

Ahab & Elijah (Part 1) 1 Kings 17 – 18

Ahab & Elijah (Part 1) Introduction

- The Northern Kingdom of Israel never had a single good king.
- Ahab was the worst.
- His wickedness was only increased by his wife Jezebel, who encouraged him in everything evil.

- It was precisely during these dire times that God raised up the prophet Elijah.
- He was perhaps the most influential prophet of them all.

- Two qualities of Elijah that stand out clearly:
 - Elijah's courage
 - Elijah's commitment to prayer.

In especially challenging times, God raises up courageous and steadfast people.

Introducing Elijah 17:1-7

- Ahab was an ungodly king. He and his wife Jezebel actively sponsored the worship of Baal – a Canaanite god of fertility and rain.

- Elijah was as true a prophet as there will ever be.
- He appeared at an especially challenging time in Israel's history.
- It reveals that though Israel had departed radically from God, God had never departed from Israel.

- Elijah's mission is to prove to Israel that the Lord is the one true God.
- The Lord is ultimately responsible for the nation's well-being.

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Elijah & the Widow 17:8-16

- God sent Elijah to a widow in the region of Sidon.
- This was the epicenter of Baal worship.
- It was also Jezebel's home territory – where her father was the king.

- Israel was rejecting the Lord, but he found a true convert among a people who worshiped Baal.
- Jesus used this story as an example of God reaching out to the world when his people were rejecting him.
 - See Luke 4:24-28.

- God took care of the prophet through the widow.
- God took care of the widow through the prophet.
- God will take care of all of us as we care for one another.

Elijah & the Widow's Son 17:17-24

- 17:21 Elijah prayed a bold prayer, but he still had to pray three times before the child's life was restored.
- Jesus raises a widow's son in Luke 7:11-17.

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Elijah Encounters Ahab 18:1-18

- 18:3 Obadiah His name means "servant of the Lord."
- He was "over the household," – a technical term for the king's chief officer.
- As the king's chief of staff he would have held the royal seal.
- He feared the Lord greatly!
- God puts his people in key places.
 - In Luke 8:3, we meet Joanna the wife of Chuza, who was Herod's household manager.
 - In Acts 13:1, we meet Manaen, a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch – one of the teachers in the church at Antioch.
- God can do remarkable things through a faithful servant in a key position.
- Be faithful wherever God has called you.
- That may be a crucial part of his plan influence others.
- 18:17-18 Serving the Lord can have a down side.
- Evil people tend to blame good people for their problems.
- This happens all through the Bible.
- It eventually even happened to Jesus.

Elijah Vs. the False Prophets 18:19-40

- 18:26-29 No matter how hard you scream, false gods can't answer prayer.
- 18:30 In years past there was an altar to the Lord on this mountain. It may have dated back to the days before the temple was built.
- Now it was broken down and in disrepair – a perfect illustration of the people's present spiritual condition.

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Elijah Prays for Rain 18:41-46

- Even when you're Elijah, you still have to be persistent in your prayers. Nonetheless, God answers.
 - See James 5:16-18.

Ahab & Elijah (Part 1) Conclusions

- King Ahab had all the political power.
- He is held up as an example of wickedness.
- The king's servant Obadiah and a nameless Gentile widow are held up for us as examples of faith.

- These are times when our Christianity can frequently be challenged by those around us.
- Whether you answer directly to the king or you're a poor, nameless widow, this world needs you to be an example of faith.

- Two qualities of Elijah stand out clearly:
 - His courage
 - His commitment to prayer.

- These times also call for men and women who have both the courage and commitment of Elijah.
- You may be called upon to be a bold witness.
- You may need to become far more devoted to prayer.

In especially challenging times, God raises up courageous and steadfast people.

We need to be among them.