

1 Kings 18

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

Concerning God's direct intervention and the remarkable acts of Elijah – this is the 'big one'. Do you believe it happened? If not, why not? I see in this chapter the very essence of God and belief, where the acts and words of a prophet proved the very existence and living presence of Almighty God. This kind of faith is missing throughout the churches today. (We cannot rely on charismatic claims because charismaticism is a false movement: they claim miraculous and powerful interventions every single day!!). Today, we live in the midst of filth, squalor, sexual immorality, and godless leadership – no different from when Elijah was alive! If we truly trust God things will happen and the godless will disappear.

Verses 1&2

1.

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.

2.

[2](#) And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And *there was* a sore famine in Samaria.

Three years into the devastating drought, which was God's judgment on His people, Israel, God spoke again to Elijah. There is no evidence that God spoke many times directly to the prophet... but when He did, the message was incredibly awesome. Today, (read 'Elijah List' statements as an example) many charismatics boast of how God speaks to them about all kinds of things, and they call it 'prophecy'! My own view is that God does not give prophecies about stupid things, or minor things, but about big things every church should take notice of and implement. And those big things are only referred to once in a while. And so it was with Elijah. In all true prophecies what has been predicted comes about in detail.

If you remember, God told Elijah to escape the wrath of Ahab (or rather, probably the anger of his wife, Jezebel) and to hide in the desert. He then told Elijah to traverse the mountains and deserts to live in a widow's house on the Mediterranean coast. During that time on the coast, apart from the miraculous provision of simple meals and oil, we are not told of any further messages, until this one almost three years later. He was to go back to the evil king Ahab!

1 Kings 18

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Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

He was to face the king and tell him that God will send rain again. Though this should have been a blessing to Ahab, Elijah still feared for his life, as many had died in the three year famine caused by the drought. How many genuine Christians refuse to speak the truth, when they see only hurt in many others? When speaking truth we should not hold back for fear of adding to hurt, whether or not the hurt has been caused by sin.

Verses 3-6

1.

And Ahab called Obadiah, which *was* the governor of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:

2.

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.)

3.

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.

4.

So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

At that time Obadiah, a God-fearing Israelite, was the steward of the king's palace. At one time he hid 100 true prophets in caves and kept them fed, while the queen, Jezebel, wanted to put them to death. He did so at the very real possibility of losing his own life. But, when Elijah spoke to him he was afraid.

While Elijah was travelling back to Samaria, Ahab gave Obadiah instructions to travel the land to find sources of water and grass for his horses and mules, which were invaluable as war animals. Ahab took men one way and Obadiah took men the opposite way, to make the

1 Kings 18

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Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

discovery faster. This was a move of God, Who wanted Obadiah separated from the king until he had seen Elijah. Very often in our own lives, God will take us along paths we did not think about, so that He can maneuver us to a position where He will act on our behalf.

Verses 7-14

1.

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?

2.

And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

3.

And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

4.

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.

5.

And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

6.

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.

7.

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?

1 Kings 18

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

8.

And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

On his journey, Obadiah came across Elijah. Or, to put it more precisely, God ensured that he met Elijah. Obadiah instantly bowed to the ground in respect for Elijah. This shows us how famed he was as a prophet. Elijah confirmed who he was and told Obadiah to go back to Ahab and tell him he was here. Obadiah was very afraid, for this meant him going back to the king without accomplishing his task of finding food for the horses. He asked Elijah if he had sinned, for him to make such a demand. 'Is this a punishment, sending me to my death?' As we saw previously with the widow, it was common amongst Israelites to think of this kind of thing as a judgment for unknown sins.

Obadiah expanded on his fear, saying that the king had sent many men out to find Elijah after his dire prophecy about drought. The king obviously blamed the prophet for the circumstances and not God's judgment! This was a case of 'shooting the messenger'. Does this not happen to any preacher or teacher who dares speak the truth? Yes, it does, as I very well know. Christians only wish to hear the 'good bits', so anyone who gives bad news is thrown out of the midst and shunned.

Ahab made a vow to kill Elijah and ordered his men to search until he was found. It is truly amazing that even with so many men looking for him, Elijah was not found. However amazing it was, it was God's intention. In the city Elijah kept to himself and proclaimed nothing, because any words from him would have brought attention. Obadiah was afraid for himself as well as for Elijah. 'After all,' he said to Elijah, 'did you not hear how I hid prophets from Jezebel? It would not take much for her to have me killed!'

Obadiah thought that once he had gone back to Samaria the Holy Spirit would miraculously move Elijah to a safe place, and then the king would kill Obadiah instead! Even people as holy as Obadiah are sometimes struck down by fear and deep anxiety. This kind of reaction can be found today amongst many Christians, especially those who resort to 'mental' (emotional) imbalances. It is a form of distrust or lack of faith in God. At least this is a sign of spiritual life! The majority of Christians only have a superficial love of God, as their lives and responses prove. Most are not 'bad'... but their holiness is only tolerated by them, and their faith is very thin, so that daily living is just the same as that of unbelievers. To put it another way,

1 Kings 18

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Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

unbelievers cannot see any difference in their lives or words.

Verses 15-20

1.

And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.

2.

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

3.

And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

4.

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.

5.

Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

6.

So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

Elijah told him that whatever Obadiah did, he *would* meet with the king that very day! Obadiah, thus assured, went back to the king and gave him the message, to meet with Elijah. When they met, Ahab asked if Elijah was the same prophet who told him of the drought. You may

1 Kings 18

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Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

remember that Elijah delivered the prophecy very boldly. In this he was very much like John the Baptist in character (hence the link to Elijah in the New Testament).

Ahab, like so many godless men, blamed Elijah for the severe drought, saying that it was “he who troubleth Israel”. Correctly, Elijah replied that it was not he who troubled Israel, but Ahab! Even today, awful things befall nations who have wicked leaders who shun God. See how evil men are now running rampant throughout the world killing Christians and Jews... they are a judgment from God for our sins. Elijah told the king to his face that he was the cause of the drought, not himself; Ahab was wicked and even followed Baalim (Ba'al).

Note that when people follow a false god or teachings, they are instantly condemned by God. This is because there is only one God, and He is a jealous God who does not tolerate an illusion of a 'god' or false being to take His place. This is why no Christian can become closely involved with unbelievers, and especially not worshippers of false gods.

With more boldness Elijah told the king to gather the people to mount Carmel. He did not ask, but commanded him to do it. Mount Carmel was on the Mediterranean coast just under Haifa, within Israel's borders. Elijah wanted the 450 prophets of Ba'al to meet him there, together with another 400 priests who attended to the various groves dedicated to the false god. Elijah bravely linked these false priests to Jezebel, saying that they all ate of the same poison.

Ahab obeyed Elijah, proving that God was in the activity. He ordered all of Israel (the leaders of tribes and clans) to come to the mountain, with the 850 prophet/priests. This was to be a mighty event and it took perhaps a few weeks to come about, allowing time for riders to reach all parts of Israel.

Verses 21-24

1.

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

2.

Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's

1 Kings 18

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

3.

Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:

4.

And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

When everyone was gathered, Elijah challenged them to choose between God and Ba'al. In this text 'opinions' means 'ambivalence', because the Israelites KNEW who their God was, yet they played around with the idea of Ba'al. Their history proves that they swung between the one true God and false gods on a regular basis. Yet, God gave them a way out so they could rescue themselves – return to Jehovah. The Israelites did not murmur one word, for they knew they were guilty.

Elijah then shouted out that only he, in all Israel, remained a loyal prophet to the Lord. On the other hand, Ba'al, though false, had 450 prophets. Elijah was here building a foundation on which to erect a solid wall of opposition to the false prophets. He told the prophets of Ba'al to cut up a bullock and to place it on wood, ready for sacrifice. He then asked for another bullock, which he cut up and made ready himself. Both bullocks were thus placed over wood, but Elijah said that neither could be set alight.

He then commanded the 450 Prophets to pray to Ba'al and other false gods, to set the wood and bullocks on fire. He would call on his God likewise. Speaking to the people, he said that the one who set fire to the pyre was the one true God. The people agreed. This was either a brave but colossal error or an act of God. How many modern believers have this kind of faith? Especially in public?

Of course, the whole point of this event was that God sustained Elijah and gave him the words

1 Kings 18

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Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

to speak. So, nothing could go wrong. Even so, Elijah must have been greatly tremulous. In many ways this might be seen as setting out a fleece for God to act. In reality it was God Who told him what to do, so success was assured.

Verses 25-28

1.

And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

2.

And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

3.

And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

4.

And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

Elijah told the 450 prophets of Ba'al to set up their altar first; after all, there were many of them, so they should not take long. Then, they were to call to their gods to burn the pyre. The prophets called on Ba'al all morning until noon, with no result. They shouted themselves hoarse, and with frustration some even jumped up and down on the altar... but still no answer. It so happens that some who follow demonic cults can call out for help and be given it by demons. But, God did not allow such trickery on that day.

Elijah waited patiently, probably with a twinkle in his eye. At noon, he mocked the prophets. Note that! He did not discuss the relative merits of the different gods and Ba'al!! There was no

1 Kings 18

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Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

'dialogue'! No, he MOCKED them. We should do this today, but foolish and ignorant Christians say we must show 'respect' for false religions, including Islam. NOT SO! To show respect for false gods is to denigrate and defile the one true God. To do so is to connive with the fakers and condone their evil.

Today, Islam SHOULD be mocked: it is equal only to the dung heap and has no value whatever. It keeps millions of poor people shackled to demons. For this there can be no respect. BEWARE of befriending Muslims in general for this reason. There can be only ONE reason a Christian befriends a Muslim – and that is to preach the Gospel to him and tell him he is bound for hell if he does not repent and be saved.

Elijah, mockingly, joked that maybe their gods were chatting to someone else, so shout louder! Or, maybe Ba'al was out for the day, perhaps travelling. Or, maybe he is asleep and needs to be called even louder! In response the false prophets shouted out-loud and cut themselves with knives, until they bled on the ground and over the bullock. The true God never asks us to cut our bodies, or to flay ourselves with whips, or to crawl on our knees on rough stones! Such ignores the Levitical laws.

Verses 29-35

1.

And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

2.

And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

3.

And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

4.

And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

1 Kings 18

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

5.

And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

6.

And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

7.

And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

By the evening, when all the shouting and cutting and jumping-about failed, everyone could see that the gods did not answer or do anything. The false prophets stood around in abject misery. Elijah told people to come closer so they could witness what was happening. He began to repair a true altar to God, using twelve stones to represent each tribe of Israel (thus including Judah). Then he dug a deep trench around the altar.

He put wood on the altar, and cut up the bullock. Then came the most amazing part of the day. Elijah told those round about to pour four barrel loads of water over the bullock pieces and the wood. The people must have watched in puzzlement for this was to be a burnt offering; how could wet wood and meat be burnt up? Elijah commanded them to pour even more water on top, a second and then a third time. Then he told them to fill the trench with water. This was not God doing party-tricks; He was making sure that no excuse could be made for unbelief.

Verses 36-39

1.

And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

1 Kings 18

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

2.

Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

3.

Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

4.

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

When the time came for this evening sacrifice, Elijah approached the altar and called out-loud to Jehovah, referring to Him as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel (Jacob). He said that the people this day would know Jehovah was real and was the only God, and he was the true prophet, no the prophets of Ba'al. What he had done that day was given to him to do by God, the God Who wanted Israel to return to Him.

Immediately, "the fire of the LORD fell". That is, it came down from above, just as God rained fire and brimstone on Sodom. Within a short time the sacrificed bullock was utterly burnt to nothing, and so was the wood and the stones, which were rendered to dust by the incredible heat. Even the water in the trench was heated to nothing, evaporating.

To say this was spectacular is an understatement. It was a frightening and awesome thing that caused all the people to bow before the Lord in fear and reverence. "He is the God; the LORD"! This is the Lord we have today. It is He Who will defeat the wicked men on this earth. The Israelites were given the opportunity to repent and change. Many today will be given-over to their sins, because they refuse God's word.

Verses 40-43

1.

1 Kings 18

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

2.

And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

3.

So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

4.

And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

Now we come to an incident that accurately describes the wrath of God against false gods and those who follow them. Christians should observe what happens in light of Muslim atrocities today. Elijah commanded the people to catch all the false prophets of Ba'al, who were then taken to the Kidron river and put to death. Unlike modern ISIS members who murder on a grand scale, these prophets had not killed anyone. They were put to death for the heinous nature of their godless worship. How much moreso should ISIS members be put to death summarily – no trial, just judicial death? All of them should thus be dispatched from this life to meet the real God.

I will repeat why this should happen – worshipping a false God is the ultimate rejection and scorning of the true God. God does not tolerate this, and every false worshipper should be told this. I cannot imagine why any Christian should befriend a Muslim of any persuasion, killer or not, unless it is to tell him the Gospel. Without this the 'friendship' is false and the Christian condones the fake gods of the Muslim, himself or herself becoming as guilty of idolatry as the Muslim. There is no excuse.

Sadly, many Christians are seduced by the title 'moderate Muslim', and they fail to view Muslims through *God's* eyes. He does not see them as violent or peaceful. He only sees that

1 Kings 18

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

they worship a false moon-god and they reject Him as the one true Lord. This is why they stand condemned forever, unless they repent, renounce and denounce Allah. Until that time Christians are warned not to enter into a close friendship with Muslims because they appear 'nice'. They may indeed be humanly 'nice' (I have met many), but this does not prevent their hell-bound state – God loathes them and sees their Koran as foul. Beware.

Ahab's soldiers did not stop Elijah killing the false prophets. It is probable that the king was afraid of what he had just witnessed and knew God was present. Elijah told him to eat and drink, for rain was about to fall. The king did as he was told, while Elijah climbed to the top of mount Carmel. He kneeled on the ground and dropped his head between his knees in worship of God. He told his servant to look towards the Mediterranean sea. The servant said he saw nothing, but Elijah caused him to look seven times.

Verses 44-46

1.

And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

2.

And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

3.

And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

When the servant looked the seventh time, he saw a small cloud in the sky above the sea. Elijah told him to run to Ahab to tell him to get his chariot ready to travel to a city before the rains stopped him doing so. As the servant obeyed, the tiny cloud became a mass of black rain clouds accompanied by strong wind. The rain fell and was heavy as the king headed for Jezreel. Two cities bore that name, but the most likely one in this text was one in the area of Issachar in the north-west. Ahab rode fast to escape the downpour which would make any paths impassible. Elijah, too, needed to get out of the rain and so ran in front of the chariot to

1 Kings 18

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 01 September 2016 15:43

the city.

In this text we see that the rain was another example of a genuine miracle. That is, God caused the drought, then He told Elijah to say that rain was coming; the rain came as prophesied. Do you believe these events happened? If not, why not? We must always keep the sense of God's real presence before our minds. Only then will we see and acknowledge His presence and power in our own lives. Those who do not are living a lie, a pretense of worship of God when we inwardly defy or ignore Him. This is no slight thing.

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