

1st Kings Chapter 18

V: 1 There are two sides to prayer and this is the other side, listening, waiting on the Lord.

“The word of the Lord came to Elijah.” The word of the Lord came to ____.

- After many days, Elijah was in the wilderness for about 1 year, then stayed with the widow for about 2 years, which is the last time we’ve seen God speak to Elijah, sending him to the widow.
- God speaks to his servant saying “go show yourself” to the evil king who wants to kill you... you trust Me right?

Job 13:15 “Thou he slay me, yet will I trust in Him...”

“I will send rain on the earth” – God’s promise.

- God is doing the work, Elijah, God’s prophet & spokesman is simply informing those to whom he is sent.

V: 2 Here we see a key to being able to hear God’s voice - **obedience!**

- God says go and the next thing we read is that Elijah is going.

Proverbs 29:18 “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

Jesus said:

Luke 11:28 “... blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”

V: 3-4 **Obadiah** was a common name which means “**Yahweh’s servant**” or “**Servant of God.**”

- Obadiah was Ahab’s chief steward, the governor of his house - and he feared the Lord.
- As a testimony of his faith, proof - he protected and provided for 100 of the prophets of God, protecting them from Jezebel’s murderous wrath.

James 2:17-18 “¹⁷Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
¹⁸Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”

- Ahab’s evil wife Jezebel was the daughter of a Zidonian king, Ethbaal.

- Where it says that Jezebel “cut off” the prophets of God, the word “cut off” is also translated “destroyed”, or “massacred” meaning she was killing them.
- The Jews related her name to a dung hill.

V: 5-6 Things are getting worse, the animals are starting to starve.

Jesus attests:

Luke 4:25 “But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout the land,”

- Ahab instructs Obadiah, you go one way and I’ll go the other - in search of grass for the livestock which are perishing. They aren’t looking for Elijah.

V: 7-8 As Ahab and Obadiah go their separate ways in search of food, the man of God is met by the prophet of God.

- Looking for food, for sustenance, what did Obadiah find? He finds the Word of God.

Matthew 4:4 “... it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

- It is appropriate that the man of God would recognize the prophet of God.

V: 9-14 Violin music please..... Obadiah explains to Elijah that they’ve been searching all over for him, leaving no stone un-turned so to speak - except that they didn’t look right under their own noses in Zarephath

- He’s feared the Lord from his youth. So often we impress upon our kids the grace of God, His mercy, and forgiveness - we need also impress upon them the fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 9:10 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

- In this passage Obadiah demonstrates that he knows his master king Ahab pretty well, that he would just as soon kill his servant for misleading him.
- Obadiah also demonstrates that he doesn’t know or trust the Word of God as well. Why would God send Obadiah on this mission just to see him killed?
- Many of us probably know the ways of the world better than we know the ways of the Lord, but that is why we are here right?

2 Timothy 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

V: 15 **Elijah has used this affirmation before.**

1. As the Lord lives; and He surely does.
2. Before whom I stand: It’s an acknowledgment that **Elijah’s stands before the Lord as a servant stands before his master**, and that he is accountable before the Lord.

V: 16 To his credit, **Obadiah demonstrates that he too is a servant of the Lord**, because even though he was scared, he was obedient to the Word of the Lord through Elijah.

Revelation 22:14 “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

V: 17-18 Ahab starts out by referring to Elijah as a “trouble maker”, trying to shift the blame onto Elijah for the years of famine brought on by his own idolatry and rebellion against God.

- Both Jesus in **Luke 23:5**, and later the Apostle Paul in **Acts 16:20** are called “troublemakers” - so Elijah is in good company.
- Ahab is doing what our media and politicians have been doing:

Isaiah 5:20 “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

- Elijah responds boldly (ala John the Baptist!), and sets the record straight.

V: 19-20 **Elijah takes charge, he dictates the terms** – and everybody does it. It is easy to see God’s hand in this.

- Elijah sets up this contest between the prophets of Baal and Elijah, the prophet of God. The show down at the OK Corral, except that it is Mt. Carmel.

Map / pictures Mt. Carmel / Megiddo

- This is to take place before all the children of Israel, so the nation or at least it’s representatives are present, presumably along with king Ahab who brings the 450 prophet of Baal.

V: 21 Elijah challenges the people to get off the fence, to make a choice. (Halt)

- A lot of Christians are in the same place – trying to have it both ways, and that never flies.

James 1:8 “... a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Jesus said:

Matthew 12:30 “He that is not with Me is against Me...”

- All the way in, or all the way out - that’s how it is.

“But the people answered him not a word.”

- What were they waiting for? Stunned silence? Waiting to see who the winner was going to be.

V: 22 The other 100 prophets stashed by Obadiah are in hiding, they aren’t boldly proclaiming the Word of God, nor did Elijah know about the ones that God had set aside:

- Elisha was waiting in the wings to replace Elijah and...

1 Kings 19:18 “Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.”

V: 23-26 Elijah lays out the challenge. Prepare a sacrifice but do not light a fire, each respective team will cry out to their God, and the God who answers by fire will indeed be God.

- Elijah tells the prophets of Baal who are many that they may go first. This allows everyone to see the futility of worshipping these false gods.
- They got all set up and began to cry out to their god - but got no response.

Psalms 115:4-8 “⁴Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. ⁵They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: ⁶They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: ⁷They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. ⁸They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.”

- Not getting any answer, they “*leaped upon the altar...*” as a measure of their desperation - which must have been somewhat comical, leading up to Elijah’s next comments.

V: 27-29 Elijah mocked them, he taunted them - spurring them on in their idolatrous fervor.

- Maybe he's meditating, or using the restroom, or he's sleeping - **you need to wake him up - try yelling louder.**
- They cried all the louder, and they began to harm themselves, cutting themselves.
- While the little god they worshipped is unable to do anything, we see the author of this foolishness just behind the scene - the destroyer.

John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

- Elijah's saying your god sleeps, or maybe he doesn't care, our God never sleeps.

Psalm 121:4 “Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”

- **These false prophets served a cruel master of their own making.**

Psalm 115:8 “They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.”

- But on the other hand, while they are like their god, we are also being conformed into the image of our God, from glory to glory:

1 John 3:2 “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

- They kept at this until they wore themselves out, there was no answer from their god, right up until the time of the evening sacrifice.

V: 30-35 Elijah gathers the people, he wants them close at hand to witness what is about to happen.

- Elijah repairs the altar taking 12 stones for the 12 tribes of Israel (not just 10 stones for the Northern Kingdom), re-building this altar unto the Lord God of Israel.
- Elijah dug a trench around the altar deep and wide enough to hold 2 measures of seed, or 2 “seahs” of seed, roughly equivalent to 4 or so gallons of water.

- 4 barrels, water pots, or pitchers of water - 3 times. In a time of drought, at the top of a mountain this would have been a labor intensive, expensive measure.
- The sacrifice, the wood, and the altar are all drenched - and the trench is filled up with water.

V: 36 Elijah begins to pray - seemingly in conversational tones - in contrast to the prophets of Baal. (Loud, melodramatic, jumping, hurting themselves)

- Elijah addresses “*the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel*” – not Jacob. Israel = governed by God.
- As long as Elijah includes himself in the prayer there is no response. (God and “I” 2 X’s). (Vindication?)
- God doesn’t, He won’t share His glory!

Isaiah 42:8 “I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.”

V: 37-38 Remove the “I’s” and watch the fire fall! When we get out of the way!

Luke 17:10 “So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, we are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.”

- Fire falls from heaven and consumes the sacrifice, the wood, the altar stones, the water, and the dust! What an amazing contrast!

V: 39-40 The peoples response – “*The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!*”

- Mountain top experience, literally. The mountain top is where you get vision, the inspiration, but fruit grows in the valleys. This emotional response didn’t last.
- They said “The Lord, He is God!” but not that He was *their* God!
- Because God is real, that means His Word stands, it’s authoritative - so Elijah orders the execution of the false prophets.

Map / picture - Book Kishon

Deuteronomy 18:20 “But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.”

V: 41 After the people acknowledged that Jehovah was truly God, and executed the false prophets of Baal - cleared the way the next step.

- Confession of sin and obedience to the Word of God is an excellent recipe for blessing.

- As a second demonstration of the obvious fact that Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel is alive and powerful; Elijah tells Ahab that he can go and celebrate because it's about to rain, demonstrating of course who controls that.

V: 42-43 Ahab believes Elijah and begins to celebrate.

- In the mean time Elijah goes back to the top of Carmel, and throws himself down to the ground - praying to God.
- As he is praying, he has his servant go back and forth 7 times checking to see if the rain clouds are there yet.
- As Elijah persevered in prayer, he got to see the results.

V: 44-46 At the sight of the first little cloud, Elijah instructs his servant to tell Ahab to get going before he gets stuck in the mud - then it begins to pour.

- The hand of God guides, compels Elijah to run before Ahab down to Jezreel.
(Map Jezreel)
 - From Carmel to Jezreel is about 15 miles.

Why?