

VRBC *women*



Purified *in* Fire

Before Whom I Stand

1 Kings 16:29-17:6



Before Whom I Stand

- *The days are evil.*
- *The defense is ready.*

The days are evil.

1 Kings 16:29

In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.



A brief history:

Genesis: God **chooses** Abraham

Abrahamic Covenant — Genesis 12, 15, 17

- God promises Abraham **offspring, land, and blessing**, and that through him all nations will be blessed.
- An **unconditional** covenant based on God's promise.

↓

Exodus: God **rescues** Israel

Mosaic Covenant — Exodus 19–24

- God makes Israel His covenant people and gives them the **Law**, including the Ten Commandments.
- A **conditional** covenant: Blessings for obedience and consequences for disobedience.

↓

Joshua: God **gives** Israel the land

↓

Judges: Israel **rebels** repeatedly



A brief history:

Kings: Saul



David: God **establishes** the kingdom and promises a Messiah

Davidic Covenant — 2 Samuel 7

- God promises David an enduring **dynasty and kingdom**, with a descendant who will have an everlasting throne.
- Points toward the coming **Messiah/King**.



Solomon: Israel reaches its **peak**, then falls into idolatry



1 Kings: The kingdom **divides:** Israel in the north, Judah in the south



1 Kings 17: Israel is deep in **idolatry**



The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

(c. 930 – 722 BC / 931 – 586 BC)

Kingdom of Israel
(northern kingdom)

Kingdom of Judah
(southern kingdom)

Sidon

Assyrian
Empire

Mediterranean
Sea

ISRAEL

• Samaria

AMMON

JUDAH

• Jerusalem

Dead
Sea

MOAB

Babylonian
Empire

PHILISTINES

EDOM



0 25 50 75 100 Miles
0 50 100 150 Kilometers

Modern Day Middle East (Countries and Borders)



Will God's people trust Him, worship Him alone, and remain faithful to His covenant?



The days are evil.

1 Kings 16:30-34

³⁰ 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.**

³⁴ In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.



The days are evil.

Married Jezebel:

- Likely an economic alliance
- Adopted her pagan worship- Baal and Asherah

Rebuilt Jericho:

- Joshua 6:26-
“Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, “Cursed before the LORD be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.
“At the cost of his firstborn
shall he lay its foundation,
and at the cost of his youngest son
shall he set up its gates.””
- Consequences of Joshua’s curse- Hiel lost two sons

Willful, gleeful disobedience and defiance of God’s word.



The days are evil, indeed.

Remember the *conditional*, mosaic covenant:

**Obey and be blessed, disobey and face judgement,
ultimately exile.**

Evil is capable of exponential progress, but God sees and
stands at the ready.



The defense is ready.

1 Kings 17:1

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.”



The defense is ready.

- Who is Elijah?

- Name means: "**My God is Yahweh**" or "The LORD is my God."

- Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead -
 - a nobody from nowhere



The defense is ready.

*“For to see him [Elijah] appear thus [i.e. so suddenly] reminds us that **we need not despair** when we see great movements of evil achieving spectacular success on this earth, for we may be sure that God, in unexpected places, has already secretly prepared His counter-movement...Whenever evil flourishes, it is always a superficial flourish, for at the height of the triumph of evil **God will be there**, ready with His man and His movement and His plans to ensure that His own cause will **never fail**.”*

Ronald Wallace, *Elijah and Elisha*



The defense is ready.

Elijah:

- **Reminds them of the covenant (s)**
Lord, the God of Israel
- **Tells them where he gets the authority**
the LIVING God
- **Tells them how he gets the courage**
before whom I stand

***We are only as brave in the throne rooms of this world as we
are settled in the presence of the living God.***



The defense is ready.

“The Presence and the manifestation of the Presence are not the same. There can be the one without the other. God is here when we are wholly unaware of it... On our part there must be surrender to the Spirit of God... If we co-operate with Him in loving obedience, God will manifest Himself to us, and that manifestation will be the difference between a nominal Christian life and a life radiant with the light of His face.”

A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*



The defense is ready.

- **Tells them what's about to happen**

there shall be neither dew nor rain these years

- Direct strike at Baal
- Covenant-breaking consequence

Whose world is this, really?



The defense is ready.

- **Tells them who is in control**
except by MY WORD

James 5:16-17

“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently...”



The defense is ready.

1 Kings 17:2-4

² 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.”



The defense is ready.

Elijah's withdrawal:

1. Protection
2. Formation
3. Judgment



The defense is ready.

1 Kings 17:5-6

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.



The defense is ready.

God Provides:

- Through the unclean
- In His timing



Do we know where we stand?



The defense is ready.

John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**



Discussion Questions:

1. Scripture tells us Ahab "did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him" (1 Kings 16:33). Evil like this rarely happens all at once. It is built through small compromises. **Where do you see the pattern of compromise leading to Ahab's downfall, and where might we be tempted toward similar "small" compromises in our own lives?**
2. Before Elijah needs the provision, God has already arranged it. **What does that teach us about God's foreknowledge and care?**
3. Elijah's courage came from knowing whose presence mattered most. **Where are you most tempted to live "before" the approval, expectations, or power of other people rather than before God?**

