

Fear Is Not Our Future

Lessons From Elijah And Elisha

Growth Group Curriculum

January 8, 2023 – 1 Kings 17:1-6; 16:29-33; Deut. 18:14-19; 32:44-47; Luke 11:28
“The God Who Provides”

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

Today we start a new sermon series where we will be looking at the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Their stories are found in the books of 1 and 2 Kings. These two books contain 47 chapters, of which 15 chapters are devoted to the work of Elijah and Elisha. They prophesied in the northern kingdom of Israel from around 850 BC to 775 BC.

The books of 1 and 2 Kings warn about the threat of foreign gods. They were clearly written with a deep understanding of the warnings expressed in Deuteronomy, about the threats of foreign religions and foreign gods. Baal was one of those foreign gods, and we will encounter him throughout our series.

Baal was the “storm” deity and called the Rider of the Clouds. He was depicted with a lightning bolt in one hand and the thunder was seen as his voice. In an agrarian society the weather mattered, and because Baal supposedly gave the rain, he was worshipped, to ensure the rains would come and the ground would be fruitful, and crops would be produced.

Elijah announces a drought is coming because of the disobedience of Israel. God had told the nation of Israel that if they did not obey, He would dry up the heavens and there would be no rain (Deuteronomy 11:13-17). The announcement of the drought and the actual drought will serve as proof that God controls the rains and the fruitfulness of the soil, and not Baal.

Much of the Elijah story is set in the region around the plain of Jezreel. In the mornings in both the fall and the spring dew would fall in this valley. The dew was so heavy that even if it did not rain, farmers could still produce a crop. This is the area where Gideon had laid out his fleece (Judges 6:36–40). This helps us to understand why Elijah announced that God would withhold not only the rain, but also the dew.

Elijah shows up quickly and leaves quickly. God would provide for Elijah, but not for Israel. The crops would fail and there would be no rain or dew. There would be a famine of not only food, but also the word of God.

Page 1 of 3



Exploring the Text

1 Kings 17:1-6

¹⁷ Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe^[a] in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.” ² Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: ³ “Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. ⁴ You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there.” ⁵ So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. ⁶ The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Deuteronomy 18:14-19

¹⁴ The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so. ¹⁵ The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. ¹⁶ For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.” ¹⁷ The LORD said to me: “What they say is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. ¹⁹ I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.

1 Kings 16:29-33

²⁹ In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. ³⁰ Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. ³¹ He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. ³² He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. ³³ Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to arouse the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him.

Deuteronomy 32:44-47

⁴⁴ Moses came with Joshua^[a] son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing the people. ⁴⁵ When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁶ he said to them, “Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. ⁴⁷ They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”

Luke 11:28

²⁸ He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

1 Samuel 15:22

But Samuel replied: “Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

John 4:34

“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

1. The Bible is full of God’s promises to provide for our daily needs as well as for our spiritual growth. What are some of the things that God has promised to provide for those who love, trust and obey Him?
2. Pastor Paul made the point that God’s provision for our lives is strongly connected to our obedience to Him. What does it look like to be obedient to God?



3. Pastor Paul quoted Eugene Peterson from Peterson's book Eat this Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading. In the book, Peterson says that when we read a passage of scripture, instead of asking what the text means, we should ask "What can I obey?" Select one of your favorite scripture passages and apply this approach. Did this approach change how you perceive the passage? What did you learn?
4. In 1 Kings 17:1-6, we learn how God provides for Elijah as he hid in the Kerith Ravine. God's provision for Elijah was directly tied to Elijah's obedience to God. There are many such stories throughout the Bible. Do you have a favorite story of how God has provided for those who were obedient to Him?
5. In 1 Samuel 15:22, Samuel said: "to obey is better than sacrifice." What does this mean to you?
6. Why do we often find it so difficult to be obedient to God?
7. How can we learn to be more obedient to God?
8. Pastor Paul told us that the key to obedience is trust. Explain what you think he meant by that statement.

