

Elijah at the Palace

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[0 : 00] Welcome to our service and as we come together around the Word of God, let us seek his blessing upon his word. Let us pray.

Eternal and ever blessed Lord, we give thanks unto thee for the privilege that thou hast given to us when we can come around thy word in this act of worship.

And as we do so, we pray that it may please thee to grant to us of thy spirit to enable us to worship thee in a way that would be acceptable to thee, in a way that would honour and glorify thy known name.

We pray for thy blessing to be upon thy word as we read it and as we meditate upon it. And we pray that it may indeed be lodged into our hearts so that it will bring forth evidence in our lives.

That it can work in our hearts and in our lives to the glory of thy known name and to the eternal good of our souls. We seek thy blessing upon our communities, upon every home and family.

[1 : 21] Thou knowest our needs better than we know ourselves. And we give thanks unto thee that thou art the one who is able, out of the riches of thine own grace, to meet with the needs of each and every one of us.

We remember, O Lord, those who mourn this day. We pray that thou would bring comfort to their hearts. We live in a changing world. In a world that changes every moment.

But blessed be thy name that thou art the one who changeth not. That thou art the same yesterday, today and forever. And we give thanks that we can have our hope in the unchanging God.

We give thee thanks for all thy promises that thou hast given to us in thy word. That they have been sealed for us by the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Remember those who are ill. And pray that thine own healing hand may be upon them. Bless those who today may be struggling. We pray, O Lord, that thou would draw near to them.

[2 : 28] Not only those who may be struggling in physical ways. But those who may be struggling in spiritual ways. Oh, we pray that thou would bring peace.

And that thou would bring healing to those whose lives may be broken. We so often live broken lives. But we give thanks that we can come to the one who can truly bring healing into our lives.

We pray, O Lord, for thy people. We pray that thou would uphold them in this day when there is so much indifference and apathy shown to the things of God.

We pray, O Lord, that it may please thee to come in a day of thy known power among us. To bring us to repentance. To bring us to sorrow over our sin.

And to seek the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. O Lord, may thou have compassion upon us. We give thanks that thy word reveals to us that thou art a compassionate God.

- [3 : 31] That thou art a God who is full of pity. And we pray, O Lord, that thou would look upon us in pity and compassion. And that thou through thy spirit would work among us as a people, as a nation.
- O bring us to days of revival and days of awakening. Remember thy cause, we pray thee. And we pray, O Lord, that thou would come.
- And that thou would breathe upon us through thy spirit. O that thou would stir us up in our hearts. We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless thy word to us.
- And to every other place where thy word is proclaimed. We pray, O Lord, that thy spirit would accompany thy word.
- And bless thy servants who proclaim thy word. O may they do so with boldness and with confidence. May they do so with the unction of thine own spirit upon them.
- [4 : 29] And we pray that thy word would penetrate heart and hearts. O Lord, we give thanks unto thee for all the tokens of thy goodness and kindness that thou did so abundantly outpour upon us every day.
- We pray for our young people and our children. O growing up in a world that is full of darkness. In a world that is not sympathetic to the things of God.
- In a world where there is so many things to entice them away from the gospel. O we pray that thou would work among them and raise up a generation that would fear thine own name.
- A generation who would be bold witnesses for thee in this world. We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless all nations of the earth.
- We pray that thou would come among us and that thou would still our hearts when there is so much turmoil in our hearts. O Lord, that we may know the peace of God which passeth all understanding.
- [5 : 37] That we may rest in the fact that thou art the sovereign God. That thou art the one who ruleth and that all things are in thine own hands. That thou art working out thine own eternal purpose.
- To the glory of thy name. We pray, O Lord, that thou would be pleased to enlighten our understanding. And to lead us into thy truth as we come to meditate upon it.
- That we can learn from thy word at this hour. O Lord, that it may be a means of strength to us. And a means of encouragement for us.
- And if we stand in rebuke that it may do so. O Lord, we give thanks for the revelation that thou hast given of thyself. As the God who is able to meet with us at every point of need.
- We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless us now as we come to wait upon thee. And all that we ask for the forgiveness of our many sins is in Jesus' name and for his sake.
- [6 : 43] Amen. Let us now read the word of God as we find it in the New Testament. In the General Epistle of James and Chapter 5.
- Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten.
- Your gold and silver is cankered and the rest of them shall be a witness against you. And shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.
- Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cryeth. And the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sappho.
- You have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton. You have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you.

[7 : 50] Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be ye also patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned.

Behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience.

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath, but let your be ye, be ye, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.

[8 : 53] As any among you afflicted, let him pray. As any merry, let him sing songs. As any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he hath committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

May the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word. Now, seeking the Lord's blessing and help, let us turn to the Old Testament, and to the first book of Kings, and chapter 17.

[10 : 17] First Kings, chapter 17, and we'll read verse 1. 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.

As we begin our study of Elijah, we are aware that there is not much to say which has not already been said, and many books have been written, and many sermons preached, and many lectures given on the person and work of Elijah.

Therefore, not much of what I will say during your study will be original. It will be the bringing together of what I have gleaned over the years. There are two books that I would recommend.

One is by A.W. Pink, simply entitled Elijah, and the other book is by Leon Wood, entitled Elijah, Prophet of God.

If you come across these two books, they are worth reading. But tonight I would like to focus on Elijah at the palace. Elijah is unique in a number of ways, for in all history only two men were permitted to bypass death.

[11 : 45] That was Enoch and Elijah. Elijah was also one of the men privileged to appear with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, and have a conversation with Jesus regarding the death that he was going to accomplish outside Jerusalem.

Malachi predicted that Elijah would return before the great and terrible day of the Lord. Elijah appears quite suddenly upon the pages of Scripture.

We are not told anything about his parents, or his education, or general background.

All we are told is Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead. His name that was given to him by his parents, it means, my God is Jehovah.

And from that we can assume that he came from a God-fearing family. Tishbite probably refers to his birthplace. In 2 Kings chapter 1, he is described for us as a hairy man, and one who is good around with leather about his loins.

[13 : 13] However, in the New Testament, and in the book of James that we have just read, we are told something about Elijah, which was true of him before he is introduced to us in 1 Kings chapter 17.

There, in James chapter 5, we are told that he was a man subject to like passions as we are, and that he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and that it did not rain on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

And again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. It brings before us the fact that Elijah was a praying man.

James informs us that he prayed earnestly, which could be translated, with prayer he prayed, or pray he prayed.

Before Elijah appeared before the king, he had been in his closet on his knees, speaking to God. James tells us that he had been in this duty for six months before he made his way to King Ahab, which is confirmed for us by Jesus, for in the Gospel of Luke chapter 4, we read, Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land.

[14 : 45] When Elijah appeared before the king of Israel, they had already suffered six months of famine, and during all that time, Elijah was praying.

Now, although his actual prayers are not recorded for us, we know that he prayed in accordance with the word of God.

For in Deuteronomy chapter 11, we read, Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and said other gods, and worship them.

And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit, unless ye perish quickly from off the good land, which the Lord giveth you.

The Lord, in his word, had warned them that he would judge them if they turned aside to serve other gods. So this tells us that Elijah was a student of the word of God.

[15 : 52] He knew the books of Moses. He knew the promises, and the judgments of God. It is always a valuable thing for us to be students of the word of God, to let the word of God guide our prayer life.

But it is important for us to note at this point, that it was not the goodness and merits of Elijah that gave efficacy to his prayer, but the grace and the power of God.

Elijah, he was a righteous, faithful, and a praying person. But he lived in an evil day, when Ahab was king over Israel.

The kingdom of Israel became divided after the death of King Solomon. There was the northern kingdom, which was made up of ten tribes of Israel, and the southern kingdom, made up of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

The northern kingdom was known as Israel, and the southern kingdom as Judah. Now, the first king that reigned over Israel was a man named Jeroboam.

[17 : 07] And he set idols for the people to worship, because he was afraid, if he allowed the people to return to Jerusalem and Judah to worship, that eventually they would rise up against him.

So we are told that he made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put thee in Dan. And this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one even unto Dan.

And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not the sons of Levi. You can read all about that yourselves in 1 Kings and chapter 12.

Now, the six kings that followed Jeroboam were evil kings in the sight of God. Nadab was an evildoer. Beasha was a murderer.

[18 : 16] Eli was a drunkard. The Samurais murdered Eli and Omriah was even worse than them all. For we read in 1 Kings chapter 16, But Omriah wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and it worse than all that were before him.

For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam, the son of Neban. And in his sin, wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

However, things were to get worse. For we read that Omriah slept with his fathers and was buried in Samaria, and Ahab, his son, reigned in his dead.

And in the 30 and 8th year of Ansel king of Judah, began Ahab, the son of Omri, to reign over Israel. And Ahab, the son of Omri, reigned over Israel in Samaria 20 and 2 years.

And Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. So there, we can see that Elijah lived in a very dark and cloudy day, that he lived in a day of much evil.

[19 : 34] Because to Ahab, sin was very trivial. He did not for a moment give any thought to the consequence of his actions. We read, And it came to pass as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Neban.

And to top all that, he married a wicked woman. He took to wife Jezebel, who belonged to the Sidonians. And this marriage, of course, was a political move to establish an alliance between Israel and Sidon.

Not every alliance is a good thing, for the Sidonians were worshippers of false gods. They were Baal worshippers. And what we know is that soon Ahab, king of Israel, himself became a Baal worshipper.

He went and served Baal and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And he 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. Not only is the evil of Ahab brought before us, but evil also penetrated the people that belonged to Israel.

[21 : 00] In chapter 16, see how it ends. It says, We can read that in Joshua chapter 6.

Now, Ahab has many lessons to teach us. But tonight, what we want to focus upon is to have a little knowledge of the background in which we find Elijah.

For he is a praying man living in an evil day when there was no regard to the claims of God. When people served other gods.

when sin was looked upon as a trivial thing. God was not relevant. Do these things sound familiar to us tonight?

But in the midst of it all, Elijah, the praying man, was zealous for the glory and honour of God. He knew that the evil of his own day was idolatry.

[22 : 26] And he knew from the word of God exactly what kind of punishment to expect. As A.W. Pink says, When Elijah prayed, he was very jealous for the Lord God of hosts and longed to see his great name vindicated and his backslidden people restored.

Elijah put the glory and honour of God before everything else, even before his own natural feelings. Elijah knew that the famine, which had already begun in Israel for six months, was the beginning of God's voice to the people to repent and to turn back.

Now, Elijah was not only a praying man, but he was an observant and a sensitive man. There are those who would judge Elijah as being a man who had very little care towards human suffering, or a man who took delight in witnessing the misery of his neighbours.

However, the opposite is what is true. It was the glory of God and his love for the people of Israel that motivated his prayer life.

And these should be our motivations for prayer. The glory of God and the good of our family and the good of our neighbours and our people. We are not to be ignorant when we pray for the glory of God and the good of our families and communities and so on.

[24 : 03] We know that it could mean sufferings and hardships. And we are not to be ignorant of that. But we also know that sometimes it is by such means and ways that God acts so that people's hearts would turn back in repentance to him.

Would any of us dare to pray such a prayer today? You may say, but Elijah was so different.

He was a prophet. He became a miracle worker and so on. You may say it was easy for him. But James says, Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.

Although Elijah was a righteous and a faithful servant of the Lord, yet he certainly was not yet made perfect. Elijah struggled with the same struggles as we go on to read about his life.

We see at times that he so indulged his fears that he ran away. He was prone to depression. He even despaired of life and petitioned God to take his life away.

[25 : 30] He felt at times his weakness. There were times that he felt lonely. He felt intensely the evils of his day.

Elijah was a person just like me and you. And since we live in a day that resembles the days of Elijah, as we have already noted, wherein there is little regard to the claims of God, in a day when people said other gods, in a day when sin is looked upon as a trivial thing, in a day wherein God is not relevant, our prayers are as necessary as they can be, and they can be just as effective as the prayers of Elijah.

Let us pray for the glory and honour of God. Let us pray in accordance with the word of God. Let us pray out of true love for the good of our people.

It does not mean that we have to go as Elijah was directed to the palace and publicly stand before the king. But let us come into our cross with our words and let us kneel before the king of kings.

Let us come with our words before the king of kings. To pray for the glory and honour of God.

[27 : 03] Do we dare to pray such a prayer today? Knowing that it may bring certain struggles and certain hardships among us.

But our motivation to be the glory and honour of God and the good of our people. That they may repent and turn to God.

Elijah was directed to the king's palace. And we can just imagine the scene in Ahab's coat as Elijah is brought before the king. Crude of dress and lightly of speech as he approaches the king and gives his message.

As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand there shall not be June or rain these years but according to my word. The pale worshipper confronted by the servant of the living God.

Elijah began his address to the king by declaring what was wrong in the land of Israel. He pointed out to him who was truly the God of Israel.

[28 : 20] The Lord God of Israel. Or Jehovah the God of Israel. Jehovah the covenant God of Israel.

His own name Elijah would be a witness to the king. As we noted his name meant my God is Jehovah. He was pointing out to the king that he was wrong in worshipping and introducing pale worship into his kingdom.

He says, As the Lord God of Israel liveth. He is a true living God. So unlike the gods that Ahab and Israel worshipped.

They are not living gods. In Psalm 115 we read these words. Our God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths but they speak not. Eyes have they but they see not. They have ears but they hear not.

[29 : 29] Noses have they but they smell not. They have hands but they handle not. Feet have they but they walk not. Neither speak they through their throat.

They that made them are like unto them. So is every one that trusteth in them. Elijah says, As the Lord God of Israel liveth.

Before whom I stand. Elijah stood before King Ahab in his crew dress. But he was more conscious of standing before the living God.

The true living God of Israel. Now it took courage for Elijah to make this profession. Because Baal worship had now become the recognised state religion of Israel.

And it had become dangerous to make any alliance towards any other than Baal. However, Elijah was a man of faith in the living God.

[30 : 33] And he continued his whole journey conscious of that very fact. How we all need this fearless conviction today.

That we are in the presence of the living God. Elijah was not afraid of making this bold declaration. That he was standing in the presence of the living God.

After introducing himself he gave his message. There shall not be June or rain these years. But according to my word.

Now Israel was a land that was dependent upon water. The former and latter rains is spoken of in the Bible.

The former or early rain must be received after the corn is put into the ground. Otherwise it will rot or be blown away with the dust. And the latter rain must be received just before the time of harvest.

[31 : 48] Otherwise the ears lack the moisture that should fill them out. And they become thin and lean. Barely worth harvesting. No message could have been more challenging to the ears of the king of Israel.

Than the message that Elijah is bringing to him. No message could have been more challenging to the ears of Israel. Than the message that Elijah is bringing to them.

There was to be no dew or rain. And this meant disaster. Devastation and tragedy for Israel. This was not simply something that would pass over in a week or two.

But it was to last for years. And then he adds. But according to my word. You know Elijah's life was in danger at this point.

Not merely for his profession of allegiance to the true living God of Israel. But also because of the content of his message.

[32 : 56] The message that challenged Israel. In his message he was challenging the power and existence of Baal.

Baal was supposed to be the god of rain and good crops. And for God to proclaim through Elijah. That there would be no dew or rain until the prophet gave the word.

Was to challenge Baal's central domain. It was the beginning of the battle. That would culminate at Carmel.

Ahab and Israel. Probably paid little attention to the words of. This crude dressed man of Gilead. But as the days passed.

And no dew or rain came. As the lives and livelihood of the people began to suffer. As the animals began to die.

[34 : 00] As there was no crops. As there was no food on the table. As there was shortage of water. Instead of repenting and turning to the true living God.

They possibly began to cry to Baal. Was Baal not the expert in rain giving? But we see that as conditions became more desperate and more helpless.

That Ahab's mind turned to the man of Gilead. And in chapter 18 we read that he sends messages all over the land and beyond. Looking for this man of God.

Among the many lessons that we are to learn. Is that our God is a living God.

Those who serve God is like Elijah. We serve a living God. And another lesson is that the living God always keeps his word.

[35 : 10] Elijah's drought was not simply a natural disaster. But it was a specific punishment from God upon the people. It is a reminder for us that God's threatened punishment for our sins is not an idle threat.

And also we see here that it was an opportunity that was given to Israel. To repent and to return to the Lord.

That the drought was a means for Israel to come and to confess their sin. To repent of their sin and to return to the Lord.

And to be restored into fellowship with the Lord. Tonight you and I are in the presence of the living God.

Who always keeps his word. And his threatened punishment for my sins and yours is not an idle threat. The cross of Golgotha where his own beloved son hung.

[36 : 22] Is proof that God's threatened punishment against sin is not an idle threat. For he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin.

That we might be made the righteousness of God in him. This living God can bring hardships into our lives.

And bring us to an end of ourselves. In order to make us realize our sins. And our need to repent and to return to our God. If we repent and return.

He is the living God. Who will abundantly pardon. Well where are you and I tonight? In the light of the devastating plague that is raging among us.

Affecting every avenue of our lives. Have we turned to God in repentance. And have we sought his mercy? Our political leaders do not encourage us to call upon our God.

[37 : 30] Their philosophy is we shall overcome. Maybe that was Ahab's philosophy as well. But after the three years and six months of famine.

He began to seek the man of God. The man who came and stood before him. In the name of the Lord. And who gave the message about what God was doing to Israel.

Because of their sin. Tonight I am pleading with you. Not to seek a mere man like Ahab did.

Ahab should have sought not Elijah. But he should have sought the Lord in repentance. And for me and you. Our priority should be to seek the saviour of sinners.

Our priority should be to come and to confess our sins. To come and to repent of our sins.

[38 : 31] To come and to turn to the Lord our God. A God who is full of pity. And full of compassion. A God who is ready to exercise mercy.

A God who delights in mercy. A God who is ready to forgive us our sins. As we are told in the Bible.

That if we confess our sins. That he is faithful and just. To forgive us our sins. And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us not be like Ahab. Who sought out a mere man. Who sought out Elijah. But who did not repent.

Who did not sorrow over his sin. Who did not sorrow over the fact that he led his kingdom into sin. Let us not follow Ahab.

[39 : 34] But let us and our priority be to seek the Lord Jesus Christ. To seek the saviour of sinners. To come in repentance.

To bow down before the Lord. And seek his mercy. And seek his forgiveness. Will you do so tonight?

Will you do so right now? May the Lord bless our thoughts. Let us pray. Eternal and ever blessed Lord.

May we always be conscious of the fact that. We live and move. In the presence of the living God. And we pray oh Lord.

That in all aspects of our life. That we may always be mindful. That we are before the living God. Lord. We pray oh Lord.

[40 : 33] We pray oh Lord. That we would indeed not take the example of Ahab. Who sought a mere man. But that we would. Seek the Lord our God.

With all our heart. With all our mind. With all our strength. Oh Lord. That we would seek thee in repentance.

And that we would come and bow down before thee. And confess our sins. Knowing that if we do so thou hast promised.

That thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We give thanks for the God of Elijah.

That he can be our God. And we pray that we would have that assurance. At this hour. That the God of Elijah is our God.

[41 : 33] Now and forevermore. We pray oh Lord. That thou would bless thy word to us. That thou would lay it to our hearts. That we would meditate upon it.

Not only at this hour. But during the days that lie ahead. We pray oh Lord. Thy blessing to rest upon us. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the love of God. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all. Now and forevermore. Amen.