

## 1 Kings 18:1-46 **Elijah sent to Ahab – Baal Worshipers Defeated – Drought Ended**

### Elijah's Sent to Ahab

1 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.'"

9 So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? 10 As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. 11 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here"! 12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth. 13 Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, how I hid one hundred men of the Lord's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? 14 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here.'" He will kill me!"

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?"

### Message to Ahab

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."

### Elijah's Mount Carmel Victory

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."

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.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." 32 Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." 34 Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. 35 So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

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.

### The Drought Ends

41 Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." 42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on

the ground, and put his face between his knees, <sup>43</sup> and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea."

So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."

<sup>44</sup> Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'"

<sup>45</sup> Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup> Then the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

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#### Facts Revealed:

##### Elijah's Sent to Ahab [1 Kings 18:1-17]

- ✧ <sup>1</sup> 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." [1 Kings 18:1]
- ✧ Again the text says after many days, in the third year, which seems to indicate that the son's sickness had been about midway through the 3 ½ years of the drought.
- ✧ Late in the third year, Elijah was sent to Ahab with word of the end of the drought, since the drought lasted 3 ½ years according to [James 5:17].
- ✧ <sup>2</sup> So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria.
- <sup>3</sup> And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.)
- <sup>5</sup> 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."
- <sup>6</sup> So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. [1 Kings 18:2-6]
- ✧ While Elijah is on his way from Zarephath in the territory of Sidon on the coast of the Mediterranean sea where he had been saved for the 3 years of the drought with a widow and her son, at the command of God, he is headed for Samaria to face Ahab.
- ✧ The scene turns to the chaos in Samaria and Ahab's desperate search for water for his horses.
- ✧ The horses seem to have a more prominent place in his concern than the people, though the famine in Samaria is severe.
- ✧ Obadiah is here introduced as a God fearing steward in charge of Ahab's house, who secretly had rescued 100 prophets of the Lord and hid them 50 to a cave when Jezebel was attempting to slaughter all the prophets of Yahweh. Obadiah had been able to provide them with bread and water.
- ✧ This Obadiah is not the prophet who wrote the book of prophecy bearing his name. There are about 13 different people in the Bible named Obadiah.
- ✧ Ahab sent Obadiah one way out of Samaria while he went the other way in search of water and grass to keep his horses alive.
- ✧ Obadiah was the first to encounter Elijah returning from Zarephath.
- ✧ <sup>7</sup> 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?" <sup>8</sup> And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell

your master, 'Elijah is here.'"

9 So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? 10 As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. 11 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here"'! 12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth. 13 Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, how I hid one hundred men of the Lord's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? 14 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here." He will kill me!' [1 Kings 18:7-14]

- ✧ Obadiah's encounter with Elijah was one of immediate recognition.
  - ✧ Elijah's command to tell Ahab Elijah is here frightened Obadiah in fear of his life.
  - ✧ Ahab had searched for Elijah everywhere he could imagine to the point of sending men to all neighboring nations to find him, but with utter failure.
  - ✧ Obadiah is certain that the Spirit of God is able to transport Elijah out of reach at any time.
  - ✧ Obadiah is fearful that if Elijah is gone when he returns with Ahab that, Ahab will certainly kill him.
  - ✧ Obadiah pleads for his life by telling Elijah of his faith in Yahweh and of his actions to save 100 prophets of Yahweh from being slaughtered by Jezebel.
- ✧ 15 Then Elijah said, "As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today." [1 Kings 18:15]
- 16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. [1 Kings 18:16]
- ✧ With a little assurance from Elijah, Obadiah did as requested.
- ✧ 17 Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" [1 Kings 18:17]
- ✧ Ahab demonstrated that he blamed Elijah personally for all the trouble of the drought.

### Message to Ahab

- ✧ 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." [1 Kings 18:18-19]
  - ✧ Elijah put the blame where it belonged and pronounced a way to resolve the problem and put the matter to rest.
- ✧ 20 So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.
- ✧ Ahab was interested in a contest 850 to 1, the prophets of Baal and Asherah against Elijah, so he summoned the people as Elijah had instructed.

### Elijah's Mount Carmel Victory

- ✧ 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. [1 Kings 18:21]
- ✧ 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 (eloheykm), and I will call on the name of the Lord (Yahweh); and the God (ha-elohiym) who answers by fire, He is God (ha-Elohiym).**" [1 Kings 18:22-24]

☆ So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken." [1 Kings 18:24]

◇ The contest is not between men, but obviously between gods, Jehovah against Baal.

◇ Elijah is the only representative of Yahweh (Jehovah), and there are 450 representatives of Baal present, so Elijah gave them first chance to prove their god is real.

◇ Elijah, being alone, would wait until last.

◇ The suggested contest pleased the people.

☆ 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. [Kings 18:25-26]

◇ Elijah gave them 3 hours for a response from Baal from about 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon while he kept silent and went about his own business.

☆ 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. [1 Kings 18:27-29]

◇ At noon Elijah chided them, and they increased their frenzy until about 3:00 PM the time of the evening Sacrifice with no response from Baal.

☆ 30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." 32 Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." 34 Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. 35 So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. [1 Kings 18:30-35]

◇ At about 3:00 PM, Elijah called the people to come near, set up an altar to Yahweh with twelve stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel, made a deep trench around the altar, placed the wood on the altar, prepared the sacrifice and placed it on the wood.

◇ All this was quite usual with the exception of the trench around the altar.

◇ Then as the people watched in astonishment, Elijah made the test extremely unreasonable as he had water poured over the entire sacrifice wood and altar to the point of filling the trench with water so if Yahweh sent fire on the sacrifice it would have to be unquestionably a miracle and the work of a living God.

☆ 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.**" [1 Kings 18:36-37]

- ✧ Elijah was working at the command of the Lord, and his simple prayer was for the people to realize that Yahweh is a living God who listens to His own.
- ✧ It is a call to repentance and decision on the part of the people of Israel whom God desired to turn back to Himself in faith by unquestionable evidence.
- ✧ **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.** [1 Kings 18:38]
  - ✧ The truth of who is God was convincing beyond any dispute, Even Ahab could say nothing against the evidence provided by Yahweh.
- ✧ **39** Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord (Yahweh), He is God (Elohiym)! The Lord (Yahweh), He is God (Elohiym)!" [1 Kings 18:39]
  - ✧ Now the people knew for certain and so acknowledged that the only living God is Yahweh Elohiym the God of Israel.
- ✧ **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. [1 Kings 18:40]
  - ✧ God called for the destruction of idolatry and idolaters from the land of Israel to prevent His people from falling under the delusion of foreign gods to their own destruction. [Exodus 23:24, 34:10-16, Deuteronomy 7:1-5, 12:1-4, Judges 2:11-15, 6:25]
  - ✧ At the command of Elijah, the people seized the false prophets and they were executed.

### The Drought Ends

- ✧ **41** Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." **42** So Ahab went up to eat and drink.

And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, **43** and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea."

So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."

**44** Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'" [1 Kings 18:41-44]

- ✧ Elijah gave Ahab assurance of abundance of rain, so Ahab could take comfort, by eating and drinking, the drought is ending at the word of Elijah as predicted. [1 Kings 17:1]
- ✧ While Ahab was eating and drinking, Elijah went to the top of Mt. Carmel, bowed down with his face between his knees in faith, and sent his servant to look out over the sea and report back to Elijah.
- ✧ The seventh time the report was of a small cloud rising out of the sea.
- ✧ That was the sign Elijah was waiting for, so he sent word to Ahab that he needed to hurry before the abundant rain prevented his descent from Mount Carmel.
- ✧ **45** Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. **46** Then the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. [1 Kings 18:45-46]
  - ✧ While they were preparing the chariots, the storm blackened the sky with clouds, wind, and a heavy rain.
  - ✧ Ahab headed for Jezreel, in a hurry.
  - ✧ With the power of the Holy Spirit, Elijah tied up his robe and out-ran the horses down from the top of Mount Carmel to the city of Jezreel which in a straight line is about 30 miles, and the winding road off the mountain and along the Jezreel valley would have added considerable distance to the race and in down-pouring rain.