

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
1 Kings 18: 16-46

Introduction.

- A. Different divisions of the prophets.
 - 1. Major and minor.
 - 2. Pre-exilic, exilic, post-exilic.
 - 3. Writing and non-writing.
- B. Background.
 - 1. Ahab (16:29-33).
 - a. Most wicked king of Israel.
 - b. Married Jezebel.
 - 1) Baal is in her name (means “master.”)
 - 2) Brought Baal worship to Israel.
 - 2. Elijah.
 - a. From Tishbe.
 - b. Confronts Ahab – 3 years of drought.
 - c. Went into hiding.
 - 1) Fed by ravens.
 - 2) The widow of Zarepath.
 - i. She fed him first.
 - ii. Miraculous supply of food.
 - iii. Raised her son.
 - 3. The search (18:1-15).
 - a. Obadiah.
 - b. The promise to meet Ahab.

I. The contestants.

- A. Baal.
 - 1. Fertility god.
 - 2. Associated with Asherah.
- B. The LORD – the one true God.
- C. The test – who was the true God of Israel.

II. Confrontation with Ahab.

- A. Troubler of Israel.
- B. Drought was because of Ahab's sin.
 - 1. Abandoned God's commands (Ex. 20:3-4).
 - a. No other gods before the LORD.
 - b. No images.
 - 2. Brought Baal worship to Israel.

III. The contest.

- A. To bring glory to God (vs. 37).
 - 1. They will know who he is.
 - 2. As in the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:4, 17).
 - 3. The contest continues (Eph. 3:8-11).
- B. The choice of the people – the LORD or Baal.
- C. Baal's prophets.
 - 1. Shouting, dancing, cutting themselves.
 - 2. All day long.
 - 3. Nothing happened.
- D. Elijah.
 - 1. Built an altar "in the name of the LORD."
 - 2. Drenched it with water.
 - 3. Quiet prayer.
 - 4. The fire of the LORD.

IV. The aftermath.

- A. The people return to the LORD.
- B. Prophets of Baal slain.
- C. Rain ended the drought.

V. Lessons learned.

- A. God does not share his glory with another (Is. 42:8).
- B. He is a jealous God (Ex. 20:5).
- C. Our lives have a cosmic dimension (spiritual warfare).
- D. Going out on a limb for God.
 - 1. Elijah was outnumbered 450 to 1.
 - 2. His faith – like Moses at the Red Sea.
 - 3. The prayer of a righteous man (Jas. 5:16f.).

E. Should we expect such miracles in our day?

1. Three great periods of miracles.
 - a. Exodus.
 - b. Elijah and Elisha.
 - c. Jesus and his disciples.
2. Our faith must be in our God.