

Story of Elijah on Mount Carmel

1 Kings 18:1—19:18



bible verse

COMMITTING TO MEMORY

Ms

main street

March 27, 2011

Matthew 5:44

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...



story lesson

BIBLE STORY

Found in the annals of the kings of Israel and Judah, are spokesman for the Lord—the prophets. There are two prophets in particular that are more “popular” than others. One of these prophets goes by the name of Elijah.

Elijah’s role as a prophet has rather tumultuous beginnings. His first “spokesman” assignment was to tell the current king, Ahab (who was wicked), that “there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word” (1 Kings 17:1). That did not make him extremely popular in the kingdom. The king wanted to kill him. The Lord sent him into the wilderness and fed him through ravens.



Then the Lord led Elijah to a widow at Zarephath because of the famine in the land. The widow was about to fix a last meal for



herself and her son, for it was all they had, then they were going to die. Elijah asked her to prepare a small cake of bread for him first, then make something for her and her son. “For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land’” (1 Kings 17:14). The widow did as the prophet told her and sure enough, there was food every day for her and her son and Elijah.

However, sometime later, the widow's son became very ill. He grew worse and worse and then his breathing stopped. The widow turned on the prophet of God: "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?" (1 Kings 17:18). Elijah took her son, prayed and beseeched the Lord, stretched himself out over the boy three times while he cried to the Lord. "The Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived ... Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth'" (1 Kings 17:22, 24).

About three years later, the Lord told Elijah to go back to Ahab to confront him about his wickedness and the real cause of the famine. Meanwhile, in Ahab's court, he and Obadiah went in search of good, fertile, irrigated land because of the famine. Obadiah ended up encountering Elijah. Elijah told Obadiah to go tell Ahab that he was coming to meet with him. This request was surely a death sentence to Obadiah, because King Ahab was poorly disposed to the prophet who caused the famine and the king would surely kill the messenger. However, Obadiah did go and tell Ahab and he did not lose his life.



No Food or Drink



Elijah met up with Ahab on Mount Carmel where he called all the prophets of Baal (all 450 of them) and the prophets of Asherah (all 400 of them) and all the people of Israel. So they were summoned and they came... on Mount Carmel. Elijah made this plea: "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). But the people were speechless. Then Elijah made this challenge: Let's see who is really God.

"Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God" (1 Kings 18:23-24).

They all agreed to the proposal.

The prophets and people of Baal went first. They started in the morning and went until noon, crying out; but they received no answer. Elijah began to taunt them, so they became even louder with their voices and slashed themselves with spears and swords, but their was still no response.

When it was time for the evening sacrifice, Elijah took over. He took twelve stones, one for each tribe of Israel, and prepared the altar of the Lord. Elijah dug a trench around the altar and asked for four large jars of water to be poured on the altar. Then he asked them to pour the same amount again. Then a third time. The altar was drenched and filled the trench that had been dug around the altar. Then Elijah prayed:



"O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this they fell prostrate and cried, 'The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!'" (1 Kings 18:36-39).

All the prophets of Baal were slaughtered that day and then it finally began to rain. The famine was over.

King Ahab told his wicked wife, Jezebel, what Elijah had done. She swore that the prophet would surely be killed in a day. "Elijah was afraid and ran for his life" (1 Kings 19:3). He went into the desert and wanted to die. The Lord provided for him there and then sent him on a journey to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God (the same mountain where Moses saw God in the burning bush, and the same place where Moses received the Ten Commandments and the Law). The Lord showed himself to Elijah through a series of natural occurrences, but He was only in the gentle whisper. The Lord then told Elijah that he would be succeeded by another prophet named Elisha and that he was to go and find him.

Elijah had served the Lord faithfully all his life amidst the most treacherous of circumstances. He also was the one who went out of this life in a blaze of glory (fire)!

FYI: Ravens are not generally associated as "good" omens in Scripture. It is an "unclean" thing. And yet the Lord used even the not-so-kosher things for his purposes. Interesting implications, eh? The Lord typically uses the "written-off" things in this world to confound the wise and to uplift the humble... I think that is even a Scripture verse somewhere.





life application

MAKING IT REAL

The Lord Provides

Countless times in the life of Elijah, the Lord provided for him: food from the ravens, food out of the widow's obedience, protection from his enemies, etc. We would do well to trust the Lord with reckless abandon.

The Lord Protects

Elijah did not have a "safe" life. But it was one where he was "protected" by the Lord his God in a variety of ways. His life was risky, adventurous, holy. And the Lord blessed his servant's obedience in mighty ways... and He used this obedient prophet to accomplish turning the hearts of the people of Israel back to the Lord their God.

Help Other People

Whatever your circumstances might be, one should be like the widow and help those who are in need. Living outside of yourself and sacrificing for others.



questions

REMEMBERING

- 1. Who was a very famous prophet?** Elijah
- 2. What was the king's name whom Elijah confronted on behalf of the Lord?**
King Ahab
- 3. What was the Lord's punishment for King Ahab and the people of Israel?**
"there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word"
- 4. On what mount(ain) did Elijah call every up to?** Mount Carmel
- 5. Did the prophets of Baal and Asherah receive a response from their god?** No
- 6. Did Elijah receive an answer from the Lord?** Yes
- 7. What did the Lord do to the sacrifice Elijah had on the altar?**
The fire of the Lord licked it up!



coloring sheet

ON THE NEXT PAGE



Story of Elijah on Mount Carmel