



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA  
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## 1 Kings 17:1

**Related Topics:** Ahab; Jezebel; Elijah; God Seeking A Man; The Man God Uses; Standing before God; Wrapped Up In The Passions Of God; Jealous For God; The Man Who Prays

### CHAPTER 17

**<sup>1</sup>Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “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.”**

In the KJV Elijah steps on the scene with a conjunction — ***AND** Elijah the Tishbite.*

I like that reading because it fits so well with the way the Holy Spirit introduces the 8<sup>th</sup> king of the Northern kingdom back in Chapter 16.

*<sup>29</sup>.....**and** Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. <sup>30</sup>**And** Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. <sup>31</sup>**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..... <sup>33</sup>**And** Ahab made an Asherah.*

Grammatically, the conjunction **AND connects** and **builds on** thoughts or ideas! By it, the Holy Spirit essentially makes the point that if it weren't bad enough to walk for Ahab to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, he married Jezebel. We spoke at some length about her last Monday. She reintroduces Ba-al worship to Israel and imported 450 priests and prophets of Ba-al and placed them under the political umbrella of the Ahab's kingdom by subsidizing their occultic activity — essentially making anyone who believed in the One, True and Living God a traitor to the king. She was Madonna, Barbara Streisand, and Cruella De Vil rolled into one on steroids! She was so wicked that her very name is synonymous with wicked. To prove the point — I can say that as a pastor I've dedicated babies for 27 years — and I've never once dedicated a Jezebel.

After stringing together wickedness upon wickedness the Holy Spirit gives the SUM of it all — *<sup>33</sup>...Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were*

The Holy Spirit adds one more verse to close the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter in which He records the fulfillment of a 500 year old prophecy which was a merciful warning to Ahab that God means what He says and says what He means.

REMEMBER — There are no chapter breaks in the original manuscripts. The original manuscript would continue the narrative with **<sup>1</sup>And Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead**. That is the way that the author of Scripture — the Holy Spirit — saw fit to introduce to us the greatest prophet of the Old Testament — the prophet who is mentioned by name in the New Testament more than any prophet! He just says – *And Elijah*.

REMEMBER — the word **connects** and **builds**. The Holy Spirit wants us to see Elijah as connected to that moldy, malevolent, dark, demonic generation! Through 8 dynasties this wickedness has been building *and* building *and* building *and* building *and* building — **AND** — God has a man ready to stand for Him and with Him against this tidal wave of wickedness.

Here in the first verse of 1 Kings 17 we get to look into the pages of the history of Israel. God pops the lid on it for us — so that as we look at this man found in the middle of that — we can bring that picture forward to 2010! In THIS land we have men in the highest offices of government who think it's just fine for a doctor to wait for the head of a full term baby to come out of the womb — drill a hole into it's skull and suck it's brain out!

In THIS land we're still deciding if a man should marry another man, or a woman should marry another woman. In THIS land people sue State governments (Ohio) because the state seal says – *I can do all things through God who strengthens me*. The word 'God' is not allowed to be there. In THIS land there is an all out assault on righteousness on every level.

**There is something else really important** about this rather abrupt introduction of Elijah. The conjunction “and”, gives context for Elijah's life and ministry, but it leaves us pretty deprived of background.

We don't know who his parents are. We know who Abraham's dad was — Terah ([Gen. 11:26](#)). We know about Abraham's family — his brothers were Nahor and Haran. His nephew by way of Haran was a guy named Lot ([Gen. 11:27](#)). We know who David's great grandparents were — Ruth and Boaz ([Ruth 4](#)). We know David's grandfather was a guy named Obed ([Ruth 4](#)). We know that his dad's name was Jesse ([Ruth 4; 1 Sam 16](#)). We know that David had 7 brothers ([1 Sam 16](#)). We know that the father of king Saul was a guy named Kish ([1 Sam 9](#)). We know that Samson's dad was named Manoah ([Judges 13](#)). We know the names of Samuel's parents — Elkanah and Hannah ([1 Samuel 1](#)).

**We don't know anything about this guy.** We don't know how old is he? Is he 14 or is he 40? We don't know anything about him. He steps onto the pages of scripture out of nowhere. He's not formally trained. He's not formally schooled. He has no political protocol — no access to King Ahab. We do know that he had bad taste in clothes and a bad hair cut. In [2 Kings 1](#) Ahab sent men to find Elijah and they said that they met this man. Ahab said — what did he look like?

*'He said to them, "What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?"' They answered him, "He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."*

About all we know about this man was that he was HAIRY and he wore HAIRY clothes!

The Holy Spirit is DIVINELY DELIBERATE in every word — or lack of words — in Scripture! I think God has left this man pretty much a blank slate so that we could ALL identify with him. He comes from an obscure background. Nobody knows who his parents are. He seemingly has no credentials or training or skill sets that would give him the right or qualify

him to even be a candidate for the role of mighty prophet of God. I think that's why the Holy Spirit introduces Elijah to us by simply saying — *And Elijah.*

The stuff that man would hold as crucial and essential when it comes to jobs and titles and promotions — the Holy Spirit completely omits! However — the Holy Spirit does tell us something about Elijah that only He can see — and that is of tremendous importance to the Lord in regards to choosing instruments through whom He can work. The Holy Spirit gives us a window into Elijah that is so crucial to our understanding of this man and his ministry to the radically lost generation and culture.

*1 Kings 19:10 He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts.*

The Holy Spirit is letting us know that pedigree, training, schooling and credentials are not the **deciding** factor in being used by God. Love for the Lord is **THE ESSENTIAL** qualification for serving the Lord.

**ANOTHER INTERSTING OMISSION** — Elijah is not called a prophet here — but virtually everywhere we find Elijah in the New Testament — he is referred to as Elijah the prophet. When we think of “prophet” we think of those men whose prophetic ministry was predictive — Daniel - Ezekiel - Isaiah - Jeremiah. You know what? Elijah guy is not predictive. That's not his ministry. He predicts the weather at one point — that's the sum and substance of his predictive activity. He's not prophetic in that sense. The greatest prophet that lived in the Old Testament — the prophet that is most often mentioned in the New Testament is not predictive.

You know the first prophet mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 20:7) is Abraham — an angel of God label's Abraham as a prophet. Abraham's a prophet! What do you mean he's a prophet?

We have to understand that ABOVE ALL ELSE — the prophet was someone whose life and passions were — wrapped up in — held captive by — the passions and pleasures of God. Here's the man who was the greatest prophet that ever lived — **what did he do?** He stepped into the middle of his own generation. He had no qualifications. He didn't fill out any resume. He didn't even know how to take care of himself. He was unkempt. He was

rugged. He steps into the scene. With his heart on fire. He was a man who was jealous for God. FROM THAT HEART he becomes unique on the pages of Scripture.

He's the first prophet — the first man of God in the Bible — to raise the dead. I've heard of missionaries praying over the dead and they have witnessed the dead being raised to life. For a missionary to pray for someone who died ' they have a reference point — well, Jesus did it. Elijah has NO point of reference for such a thing. Up to this moment there is NO record that anyone was ever raised from the dead. What is Elijah thinking when he prays over the dead body of the son of a widow? He's unique in that sense.

He's the first one we know of to shut up the heavens for 3 ½ years. That had never been done before. What is he thinking? There's 1.5 trillion tons of rain that fall on the surface of the earth every day. 330 cubical million miles of ocean. 1.5 trillion tons of rain that crash down on the earth every day. And Elijah says – *it ain't gonna rain*. He had ZERO reference point for such a prayer.

Elijah didn't taste death. He was taken up in a fiery chariot. That makes him unique. Enoch never tasted death but he didn't leave this world via a fiery chariot. Elijah is seen in the New Testament on the mount of transfiguration with Jesus and Moses. He's a unique man.

Another thing UNIQUE about Elijah — that is incredibly relevant to the day in which we live — the Scriptures say that Elijah is coming again! The Old Testament ends with the Book of Malachi. In the second to the last verse of the last book of the O.T. we read

*Malachi 4:5* “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

You look at the world today. You look at the conditions of the world today. You look at them falling apart. You look at the spiritual and moral darkness. You look at the injustice. OUR world is spiritually and morally dark and malevolent. It is one long connected sting of rotten stuff. You know what — Elijah is the right man for the job — and he's coming.

That says something to my heart. As we look at this man walk into the pages of Scriptures with a simple — **AND ELIJAH** — there's something

that's in keeping with the spirit of Elijah for our generation, for our age. **WE** should want in our hearts the same zeal for the Lord — the same hunger to see the name of Jesus glorified in our lives.

***And ELIJAH*** — What does his name mean? El = God. I = my. Jah = Jehovah/Yahweh. *God my Jehovah*. It transliterates into *My God is the LORD*. That was his name. That's great. In an era when everyone was worshipping other gods, bowing their knee to all kinds of other master passions, his very name said *MY God is Yahweh*.

People are willing to stand up for all kinds of things today — without shame and they say that they stand up for then whales, for the spotted owls, for trees, for all kinds of strange rights. **What about us?** Elijah by name and by action said, *My God is the Yahweh, that's who my God is, He is my master passion*.

***And ELIJAH the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead—***

He's from Gilead. Gilead was on the east side of the Jordan River. Is he a Jew? We assume. We're not sure. Gilead means — *hill of witness*. That's a great place for a guy like this to come from.

**THIS IS HUGE** for those of you who are parents — and for those who are not — file it in your hearts under — *This is what I want to be*.

Somewhere there was a godly parent, or godly parents, whose hearts were stirred in some way to name their little kid Elijah. When he was growing up, he must've said — *why did you name me Elijah?* They must've said — because it means 'My God is the Lord'. When he was growing up — every time somebody called him by name he was reminded — *My God is the LORD*. There had to come a point in his young life when he saw the world around him worshipping Ba-al and Asherah and Molech — when his heart became jealous for the True and Living God.

When you look at the condition of our nation — we are desperate for parents who will say *OUR God is the LORD — and we're going to worship him*.

This man, Elijah, is one huge — living — exhortation! Exhortation means to come along side and call to action. By way of the Scriptures the very life

of Elijah comes along side and calls US to action. His life doesn't come along side the person who wants to come sit in church and go out and live for some other master passion. But his life will speak to those whose hearts are moved and broken as they look at THIS generation — THIS culture. It will speak to the man or woman — young or old — that looks at the world around them and says — *I'm just one person — Nobody knows who I am — Nobody knows who my parents are — I'm not qualified — I'm not trained — What could I ever do?*

**said to Ahab, “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.”**

There is much we don't know about this man — but we can overlay two passages of Scripture on Elijah's life that will give us a window into this declaration.

*Deuteronomy 11: 16-17 Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; <sup>17</sup>then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the Lord is giving you.*

*James 5:16b-18 The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man —*

God wants us to be very clear on this matter — Elijah was not some superhuman guy — he was just a man.

*with a nature like ours —*

The **KJV** says — *subject to like passions as we are*

*and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. <sup>18</sup>Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.*

Jesus concurs with that in **Luke 4:25** where He says that it didn't rain for 3 ½ years.

So those passages are the OVERLAY. Here's what we conclude. Somewhere in Gilead, this hairy man, wearing hairy clothes, gets on his knees and says –

*God, what's going on? I know you're real. You're alive. I sense your presence.*

*Your Word says that if your people sin you are going to shut up the heavens — they will become like brass — that you won't bless them, that you are going to speak to them.*

He was very **jealous** for the True and Living God. He was very **grieved** about his generation. He felt **quite helpless**. There was **nothing he could do** — **so he began to pray**. God brought a drought.

Evidently by the time he gets to Ahab — it's already six months in progress. And from everything we see in the life of Elijah — God would speak and he would obey. So as we see him before Ahab we are on safe ground thinking that God said – *Go tell Ahab*. He was no doubt much like Moses going to Pharaoh to say – *let my people go*. He's headed from Gilead over to Samaria — there was something burning in his heart.

He comes into Samaria and he comes into the king's palace, which was no doubt luxurious and opulent, and there's Jezebel and Ahab. Here comes this hairy, strange guy. Nobody stopped him (they were probably looking at all his hair and his hairy clothes and thought — human lice farm!) He comes walking in — he stands in front of Ahab and Jezebel and says — *“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.”* And, he turns around and we walk out. I'm just trying to imagine the look on the faces of Ahab and Jezebel! *WHAT? What was that?* He did that at the prospect of losing his life!

**Let's walk around a bit in the words of Elijah.**

He says — *the Lord, God of Israel is alive*. **First of all Ahab** — *you're not in charge of Israel. The Lord is the God of Israel and He's alive*. **Secondly** — he's saying – Baal isn't in charge of anything —especially the rain.

*Jeremiah 14:22 Are there any among the false gods of the nations that can bring rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are you not he, O Lord our God? We set our hope on you, for you do all these things.*

He says – Baal is not God. **REMEMBER** — They believed that Ba-al brought the rain. He was the God of the sun and the moon and the stars. (**NOTE TO SELF** — Radical environmentalism existed in thousands of years ago.) Elijah walked on the scene and said – he’s not God. Yahweh is God and he’s in charge and He’s alive.

**THIRD** — If he were living in our day he could say — My GPS says I’m standing in the palace of Ahab and in front of Ahab — but in reality I’m standing before the True and Living God. **THAT** is a huge truth on a couple of levels. **FIRST** — Think of how many marriages have ended in divorce because of GPS technology. Wives discovering that their husbands really weren’t at the gym. If a woman can know where her husband is standing — ya think God can? It doesn’t matter where you might be — or how discrete and clandestine and stealthy you have been. Though we can’t see Him with these physical eyes — you are standing before God! No hiding from Him. **SECOND** — It is not man or man’s opinion that should concern you. Ahab, Jezebel, teacher, or boss — you live your life as standing before the True and Living God who loves you and sent His Son to die for you. You live and speak as to please Him! You fear Him, not man!

Having said that — **REMEMBER** — James told us that Elijah was a man *of like passions* as you and I are. He wasn’t immune from the feeling we call fear. He wasn’t immune from the feeling that we call despair. We will see that Elijah will throw in the towel at one point. But, he was a man who loved God. He was a man who was jealous for the glory of God. He was a man who was grieved in his own generation. I’m sure that our adversary the devil was Elijah’s adversary — and like our adversary the devil comes to us — he went to Elijah as Elijah’s adversary and said — *Elijah, there is not one thing you can do about it. Nobody knows who you are. Nobody knows where you live. Nobody knows who your mom and dad are. You aren’t qualified. You don’t have an audience. There is absolutely **nothing** you can do.*

But — I’m also sure that when Elijah felt everything that we feel — was lied to by the devil like we are — that Elijah heard a still small voice say something else. I think when Elijah looked at his world and said — Lord — look where this generation has come. Look at the leadership. Look at the moral darkness — look at the spiritual darkness. Look at the babies being

sacrificed to the god of sensual pleasure — burned alive in the womb. Look at what people worship. What kind of a country are children going to grow up in God? What can I do? I'm just one man. I'm just one man — nobody knows who I am and where I live and what can I do? I'm just one man I don't have any resources. What can I do?

**A still small voice said to him – *Pray! Pray Elijah! Pray! There's nothing that's restricting me Elijah. I have all the resources. I'm the God of Israel, I'm in charge, not Ahab. You stand in my presence, you don't stand in his. Pray! Pray! A nation needs to be changed. Pray.***

**QUOTE:** John Bunyan (1628-1688) author of Pilgrim's Progress.

*You can do more than pray once you've prayed. But, you can't do more than pray until you've prayed.*

**DON'T MISS THIS** — In the world of architecture and structural engineering much the superstructure of a building must always be proportional to its foundation! We might call the words and the deeds of Elijah the SUPERSTRUCTURE of his life and ministry. All that we can SEE in his life — could not have stood without a radical foundation. So much of his ministry was exercised in private — was built in a place that nobody saw. No eye was on him but God's. When he came to the court of Ahab, he had already prayed. When he spoke to Ahab he had already spoken to God — already heard from God!

## **HOW DOES ALL OF THIS RELATE TO YOU AND ME TONIGHT?**

FIRST — He was just a man. **How old?** God doesn't tell us — God doesn't want us to know — Because God wants to speak to us whether we're 14 or 40 — 18 or 80. He wants to say to all of us — *look at this man, I want you all to know — he's just a man — who when he saw the mess around him turned to heaven.*

Listen to what the Lord said to Ezekiel. Ezekiel lived and prophesied at the beginning of the Judah's captivity in Babylon. There was still a population of Jews in Judah under a puppet king. The spiritual and moral decay of the people was horrific. (See [Ezekiel 22](#))

*Ezekiel 22:20 And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.*

I sought for a **man** — a **woman** — but I found none. Not for an organization. Not for a committee. Not for a denomination. Not for a concert. One man. One woman. The nation was falling apart and God said — *I looked for one man, one woman to stand in the gap before me that I shouldn't destroy the land and I found none.*

Listen to what the Lord said to Isaiah —

*Isaiah 59:16 He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede;*

Much is said about seeking the Lord. Much is written about finding his will. I would never diminish either of those things. But the Bible says that there is something else that's going on. The Lord is seeking a man, he's seeking a woman. We read in *2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.* In the rule of Ahab and Jezebel the eyes of the Lord were going to and fro throughout the earth and they land on Gilead — because there's one man. Yeah, he's a nobody. Yeah, he's a walking talking carpet. But, he's on his knees and he's saying — *Lord, I'm jealous for your name.* Here we are in 2010 — The eyes of the Lord are STILL going to and fro throughout the whole earth — looking for a man. What kind of a man is God looking for? What kind of a man can stand before the Ahabs and Jezebels of our generation (neighborhood – school – work)? The life of Elijah tells us that God isn't looking for a superman — He is looking for a HU-man! A HU-man who is on their knees saying — *Lord, they're making a mockery of who you on every front — they are legislating against you and they're setting up other god's. Oh, God, I'm jealous for your glory. This is who you say that you are. There's a generation that is being lost and deceived.*

God sees that heart. He found it in ONE man in the rule of Ahab. One person.

Can one man or one woman change a nation? Can one teenager? One 80 year old? Elijah's life screams — YES!

I'm rebuked by this. Lord teach me to pray — teach us to pray.