

## SUNDAY SCHOOL RETREAT

24-25 October 2025

Theme: Readied for Greater Works

Text: 1 Kings 18

### RECALLING THREE YEARS OF FAMINE IN ISRAEL

#### 1. The Warning given to King Ahab

- a) The withholding of dew and rain     1 Kings 17:1
- b) This would cause great hardship to the nation

#### 2. The Word of the LORD given to Elijah

- a) To go to the Brook Cherith which flows into the Jordan River     1 Kings 17:3
- b) God would feed Elijah there                     1 Kings 17:4
- c) Elijah obeyed the LORD faithfully     1 Kings 17:5

#### 3. Many lessons were learned in this Wilderness Sojourn

- a) Obedience
- b) Faith
- c) Prayer
- d) Dependence on God
- e) Relationship with God
- f) Waiting on the Lord
  - i) For His leading
  - ii) For His empowering
  - iii) For His instruction

### SENT BY THE LORD TO APPEAR TO KING AHAB

<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."

<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 18:1-6

## **SENDING OF ELIJAH TO KING AHAB**

### **1. Three years later 1 Kings 18:1**

- a) There was severe famine in the land 1 Kings 18:2
- b) Samaria, the capital was not spared from suffering

### **2. The Word of the LORD came to Elijah 1 Kings 18:1**

- a) “Present yourself to Ahab”
- b) “I will send rain on the earth”
- c) It was the LORD who had caused this punitive famine and it would be God who would end the drought that had caused the famine

### **3. Three years of tyranny under Ahab and Jezebel**

- a) Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD 1 Kings 18:4a
- b) Reasons for this persecution:
  - i) Rage
  - ii) Revenge/ Retaliation
  - iii) Rabid violence

## **OBADIAH - A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF THE LORD**

### **1. Obadiah 1 Kings 18**

- a) He served King Ahab
- b) He was a trusted official of the king
- c) He was in charge of the king's house

### **2. His deeds of compassion**

- a) He helped to save the lives of 100 prophets
- b) He found two caves to hide the prophets of the LORD
- c) Each cave hid 50 prophets
- d) He fed them with bread and water

### **3. Evaluation of his acts of mercy**

- a) He had put himself at risk
- b) He possessed courage to attempt this
- c) He would face severe penalties if he were found out
- d) It must have cost him quite a bit to feed 100 prophets
  - i) Water was not easy to find
  - ii) Bread was scarce because of the famine
  - iii) How long he had to do this is not disclosed

## **THE DESPERATE SEARCH FOR GRASS**

### **1. Two Teams were organized 1 Kings 18:5-6**

- a) One team was led by King Ahab himself
- b) The other team was led by Obadiah

### **2. Grass was needed**

- a) For the horses

b) For the mules

3. Wherever there was water

a) Springs

b) Brooks

c) Perhaps grass would be found there

d) There was no guarantee that grass would be found

### **THE APPEARANCE OF ELIJAH TO OBADIAH**

<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.’*”

<sup>9</sup> So he said, “How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me?”

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> And now you say, ‘Go, tell your master, “Elijah is here” ’!

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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?

<sup>14</sup> And now you say, ‘Go, tell your master, “Elijah is here.” ’ He will kill me!”

<sup>15</sup> Then Elijah said, “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today.”

<sup>16</sup> So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

1 Kings 18:7-16

#### **1. The prophet Elijah suddenly appeared before Obadiah**

a) This was totally unexpected

- b) Obadiah was unsure how he should respond
- c) The enemy of King Ahab wanted an audience with the king!

## **2. Obadiah recognized the prophet immediately**

- a) Perhaps had had seen the prophet
- b) He was in charge of Ahab's house
- c) He certainly had heard about how the Spirit of God would snatch him away at a moment's notices

## **3. He greeted Elijah fearfully 1 Kings 18:7**

- a) He fell on his face
- b) He addressed the prophet as "my lord Elijah"

## **4. Elijah instructs Obadiah to inform King Ahab of his presence**

- a) That Elijah was there in Samaria
- b) He may not have found grass but he had found Elijah
- c) And that Elijah wants an audience with the king

## **THE FEAR OF OBADIAH EXPRESSED**

### **1. He feared the wrath of King Ahab**

- a) Ahab was vengeful
- b) He was vindictive

### **2. Ahab's efforts to capture Elijah**

- a) He had sent out bounty hunters
- b) To every kingdom and nation
- c) The hunters must make a report of their efforts to capture Elijah
- d) All reports must be verified with an oath that they have not given refuge to Elijah
- e) Such was the intensity of effort made by Ahab to hound Elijah

- f) All their searches were fruitless
- g) Elijah could not be found by Ahab and his hunters

### **3. Obadiah feared for his life 1 Kings 18:12**

- a) If he were to tell Elijah was in Samaria
- b) And Elijah was taken away suddenly by the Spirit of God
- c) Obadiah could forfeit his life
- d) Obadiah expressed his fear openly to Elijah

### **4. The Plea of Obadiah**

- a) That he had practised the fear of the LORD from his youth
- b) That he had saved 100 prophets from being killed by Jezebel

### **5. Assurance given to Obadiah**

- a) He will meet with King Ahab
- b) Assured, Obadiah informed Ahab of Elijah's presence

### **6. King Ahab goes out to see Elijah 1 Kings 18:16**

- a) He had sought Elijah for 3 years in vain
- b) Elijah was now within his grasp!
- c) Ahab was eager to see if he could arrest Elijah

### **THE MEETING BETWEEN ELIJAH AND AHAB**

<sup>17</sup> Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "*Is that* you, O troubler of Israel?"

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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 18:17-19

#### **1. King Ahab's attitude**

- a) Hostile
- b) Arrogance
- c) Intimidating
- d) He blamed Elijah for causing so much trouble to Israel

## 2. Elijah's attitude

- a) Confident
- b) He had been sent by the LORD to meet Ahab
- c) He rebuked Ahab
  - i) His father and he had troubled Israel
  - ii) They had broken the commandments of the LORD
  - iii) They had worshipped idols
- d) The challenge to Ahab and the false prophets under his employ

## THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE AT MOUNT CARMEL

<sup>20</sup> So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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*.

<sup>24</sup> 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."

1 Kings 18:20-24

### 1. Mount Carmel

- a) Located in Northern Israel

- b) 1784 ft above sea level
- c) Mountain range was 24 miles long
- d) Mentioned in Isaiah 35:2 in a prophecy where glory and excellence are associated with Carmel

## **2. People in attendance**

- a) The people of Israel
- b) The prophets of Ahab and Jezebel  
850 in total

## **3. The rebuke Elijah gave to the people**

- a) On the one hand they worshipped Baal
- b) On the other hand, they worshipped the LORD
- c) They were faltering between the “two opinions”
- d) The people remained silent

## **4. The Participants in this Contest**

- a) Elijah was the prophet of the LORD
- b) Baal’s prophets numbered 450

## **5. The Contest**

- a) To offer a burnt offering
- b) But no fire is to be lit by anyone
- c) Both sides would pray
- d) The God who answered by fire would be the true God

## **6. The people agreed**

- a) This was a fair contest
- b) The God who answers by fire would indeed be the true God

## THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CONTEST

<sup>25</sup> 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*."

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> 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."

<sup>28</sup> So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them.

<sup>29</sup> 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 18:25-29

### 1. Elijah's word to the prophets of Baal

- a) They are to go first
- b) They are to prepare a bull to be offered as a burnt sacrifice
- c) They are not allowed to light a fire
- d) They are to rely on prayer alone

### 2. The prophets of Baal

- a) The prophets called out to Baal
- b) They cried out from morning to the afternoon
- c) They leaped about the altar
- d) They cut themselves
- e) This was their custom
- f) But Baal did not answer for he could not
- g) He was a man-made god!

## THE PRAYER OF ELIJAH

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> 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."

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> 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."

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> 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."

<sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup> 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!"

<sup>40</sup> 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 18:30-40

1. Elijah called the people to draw near

- a) They had seen that Baal was powerless
- b) He cannot answer any prayer

2. Elijah repaired the Altar of the LORD

- a) Twelve stones were taken (to represent the tribes)

- b) A trench was made around the altar
- c) This trench was filled with water three times

### 3. Elijah's prayer to the LORD

<sup>36</sup>*"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."*

<sup>37</sup>*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*

- a) The LORD God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob
- b) He is the God of Israel
- c) Elijah was His servant
- d) He asked to have his prayer heard
- e) That the people may return to the LORD

### **THE GOD WHO ANSWERS BY FIRE**

<sup>38</sup>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.

<sup>39</sup>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!"

*1 Kings 18:38-39*

1. The fire of the LORD fell
2. What the fire of the LORD did
  - a) It consumed the burnt sacrifice
  - b) It burnt up:
    - i) The wood
    - ii) The stones
    - iii) The dust

iv) The water in the trench

### 3. The response of the people

a) They fell on their faces

i) With a great sense of awe

ii) With a new sense of regard for the LORD

b) They exclaimed

*“The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!”*

### **THE EXECUTION OF THE FALSE PROPHETS**

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

#### 1. The prophets were guilty of the following;

a) Corruption of the people

b) Deception

c) Promotion of idolatry

#### 2. The prophet Elijah exercised prophetic authority

a) He caused them to be executed

b) This was at the River Kishon

c) The River Kishon

i) The source is from the Gilboa mountains

ii) It flows into the Mediterranean Sea

iii) It passed through Mount Carmel region

## **THE END OF THE THREE-YEAR DROUGHT**

<sup>41</sup> Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for *there is* the sound of abundance of rain.”

<sup>42</sup> 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.

1 Kings 18:41-46

## **INFORMING AHAB THAT THE RAINS WOULD RETURN**

1. Elijah informs Ahab that an abundant rainfall would come soon
2. The subdued King quietly obeyed Elijah

## **INSTRUCTION OF ELIJAH’S SERVANT**

1. Elijah went back up to Mount Carmel to pray
2. He bowed himself to the LORD and prayed for the rains to come
3. He sent his servant to check the rain clouds
  - a) He sent his servant to check 7 times
  - b) Each time he checked, he found no signs
  - c) Until the 7<sup>th</sup> time
  - d) Then the rains came
4. Elijah was especially empowered

He ran in the strength given to him and outran the carriage of Ahab!

## **GREAT LESSONS TO LEARN FROM OBADIAH**

1. You do not have to be a prophet to do great things

2. Things that we can emulate

a) His character

It remained incorrupt though he served wicked king Ahab

b) His courage

He risked his life, seeking to save the 100 prophets

c) His fear of the Lord

He feared the Lord more than he feared king Ahab

d) His humility

He spoke with great deference to Elijah

e) His faithfulness

He did not worship Baal but remained true to his faith in God

## **GREAT LESSONS TO LEARN FROM ELIJAH**

1. There were many other prophets

2. But Elijah stood out as an outstanding prophet

3. Outstanding features:

a) His steadfast faith in God

b) His total obedience to the LORD

c) His relationship with God

d) His prayer life

e) His courage

f) His spiritual strength

4. How were these features cultivated?

a) In the Wilderness where

- i) His faith was tested
- ii) His character was honed
- iii) His dependence on God had to be absolute

b) In solitude where his only company was the LORD Himself

c) Through his consistent obedience to God

- i) Brook Cherith
- ii) Zarephath
- iii) Mount Carmel

#### **SOME REASONS WHY WE LACK SPIRITUALLY**

1. We are not prepared to put our life at risk
2. We are not willing to make many sacrifices
3. We do not really appreciate in full, spiritual values
4. We are happy to give just a bit of our time and energy to serve God
5. We are not able to follow the leading of the Lord with courage and confidence
6. We still love the world and the things of the world
7. We think that a weakened spiritual state is a common/ natural thing