

Elijah: A Man Sent from God Part 2

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Date: 10 April 2024

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[0 : 0 0] 1 Kings chapter 17 again. 1 Kings chapter 17. Last week we started talking about Elijah being a man sent from God.

And we're going to continue that thought tonight. 1 Kings chapter 17. We talked about the fact that God has a lot of people who seem larger than life characters in the Bible. We talked about Moses and Paul and David and Daniel and people like that. And Elijah is one of those people.

But James tells us in James 5.17 that he was a man who had subject to like passions as we are. Just like the rest of us. All of those men.

Just like the rest of us. And there was nothing really special about them except for one thing. And that one thing was the fact that they were willing to yield their will to God's will.

They were willing to obey him and follow him whatever he wanted. Look with me there in 1 Kings chapter 17 verse 1. It says, And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

[1 : 2 0] Let's have a word prayer. Father, pray that you'd be with us tonight, Lord, as we continue to look at Elijah. Elijah, Lord, and the things that happened in his life and how he was used of you because he was willing to obey you.

Because he was willing to follow you. And so, Lord, pray that you'd just teach us some things in our own lives. We as ordinary people can be used of God. And so, Lord, minister to us tonight.

In Jesus' name. Amen. We talked, first of all, about Elijah being a common man. We talked about the fact that his home was, he was a Tishbite. And that that was in part of Gilead.

And Gilead means rugged or raw. And so, we talked about the fact that Elijah would have been, in today's terms, a redneck. He would have been a mountain man.

He would have been something like that. And that would have affected his manners, his message, the methods that he used and things. It would have shaped him and who he was.

[2 : 1 8] And we talked about that a little bit. We talked about his humanity. The fact that he was subject to like passions as we are. The book of James talks about that.

The fact that he prayed, it was not going to rain. It didn't rain for three and a half years. We talked about the fact that God doesn't need the rich or the educated, the intelligent, all those.

He needs people who are willing to follow him in order to get things done. And I referenced David. When Samuel went to find who was going to be the new king after Saul, he saw Eliab, one of Jesse's oldest sons.

He said, this has got to be the guy. He's tall. He's handsome. He's good looking. He does all of these things. Has all these characteristics. But 1 Samuel 16, 7 says, The Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him.

For the Lord seeth not as man seeth. For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. And here in Isaiah. Isaiah is another one. Isaiah, you know, he's the one who saw the Lord high and lifted up.

[3 : 30] And when he saw the Lord high and lifted up, what was his reaction? Here am I. Send me. He said, I'll do whatever you want me to do. I'll go wherever you want me to go.

I will follow you. Samuel, again, when he was talking during this time about finding, having Saul disobeying God and looking for who's going to be the new king, he said, Hath the Lord his great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of ram. So Elijah was a common, ordinary man, just like you and I, but he was willing to obey God.

He was willing to follow him. Second thing we started to talk about was, Elijah was a courageous man. And first thing we talked about was, he defied a foolish ruler. We talked about who Ahab was.

Ahab was king during Elijah's time. And in 1 Kings 16, if you look just back there, a few verses, it says in verse 30, 1 Kings 16, 30, And Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.

[4 : 41] He was the worst king ever. Matter of fact, Sunday, I'm probably going to be talking, I told you before we, somewhere in here we'll talk about the sin of Jeroboam.

I'm going to talk about that. And Jeroboam was bad. But Ahab was worse. And he said he did more above all that that were before him.

Look at verse 33. Ahab made a grove. And Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

He says Ahab did more. Then take all the other kings combined. And he did more. He did so much. One of the things that he did, verse 31, It came to pass, it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, son of Nabat.

And he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, Zidaniens, there we go, and went and served Baal and worshipped him.

[5 : 45] He took Jezebel for wife. Jezebel grew up in Baal worship. Jezebel was still in Baal worship. And he went so far, verse 32, And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

He built a house for Baal. He built a temple for Baal. He built an altar for Baal. He did all this. He did it in Samaria. And what happened because of that? Verse 34 we looked at last week.

A guy by the name of Hio built Jericho. And God has specifically said there was going to be a curse on anybody who rebuilt Jericho. In Joshua 6, 26, Joshua adjured them at the time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord that rises up and buildeth this city Jericho, and he shall lay a foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.

And we talked about the fact that it's Hio. You read that verse. He set the foundation for Jericho, and what was going to be built there, his oldest son dies. He finally gets it all done and puts the gates up.

His youngest son dies. God had said, If you do this, this is what's going to happen. And God held true to his word. I ended last week by saying the fact that Elisha, when he took over for Elijah, said, Where is the God of Elijah?

[7 : 18] We were talking about where are the Elijahs of the Lord God? Who's going to take and stand? Be that common person who just stands upon God and what he wants and follows him.

Let her be on your sheet there, where we left off last week. He denounced a false religion. He went after a foolish ruler, but he also went and denounced a false religion.

See, the crux of his message was going to be that there's no rain, no dew, nothing is going to happen as far as water-wise until he says so.

And that's a direct attack upon Baal. Baal was a Canaanite god of fertility. And he was seen in the thunderheads, he was seen in the rain that fell.

Baal worship was conducted on the top of hills, and typically those shrines were staffed by priests and priestesses, you know, where people would come to worship, and then part of their worship was performing essential acts with those priests and priestesses.

[8 : 27] And while you were doing that, you were considered a god for a while during the time of that interaction. You know, one of the most horrible things about Baal worship was human sacrifice.

If it did not rain, Baal was in charge of rain. If it did not rain, they would offer up newborn babies up to one year old to be offered as a human sacrifice for Baal to be satisfied so that he would make it rain.

And here comes Elijah and says right off the top, look, it's not going to rain again until I say so. Forget Baal. See, he went up against Ahab, he went up against Jezebel, he went up against Baal and said, look, this is not going to happen until I say so.

Until God gives me permission. And you think about it, when they were doing all of this Baal worship, how many commandments were they breaking?

They got ten commandments that they have to follow. How many of them were they breaking? Well, basically one through three about having other gods and worshiping other gods and making other gods and stuff. And then the ones toward the end, he's breaking all those.

[9 : 51] He says, look, my God is greater than Baal. my God can do what Baal cannot. And my God says, the water's turned off until I get word from him and it's going to happen again.

And it doesn't matter what you guys say or what you do, it is not going to happen. Think of the courage it took to do that. Walked right in to where Ahab was and said, Ahab, this is what's going to happen.

This is what's going to take place. Think of the courage that he had. The kind of courage it stands to take, you know, stand up to ridicule.

The kind of courage it takes to stand up to people coming against you from all different directions. Do we have that kind of courage today? We as common people, just like him.

Do we have that kind of courage to stand up for what God wants us to? I'm going to be different regardless of the cost. I'm going to stand up for God and what he wants.

[10 : 57] He was a common man. He was a courageous man. Number three, he was a committed man. A committed man. Think of, first of all, I use the word designation. It has to do with his name.

What does Elijah mean? Anybody know? My God is Jehovah. Jehovah. That's what his name means. My God is Jehovah.

Think about having that for a name and then having to live up to that name. That's what Elijah was doing. He was living up to that name. My God is Jehovah.

You know, the first step in becoming anything for God is a personal relationship with him. Do we have a personal relationship with him?

It was so exciting yesterday to watch and listen to Mike talk about the growth he's seen already in his own life and understanding that it comes back to God and everything about him and what he wants.

[12 : 06] And he's newly saved. Comes from a Catholic background so he does have some knowledge but he just growing so much in just a week and a half and it's so great to see and the questions he asked me were just so great questions.

You know, he's thinking, he's studying, he's learning. Do we do that? We've been saved for how long? I've been saved for 50, 55 years?

56 years. 56 years. Do I still have that kind of excitement about getting along with God and finding out what he has for me? Have that personal relationship?

Do I understand? I've got him reading through the book of John. Do I understand? Go back to the fact that Jesus is the way, the truth, the life.

No man come with him the Father but by him. Do I understand the way, the truth, and the life? That he is those things to me. His designation, his name, my God is Jehovah.

[13 : 19] His dependence. by walking into the king's presence there, going in before Ahab and Jezebel in the name of Jehovah. He was showing that his entire ministry was going to be relying on God's presence and God being there for him.

I'm going to do what God wants me to do because I believe that God is there with me every step of the way. There's a difference between resting in our flesh and resting in the arms of God.

When we try to do things on our own, we are always going to fail. We trust in the Lord and what he wants us to do and we follow him and his guidance.

What a difference it's going to make in a life. You know, when we're totally yielded to him, it makes all the difference in the world. for some reason I cannot remember this verse all of a sudden.

Hebrews 11, 6. Probably somebody can quote it for me right now, but it says, but without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

[14 : 34] He says, look, without faith it's impossible to please him. My God is Jehovah and so if I'm going to please Jehovah, I have to come in faith believing what he has for me.

Romans 14, 23 says this, and he that doubteth is damned if he eat because he eateth not of faith for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

He says, look, you're going out to try to do things and you're not doing it by faith in God. That's sin. You go out trying to do it under your own power and your own strength. That's sin.

We think, oh, I can just do things and I can do this and that and the other thing and it's like, you know, no big deal. He says, no, no, no. You may not realize it but it's sin to go out with that attitude and those actions.

He says, you need to be relying on God and what he is doing. We have to come to a place where we start trying to and start trusting God. As Christians, again, so often we try to do things but we don't trust God.

[15 : 45] We question him. We have all kinds of things. We have so many different things available to us that we can try to do things on our own. I could trust God for this but I have a credit card so I'll just go ahead and do it.

I could trust God for this thing or that thing but I've got a job on making money I can do it. I could trust God for this but I've got an education I can figure it out.

You know, all these different things that we do instead of just trusting God we try to figure it out on our own. Notice his devotion. Look back there at verse 1 again in chapter 17.

He says, Elijah the Tishbite who was of the inhabitants of Gilead said unto Ahab as the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand.

Did you get those words? Before whom I stand. Elijah was going in standing in the presence of Ahab and Jezebel but even more importantly he was going in standing in the presence of God presence of Jehovah.

[16:56] Ahab and Jezebel can think what they want to think can say what they want to say do what they want to do but I'm coming in in the presence of Jehovah. He said Ahab was one of the most powerful men alive at his time.

He could have remember I said last week what happens if Ahab says take him out and kill him because Elijah had already told him it's not going to rain again until I say so.

I wonder what would have happened if they killed him. How long would it have taken it to rain again if they had done that? But here he is. He's going in he's standing in the presence of God doing what he wants saying the things that God wants him to say.

He knew there was no reason or any way possibly that he was going to please Ahab. Nothing he said was going to make Ahab happy but it didn't matter. I'm pleasing God.

I'm doing what he wants me to do. I'm following what he has for me. Can you honestly say that you're following God and doing what he has for you? That you're honestly thinking about him.

[18:10] Not thinking about anybody else but thinking about God. What does he want from me? You know it's an attitude of total commitment. It's an attitude that realizes God can bless and God can use us and God can take care of us and God can meet our needs.

Do I trust God? You hear me say that a lot lately. I think way too many Christians do not trust God. And that's the whole basis for what we believe.

If I can't trust God what am I doing here? If I can't trust God what am I doing praying?

If I can't trust God what is life all about? Do I trust him to know what is best, to know what is right, and to follow him no matter what?

You say, yeah, but God does a lot of things I don't understand. Yeah? We don't think like God does. We don't have his thoughts. We don't have his view of, you know, as I've mentioned before.

[19:19] We look at life and we see this. God looks at the world and he sees this. He knows. He understands.

He's watching. Do we trust him? And I'm going to stop there because we have to take prayer requests. We'll finish this part of Elijah's life next week.