

Elijah in Hiding

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[0:00] This evening I want to bring a message out of 1 Kings.

! So if you have your Bible, then turn to 1 Kings. We'll be in chapter 19. As I said, I'm trying to stick to historical narrative. Because it doesn't get preached often.

And I enjoy preaching it. And it's interesting to see what God would have for us in the Old Testament. Because we are indeed people of the book. That would be the whole counsel of God's word.

And sometimes we kind of forget there's an Old Testament. Because it is more difficult sometimes to understand. There are lots of great stories. We know many stories from it. This including.

This is included in those stories. A very familiar story about Elijah. As far as some background to our text. 1 Kings stands kind of the same place we were last night.

[1:06] Or last night. Sorry. My brain's gone. I took a nap this afternoon. That doesn't work. But where we were this morning. In 1 Samuel.

In fact. 1 Kings. 1 Kings. Is actually part of the same group of books. That 1 Samuel was. In the Hebrew Bible. In the original texts.

That we have. Well not originals. But the earliest text from the Hebrew Bible. It's included with 1 and 2 Samuel. And is considered. Part of the last book of the former prophets.

The Septuagint actually. Just like it divided. Samuel into 1 and 2 kingdoms. In the Septuagint. The Greek translation. Of the Old Testament. It originally was.

3rd and 4th kingdoms. And so you had. 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th kingdoms. And that's where they got the name. Kingdoms. From these books. Here. 1 Kings.

[2:03] Actually begins. With the final days. Of David's reign. It covers Solomon. It covers. The construction of the temple. It covers. The dividing of the northern.

And southern kingdoms. After Solomon. And it also covers. It goes all the way up. Into the exile. Of Israel. And we will see the northern kingdom. Go into exile. At the end of 1 Kings.

And 2 Kings. Will pick up Judah. All the way to the exile. Like Samuel. Is probably composed. In the same time. They probably finished editing. And everything somewhere.

In the period of the exile. At the latest. At the earliest. It would have been. It would be difficult. For them to have composed. All of it. During the reign of King Rehoboam. But there are some scholars. That think that. Just like in Samuel. The book of 1 Kings. Demonstrates a concern. For kind of two. Different things. The first is.

[2:57] There's a concern. For the covenant relationship. Between God. And his chosen people. You'll see that theme. Play out. Over and over. Where you'll kind of have. We're very familiar. With the idea.

You know. King rises to power. And so and so. Reigned in Israel. For this many years. And did what was either. Good in the sight of the Lord. Or evil. In the sight of the Lord. It's very concerned.

With our relationship. Or Israel's relationship. With God. In terms of the covenant. And it weighs. Just like 1 and 2 Samuel. Part of that. Mosaic law. Law. As kind of the scale.

Upon which people are weighed. In 1 Kings. It weighs them against. That Mosaic law. The other thing is. It's concerned with how God acts. In history. How God acts in history.

God's activity in history. Is actually demonstrated. If you read in 1 Kings. In chapter 11. 29 through 40. And we read about the division. Of the kingdom. There's a prophecy there.

[3:54] And so it's concerned. With these things. There's prophecy in here. And we will read. By the end of 1 Kings. That in fact. This prophecy. Is true. And so it's concerned. With the course of history. In relation to God.

As far as. It's. It weighing rulers. Probably the most. The obvious example. Of it weighing a ruler. In terms of the Mosaic law. Is Solomon. We basically.

In 1 Kings. The height of faithfulness. Would have been the construction. Of the temple. To the Jewish writer. The depth. Of faithlessness.

Would have been. Solomon's. Accepting of. Pagan religions. And construction. Of high places. That people worshipped. These pagan gods. At. And so that's kind of.

How it plays out. One example of it. But it will play out. All through the book. With each of the kings. We will learn. What they did right. What they did wrong. And how that stacked up. Against the Mosaic law. As far as.

[4 : 47] When we get to. To Elijah. Elijah. Some interesting facts. About him. His name actually means. My God is. Yahweh. And so even his name. Is kind of a statement. As to what his mission.

Will be. Elijah's mission. Probably happened. Sometime during the 9th century. B.C. Elijah was a defender. Of Yahweh worship. That's kind of. What he did.

He stood against Ahab. Against Jezebel. And defended the worship. Of the one true God. Um. Um. His time was marked. By Baal worship. Very specifically. Baal was.

A pagan god. That Israel. Would struggle with. Uh. For many many years. Because. That's. Just kind of the area. That God had placed Israel in. Everyone around them.

Worshipped. Baal. Um. This god. Uh. Elijah kind of appears. Very suddenly. It's kind of like. And. Here's Elijah. He was a Tishbite. And.

[5 : 44] He becomes. What is called. The troubler of Israel. Or Ahab calls him. The troubler of Israel. And it's an irony. In the language. It's the beauty of the Old Testament. There's so much irony. You know.

It kind of presents. A story. And the irony. Is what happens to the person. In the story. And so the irony. Is. Ahab refers. To a you. Troubler of Israel. To Elijah.

But the fact is. Ahab is the troubler of Israel. His decisions as king. And his allowing Jezebel. To institute. Her Baal worship. Is actually.

What has troubled Israel here. He's the reason. That there's famine in the land. He's the reason. There's a drought. He's all. The reason for all. The problems Israel is facing. And yet. He calls. Elijah.

The troubler. Of Israel. So there's a lot of irony. And we do know also. About Elijah. He was. Great at running. Apparently. Um. Elijah. One of the more famous things.

[6 : 38] That he did. Was he ran 17 miles. It would be about 17 miles. From. Mount Carmel. To Jezreel. Which was kind of. The seat of power for them. And in fact.

He beat Ahab's chariot. So. I think the. The. The. The. New. King. Or King James Version. Is probably my favorite of that. I think it says. Gird up your loins. It's like. I just.

That's a great picture. And so that's Elijah. Um. As to the text. I'm going to read. Verses. One. Through nine. This evening. And follow along with me. It says.

Ahab told Jezebel. Everything that Elijah had done. And how he had killed all the prophets. With the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger. To Elijah. Saying. May the gods. Punish. Punish me.

And do so severely. If I don't make your life. Like the life of one of them. By this time. Tomorrow. Then Elijah became afraid. And immediately ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba. That belonged to Judah.

[7 : 30] He left his servant there. But he went on a day's journey. Into the wilderness. And he sat down under a broom tree. And prayed that he might die. He said. I have had enough Lord. Take my life.

For I am no better than my father's. Then he lay down. And slept under the broom tree. Suddenly an angel touched him. The angel told him. Get up and eat. Then he looked. And there at his head. Was a loaf of bread. Baked over hot stones. And a jug of water. So he ate and drank. And lay down again. Then the angel of the Lord. Returned a second time. And touched him. He said. Get up and eat.

Or the journey will be too much for you. So he got up. Ate and drank. Then on the strange from that food. He walked 40 days and 40 nights. To Horeb. The mountain of God. He entered a cave there. And spent the night. Now as I was studying for this. I had every intention. Of doing the entire chapter. But. God kind of stopped me. One.

[8:25] He fixed a lot of preconceptions. I had in approaching this text. And. So I had to slow down. And then I realized. You know what. There's. There's enough. In these first nine verses. Now. At the end.

We'll kind of see what happens. After these nine verses. But I want to really focus. On these nine verses. Now as far as context. If you've grown up in church. You know what the context is. It's Mount Carmel. They have this epic clash. Of. Big God. And. Little G God. God. Yahweh God. Versus Baal. And Elijah goes to Ahab. And says. Hey listen. Let's just have a proof. We'll have a little contest. You get all your prophets. And what we'll do is. We'll try and call fire down from heaven.

And burn these sacrifices. Offer sacrifice to God. And whoever is God. Prevails. That God is in fact God. And so it's interesting. Because Baal was considered.

[9:18] Baal is actually similar to Zeus. In mythology. Baal was. Was said to be able to throw lightning. And so. For Elijah. Elijah was like. Like taking a handicap here.

Like Baal throws lightning. That kind of. Is good at setting stuff on fire. And. And so he's actually playing into their comfort zone. Even in. The fact that he's challenging them. To this fire from heaven type scenario.

And as you know. The Baal worshippers. For a very long time. Call out to their God. And ask him to send fire. And he doesn't. And they cut themselves. And he still doesn't send fire.

And then Elijah. Of course you have the story. Where he builds the altar. And soaks it in water. And builds a trench around it. And fills that with water. And then. God's fire comes down.

And consumes. The sacrifice. The stones. Licks up all the water. So you have this huge. Triumph. For Yahweh God. And Elijah's life. And from this triumph.

[10:16] We head into this passage. And so we know. At the end. Because of the context. We know at the end of all of this. I guess the logical thing to do. Was kill every one of the prophets of Baal. And so they killed him.

450 prophets of Baal. Are slaughtered that day. Are executed. For what they've done. And so here we find. Ahab. Being the. Great leader he is.

Has run back to his wife. Jezebel. And he tells on. Elijah. Well Elijah's actually there. Because. Well Elijah got there first. Because he ran the 17 miles faster.

Than Ahab could. Chariot it. I don't know if that's a verb. But it is now. And so that's kind of where we are. When we come to the text here. Now. This text.

I think is probably. One of the most. Misinterpreted texts. In all the Old Testament. By me over the years. And by most preachers I've heard. In fact. As I was kind of reading it.

[11:13] And kind of like. Wow. You know. This really doesn't mean. What a lot of people think it means. I decided to go over. Sermoncentral.com. It's a great website. There's a lot of sermons there. They're not real picky.

You can put your sermon there. If you've got a sermon. Give it to them. They will post it online. Part of not being picky. They have a lot of really bad sermons there. They have some good ones too. I'm not. Hating on them for the.

Mirror. Well anyway. And so I go over there. And I start reading some transcripts. And you know. One guy's made the point that. That what Elijah is under here. Is clinical depression.

And then he goes into like. Like medical field. That's not right. But for the most part. Their interpretation of the text.

Kind of came down. To one thing. And there's an old children's song. That kind of reminds me. Of how people usually interpret this text. Tell me if you know the song. It starts. It says. Nobody likes me.

[12:07] Everybody hates me. Guess I'll go eat worms. Long thin slimy ones. Short fat juicy ones. Itsy bitsy fuzzy wuzzy worms. Down goes the first one.

Down goes the second one. Oh how they wiggle. I better stop. There's like. I looked for this song too. Because I kind of remembered it. But I need a refresher. And there's like ten versions of this song.

And that's the tame one. There's. I was a little sickened by some of the versions. They're children's songs. Anyway. So that's kind of the impression. We're like. Oh. A victory at Mount Carmel.

Now Elijah's like this scared little man. Who's being faithless. After God has given him this great victory. But it's a misconception. On our part.

And what it is. It's eisegesis. It's reading something into the text. It's not there. It's not good exegesis. It's not treating the text. How it's supposed to be treated. It's ignoring the context. It's ignoring the language.

[13:02] Of the text. And so diving into the text. We learn that Ahab. Told Jezebel. Everything Elijah had done. And how he had killed all the prophets. With the sword. Alright. So Ahab runs back to the boss. He tells on Elijah.

And apparently Jezebel's. None too happy. About all of her little. Baal prophet friends. Being slaughtered. And so what she says to Elijah. She says. Hey. May the gods punish me. And do so severely. If I don't make your life. Like the one of them. By this time tomorrow. What is she going to do to him? Well I'm going to kill you. Like you killed my prophets. And I do think it's rather.

Again. And we have this kind of ironic moment. Where Yahweh just proved. That there's not a lot to her gods. Right. Yahweh is the one who.

Who burned up the sacrifice. In the last chapter. Baal was silent. So even the fact. Like it's a little bit of humor. Built into the Hebrew text. Of like. May the gods. What gods? Your gods are weak.

[13:57] Your gods are nothing. But. Elijah understands that. You know. Well. He probably should be afraid. Of the queen. So. He uses. She uses the god. As a threat.

It's a public threat. Apparently. Right. It's not Jezebel. Going to Elijah. And meeting him. In a dark alley. Like listen. If you don't get out of town. I'm going to kill you. Apparently.

We're led to believe. That this is a public threat. Which is very important. In understanding this passage. Because what that means. If really. The people had turned. Back to the Yahweh God. The true God. The Lord God. Then Jezebel. Would not have been able. To make this public threat. Because they would have risen up. And cast her out of the kingdom. At the very best.

Or killed her. Because Elijah. Would have been very popular. At this point. Because he's brought about. A great miraculous work. Of the one true God. And because it's a public threat.

[14:51] We kind of get. A reading. So to speak. As to how the people still felt. They're still. Not convinced. I don't know how it's possible.

But that's kind of where the text is going. They're not convinced. At least they're not convinced enough. To protect the life of Elijah. Because it says. In verse 3. It says. Elijah became afraid. And immediately ran for his life.

Elijah sees that he can't remain in Israel. He can't. Can't be there. Whatever he was thinking was. Whether it's. Whether it was. Really just fear for his life.

Whether he was having a moment of crisis. In his faith. Whatever his thinking was. He left. He got out of there. And it says he goes to Beersheba. Now Elijah. Throughout his time as a prophet.

Is primarily a prophet. Prophet for Israel. He had kind of Judah prophets. And Israel prophets. They kind of did their thing. Where they were called. Because of. Like this morning. When we learned. That the. The calling that prophets had.

[15:49] Was a very specific calling. So he specifically called. To minister in Israel. And so. It's interesting that he goes to Beersheba. Why is he going to Beersheba? That's Judah. Well. If the queen of Israel.

Wants to kill you. It's probably best to leave. Israel. And so he goes to Beersheba. He's fleeing the wrath. Wrath. Of an evil queen. And in verse 4.

It says. He sat down under a broom tree. And prayed. That he might die. Now. This is kind of where. The. Nobody loves me.

Everybody hates me. Guess I'll go eat worms. Comes in. According to most. People who interpret this text. But it's simply not the case. Elijah's not feeling sorry.

For himself here. And we'll learn that. As we march through this. Basically. When he says. I'm going to go ahead. And read it. It says. He sat down under a broom tree. And prayed. That he might die.

[16:43] He said. I have had enough Lord. Take my life. For I am no better than my fathers. I've had enough. Take my life. That's what he's asking God to do. And we kind of sit there like.

You shouldn't say that Elijah. You should be more faithful. But. Understanding. The historical context. Kind of the cultural context. Of this passage. We understand. That. To the Hebrew people. Long life. And old age. Wasn't a guarantee. You know. We kind of. In America. Are like. You know. I'm probably going to live to about 70. 72. Maybe more. All right. But we kind of. Kind of.

Assume that we will live a long time. We don't assume that we're going to die early. And that time. The average age was. Much lower. Than 72. Or 68. Or whatever it is here.

They died as. Fairly young men. Back in that time. And so. It was considered a blessing. From Yahweh God. If they were allowed to have. Long life. And so. Elijah.

[17:38] In his humility. Isn't stating that. Or I'm sorry. Is stating that. He doesn't feel deserving. Of God's gifts. God is gifted. Elijah is apparently an old man.

By this point. Becoming older. And he feels like. He's failed. He's failed. At the mission. Mount Carmel. Should have been the fulfillment. Of his mission. It should have reinstituted. Yahweh worship. In a very real. And very immediate way. But instead. The people. Continued in their wickedness. As evidenced by. Jezebel's public threat. She could not have made that threat. If the people. Were really following. The one true God. And so. Elijah journeys. To a place of solitude. To a place. Of peace.

Actually know that he. Based on what the Bible. Is telling us. He really journeyed out. Into the Arabian. It's like. Wow. That's solitude there. There's these broom trees. Out there. To this day. And that's kind of how.

[18:33] The people would cross. The Arabian. Is they would go through. These gullies. And these. These streams. And these dry creek beds. And the. The things that. The. The vegetation there. Was this.

Big fanned out. Broom tree. And that's where they had rest. During the heat of the day. And so. We have clues there. That we know that he was in the Arabian. This is what one theologian said. About this moment.

In this passage. It says. It was a holy sorrow. And sadness. Such as no common man is capable of. Which filled him at that time. And brought to his lips. The prayer.

It is enough. This request. To die. Isn't some weakness. Or lack of faith. On his part. It isn't. It's not a murmuring heart. Like the.

Like the people of Israel had. While they were in the wilderness. Wandering. It's just sorrow. Because it should have been triumph. And instead.

[19:27] People are after him. They want his life. And so. What is God's response? Well. God's response is a clue. That Elijah isn't somehow.

Sinning here. Because if Elijah really. Has a murmuring heart. He's complaining. Or he's just got a lack of faith. That he needs to be stronger. God would have responded. With a rebuke. But he doesn't respond.

With a rebuke. Instead he responds. And it says. Tells him to eat. Verse 7. It says. Get up and eat. Or the journey. Will be too much.

For you. The angel of the Lord appears. And provides for Elijah. Elijah is so weary. We read. That he actually falls asleep. Before he finishes eating. He gets up.

He eats. Drinks a little water. And he's so tired. So worn out. So exhausted. He goes back to sleep. He can't even finish his food. And so the angel of the Lord. Says again. Hey. Get up.

[20:21] And eat. Don't miss this. Elijah eats. And then it says. He walked 40 days and nights. To Horeb. The mountain of God.

Elijah was traveling. Not running away from Jezebel. But running to the presence of God. That's what Elijah is doing here. He's not going to a high place.

Now understand this. We have the benefit. Of the new covenant. The Holy Spirit lives in. In every believer. Right. We don't have. A. Defined place of worship.

But for Elijah. When he's looking around. And he needs a revelation. From God. All the mountains. Have high places on him. In Israel. He can't go there.

It's pagan worship there. All the old altars. Have probably been repurposed. For Baal worship. So there's no place. For him to go. And so he travels. Toward the only place.

[21:19] That he's. That he feels. Is for sure. To have the presence of God. Towards Horeb. Elijah goes. To God's mountain. In search of revelation. And I think some of the older translations.

Actually name Horeb. You might have your translation. Mount Sinai. Because that's what he's getting at here. Mount Sinai. And more specifically. It says. At the end of this little passage.

It says. He got up. Ate drank. Then on the strength. From that food. He walked 40 days. And 40 nights. To Horeb. The mountain of God. He entered a cave there. And spent. The night. And so he enters a cave.

Now this is really cool. The Hebrew word. Or the Hebrew language. Here. This isn't just like. Elijah found a cave. And it seemed like a good place.

To be to him. Rather than out in the elements. And so he slept there. It's not one of several caves. There's actually a definite article. There in the text. In the Hebrew text.

[22:16] A definite article. And what that does. A definite article is kind of. We use definite articles. Like the. We use a definite article. In front of a noun. We believe that the hearer.

Or reader. Knows what we're talking about. Right. And so if I say. The pastor. Everyone knows. I'm talking about Don Coleman. Because of that definite article.

I don't say a pastor. I say the pastor. Of Highland Park Baptist Church. I don't even have to say his name. At that point. Because people. Know. And so the writer. Of this book.

Says. He gets up. He travels. Forty days. And forty nights. Comes to the mountain of God. And takes shelter. In. The cave. The cave.

This is very likely. The cave. From Exodus. Chapter 33. And verse 22. Where Moses. Request to see God. And God places him.

[23:11] In a cleft of the rock. And passes by. This would have been. A. A huge. Huge area. In Jewish. Folklore.

In Jewish history. People would have known. Oh. The. Cave. Not just. A. Cave. Horeb.

Horeb. Is the place. Of the loftiest. And weightiest. Revelation. Of Israel. God. That is where God. Hands down. The law. To Moses. And so Elijah. Is not. Some depressed old man.

Running from. His mission. That's what a lot of people. Think about this verse. And it's just simply not true. He's searching. He's searching. For. A word from God. And oh.

That we would search. As diligently. As Elijah. This thing. Sits on our nightstand. Maybe on our bookshelf. Somewhere beside our bed. I've got.

[24:04] Twenty of them in my office. And another. Probably. Hundred different ones. On my computer. Elijah goes. Forty days. And forty nights. Into the Arabian desert.

For a word. From God. For a revelation. From God. And often times. I can't even bother. To stay up. Fifteen minutes longer. To dig into the word of God. I just hit that in the morning.

And that's where a lot of us are. Much less. Travel forty days. And forty nights. And so. That's where we find Elijah. That's kind of the. The point. Of this passage. He's going.

He's searching. For a revelation from God. Now. If you look ahead. You can see the rest of the story. Elijah actually meets with God. I'm not going to focus on it. Like. Many. Volumes of things.

Have been said. About that still small voice. Volumes of things. And that's really not the point tonight. There's a lot to learn from that. But we know that God reveals himself. In the still small voice.

[25:01] And. I think. I guess I will say one thing. What a picture of a loving God. He doesn't like. Elijah. Man. Man. Up. What are you thinking?

But no. This still small voice. This is Elijah. Wrapped his face in a veil. And walked out. Into the very presence of God. What an amazing picture of a loving God.

So. Elijah. We learn. Admits his discouragement. It says this. Hey. I've been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts. He replied. This is verse 14. But the Israelites have abandoned your covenant.

Torn down your altars. And killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left. And they're looking for me. To take my life. So Elijah's very honest with God. And God already knows this.

But. He allows Elijah to get this off his chest. Of his discouragement. You know. Why didn't we win at Mount Carmel? Why is. Why are things so bad still? And what we get from the remainder of this story.

[26:00] Is we get a couple promises from God. To Elijah. One we see. It says in verse 14. It says. The Lord said to him. Return by the way you came to the wilderness of Damascus.

When you arrive. You are to appoint Hazei. As king over Aram. And you are to appoint Jehu. As the son of Nimshi. As king over Israel. And Elisha.

Son of Shaphat. From Abimele. Hola. As prophet in your place. Alright. And then Jehu will put to death. Whoever escapes. The sword of Hazei. And Elisha will put to death. Whoever escapes.

The sword of Jehu. But I will leave 7,000 in Israel. Every knee that is not bowed to Baal. And every mouth that has not kissed him. So God promises. One thing he promises.

He promises Ahab's defeat. These are the men that will defeat Ahab. If it's not one. It's going to be the other. They're going to defeat Ahab. But also what he promises. And this is so cool.

[26:55] Because Elijah is like. I'm the only one left. Of your prophets. He promises him rest. He says. Hey. You're going to meet Elisha. And you read later.

He does meet Elisha. And eventually. Because of Elijah's faithfulness. He will be spared. Even the suffering of death. Just a few verses ago.

He's asking to die. And God is so gracious to him. Because of his faithfulness. Because he stood alone. When no one else would stand. And even saves him from that fate. Man you're not dying. You're going to come up here with me. And takes him up in a chariot. Of fire. And read about that. In actually chapter 2. Of 2 Kings. So Elijah.

Don't let anybody tell you this morning. Elijah. Oh he was depressed. Clinical depression. Faithless. It just wasn't the case. He was looking. Searching. Longing.

[27:50] For a word. From God. And so what is the application for us? Well obviously. We too should be searching. We should be searching. For a word from God. We should be striving.

To hear from God. We don't need Mount Sinai. Thankfully. We'll have to travel over there. We're not going to like. Have a pilgrimage. Of Highland Park. Out to Mount Sinai.

Because like I said earlier. We have the Holy Spirit. We don't need any holy place. We don't even need this building. We can meet with God anywhere. Because we have the Holy Spirit. And. We have the revelation of God. Most of us have multiple copies of that.

And so. We should search. Hunger and thirst. For God's word. And direction. For our lives. Elijah left his country. And traveled across a desert. To hear from God.

I guess really the challenge is. What will you do this week? Are you willing. To leave your country. And travel across a desert. Or just. Sit on the side of your bed.

[28:52] And pick up your Bible. And search for the word. From God this week. I challenge you to do that. I challenge you. So. I hope we have. Kind of a. It's a clearer.

Picture. Of what Elijah's doing here. Maybe we won't be so hard on him. When we read this passage. Next time. Bye. Bye. Bye. Thank you.