

ISRAEL'S WEATHERMAN

TEXT: 1 Kings 17:1

INTRO.: A. The pages of our Bibles are filled with accounts of men that seem larger than life. People like **Moses, David, Daniel, Paul** and others, all seem to be characters that are so far above the realm of our own experience that we may feel like we can never be like them. However, I'll let you in on a secret this morning: All of these people were just that: people! The fellow in our text is no different. When I read about the life and ministry of Elijah, I am amazed at his courage and at his power with God. Yet, I am reminded by the Word of God that Elijah **"was a man subject to like passion as we are."** (James 5:17) He was just a man who walked in humble obedience before his God.

B. The man Elijah bursts on the scene like a bolt of lightning! He suddenly appears in wicked Ahab's court, an idolatrous puppet of Satan. He comes in unannounced, uninvited, uninhibited and unafraid! He comes to make an "Accuweather" forecast that will be 100% accurate – no rain for 3 ½ years! The purpose of all Elijah does is to unseat Baal the false god of Israel who was worshipping at this time. The drought and accompanying famine will prove that it is not Baal who is the true god, but Jehovah. It is not "mother nature" it is Father God!

I. GOD'S PROPHET:

A. His Name: **"Jehovah is my God"**

1. The first part of his name "El" or "Eli" comes from "Elohim" one of the primary names of God.
2. The second part of his name "Jah" comes from "Jehovah" another of His primary names.

B. His Neighborhood: "Tishbe" – hence "the Tishbite"

1. This was rugged country and not a place for wimps; he was hardened by his upbringing.
2. He became stoic, stern and shaped by his environment; he was a backwoodsman!

ILLUS.: There is no place in the ministry for the lazy, limp-wristed or. We have lackadaisical. too many prissy preachers (think Joel Osteen, Jack Schaap) and cream puff clergy (think Paul & Jan Crouch, Benny Hinn, et.al.).

C. His Nature:

1. God always fits the man for his calling; if you don't have the qualities, He can give them to you.
2. He was a rough, tough and ready prophet to deliver a stern message to Israel to call the nation back to God.
3. He would ridicule the false prophets and their god, call fire down from heaven and destroy God's enemies and confront the wicked king of Israel w/out flinching!

II. BAAL'S PRINCE:

A. Ahab the Wicked King:

1. After the reign of idolatrous and adulterous King Solomon, Israel split into 2 kingdoms, the northern kingdom of Israel being the most wicked.

NOTE: Israel is the name of the nation as well as the northern kingdom. The context of Scripture will let you know which Israel is in view.

2. There were a total of 19 kings in Israel, all of which were evil men.
3. Jeroboam was the 1st of the Northern kings and it was he that started the nation down the road to idolatry: **"he did evil above all that were before him" "Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin"** – 12 times that phrase is written of him the God's Word.

4. The 6 kings who preceded Ahab were Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri.

NOTE: Someone said of this time that it was as if Satan had transferred his residence from hell to earth.

5. Ahab made things worse by choosing Jezebel, the daughter of Ethball (= "Baal was with him") & he was originally the priest of the great temple of Astarte in Tyre.

1 Kings 16:31-33 *And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. 32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.*

6. Jezebel's wickedness and idolatry had a pronounced effect on Ahab and perhaps he would not have been so wicked if he had not married her!

NOTE & QUOTE: Author John Butler says that Jezebel is a type or picture of "those domineering women who often get in and defile the church...They are immoral, usurp authority, and are self-appointed spiritual leaders...God help our churches to discern these wicked women in their midst and to deal with them firmly and faithfully." The Apostle John in writing to the church at Thyatira said:

Revelation 2:20 *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*

III. ELIJAH'S PREDICTION:

A. The Preface:

1. Elijah identifies himself with **"...the Lord God of Israel"**
2. In spite of the religion prevalent in Israel Elijah declares that Israel's God is the *living* God: **"...liveth"**
3. Elijah identifies Jehovah as the true God of Israel

NOTE: If Jezebel was present for this announcement, we can rest assured that she flew into a female tantrum and would have declared war on Elijah for sure. Since Ahab was her puppet, he too would be enraged at this declaration. This would be like marching into St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome and announcing to the Pope that he was serving a false god, while you were serving the true and living God of the Bible!

The real issue Elijah addresses here is: Who is your God? Who will be Lord over you? Perhaps each of us should ask ourselves the same questions.

B. The Presentation:

1. Elijah didn't just come to predict the next 3 ½ years of weather
2. Like all of Israel's prophets his ministry was not just to predict the future, but to indict the nation
3. Elijah speaks of his **calling**: **"...before whom I stand"**
4. Elijah speaks of his **commitment**: he knew he would have to give an account to the One Who called him
5. Elijah speaks of his **loyalty** to **"...the Lord God of Israel"**
 - a. He was serving notice on King Ahab that he was not a Baalite idolater, but a Jehovah worshipper
 - b. He was announcing that he was on the opposing team, and wearing their colors, though in the stadium where Baal worship was being played out

NOTE: It is relatively easy to stand for your beliefs among those who believe as we do, but the real test of loyalty to the Lord is to stand up for Him when in the enemy's court; when they have the home team advantage.

C. The Proclamation:

1. The weather forecast: no moisture of any kind for the next 3 ½ years

Luke 4:25 *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land...*

James 5:17 *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*

2. Elijah tells the King that only he, not the false prophets, would be able to end the drought: *"...according to my word"*

NOTE: Only Bible believers can predict with accuracy what will definitely take place in the future. God has given us the information in His Word. We can stand our ground based on the Book! Some preachers refuse to preach on prophecy because they don't have absolute faith in what God has said! Some believers squirm when a preacher "goes out on a limb" to preach God's Word without apologizing for it, or watering it down.

3. A 3 ½ year drought would devastate the land: its vegetation, its cattle, and its people
4. The weather forecast seems ominous and it was, but it had a purpose:
 - a. To encourage the people of Israel to turn back to God
 - b. To show that Baal was a sorry substitute for the living God

NOTE: Baal was supposed to be in charge of thunder, lightning, rain, and abundance; the drought would show him up for the fraud he was.

- c. To show Israel that they must only worship the true and living God – Jehovah

CONCL.: This is quite an exciting introduction to **Elijah – The Man, Ministry & Miracles**. What a man! What a ministry! Later we will see his miracles.

Elijah is another of God's choicest servants. He is a mere man, but an exceptional man. He is just a man, but a bold, fervent man. He is not just another man, but an outstanding man. But since he was *"a man subject to like passions as we are"* he doesn't have to be unique. We too can have God's power on us and the same Spirit that moved Elijah to accomplish great things for God, is ours as well. It is not how much of the Holy Spirit we have, but how much of us the Holy Spirit has.

How much of YOU does He have?!