

Week 24

June 11 - 17

1 Kings 17:8-22:53; 2 Kings 1:1-10:31; 2 Chronicles 18:1-22:9

This week's passage describes God speaking in a variety of rather powerful ways (fire from Heaven, famine, etc.). However, Elijah discovered God's typical approach: God spoke in a quiet whisper. As you read these passages you may be convicted and/or enlightened as you consider how you listen for God's voice.

June 11th

1 Kings 17:8-20:22. "His Whispers"

I can't imagine too many ways God could have spoken louder than He did on Mt. Carmel. "Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from Heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the ditch!" (18:38). It wasn't a thunder storm. There was not a cloud in the sky. In fact, only after that event, and following Elijah's prayer, did a cloud even appear. Then, after three years of drought God spoke in a torrential rain.

The wicked Jezebel vowed to kill Elijah, who ran away discouraged and depressed. Elijah cried out his frustrations to God, who then told Elijah to stand on the mountain as He passed by. A mighty windstorm hit the mountain, but the LORD was not in the wind. Then there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. Then there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. Next was the sound of a gentle whisper. That's where the LORD came. Listen to His whispers.

June 12th

1 Kings 20:23-22:9; 2 Chronicles 18:1-8. "Listening Amidst the Noise"

Jehoshaphat was listed as "a good king, but..." He fell short in seeing things through to the end. He did not completely destroy idolatry in Judah. He did not think through the long-term results of his decisions; be it allying with a wicked king, or allying his son in marriage to a wicked king. His poor decisions resulted in mediocrity as a parent and a king.

However, he is to be commended for how he sought the desire of the LORD regarding the decision to go to battle against the Arameans. Jehoshaphat wanted to hear from God and recognized that Ahab's prophets were not of God. Ahab also knew there was a difference. In fact, Ahab recognized that often the messages from God's prophets were different than that of his idol-worshipping prophets.

Although the noise of 400 erroneous prophets was loud around him Jehoshaphat wanted to hear even just one quiet voice from God. How well do you recognize God's voice and His message? Does the noise of the world get in the way?

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June 13th

1 Kings 22:10-40, 51-53; 2 Chronicles 18:9-20:30. "Unpopular Proclamation"

After reading today's passage, the bottom line has to be; "Sometimes people don't like to hear what the Lord has to say." Micaiah's prophetic messages from the Lord always irritated King Ahab. In fact, he hated Micaiah for it. There was never any "good news" for Ahab (no doubt something that would support his evil acts).

Ahab's wicked prophets told Micaiah what he should say; only that which would agree with and make Ahab happy. The evil prophet, Zedekiah, danced around with iron horns pretending to have a message for Ahab. He also hated Micaiah's message and slapped him across the face. Ahab then had Micaiah put in prison, and fed nothing but bread and water. And we never read whether or not he ever got out of prison.

When you listen for God's voice are you hearing the exhorting and the encouragement? Do you listen to the convicting as you would the comforting? Or, how are you at heeding God's word even when it's not the most popular opinion or comfortable answer?

June 14th

1 Kings 22:41-50; 2 Kings 1:1-18; 3:1-27; 8:16-22; 2 Chronicles 20:31-37; 21:1-7. "What If He's Too Quiet?"

God had been put on the back burner.

Ahaziah, Ahab's son, barely made it over one year reigning as king. After falling in his palace, he was seriously injured. So, he sent messengers to the temple of Baal-zebub. This god was thought to possess supernatural power and the power of prophecy. Needless to say, that idea didn't work. Instead, the Almighty God of Israel who truly possesses supernatural powers and the power of prophecy sent a message through His messenger, Elijah.

God's message to King Ahaziah was one of condemnation for choosing to seek answers from idols, from gods who could not do a single thing. Ahaziah ignored God and looked elsewhere.

It's obvious Ahaziah chose foolishly to look elsewhere for answers. However, I was pondering the times we may have the tendency to look elsewhere for answers. I'd ask you to ponder this: If God is quiet do you look elsewhere? We may not have put Him on the back burner, but if we don't hear from Him quickly do we look somewhere else?

June 15th

2 Kings 2:1-25; 4:1-44. "What Do You Hear Him Say?"

A wealthy woman from Shunem sensed Elisha had a need and then took it to the next step and met that need. There are several wonderful attributes displayed in her life. First, in discerning a need she had to be sensitive and open to the hardships of others. She was obviously a person of compassion and grace. Secondly, she was obedient and responsive to the will and desires of God. Third, she was willing to spend time and money to meet other's needs. There is an enormous difference between sensing someone's needs and meeting their needs. James says it well, "Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, and you say, "Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?" (2:15-16).

Obviously, she also exercised hospitality and generosity, but beyond that she looked for ways to serve and help. Although God asks it of each of us, we may not do so as freely as we should.

June 16th

2 Kings 5:1-8:15. "Hoping for the Loud"

Have you ever expected God to answer a certain way only to find out He answered differently? Naaman was angry when the answer he expected to hear from God's prophet came back differently. In fact, Naaman's officers confronted him on this point. They asked him why he was only looking for a loud and great reply, and not willing to listen to the simple and quiet response.

In this case, the result was the same, as far as healing goes, but the spiritual result was something deeper and greater. Naaman came away from the experience "know(ing) at last that there is no God in all the world except in Israel." He also vowed to "never again offer any burnt offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the LORD."

There may be something glamorous or sensational about a loud and great response from the Lord. Yet, for that very reason, it may be why God chooses to respond more often in a quiet and simple way. In humility may we hear God's quiet voice.

June 17th

2 Kings 8:23-10:31; 2 Chronicles 21:8-22:9. "Obedient Conspiracy"

Jehu was anointed by Elijah and Elisha and sent forth to destroy the family of the evil King Ahab. He did so, obediently and faithfully. He destroyed the idols and priests of Baal.

In the end God told him he had done fairly well in doing what he was asked, but he "did not obey...with all his heart." He was a bit careless in what he did. He also worshipped the golden idols of many years earlier.

He was God's instrument, but not His servant. In fact, his fault was that he "was devoted to God only to the point that obedience served his own interests" (Life Application).

Selective listening makes for selective obedience. There are people today that believe we should be obedient to God because of what we can get out of it. Should we only obey because we will receive a reward for our obedience? Do we only contemplate tithing, evangelism, serving, and even Heaven as a means to a personal reward? Where do personal interests fit into your obedience?