

# Elijah

## God's man to a nation in crisis

### Living faithful in an evil government!

#### Lesson 5

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1 KINGS 18:17-18 KJV "AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN AHAB SAW ELIJAH, THAT AHAB SAID UNTO HIM, ART THOU HE THAT TROUBLETH ISRAEL? 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 18:1-18 KJV "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria. And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me. And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah. And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? 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."

After three years of being in hiding, God calls Elijah to go and confront King Ahab with the proclamation that God, Jehovah, was going to send rain upon the earth. His proclamation was that Jehovah, not Baal, is the one who is in control of the rain and harvest.

Notice that in verse 2, there was a sore famine throughout the land. So often, unless one has endured a time of drought, they do not understand the effects of the drought on the people, land, economy, and environment. From a physical aspect, the drought will reduce the amount of crops produced, reduced the forest area, and the productivity of the rangeland. A drought will destroy the fertility of the farmland; pasture land, and the forest. From the economic aspect, it brings down the standard of living. The farmers do not have any crops to sell. The grocery store does not have any produce to sell. The economy begins to collapse because there are no products to sell. This leads to increased unemployment. The government suffers from the loss of tax revenues. From the population aspect, many of the individuals will move from the homeland in order to find food and jobs. The population drops, which has an adverse effect on the economy and land. From the environmental aspect, there are great losses to both plant and animal life. The increased number of forest fires reduces forestland. The insect population usually increases dramatically. The wildlife population decreases significantly and sometimes species are totally destroyed. The effects of a severe drought can last for years.



The three and half year drought on Is-

rael had taken a great toil on both man and animal. The time for the drought to end had come and God sends Elijah back to King Ahab to announce that God was going to end the drought.

## I. Elijah - God's man for the time

1 Kings 18:1-2 KJV "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria."

Elijah was a man of faith and obedience. When God sent him away, he obeyed and when God called him back, he obeyed. Elijah was also a man that trusted in the power and protection of the Lord because he willing went back to the King that wanted him killed.

Notice that God instructs Elijah that He was going to end the drought and famine in the land. He wanted Elijah to go back to Israel so the people would know that the rain came by the Lord Jehovah and not the prophets of Baal. The Lord was sending Elijah to a showdown with the prophets of Baal that would determine who was truly God.

## II. Obadiah - God's man in the middle

1 Kings 18:3-4 KJV "And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the proph-

ets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)”

1 Kings 18:12 KJV “And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.”

#### A. Obadiah’s position

Obadiah was a man caught in the middle. He was in King Ahab’s government but he was a man who feared and loved the Lord. In verse three, Obadiah was called the governor of King Ahab’s house. He was the overseer. He was the man who took care of the affairs of Ahab’s house. He was trusted by Ahab.

#### B. Obadiah’s faith

Obadiah was a man of faith. He was a man who trusted in the Lord, Jehovah. He was positioned in the middle of an evil and perverse government that hated the Lord. He was in a very dangerous position. But, Obadiah’s faith is readily seen in several things.

##### 1. Obadiah’s faith is seen in his fear and reverence for the Lord

Proverbs 1:7 ¶ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Proverbs 14:26 ¶ In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his

children shall have a place of refuge.

Obadiah feared and revered the Lord from his youth. Even though he worked in a government that was evil and sinful, he remained faithful to the Lord. He had a great fear of the Lord.

Acts 5:27-33 KJV “And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.”

When there is a conflict between the government and the Word of the Lord, one must always be obedient to the higher authority, which is the Lord. Obadiah obeyed the Lord.

##### 2. Obadiah’s faith is seen in his obedience

1 Timothy 2:1-4 KJV “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of

the truth.”

Obadiah worked in an evil government, but he did what he was supposed to do as long as it did not violate the Word of God. He was a good citizen, obeying the laws of the land as long as they were not in conflict with the Word of God.

3. Obadiah saw that Queen Jezebel was killing all the prophets of the Lord so he went out and hid one hundred of the prophets in a cave. His actions in saving the prophets showed his obedience to the Word of the Lord which was evidence of his faith in the Lord.

a. His obedience required a personal commitment

When Obadiah hid the prophets, it required that he make a personal commitment to hid and provide for the prophets of the Lord. He committed to the safety of the one hundred prophets.

b. His obedience required a financial commitment

When Obadiah hid the prophets, it required that he make a financial commitment to providing for their needs. He bought the food and provided for them. Remember that it was during a time of drought and the food prices skyrocketed. His obedience required a financial commitment.

c. His obedience required a sacrificial commitment

When Obadiah hid the prophets, he put his life on the line. He knew that if Queen Jezebel discovered that he hid these prophets from her, she would have him killed. His commitment was sacrificial.

### C. Obadiah’s concern

1 Kings 18:7-15 KJV “And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Eli-

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jah is here. And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD’s prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me. And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.”

When Elijah returned back to Israel, he met Obadiah as he was taking part of the horses to find pasture for them. Elijah tells Obadiah to go and tell King Ahab that Elijah has returned.

Obadiah is concerned at what might happen. He tells Elijah that King Ahab has sent out men all over the land looking for him. King Ahab was seeking to destroy Elijah and Obadiah knew this. He was concerned that if he went back to King Ahab with the news and the Lord took Elijah away that King Ahab would kill him.

## III. King Ahab - man blinded by sin and rebellion

1 Kings 18:5 KJV “And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all

brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts."

King Ahab was a man who was blinded by his sin, idolatry, and rebellion. He could not discern between right and wrong.

2 Corinthians 4:4 KJV "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Those who do not know the Lord are blinded by their sins. They cannot discern between what is spiritual and what is carnal because in order to discern spiritual things one must have the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:14 KJV "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

King Ahab was blind to what his sin and rebellion against God had cost his nation.

A. Sin blinds to what is important

1 Kings 18:5 KJV "And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts."

In the midst of the famine, King Ahab was concerned over the state of his horses and mules. There is no mention of his concern over the people and their condition. One can surmise by looking at the other passages dealing with Ahab that he was a selfish individual that was only concerned about his own self and possessions and no one else.

His sin had blinded him to what is important. Ahab was concerned for himself because the horses represented power and protection. Ahab was looking out for him-

self. Sin makes one selfish.

Psalms 20:7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

B. Sin blinds one to what is right

1 Kings 18:17 KJV "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

Sin blinds the person to see what is the truth and what is not. There is discernment in having one's eyes open spiritually. The person who is in sin is blinded to their condition and to the truth. King Ahab thought that he was the one that was doing what was best for Israel and that Elijah was the one who was destroying Israel. King Ahab's sin had blinded his eyes to the truth.

This is why the psalmist cried for the Lord to open his eyes to see if there was any wicked way in him because he knew that sin can blind one to the truth.

Psalms 139:23-24 KJV "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

C. Sin blinds one to what one's actions and decisions have caused

1 Kings 18:18 KJV "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."

King Ahab did not realize that his sin and idolatry was the leading cause for the famine in the land. He did not realize or recognize that his sinfulness and idolatry had brought the hand of judgment on the nation. Sin blinds individuals to see the results of their sinful actions and decisions.

Only when a person's eyes have been open can he see the effects of his sin on his life and the life of those around him.

Many times, a parent many is blind to the effect his sin and rebellion against God has on the life of his children. He thinks that it does not affect them at all. This is why the Scriptures teach us that the sins of the father are visited upon the children.

**Numbers 14:18** The LORD is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

King Ahab's rebellion and idolatry brought judgment on the nation. Today, there are many who think that their 'progressiveness in society' by being tolerant of all kinds of deviant, sinful activity is supposedly making our nation greater but they fail to see that the end results of their sin and rebellion against God is bringing judgment on the nation.

#### **IV. Lessons**

A. Elijah's life teaches that Christians must follow God's will for their lives regardless of where and whom God sends one to.

B. Obadiah's life teaches that Christians can serve the Lord even in the middle of an evil and corrupt government.

C. King Ahab's life teaches that one's sin, rebellion, and idolatry can have devastating consequences for both one's self and others.