

1 Kings 17:1-16

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[0:00] Bibles and go with me to the book of 1 Kings, 1 Kings chapter 17. 1 Kings chapter 17 is where we will be at this evening, just making our way through scripture and we have made it up until this point of 1 Kings chapter 17.

We'll be in the first 16 verses this evening, verses 1 through 16, 1 Kings chapter 17 starting in verse 1. Let's pray. God, we're so thankful.

Thankful that we have the opportunity of gathering together and thankful that we can come and fellowship. Lord, it is good to be among brothers and sisters in Christ. Lord, it's good to be encouraged.

It's good to be just refreshed through their presence. So we thank you for providing a place for us to do that. We thank you that we have the opportunity to open up your word and God, we pray that you would speak to us through your word.

God, we ask that you work with the children, the workers and the youth in the back. We ask that Christ be magnified and glorified in their presence. Just in all ways and all manner.

[1:09] Oh God, we ask that you would get the attention and the reverence and the awe that you deserve. That we would learn of you. We would grow closer to you and that it would shape and change our lives for your glory.

And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. 1 Kings chapter 17. We're going to pick it up in verse 1. Now, we have been focusing for some time on the divided kingdom. After Solomon's reign, his son Rehoboam ascends the throne.

Rehoboam makes very unwise judgment. The kingdom is divided. But we know that the division of the kingdom is not a result of Rehoboam's judgment.

Rather, Rehoboam's judgment was used of the Lord God to divide the kingdom because of Solomon's sin. Solomon was a king with a divided heart. He was a king who loved the Lord his God and loved many foreign women, the scripture tells us.

[2:16] So therefore, having a divided heart, it resulted in a divided kingdom. Once the kingdom is divided, it's an amazing thing that begins to happen. The southern kingdom stays at least a little bit true to the Lord God because they still have the temple.

They have the priests and they have the ordinances and the commandments and the things which God had commanded them to do. Almost instantaneously, the northern kingdom begins to deviate. The king there, though God had told him he would make him king, God had encouraged him to be faithful as king, raised up two golden calves and began to worship God however he wanted to worship. He began to twist and distort the worship of the one true God in an unworthy and unordained manner.

For a succession of six kings, this takes place until we get to Ahab. That gets us to the end of the 16th chapter. Ahab did what was evil in the sight of the Lord his God more than all who went before him, it told us.

Ahab did more than try to twist and distort the worship of God. He tried to replace the worship of God. Ahab's replacement of the worship of God was a direct result of the introduction of Baal.

[3:32] And if you guys don't mind, I know I typically stay down here on Wednesday night, but now we have people in the balcony and I can't see them and they can't see me, so it bothers me a little bit. I hate to be that way, but it just does.

So we're going to move up here. Ahab introduced the worship of Baal, and therefore, wow, that microphone came on with a vengeance.

Thank you, brother. I'm here. And I moved and they had to move cameras and change microphones. I'm sorry I didn't give you guys warning for that, but you're so good at that. Ahab tried to replace God with Baal.

Now one thing that we notice, and I know this is a long introduction, but we need to understand this because we need to know where we're at. God always has his people. Even when the northern kingdom is going their own way and they're doing things the way they so desire, God always has his people.

He was sending word to these false kings or these unfaithful kings through prophets. He was giving warnings of coming judgment.

[4 : 39] Judgments which did indeed come about. Judgments which were displayed in the results of what happened. The word of God was not hindered by the actions of man, is what I want you to understand.

Man twisted, distorted, and tried to replace, but yet the word of God stayed true. We are about to be introduced to one of the major prophets of that time.

Anyone that knows much of anything of their scripture knows that when you get to 1 Kings 17, you meet a man named Elijah. Many of which believe is one of the two witnesses found at the end of the Bible in the book of Revelation, who are there prophesying until they are slain, and they lay dead for three days exposed, and then they're called back into glory.

Elijah appears on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus himself. Elijah is a man that is said that in the spirit of Elijah would go as a forerunner before the Savior, and John the Baptist fulfilled that prophecy.

Elijah is a man that we will meet over and over again through scripture. And we will meet him here for the first time in scripture in 1 Kings 17, starting in verse 1.

[5 : 54] The word of God says, And the word of the Lord, And he said,

Go, do as you have said, But make me a little bread cake from it first, and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son.

For thus says the Lord God of Israel, The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth. So she went and did according to the word of Elijah.

And she and he and her household ate for many days. The bowl of flour was not exhausted, nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke through Elijah.

1 Kings 17, verses 1 through 16. I want you to see this evening, the days of Elijah. I can summarize the whole sermon in one sentence, and then we'll break that sentence out.

[8 : 17] I can't always do that, but I can this evening. Elijah was a man of the moment with a message lived out in a proper manner. He was the man of the moment with a message lived out in a proper manner.

We want to look at each one of those and see what it looked like during the days of Elijah. First, I want you to see the man. It says, Now Elijah the Tishbite.

The first thing you need to know about Elijah is what his name means. Elijah's name literally means Jehovah is God. He has the very name of God stamped across his person.

He has a message to deliver. He has a time in which he is to deliver it. But the first thing that we notice is the man himself, because this man comes bearing a very particular name, and his name is Jehovah is God.

Now, we don't want to take him or the Scripture out of the context in which it is set, because this man whose name means Jehovah is God was being sent to a people who were trying to forget God.

[9 : 28] He was being sent to a people who were trying to replace God, and he was being sent to people who wanted nothing to do with God. But yet this man with this name was the one that would be used at this time.

The Word of God tells us, according to the New American Standard, it says, Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead. Some translations say, Elijah the Tishbite, who is from Tishbe in Gilead.

Tishbite literally means one who is from Tishbe. That's all it means. So we really have to find out exactly what's going on here, because this defines the man. He is defined as the Tishbite.

Tishbite and settler are really the same words. So you could essentially say it, Elijah the settler was from the settlers of Gilead. Another translation of settler also means stranger.

Elijah the stranger was from the strangers of Gilead. And the reason we say that is because no one knows geographically where Tishbe of Gilead ever existed.

[10 : 25] It kind of gets lost in translation. So now we have a man whose name means Jehovah is God, who literally is from somewhere nobody knows where. This man apparently shows up out of nowhere, onto the scene, and he's introduced into the situation that he comes into.

And we know the end of Elijah's life, because as surely as he shows up, he will also disappear. Elisha will look for him, and no, he's not there, because the chariots of Israel carried him away, and the prophets with Elisha will say, Father, shall we look for him?

He said, you can look all you want to, but he ain't here, right? Because the one who showed up out of nowhere was caught up to somewhere. That's why, personally, just so you know, your pastor believes he is one of the two witnesses that are there in the book of Revelations.

I believe those two can be fairly clearly defined in Scripture. I believe it's Enoch and Elijah. Some people are going to say, well, I think it's Moses and Elijah. Those are the one with him on the Mount of Transfiguration. You say, well, Pastor, why do you think it's Enoch and Elijah?

Because it is appointed unto man once to die. And those are two men that have never died in Scripture. And if every man has an appointment to die, and those two were caught up to glory and have never died, then they either missed their appointment or God made an exception of the rule.

[11 : 40] But if you go and read the book of Revelations, they die. I think their appointed time just happens to be at the end time. So God caught them into his presence until their time. That's just my interpretation.

I mean, I'm not saying it has to be yours. We can disagree on that, but that's my interpretation. But Elijah is a man from nowhere whose name means Jehovah is God.

Now, the book of James, James chapter 5, tells us, James himself, Elijah was a man with a nature just like ours.

That's astounding. I mean, this is Elijah. This is Elijah that is spoken of so much through Scripture that has the showdown on Mount Carmel that we'll get to.

He's a man who is caught up to glory on the chariots of fire. The man who had all the power and the authority of the Lord his God with him. The man who did so many supernatural works.

[12 : 37] But James tells us that Elijah was a man with a nature just like ours. What we need to notice was that Elijah was just a man.

He was a man who had a name reflective of the Lord his God who was from somewhere we don't even know where it was at because none of those things really matter.

See, in the end, the family tree, the family legacy, or the heritage of the individual matters little if the individual is committed to the Lord his God for his usefulness.

We notice the man. We don't know anything else about Elijah other than our introduction to him here. He shows up at the right time.

We can get caught up in this reality that sometimes the people that God uses are supernatural people. We call them super saints. We like to put them on a pedestal or we like to say, Oh, well, God's doing something marvelous.

[13 : 47] And what I have found in Scripture and in history is there are no such thing as super saints, but rather there are individuals who are surrendered to the super one. There are individuals who say, Lord, use me, and they allow themselves to be used.

They are just men and women like us. Be careful how we put Elijah on a pedestal because he is just the man of the moment.

Is he used mildly of the Lord God? Sure he is. Does God do some wonderful things through him? Absolutely. But he is a man with a nature just like ours because, see, the tendency is to say, Well, I'm not Elijah.

Well, no, you're not. But you are the man or the woman that God has commanded and created you to be, and you have the same God who empowered Elijah empowering you.

We like to make super saints out of individuals to excuse our ineffectiveness or our uselessness or our busyness or our lack of surrender instead of realizing that here is a normal individual from the middle of nowhere that God uses in a powerful way.

[14 : 56] He wasn't even from Jerusalem. He wasn't from any place that we even know of nor can locate on a map. But yet God uses him.

He's the man. And he's a man for a particular moment. Look at what it says about the moment. It says, Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab. There's the moment. He said to Ahab.

As we've already said, it says in the 16th chapter that Ahab did more evil than all who went before him. So here is this man who is reserved for this moment.

And this moment is a desperate time in the history of God's people. This moment is a time where not only is worship cast off, but worship has been replaced.

This man comes at the moment where they want nothing to do with God. At least before Ahab, they were trying to appease God in a wrong manner. I'm not saying it was acceptable.

[15:55] I'm just saying at least they were given lip service, right? Jehoshaphat said, why go all the way down there? Jeroboam said, why go all the way down there? You can worship God here. That's not what we find going on with Ahab.

Ahab says, why worship the Lord God? Worship Baal instead. See, it's at this moment when things are the darkest that God calls this man. Now this is astounding.

It's astounding when we realize exactly what is being introduced here. Up to this point, God's people have been living in rebellion. It was an ordained split, but they were using it as if it had been a man-gained activity.

They were using it for their own benefits. We've seen the turmoil that sin brought into that, people killing everybody, even themselves. And we've seen all the discourse cord that is there and how nobody trusted anybody.

And there's all these varying dynasties in the northern kingdom that none of them endure. None of them are lasting. We don't know who any of them are. None of them last past the Assyrians. As a matter of fact, all of that is lost when the Assyrians come in and carry them away.

[17:07] We have seen how they fell and fell and fell and fell and there's not one good king in all of the kings that reign in the northern kingdom. But one thing we have found that with each king, God would bring a word.

God would bring a prophet, right? God would send an individual who would say, hey, change your ways, change your ways, change your ways. Is God constrained or does God have to do that? No. But now here at this darkest moment, when the nation wants nothing to do with God, Elijah starts the prophetic ministry that will be one of power and of word.

You have Elijah and Elisha. These are not prophets like they had preceded them that showed up and says, God says, change your ways or you're going to die. These are prophets who show up and say, hey, let's go on Mount Carmel and let's see who really is God.

Or hey, it's not going to rain. Some of you were wishing that Elijah would show up right now. It's thunder and lightning. It's okay. Some of you, you know, they would say, I'm just not going to let it rain. These are people that would do amazing things.

These are people that God used in a mighty way. Elijah was so powerfully used and then he's caught up and Elisha replaces him and Elisha so powerfully used. You cannot dispel the prophetic word that's coming out of their mouth because of the power of the activities that are displayed through their life.

[18:23] What's going on? When the nation gets the darkest, God sends the greatest witnesses of himself to the nation and he does this.

Look at this. Judgment is coming. So God is without excuse when judgment is finally rendered and the Assyrians come in and they lead them away.

The word of God had been declared. The prophets of God had been in the place. God's people had not only heard, but they had also seen God prove himself over and over and over and over again. And the judgment of God was coming. God did not just swoop down in one moment and bring judgment. God in his grace and his mercy sent a clear word, a clear prophetic word before the judgment.

That's the moment. That's the moment. I know we can get carried away and sometimes think that the God of the Old Testament is a God of vengeance and a God of judgment.

[19:27] He's the same God that we get into the New Testament. And some people get a little bit out of shape about that and we forget about Noah's flood, right? That's just not a pretty picture. I mean, everybody drowns.

Yes, but for 120 years Noah's preaching righteousness. And for 120 years no one accepts the message. And then it says that the animals line up.

This is one of the greatest pictures of God's patience and mercy I've ever seen is in the account of the flood. The ark is completed. The animals line up. So if you don't care that Noah's preaching for

120 years and Noah keeps saying that the rains are coming the animals are coming when the animals start lining up two by two and sevens are the clean you need to start paying attention. Right? Animals start coming. All the animals are on the boat. Noah and his family goes on the boat and then the Bible tells us Noah didn't shut the door. You know that, right? God left the door open for several more days before God finally shut the door.

120 years. The animals line up. They walk onto the boat. Everything's beginning to fall apart. God leaves the door open. Nobody comes so he shuts it.

[20 : 37] We cannot blame God for that. Judgment is coming to the northern kingdom because of their rebellion and their revolt against holy God. Elijah and Elisha had been there before.

See, friends, at those darkest moments God has the brightest lights. And God has the men and the women for the moment before the coming judgment.

We live in a world that does not want much to do with a holy God. We live in a world where we think maybe it should be like the good old days and it ought to be like it used to be in all the yesteryears. Maybe we ought to try to be the brightest lights in the darkest moments knowing that that moment that God has put us in was so that his glory and so that his glory can be displaced.

That when judgment is rendered and it will be that God will be able to emphatically say did you not see and did you not hear?

[21 : 38] I had my people there yet you rejected it. This is what Elijah, he's the man at that moment. We notice also Elijah's message.

He's just a man who has surrendered wholly to the Lord his God and God has reserved him until that moment. I like to say it this way, God has a man or a woman for every moment and there's a moment for every man or woman.

That is, there's a reason for us being here. In the New Testament it tells us that we were called before the foundations of the world were laid for a good work he had prepared beforehand for us. That is, he's got a moment for you and he's got a moment for me. Sometimes he holds us in reservations. I remember she refers to herself as my spiritual mother. When I came to Christ my spiritual parents were Billy and Patty Howell.

Miss Patty used to tell me we would go over there, it's actually y'all's house, I remember where she told me this, sitting in your kitchen at the table Miss Patty told me one night, she said, you know Billy Joe, that was a good one, that's not what she said, but she said, you know Billy Joe, I feel like God's got you in a slingshot, he's just pulling you back and pulling you back and pulling you back and pulling you back and pulling you back and someday he's going to let you go.

[23 : 06] That there's a moment that he's going to let you go and you'll be fulfilling that purpose. Now when she was telling me that I was in some seasons, I knew God was calling me into ministry, but yet I couldn't do it and it just wasn't happening and I was getting frustrated and she was reminding me that there was a moment that God had prepared for me that would be that opportunity and the reason she could say that is because it's like that for each and every one of us, God has a moment for every individual and it's just being readily available to him at that moment.

Elijah went there, but he went with that message. Now here's his message, what a fitting message and God is so good at giving great illustrations. He said, there will be no rain until my word.

But that's not all he said. Did you notice what he says? As the Lord God of Israel who lives says. He started his message with the reality that though the kings and the people wanted Baal to be their God, he was not their God.

He says, as the Lord God of Israel. That's the northern kingdom. That's all the people also love the fact that when Elijah goes on Mount Carmel and he builds an altar, you know how many stones he uses on the altar, right? He builds his altar with 12 stones.

The reason he uses 12 stones is because there's 12 tribes. You say, no, they're not. There are only 10 in the northern kingdom. Elijah sees a bigger picture, right? Man had divided it. We know that God had ordained that division, but God was dealing with a people, a particular people, a single people.

[24 : 35] He was the God of all the people there. But anyway, the first thing that he tells them, he says, as the Lord, the God of Israel lives, he reminds them that there is but one God over them and it is the Lord God of Israel.

And he reminds them that he is a very living and active God unlike the dead idols that they are serving. He comes with this message at this moment that though they do not acknowledge him,

though they will not worship him, though they will not admit him, it does not change who he is. He is still God. And he is God over those people and he is a living and active God. Friend, listen to me. Man's worship or inability to worship or no desire to worship or non-worship does not change the reality of God's existence.

God does not need us to worship him. We need to worship God. That is, God is not dependent upon us for our existence.

He is, the great theological term there, self-sufficient and self-existent. He exists within himself. He doesn't depend on anything nor need anything.

[25 : 53] Everything else is outside of him. And Elijah says, he's alive. Though they wanted nothing to do with him, he was alive.

And this living God who was over them had a word and the word was, it will not rain according to my word. Three and a half years it did not rain.

Now, when God sends a word, he sends a word for a particular purpose at a specific time. That is, there's always a word for that moment.

He went to Ahab and Ahab had just introduced the worship of Baal. Baal was the storm god. As storm god, Baal is the god who controls the weather.

So God goes and before, long before there's a showdown on Mount Carmel, God shows who's god by controlling the weather. Ahab was worshipping a god who controlled the weather and the real god said, I'll show you how much control he has of the weather.

[27 : 02] Because when the rain stopped, it demonstrated absolutely that Baal was ineffective at creating rain. And it was a message that would be duly noted because no matter how many altars, no matter how many false temples, no matter how much worship, no matter how much show was put into it, rain would not come until Elijah said that it would come.

God had a specific message for a specific time. God's word has a message for every moment. that's the only way we know that is when we walk in fellowship with him and we walk in commune with him. I was asked earlier this week, someone asked me, I said, Pastor, I just want to know like when you preach through scripture, say you've preached through a book before, do you go back and preach the same sermons?

I said, no, I said, I have a filing cabinet that's got a drop file folder, I told you this before, of every book of the Bible and in that filing cabinet is every sermon I've ever preached from October 2005 until present.

The earliest ones are handwritten, chicken scratch that I could barely read myself. Every other one after a few years where I actually learned to type were actually typed outlines. I said, there's an outline of every sermon I've ever preached.

[28 : 44] Some of them were handwritten, some of them were changed. There was a sermon that I had prepared I didn't do and I changed it. I said, but I've never once pulled an old sermon out and re-preached it.

I said, so essentially all I'm doing is creating a mess for somebody else to go through later on in life when I die. Somebody's going to have to go through all my filing cabinet and I don't know what usefulness it'll be to them because it makes no sense apart from the sermon.

I said, but the reason I do that is I wanted to do my due diligence and not waste my study as Adrian Rogers used to say. But I also don't go back and re-preach the messages because I believe there's a particular word for every moment.

Well, the application was in a particular setting. I preached one sermon. S.M. Locker said if a sermon was good enough to preach once it's good enough to preach multiple times.

He preached That's My King probably about ten times and people say, well, I've heard you preach that before. He said, well, if it's good enough the first time surely I can preach it again. I preached, there's one sermon that I can think of that I have probably preached more than any sermon and I've preached it in multiple churches and the title of it is Man's Desperate Need for a King.

[29 : 56] It's from the book of Judges. You've heard it. It wasn't titled that when I preached it to you but you've heard it. But I've never used the same outline to preach the same sermon.

And I don't say this in a boastful way. I say this because we need to realize that the call is not just to pastors and it's also to every individual that God has a word he wants you to share at a particular moment.

And if we're not in the word of God we'll never know what word he has for that moment. It's amazing how many times in daily reading or just devotional reading God gives you a word that he wants you to share for someone at that day during that moment or some season.

God has a word for every moment. There's a particular message for every encounter you will ever have. That's why we're here. For Elijah he needed to go to Ahab and said it's not going to rain. But that was that message. That message gets us to our fourth thing was only as effective as his manner of living. You cannot separate the message from the messenger.

[31 : 06] That's true of pastors. That's also true of individual believers. You can never separate the message from the messenger. Elijah declares his message to Ahab and then it says the Lord God told Elijah to leave.

He was to go to a wadi. Cherith is not really a stream or brook. It's a flood overflow of the Jordan River. It's one of those wadis that runs dry over sometime out in the wilderness and he was told to go there that God would feed him there.

So the first thing we notice is Elijah hears a word. He's walking in fellowship with the Lord God and he responds to that word so he goes. It seems like a weird place to go if you've just stated that it's not going to rain, right? Because he's not even going to the Jordan.

He's not going to a flowing river. He's going to an overflow of the Jordan but God says this is where you're going to drink and this is where you're going to eat. Okay, I'll go there. He goes somewhere that he knows is going to dry up but he doesn't doubt, doesn't complain.

He responds. He goes. And he goes to this place and God keeps his word. He drinks from the brook for a while. He eats the food that the ravens bring and he's got meat and bread twice a day.

[32 : 11] It's pretty good. The brook dries up which shouldn't surprise us because it's not raining. It's going to dry up. We understand these things and then God says okay now I want you to go to a place called Zarephath to a widow. I love this.

God says I've commanded a widow to take care of you. The problem is is the widow doesn't know about the command. Only Elijah knows about the command. Jesus by the way references this account. Jesus says there were many widows in that day in Jerusalem but Elijah was sent to the widow of Zarephath.

Right? We understand this reality that God says now I want you to go to Zarephath but where is Zarephath? Zarephath is in Sidon. Sidon is where Jezebel is from.

And that region of the world was dependent upon the rain in Israel to provide grain for them. So now let's get this picture. God says I want you to go to a wadi that's going to dry up I'll take care of you there.

When that dries up I want you to go into the very regions of the world that this worship of Baal came from and find a widow who is starving to death because the God you serve has brought a famine and I want you to go into enemy territory and hang out there with that widow.

[33 : 15] Elijah says okay. Because he obeys he walks in faithful obedience to what God has commanded him to do. And his faithful obedience becomes a blessing to others.

Don't ever miss that. His obedience becomes a blessing and a life saving operation to this widow from Zarephath. She though she did not know it was dependent upon his obedience.

If Elijah didn't go then Elijah would not have issued the command and if Elijah never issued the command she would have gathered her sticks and went in and made their last meal ate their meal and died. But Elijah comes in he says give me something to drink she's going to get something to drink he says oh so make me some bread she says I don't have any bread I'm going to make my last meal he says well don't worry about it go in there make one for me first give God his first right and then you and your son can eat the oil will not run out and the wheat will not run out and it doesn't because see the messenger validated the message look at what it says when the widow meets him she says the Lord your God that's not her God she says as the Lord your God lives that's not she's not proclaiming allegiance to God it was nothing for people in idolatrous nations to admit there's a God over there too and a God over here too and a God over here too and so when you're speaking to this individual you talk to them according to their God because they don't care about your God so she's looking at Elijah going as the

Lord your God lives I don't have anything to eat this is not her God and the only way that she's going to be blessed we find it in the New Testament is through Elijah's obedience so he becomes a blessing to the enemies that introduced idolatry to the nation he becomes a blessing to an individual in enemy territory because of his obedience that's astounding it says the bowl of flour was not

exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty according to the word of the Lord which he spoke through Elijah legacy standard translation which is a very literal translation of the English or of the original language into English it's a newer translation it's a really good translation legacy standard says according to the word of the

Lord which he performed through the hands of Elijah because see it was what Elijah did that brought the fulfillment of the word remember the book of Acts people came to Christ based on what they saw and heard it's not enough to be a man at the moment with a message if you're not going to live in the right manner you got to have all for we have to be individuals surrendered to the Lord God no matter what moment he's put us in to declare his message and to live in the right manner so that sometimes even our enemies are blessed by our presence being there this widow is sustained I know very next verse her son dies we'll get to that right if the Lord allows us to we'll get to that double blessing because there's somebody in the house that can take care of that too what a blessing because

[36 : 59] Elijah was obedient to the word of God and I wonder in our own lives the manner we live our our lives a blessing to those around us simply because we're present and we see this here this is what was going on in the days of Elijah found in 1 Kings 17 verses 1 through 16 thank you my brothers so Thank you.