



Sermon Series Notes

“Tough Times, A Tough Prophet, A Real Trial” (I Kings 16-19)

Danny Hodges – TS2501 Topic: Trials

Intro: After Rehoboam’s rebellion, the nation of Israel was divided, the ten northern tribes and two southern tribes. Each appointed a succession of kings over the years, and the majority of them “did evil in the eyes of the Lord.” Only Judah (southern union of two tribes) had *any* kings who were good kings, but they were few. But Israel (the northern tribes), had not one good king. And of the bad ones, one was really bad. Read I Kings 16:29-33. It was during his reign that the Lord raised up the prophet Elijah.

Read I Kings 17:1; In response to Elijah’s prayer, it did not rain on the land of Israel for three and a half years (James 5:17). As a result of no rain, there was of course a famine. Times got really tough, the economy tanked, and people are literally starving to death. But as bad as things were, the Word of the Lord was still being proclaimed by men like Elijah, and there was still a remnant of God’s people who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

17:2-6 In tough times, we must trust the Lord to take care of us. But in order for Him to do for us what He wants, we must have faith, the kind of faith that will respond to His directives, and trust Him even when times are at their worst.

17:7-9 Think about how much faith this would take, to believe the Lord is going to provide for Elijah through a widow, and a widow living at a time of severe famine.

17:10-14 It’s one thing for Elijah to have faith that God would provide for his needs through this widow, but it’s another for her to trust God to make something for Elijah with the meager resources she has, then to trust God for a miracle – because a miracle is what it’s going to take to fulfill the Word of the Lord through Elijah. Note again the promise – “The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the lord gives rain on the land.”

17:15-16 WOW!

17:17-18 What a tragic turn of events, especially after having the Lord do such a miracle for her and her son. But now she needs fresh faith, and could suggest an even greater faith. Before the miraculous multiplication of flour and oil for her and her son, she had accepted their fate – she was ready for her and son to die. But now that God had so miraculously provided, why would He allow her son to die now? Once again we have an example in the Word of God of the mystery of God’s workings (Jairus’ daughter, Lazarus, John the Baptist, Hebrews 11, Rom.8:28, etc.). Faith is needed in this life “from first to last.”

17:19-24 Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe, who do not understand and yet believe.

Summarize 18:1-15

18:16-17 Ahab blames Elijah for the famine. Israel loved for the prophets to prophesy prosperity, not famine. See Jer.14:14-15; Isaiah 30:10-11.

18:26-29 What a contrast to the God we serve, and the confidence we have that he hears us; Moses struck the rock, and after the rock is smitten, we only need to speak to the rock. See Psalm 5:1-3; Isaiah 65:24; Psalm 66:18-20.

18:18-46 Mt. Carmel to Jezreel is over 20 miles. Do you ever read these stories, or hear them taught, and deeply desire to have the character, the courage, the faith, of a man like Elijah?

Here's a needed reminder – Elijah was just a man.

James 5:17 Elijah was a man just like us...

19:1-7, noting verse 7b. See II Cor.1:8; David McIntyre's devotional in Denver recently.

19:8-9a The forty day and forty night journey seems to have been made only by the supernatural strength the Lord provided for Elijah. God has allowed Elijah to rest, be fed, rest some more, and then be strengthened to make a long journey to what appears to be a good destination – Horeb, the mountain of God. Horeb's first mention in the Bible is in Exodus 3:1. Go over Gen.3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13. Moses has no desire to do what God has called him to do. That appears to be the same state of mind that Elijah is in here. He's at the mountain of God to escape the chaos going on in his world!

19:9b-14 Why does the Lord ask the same question repeatedly to Elijah? Perhaps he wants Elijah to think about his answer a little more deeply.

19:15-18 God has a plan for the future, and Elijah is not alone in this battle.

Note: The Lord was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but rather the gentle whisper. What is the significance of this? Could it be that the Lord reminds Elijah of the fact that He is the all-powerful God, and at the same time communicates how much He loves him by the gentle way He speaks to him here. Should Elijah choose to do what the Lord has said, it will not be because he has been forced to, or as the result of being threatened by an all-powerful God. No, it will be because of the Lord's compassion and love toward him. Elijah's obedience will be only in response to God's love, compassion, gracious encouragement, and supernatural strengthening.

LESSONS

- Sometimes the greatest spiritual defeats come right on the heels of great spiritual victory.
 - It only takes one person to send you into spiritual depression.
- God understands our human weaknesses; Psalm 103:14...he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.
- Sometimes God allows us to experience more in life than we can handle.
 - From website "Got Questions" – "God is always faithful, and He will not allow us to suffer or be tested above what we can withstand and will also make a way to escape so that we are able to bear up under it ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#))."
 - See II Cor.1:8-9; 4:7-11
- It's OK to be depressed, but it's not OK to stay depressed.
- Steps out of depression
 - Rest, nourishment.
 - Supernatural strength
 - Fresh perspective from the Word of God
 - We are not alone (See I Peter 5:8-9)
 - God has a plan for the future.

- These events did not play out until after Elijah was gone (II Kings 2); On Hazael, see II Kings 8:7-15; 10:32; 12:17; 13:1-3, 22
 - On Jehu, see II Kings 9:1-3, 21b-26, 30-37
 - I Kings 20:35ff, a prophet condemns Ahab; I Kings 22, Micaiah speaks against Ahab I Kings 6, Elisha with “the company of the prophets.
 - “Twice as many miracles recorded by Elisha than Elijah
- Come out of your cave
 - Sometimes, after I have rested, I do not want to go back where the battle is. I just want to go to “the mountain of God!”
 - Phil.1: 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith.
 - Peter just wanted to stay on the Mt. of Transfiguration (glory), but God’s will was for Him to go back down into the valley of need.

GOD IS STILL ON THE THRONE, AND WE WIN IN THE END!