

Wednesday Night Adult Bible Study

June 17, 2020

1 Kings 18:1-8

And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth."

² So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria. ³ And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly. ⁴ For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) ⁵ And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock." ⁶ So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. ⁷ Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is that you, my lord Elijah?"

⁸ And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.' "

Contrast 18:1 with 17:2. There is a time for everything but we need to listen to the Lord. What an example this Obadiah character is.

1 Kings 18:15-19

¹⁵ Then Elijah said, "As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today."

¹⁶ So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

¹⁷ Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"

¹⁸ And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

Ahab takes us to a point where we call good evil and evil good. I think eating at Jezebel's table is a reference to government sponsorship. Like Elijah, I think it is of the greatest importance that believers continue to speak the truth.

1 Kings 18:20-24

²⁰ So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. ²¹ And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. ²² Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. ²³ Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God."

So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

Imagine the faith and courage it took to be the one without any support facing off against 450 backed by the government, the leadership of the government and the people content to follow that leadership.

1 Kings 18:25-29

²⁵ Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.”

²⁶ So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us!” But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

²⁷ And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.” ²⁸ So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. ²⁹ And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

Elijah gave them first dibs but that didn't matter Baal was a creation of the people. In contrast the Lord is the creator of the people. From Adam Clarke (1762-1832) – “I will give it in Latin, because it is too coarse to be put in English; *Fortassis ad locum secretum abiit, ut ventrem ibi exoneret*; ‘Perhaps he has gone to the ——-.’ This certainly reduces Baal to the lowest degree of contempt, and with it the ridicule and sarcasm are complete.”

1 Kings 18:36-40

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 Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word.

³⁷ Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.”

³⁸ Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!”

⁴⁰ And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!” So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

Look at Deuteronomy 13:1-5, Elijah did all these things at God's word.

1 Kings 19:1-4

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” ³ And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!”

There was no repentance in Jezebel, just a doubling down on lies. Elijah probably presumed that there would be no doubt as to who the true God is. Perhaps that is true but knowing and accepting are two completely different things. We get a glimpse into Elijah's humanity.

1 Kings 19:10-14

¹⁰ So he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

¹¹ Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

¹³ So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴ And he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

Elijah had given everything he had in his efforts to turn the hearts of his people back to the Lord, now he needed some encouragement. The great creator of the heavens and earth comforted Elijah in a still small voice.

1 Kings 19:15-18

¹⁵ Then the Lord said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. ¹⁶ Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. ¹⁷ It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. ¹⁸ Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.

In God's great love he know exactly what Elijah needed - a purpose, a prophecy, a friend and a reminder that Our God is Greater.

1 Kings 19:19-21

¹⁹ So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. ²⁰ And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you."

And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?"

²¹ So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

Elijah passed the mantle and Elisha accepted at considerable sacrifice.