

Elijah – Prophet of Confrontation #3

Elijah at the Brook

1Ki 17:2-7

Introduction:

1. This is the 2nd assignment that God gave to Elijah
 - a. The 1st assign involved the prestige and publicity of going to the king
 - b. Going to the brook Cherith was just the opposite
2. Obligation in service is not determined by the excitement, status, popularity or convenience of the task, but by the Word of God
3. Elijah must have faith that God will bring Him through the drought
4. Elijah needed to go through boot camp for training
 - a. Elijah would be doing battle with a treacherous enemy
 - b. He needed to learn that he could trust God
5. Cherith - "to cut off" or "to cut down"
 - a. The word is used to cut off from all others
 - b. Those who are in boot camp are cut off from the outside world
 - c. Elijah would be cut off from others -he could learn to depend on God
6. In 17:1 we see Elijah the Tishbite but by verse 24 he is a "man of God"
7. Between vs 1 and 24 we see Elijah's boot camp experience
 - a. "God - don't forget - I'm called to preach. I can't hide."
 - b. One who is comfortable in the limelight, with leadership abilities, a doer - get-the-job-done kind of person has difficulty with hiding.

I. The Protection of His Life – vs 2-3

2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

A. The Necessity of This Protection

1. Elijah message did not inspire honors from Ahab
 - a) *Elijah was not made chaplain of the palace*
 - b) *He was not made "man of the year"*
2. Elijah's message provoked anger as messages of sin usually do
3. Ahab would go to great lengths to find Elijah and kill him
 - a) *Elijah was at the top of the "10 most wanted list"*
 - b) *1 Ki 18:10 – Ahab searched country after country for Elijah*
4. Elijah needed special protection for his life
5. If he would continue to serve the Lord, the Lord would have to protect him
6. Those who dare to follow the Lord faithfully may be exposed to hatred, scorn and ridicule

B. The Judgment in This Protection

1. It is a sad time in society when the man of God must stay hidden
2. Israel had slipped a long way from the Lord

II. The Provision of His Meals – vs 4

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. 7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

A. The Food

1. The Source of the Supply
 - a) *Ravens would be the caterers for Elijah*
 - b) *Ravens would not be the most likely or most appealing creatures to bring one food*
 - c) *Ravens were scavengers and were unclean in the OT*
 - d) *God can use even unclean vessels to accomplish His tasks*
 - e) *God can make animals act contrary to their nature and supply the needs of His own*
 - f) *Here is a great man of God, a great prophet, and the spiritual darkness of the land is so great that God uses ravens to feed His servant*
2. The Stipulation of the Supply
 - a) *“I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there”*
 - b) *God will supply Elijah’s needs but he had some responsibility*
 - c) *He must obey the divine command if he is to be supernaturally fed*
 - d) *“There” is where God’s will is and “there” is where the promise will be realized*
3. The Schedule of the Supply
 - a) *Twice a day the ravens would fly in with food – vs 6*
 - b) *He didn’t even get 3 meals a day, he received just enough to support him*
 - c) *Elijah was not able to store up food for the future, he only had enough for the present*
 - d) *Morning and evening the ravens served as a constant reminder that God was still in control of nature*
 - (1) *God could have just rained down manna every morning as He did for the children of Israel in the wilderness – but He didn’t*
 - (2) *Maybe God was sensitive to Elijah’s loneliness*
 - (3) *Rather than leaving him alone in the wilderness surrounded with trees, bushes that were beginning to reflect a look of death*
 - (4) *God provided a daily touch with life*

B. The Water

1. It was Not Miraculous
 - a) *It was a miracle that the ravens brought food to Elijah, but the water was not miraculous*
 - b) *God works miracles when they are necessary*
 - c) *The flesh desires miracles when they are not needed*
2. It was Not Forever
 - a) *The fact that the brook dried up shows that there was no miracle in it*
 - b) *Since there was no rain in the land, it is no surprise that the brook dried up*
 - c) *Don't confuse the drying up of the brook with the drying up of God's power*
 - d) *God sometimes allow the brook to dry up so that we will trust in Him and not in His gifts*
 - e) *A brook drying experience is a time to grow in faith and stay focused on God*

C. The Obedience

(5) So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that [is] before Jordan. (6) And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. (7) And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

1. Prompt Obedience – he didn't even ask why
2. Elijah did not wander around Samaria looking at the sights before he carried out God's orders
3. He did not try to find a better hiding place
 - a) *Maybe Elijah knew of someplace in Gilead where he could hide better than the brook Cherith*
 - b) *God programmed the ravens to fly to Cherith and not anywhere else – Elijah would have starved*
4. Elijah was ready to serve God in the spotlight or in the shadows by a brook
 - a) *He was not just going to stay for a weekend*
 - b) *It was not just a week of vacation*
 - c) *He would be there for months – maybe even a year*

III. The Preparation of His Heart

A. The Need of Solitude

1. God would take care of Elijah's physical need for food
2. God would also take care of Elijah's spiritual needs
 - a) *Alone, hiding out, Elijah would have time to pray, think and meditate on the Word of God*
 - b) *Solitude is a time for refueling or preparing the heart*
 - c) *Ps 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*
3. Great Bible heroes had notable times of solitude
 - a) *Moses spent 40 yrs on the backside of the desert*
 - b) *David spent much time alone with his sheep*
 - c) *John the Baptist spend time alone before his ministry*
 - d) *Paul spent 3 yrs in Arabia before his ministry*
 - e) *Apostle John spent time on the Isle of Patmos and now we have the book of Revelation*
 - f) *Our Savior spent 30 years in obscurity and then 40 days of temptation before beginning His public ministry*

B. The Need of Humility

1. Serving in high places often fosters pride
2. Stepping up to the king and speak for God could bring pride into the life of Elijah
3. God balances this off with the humble surroundings of the brook Cherith
 - a) *It was a brook and not a river*
 - b) *Elijah was living in the woods, not in the castle*
4. Before God exalts, He humbles
5. Elijah was going to be exalted at Mt. Carmel so he needed this prior humbling
6. Joseph spend time in prison before becoming the prime minister of Egypt
7. Paul was taken to the 3rd heaven and saw things that others had not seen, so to keep him humble, God gave him a thorn in the flesh to buffet him

C. The Need of Patience

Ps 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. 9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

1. It is not easy to be patient when one sees evil succeed and it was succeeding in Elijah's day
2. Elijah needed to grow in patience so he would be better equipped to oppose the evil of his day
3. Elijah was a man of action and God forced him to be inactive for awhile – this would tax his patience
4. Elijah developed patience while the brook dried up
 - a) *He knew it was drying up*
 - b) *He needed a source of water*
 - c) *Should he wait there as God had said?*
 - d) *Should he begin looking for more water?*
 - e) *God made him wait till the brook dried up before giving Elijah the next command*
5. How important it is to wait for God's orders
 - a) *King Saul is an example of someone who did not wait – 1 Sam 13:8-13*
 - b) *Circumstances were pressing and Saul took things in his own hands and offered the sacrifices – it cost him*
6. Unbelief sees God through the circumstances
7. Faith sees the circumstances through God's eyes