

ELIJAH

A Man of Like Passions

2 - Elijah's Drought



SERIES OUTLINE



1 - Ahab's Israel



2 - Elijah's Drought

3 - The Ravens

4 - The Widow



5 - Carmel and Judgment

6 - The Voice



Goal: to see how God was working with Elijah.

Core Message:

God:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 - Ahab's Israel | is in control. |
| 2 - Elijah's Drought | hears prayers. |
| 3 - The Ravens | gives lessons that push us beyond our comfort zones. |
| 4 - The Widow | gives lessons with fantastic blessings. |
| 5 - Carmel and Judgment | decides when it is time for judgment. |
| 6 - The Voice | doesn't relent. |

2 - Elijah's Drought

- Successes and Challenges
- The Word of the Lord
- How God Works

Core: God hears prayers.

Why: did God bring a drought on Israel?

1 Kings 17:1 - “Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.’”

The entirety of this class will focus on this verse.

Elijah's story begins with a miracle.



SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

I Kings 17:1 - "Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.'"

What is the difference between a miracle and providence?

miracle = מופֶת H4159 “wonder”

plagues Exodus 7:3 Exodus 11:10 Deuteronomy 6:22

Ahaz's sundial 2 Chronicles 32:24

“sign”

false prophets Deuteronomy 13:1-2

Jeroboam's altar 1 Kings 13:3-5

“sign”

people Ezekiel 12:6 Zechariah 3:8

A miracle is God's clear divine action that causes people to marvel.
Providence is God's subtle maneuvering of circumstances.

These definitions underscore Elijah's uniqueness.

Miracles appear throughout the record, but there are few people who *perform them*.

Moses

Joshua

Elijah the only person before him who had performed more miracles was Moses!

Elijah's miracles

3.5 year drought 1 Kings 17:1

Multiplying flour and oil 1 Kings 17:14

Raising the dead 1 Kings 17:22

Calling down fire from heaven 1 Kings 18:38

Calling down rain from heaven 1 Kings 18:41

Calling down fire from heaven twice 2 Kings 1:10, 12

Dividing the waters of Jordan 2 Kings 2:8

Elijah appears to have struggled with communication.



SOCIAL STRUGGLES

He consistently spoke in short sentences—except when praying or prophesying.

Elijah's first words:

1 Kings 17:1 - “Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.’”

1 Kings 17:10-14 - “So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, ‘Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.’ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, ‘Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.’ And she said, ‘As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.’ And Elijah said to her, ‘Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’”

1 Kings 17:17-23 - “After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elijah, ‘What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!’ And he said to her, ‘Give me your son.’ And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. And he cried to the LORD, ‘O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?’ Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, ‘O LORD my God, let this child’s life come into him again.’ And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, ‘See, your son lives.’”

Contrast this with Elisha's first words:

1 Kings 19:20 - "And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, 'Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.' And he said to him, 'Go back again, for what have I done to you?'"

2 Kings 4:1-7 - “Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Elisha, ‘Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD, but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.’ And Elisha said to her, ‘What shall I do for you? Tell me: what have you in the house?’ And she said, ‘Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.’ Then he said, ‘Go outside, borrow vessels from all your neighbors, empty vessels and not too few. Then go in and shut the door behind yourself and your sons and pour into all these vessels. And when one is full, set it aside.’ So she went from him and shut the door behind herself and her sons. And as she poured they brought the vessels to her. When the vessels were full, she said to her son, ‘Bring me another vessel.’ And he said to her, ‘There is not another.’ Then the oil stopped flowing. She came and told the man of God, and he said, ‘Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest.’”

2 Kings 4:27-37 - “And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came to push her away. But the man of God said, ‘Leave her alone, for she is in bitter distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me.’ Then she said, ‘Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, ‘Do not deceive me?’” He said to Gehazi, ‘Tie up your garment and take my staff in your hand and go. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not reply. And lay my staff on the face of the child.’ Then the mother of the child said, ‘As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.’ So he arose and followed her. Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. Therefore he returned to meet him and told him, ‘The child has not awakened.’ When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD. Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. Then he summoned Gehazi and said, ‘Call this Shunammite.’ So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, ‘Pick up your son.’ She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out.”

Elijah

Almost always alone

Rarely asked for help

Seeks God's wrath on Israel

Elisha

Works with Gehazi

Constantly approached for help

Seen as someone who cares!

Requests for Elisha's help:

Heal the water in the city 2 Kings 2:19

Solve the widow's food shortage 2 Kings 4:1

Raise the Shunammite's son 2 Kings 4:22

Fix the poisonous stew 2 Kings 4:40

Heal Naaman 2 Kings 5:9

Retrieve the axe head 2 Kings 6:5

Elijah struggled with people.

He struggled to talk to them and to love them.

Throughout his life, God treated him how he should treat others.

Recognizing Elijah's struggle with people...



THE WORD OF THE LORD

...let's consider the verse again.

1 Kings 17:1 - “Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”

Do you notice odd and anything missing?

1. Except by my word?

2. There's nothing about this being God's word!

1 Kings 17:2-3 - “And the word of the LORD came to him: ‘Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan.’”

1 Kings 17:8-9 - “Then the word of the LORD came to him, ‘Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.’”

1 Kings 17:13-14 - “And Elijah said to her, ‘Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’”

1 Kings 17:16 - “The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.”

1 Kings 18:1 - “After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, ‘Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.’”

1 Kings 19 has three divine encounters:

v. 5 - Angel touches him and commands him to eat

v. 9 - The word of the LORD asks Elijah why he is at Sinai

v. 11-12 - The LORD passes by Elijah

The Word of God is always coming to Elijah and telling him what to say:

The curse on Ahab and Jezebel 1 Kings 21:17-19

Lightening of Ahab's sentence 1 Kings 21:28-29

How to respond to the king's men 2 Kings 1:3-4, 15

Sending him to various cities 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6

The record makes it clear when God interacts with Elijah.

Instead, this says “by my word.”

This curse was from Elijah.

Revelation 11:3-6 - “And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

Do you hear the echoes of Elijah?

In reflecting Elijah’s story, Revelation attributes the drought *to him*.

But, Elijah didn't realize that his plan didn't align with God. 1 Kings 18:36

Perhaps because the plan had Scriptural backing.

Deuteronomy 11:13-17 - “And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full. Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you.”

Deuteronomy 28:23-24 - “And the heavens over your head shall be bronze, and the earth under you shall be iron. The LORD will make the rain of your land powder. From heaven dust shall come down on you until you are destroyed.”

So, Elijah's drought was in line with God's word.

The people had been warned.

They deserved what was coming.

Right?

Not quite.

This isn't entirely how God works.

And that's what, throughout his life, Elijah had to learn.

God listened to Elijah.

He was going to teach him.



HOW GOD WORKS

Elijah believed that God had shut up the heavens because of the people's evils.

But, God had shut them up **for Elijah's sake.**

1 Kings 18:1 - “After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, ‘Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.’”

God ended the rain.

And he sent Elijah to Ahab. Why? *Except by my word.*

God allowed Elijah to keep his authority.

This was all that God told Elijah to do.

1 Kings 18:17-19 - “When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, ‘Is it you, you troubler of Israel?’ And he answered, ‘I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father’s house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals. Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.’”

In some ways, this was true!

Israelites had lost their lives because of Elijah. cp. Joshua 7:5

Elijah’s words were also true.

They reflect his connection with the drought and idolatry.

????? Wasn’t he supposed to tell Ahab that it was going to rain?

In his schema, if it was going to rain, the people had to return to God.

1 Kings 18:39-41 - “And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, ;The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.; And Elijah said to them, ‘Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.’ And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there. And Elijah said to Ahab, ‘Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain.’”

But there was a hint that something wasn't as Elijah expected:

1 Kings 18:42-43a - "So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, 'Go up now, look toward the sea.' And he went up and looked and said, 'There is nothing.'"

1 Kings 18:43b-44 - "And he said, 'Go again, seven times. And at the seventh time he said, 'Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea.' And he said, 'Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'"

This kind of thing happened to Elijah again: (and to no one else!)

Raising the widow's son 1 Kings 17:20-21 Did Elijah *really want* these things?

Why?

Compare:

Fire on Mt. Carmel 1 Kings 18:36-38

Fire on the captains 2 Kings 1:10. 12

But Elijah couldn't pretend anymore.

1 Kings 19:1-3 - "Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.' Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there."

Why was this so upsetting to Elijah?

Jezebel had always wanted to kill him... 1 Kings 18:4

It was because God sent rain.

And the people hadn't changed.

Elijah realized that *he was wrong*.

1 Kings 19:10 - “He said, ‘I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.’”

Do you notice the tense? It was about what they *had done*.

Elijah had been zealous, calling for a drought.

And God didn't seem to care about the people's idolatry.

His whole schema was falling apart.

God listened to Elijah, even though his prayer wasn't necessarily righteous.
Because God is patient and works with us.



God hears prayers.

He is willing to work with many requests.

GOD'S FLEXIBILITY

When He doesn't, it is because the request absolutely doesn't fit with His plan:

Romans 11:2-3 - "God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? 'Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.'"

On the other hand, He will consider many possibilities:

James 5:13-16 - “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? 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 will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

James 5:17-18 - “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.”

James 5:16b NKJV - “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

James 5:16b NIV - “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

James 5:16b NASB - “A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much.”

James 5:16b - “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

πολὺ ἰσχύει δέησις δικαίου ἐνεργουμένη

Present aspect = continuous

this exact word is only used one other place

Galatians 5:6 - “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.”

Sometimes God wants to see if we *really* want what we are praying for.

CONCLUSION

Elijah was a man of like passions.

But God heard him—to teach him.

When we struggle: It could be our fault.

Maybe we are to learn.

Or maybe someone else is to learn.

Regardless, God is listening.

