

The Book of FIRST KINGS

Chapter 18

“The Life of Elijah” (Part 2)

I) THE CONFRONTATION! (v1-16)

Four characters:

#1 – **ELIJAH** – (*God is Jehovah*) - Let’s update from chapter 17 - Having delivered his message to King Ahab of the Northern Kingdom (Israel), he retired at the command of God to a hiding-place by the brook Cherith, beyond Jordan, where he was fed by ravens. When the brook dried up God sent him to the widow of Zarephath, a city of Zidon, from whose one meal resource God multiplied to support Elijah, the widow and her son for the space of two years. During this period the widow's son died, and was restored to life by Elijah (1 Kings 17:2-24). During all these two years a famine prevailed in the land. Elijah meets Obadiah, one of Ahab's officers, whom he had sent out to seek for pasturage for the cattle, and bade him go and tell his master that Elijah was there. The king came and met Elijah, and reproached him as the **troubler of Israel**.

#2 – **AHAB** - The son of Omri and the seventh king of Israel (1 Kings 16:30). Under the influence of Jezebel his wife, Ahab gave Baal equal place with God. Ahab also built a temple to Baal in which he erected a "wooden image" of the Canaanite goddess Asherah (1 Kings 16:33). At Jezebel's urging, Ahab opposed the worship of Jehovah, destroyed His altars, and killed His prophets. He reigned over Israel in Samaria for 22 years (873 B.C. - 853 B.C.) (1 Kings 16:29). Throughout Ahab's reign, the prophet **ELIJAH** stood in open opposition to Ahab and the worship of Baal.

#3 – **OBADIAH** - (*servant or worshipper of Jehovah*) - The governor of Ahab's palace (1 Kings 18:3-7, 16); (this is not the Obadiah who wrote *The Book of Obadiah*; there’s actually 12 different Obadiah's in the Old Testament). In verse 3 we are given insight into the character of this Obadiah, the governor of Ahab’s palace where it says he “*feared the LORD greatly.*”

#4 – **JEZEBEL** (perhaps “*noncohabited, un-husbanded*”) - The daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre and Sidon, and queen with Ahab. Her father had formerly been a priest of Astarte, but had violently dispossessed his brother Phelles of the throne. The first mention of Jezebel in Scripture is her marriage with Ahab (1 Kings 16:31), about 871 B.C. The first effect of her influence was the immediate establishment of the Phoenician worship on a grand scale at the court of Ahab. At her table were supported no less than 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Astarte (1 Kings 16:31-32; 18:19), whereas the prophets of Jehovah were slain by her orders (18:13; 9:7).

II) THE CONTENTION! (v17-19)

> **Every Christian must “CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH” - Jude 3-4** - *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God* and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

III) THE CHALLENGE! (v20-46)

> Christians face six challenges:

(v20) **Challenge #1 - POPULARITY OR PRINCIPLE?** - Ahab sent for “*ALL the children of Israel*” and gathered all the false prophets; Ahab uses intimidation by population, whereas, Elijah stands alone, every Christian stands alone, but God is on our side and victory is won in Christ!

(v21) **Challenge #2 - COMPROMISE OR COMMITMENT?** - **Elijah’s challenge, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God follow Him!”**

> What does it mean to FOLLOW THE LORD?

- **Deuteronomy 8:19-20** - *Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.*

- **Deuteronomy 12:29-32** - *"When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and*

daughters in the fire to their gods. "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

- **Deuteronomy 18:9-14** - "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.

> **We are called to "FOLLOW JESUS!" in:**

#1 – **SOUL-WINNING!** - **Matthew 4:19-20** - Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

#2 – **LIFE!** - **Matthew 8:22** - But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

#3 – **SACRIFICE!** - **Matthew 16:24-27** - Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

#4 – **SERVICE!** - **John 12:26** - If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

(v22-24) **Challenge #3 – BAAL OR JESUS? - Romans 10:9-13** - that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

(v25-29) **Challenge #4 – FACT OR FICTION? - Whose God is real? Which way is right? What is true? In 2 Peter 1:19-21** - And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. **John 14:6** - Jesus said to him, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" **John 11:25-26** - Jesus said to her, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*"

(v30-40) **Challenge #5 – FEAR OR FAITH? Elijah's prayer was answered and God was testified, because Elijah had FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD! (v31, 36). Romans 10:17** - So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. **Ephesians 6:17-18** - And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

(v41-46) **Challenge #6 – PESSIMIST or PROMISE? Elijah believes in the promises of God and prays accordingly, his God is the God of the impossible! Hebrews 11:6** - But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. **Luke 10:2** - Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

> Every Christian must **CONFRONT, CONTEND and CHALLENGE** the world and its beliefs. Every Christian must learn the **WORD OF GOD!** Every Christian must **TESTIFY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!** Every Christian must **LIVE BY FAITH** in God's **PROMISES!** Every Christian must **PRAY** and may God rain in the **HARVEST!**