



Lesson 4 March 27th, 2021

Elijah: Prophet of Courage

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

Study Scripture – 1 Kings 18:5-18

Background Scripture – 1 Kings 18

Key Verse:

And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

1 Kings 18:18

INTRODUCTION

Our Lesson Study today is directly addressed to

1. Two- timing worshipers
2. Those who marry out of their faith or enter into close association with unbelievers for political and strategic reasons
3. Those who because of the pluralistic milieu of the world in which they live and in which there are many diverse religions think it is a good idea to coexist in close relationship with these diverse religions
4. Those who wish to use the excuse that they have ungodly parents to explain why they continue to reject the Lord God Almighty despite the plain evidences that are shown to them
5. Those who think that because it is demoralizing to work in a corrupt or evil organization it is much easier to quit and find someplace holier to work to avoid doing evil ourselves ignoring the fact that it is possible that you may be where God wants you to stay and to behave ethically being a Saviour and an anchor to those who are about to die
6. Those who think because of their lack of courage that they may not be Jehovah's answer to Baal
7. Those who underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit to work through them to move the plan of God forward.

Our Study directly addresses the difficulty that believers face because of their lack of courage and their lack of desire to accept the terms of the covenant relationship that they have with the Lord God Almighty.

The ongoing struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil took a dramatic turn in the days of Elijah the prophet and that confrontation is the focus of our Lesson. This was combat designed to show that God is supreme and that the forces of evil are no match for God. The power of God shows the impotence of the many idols of Baal to successfully challenge the sovereignty of God.

Remember we too today face the temptation to worship idols which are not made of wood and stones. Our idols can be wealth, houses, cars, men, women, popularity, power, and all the things which we prize and hold dearly more than we hold God dearly.

We will see that God is so gracious, that despite the utter iniquity and disobedience of His people, He is still concerned about them and is prepared to use His control over nature, as well as the efforts of His Servant to reveal Himself and His plan of redemption.

We see also that even when the people of God are in a degraded state, God still expects His saints to be the 'salt' of the earth. Their individual situations might be very difficult, and the forces of evil might try to destroy them physically, but they are still expected to stand up for God and show His loving character, as well as His discipline.

God clearly places His holy people in places He chooses to slow down and reverse the decay which is constantly occurring among His people and in the world around them.

Now this is often a difficult task, for people have a natural tendency to avoid confrontation and conflict. More often we prefer to swim downstream or as one writer said, 'to float with the tide' rather than to confront issues and problems and the things which offend God and go contrary to His commandments.

We must realize that confrontation is never painless, easy, or without risks. Our Lesson will show the risks to life faced by the prophet Elijah. It is commanded and illustrated by Scripture, for without challenging sin there would be no godliness, biblically required change, or spiritual growth.

The prophets were often confrontational, facing people who lived independent of God and who were independent of those who were in sin. They were strong minded and did not always cry to God for they knew God was there and they knew what they had to do.

They frequently faced those who were trying to serve God and *mammon* at the same time. As a result, they regularly had to deal with the sin, rebellion, independent ways, self-centeredness and the stiff-necked attitudes of the people. Note however, that with the confrontations come the offer of reconciliation and grace and the many blessings that come with forgiveness.

In chapter 18 we see the two approaches of God. In one case we see the prophet refocusing, encouraging and assuring a faithful servant of God, who was prepared to obey God despite the difficulties.

In the other case we see confrontation and conflict, for here the prophet faced a King captured in the idolatry of Baal. This person needed to be confronted with his sin. His excuses and rationalizations had to be pointedly and bluntly rejected and the blame for the sad state of affairs placed squarely on his shoulders.

Today as at all other times we find similar situations requiring the attitude displayed by the prophet of God.

It should be carefully noted however that at the conclusion of this story we find this powerful warrior, a real prophet and saint of God depressed, discouraged and all alone.

He had done magnificent work for God, but the people had remained almost as bad as before, allowing their evil rulers to continue to rule over them, saying nothing, taking the easy way, swimming downstream, floating with the tide and not fighting for the truth.

Our Lesson is set in the northern kingdom of Israel, the ten tribes. The nation had split and the apostasy and moral decay which Solomon had begun with his marriages to idolatrous, pagan women, his imposition of very high taxes and oppressive labor levies on the people, was



bearing full fruit. The first leader of the northern kingdom, Jeroboam, had cut off spiritual contact with Temple worship in Jerusalem and had instead set up idol worship in the official worship centers. The godly people moved out of the northern kingdom into Judah and those remaining continued with the evil idolatrous form of worship.

In the northern kingdom there were no good Kings. All of the descendants of and successors to Jeroboam *'made Israel to sin'*. The next King was always worse than the previous. Omri had reigned over Israel for 12 years and was more evil in the eyes of the Lord than all that were before him. He made Israel to sin and angered God and provoked the Lord God of Israel dishonouring God with the worship of idols. When he died his son Ahab ascended the throne, and it is recorded that

"He did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass (as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat) that he took to wife, Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him".

He did evil continuing in the style of the fifty-eight years and seven Kings after the kingdom was divided, and things that reached the lowest possible point. Ahab married Jezebel, the notorious princess from Tyre who added the satanic cult of Baal-Melqart into the already idolatrous Israel.

Remember that Baal in his many and varying local interpretations, was regarded as a god who had power over the rain, the winds, cloud and therefore over fertility. He was believed to be the one who gave life to humans, animals and the crops. He brought prosperity and wealth, and the good life depended on him. In his worship, burnt offerings, including human sacrifice, were offered. All kinds of gross sexual activity including homosexuality were part of the normal practice.

The moral climate in Israel was totally degraded and corrupt. The leaders were corrupt, and the people went along with it. Those who believed in God felt powerless in the face of official hostility. They either had to seek refuge in Judah or be quiet, suffering in silence.

As Psalm 11:3 asks-

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

In this situation God calls Elijah, a premier example of faith, courage, and service to God in a time of intolerable adversity.

We must not kid ourselves into thinking that the situation was not at rock bottom. It was worse than we can ever imagine, and God had to take drastic action. One writer therefore advises us: **"Elijah was Jehovah's answer to Baal. He was, apparently, so important in divine revelation that he is mentioned more in the New Testament than any other prophet. As you know, he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with our Lord Jesus, and furthermore, it is stated in Scripture that he is the prophet that shall come again before that great and terrible day of the Lord.**

Elijah's name means, "Jehovah is my God". And I don't know how that was must have sounded in the days in which Baal became so prominent. I wonder if men look at the Elijah and said, his name is "Jehovah is my God" or "Jehovah is my God" as over against the gods of so many of the Israelites that day.

But, at any rate, Elijah is a man who comes with almost superhuman powers. He is a man who seems to be a citizen not of the ordinary Earth in which we live, but almost a retainer of



God's Kingdom and God's throne and God's court in heaven. He was a rugged, stern, solitary man who was called by his commentators a prophet of fire.

And yet, he is likened onto Jesus Christ in the New Testament. When the Lord Jesus asked his disciples, whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? They said, "Some say you're the Prophet. Some say you're Jeremiah. Some say you are Elijah".

So there must have been some things about Jesus Christ that parallel the life of Elijah in the Old Testament. Now, we often think of Jesus as meek and lowly in heart, only. Now, he was that. But he was also extremely inflexible in his holiness. In fact, if he had not been holy, he could not have gained our souls by a sacrifice on the Cross. If he was not just and righteous himself, he could not have been our Saviour. And so that sternness and ruggedness that existed in the prophet Elijah also existed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and men saw that there was something similar about the two".

There were relatively few in Israel that had not worshipped Baal. In fact, God disclosed that there were seven thousand men who had not *bowed the knee* to Baal. These were righteous people, and they were a tiny percentage of an estimated three to four million people living in the northern kingdom.

Elijah comes out of relative obscurity and probably lived in a town called Tishe in Upper Galilee. This area in Gilead was a rocky, mountainous and sparsely inhabited region. The terrain made the people hardened, disciplined, physically strong, rugged and stern. People from that area were men of the desert, uninterested in the comforts of society and accustomed to inconvenience and hardships.

We are told however that Elijah was a man just like us with similar passions, fears, weaknesses and doubts. He clearly rose above his weaknesses because of the strength of his faith in God. As a result, he became a man of courage and faith, available and ready to do the work of God when called.

We should pay attention to this example.

God could count on him when the foundations of the nation and the spiritual life of the people had crumbled.

The Dictionary defines courage as mettle, spirit, resolution, tenacity, mental or moral strength to resist opposition, danger, or hardships. Courage implies firmness of mind and will when in the face of danger or extreme difficulty.

So this man came to teach us that those religious systems that do not worship the true God, Yahweh, are false and lifeless. Their adherents will often show a lot of zeal and energy, but they have no real life, or a light meant to offer.

Elijah had been sent out of nowhere to announce to King Ahab that because of his iniquity, his doing more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, than all the kings of Israel that had lived before him, it would not rain in Israel until Elijah spoke the word to bring rain. (Chapter 16:30-17:1). This would spell disaster, since the words and cursing's of Deuteronomy 11 would now be totally fulfilled. Everyone in Israel would suffer. Israel would see that Baal had no power to help them and that he was not the God of weather or fertility.

God then instructed Elijah to go out of harm's way and hide himself in a place that God chose. Elijah was put in seclusion. Nobody could find him, no matter how they searched.

In the three years from Elijah's announcement severe drought covered Israel. The prophets of God were viciously attacked, and Jezebel went after all those that worshipped Yahweh.



If it were not for Obadiah, a right-hand man to Ahab, the prophets of God would be wiped out, but he took a hundred prophets, hid them in caves and fed them.

So if you think that it isn't possible for you to work in a corrupt or evil organization and be the right hand to a man or men who were criminals spiritually think again. In fact, it seems that the more corrupt the world the more it needs godly people. If you can stay somewhere without adding to the evil yourself it may be that God wants you to stay right, there and witness for Him quietly. We will see that it is our responsibility to do all we can to help others.

It is clearly stated that this is more important to God than our desire to think of ourselves as morally pure, says one writer.

All the animals in Israel were dying, for there was no water. The crops were poor or nonexistent and it was so bad that Ahab himself and his trusted servant Obadiah, a man of God who the wicked Ahab trusted, had to personally go and search for pastureland. Saving horses was more important to Ahab than saving his own people for we know that he intended to contribute 2,000 chariots to the group of nations being put together to repel the attack of the Assyrians. But we know that that coalition could not save the nation from the Assyrian invasion which eventually resulted in the destruction of the nation and the sending away of the people of the northern kingdom into exile.

One can imagine the overwhelming rage in the courts of Ahab and in the priests, priestesses and loyal followers of Baal who had long been trumpeting the power of their God.

There was no cure for their frustrations and no lettings up of the sweltering heat, crippling thirst and the smell of death.

It was during this search that Obadiah met Elijah and Elijah gave him instructions to announce to Ahab that he Elijah was now back in Israel and was ready to meet him. Obadiah knew well of Jezebel's strategy to eliminate the prophets of God and he had undertaken the very dangerous and difficult task of hiding and feeding one hundred prophets of the Lord. Finding food and water for this group must have been very, very difficult.

This devout believer gives us an insight into the extent of the rage and hostility to the people of God and to Elijah. He knew that the King had been looking both inside and outside of Israel for Elijah to kill him. Ahab was so enraged and vexed that when his allies told him that Elijah was not hiding in their territory, he insisted that they take an oath to prove that they were telling the truth.

Do not therefore forget that when you serve God faithfully and have courage the followers of Satan would be enraged against you and will go to great lengths to try to destroy you.

Obadiah knew that if he as much as told Ahab that he had met Elijah, and then Ahab would not find Elijah at the place Elijah had said he would be, Obadiah would be a dead man. Elijah assured Obadiah that he would meet Ahab and this devout believer's heart was calmed.

So at this eventful meeting Elijah corrected Ahab's accusation that he was troubling Israel, pointing out to Ahab that it was he Ahab and his house that had turned away from God and had turned the people away from God. That was the source of the trouble in Israel.

Note that Elijah confronts the King with the issues. People sometimes seem to avoid dealing with issues. Elijah said that there was an evil root and it bore evil fruit. There was a cause that led to the effect. Ahab and his house had forsaken the Commandments of God and rejected His word. Turning away from the 'word' had led to idolatry, materialism occultism, ritualism and



serious national problems. This ended in total self-deception. Incidentally, this led to Ahab's death as recorded in 1 Kings 22.

One commentator on this passage states:

“One of the signs of decay in a church or in a nation is when the leadership acts as capricious children governed by their own whims and fancies.”

Elijah had no guilt on his conscience and in the power of God ordered a challenge to Ahab to bring the four hundred and fifty male priests of Baal, the alleged “God of rain” and the four hundred female priests of Asherah, the female wife of Baal, along with the people of Israel, to meet him on Mount Carmel.

Ahab knew that it was now three years and six months since Elijah had spoken to him that there would be no rain until he spoke again. Ahab knew that during that time all the crops failed, and the rivers had dried up. He had personally searched for water and had found none. The priests of the false god of rain had done all they could, but the drought and suffering simply got worse. Ahab knew enough about God to know that God was real, but he was evil and preferred darkness to light.

So we will now look at this confrontation, before one looks at the showdown at Mount Carmel, where Ahab and Israel were shown that they were to have no other gods beside Yahweh.

THE TEXT

Verse 5 & 6. Obadiah was a true servant of the Almighty God. Yes, some consider it strange that such a man would be in the service of Ahab knowing all that he had done to God's prophets and people, but we can see that in the struggle of God against Ahab and Jezebel that God put Obadiah in this position to help his people and to set in motion events that unfolded in this Chapter. However, God maintained Obadiah's presence in this court, and it does not appear as though in the issue of worship Obadiah was made to bow the knee to Baal.

Obadiah therefore could with good conscience enjoy the job he had, and had no need to give it up, even though he foresaw he could not do all the good he desired to do in it.

This was a genuinely tough situation, but it has an important lesson for Christians in that those that fear God need not go out of the world, bad as it is and live like a hermit or live in a cave by oneself.

Another strange but interesting and meaningful point is that Ahab was not able to corrupt Obadiah, but Obadiah was not able to reform Ahab.

It seems in this case as Scripture warns, he that was filthy would be filthy still, and he that was holy would be holy still. God has His remnant among all sorts, high and low.

This good man used his power for the protection of God's prophets. He hid 100 of them in caves, when the persecution was at its peak, and fed them with bread and water; this he provided for them in time of a drought. He thought himself obliged to assist and countenance others that feared God. A good and wise child of God will not only fear God greatly himself but will also do service and patronize those that fears God likewise.

Providence ordered it so that Ahab would with his own eyes see how bad the consequences of this judgment were, so that he might be the better inclined to listen to Elijah, who would direct him into the only way to put an end to what God has so constructed.



Now we should understand that Ahab's concern was not for the nation of Israel, or even for his soul, but for the welfare of the beasts. He had lost it seems enough livestock that he would go out with Obadiah to seek grass, but not seek the favour of God, employing a stop gap, but not a cure.

Note in contrast that the land of Judah who still followed God did not experience this drought. They looked upon Israel and maybe wondered why they would not repent and return to God. The evidence was clearly there, God caused rain to fall on one city and not upon another. Like Ahab, the people of Israel blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts and would not see the truth. Because of this, God takes the steps to redeem His people. Step one was the reappearance of Elijah to Israel and Ahab, to bring God's word back to the people. Elijah is set upon this stage as a Tishbite, *a converter or reformer of Israel*, for so that title of his signifies, Ahab only left his palace with Obadiah, which can only mean that he trusted this particular servant and no one else due to the faithfulness Obadiah must have shown serving him. Ahab assigned Obadiah to search throughout one part of the land, and he took the other knowing Obadiah would be faithful to the task.

Verse 7. In the third year of his living at Zarephath the word of the Lord came to Elijah to show himself to Ahab. This occurred as God was about to send rain upon the land again. The time given, "the third year," is not to be reckoned, from the commencement of the drought, but from the event last mentioned, namely, the sojourn of Elijah at Zarephath. This view merits the preference as the simplest and most natural one and is shown to be the oldest by Luke 4:25 and James 5:17, where Christ and James both say, that in the time of Ahab it did not rain for three years and six months. And this length of time can only be obtained by allowing more than two years for Elijah's stay at Zarephath.

One writer tells us that the worst times however demand the best men.

God was providing Israel with Elijah the prophet so Ahab and Israel would be reminded of the ancient covenant terms. Ahab and the people had forgotten them. Note carefully that this was not bringing a new theology, but it was a reminder of the great principles by which the people of Israel should be living.

God had called Elijah from his isolation to now help Israel come back to God.

We had better remember that we do not need a new theology, but we need to hold onto and remember the old faith represented in the Word of God. When people therefore come to you with a new faith or a new interpretation of the old faith which changes its substance completely or even partially you, we should reject them.

The appearance of Elijah was a clear sign that rain will come to Israel, and the mercy of God will be granted. The Spirit of the Lord led Elijah to where Obadiah would be. When they met, Obadiah displayed great reverence to Elijah as a prophet, and extraordinary ambassador of God, demonstrating that he Obadiah did indeed fear and know God for himself. In the greetings to one another, we can see on display the humility of Elijah as he honours what Obadiah has done and recognizes his relationship to Israel's king. Elijah however, is not a person who seeks the honour of men but focuses on doing the will of God. But Israel was at a crisis. Elijah's job was done bring reform and recovery.

Verse 8. Prophets like Elijah have demonstrated that their desire is to do the will of the Father, and so such greetings or titles as lord in addressing them mean nothing to them.



Instead, Elijah bids Obadiah to go and tell the king that he is there to speak with him. King Ahab had searched long and hard for Elijah, but it is clear that God's will would be done on His timeline. His judgment will be done. This was done to show Ahab and Israel their place. Ahab should not be surprised at the appearance of Elijah, but more importantly, it was meant to be show Ahab that it was the prophet's own act to present himself to Ahab at the precise time when the prophet Elijah had predicted that the drought would be lifted.

Verse 9. Obadiah knew that King Ahab conducted an exhaustive search for Elijah, to punish him for the drought that his prayers imposed on Israel. Obadiah feared that if he announced that he met Elijah and the prophet disappeared again, Ahab would punish Obadiah for letting Elijah get away. He is sure Ahab would be so enraged at the disappointment that he would put him to death for making a fool of him, or for not laying hands on Elijah himself, when he had him in his reach. Tyrants and persecutors, in their passion, are often unreasonably outrageous, even towards their friends and confidants, this Obadiah knew.

Obadiah thought that Elijah would withdraw again, or the Spirit of the Lord would whisk him away to expose the impotency of King Ahab's malice, for he knew that Ahab was not worthy to receive any kindness from the prophet.

Verse 10. Ahab had made diligent search for the prophet of God, Elijah. He had offered rewards to anyone that would discover him, he had sent spies into every tribe and into all the neighbouring nations and kingdoms that were in alliance with him, but to no avail.

We should understand that the reign of Ahab involved a reign of wealth and splendour. His father Omri shows up in the annals of the Assyrian kings as a great man. In fact, the Assyrians called Israel. "The house of Omri". Ahab's father was a world figure and in the view of the pagan nations it was reasonable that Ahab would walk in the sins of his father, worshiping his gods, and sharing in the iniquity of the nations around him.

Nobody could find Elijah in the 31/2 years of the drought because God would not allow it. Ahab's friends were useless as they swore oaths that they had not been able to find Elijah. In Ahab's mind it seems he had hoped that if he found Elijah that he would get him to undo the sentence uttered, believing Elijah acted on his own power as the witches and sorcerers under his wife's employ.

Verse 11. Recounting Ahab's search for Elijah, Obadiah then explains that his life would be forfeit if he returns to the King with this message and then later, Elijah could not be found.

Verse 13 & 14. He pleads that he did not deserve to be thus exposed and put in peril of his life. From verse 9 Obadiah had recounted what he had done, the kindness done to the prophets at great risk to himself. He mentions this, not in pride or ostentation, but to convince Elijah that though he was Ahab's servant it was not in his interest, and therefore not deserved to be treated dismissively. He that had protected so many prophets, he hoped, should not have his own life hazarded by so great a prophet.

Verse 15. Elijah tries to reassure him that he might with safety deliver this message to Ahab, by providing him, with an oath, that he would, this very day, present himself to Ahab. By doing this, Elijah would let Obadiah know that he spoke seriously and really intended it, and thus, Obadiah would make no scruple to carry the message to Ahab. Elijah swears by the Lord of Hosts, who has all power in His hands, and is therefore able to protect His servants against all the powers of hell and earth.



We know that we and other believers have lived in times when the people of the church of God are in cahoots with corrupt political governance. Sometimes it is so bad that the true people of God have to hide from the agents of these people. Obadiah had very little spiritual encouragement and yet God encouraged him and told us He considered Obadiah as a man who feared the Lord greatly.

Clearly then there is nothing to prevent a man or woman from fearing the Lord greatly despite the outer circumstances of his or her life. We do not have to be persons of spiritual mediocrity because of where we live, where we work, or the circumstances of our environment.

Remember therefore that John the Baptist pointed out to the soldiers in the Roman military who were convicted by his preaching and who then asked him what they ought to do, John did not tell them to quit their jobs. They could still do their jobs and behave ethically and righteously. When Jesus met the Centurion, Jesus remarked about the great faith of this soldier of consequence and authority and He complimented him on his life. Similarly therefore we know that Obadiah could be a high official in the court of the extremely corrupt and debauched court and Royal house of Ahab and still fear God.

We are sure that it was not easy for Obadiah to work with such a man as Ahab and at the same time maintaining his faithfulness to the Lord day after today. He might have stumbled sometimes but he did what was needed to remain in Ahab's good graces without compromising his loyalty to Yahweh. Not every Christians will be called to be an Elijah and confront the sinful political masters among whom we live. But all will be called by God to do the tricky work of remaining faithful in a faithless environment serving the Lord God and spiritually worthless master or masters at one and the same time. It is possible to do that well and many ordinary Christians have done that well.

Verse 16. Obadiah overcame his legitimate fears and therefore met Ahab and told him that Elijah was back. Elijah wanted to meet Him immediately. Ahab accepts the challenge: He went to meet Elijah. We may suppose it was a great surprise to Ahab to hear that Elijah, whom he had so long sought and not found, was now found without seeking. He went in quest of grass, and found him from whose word, at God's mouth, he must expect rain. Yet his guilty conscience gave him little reason to hope for it, but, rather, to fear some other more dreadful judgment. Perhaps he thought had he by his spies, surprised Elijah, he would have triumphed over him; but, now that he was thus surprised by him, we may suppose he even trembled to look him in the face, hated him, and yet feared him, as Herod was afraid of John the Baptist.

Verse 17. We have here the meeting between Ahab and Elijah, as bad a king as ever the world was plagued with and as good a prophet as ever the congregation of God was blessed with. Ahab accused Elijah for all the trouble he and Israel was currently in. However, at least King Ahab knew better than to reach out to assault the prophet, remembering that Jeroboam's hand withered when it was stretched out against a prophet. This still did not stop him from directing bad language or the accusation against Elijah, which was no less an affront to him that sent him. It was a very coarse compliment with which he accosted him at the first word: ***"Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"***

According to his theology, it made sense for Ahab to blame Elijah. Ahab believed in Baal, so much so that his government promoted and supported Baal worship and persecuted the worshippers of Yahweh. Ahab believed that Elijah had angered the sky-god Baal and therefore



Baal withheld rain. Ahab probably thought that Baal would hold back the rain until Elijah was caught and executed.

In comparison of the two men, King Ahab and Obadiah, we can see how they greeted the servant of God. Both revealed their character by the manner of their address to the prophet. Obadiah feared God greatly, and as such treated the servant of God with respect and honour. Ahab had sold himself to work wickedness, and his demeanor towards God's servant showed his iniquity.

If Ahab had any interest in Jehovah and paid attention to the Word of God in Deuteronomy 28:23-24 he would have seen that God promised that drought would come when Israel was disobedient. But unfortunately, we see that people who should know better are often disobedient and do not want to accept responsibility for their sins.

One may guess how people stand in their relationship to God by observing how they stand and treat his people and ministers. Elijah now came to bring blessings to Israel, tidings of the return of the rain, yet he was thus affronted. Had it been true that Elijah was the troubler of Israel, Ahab, as king, would have been bound to exact judgment upon him. There are those who trouble Israel by their wickedness, whom the conservators of the public peace are concerned to enquire after. But it was utterly false concerning Elijah; so far was he from being an enemy to Israel's welfare that he was the stay of it, the chariots and horsemen of Israel.

It has been seen throughout history that it has been the lot of the best and most useful men to be called and counted the troublers of the land, and to be run down as public grievances.

Verse 18. Elijah, in true fashion, boldly returned the charge upon the king, and proved it upon him, that it was he the king that was the troubler of Israel. Elijah is not the Achan: "I have not troubled Israel, have neither done them any wrong nor designed them any hurt."

Those that bring down God's judgments do the mischief, not he that merely foretells them and gives warning of them, that the nation may repent and prevent them. Elijah continues his defense and says he would have healed Israel, but they would not be healed. Their hearts were hardened against God and their King looked towards another god. Ahab is the troubler for he follows Baalim.

Nothing creates more trouble to a land than the impiety and profaneness of princes and their families. As one who had authority from the King of kings, Elijah immediately ordered a convention of the states to be forthwith summoned to meet at Mount Carmel, where there had been an altar built to God. Probably on that mountain they had an eminent high place, where formerly the pure worship of God had been kept up as well as it could be anywhere but at Jerusalem. All Israel must come, to give Elijah the meeting; and the prophets of Baal who were dispersed all the country over, with those of the groves who were Jezebel's domestic chaplains, must there make their personal appearance.

CONCLUSION

You might have looked at Ahab well-dressed in his long and flowing expensive gold trimmed robe with his fingers filled with gold rings and living in a sumptuous palace and thought that he was something in the eyes of God.



You might have looked at Elijah in his strange garments and his peculiar style and not realize that Elijah lived in the presence of God and stood before God at all times, ministering as a servant of God, living in heaven before God.

So try not to forget that a man or woman of God might not be the most beautiful or attractive person to you. But the important thing to God is that the man or woman of God must be courageous.

One writer reminds us: ***“Whenever we are at the centre of God’s will we can be sure of his provision. But we cannot be sure of his provision when we’re out of his will”.***

Courage is a wonderful thing especially when it's courage in their work of God. If you were in Ahab's court you would have looked with approval at the impressive looking Ahab and probably might have admired the beauty of Jezebel, that extremely wicked Sidonian princess. But we know that Elijah as James said was a man of prayer who feared God. That is what is important. When he saw the idols of Baal and the nation that was completely dominated by the heresy of Baalism, backsliding, abandoning their God, and now suffering for that, he knew he had to obey the call of God. We must remember as Scripture tells us that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

So fear the Lord greatly. We know that sin remains in us and affects our attitudes, thoughts, words and deeds. But despite our failures we know that God is merciful and gracious, and he wants every man, woman, boy, or girl to fear the Lord greatly. The rewards of that are tremendous and of infinite value. Examine yourself.

Is it easy for you to look around you at sin and corruption and say and do nothing? Do you mourn over sin?

