

Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve

PART 2

ELIJAH FORCES THE QUESTION

1 Kings 18:21 (NKJV)

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. (1Ki 18:21)

- City
- ★ Capital city
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Israel
- Judah
- International roads
- Local roads

0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50 Kilometers

Northern Kingdom

MEDITERRANEAN
SEA



Looking for Lessons

Plan:

- Walk through the epic story of Elijah vs. the Prophets of Baal, trying to envision it like you were there.
 - Pull out lessons for today as we go.
 - Take one or two lessons to heart, and let them change how you live
- Lessons will be highlighted like this.

Elijah Arrives on the Scene

Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, “As surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there will be no dew or rain during the next few years until I give the word!”

(1Kings 17:1)

- Elijah’s heart was connected to God’s heart.
 - He felt God’s grief at the abominations His people were committing.

A Dry Three Years

- It doesn't rain It doesn't rain
 It doesn't rain
- Israel's agrarian economy was devastated
- Ahab now ruled over a true disaster zone

God Preserves His Prophet

- At the Brook Cherith
 - Fed by Ravens
- At a poor widow's home in the kingdom of Sidon!
 - The jar of oil and the bin of flour never run out

- Elijah learned to depend on God in desperate times
 - If food shortages get worse, and famine comes to our land, can we depend on God?
- Elijah learned to wait on God, for as long as it takes
- Elijah was content to wait in obscurity

God Says: “It is Time”

After 3 years!

- Go present yourself to Ahab
 - Yeah, the one who’s trying to kill you
-
- Elijah has learned to hear God’s voice.
 - Do you want to be an Elijah? Learn to hear God’s voice.
 - Elijah was willing to obey, even in the face of great personal danger

Obadiah: Steward of Ahab's house

As Obadiah was walking along, he suddenly saw Elijah coming toward him. Obadiah recognized him at once and bowed low to the ground before him. "Is it really you, my lord Elijah?" he asked. "Yes, it is," Elijah replied. "Now go and tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'" "Oh, sir," Obadiah protested, "what harm have I done to you that you are sending me to my death at the hands of Ahab? ...as soon as I leave you, the Spirit of the LORD will carry you away to who knows where. When Ahab comes and cannot find you, he will kill me. Yet I have been a true servant of the LORD all my life. (1Kings 18:7-12)

- Even in an evil world, with an evil government, God has some of His representatives in strategic positions

Ahab and Israel now Ready

When Ahab saw him, he exclaimed, “So, is it really you, you troublemaker of Israel?”

“I have made no trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “You and your family are the troublemakers, for you have refused to obey the commands of the LORD and have worshiped the images of Baal instead. Now summon all Israel to join me at Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who are supported by Jezebel.” So, Ahab summoned all the people of Israel and the prophets to Mount Carmel.

(1Kings 18:17-20)

Ahab and Israel now Ready

- After 3 years, the king and the people were ready to listen.
 - Are people around us more open and ready to listen to God's message than they were 3 years ago?
- There are key moments in history when people and nations are open to hear God's message.

Mount Carmel



Mount Carmel



National Convention

- Imagine the planning
- Imagine the Sight: Tens of thousands plus:
 - Animals, Tents, Water, food, supplies
 - The Royal household, with army and servants
- 450 'prophets' of Baal, and 400 'prophets' of Asherah
 - With their official vestments, equipment, servants...

The Question

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. (1Kings 18:21)

- Elijah knew WHEN to ask the big question.
 - there's a time for everything
- How would you answer the question?
 - Is there still some wavering?

Who is the Real God ?!

When the people didn't answer, Elijah made an offer.

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. 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.

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." (1Kings 18:22-24)

Elijah Taunts Them

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." So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. 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.

(1Kings 18:27-29)

Time is Up

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. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob..." Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD;

Time is Up

..and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 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." 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. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

(1Kings 18:30-35)

Time is Up

- There comes a time when God declares: “Time’s Up”.
 - He has enormous patience, but eventually, time is up.
- Is it time to rebuild the altar to the true God, in your life?
 - Paul calls us to present ourselves a ‘Living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God’ (Rom 12:1)

Elijah Calls on Yehovah Elohim

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.

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."

Yehovah Answers by Fire

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. 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!"

(1Kings 18:36-39)

Yehovah Answers by Fire

Elijah points the people to God, not himself

Let it be known that You are God in Israel!

God can change the course of a nation with one willing and faithful servant.

Elijah's God was a BIG, BIG God. (How big is yours?)

Elijah drew on what he had heard God had done before, but had never seen.

Many generations ago, God had sent Holy Fire to burn up a sacrifice.

Examples included when Moses and Aaron first dedicated the tabernacle, and again when Solomon dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem.

What About the Rain?

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, 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." 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!"

What About the Rain?

So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.' " 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. 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.

(1Kings 18:42-46)

- Elijah knew how to pray.
 - And it didn't take much evidence for his faith to burst out

Conclusion

1. Have you answered Elijah's question? How long will you falter between two opinions? Are you a Christ follower when it's convenient, or are you like an Elijah?
2. Which of the lessons from the story of Elijah has God placed on your heart today? Write it down. Meditate on it. Pursue God in that area.

Benediction

Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? ...

(Isaiah 43:19)

"Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

(Rev 5:13b)