

Week 1 Elijah the Prophet

Wednesday Bible Study

Elijah and Ahab 1 Kings 16:29-17:6

After the death of Solomon in 931 BC, the kingdom of Israel split into a northern and southern kingdom. Solomon's son, Rehoboam the rightful heir, ruled in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, with the real capital of Jerusalem. His kingdom was made up of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. The northern kingdom of Israel was led by Jeroboam and was made up of the other ten tribes. Samaria was its capital.

Elijah was called by God to be a prophet primarily to the northern kingdom of Israel in 870 BC. His name means "My God is Yahweh". He served during the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah in Israel. Two of the most evil kings in Israel's history.

1. **A Wicked King.** 1 Kings 16:29-34

Ahab did more evil in the sight of the Lord than any king before him. vs.30

He considered it trivial the sins of Jeroboam: 1 Kings 12:25-33; He married a foreign woman, forbidden by God's law. Deut. 7:3-4.

Ahab formalized Baal worship in Israel. Baal (storm-god *Hadad*) was the most important God among the Canaanite peoples. Israel, divided or undivided was continually tempted to adulterate themselves and worship this false God.. In Ancient Near Eastern thought, the plural *Baals* referred to various attributes of the one Baal, however came to be thought of as independent gods by some. Worship of Baal involved human sacrifice, incense and other sacrifice and fertility rights. Idolatry is an affront to God and is to be rejected. It is anything that replaces God on the throne of our heart. Such as Greed. Ex. 20:2-3; 2 Cor 2:14-18; Col. 3:5-7.

Ahab also made an Asherah pole in violation of God's Law. Asherah: Consort of El. This goddess is often connected with fertility. She was viewed as the Queen Mother of the gods. In syncretistic Israelite practice she may have been viewed as a consort to Yahweh. (Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament— Walton) Ex. 34:11-14

2. **A Righteous Prophet.** 1 Kings 17:1-6

Elijah makes it clear that the Lord, the God of Israel whom He serves is in charge of rain and fertility. And that He not Baal, nor Asherah would determine when it would rain or not. This is a direct challenge to Ahab's evil worship of foreign Gods. Just as God did to Pharaoh and defeated all the false Gods of Egypt in the time of Moses, so here, God would render powerless the false Gods of the Canaanites whom Ahab had welcomed. The Bible teaches us that false gods are really not gods at all, but are demons. Jeremiah 2; 1 Cor. 10:14-22

The prophecy is made in the form of an oath with God as the one who guarantees it will be done. God controls all things, including the weather! The withholding of rain was to validate that the God of Elijah, was the true God.

God provides for the Prophet: Vs. 3-6

The Lord always provides for his people! Even in times of discipline of a nation, God will take care of us. Not only is HE LORD over the weather but over the creatures as well. He will sustain His people. Worship not the things of this earth. 100 years later, Isaiah will prophesy concerning the Lord as well. Isaiah 46.

Question to meditate on: Whom we serve is often seen in where we invest our time, talent and treasure. Elijah had a unique task to carry out for the LORD— as do each of us. What are your thoughts concerning Elijah's willingness to obey and stand against a wicked king and a culture?

