

THE LIFE OF ELIJAH
"Standing In The Gap"
1 Kings 16:29-17:1

INTRODUCTION:

1. In our last series we looked @ Spiritual Warfare!!!
 - a) And we learned that everything we see in the **VISIBLE - PHYSICAL** realm is influenced by something in the **INVISIBLE - SPIRITUAL** realm.
2. When we come to the Story of Elijah we see what Spiritual Warfare looks like in an ordinary person's life!!!!
 - a) A person just like you and me!!!
3. When we study the lives of individuals like (Joseph and David) we also study history!!
 - a) Why? ***Because the steel of inner character is hammered out on the anvil of time!!***
4. WOW!!! SO GOOD - Great men and women of God have experienced THE HEAT OF THE REFINERS FIRE

I. WHERE WE ARE IN HISTORY

1. @ the end of Solomon's life a Civil War broke out in the Kingdom of Israel that had been united under God's leadership.
2. When Solomon died a schism over TAXATION divided the Nation in two.
 - a) So Rehoboam, Solomon's son and appointed successor, ruled over the Southern Kingdom which was composed of the territory of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.
 - b) A newly proclaimed king, Jeroboam ruled over the Northern Kingdom, called Israel.
3. So **Israel** - 10 tribes to the north ruled by Jeroboam
 - a) Israel had 19 kings of Israel all bad
 - b) In 722 BC Israel was defeated and taken into captivity by the Assyrians
4. And **Judah** - 2 Tribes in the South ruled by Rehoboam
 - a) Judah had 20 kings of which 8 were good
 - b) In 586 BC Judah was defeated by the Babylonians and taken into 70 year captivity.

5. During this period of the Davidic Kingdom there was much wickedness and apostasy of many evil kings and of the Hebrew people.

6. NOW LOOK @ 1 Kings 13:33

a) *"After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from their evil way."*

b) *"high places"* - were alters built and used for the worship of pagan gods and idols.

7. Jeroboam promoted idolatry.

a) **Definition** - "And Idol is an unauthorized NOUN, that person place or thing that you look to be the source of a need being met".

8. 15:25-26; 33-34; 16:8; 21; and the list goes on.....

9. Despite all the bloodshed and idolatry and wickedness of these previous kings, Ahab acted more wickedly than all.

a) 16:29-30

II. SOME BAD PEOPLE

1. 1 Kings 16:31

2. But here we are given the name of Ahab, the next king, but also the name of his wife!

a) Why does the writer linger over the marriage of King Ahab?

TWO REASONS:

#1 - Because Jezebel was the dominant partner in the relationship!!!

1) Jezebel was the real power behind the throne.

2) Ahab did what he was told.

#2 - Jezebel initiated Baal Worship

1) **Vs 31**

2) Baal worship originated with the Canaanites.

3) But the actual Baal worship found its way into the hearts of the Israelites when it was introduced by marriage into Israel by Ahab.

4) All part of Jezebel's plan.

3. When Ahab married Jezebel, she brought her religious heritage with her - the idolatrous worship of Baal.

a) Baal was worshipped as the god of rain and fertility who controlled the seasons, the crops, the land.

III. THE NEED FOR A VOICE

1. J. Oswald Sanders said this about Elijah: "*Elijah appeared at zero hour in Israel's history. Like a meteor he flashed across the blackness of Israel's spiritual night.*"
2. Elijah was the right man for the job.
 - a) God knew that Elijah would become His instrument of confrontation.
3. Now Jezebel was Satan's woman of the year!!!
 - a) And she checked all the boxes of demon possession.
4. **LISTEN UP:** Israel as a whole was to be a light to the world of the one true living God.
 - a) Now has reached its widest chasm between God and His people.
 - b) God's people had reached their widest separation from Him.
5. **1 Kings 16:32-33**
 - a) "**and Ahab made an Asherah**"
 - 1) An Asherah represented the chief goddess of Tyre and consumed in Idolatry the mother of Baal.
 - 2) Asheim were pillars sculpted in the shape of Asherah all associated with the worship of Baal.
6. **LISTEN UP:** There must have been heartache and pain of the writer of the text.
 - a) Clearly the author was interested in showing how God's people had failed to live up to the requirements of the covenants God had made with them.
 - b) **Deuteronomy 30:15-20 WoW!!!**
7. **1 Kings 17:1**
8. **Now Israel is living in an era of gross evil and wickedness!!**
 - a) And God calls Elijah
9. **THREE SIGNIFICANT FACTORS ABOUT ELIJAH - 17:1**
 - a) **HIS NAME** - Elijah - The Lord is My God
 - 1) El (God) - I (my) - Jah (Jehovah)
 - 2) So Ahab and Jezebel were in the land and Baal was the god they worshipped.
 - 3) When Elijah burst onto the scene his very name proclaimed "I have one God!!"
 - a) He is the one I serve before whom I stand!!
 - 4) Elijah stood in the gap!!

b) **HIS LAND** - Tishbeh

- 1) He is "Elijah the Tishbite"
- 2) All we know about Tishbe is that it was located in Gilead.
- 3) Gilead was located in the northern Transjordan area - that is on the eastern side of the Jordan River.
- 4) From that clue we know that Gilead was a place of solitude and outdoor life.
 - a. A place where men would have been rugged and tough, course and crude and Hard workers.

c) **HIS STYLE**

- 1) 17:1
 - a. He gets right in front of Ahab
- 2) So without hesitation, with no fear Elijah confronts Ahab and gets to the point.
- 3) So here comes Elijah - from nowhere with no training and no polish. 17:1
- 4) WOW!!! 17:1c
 - a. *"There shall be neither dew nor rain..."*

10. When everything around him was blatant anti-God Baal-worship
- a) Elijah steps up to the plate and makes his announcement.
 - b) Elijah shakes his fist in the devil's face and says "NO RAIN"
 - 1) Your crops will die.
 - 2) Your cattle will die.
 - 3) People will die.

11. Elijah delivers God's message!!!
- a) Elijah is all alone.

IV. WHEN WE STAND ALONE

1. God still calls men and women to SHAKE PEOPLE UP.
2. God calls people to stand in the GAP and willing to stand alone against the forces of evil without hesitation to proclaim the name of the Lord.

3. *Ezekiel 22:30*

4. **THE QUEST CONTINUES**

5. **QUESTION IS:** Who here has the courage to stand alone for God?