

The Life and Times of Elijah and Elisha
Lesson 2 – The Battle of Mount Carmel
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Introduction: The child of God must fight in a world ruled by Satan.

- A. Satan is completely ruthless. He wants the ruin of everyone, including those who serve him! **(Jn 8:44)**
 - 1. All idolatry has Satan as the author of these “religious heritages.” **(1 Cor 10:20-21; Deut 32:17; Lev 17:7)**
 - 2. The idea of that the ministers of Satan being willing to “co-exist” with the people of God is a lie.
 - 3. He will, however, “co-exist” with the counterfeits he has made! **(2 Cor 11:4, 13-14)**
- B. With Jezebel introducing the worship of Baal the people of God were under attack.
 - 1. There was a great slaughter of God’s prophets led by Jezebel. **(1 Kings 18:4)**
 - 2. Israel was told they were following a path of “tolerance” and “openness.” When false religions gain control then all of their “tolerance” disappears!
 - 3. Was the battle lost? Of course not! One man and God will always win. **(Rom 8:31)**

I. Elijah had to wait on the Lord

- A. God had Elijah deliver a one-sentence sermon and then disappear! **(1 Kings 17:1)**
 - 1. We often think of God’s battles being won in a moment of confrontation with great arguments and powerful signs. This is rarely the case!
 - 2. The brief confrontation was brave and dramatic but God had a much broader battle plan.
 - 3. Who is God fighting for through Elijah? What does God hope to accomplish?
 - 4. Our God uses time and suffering to break the will of man and to open the heart of man. **(Judges 10:12-16)**
- B. Elijah had to wait in isolation. **(1 Kings 17:2-7)**
 - 1. The effect of the drought grew more powerful with time.
 - 2. The drought also affected the faithful too! God would provide for them. **(Hab 2:4; 3:16-19)**
 - 3. What effect would isolation have on Elijah? Not even the faithful would come to him to bring supplies? How long would it take for the brook to dry up?
 - 4. What did Elijah see each day and what would he learn from this?
 - 5. Did Elijah know how God would provide the victory? Why not?
 - 6. What would the drought do in the minds of Ahab, Jezebel and those that followed Baal? **(1 Kings 18:10)**
 - 7. As in the days of Moses, some were hardened and some saw God!
- C. Elijah was sent to a faithful widow. **(1 Kings 17:8-16)**
 - 1. How do we know she was a faithful follower of God? God spoke to her and Jesus makes a point about her faith in contrast to others! **(1 Kings 17:9; Lk 4:25-28)**

2. Why did God let this widow believe she was going to die? There is a difference between temptations and tests. God's tests make us stronger and will bring out good things in us.
 3. Even in the matter of deliverance, God is teaching! What things will the widow learn from this miracle?
- D. Elijah and John the Baptist had to learn to wait!
1. Both of these men were spiritual giants, yet God tested them to bring out their doubts. **(Lk 7:19-20)**
 2. A lengthy period of isolation plus a healthy dose of observing unfaithful people made both men wonder about the ultimate plan of God!
 3. Both men take their doubts to the Lord and are strengthened! **(Lk 7:21-23)**
- E. Elijah and the widow are tested at the loss of her son. **(1 Kings 17:17-24)**
1. Even now Elijah is in isolation. He must be careful as he continues to wait!
 2. The sudden death of the son causes great anxiety to Elijah. **(v20)**
 3. The final affect of the miracle is to strengthen the widow's faith. **(v24)**

II. Elijah's battle with the prophets of Baal

- A. Elijah's appearance came through a faithful man, Obadiah. **(1 Kings 18:1-4)**
1. By appearing to Obadiah first, God would make it clear that Ahab did not just "find" Elijah. God was in complete control of the situation.
 2. This also tested Obadiah! **(1 Kings 18:8, 12-15)**
- B. Elijah confronts Ahab without fear. **(1 Kings 18:17-18)**
1. The power of self-deception can be seen in Ahab! Did Ahab know why there was a drought? If Elijah had such power, where only could it have come from?
 2. Why does Ahab show such hostility towards Elijah? Was Ahab sincere in this?
 3. Who does Ahab blame? Who does God blame? Why is self-deception so easy?
- C. God is ready for a battle and the forces of Baal agree.
1. Why do the forces of Baal agree to confront Elijah? **(1 Kings 18:19-20)**
 2. Ahab brought all Israel together too so they could observe a divine "debate!"
 3. If there had been no famine Ahab would have never given a prophet of God an audience with Israel. God often used his prophets to contrast truth and error!
- D. A plain contrast between human religion and divine. **(1 Kings 18:21)**
1. Israel was a faithless, cowardly people.
 2. A divine demonstration that appealed to logic, and was open for investigation would help the people to reason and make a decision.
 3. They first decided to be "agnostic."
- E. A fair plan was given and the prophets of Baal actually tried to do that which they had never done before. **(1 Kings 18:22-29)**
1. They wanted to please the king and hold the minds of the people.
 2. The kings of Daniel's day also saw the difference between the fake and the real!
 3. The prophets of Baal were zealous and sacrificial. How was the truth to be determined on this day, emotion or reason?
 4. Elijah speaks to let all know what is at stake! Was this "offensive" to those who God was trying to reach?

F. A divine demonstration that cannot be questioned. **(1 Kings 18:30-38)**

1. The prophets of Baal were given all the advantages. They went first and were given the most time!
2. Elijah went out of his way to show that only the power of God was used and not any trick of men.
3. Elijah's prayer identifies the one true God and His past working with Israel. It also was a prayer for the repentance of the people. **(1 Kings 18:36-37)**

G. The turning of the people demanded that they take action! **(1 Kings 18:38-40)**

1. God could have destroyed the prophets like He did Korah.
2. True repentance always results in "fruit." What did Ahab think when he saw his subjects slay the prophets of Baal before his eyes!

1. What is characteristic of false religion? Who was the author of idolatry?
2. What are some possible reasons that God took such a long process in using a drought in teaching the people?
3. How do we know that the widow God sent to Elijah was a faithful person? How did God test both the widow and Elijah at this time?
4. What common tests did both Elijah and John the Baptist experience? How did John the Baptist handle his doubt?
5. How did God move the people to stand for Him? How can God do the same thing today when Christians start to follow a false way?

Learning from Elijah
by Connie Adams

The apostasy of Israel had developed to an extreme degree when Elijah stood before Ahab and said: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1). The prophet came to Ahab with a definite purpose — to deliver God's message — and when he had done so he was gone. If other words were spoken they are not recorded, but these were sufficient and Ahab understood them. Consider their implications.

1. God is presented as "the Lord God of Israel" and is described as he that "liveth." The very existence of Israel was attributable only to God who first announced his purposes to Abraham, and then through a series of providential events and circumstances developed those promises until the descendants of Jacob had truly become a great nation. This nation sustained a peculiar relationship to God as shown by the statement addressed to them at Sinai. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. 19:4-6).

He was "the Lord God of Israel" in that their present occupation of the land of Canaan was the result of Divine intervention and in fulfillment of God's promises. God had promised the land to Abraham for his seed, renewed the promise to Isaac and Jacob, and fulfilled it when Joshua and his troops marched triumphantly against the Canaanite tribes. Subsequently, the land was divided among the tribes of Israel, and Joshua declared that God had given it to them. "When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you" (Josh. 23:16). When Elijah spoke of "the Lord God of Israel" he stated a relationship which Ahab had ignored and spoke of a covenant he had broken.

God is presented as he that "liveth." This immediately elevated him above Baal to whom so many bowed at this period. As the "living God" he had blessed them and punished them when they rebelled. He was even at this time sensible to their apostasies and a reckoning was in order. If Ahab thought he could ignore the relationship between Israel and God and trample under his feet the covenant between them, it was time to remind him that Jehovah "liveth."

2. When Elijah said "before whom I stand," he made known both the author and judge of prophetic utterance. Elijah was not some crank preacher bent on gaining notice by predicting doom to a king. He was commissioned by God to

say this. There was also a comparison here which could only disquiet Ahab. Elijah also “stood” before Ahab, the king of Israel. Kings were accustomed to hearing words uttered in honor of their authority and from respectful subjects. Elijah indicated no subjection to this wicked monarch, no statement of honor to his “majesty” came. Elijah honored God, and him alone, by his words. These words summarized the life and work of the prophet. He walked with God, living in communion with his maker. Uprightness of character is a necessary element for those who would serve God acceptably. It was this standing before from which he not only received his oracles, but also the strength and courage to carry out his charge. Though the element of direct inspiration is changed, yet every preacher who stands before others to proclaim eternal truth, should first seek the pleasure of the author of that truth and not the praises of those who receive it. They stand before God. He shall bring the preacher to account for his words. Is it possible that many of our time have forgotten what Elijah kept before him in the presence of Ahab?

3. When Elijah said “there shall not be dew nor rain these years,” he stated what had been promised as a result of disobedience. Canaan had been described in this fashion: “For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills” (Deut. 8:7). It was called a land that “drinketh water of the rain of heaven” (Deut. 11:11). But such blessings were conditioned upon faithfulness. Unfaithfulness would have the opposite effect. “And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that they mayest eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; and then the Lord’s wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you” (Deut. 11:13-17).

For more than fifty years Israel had followed a trail of wickedness. The promise had been made and would be kept. There was nothing arbitrary in these terrible words of Elijah. His short statement not only warned Ahab of what was to come, it likewise involved the cause of the punishment. They had turned aside to other gods.

4. Although the Lord had promised such punishment for disobedience, he employed human agency to affect his work. Elijah said there would not be rain “but according to my word.” Jehovah has often used human agents to carry out his will or announce his purpose. It was God who brought Israel out of Egypt, yet he used Moses. God gave Jericho to Israel, but Joshua led the marching troops around the city the specified number of times. God shut up the heaven that it did not rain, yet James said that Elijah “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 (Jas. 5:17-18). God could have spoken directly to Ahab, but he sent Elijah. God still uses human agency in the great work of redemption. He could speak directly to the sinner, but he does not. Philip “began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8:35).

If Elijah’s prophecy sounded doom, it also contained an element of hope. The rain would cease “according” to his word, but it would also come again “according” to it.

His work done for this time, the prophet departed. Nor did he tarry to view the results. Too often men become overly concerned for immediate results. How often have prophets of old and preachers of the present looked expectantly to see immediate results from the sowing of the seed, and seeing none become despondent. Do we think we can add people to the church? We may plant and water but it is still God that gives the increase. His word will not return void. It may not always accomplish what we expect, or when we expect it, but the effort is not wasted.

We cannot fail to be given courage and strength from Elijah’s forthrightness in discharging his duty. Here was a concise message stripped of the enticing trappings and glittering tinsels which many of our day are prone to employ. It had a sting for the guilty heart of Ahab. Effective preaching has always pierced the hearts of the wicked. The 3,000 on Pentecost were “pricked in their hearts.” Those whose hearts are pierced with truth do not always respond to the will of God, but the honest do. This writer was once admonished by an elder to “just preach the gospel and let everyone alone.” But preaching which let’s everyone alone is not gospel preaching. The demand for a change in the sinner’s life bothers him. It is supposed to do just that. And though the indications are clear that Ahab did not repent at this time, who can deny that the prophet’s words were like piercing daggers to his sinful heart?

Amos well stated the compelling force that moved within the prophets. “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy” (Amos 3:7-8)?

The next article will concern Elijah’s stay by the brook Cherith and with the widow of Zarephath.