

I Kings 16:29-18:46 –25 August 2022

“A Venture In Faith-Action”

Introduction

- *I & II Kings demonstrate that a king’s allegiance to God’s Law is the key to success & protection
- *The 1st half of I Kings depicts the reign of Solomon
- *The 2nd half of I Kings begins the divided kingdom
- *We now have 2 tribes in south called Judah led by a descendant of David & 10 tribes in north called Israel
- *We now enter one of the darkest times in Israeli history – reign of Ahab & Jezebel in Israel (850BC)
- *Although 71% of Americans claim to be Christian (way down), only 32% say they attend services regularly & 56% of Christians say their spiritual life is entirely private
 - *This is recipe for turning false worship of the true God into worshipping things entirely apart from God
 - *This is where Israel stands in the days of Ahab
- *Today, let’s see 3 qualities we all need to have to successfully venture thru this dark, confused world**

1st quality we need is Conviction: One imperfect person can change everything (Chap 16:29-17:1)

Read Chap 16:29-33

1. 80 years ago, Jeroboam set up false worship calling it true worship, but here it gets worse
2. Ahab made serving false gods the normal even setting up Baal worship in the capital city
3. Jezebel was so seductive at teaching idolatry thru lifestyle, her name became epitome of it (Rev 2:20)

Read Vs 34

1. Fulfills curse of Joshua 6:26 from 550 years b4
2. Did Hiel know of the curse, he should have
 - a. Can't claim ignorance of God's Word

Read Chap 17:1

1. God is always looking for a person to stand in the gap & speak the truth (think Paul, Noah, etc)
2. James says Elijah was man of like passions yet that didn't stop him from standing for God's glory
3. This drought will end up lasting 3.5 years

2nd quality we need is Perseverance: It can get very hard before a breakthrough (Chap 17:2-24)

Read Chap 17:2-6

1. The Lord is looking for faithfulness to obey
2. Before he's ready to confront others, Elijah needs to confront himself, prove himself faithful
3. Sad that the very people he's running from are the people of God

Read Vs 7-9

1. Why not just have Elijah go to the Gentile widow's house in the first place and save time?
 - a. B/c it's not about the short path, it's about the relational, character-building path
 - b. God wants Elijah to build his faith & confidence in God by watching the brook run lower & lower & yet God continues to sustain
 - c. These lessons will benefit him later in life
2. Notice that the widow he's sent to, lives in the heart of idolatry in Zidon where Jezebel is from

Read Vs 10-12

1. God always seems to show up at the “last supper” (Abe was old, Joe was imprisoned)
2. Notice this Gentile women is a lover of God
3. They’re both is a desperate spot needing God

Read Vs 13-16

1. So a miracle of the Lord, simply b/c she believed that God could do the impossible for her
 - a. Read Luke 4:21-26 & Matt 13:55-58
 - b. It’s hard to see past the familiar, to belief that God can intervene using a common person

Read Vs 17-18

1. She’s in grief but what she says is wrong
 - a. God doesn’t judge another for our sins
 - b. Except each of us repent, we all perish
2. Her son represents, as a widow, her last chance at a legacy in Israel & to be mother of the Messiah

Read Vs 19-24

1. Now I don’t know how the son felt about this but his mother was certainly happy

3rd quality we need is a Clear Mind: Faith isn't the cause of trouble, it's the catalyst for triumph (Chap 18)

Read Chap 18:1-4

1. This isn't the Obadiah the author, but what a man of great faith action
2. Notice vs 1, it's not up to Elijah to bring the rain, God will bring it a the right time

Read Vs 5-15

1. This's 2nd time (widow's son) that someone thinks God's plan is to harm, all b/c things look risky or hard
2. Takes faith to trust the steps the Lord puts you thru are not just good, but the right & best way
 - a. Like the widow, sometimes people of faith are good at *accepting a bad fate*, but need to grow in trusting God *for more*
 - b. Like Obadiah, sometimes people of faith are good at taking *bold action personally*, but need to grow in trusting God for what He's *doing thru others*

Read Vs 16-18

1. This is now the 3rd person that thinks Elijah is bringing the trouble
2. The famine was the judgement or reaction to their idolatry, NOT the cause of their troubles
3. The man who's following God's plan in faith, even if in the minority, isn't source of the trouble
4. This is what it means to be renewed in the spirit of your mind with truth

Read Vs 19-21

1. The problem: In serving Baal, they're violating their allegiance to God
2. When any allegiance demands we do a thing in violation of God's Word, it's still idolatry
3. Challenge: you can't serve God & mammon
 - a. Just as Joshua gave the choice (Jos 24:15)
 - b. It's usually a slow fade; people don't realize they started off worshipping cows they thought were God & then they abandon God altogether for Baal

Read Vs 22-24

1. Notice this whole time Elijah is addressing the people not the priests of Baal
2. Focus on helping the people, not false teachers

Read Vs 25-27

1. Mocking: He may be meditating, on a business trip, using the toilet or sleeping

Read Vs 28-29

1. Religious servants have to give & strive
2. God's servants have to faithfully wait for God to move and act

Read Vs 30-37

1. All this is for; #1 God to be center & #2 the people's repentance
2. Notice 12 stones vs 31; even though divided from Judah, this is the same that they ALL need
3. The mocking is toward the priests that teach falsehood, the call to repentance is for the people

Read Vs 38-42a

1. Ahab (flesh) is just happy his pain, the drought will be over, so he eats
2. The Lord is looking for repentance of the heart
 - a. Whether we get “good things” or not, will we now trust in the Lord and His plan?

Read Vs 42b-46

1. Even at the slightest cloud Elijah knew it would rain b/c God promised it in vs 1
 - a. Confidence in prayer comes from knowing God’s Word
2. So Elijah supernaturally outruns Ahab back to Jezreel

Conclusion

So, what does it take to bring God back to the schools, to the homes, to the workplaces?

1. **Takes people of conviction**

- a. 1 brave person can set a NEW tone
- b. 1 person of principle can lead other to God

2. **Takes people that persevere**

- a. The Christian's destination is already secure, now it's a matter of growing in the journey
- b. God's more concerned about building our faith, than giving us an easy life

3. **Takes people with clear minds**

- a. Don't ever succumb to lies even if you're in the minority
- b. Be a person that knows God and trusts in His Words, THEN we'll have a ready mind to live a life full of faith-actions