

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 13, Elijah and Redemptive History Preaching Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 13, Elijah and Redemptive History Preaching, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Robert Vannoy explores preaching on Old Testament narratives, specifically focusing on Elijah through a redemptive-historical lens. It contrasts exemplaristic and redemptive historical approaches, advocating the latter to understand God's actions in history. **The lecture draws on the work of M.B. Van't Veer to examine Elijah's confrontation with Ahab and the significance of Elijah's subsequent concealment in the Kerith Ravine.** Ahab's syncretism is highlighted as a failure to maintain the antithesis between God and the world. **Elijah's strength is shown as an appeal to God's covenant faithfulness, contrasting with Ahab's actions.** The lecture concludes by discussing the revelatory significance of Elijah's concealment and how God's care for him points to Jesus Christ.

**2. 27 - minute Audio Podcast Created based on
Dr. Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 13 – Double click
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Exodus to Exile).**



**Vannoy_ExttoExileK_
Session 13.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 13, Elijah and Redemptive History Preaching

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Robert Vannoy's Lecture 13 on Elijah and Redemptive History Preaching:

Briefing Document: Dr. Vannoy on Elijah and Redemptive Historical Preaching

I. Overview

Dr. Vannoy's lecture focuses on approaching Old Testament (specifically the Elijah narratives in 1 Kings) historical narratives through a *redemptive historical* lens. He contrasts this approach with the *exemplaristic* or *illustrative* approach. While he acknowledges the legitimacy of finding examples for our own lives in these stories, he argues that a solely exemplaristic reading fails to fully capture the significance of biblical history, which is fundamentally about God's work of redemption. The lecture draws heavily on the work of M.B. Van't Veer and his book *My God is Yahweh*.

II. Key Concepts and Themes

- **Exemplaristic vs. Redemptive Historical Preaching:** The lecture hinges on this distinction. Exemplaristic preaching focuses on moral lessons and examples to emulate, while redemptive historical preaching emphasizes how the narrative reveals God's redemptive plan in history. Vannoy advocates for the latter as a more complete approach. He states, "if that's all we do, I don't think we've done justice to the historical narratives of the Old Testament because the history of the Bible, whether Old or New Testament for that matter, is basically about redemption."
- **The Antithesis Embodied in Ahab and Elijah:** Vannoy, drawing on Van't Veer, highlights the stark contrast between Ahab and Elijah as representing a fundamental antithesis: "Van't Veer suggests that in these two figures, Ahab and Elijah, you have embodied an antithesis...between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan." This antithesis is further described as existing "between truth and error, between belief and unbelief," and even echoing back to "the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman" in Genesis.

- Ahab's Sin of Syncretism:** Ahab's actions are characterized as *syncretism*, which Vannoy defines as "basically the failure to maintain the antithesis." Ahab's attempt to combine the worship of Yahweh with Baal is presented as a violation of the first commandment and a dangerous erosion of the distinctiveness God intended for his people. "Syncretism attempts to erase the lines that God had drawn around his people." He contrasts this with Jezebel's desire to completely wipe out worship of the Lord, arguing that Ahab's approach is arguably more dangerous because it is deceptive.
- God's Covenant Faithfulness:** A central theme is God's faithfulness to his covenant even when his people are unfaithful. Elijah's appearance and pronouncement of the drought are interpreted as God acting in accordance with the covenant curses outlined in Deuteronomy. As Vannoy states, "God is faithful to his covenant even when his people forsake the covenant because God sent Elijah."
- Elijah's Strength in Appealing to God's Covenant:** Vannoy asserts that "the strength of Elijah was that he appealed to God's covenant faithfulness. He asked God to do that which he had promised to do, and that is withhold the rain. Elijah's prayer was a prayer of faith because it was grounded in the word of God."
- Modern Syncretism and Maintaining the Antithesis:** The lecture connects the sin of syncretism to contemporary issues, arguing that the call to maintain the antithesis between God's people and the world remains relevant. He acknowledges the influence of Hegelian philosophy and its relativism, noting, "There are no absolutes if we define syncretism as erasing the lines that God has drawn around his people. I think that's certainly a continuing problem today, this whole distinction between the church and the world, between believers and unbelievers."
- The Revelatory Significance of Elijah's Concealment:** Vannoy explores the meaning behind God's command for Elijah to hide in the Kerith Ravine. While safety might be a consideration, it is not seen as the primary reason. Instead, Elijah's concealment signifies a cessation of revelation. "His concealment says to us that revelation has ceased...His concealment says that God is going to stop speaking to his people through his prophet." This silence intensifies the judgment on Israel.
- The Significance of God's Care for Elijah:** Vannoy cautions against interpreting the Kerith Ravine story solely as a general promise of God's providential care for all

believers in all circumstances. He contextualizes it within redemptive history: "Elijah's a prophet; Elijah's the bearer of the revelation of God to Israel. The Lord sustains him because his work is not yet finished."

- **Elijah's Weakness Points to Jesus Christ:** Finally, Elijah's limitations are highlighted. He could pronounce judgment but not offer forgiveness or justification, demonstrating the need for a "greater than Elijah" – Jesus Christ.

III. Practical Implications for Preaching

- **Emphasize Redemptive History:** Preachers should strive to present Old Testament narratives not just as moral examples, but as part of God's unfolding plan of redemption.
- **Identify the Antithesis:** Explore the conflicts and contrasts within the narratives to reveal the ongoing battle between God's kingdom and the kingdom of Satan.
- **Connect to the Covenant:** Understand the historical context of the covenant and how God's actions fulfill or relate to its stipulations.
- **Address Modern Syncretism:** Challenge contemporary forms of syncretism that blur the lines between the church and the world.
- **Balance Prayer and Action:** Emphasize the importance of both prayer and active engagement in fulfilling God's will, following the "ora et labora" model.

IV. Suggested Resources (from the lecture)

- Greidanus, Sydney. *Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, chapter 9 on preaching Hebrew narrative.
- Greidanus, Sydney. *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Text*.
- Van't Veer, M.B. *My God is Yahweh: Elijah and Ahab in the Age of Apostasy*.
- Trueman, Carl (article).
- Trimp, C. (article).

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 13, Elijah and Redemptive History Preaching

Elijah and Redemptive History: A Study Guide

I. Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What are the two primary approaches to preaching on historical narratives discussed in the lecture, and how do they differ?
2. According to Van't Veer, what theme is exemplified in 1 Kings 17:1, where Elijah confronts Ahab?
3. Explain the "antithesis" embodied by Ahab and Elijah, as described in the lecture.
4. What is syncretism, and how did Ahab's actions exemplify this sin?
5. How did Ahab's actions differ from those of Solomon?
6. According to the lecture, what does the name "Elijah" mean, and why is this significant?
7. What was the source of Elijah's strength, and how is this demonstrated in his actions in 1 Kings 17?
8. How did Elijah's knowledge of the covenant established in Deuteronomy factor into his prayer regarding the drought?
9. According to the lecture, how is the concealment of Elijah in the Kerith Ravine of revelatory significance?
10. How does Dr. Vannoy critique the common understanding of Elijah being sustained by the ravens?

II. Quiz Answer Key

1. The two primary approaches are the **exemplaristic/illustrative approach** and the **redemptive-historical approach**. The former focuses on using the narrative to find examples for our own lives, while the latter emphasizes understanding the narrative within the broader context of God's redemptive plan in history.
2. The theme is "**God is faithful to his covenant even when his people forsake the covenant.**" This is seen in Elijah's confrontation with Ahab and the

pronouncement of the drought as a consequence of Israel's covenant unfaithfulness.

3. Ahab and Elijah embody the **antithesis between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan**. This represents the broader conflict between truth and error, belief and unbelief, that runs throughout biblical history.
4. Syncretism is **the failure to maintain the antithesis** or union of conflicting beliefs. Ahab exemplified this by allowing Baal and Asherah to be worshipped alongside Yahweh, violating the first commandment.
5. Solomon gradually slid into building temples for other deities towards the end of his reign, but Ahab made a conscious choice of policy to give Baal and Asherah a place for official worship next to the worship of the Lord.
6. The name "Elijah" means "**My God is Yahweh.**" This is significant because it encapsulates the fundamental message Elijah brought to the people of Israel, reminding them of the one true God in the face of Baal worship.
7. Elijah's strength came from **his appeal to God's covenant faithfulness**. He asked God to enact the covenant curses outlined in Deuteronomy as a consequence of Israel's disobedience.
8. Elijah was familiar with the covenant that God established with Israel in the book of Deuteronomy. The Lord said that if the people were disobedient there would be certain curses, one being a drought. Elijah uses this knowledge of God's covenant to appeal to the Lord.
9. The concealment of Elijah is of revelatory significance because **it symbolizes the cessation of God's direct communication with his people** through a prophet. It highlights God's judgment and isolation of the people from His word.
10. He argues that the typical understanding of Elijah being sustained by the ravens is not the correct message of the text. Dr. Vannoy says that you can't use the passage to insinuate that God will never let his children die of hunger or thirst, because there are Christians who suffer and many of them do hunger and thirst and God doesn't send his ravens.

III. Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of approaching Old Testament narratives from a redemptive-historical perspective. What are the benefits and potential challenges of this approach for preaching and understanding the text?
2. Explain the concept of "syncretism" as it relates to Ahab's reign and its implications for contemporary Christian life. How does modern syncretism manifest itself, and what are the dangers it poses to the church?
3. Analyze the role of Elijah as a prophet in the context of 1 Kings 17. How does his confrontation with Ahab and subsequent concealment reveal the nature of God's judgment and covenant faithfulness?
4. "Elijah's concealment reveals his own weakness and points to the 'greater than Elijah' – Jesus Christ." Explore this statement in detail, drawing connections between Elijah's limitations and the redemptive work of Christ.
5. Compare and contrast the exemplaristic and redemptive-historical approaches to preaching on historical narratives, illustrating their strengths and weaknesses with specific examples from the Elijah narrative.

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Exemplaristic Approach:** An approach to interpreting biblical narratives that emphasizes the characters as moral examples or illustrations for contemporary believers.
- **Redemptive-Historical Approach:** An approach to interpreting biblical narratives that emphasizes understanding the events within the overarching context of God's plan of redemption throughout history, culminating in Christ.
- **Antithesis:** A direct opposition or contrast between two things. In the lecture, it refers to the fundamental opposition between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, or between truth and error.
- **Syncretism:** The amalgamation or attempted reconciliation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought. In the context of the lecture, it refers to the mixing of the worship of Yahweh with pagan practices, particularly the worship of Baal and Asherah.
- **Theocracy:** A system of government in which priests rule in the name of God or a god. In the context of the lecture, it refers to the nation of Israel during the Old Testament period.
- **Post-Hegelian:** Relating to or characteristic of the period after the death of the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, marked by a questioning of absolute truth and an emphasis on relativism.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or promise between God and his people. In the Old Testament, the covenant established with Israel included blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.
- **Kerith Ravine:** The location where God commanded Elijah to hide and be sustained by ravens during the drought (1 Kings 17:2-6). It symbolizes God's provision and protection of his servants, even in times of isolation.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible, often translated as "LORD" in English translations. It represents God's covenant faithfulness and his unique relationship with his people.
- **Baal:** A Canaanite deity associated with fertility, rain, and storms. The worship of Baal was a common form of idolatry in ancient Israel, and it represented a rejection of the covenant with Yahweh.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 13, Elijah and Redemptive History Preaching, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Redemptive Historical Preaching and the Story of Elijah

1. What are the exemplaristic and redemptive historical approaches to preaching historical narratives, and why is the latter emphasized?

The exemplaristic approach focuses on extracting moral lessons and examples from the lives of biblical figures for application to our own lives. While valuable, it doesn't fully capture the essence of biblical history, which is fundamentally about God's redemptive work. The redemptive historical approach emphasizes understanding how historical narratives reveal God's plan of redemption unfolding through history, highlighting God's actions and purposes in bringing about revelation and salvation. While the exemplaristic approach is not necessarily wrong, the redemptive historical approach provides a deeper and more complete understanding of the text.

2. What is the significance of the antithesis between Ahab and Elijah in 1 Kings 17:1?

Ahab and Elijah embody the antithesis between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Ahab, representing apostasy and syncretism, stands in stark contrast to Elijah, whose name means "My God is Yahweh," and who represents faithfulness to the covenant. This antithesis reflects a broader battle throughout biblical history between truth and error, belief and unbelief. Their confrontation underscores the ongoing conflict between God's people and the forces that oppose Him.

3. What was Ahab's sin, and how does it relate to the concept of syncretism?

Ahab's primary sin was syncretism – the attempt to combine the worship of Yahweh with the worship of Baal and Asherah. Syncretism is the failure to maintain the antithesis between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. By giving Baal and Asherah a place of official worship alongside Yahweh, Ahab violated the first commandment and undermined the exclusive devotion God requires. This attempt to erase the lines that God had drawn around his people, which had potentially more dangerous implications than solely eradicating the worship of the Lord.

4. How does the lecture define "syncretism" and what are some modern day examples of it?

Syncretism is defined as the union of conflicting beliefs, attempting to erase the lines that God has drawn around his people. In modern contexts, syncretism manifests as a relativistic mindset, where absolute truths are rejected. We can see this distinction between church and the world and believers and unbelievers.

5. How does Elijah's name connect to his message and role in redemptive history?

Elijah's name, meaning "My God is Yahweh," is intrinsically linked to his message and role. At a time when Israel was turning to other gods, Elijah's name served as a constant reminder of the true God and His covenant. His very existence and pronouncements were a living sermon, calling the people back to exclusive devotion to Yahweh.

6. What was the significance of the drought that Elijah pronounced, and how does it relate to the covenant curses in Deuteronomy?

The drought was not merely a natural disaster but a covenant curse, as outlined in Deuteronomy. Elijah, familiar with the covenant stipulations, appealed to God's faithfulness by asking God to do that which he had promised he would do. When the people turned away from God, He would withhold the rain, resulting in famine. Elijah's pronouncement of the drought was therefore an act of divine judgment, demonstrating the consequences of covenant unfaithfulness.

7. Why was Elijah commanded to hide in the Kerith Ravine, and what is the revelatory significance of his concealment?

Elijah's concealment in the Kerith Ravine was not primarily for his safety, but rather, it revealed that revelation had ceased. God removed his spokesman from among his own people, that the prophet's removal tended to confirm and intensify the judgment. God is isolating his people from the administration of his word. While isolated from the people, God stays in communication and cares for Elijah.

8. How does understanding Elijah's story through a redemptive historical lens affect our understanding of God's care and our own role as believers today?

Viewing Elijah's story redemptive historically cautions against simplistic interpretations of God's care. While God did provide miraculously for Elijah, it's crucial to recognize Elijah's unique role as a prophet in redemptive history, his is an act of God demonstrating what a lack of covenant faithfulness looks like and means for God's people. Moreover, we have a calling to maintain the antithesis, to preserve a faithful remnant of God's people and our strength should be found where Elijah's was, a faithful covenant faith in God.