

LESSON 10: *Elijah: The Lamp In Israel.*

(Read: **1 Kings** 17-19; **2 Kgs** 1:1-17; 2:1-12).

Key Passage: “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth” (**1 Kgs** 17:24).



I) **Elijah's Background**

- A) **HIS NAME:** Elijah’s name means “my God is Yahweh [the Lord]” (eli = “my God”; yah = “Yah[weh]”), which is fitting since most of his efforts are aimed at proving that the Lord, Yahweh, is superior to the false god Baal.
- B) **HIS ORIGINS:** The Scriptures give no information regarding his family background except that he was a Tishbite who probably came from the land of Gilead on the east bank of the Jordan River (**1 Kgs** 17:1).
- C) **HIS IMPORTANCE.**
 - 1) Although his message did not include the coming Messiah (like Isaiah’s), Elijah is considered by many as the most famous of God’s prophets. Jesus Himself said that John the baptizer was the greatest of the prophets (**Lk** 7:28) and yet, it is very interesting that John is reckoned as a type of Elijah (**Mal** 4:5-6; **Lk** 1:11-17; **Mat** 17:10-13; **Mat** 11:12-14; **2 Kgs** 1:1-8; **Mat** 3:1-4).
 - 2) Elijah was present at Jesus transfiguration, holding a conversation with Moses and the Lord (**Lk** 9:28-31).
- D) **HIS MISSION.**
 - 1) As the Baal worship of Sidonia traveled to Israel through Jezebel, Elijah was sent to confront its spread by emphasizing again that Israel’s true God was the only God of the whole earth.
 - 2) Elijah had been called primarily to minister to Israel, but he also delivered God’s word of warning to Jehoram, king of Judah, rebuking him for following Israel in its idolatry and for not walking in the godly ways of his father and grandfather (**2 Chr** 21:12–15).
 - 3) Miracles were prominent in Elijah’s ministry, given as a sign to confirm him as God’s spokesman and to turn Israel’s kings back to God. Some scholars have rejected these miracles or tried to explain them away. The OT, however, clearly testifies to their validity, and the NT affirms them (**Lk** 4: 22-26; **Jms** 5:17-18).

II) Elijah had the courage to answer God’s call and serve faithfully.

A) This was significant—given the spiritual depravity of the nation to whom he was called to preach to: (**1 Kgs 16:29-33**).

1) Elijah was walking into a mess. He must have felt the same way Noah did.

a) Every spiritual foundation in Israel had been compromised... Consider **Psalm 11:3**... What can we do?

_____ (Psa 26:4-7)

_____ (Psa 46:1-3)

_____ (Psa 119:23)

_____ (Psa 119:141)

_____ (Rev 2:10)

2) When Elijah first comes on the scene, how does he show himself to be genuinely courageous for the LORD? (**1 Kgs 17:1**).

3) How did Elijah survive the drought while living east of the Jordan River? (**1 Kgs 17:2-7**).

4) What does this say about the faith and spiritual commitment of Elijah to continue serving God under such living conditions? (consider **Mat 4:1-4**; **Heb 13:5-6**).

B) Elijah Sent to a Gentile (1 Kgs 17:1-24)

- 1) *“Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.”* (1 Kgs 17:9). Sidon was one of the centers of Baal worship in the ancient Near East (1 Kgs 16:31-32), and it was also experiencing famine (1 Kgs 17:12). God sends Elijah there and further demonstrates that He alone controls life and death, rain and drought.

- 2) During such difficult times, what hope did Elijah provide for the pagan Gentile widow and her son? (1 Kgs 17:13-16).

- 3) How was the Gentile woman’s faith in Elijah’s hope tested? (contrast with Mat 6:31-34).

- 4) What caused the Gentile woman to be convicted of her sins? (1 Kgs 17:17-18).

- 5) How did the resurrection of her son cause the Gentile woman to reflect spiritually? (1 Kgs 17:19-24).

- a) Through this miracle God not only proves his power over Baal but provokes Israel to return to Him. Jesus Himself indicates in Lk 4:26 that during the famine God sent Elijah to a Gentile widow rather than any of the Israelite widows, and God said in Deu 32:21–22 that He will make Israel jealous of other nations when Israel makes Him jealous by turning to idols. In the same act the Lord proves His infinite superiority to Baal and calls His people to return to Him.

This miracle also demonstrates that the Lord’s mercy extends far beyond the people of Israel. He welcomes all from around the world who turn from idols and put their trust in Him.

- b) “Truly I understand that God shows no _____, but in every nation _____ who fears him and does what is right is _____ to him.” (Acts 10:34).

- c) From this first account of Elijah we learn two things about how God treats His people in exile. **First**, God will always provide for His people, even by extraordinary means—with ravens or poor widows from foreign countries. **Second**, exile is not the final word when it comes to the Lord’s dealings with His people. As the resurrection of the widow’s son demonstrates, God is able to fully restore His people no matter the circumstances (consider **Eze 37**).
- d) The hope represented by Elijah is also applicable to the Christian life. We live in exile on this earth as aliens and sojourners (**Heb 11:13; 1 Pet 2:11**), but the Lord is able to provide for our every need (**Mat 6:25–30; 1 Tim 6:17**).

III) Elijah Returns & Boldly Confronts A Wicked King & His Kingdom (1 Kgs 18:1-2, 17-18).

A) Again, we see the unflinching courage of Elijah in accepting a difficult task from the Lord (**1 Kgs 18:1-15**).

1) Ironically, who does Ahab blame for Israel’s troubles? (**1 Kgs 18:17-18**).

2) In what two ways does Elijah show boldness toward Ahab? (**1 Kgs 18:18-20**).

a) Like Elijah, we must not only demonstrate boldness in telling others about their sins, we must also be courageous in telling them what they must do (Consider the example of John the Baptizer and how his example of boldness affected others (**Lk 3:1-20**)).

b) List possible reasons some neglect reproving others

B) Yahweh vs Baal, Part 1 (**1 Kgs** 18:20-29).

- 1) After commanding the king to call a national meeting, Elijah personally and publicly confronts the people's religious practices. What question did he put before all the people? (**1 Kgs** 18:21). How did the people respond?

- a) Why do you think they responded in this way?

- 2) What essential lessons can we learn from Jesus' message? (**Mat** 6:24).

- 3) What else made the people's religious situation egregious? (**Jer** 2:10-12).

- 4) Although he was outnumbered, Elijah seems to have no regrets about being the lone representative of Yahweh (**1 Kgs** 18:22).

“Though all the world forsake me, and Satan tempt me sore,
Through Jesus I shall safely reach the goal (Hallelujah), He's
The Lilly of the valley, the bright and morning star, He's
The fairest of ten thousand to my soul”

-The Lily of The Valley, Hymns for Worship (Revised), pg. 594.

5) What challenge did Elijah put before the people of Israel? What did the people say after hearing Elijah's challenge? (**1 Kgs 18:23-24**).

6) What was the one prohibition of the challenge (**1 Kgs 18:25**).

7) What did the prophets of Baal do in an attempt to summon Baal?

a) 18:26 _____

b) 18:28 _____

c) 18:29 _____

8) How long did they do these things?

9) Did Baal ever answer? _____

10) Why? _____

(consider **Jer 10:3-5**; **Isa 44:10-20**)

C) Yahweh vs Baal, Part 2 (1 Kgs 18:30-40)

1) What did Elijah do after calling the people closer to himself? (1 Kgs 18:30-32).

2) What did he command to be done to the prepared sacrifice? (1 Kgs 18:33). How many times was this done? (1 Kgs 18:34-35).

3) What major things would Yahweh's answering by fire prove (1 Kgs 18:36-37)

4) How long did it take Yahweh to answer by fire and What did His fire do? (1 Kgs 18:38).



D) The Aftermath of Yahweh vs Baal

- 1) Upon witnessing the power of the one true God, how did the people finally respond? (1 Kgs 18:39).

- 2) It had been many years since Yahweh had been feared and worshiped like this by the people of Israel (18:39). How were they worshiping? (1 Kgs 19:18).

- 3) How spiritually depraved would they eventually become? (Jer 11:13).

- 4) Once the people of Israel realized Baal was false and Yahweh was the one and only true God, what did they do to the prophets of Baal? (1 Kgs 18:40).

IV) **Elijah Flees For His Life (1 Kgs 19:1-18).**

- A) After the defeat of the prophets of Baal, the Lord God sent rain on the earth (1 Kgs 18:41-46). Elijah miraculously outran Ahab as Ahab traveled back to his royal palace in Jezreel (1 Kgs 21:1) to tell queen Jezebel about what happened on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 19:1). The fact that Elijah also went to Jezreel suggests that he thought his war with Baal worship was over and that all Israel would suddenly turn back to Yahweh. This of course did not happen.

- 1) What was Jezebel's response to what Elijah had done? (1 Kgs 19:1-2).

- 2) After showing great courage and boldness up to this point, how did Elijah react to Jezebel's message? (1 Kgs 19:3).

3) Once Elijah realized that his efforts would not change the heart of Ahab and Jezebel, or have any significant lasting effect on Israel, what did he request of God? (**1 Kgs 19:4a**).

4) What was Elijah's explanation for asking such a request? (**1 Kgs 19:4b**).

5) Why was Elijah's request nonsense?

6) Like Elijah, can you think of some reasons why some Christians today give up so quickly in their efforts to share the gospel with others?

7) What do verses 5-8 teach us about the love and grace of God?

8) Elijah travels to Mt. Horeb. Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai, where God first spoke the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel (**Exo 19–20**). The forty days and forty nights of Elijah's travels recall Israel's own wandering in the wilderness (**Num 14:33–34**) and Moses' first sojourn on this same mountain (**Exo 24:18**; see also **Exo 3:1; 19:3**). Will Elijah, like Moses, see God (**Exo 33:12–23**); and if so, will it make any difference to his current attitude? This journey from near Beersheba to Mount Horeb was about 250 miles.

9) As Elijah reached a cave on Mt. Horeb, what did God ask him? (**1 Kgs 19:9, 13**).

10) Being a prophet of God Almighty, was Elijah's explanation excusable? (**1 Kgs 19:10-14**)

11) After commanding him to depart, what final three things did God commission Elijah to do? (**1 Kgs 19:15-17**).

V) Elijah: His Last Act of Courage & Departure (2 Kgs 1:1-17; 2:1-12).

A) After the death of king Ahab, his son Ahaziah reigned in his place. How was Ahaziah's rule compared to his father's? (1 Kgs 22:51-53).

1) After falling from the lattice of his roof, Ahaziah became sick (possibly from infections). As his sickness worsened, whom did he appeal to? (2 Kgs 1:1-2).

a) Ekron was one of five major Philistine cities on the border of ancient Israel, about 25 miles west of Jerusalem.

2) How did Elijah show courage once again? (2 Kgs 1:3-6).

3) Obviously, Ahaziah was aware of who Elijah was (2 Kgs 1:7-8). And no doubt Ahaziah was familiar with what Elijah had done on Mt. Carmel. Taking no chances, who all did Ahaziah he send to arrest Elijah? (2 Kgs 1:9).

4) What happened to the soldiers attempting to capture God's prophet? (2 Kgs 1:10-12).

5) How were the last band of soldiers able to fare better than the previous bands? (2 Kgs 1:13-15).

6) What was Elijah final act of spiritual and moral courage? (2 Kgs 1:16-17).

7) How did Elijah depart the earth? (2 Kgs 2:1-12).

a) As our nation and its leaders become more corrupt, we must have the courage like Elijah to make a stand! Never forget, you are not alone. Even though a majority of people reject God, He will never reject a faithful remnant (Rom 11:1-5).