

What You Need to Know About ELIJAH:

“Someone Who Watched God at Work”

Study Number Three – 1 Kings 18:1-18

We’re studying the life of Elijah together. In our first session we saw Elijah come out of Gilead on the eastern side of the Jordan River into the palace. He told Ahab and Jezebel that because of their idolatry and wickedness, because of their departure to worship the god Baal, it was going to be three and a half years before it was going to rain again.

Then the Lord took our hero to Cherith, a very private isolated hide-a-way where he could be protected from the wrath of Ahab and the king’s palace. And for about 18 months he was at Cherith. Then after the brook dried up, the word of the Lord came for him to go to Zarephath.

And in our last study we saw him go right through the center of the land into the heart of Baal worship, the home of Jezebel’s daddy who is the king. And there to be provided for by a widow who was gathering sticks to fix her last meal when our good friend Elijah came on the scene.

There at Zarephath the Lord marvelously provided for him, but he had another trial. Whereas we had a drying brook, in our last study we had a dying boy. Just seemed like when

everything got going good, the son of this widow lady died.

And then we notice something terrific as a result of this trial. And that is, first of all, the Lord was preparing His servant Elijah for what was going to happen in the next study when he has his final confrontation with the nation Israel. And secondly we noticed in the last statement, in verse 24, the lady said, “Now I know that you’re a man of God. Now I know that the word that you speak is truth.”

And just the thrill of seeing somebody really come to a solid, complete conviction about a matter really makes a trial worthwhile. And this lady responded to this trial in a beautiful way as her son is given back to her. And in verse 24 she said, “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.”

Now these are the introductory observations to this study. He stayed in Zarephath for the rest of two years, being sustained daily by the Lord in providing the meal and the oil so that they could live there.

And then we come to chapter 18. It’s been three and a half years now since Elijah made the statement in the palace. So we pick up tonight with verse 1 of 1 Kings chapter 18.

v. 1 Now it came about after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.”

“Now it came about after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.””

Just as “the word of the Lord came” when he completed his palace assignment and said “go to Cherith,” and just as “the word of the Lord came” when the brook was drying up at Cherith, to go to Zarephath, now here comes the new assignment from the Lord.

He’s in the center of the Lord’s will and the Lord gives him new direction. And it says, “the word of the Lord...after many days...came to Elijah in the third year, saying.”

Now look at that statement, “after many days,” and tie that back into verse 15 of our previous study. We have that little phrase recurring.

“so she went”—verse 15—“and did according to the word of Elijah and she and he and her household ate for many days.”

In other words, the Lord faithfully provided every day from the time that widow was obedient to the word of Elijah, the Lord’s word through Elijah, until right now. And now it says, “after many days, the word of the Lord came to Elijah...saying, ‘Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.’”

When we see that term “many days” it refers to just living a day at a time. We need to recognize that the Lord didn’t dump the whole mess of meal and the whole pot of oil on them all at once. He daily provided, a day at a time, to meet their needs so they’d learn to trust Him.

And Psalm 90 says:

Psalm 90:12

So teach us to number our days
and to apply our hearts to wisdom.

It was just a single day at a time they trusted the Lord and He provided for them.

Now imagine if we got an assignment like this after living for, let’s say, three years in these two kinds of circumstances where the Lord had been providing for us—especially these last couple of years—wouldn’t we kind of have feelings of mixed emotions about leaving?

Elijah probably did. He’d probably become almost like a father image to this young boy in the household. And this guy had blessed that household by his dedication to God and by his prayer life.

And it was probably a very special relationship that he had here in this home. And first of all he’s thinking, “Oh how unfortunate that I’m gonna have to leave this place now.”

But secondly there's the gnawing sense of excitement. "Oh boy the times here, God's gonna use me now. I'm looking forward to getting out there and really having it out with Ahab."

And so the feelings are mixed at this point. One disappointment in leaving, another excitement about what the Lord's about to do.

The Lord's been preparing him for these three and a half years. Now He's going to put him into the middle of everything.

What is the command that the Lord gives to Elijah in verse 1?

"Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth."

We say, "Wow, what a difficult assignment."

"First let's go to Cherith, hide yourself. And down there it's a drying brook."

"Go to Zarephath. I'll provide for you. It's a dying boy."

And now it's right in the midst of a dangerous battle. The zero hour has arrived. The time to confront the wicked king is here.

Human nature always makes us want to avoid someone that's mad at us. Someone who is out to get us. Someone that doesn't

like us.

Well in this situation that's probably how Elijah feels. The last person he'd like to see right now is the guy who wants his head. And so the Lord says, "Go, reveal yourself to Ahab." In other words, "You've been hiding for three and a half years. Now it's time to go see him."

And then He gives him a little promise—which is really great. And there it is: "I will send rain upon the face of the earth."

Elijah's probably thinking:

God we rest on Thee,
Our shield and defender.
We go not forth alone against the foe,
Strong in Thy strength,
Safe in Thy keeping tender.
We rest on Thee
And in Thy name we go.
(source unknown)

Or with Isaiah the prophet's promise:

Isaiah 59:19

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against them.

Or with David in his courage as he goes to meet Goliath:

1 Samuel 17:47

The battle is the Lord's.

Well, here he goes.

Notice that as the Lord's been faithful to preserve him by the drying brook and provide for him in the home of the widow, so now He's promised His servant that He's going to send rain upon the face of the earth. In other words, He's going to go with him and He's going to be faithful to fulfil the promise that He's made.

v. 2 So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria.

“So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria.”

Isn't that interesting? One of the things we're going to learn about the life of Elijah is that he's always instantaneously obedient. He might not understand it, he might argue with the Lord about whether this is the right time or not. He might reason with the Lord, he might object, he might present some of the difficulties.

Now he doesn't do that. He's instantaneously obedient as the Lord reveals new directions to him.

And the writer to the book of Proverbs says:

Proverbs 3:5, 6

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he'll direct your path.

And the psalmist agrees with that when he says:

Psalm 37:23

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

“What are you supposed to do Elijah? You're supposed to go back into the public eye. You're supposed to go right to the palace, right to the point where the venom is the greatest. Confront Ahab once again.”

Now notice that at the end of the second verse it says, “the famine was severe” in the land. Imagine the extension of that severity.

For instance, what did we find in our last passage? Over in Zarephath outside the land, it had only been 18 months. And what's this poor lady doing? She's getting sticks for her last meal. She's going to bake that little cake and then she and her boy are going to eat it, drink a little water and they're going to die. This is what she had to look forward to.

Now it's been two years longer. And when they make a statement like this in the text and it says, "the famine was severe in Samaria," there's probably been a lot of dead widows lying beside the road. There's probably been a lot of dead livestock in the field. It's a time of real dire emergency and national crisis.

The time of God's judgment has been felt very severely upon the land. The fields are parched, the flocks and the herds have almost all disappeared. The barns are empty and the Israelites, many of them have probably prepared their last meal and have already died as an act of God's judgment because of their sin and disobedience.

v. 3 And Ahab called Obadiah who was over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly;

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Alright, we have the cameras zeroed in on Zarephath and we see our hero Elijah getting the command from the Lord. Now it's just like the camera turns and it goes to the palace, because these are the two forces that are getting together. And our writer turns back to the palace now to see what's going on up there.

And it's very interesting that we meet somebody here who's very special.

“And Ahab called Obadiah who was over the household.”

Here’s the governor. Here’s the guy who was in the place of key leadership.

“Obadiah feared the Lord greatly;”

Just as in the midst of a sewer pipe society in the book of Judges, we have a beautiful love story of Ruth and Boaz. So in a time of real weakness nationally, in a time of great wickedness, in the time when we have leaders who are also departed from the living God. Isn’t it interesting that we’d have a man who stands so close to Ahab who fears the Lord greatly?

It’s not a strange position for men to be in the scripture. Many times the pagan kings had Christian or dedicated godly men in places of key leadership close to them.

For instance, Nehemiah served in the court. And it was at this particular time of serving in the court that he was charged with the responsibility of going to rebuild the walls.

Then we have somebody like Joseph who had the same privilege of serving second in command under Pharaoh in Egypt. And we have somebody like Daniel. Although Daniel purposed in his heart and he stood for his convictions, yet he was elevated to the place of second in command in his time and generation.

So many people say if someone is going to get power and leadership and if they're going to be great, they have to compromise their convictions. And they have to water down their statements. They have to be careful so that they don't step on too many toes so they can get that place of authority.

Well here we see a guy Obadiah who “fears the Lord greatly” and he's second in command to this wicked king Ahab. And we think, how in the world can a guy like that survive when Jezebel was out to get everybody that had any interest in the living God at all?

Well Ahab probably said, “Now Jezebel, listen honey. You can go just this far and that's all the farther you can go. You can take the prophets of God but you keep your hands off Obadiah. He's a very special man to me. He serves me well and we have a great relationship. And I know how he stands. Now you just leave him alone. But you can do all your other vile deeds that you want to on the rest of the kingdom, but you leave Obadiah alone.”

Now the name Obadiah means “the servant of Jehovah.” It's hard to believe but there are thirteen Obadiahs in the Bible?

Obadiah is kind of like Smith. In heaven we're going to find out which one it is—thirteen Obadiahs.

It's said of Obadiah that he “feared the Lord greatly.”

Now a lot of people look at that statement “feared” and they

say, “Does that mean that every time he got close to God he got scared?”

We take the term “feared” today and we sort of use that as being afraid of something. The term “feared the Lord greatly” conveys the following THREE THOUGHTS:

1. If Obadiah “feared the Lord greatly” he had a tenderness of conscience toward God. He wanted God’s will and God’s direction in his life. He was tender in his conscience towards God’s will and direction.
2. He had a dread of doing wrong. He had this dread inside that he’d do the wrong thing, as far as God is concerned.
3. He had an anxiety of spirit to please the Lord. He wanted to do the right thing. Not only a dread to do the wrong thing, but an anxiety to do the right thing.

And if we have those characteristics about our life, it can be said of us, like of Obadiah, that we “feared the Lord greatly.”

So what do we have? We have a quiet believer, in a very wicked place, steadfast in a difficult situation, driven to perform his duty in a less open manner than someone like Elijah. His faith has swayed his life, but it hasn’t driven him out of the court. He’s staying right here in this circumstance and he’s walking a tight-rope. He’s prudent, he’s cautious, and yet he’s consistent with his convictions.

Isn't it amazing how God always has His men in these silent, secret places? But when it comes time for them to speak, when it comes time for them to act, it's amazing the impact they have.

Probably the most astounding illustration of that in the New Testament are the saints in Caesar's household in Philippians 4. As Paul is writing the last words to the Philippian church he says, "And the saints in Caesar's household greet you." (see Philippians 4:22).

That means that right under the nose of the mad man Nero were a bunch of Christians. They made the mistake of putting Paul in prison in Rome. And when they put Paul in prison in Rome every six hours, they chain another guard to him. And for six hours Paul had a captive audience.

He loved to be in prison because he'd lead these guys to Christ and they'd go home and lead their wives and children to Christ. And when Epaphroditus came there, he just shoved Epaphroditus into service and got him teaching a bunch of underground Bible classes all around the place. People are just becoming Christians and getting to know God.

And that was all started because the apostle Paul was put in prison. It seemed like an impossible circumstance and yet he was leading all these key soldiers to Christ. They in turn were leading their families to Christ. And there were saints in Caesar's household, officials in the palace, secretaries and leaders in the government, right there under Nero's nose that

had become Christians and were faithful to the Lord.

Well, it's a miracle that Obadiah has survived all of this. But here he is.

v. 4 for it came about, when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.)

“for it came about, when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided for them with bread and water.)”

Well we learn about his **ATTITUDE OF REVERENCE** in verse 3 and then about his **ACTIONS** in verse 4.

As soon as Jezebel started to take the lives of the prophets, several of the guys—and we can tell they must have had real trust in Obadiah—went to him and said, “Obadiah, if you don’t do something we’re done.” In other words, it’s all over. “Would you provide for us in some way? Do you have any way that we can escape Jezebel’s slaughter?”

Well, Obadiah scratched his head and he thought, “Well I bought a couple of caves out here on one of my last real estate transactions. I’ve got a place where you guys can hide. And I’ll try to make out some way to get some provisions out to you.”

And the record now says that he was successful in doing this—taking care of these hundred men. And it just helps us realize that they had a lot of confidence in his ability and in his leadership, that they would put their lives in his hands and be willing to trust him at this point.

Those prophets probably felt about Obadiah like Paul did about the house of Onesiphorus in 2 Timothy 1:16. It says:

2 Timothy 1:16

May the Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

And then he goes on to say, as he concludes the epistle:

2 Timothy 4:17-18

But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished and that all the gentiles might hear that I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will deliver me from every evil will. And he will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever! Amen.

v. 5 Then Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys; perhaps we will find grass and keep the horses and mules alive, and not have to kill some of the cattle.

“Then Ahab said to Obadiah, ‘Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys; perhaps we will find grass and keep the horses and mules alive, and not have to kill some of the cattle.’”

Alright, now we can begin to feel some of the effect the three and a half years had on the wicked King Ahab.

Who’s responsible for what’s happened these three and a half years? God is, isn’t He? He’s brought judgment upon the house of Ahab and the children of Israel.

Why has the judgment been permitted? To get Ahab to start thinking about God, to repent, to turn to God so God can bless him and prosper him. Right?

Well instead of thinking of God he’s thinking of grass. He’s a guy who is so selfish and so ego-centered that he can’t even think about the people he’s leading at this point. The only thing that really bugs him right now is the fact that some of his livestock in the palace are beginning to get a little skinny.

Some of them really need to have some more pastureland and he’s worried about that. So he’s going to go and start searching for that and he thinks nothing of his people. How different he is from King David.

For instance, we learn of King David that he had a constant concern for the people and his careful leadership of them in his walk with God.

Ahab is probably a lot like Pharaoh in the book of Exodus. Remember when God allowed the plague to come upon Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt? But while the plague was on, Pharaoh would say, "Alright, you can go. Just anything to get over the plague." Then when they got over the plague, what happened? He hardened his heart. He changed his mind.

Over and over again all he is concerned about is his personal comfort. There's no response to the chastening hand of the Lord on the part of our friend Ahab.

It's going to be interesting throughout this whole study, until we come to the tragic death of Ahab. We never find this guy ever being aware of the fact that God is the one who is responsible for ordering the circumstances that are trying to create an environment so this guy will respond properly so the Lord can bless and prosper him. That's one thing we really learn about Ahab. He's always fighting and resisting. He's always looking at the circumstances as another bum deal. Another foul opportunity.

"Maybe next time it'll happen and maybe it'll turn out this way if I can just get out of this one." And on and on we go. Never recognizing sovereign intervention in the circumstances that face him.

Jeremiah 5:3 is a great verse to put here:

Jeremiah 5:3

Oh Lord, do not your eyes look for truth? You have smitten them, but they did not weaken; You have consumed them, but they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock and they have refused to repent.

And Isaiah says the same thing in Isaiah 1:

Isaiah 1:4-6

Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him. Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it. Only bruises and welts and raw wounds...

And on and on he goes.

That's the very same characteristic that we find described in Revelation 16. When we come to the tribulation period, when God's final judgment is poured out upon sin, Revelation 16 says, "And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pain and their sores and they did not repent of their deeds." (see Revelation 16:10, 11)

Ahab is busy looking for some greener pastures at this point rather than being concerned about his people and responding

to what God's trying to teach him in the midst of these dire circumstances.

v. 6 So they divided the land between them to survey it; Ahab went one way by himself and Obadiah went another way by himself.

“So they divided the land between them to survey it;”—this Ahab and Obadiah—“Ahab went one way by himself and Obadiah went another way by himself.”

v. 7 Now as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him, and he recognized him and fell on his face and said, “Is this you, Elijah my master?”

“Now as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him, and he recognized him and fell on his face and said, ‘Is this you, Elijah my master?’”

Now that's a legitimate question. He can't believe that Elijah has survived for three and a half years. After all, Ahab has had one of the most extensive search parties looking for him. And secondly, how could a guy who had no place to go be provided for in a time of such dire need?

How could it be possible that he could even live for three and a half years? So he is amazed. It's one of astonishment.

“Is this you, Elijah my master?” Recognizing Elijah's authority as the prophet of God, he calls him his master.

v. 8 And he said to him, “It is I. Go, say to your master, ‘Behold, Elijah is here.’”

“And he said to him, ‘It is I. Go, say to your master, “Behold, Elijah is here.’””

Now Elijah identifies himself and he gives him a COMMAND. He says:

“Go, say to your master”—that is Ahab—“Behold, Elijah is here.”

Now are we going to find in this servant of Jehovah who is in the palace, the same characteristic of instant obedience and trust that the Lord is speaking through Elijah to tell Obadiah what to do?

What do we have in verse 9? Here’s the difference between these two guys.

v. 9 And he said, “What sin have I committed, that you are giving your servant into the hand of Ahab, to put me to death?”

“And he said, “What sin have I committed, that you are giving your servant into the hand of Ahab, to put me to death?”

“What have I done? Why are you sending me on an assignment like this where I’m going to lose my life?”

In other words, “If I go and tell him that, you know what’s going to happen.”

Obadiah was a man of great faith. But he was also a man of great doubt. He’s frightened with the possibility of fulfilling the command of Elijah because of what might happen to him when he makes this announcement. And he goes on to explain in verse 10, why he is so scared.

v. 10 As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to search for you; and when they said, ‘He is not here’, he made the kingdom or nation swear that they could not find you.

“As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to search for you; and when they said, “He is not here”, he made the kingdom or nation swear that they could not find you.”

He went to every place it was possible to go. With a fine-tooth comb, he had the FBI working overtime. They were looking for this guy and they searched and searched and searched. And frankly when he went to some of the kings in the surrounding area, he made them swear that they could not find Elijah. And Elijah was not to be found within their borders.

And he says, “Now, isn’t this going to be something. You’re going to send me up there and Ahab’s going to think that I’ve

been hiding you out here in one of these caves all this time. And he's going to take my life without even asking any questions!"

v. 11 And now you are saying, 'Go, say to your master, 'Behold, Elijah is here.'

"And now you are saying, "Go, say to your master, 'Behold, Elijah is here.'"

Well, we have FEAR and we have FRUSTRATION. He doesn't recognize that the Lord is speaking through Elijah to him to go and do this very thing.

v. 12 And it will come about when I leave you that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you where I do not know; so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth.

"And it will come about"—this is the final REASON that he's so fearful.

"And it will come about when I leave you that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you where I do not know; so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth."

What he's saying here is that he is so scared that the Lord is going to do the same thing that He did when he took him to

Cherith. The Lord's going to do the same thing when He's hidden him over in Zarephath. The Spirit of the Lord's going to catch him up and take him someplace where he doesn't know and then, "Ahab won't be able to find you then he'll kill me."

And he says, "He will kill me, although I am his servant and I have feared the Lord greatly from my youth."

Notice that there is one more word added to this statement in verse 12 and that is he "feared the Lord greatly from [his] youth."

First of all, it was just "feared the Lord greatly." Now it's "feared the Lord greatly from my youth."

Doesn't that tell us a lot about this guy? Here he's grown up in a home situation where from a child he has walked in the fear of the Lord. And what he is now that he's older is the same as he was when he was younger.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 says:

Ecclesiastes 12:1

Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth. Rejoice ole young man in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth. Walk in the ways of thine heart in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou this, for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

And then Paul tells young Timothy:

1 Timothy 4:12

Let no man despise your youth, but be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in purity, and in charity.

Obadiah is consistent. He's "feared the Lord" from his youth. And what he is now when he's older is what he was like when he was younger.

Now he wants to tell Elijah a little bit about his statistics. He's not only "feared the Lord greatly" and from his youth, but he's also done some things that Elijah needs to know about.

v. 13 Has it not been told to my master what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, that I hid a hundred prophets of the Lord by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water?

"Has it not been told to my master what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, that I hid a hundred prophets of the Lord by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water?"

This dangerous assignment now has precipitated Obadiah to look at a past track record. He's been faithful to the Lord, although he's been living in the court of the wicked king. And now he just doesn't understand why he's got to go and tell

Ahab this.

v. 14 And now you are saying, ‘Go, say to your master, “Behold, Elijah is here””; he will then kill me.”

“And now you are saying, “Go, say to your master, ‘Behold, Elijah is here’”; he will then kill me.”

Elijah has to make an additional promise.

v. 15 And Elijah said, “As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.”

“And Elijah said, ‘As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.’”

He makes a PROMISE.

Now have we seen that little phrase before?

“As the Lord of hosts lives.” Remember that was the very first statement we ever heard made in the palace back in chapter 17? When Elijah came into the palace, what’d he say?

“As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand”—remember there are TWO Rs for that.

Because He lives and we’re going to stand before Him, we have a RELATIONSHIP but we also have a

RESPONSIBILITY. Elijah says the same thing to Obadiah:

“Just as sure as the Lord’s alive, and before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.”

This is the PROMISE now. It’s “go hide,” “go to Zarephath,” and now “show yourself to the king.”

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

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

We’re coming to the real tense time. We’re coming to the moment when great forces are coming together, when great conflict is going to take place. Because of the hatred and the bitterness and the venom that’s going to be spoken forth because Ahab is now going to be confronted with his record and we’re going to go to the Super Bowl on Mount Carmel. We’re going to see this confrontation take place as these two men make an agreement together.

v. 17 And it came about, when Ahab saw Elijah that Ahab said to him, “Is this you, you troubler of Israel?”

“And it came about, when Ahab saw Elijah that Ahab said to him, “Is this you, you troubler of Israel?”

What do we see in that statement? We see a man who's saying if it weren't for Elijah everything would be okay. "If you'd just get rid of this one guy out of my life, everything would be alright."

Many times the prophet of God has to accept the persecution and the venom for being faithful to present God's message. And here Elijah gets just a little bit of it. And the first statement that comes to him from Ahab, as he walks toward him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

In other words, "We wouldn't have had any of this trouble for the last three and a half years if it hadn't been for you. You're the one responsible for this whole thing."

See there's another statement to show that he disregards totally that God's been ordering these circumstances. That God is the one who's trying to get Ahab to respond. And he spews all this venom out on a horizontal relationship to the man who has only been the instrument of God to bring him back to the point where he can be blessed.

We have to love Elijah. He's equal to the occasion. Look at verse 18.

v. 18 And he said, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals."

“And he said, ‘I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals.’”

“There are two things I want to tell you, Ahab. First, you’re the one who troubles Israel because you forsook the commandments of the Lord. And second, you followed the substitute worship. You went after the idols. Now Ahab, let’s put the responsibility where it really lies.”

“Why is Israel having such a rough time? Why are we in these troubled times and this difficult circumstance? Ahab, it’s your fault. Ahab you’re the one responsible. If you would only recognize that you’ve broken the commandments of the Lord and you’ve departed from the living God.”

What’s Elijah trying to do? He’s trying to point Ahab back to the vertical. Ahab can only see horizontally. He’s trying to show him that it’s because of a broken relationship here, breaking the commandments of the Lord. It’s because of substituting a worship for the god Baal instead of the living God that all of this has taken place.

“You’ve made two mistakes. You’ve disregarded the commandments of the Lord, and you followed the substitute worship. And this is the suffering that has resulted from that.”

Now that’s a quick walk-through in the 18 verses.

We have three key guys: Elijah, Ahab and Obadiah. And

there's a lesson from each of them now.

Take these three men for just a minute. First, we have a wicked, selfish king. He fails to respond to the chastening hand of the Lord. Instead of repenting, he grows harder and harder toward the claims of God in his life.

Perhaps the circumstances we're going through right now are circumstances we are resisting rather than cooperating with. Realizing the Lord's using those to build into our life.

But it could be if we're not a Christian that He's using those circumstances to bring us to Himself.

Secondly, we have Obadiah. He's a silent, prudent servant in the palace of a wicked king. In the midst of precarious circumstances, he finds an opportunity to serve the Lord, to be faithful, to provide for these men in the carrying out of his responsibilities.

And some of us walk in very difficult circumstances in our field of employment. We live in a world that's totally unsympathetic. And yet this does not give us an excuse to be that silent, faithful servant, reflecting Christ to those around us.

And then we have Elijah who's a prophet. He's a man of God. He's been directed by the Lord to this point marvelously, been provided for in every way. And the Lord is now preparing him for a rescue mission that we're going to see in our next study.

So where do we fit?

AHAB—resisting all that God is trying to do to bring us to a place of blessing and prosperity?

OBADIAH—the silent servant doing what we can, where we are, to bring glory to His name because we fear the Lord from our youth?

Or an ELIJAH—a man willing to be obedient, directed by God, provided by His hand to the full accomplishment of His purpose in his life?

We've watched him go from brooks to widows to unexplainable circumstances. But God's doing it all as He's preparing him for what we're going to see in the next study.

These are the lessons from our text:

Lesson #1: Are you an Ahab, resisting all that God is trying to do in your life to bring you to a place of blessing and prosperity?

Lesson #2: Are you an Obadiah, a silent servant doing what you can, where you are to bring glory to his name because you have feared the Lord from your youth.

Lesson #3: Are you an Elijah, a man who is willing to be obedient and directed by God, provided for by his hand to the

full accomplishment of His purpose in your life.

Our heavenly Father, as we've looked into this segment of Your Word, these three men have stepped before us in this story. We already know a great deal about Elijah, and a great deal about Ahab, but we've met a new friend. We thank You for this servant of Jehovah, Obadiah whose life was a witness. And because of that witness he could be trusted by others who were in straits that were difficult for them. And Lord we pray that You might raise up more and more Obadiah's who are willing to serve the Lord where they are and to do what they can to bring glory to Your name. Lord, continue to raise up men who are the caliber of Elijah. We know that Your eyes go to-and-fro throughout the whole earth to show Yourself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward You. Lord, continue to perfect that good work in us, that we might be conformed more to the image of Your Son and to learn the joy of trusting You and seeing You supply. And all that we don't understand the segmented circumstances sometimes we go through. At least we're not resisting. We're cooperating, we're learning what You're trying to teach us so we can be faithful in the fulfillment of the assignments that You've got ahead for us. And then Lord, we ask that if there's someone here who has the characteristics of Ahab, in the sense that it's strictly a horizontal—it's an eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die type philosophy—that You'd help them to realize that maybe what they're going through right now is to get their attention so they'll turn their eyes upon You and so they'll respond. Lord, help us to see that many times the difficult circumstances we face are just that, so that You can deal with

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the disobedience in our lives and then we're eligible for the blessing and prosperity that You want to shower upon us as Your children. Lord, we love You and we thank You for Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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What You Need to Know About ELIJAH:

“Someone Who Watched God at Work”

Study Number Two – 1 Kings 18:1-18

NOTES

v. 1 Now it came about after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.”

v. 2 So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria.

v. 3 And Ahab called Obadiah who was over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly;

v. 4 for it came about, when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.)

v. 5 Then Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys; perhaps we will find grass and keep the horses and mules alive, and not have to kill some of the cattle.

v. 6 So they divided the land between them to survey it; Ahab went one way by himself and Obadiah went another way by himself.

v. 7 Now as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him, and he recognized him and fell on his face and said, “Is this you, Elijah my master?”

v. 8 And he said to him, “It is I. Go, say to your master, ‘Behold, Elijah is here.’”

v. 9 And he said, “What sin have I committed, that you are giving your servant into the hand of Ahab, to put me to death?

v. 10 As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to search for you; and when they said, ‘He is not here’, he made the kingdom or nation swear that they could not find you.

v. 11 And now you are saying, ‘Go, say to your master, “Behold, Elijah is here.”’

NOTES

v. 12 And it will come about when I leave you that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you where I do not know; so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth.

v. 13 Has it not been told to my master what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, that I hid a hundred prophets of the Lord by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water?

v. 14 And now you are saying, 'Go, say to your master, "Behold, Elijah is here"; he will then kill me.'

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

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

v. 17 And it came about, when Ahab saw Elijah that Ahab said to him, "Is this you, you troubler of Israel?"

v. 18 And he said, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Kings 18:1-18 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What message comes to Elijah from the Lord in verse 1?

3. Describe the physical conditions, according to verse 2.

4. Who was Obadiah, and what good thing did he do, according to verses 3 & 4?

5. What was Obadiah's mission when he met Elijah?

6. What does Elijah ask Obadiah to do, according to verse 8?

7. What response does Obadiah give to this request?

8. What are Ahab's first words to Elijah when they meet, and how does Elijah defend himself, according to verses 17 & 18?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Are you an Ahab, resisting all that God is trying to do in your life to bring you to a place of blessing and prosperity?

LESSON #2: Are you an Obadiah, a silent servant doing what you can, where you are to bring glory to his name because you have feared the Lord from your youth.

LESSON #3: Are you an Elijah, a man who is willing to be obedient and directed by God, provided for by his hand to the full accomplishment of His purpose in your life.

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