

A CULTURE IN CRISIS

I Kings 16:30-17:1

Elijah's introduction reveals the reality of a culture in crisis.

I. AHAB'S WICKEDNESS (16:30-34)

- Israel's king

A. HIS WAYS (30-31a)

1. Doing evil in the sight of the Lord
2. Making Jeroboam's sins seem trivial - See I Kings 12:25-33

B. HIS WIFE (31b)

1. A Canaanite
 - All Israelites were forbidden from marrying foreign wives - Ex. 34:16
2. From a cruel family
 - Her father was an idolater who assumed his throne by assassinating his brother!

C. HIS WORSHIP (31c-33)

1. Serving and worshipping Baal (31c)
2. Building a temple and altar for Baal in Samaria (32)
3. Making an Asherah (33a)
 - A pornographic image of Baal's female cohort
4. Provoking God more than any king before him (33b)

D. HIS WORKMAN (34)

1. Hiel rebuilt Jericho
 - Restoring the city that was cursed by Joshua (see Josh. 6:26)
2. Perhaps this is a military and commercial venture for Ahab
 - By fortifying Jericho Ahab will have access to all that is east of the Jordan river

II. ELIJAH'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (17:1)

- Israel's prophet

A. AWARE OF GOD'S AUTHORITY

1. Speaking of "The Lord God of Israel"
2. Defying the thought that the "god" of Israel was Baal
3. Reminding the king that God had not given up His position!

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B. AWARE OF GOD'S ACTIVITY

1. The God of Israel lives
2. He is not dead or dying
3. Just because some defy Him does not mean that He has been disabled
 - See for example I Sam. 17:45-47

C. AWARE OF GOD'S PRESENCE

1. Elijah indicates He is the Lord "before whom I stand"
2. Elijah was standing before the Lord when most were standing away from Him
3. God's prophet is a submissive servant of a real and living, powerful God

D. AWARE OF GOD'S ENABLEMENT

1. Elijah's name means "Jehovah is my strength" and Elijah believes that
2. This man believes and acts upon what God says by predicting an ongoing drought
 - See James 5:17-18

E. AWARE OF GOD'S WORD

1. God had promised to withhold rain from His people if they turned away from Him
 - See Lev. 26:18-19 and Deut. 11:16-17
2. It is likely that most people did not believe God
3. Elijah did not hesitate to go directly to the king and provide a divine declaration

III. CULTURAL QUESTIONS**A. TO WHOM DO WE LISTEN?**

- The wicked or the righteous

B. TO WHOM DO WE YIELD?

- Baal or God

C. TO WHOM DO WE BELONG?

- The sinners or the Savior

D. FOR WHOM WILL WE BOLDLY SPEAK?

- If we're not speaking up for God, aren't we silently endorsing the evil?

CONCLUSION:

Elijah zealously confronted the sinful conditions around him

Will we stand and fight for a culture in crisis?

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