

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

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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

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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

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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)