

Men and Women of God – Elijah

Jokes:

Brother John entered the ‘Monastery of Silence’ and the Abbot said ‘Brother this is a silent monastery; you are welcome here as long as you like, but you may not speak until I direct you to do so.’

Brother John lived in the monastery for 5 years before the Abbot said to him, ‘Brother John, you have been here 5 years now; you may speak two words’. Brother John said ‘Hard bed’. ‘I’m sorry to hear that,’ the Abbot said. ‘We will get you a better bed.’

After another 5 years, Brother John was called by the Abbot. ‘You may say another two words Brother John.’ ‘Cold Food’ said Brother John, and the Abbot assured him that the food would be better in the future.

On his 15th anniversary at the monastery, the Abbot again called Brother John into his office. ‘Two words you may say today.’ ‘I quit’, said Brother John. ‘It’s probably for the best’, said the Abbot, ‘you have done nothing but moan since you got here’.

There were two prawns swimming around together in the Caribbean Sea, one called Justin and one called Christian. Justin and Christian really enjoyed their lives but they were under constant fear of being eaten by sharks.

Justin secretly harboured a desire to be a shark one night as he was thinking of this very subject lightning struck the surface of the sea just above his head and he changed into a shark. Horrified Christian fled as fast as he could.

Justin enjoyed his life as a shark at first but soon became bored and really missed Christian and his other friends and just at one of those moments lightning struck twice and he was turned back into a prawn.

Justin was so happy and swam as fast as he could back to his friends in search of Christian. Christian wasn’t there but he bought all of the others a cocktail and went in search of Christian.

On hearing the knock Christian opened the door to see his old friend. ‘Justin’, is that really you he said. ‘Yes’ said Justin ‘I’m a prawn again, Christian.’

Worship: Stained Glass Masquerade, Praise you in the Storm – Casting Crowns, Blessed be your name, Hide Me Now.

Background

Timeline (recap on Moses and Joshua)

(Period of Time in Egypt 430 yrs) Moses born c1526BC, 40yrs as prince, 40yrs in desert, 40yrs leading the Hebrews, **(Period of Time in Wilderness 40 yrs) Joshua** – military failure – incomplete conquest of land - then **Period of Judges** starts in c1375BC, (Tutankhamen dies 1358BC, destruction of Troy during Trojan War BC1183) - 13 Judges ending with Samuel, 6 periods of oppression and deliverance **(Period of Time of Judges 325 yrs)** Saul becomes Israel's first King cBC1050 **(Start of the Period of Kings)**.

Saul: Result of the people's request for a King and even though it was not what God wanted God let the people have a King. 1 Sam Ch 8 v1-22, 1 Sam 12 v 12, 17) (c.f The Prodigal Son), Saul starts by being filled with the Spirit of the Lord (1 Sam 10 v 6), but then takes credit for the actions of his son Jonathan (1 Sam 13 v 3), doesn't trust God (1 Sam 13 v 5-7) then makes an offering without a priest and makes excuses....later exhibits pride, jealousy, envy, malice and consults a witch before committing suicide.

David:

David: 2nd King of Israel (perhaps 3rd King of Judah first) Ish-Botheth son of Saul was King of Israel for 2 yrs. 2 Sam 8 v 15 'David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people.'

Length of reign: (Hebron 7 yrs 6 months, 33 yrs in Jerusalem – total 40 yrs)

Author of Psalms – (David wrote 73 psalms, Asaph 12, the sons of Korah 9, Solomon wrote 2, Ethan and Moses each wrote one and 51 psalms are anonymous)

Father: Jesse (of Bethlehem, David's home town 1 Sam 20 v 6)

Brothers: youngest of 7 brothers (3 oldest: Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah had followed Saul into war 1 Sam 17 v 13)

Wives: included Michal (daughter of Saul), Ahinoam, Bathsheba (mother of Solomon), Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah

Sons: included Absalom, Amnon, Solomon, Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream

Daughters: included Tamar

Friendship: Jonathan

N.B of the house of Judah, Jesus of the house of David (see genealogy's in Matthew and Luke)

How was David a man after God's own heart? (David and Goliath (trust in God, righteous anger for His name), David and Saul (honoured God above revenge), David and Mephibosheth (compassion for the weak), David and the Ark (unashamed, unreserved worship), David and the Altar (won't give to God something that costs me nothing)

Judges – God raises up a judge to deliver – people depend on God, Kings – people moved dependency on God to dependency on King God speaks to the people through the prophets.

The Divided Kingdom of Israel

Solomon becomes king – kingdom splits in two Northern kingdom 10 tribes, Southern Kingdom 2 tribes

Reason: 1 Kings 11 v 28-40

Rehoboam (Solomon's son becomes king of the southern kingdom – Judah) and **Jeroboam** (one of Solomon's officials in charge of the labour force of the tribe of Joseph) becomes king of the northern kingdom (Israel).

N.B The priests and levities all went to the southern kingdom at this time **2 Chron 11 v 13,14** 'The priests and Levites from all their districts throughout Israel sided with him (Rehoboam). The Levites even abandoned their pasture lands and property, and came to Judah and Jerusalem because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of the Lord.' 2 Chron 11 v 16,17 'Those from every tribe of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the Lord, the God of Israel, followed the Levites to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the Lord, the God of their fathers. They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years, walking in the ways of David and Solomon during this time.'

Kings and Chronicles tells of life and times of the kings of both kingdoms up until the northern kingdom was taken into captivity by Shalmaneser the Assyrian in 722BC (resettled foreigners in the land – 2 Kings 17 v 24) so people were mixed – this mix of people became known as the Samaritans. The southern kingdom was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC.

Elijah

Elijah background

- What do you know about Elijah?

Mark 8 v 27-29 Jesus and his disciples went on the villages around Caesarea Phillipi. On the way he asked them, 'Who do people say I am?' They replied. 'Some say John the Baptist (who was dead Mark Ch 6 v 14-29); others say Elijah; and still others one of the prophets.' 'But what about you? He asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Peter answered 'You are the Christ.'

Malachi Ch 4 v 5 'See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.' (**Matthew Ch 11 v14**)

Matthew 11 v 11-15 'I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. For all the Prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to

come. He who has ears let him hear.’ **N.B Period of the Prophets finishes with John the Baptist**

Mark Ch 9 v 2-4 ‘After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he as transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, white than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, who were talking with Jesus.’

Luke 4 v 27

Who was Elijah? What did he do? Why was he a man of God?

Proved it by his actions Elijah’s ministry was confrontational. Ministered under King Ahab (wife Jezebel) 1 Kings 25 v 25 (‘There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife.’) N.B There were 7 kings of Israel (the northern kingdom) – not one of whom did right in the eyes of the Lord.

There were many events in Elijah’s life that we could focus on beginning with his bold announcement of the forthcoming drought to King Ahab in 1 Kings 17 v 1 and ending with being taken to heaven in a whirlwind 2 Kings 2 v 11 but here we are going to focus specifically on two particular events

1 Kings Ch 16 v 29-34

Spiritual high

Elijah at Mount Carmel

1 Kings 18 v 16-46

1 Kings 18 v 21 ‘How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.’ But the people said nothing.

- Would we describe ourselves as confident decisive people?
- In what areas of Christian belief are there no grey areas?
- Before God there is no fence, no grey area. Are we saved or not?
- In what ways could we waiver between two opinions in a Christian sense?
- Is it wrong to be unsure of things?
- What might be the consequences of uncertainty?

- To what extent does the Christian Church today seem to waiver between two opinions?

Spiritual low

1 Kings 19 v 1-5

- Do we ever feel really low?
- Have we ever felt abandoned by God?
- Have we ever felt really low after a spiritual high?

1 Kings Ch 20 v 28 ‘The man of God came up and told the King of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord says: ‘Because the Arameans think the Lord is a god of the hills and not of the valleys, I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the Lord.’

What happened to Elijah after his spiritual low? He went on to anoint a king and anoint his successor (Elisha). Elijah had his ministry confirmed.

- Do we ever think that God is a God of the hills or a God of the valleys and not of the hills or not of the valleys?
- When do we turn to God most?
- When do we remember God most? Is it easiest to thank and praise than to cry help and trust? (Our God is a God of the hills **and** the valleys)

Prayer: Allow for a time of prayer

Doxology: Isaiah Ch 61 v 1-3 ‘The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.’

Author:- Carl Lee