

Elijah

God's man to a nation in crisis

God's Leading vs. Man's Reasoning

Lesson 2

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1KINGS 17:1 KJV "AND ELIJAH THE TISHBITE, WHO WAS OF THE INHABITANTS OF GILEAD, SAID UNTO AHAB, AS THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL LIVETH, BEFORE WHOM I STAND, THERE SHALL NOT BE DEW NOR RAIN THESE YEARS, BUT ACCORDING TO MY WORD."

Last week, we study how God sent Elijah to Israel's most wicked ruling couples, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. We studied how God suddenly sent Elijah with a message of judgment on the nation of Israel because of their sin of idolatry.

God leads those who are willing to follow in obedience to Him.

Psa 37:23 KJV "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way."

God lead Elijah to King Ahab and gave him the message of judgment. Then just as suddenly as Elijah came on the national scene, God lead him into seclusion. God's leading is not random or haphazard; but God's leading is for a purpose and a reason.

Many times, man might not understand why God leads a certain person to a certain place. When God lead me to Christ Independent Methodist church, I had several of my friends tell me that it was wrong and they could not understand why God would lead me away from there and send me here. God's leading is not based on man's reasoning.

Why would God send Elijah to the King and immediately send him somewhere else? Why did God want Elijah to go into the wilderness and hide? Why did God give Elijah only one message to the king?

I. God's leading

A. Is one step at a time

In verse 3, God told Elijah to get up and head eastward. As Elijah headed eastward, God told him to hide by the brook Cherith. This brook was a place of seclusion. It was a place in the wilder-

1 Kings 17:1-7 KJV "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 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. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land."

ness where no one else lived. It was a place where Elijah would be alone.

God leads men and women one step at a time. The person must be willing to go one step at a time. God lead Moses into the palace to prepare him for later ministry. God lead Moses into the wilderness to prepare him for a later ministry. God leads in order to prepare the person for ministry later.

God leads man one step at the time and man must follow one step at a time!

CHERITH a cutting; separation; a gorge, a torrent-bed or winter-stream, a "brook," in whose banks the prophet Elijah hid himself during the early part of the three years' drought (1 Kings 17:3, 5). It has by some been identified as the Wady el-Kelt behind Jericho, which is formed by the junction of many streams flowing from the mountains west of Jericho. It is dry in summer. Travellers have described it as one of the wildest ravines of this wild region, and peculiarly fitted to afford a secure asylum to the persecuted. But if the prophet's interview with Ahab was in Samaria, and he thence journeyed toward the east, it is probable that he crossed Jordan and found refuge in some of the ravines of Gilead. The "brook" is said to have been "before Jordan," which probably means that it opened toward that river, into which it flowed. This description would apply to the east as well as to the west of Jordan. Thus Elijah's hiding-place may have been the Jermuk, in the territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh.

B. Has consequences

1. Persecution

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

If a person is obedient to the Word of God, then consequences will follow. When Elijah was obedient to the calling of God,

Elijah had to endure the redicule, hatred, scorn, opposition, and misunderstanding of others, even those who are close to him.

2. Uncomfortable

If a person is obedient to the Word of the Lord, there are times that it leads to places that are uncomfortable. It could be uncomfortable in having to face a situation that the world will not understand. When sin must be confronted, it is always a very uncomfortable situation.

It can lead to a place that is uncomfortable to the person. Elijah was lead into the wilderness where he was right by himself without any of the comforts of life around him. He was in a place that was uncomfortable.

II. God's leading sent Elijah to the brook in order to protect him

1 Kings 17:3 KJV "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan."

The word hide means to be absent or to keep secret. Elijah was told to leave and go to a place where he would not be found. He was to keep his location secret.

Why did God send Elijah to a place to hide?

God lead Elijah away in order to protect him. Elijah became very popular in a short amount of time. His name became well known around Israel as the man who proclaimed judgment against the king and against Israel. Every day that went by without rain, there were those who cursed Elijah. Every day that went by without rain, there were those who wanted to kill Elijah. Every day that went by without rain, King Ahab sent out soldiers to find Elijah.

There is an old saying, "Don't shoot the messenger." But, this is exactly what they wanted to do. They could not do anything against God so they sought to kill His mes-

senger.

Hebrews 11:36-38 KJV "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

God has sent others into hiding in order to protect them.

Moses hid in the wilderness

David hid from the anger of Saul

Martin Luther hid from persecution

William Tyndale, who first translated the English Bible, was a fugitive

God protects in a multitude of different ways. He protected Daniel in the lion's dens. He protected the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace. He protected His nation in many different ways.

So, why did God choose to protect Elijah in this manner? With Elijah absent, the nation every day had to come to grips that the reason it was not raining was because the judgment of God was on them. In the beginning, it probably did not matter much to them. They probably pushed his saying off as the ravings of a madman. But, as time went by and the land became desert like

and the crops failed, the saying of Elijah rang deeper and deeper. God sent Elijah away so Israel could not escape dwelling on the proclamation of judgment from Elijah. Every day drove it deeper and deeper into their hearts and minds.

III. God's leading sent Elijah to the brook in order to provide for him

1 Kings 17:4 KJV "And it shall be,

that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there."

Psalms 78:17-27 KJV "And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God;

they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, And



had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full. He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:"

God lead Elijah to the brook in order to protect him but also to provide for him in the coming famine. There is a question that the Israelites asked in the wilderness, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?" They were questioning whether God was able to provide for His people during times of famine. In Psalms 78, it addresses the question by giving the answer that God sent water from the rock, quail from the wind, and manna from heaven. Can God provide even in the wilderness? Absolutely!

God used nature to provide for Elijah. The brook supplied the water and ravens provided the food and bread. God is the God over nature because God created nature. Just look in the life of Jesus and the miracles He had over nature. He walked on the water. He calmed the seas. He feed the five thousand. He caused the blind to see. He cursed the fig tree.

- God used the whale to transport Jonah.
- God used the donkey to warn Baalim.
- God used the lions to show that Daniel's God was the true God.
- God used the lion to judge the disobedient prophet.
- God used the she-bears to judge the disrespectful teenagers.
- God used the ravens to feed Elijah.

God can provide a table in the wilderness.

Philippians 4:19 KJV "But my God shall supply all your need according to

his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

IV. God's leading sent Elijah to the brook in order to teach and test him

1 Kings 17:7 KJV "And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land."

A. Tested his faith

2 Corinthians 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

This is where the testing comes in. After a while, being at the place that God has lead Elijah, the stream begins to dry up. Elijah sees the resources slowly dwindling away. His faith is probably tested on why the Lord leads him to this place if the resources were going to stop.

Often times, after a person has doubts later about the place that God has called him to serve or be. Elijah's faith was tested as the stream slowly vanished away.

B. Taught him patience

God sometimes pulls men and women aside to prepare them for what lies ahead. Patience is a hard lesson to learn. It takes patience to stand still when our inclination is to act. It takes patience to wait when our inclination is to respond. It takes patience to do nothing when our inclination is to do something.

God brought Elijah to a place of seclusion to be protected, to provide for, to test, and to train.

Psalms 27:14 KJV "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."

Isaiah 40:31 KJV "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and

not be weary; and they shall walk,
and not faint."

V. The key is listening and obeying the leading of God

A. God's leading yesterday prepares the Christian for ministry today.

The steps of the righteous are lead by the Lord. God leads us in order to use us for His glory and for the Kingdom of heaven.

B. God's leading today prepares the Christian for tomorrow's ministry.

C. God's leading in your life today could be to prepare you for a greater ministry tomorrow.

D. God's leading requires obedience.

Elijah would have never had the great victory on Mount Carmel if he had not been obedient in the leading of the Lord. A person cannot expect God to use him in great things if he is not obedient in the little things.

Romans 12:1-2 KJV "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

E. God's leading could be away from the forefront to the wilderness.

Our reasoning cannot be compared to His wisdom. A Christian must be obedient to the Lord and trust that His plan is far better and greater than our plan for our life. The Christian must be like Jesus when He said, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

