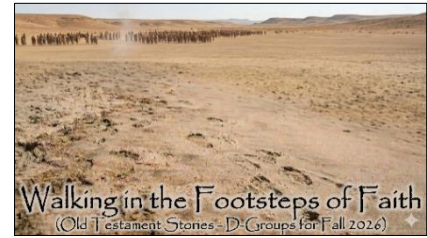


# “Walking in the Footsteps of Faith”

## OT Stories - Fall 2026 D-Groups

***For Wednesday, October 21***  
***ELIJAH (1 Kings 16:29-18:46)***



### The Big Picture - Where We Are in the OT Timeline

We’re skipping over several key parts of the OT story in moving this week to the prophet named **Elijah**. (*Again, we simply cannot cover every significant character in this limited timeframe.*) Part of our goal is to hit on some stories that might be less familiar along the way. Here’s a chart in an attempt to highlight what happens from Judges to our story for today:

| Key Characters, Events, etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Label for the Timeframe                                                                                                                                         | OT Historical Books                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Israel under the leadership of judges                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Judges</b>                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Judges and Ruth</b>                           |
| The transition from Samuel as Israel’s key leader to Kings Saul, David ( <i>such a central character due to the promise made to him about His descendants and an eternal Kingdom - pointing ultimately to the Messiah</i> ) and Solomon             | <b>“United Kingdom”</b> (all of Jacob’s descendants together as one)                                                                                            | <b>1 &amp; 2 Samuel as well as 1 Kings 1-11*</b> |
| From Solomon to the rebellion of the northern tribes under the reign of King Rehoboam, Solomon’s son ... 19 kings in “Israel” (various dynasties - none are faithful) vs. 20 in “Judah” (all from David’s direct family line - only about 8 “good”) | <b>“Divided Kingdom”</b> (10 Northern tribes - typically called just “Israel” - and 2 Southern tribes referred to as “Judah” - joined by the tribe of Benjamin) | <b>1 Kings 12 through 2 Kings*</b>               |

\* *The books of Chronicles cover the same basic story, particularly focusing on David onward and, more specifically, his dynasty - so, the Southern Kingdom.*

Even through this timeframe in the OT story, we should *still* keep it all anchored to Genesis 12:1-3 and the reason for Israel’s existence as a nation: to bring about the fulfillment of God’s promise. This stage adds an important piece to that puzzle. Especially once we get to David, there is even more specific emphasis on his family line and God’s further promise of one of His descendants reigning over an eternal Kingdom - the Messiah. Actually, when we read Matthew’s genealogy in chapter 1, he highlights Jesus’ ancestry through these two characters: Abraham and David. In a way, it provides a helpful reminder of what matters throughout the OT story as it shows Jesus as the fulfillment of *all* God had promised. **All of that is important background/context. For this week, though, we focus on events in the Northern Kingdom and the prophet Elijah, especially his interactions with King Ahab. He is perhaps the worst of the worst when it came to the northern kings, in part, thanks to his wife, Jezebel, the daughter of a foreign king who helped lead Israel further into Baal worship.**

## The Close-Up for October 21 - 1 Kings 16:29-18:46

**READ the TEXT:**    Our focus is on chapter 18, but this whole unit is helpful to read

**Some notes on the overall flow of the story with emphasis on the key sections listed above:**

**16:29-34** ... King Ahab is introduced, quickly identified as being particularly evil in the Lord's sight. With Jezebel's help, idolatry - primarily worship of Baal, but in other forms, too - becomes pervasive under Ahab. Throughout Israel's history (starting even in Exodus 32), the people struggled with giving to so-called "gods" the worship, devotion and allegiance Yahweh exclusively demands. This issue is such a key battleground in this week's story.

**17:1-24** ... The prophet Elijah appears on the scene. His initial act is to announce a drought on Israel because of its idolatry. The withholding of rain is particularly noteworthy due to the importance of agriculture *and Baal's attributed role in a fertile harvest as the god supposedly in charge of the weather and rain*. Within this chapter, we see reminders of God's unique place as Controller of the drought (Lord!) even as authorization of His approval on Elijah.

**18:1-46** ... After a humorous attempt to get the meeting arranged (vv. 1-16), Ahab and Elijah finally come face-to-face. It all leads to this confrontation on Mt. Carmel as a competition between Elijah alone representing the Lord vs. the prophets of Baal (450) and Asherah (400). It's a fascinating story designed to demonstrate Yahweh's superiority - "He alone is God!" In fact, notice Elijah's words in verse 21 - he chastens the people for vacillating between Yahweh and Baal. In this context, the competition offers a decisive answer which *should* lead to a fairly obvious conclusion: Yahweh alone deserves the people's right response of exclusive devotion! As you consider the story, remember Baal's place as a fertility god supposedly in charge of the harvest. Also pay attention to the ways the text emphasizes God's supremacy!

### Two Key Reminders throughout This Semester

1. **God is ultimately the HERO of these stories; remember, as part of Scripture, God is revealing Himself to us. So, what do we learn about Him through this story? What can we learn from the human characters about putting our faith/trust in Him?**
2. **We read these stories through a Christ-lens. So, how do we read this story differently in light of Jesus and being His followers?** Consider Jesus' own exclusive claims.

### Some Additional Questions for Reflection

- **A big part of Elijah's story is his refusal to compromise when it comes to what the Lord uniquely and exclusively deserves. How does this connect to the issue of faith in God?**
- **Such OT stories with the reality of idolatry can be challenging for us. We are not in a context where the "threat" to the Lord's exclusive place arises from "gods" to which people might be enticed to actually bow down. Yet, for us, the danger may be even *more* real because those things that threaten God's uniquely-deserved place are far more subtle. *Spend some time reflecting on the issue of modern-day IDOLATRY, especially in our context. What are some potential threats to God's unique place of exclusivity in our lives today? What does Elijah's story teach us about giving to Him what He alone deserves from us?***
- **Practically speaking, what does it mean to have a faith that trusts God's supremacy?**