

Finding God in an Age of Unbelief: Elijah

1 Kings 17: 1-7

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- Introduction:**
- * Saddened by a senseless murder of 9 students and faculty UCC
 - * Christianity in the cross hairs of Islam, crazies and politically correct
 - * Ahab was a bad, bad guy
 - * “It is often supposed that when people stop believing in God, they believe in nothing. Alas, it is worse than that. When people stop believing in God they will believe in anything.” – G.K. Chesterton
 - * Nomenclature:
 - * Baal – the common Canaanite deity seemed to be the pagan god of choice for the Israelites and surrounding pagan nations.
 - * Asherah – a totem pole like object with carved images of pagan deities with exaggerated sexual features emphasizing fertility and pleasure
 - * High Places – site of pagan and on occasion Jewish places of worship

I. Who was Elijah?

- ❖ Prophetic paradigm
 - ◆ Moses was called a prophet by God
 - ◆ David had Nathan
 - ◆ Elijah lead a prophetic movement
 - From Tishbe – “Stranger”
 - His calling was to call out Ahab for his pagan worship, destroy the worship of Baal and lead the people of Israel back to righteousness
 - Opening task was to put a beat down on Baal and prove that he [Baal] was impotent and irrelevant
 - Elijah was an advisor to King Ahab – at least before Ahab married Jezebel, whose father was a major priest of Baal.

II. What did Elijah do?

- ❖ Proves Baal powerless
 - Elijah said that by the Lord God it would not rain
 - Baal was the rider of the clouds, the god of rain and fertility
 - Psalm 104 – He makes the clouds His chariot; He rides on the wings of the wind.”
 - God would withhold rain – if this proved true, Baal would be put to public mockery and ridicule as powerless.
- ❖ A strategic retreat
 - By God’s command, Elijah went to Brook Cherith
 - Brook provided water to drink in a terrible drought
 - Elijah to be fed by the ravens

III. Take Away

- ❖ Lets go back to that dirty miserable sinner thing
 - All of our righteous deeds are like polluted garments
 - Our sin is a moral affront to God
- ❖ Many people here today are experiencing a drought of their own

Finding God in an Age of Unbelief Other Relevant Scripture and Quotes

1 Kings 16: 30-33 - And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. 31 And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him. 32 He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made an Asherah. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

It is often supposed that when people stop believing in God, they believe in nothing. Alas, it is worse than that. When they stop believing in God, they believe in anything. G. K. Chesterton

1 Kings 17: 1a – Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead . . .

**Psalm 104: 1-4 - Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you are very great!
You are clothed with splendor and majesty,
2 covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent.
3 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot;
he rides on the wings of the wind;
4 he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.**

1 Kings 17: 1b - As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.

1 Kings 17: 2-7 - And the word of the Lord came to him: 3 “Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.” 5 So he went and did according to the word of the Lord. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. 7 And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

Isaiah 64: 6 – We have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like polluted garments. We all fade like a leaf and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

2 Corinthians 5: 21 – For our sake, He made Him to be sin who knew no sin [Jesus], so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

John 3: 16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 7: 37, 38 - On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.