

I Kings Lesson 18

I Kings Chapter 18

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

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Memory verses for this week: *Jer 10:10 But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.*

Introduction: In last week's lesson, we covered the beginning of the prophet of Elijah who came on the scene to confront King Ahab. God sent him to the brook of Cherith where he obtained water and was fed by meat that ravens brought him daily. Eventually, the brook dried up and God directed him to a widow in the land of Zarephath. This was a test of faith by both Elijah and the widow woman who had virtually nothing, but she was faithful and the bible says that the food lasted because she obeyed the Lord.

1Ki 17:14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

1Ki 17:15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

1Ki 17:16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

In this week's lesson, Elijah, at the command of God, returns and confronts King Ahab, calling for a contest between the Lord and Baal. Needless to say, God is victorious, and the many prophets of Baal suffer humiliation and swift death at the hands of the people who witnessed the contest.

I. The Servant of God, The Servant of Ahab, and the Servant of Baal

1Ki 18:1 And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

1Ki 18:2 And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.

Elijah, the Servant of God, is directed by the Word of the Lord: "Go, shew thyself...."

Jeremiah 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

We too are directed by the Word of the Lord, the Written Word of God.

Psalm 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

God promises to send rain. (See verse 45)

1Ki 18:45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

In verse 2, the bible says Elijah was obedient to the command of God. All great men in the word of God had a common thread. They had faith, and they were obedient unto the Lord.

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

1Ki 18:3 And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:

1Ki 18:4 For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

Obadiah was the Servant of Ahab and it says in verse 3 that he feared the Lord greatly. It is unlikely that this Obadiah was the writer of the Old Testament book. Obadiah was the governor of Ahab's house and verse 3 suggests that he was of a capable and trustworthy character. It says he feared the Lord greatly.

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom....

Obadiah hid God's prophets and cared for them. Obadiah apparently had little influence with Ahab. In view of Jezebel's campaign against the prophets, and Obadiah's reluctance to announce Elijah's return to his king, Obadiah may have followed the Lord only in secret. He had not taken a stand, nor separated himself from the apostates as did Elijah.

John Gill said this about Obadiah helping the prophets hide.

For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord,.... Or slew them, as the Targum; put them to death some way or another; such as were brought up in the schools of the prophets, trained up in religious exercises, and instructed others therein:

that Obadiah took one hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave; fifty in one cave and fifty in another; for there were large caves in the land of Israel capable of holding such a number, and many more, see [1Sa 22:1](#) and fed them with bread and

water; which in this time of famine were very acceptable; though these may be put for all the necessaries of life.

2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

2Co 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1Co 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

1Ki 18:5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

1Ki 18:6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

Now Ahab was not only the king but he was the servant of Baal.

1Ki 16:31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

Ahab is concerned only for the welfare of the horses and mules. He has no concern for his people suffering under the drought and famine. He certainly has no concern for the spiritual condition of his people. Unlike Ahab, our God and King cares for us.

1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

II. The Servant of God Meets the Servant of Ahab

1Ki 18:7 And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?

1Ki 18:8 And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

1Ki 18:9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

Obadiah, the servant of Ahab, is suddenly thrust into the service of God. Initially, he is a reluctant messenger and fears the consequences of serving God. We too may not be well received when we speak up and make up the hedge.

Luke 12:4-5 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Obadiah feared death at the hand of Ahab. God has promised to bless those who will stand strong with faith.

Revelation 2:10b Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

As happens many times, the plan of God was not in agreement with Obadiah's plans.

1Ki 18:10 As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

1Ki 18:11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

1Ki 18:12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

1Ki 18:13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

1Ki 18:14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

1Ki 18:15 And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.

1Ki 18:16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

Although earlier he had avoided serving God, it suddenly becomes necessary for Obadiah to declare his great service for God. Notice it is only after assurance from Elijah that Obadiah submits. We should never hold back in serving the Lord waiting for someone to spur us on to action. When you look at what Christ has done for us, we could never do enough to repay the great price he paid there on Calvary. Of course we love him and serve Him because He first loved us. We serve due to being saved, not in order to be saved or maintain our salvation.

III. The Servant of God Meets the Servant of Baal

1Ki 18:17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art

thou he that troubleth Israel?

1Ki 18:18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

Ahab wrongly accuses Elijah as the reason for the great evil upon the land. He says "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Of course the king has evil intentions for Elijah. Even though his life is on the line, Elijah fearlessly speaks the truth. In Verse 18, he says you have followed after Baalim. (Baalim is the plural of Baal) Rather than seizing or killing Elijah, or even demanding the end of the drought, Ahab is suddenly compliant.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

John Wesley in his commentary said this:

1 Kings 18:18

He answered - These calamities are not to be imputed to me, but thine and thy father's wickedness. He answered him boldly, because he spoke in God's name, and for his honour and service. Ye - All of you have forsaken the Lord, and thou in particular, hast followed Baalim.

1Ki 18:19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

1Ki 18:20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

1Ki 18:21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Elijah calls for a contest between his God and the gods of apostate Israel. He calls them to a place for the contest and calls out all the people. The location is Mt. Carmel. The Carmel range of mountains give a commanding view of the Mediterranean Sea and the great plain of Esdraelon where the battle of Armageddon will be fought. Ahab's summer palace and Jezebel's temple were located at Jezreel, which was not far away. He tells Ahab to send for all the children of Israel so that they would be present. There were 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves that were to be there, but apparently the 400 fail to show. (Asherah was the goddess of the groves)

Since it is 450 to one, it appears the apostates seem to have the advantage. Apostate religion was long established in Israel, beginning with Jeroboam and his golden calves. There were at least 850 false prophets in the land, while Elijah stood alone. Apostate religion was established and supported by the King and Queen. The Baal of the Zidonians, from whence came Jezebel, was a sun-god, more specifically, a god of fire. Elijah asks the people "How Long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him:, but if Baal, then follow

him." Elijah's challenge to the people of Israel shows they are not ready to commit as the people answered him not a word.

IV. The Servant of God Meets the Prophets of Baal.

1Ki 18:22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

1Ki 18:23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:

1Ki 18:24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

1Ki 18:25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

Elijah makes a challenge to the prophets of Baal. Either God could answer. The true God would answer by fire. We know that the Devil is also able to perform miracles: Pharaoh's magicians were able to perform the same miracles as Moses; Satan caused fire to fall from heaven in his persecution of Job. The big difference is that Satan can do no more than God permits.

Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

1Ki 18:26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

1Ki 18:27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

1Ki 18:28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

1Ki 18:29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

1Ki 18:30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

1Ki 18:31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

The prophets of Baal accept the challenge proposed by Elijah and they called on their god, and "leaped upon the alter" (As a tempting sacrifice?). They cut themselves and offered their blood. Not willing to give up, these false prophets sought their god from morning to evening, but to no avail. In verse 30, Elijah

comes and repairs the altar. He prepares for his God to answer by fire. He calls the people near.

1Ki 18:32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

1Ki 18:33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

1Ki 18:34 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

1Ki 18:35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

1Ki 18:36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

1Ki 18:37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

Elijah repairs the broken altar and digs a trench about the altar. The bullock and the wood are prepared, and then drenched in water. This shows there is no deception and that the Lord is able. In verse 36, Elijah prays to his God, the one and only true living Jehovah God. He begins by praying to the God of their forefathers. He prays that God would manifest himself to this apostate people. He then prays that they would know he is the true servant of God.

1 Corinthians 1:22 For the Jews require a sign....

They wanted a sign or a miracle because of unbelief. He prays that their heart would be turned back again to the Lord God. We must remember that it takes more than seeing a sign or miracle to spiritually change a heart.

The word of God is quick, and powerful.... Hebrews 4:12

The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation...." Romans 1:16

Acts 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

1Ki 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

1Ki 18:39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

1Ki 18:40 And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

The result of Elijah's prayer was quick. Verse 38 says that the fire fell

immediately. All of the sacrifice, wood, stones, dust and water were all consumed. The people are humbled and are convince that the Lord is the God. The 450 prophets of Baal are destroyed.

Deu 13:1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

Deu 13:2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;

Deu 13:3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deu 13:4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

Deu 13:5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

* Additional Comments added by E.L. Bynum in Jan. 2014

I. The Sound of Abundance of Rain

1Ki 18:41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

1Ki 18:42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

We see in Verse 41 that Elijah is full of faith after his conquest over the prophets of Baal. Ahab is urged to eat and drink, perhaps in celebration of God's great victory, the peoples' confession, and the end of the drought. Elijah, full of faith, announces the coming of rain. But Elijah did not forget where his strength and confidence had come. In verse 42, we find Elijah in prayer to the Lord. Prayer is still necessary, even in the midst of great victory. If this is so, how much more necessary is it in times of trial?

Some verses in the New Testament concerning prayer include:

Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Colossians 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

In James, it talks about the subject of Elijah's prayer.

James 5:17-18 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

1Ki 18:43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

1Ki 18:44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

1Ki 18:45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

We have Elijah anticipating rain. Perhaps the servant for Elijah was provided by Obadiah. Some prayers may be answered immediately, like Elijah's prayer for fire, some are delayed, but all require faith. He tells him to go again 7 times. Seven more trips were required.

Seven is God's number of perfection and of His work in creation, and here an expression of Elijah's expectation. Would you and I return six additional times to see the answer of our prayers? Elijah did and never even questioned the Lord about. We have Elijah beholding the faithfulness of God in these verses. Initially all they have is only a little cloud. We should not discount the small blessings, they may lead to greater things. A little cloud shaped like a man's hand. Perhaps this was an indication of the hand of God in action.

Ahab is urged to head for home. He had much to consider as he rode to Jezreel in the pouring rain. (Jezreel was a second home to Ahab & Jezebel, perhaps a summer home.)

1Ki 18:46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

We have Elijah empowered by "the hand of God." God enables Elijah to run before Ahab.

One of my favorite verses in the Old Testament is *Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

The hand of God is always necessary to accomplish the work of God. It seems Elijah was not yet finished with Ahab. Maybe he wanted to deal with the prophets of the groves, the house of Baal, and the golden calves. The work of God must still continue after great victory, as well as in times of drought.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.