care of him.

V2 states : *Then the word of the Lord Came to him , saying , “ Get away from here and turn eastward , and hide by the brook Cherith , which*

flows from into the Jordan . And it will be that you shall drink from the brook , and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”

Elijah obeys and goes to the place God has told him. Basically, there are two reasons for this directive to hide for Elijah . God will protect him from Ahab when he goes looking for him but will also prepare Elijah for further and greater work .

Cherith means “ to cut down” or “cut off.” Elijah would be called to be separate and alone with God. It is in secret places that God forms His servants. This is a first lesson for preachers of God’s word , they must be willingly to be set aside if they are to be used of God. We must “value the hidden life” of hard study and prayer. We must learn to listen to God’s voice in the stillness -away from all the noise of everyday life.

There are times when we must pull back, regroup , rethink, and renew our souls. Silence and solitude are essential parts to our spiritual training. The public spotlight exposes the servant to the danger of self-elevation. But in secret he has no one but God. Here he learns to see himself in God’s presence and he learns Who God is to him.

For Elijah, the time to be silent has now come. From now its , “ **Go and hide** (v2) , once the training is over, Elijah is told , “**Go and show**” yourself to Ahab (18:1).

At start he a was simply a man from Tishbi , but after 3 years in God’s school of faith , he emerges as the man of God. The years by the brook was a time of preparation for his future service in public which we see in the next chapter, when he stands before all the nation on Mt. Carmel , and calls down fire from heaven. With God’s miraculous intervention , the nation turns in repentance and exclaims, “**The LORD God of Israel is our God!**”

Many of the great servants of God was formed by spending time alone with God .

- Moses—40 years in the backside of the desert
- Joseph –17 years in prison , the school of preservation
- David—10 years as fugitive , spending his time with God in caves,
- John the Baptist—his entire life was spent in the wilderness with Lord
- Paul –3 years in the desert of Arabia receiving instructions from heaven
- The Lord Jesus , spend 30 years in obscurity being prepared for his mission as the Savior of the world.

Are you in the habit of spending quiet , precious , quality time alone with your God ? How is your spiritual development going ?

Elijah is Fed by Ravens

The LORD provides for Elijah by sending ravens morning and evening with meat sandwiches . And there by the brook he had access to fresh water. Elijah is by the still waters .

Here we have two means of provision. One supernatural and the other natural . One miraculous and the other ordinary . God always has means at His disposal to provide His own with what they need, even if those means act against their nature.

Three times Elijah experiences the special provisions of God's care for his sustenance: here at the brook Cherith through the ravens, further on in this chapter at the widow through the flour and oil that do not run out and in 1 Kings 19 where the Angel of the LORD gives him a bread cake and water (1 Kings 19:5).

Matthew 6:33—*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Elijah did precisely that . The Lord had commanded him to stay there by the brook so that the blessed provisions might arrive morning and evening, day after day for years .

When God tells us to stay “ **there**” let us listen and refuse to go elsewhere. Because if we move from where God wants us, the provision will not come so easy, or at all. The place of God’s appointment is the place of his provision.

Elijah was in an extremely uncomfortable position ,but he stayed, and it forced him to trust God for his daily needs.

The Brook Dries Up

V7—Sometime later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

What was Elijah to do now? Was he going to leave that place and look for water where water could be found? Elijah would not move until he received a word from the Lord. He did not allow himself to be dictated by circumstances.

He waited patiently in his ever more uncomfortable situation. Once he received a sure word to go to Zarephath , he left his hiding place by the brook and obeyed the new directive.

