

God or Tyrants: A Study of 1 & 2 Kings

Lesson 05: A Prophet's Prophet

Settling In

What questions do you have from your reading of 1 Kings 17-19?

Introduction

This lesson was entitled, "A Prophet's Prophet" – making that claim for Elijah! Some Bible Scholars saw the title and disagreed, offering Isaiah, Daniel, and Moses as alternates for the title "A Prophet's Prophet". Within your group, have one person take Elijah, another Isaiah, another Daniel, and a final one Moses and give your reasons why your "person" ought to be labelled "A Prophet's Prophet". Determined, as a group, who had the most compelling arguments. Is there someone other than the four mentioned whom you would offer as "A Prophet's Prophet"?

Just the Facts

1. What biographical information are we given about Elijah... and what does his name mean? _____

2. Name at least three ways the LORD provided for Elijah during the time of famine? _____

3. During his ministry, what reference does Jesus make to the widow at Zarephath? _____

4. How did the LORD test the nascent faith of the widow? _____

5. Tell me THREE interesting things about the man, Obadiah of 1 Kings 18: _____

6. How many prophets of Baal/Asherah did Elijah summon (and who paid their salaries)? _____

7. Compare the length of time the pagan prophets begged their god versus how long Elijah prayed to the LORD: _____
8. Compare the length of time Elijah prayed for fire verses how long he prayed for rain: _____

9. To where did Elijah flee after his success on Mt. Carmel... and why?: _____

10. In what ways did the LORD *not* reveal himself to Elijah... and in what one way did he? _____

Take it to Heart

1. (ch.17) More than being without rain for three years, the flight of Elijah (at God’s command) also symbolized the absence of God’s Word (Elijah appears to have functioned as the bearer of the LORD’s word to Israelite king and people):
 - Explain why an absence of God’s Word is the worst kind of famine?

 - In 2025, we are not restricted by a set number of copies of God’s Word – we have it in print, on the web, in podcasts, digital audio... and more. How could the Word of God ever be absent from us?

2. (ch.17) God’s dealings with Elijah during the famine strike us as **strange** – one person is miraculously cared for (while the rest of Israel struggles in famine) and that person is fed by *unclean* animals and an *unlikely* widow. The LORD’s **circle of goodness** exits and falls in unexpected places – he bypasses Israel and lands in Gentile territory. Then, God makes a **demand** of the widow that is challenging to the core – feed the prophet first and trust there will always be enough for you and your son (one commentator reflects, “it is as if God says, ‘Give me everything you have (vs.13), for I will give you everything you need (vs.14).’”)
 - Relate an experience in your life (or the life of someone else) in which God’s ways struck you as strange.

 - Give an example from life in which the Lord’s **circle of goodness** exited or fell in unlikely places.

 - Think of a time in which what God **asked of you** seemed challenging to the core.

3. (ch.17) Read 1 Kings 17:17-24. Why would God allow this to happen? What lessons can we learn from this incident? How does this incident help to underscore Elijah as “A Prophet’s Prophet”? How does what happened highlight the theme of Kings (humankind’s unfaithfulness vs. God’s faithfulness)?

4. (ch.18) If Elijah is “A Prophet’s Prophet”, then Obadiah is... wait, who is Obadiah (and we don’t mean the prophet by that name)...! The contrast in position and personality between Elijah and Obadiah is striking – and yet they are also rather similar. God seems to infuse his Kingdom with a diversity of service and servants.
- Make a list of the diversity of gifts that you see in the characters of the Bible (only choose people who obviously are serving God’s Kingdom).
 - Then make a second list of the diversity of gifts you’ve experienced in God’s Kingdom in your life.
 - Finally, make a list of the diversity of gifts in the little slice of God’s Kingdom we call Calvary.
5. (ch.18) Think of situations in which the account of Elijah on Mt. Carmel vs. the pagan prophets (the full story... all the way to the end of the story at 1 Kings 19:2) might prove as a good Bible text for a devotional thought with someone?
6. (ch.18) Tell how 1 Kings 18:19-39 substantiate the following claims (and speak to why these claims are important):
- 1) The LORD is the God with whom geography is no hinderance.
 - 2) The LORD is the God for whom numbers are of no consequence.
 - 3) The LORD is the God for whom activity is no inducement.
 - 4) The LORD is the God for whom handicaps are no obstacle.

7. (ch.18) An agnostic friend asks you about what you're studying "at church" and you tell him about 1 Kings 18 and the contest between Elijah and the Prophets of Baal. You point out to him the inescapable truth that there is only one *real* God and urge him to trust in the God who answers prayer beyond our imagination... and who forgives our sins through the sacrifice of the Son of God, Jesus.

Your friend shoots back that the story of Elijah and the Prophets of Baal is exactly why he *doesn't* believe in the God of the Bible since it talks about Elijah's slaughter of the Baal Prophets (either 450 or 850, depending on if the Asherah Prophets are excluded or included). He can't follow a "god" of such petulance, violence, and revenge.

How do you respond?

8. (ch.19) Throughout ch. 17,18, we have seen the bold prophet of action and prayer. In ch. 19 we meet the helpless prophet reduced to prayer in the most obvious way. To this one commentator expressed that, "prayer is a most humiliating work". What did he mean by that? How have you experienced this to be true (see James 5:16b-18 for Elijah's connection with "prayer", specifically)?

9. (ch.19) As the pastor of a congregation, you have selected 1 Kings 19:9b-18 as the text on which you will preach.

- ✓ What will your theme and parts be?
- ✓ How will you preach/apply the Law?
- ✓ Where do you find precious Gospel windows?
- ✓ What appropriations and/or applications will you make for the people?

10. (All) Identify both *Specific Law* and *Specific Gospel* in this section of 1 Kings.

In what ways has this section of 1 Kings fit the theme: "God or Tyrants: A study of the unfaithfulness of humankind versus the faithfulness of the LORD"?