Bible Stories for Adults
Elijah and the Baal Prophets
1 Kings 18 - 20

Opening

Gathering: Give an example of someone who stood up for God against many.

Today’s Focus: Elijah followed God’s call to show others that Yahweh is the one & only God, even at great risk to himself.

Key Verses: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

It is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only. Matthew 4:10

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Last Week - God Feeds Elijah (1 Kings 15-17)

What great sin did Jeroboam begin and all other northern kings follow?
1 Kings 12:26-33 = Made their own religion with calves, priests & festivals

How did God punish Jeroboam for this evil?
1 Kings 14:8-11 = Destroyed Jeroboam’s household

How would God punish the people of Israel for their part in this great sin?
1 Kings 14:15-16 = Uproot from the land & scatter beyond the Jordan

Who was the most evil king of Israel?
1 Kings 16:30 = Ahab, son of Omri

How evil was he?
1 Kings 16:31-33 = Trivialized Jeroboam's sin, Married Jezebel, Baal Worship

What were Baal and Asherah?
Every pagan locality had its own Baal (lord)
Shrines to Baals were built on high places in the area
Baal of Sidon (Phoenicia) was brought to Israel by Jezebel
Controlled rainfall & fire - Critical to agricultural society
Was happy & gave rain when he mated with his wife Asherah
Temple sex induced Baal & Asherah to mate so it would rain
Sacrifices included children under extraordinary conditions
Priests would dance around altar and slash selves with knives

What did Elijah's name mean and why was it significant? = NIV translates Yahweh as the LORD
1 Kings 18:39 = Elijah means Yahweh is God. He came to show this

How would God use Elijah to prove He is God of the rain and all creation?
1 Kings 17:1 = Sent Elijah to Ahab to say He was sending a drought

What miracles did God produce through Elijah in our lesson last week?
1 Kings 17:5-6 = God sent bread and meat via ravens and water in brook
1 Kings 17:15-16 = He kept flour in the jar and oil in the jug
1 Kings 17:21-22 = He restored the widow's son to life

What was the reason that God produced these miracles?
1 Kings 17:24 = To show God's power and build faith
Three Years Later *(1 Kings 18:1-6)*

What prompted Elijah to return to Ahab and stop the drought?
- 1 Kings 18:1-2 = God came to Elijah and sent him

Who was Obadiah and what had he done out of faithfulness? = Different than prophet Obadiah
- 1 Kings 18:3-4 = In charge of Ahab's palace; Hid and fed 100 prophets

What task was Obadiah given that took him outside the palace?
- 1 Kings 18:5-6 = To find grazing land for royal animals during the drought

**Elijah Meets Faithful Obadiah *(1 Kings 18:7-18)*

Who did Obadiah run into during his search for grazing land?
- 1 Kings 18:7-8 = Elijah

Why didn't Obadiah want to tell Ahab that he found Elijah? = Elijah disappeared after last time seen
- 1 Kings 18:9, 11-12 = Ahab would have him killed if Elijah was gone when he returned

How anxiously had Ahab wanted to find Elijah to end the drought?
- 1 Kings 18:10 = Sent searchers to all nations and made them look

What reason did Obadiah give to convince Elijah not to make him tell Ahab?
- 1 Kings 18:13-14 = Faithful to God, Hid 100 prophets from Jezebel

How did Elijah respond to Obadiah's concern and did Obadiah trust him?
- 1 Kings 18:15-16 = Elijah promised that he'd stay, Obadiah trusted & went

How was Elijah greeted and how did he use this to explain the real problem?
- 1 Kings 18:17-18 = The Troubler of Israel, Ahab's unfaithfulness

**The Question *(1 Kings 18:19-21)*

What did Elijah want Ahab to do before he would end the drought?
- 1 Kings 18:19-20 = Gather people from all over Israel + 850 Baal/Asherah prophets

What question did Elijah present to the people before ending the drought?
- 1 Kings 18:21 = Which god will you serve, Yahweh or Baal? Pick one

What point was Elijah making that Jesus later repeated?
- Matthew 6:24 = No one can serve two masters - God/money, God/Baal

Was this concept of serving only one god new to the Israelites? = Commanded from beginning
- Joshua 24:14-15 = Choose..whom you will serve...as for me & my house, we will serve the Lord

**The Challenge *(1 Kings 18:22-29)*

What challenge did Elijah propose to help the people decide which was the real God?
- 1 Kings 18:22-24 = Whichever sent fire to altar was real God = Baal seen as god of fire

How successful were the many Baal prophets?
- 1 Kings 18:25-26 = Called on Baal all morning to no avail

How did Elijah emphasize Baal's impotence to the people?
- 1 Kings 18:27 = He taunted the prophets and told them to shout louder

Did they follow Elijah's advice and did Baal finally respond? = Nothing by evening (twilight)
- 1 Kings 18:28-29 = Shouted louder and cut selves to get Baal's attention
The Lord is God! (1 Kings 18:30-40)

What was significant about the altar that Elijah built?
1 Kings 18:30-32 = Made of 12 stones, one for each tribe of Israel
How did Elijah show the people that only God could light the sacrifice?
1 Kings 18:33-35 = Drenched the sacrifice, wood and altar 3 times

How much yelling, dancing and beating did Elijah need to get God's attention?
1 Kings 18:36-38 = None, just a short prayer; God sent intense fire
What decision did the people make after watching the day's contest? = Ahab didn't stop the slaughter
1 Kings 18:39-40 = The Lord is God! They killed the Baal prophets

The Drought Ends (1 Kings 18:41-46)

How did Ahab and Elijah respond to the events after a day without eating?
1 Kings 18:41-43 = Ahab ate, Elijah prayed 7 times (complete)
How did God answer Elijah's prayers? = Now that the people had repented
1 Kings 18:44-45 = He sent heavy rains and ended the drought
Who was waiting for Ahab when his chariot reached Jezreel?
1 Kings 18:46 = Elijah, Ran by God's power, despite not eating

Elijah's Reward for Ending the Drought (1 Kings 19:1-4)

How did Jezebel respond to Ahab's news of Elijah returning Israel to God?
1 Kings 19:1-2 = Said she would kill Elijah within 24 hours
Did Elijah stand up in faith to Jezebel?
1 Kings 19:3-4 = He lost faith, ran away as far as he could (south of Judah) & asked to die

God Sustains Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-10)

How did God respond to Elijah's request?
1 Kings 19:5-7 = Sent angel with nourishment for journey in desert
Where did Elijah go and how long did it take him to get there? = God sustained Moses 40 day on Sinai
1 Kings 19:8 = Mount Horeb (Sinai), Took 40 days and 40 nights (40 = generation)
What reason did Elijah give God for coming to see Him?
1 Kings 19:9-10 = He came to seek refuge in God's presence and power

God Appears to Elijah on Mount Sinai (1 Kings 19)

How did God reveal Himself to Elijah and why?
1 Kings 19:11-12 = Not wind, earthquake or fire, but whisper. Though powerful, God is love
How did Elijah respond to the presence of God?
1 Kings 19:13 = Covered his face so he wouldn't look at God (like Moses hid his face)

What instructions did God give Elijah?
1 Kings 19:15-16 = Anoint kings of Aram & Israel (Hazael & Jehu) and successor (Elisha)
What purpose did God have for these new servants?
1 Kings 19:17 = To dole out God's punishment to the unfaithful
Did God agree with Elijah that he was the only faithful left in Israel?
1 Kings 19:18 (Romans 11:2-5) = No, there were 7000 others. They would be spared
Before Hazael (1 Kings 20:1-22)

Who was the king of Aram (Syria) at this time and what was Aram's relationship with Israel?
1 Kings 20:1 = Ben-Hadad - "besieged Samaria and attacked it"

How did Ahab respond to Ben-Hadad's demands to turn over everything of value?
1 Kings 20:9-11 (2-12) = Rejected him - said "don't count your chickens before they're hatched"

Was God punishing Ahab for his unfaithfulness? = Prophet was one of the faithful Elijah didn't know
1 Kings 20:13 = No, He was creating an opportunity to again show Ahab that Yahweh is God

What happened when Ahab initiated the battle as the prophet instructed him?
1 Kings 20:19-20 (14-21) = The Israelites were victorious, even with only 7000 soldiers

Did this battle eliminate the Aramean threat?
1 Kings 20:22 = Just for this year, they would attack again the following spring

The Next Year (1 Kings 20:23-34)

How had Ben-Hadad changed his strategy for fighting the Israelites the next year?
1 Kings 20:23 (23-28) = He regrouped and trained his men to fight on the plains

Were the Israelites easy to defeat on the plains as Ben-Hadad's advisors had told him?
1 Kings 20:29-30 = No, the Israelites strongly defeated the Arameans

Did Ahab kill Ben-Hadad now that he had him trapped? = Ahab gave equal ranking by calling him brother
1 Kings 20:32, 34 (31-34) = No he made a treaty with him and let him go

Him or You (1 Kings 20:35-43)

How did God get word to Ahab that he had done wrong by letting Ben-Hadad go?
1 Kings 20:37-38 (35-38) = Had a prophet disguise himself as an injured soldier before Ahab

Why did the prophet put on this disguise?
1 Kings 20:39-40 = To tell a story that caused Ahab to pronounce his own judgement

How had Ahab pronounced his own judgement?
1 Kings 20:41-42 = Said that Ahab would die in place of Ben-Hadad

How did Ahab end up dying a few years later?
1 Kings 22:31, 34, 37 = He was randomly hit by an arrow during battle with the Arameans

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I stood up for others at risk to myself?
   (1 Kings 18:4; Esther 4:10-16; Hebrews 11:31; John 15:13; 18:7-9; Romans 9:2-5)
2. When have I stood up for my faith at risk to myself?
   (1 Kings 18:13; Matthew 10; John 15:18-21; Acts 8:1-4; 2 Thessalonians 1)
3. How have I tried to serve more than one god?
   (1 Kings 18:21; Deuteronomy 5:7; 6:4; Matthew 6:24; Revelation 3:15-16)
4. How have I tried to manipulate God to do what I wanted?
   (1 Kings 18:27-29; Job 38-42; Matthew 6:25-34; Romans 9:14-20)
5. When have I felt alone in my faith?
   (1 Kings 19:10; Romans 11:1-6; 3:9-20; Matthew 28:18-20; John 14:1-4)