

Showdown on Mount Carmel (c. 857n BC)

1 Kings 18

God Sends Elijah Back to Ahab

- 1 It happened many days *later* that the word of Yahweh came to Elijah in the third year, saying, “Go, present yourself to Ahab so that I may give rain on the surface of the earth.”
- 2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. Now the famine *was* severe in Samaria.
- 3 Ahab summoned Obadiah who *was* over the house. (Now Obadiah was fearing Yahweh greatly.)
- 4 It had happened that when Jezebel killed the prophets of Yahweh, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in the cave and sustained them *with* food and water.)
- 5 Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the wadis. Perhaps we may find green grass that we may keep horses and mules alive and that we might not lose any of the animals.”
- 6 So they divided the land for themselves in order to pass through it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.
- 7 It happened that Obadiah *was* on the way, and suddenly Elijah was there to meet him. When he recognized him, he fell on his face and said, “*Is* this you, my lord Elijah?”
- 8 He said to him, “I *am*. Go, say to your lord, ‘Elijah *is* here.’”
- 9 He said, “How have I sinned that you *are* giving your servant into the hand of Ahab to kill me?”
- 10 As Yahweh your God lives, surely there is not a nation or a kingdom to which my lord has not sent me to seek you. *If* they would say, ‘He is not here,’ then he would make the kingdom or the nation swear that it could not find you.
- 11 Now you *are* saying, ‘Go, say to your lord: “Elijah *is* here.”’
- 12 And it will happen that I will go from you and the Spirit of Yahweh will carry you up to where I do not know. Then I will come to tell Ahab, but he will not find you, and then he will kill me, *even though* your servant has feared Yahweh from my youth.
- 13 Has it not been told to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of Yahweh? I hid a hundred men of the prophets of Yahweh by fifties in the cave, and I sustained them *with* food and water.
- 14 Now you *are* saying, ‘Go, say to your lord: “Elijah *is* here,”’ and he will kill me.”
- 15 Elijah said, “As Yahweh of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will certainly show myself to him today.”

Elijah Orders Ahab to Assemble Israel and the Prophets of Baal

- 16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and he told him, so Ahab went to meet Elijah.
- 17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “*Is* this you *who* throws Israel into confusion?”
- 18 He said, “I did not throw Israel into confusion; rather you and the house of your father *have* by forsaking the commands of Yahweh when you went after the Baals!
- 19 So then, send *word* and assemble all of Israel to me on Mount Carmel, with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at the table of Jezebel.”
- 20 So Ahab sent *word* among the Israelites, and he assembled the prophets to Mount Carmel.

Elijah's Challenge

- 21 Elijah approached to all the people and said, “How long *will* you *go* limping over two opinions? If Yahweh *is* God, go after him; but if Baal, go after him.” But the people did not answer him a word.
- 22 Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone *am* left a prophet of Yahweh, but the prophets of Baal *are* four hundred and fifty men.
- 23 Let them give us two bulls, and let them choose for themselves one bull, cut him in pieces, and put it on the wood, but don't let them start a fire on it. I will prepare the other bull and set it on the wood, but I will put no fire *on* it.
- 24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Yahweh, and it shall be that the god who answers by fire, he *is* God.” Then all the people answered and said, “The word *is* good!”

Elijah Mocks the Prophets of Baal

- 25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you *are* the majority, and call on the name of your god, but don't set fire *under* it.”
- 26 So they took the bull that he allowed to them, prepared it, and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice and there was no answer, so they limped about the altar which they had made.
- 27 It happened at noon that Elijah mocked them and said, “Call out with a loud voice, for he *is* a god! Perhaps he is meditating, or is using the bathroom, or *is* on a journey. Perhaps he *is* asleep and must wake up!”
- 28 So they called out with a loud voice, and they cut themselves with swords and with spears as was their custom, until the blood poured out over them.
- 29 It happened as noon passed, they raged until the *time* of the evening offering, but there was no voice, there was no answer, and no *one* paid attention.

Yahweh Demonstrates His Power

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me,” so all the people came closer to him. He repaired the altar of Yahweh *that had been* destroyed.

31 Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of God came, saying, “Israel shall be your name.”

32 With them, he built an altar in the name of Yahweh, and he made a trench which would have held about two seahs of seed, all around the altar.

33 And he arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces, and placed *it* on the wood. Then he said, “Fill four jars *with* water, and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.”

34 He said, “Do *it* again!” They did *it* again. He said, “Do *it* a third time!” So they did *it* a third time.

35 The water went all around the altar, and the trench also was filled *with* water.

36 It happened at the offering of the *evening* oblation, Elijah the prophet went near, and he said, “O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; let it be known today that you *are* God in Israel and *that I am* your servant and *that I have* done all of these things by your words.

37 Answer me, O Yahweh, answer me; that this people may know that you, O Yahweh, *are* God and that you have turned their hearts back again.”

38 Then the fire of Yahweh fell, and it consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust; and the water which *was* in the trench it licked up!

39 When all the people saw, they fell on their faces and said, “Yahweh, he *is* God! Yahweh, he *is* God!”

Prophets of Baal Executed

40 Then Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; don’t let any man of them escape!” So they seized them, and Elijah brought them down to the wadi of Kishon and killed them there.

The Prayer of a Righteous Man

41 Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for *there is* the sound of the noise of rain.”

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink while Elijah went to the top of Carmel, bent down to the earth, and put his face between his knees. [[James 5:16–18](#)]

43 Then he said to his servant, “Please go *and* look in the direction of *the* sea.” So he went up and looked; then he said, “There is nothing.” Then he said, “Go back,” seven times.

44 It happened that at the seventh time, he said, “Look, there is a small cloud, as *the* hand of a man, coming up from the sea.” Then *Elijah* said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Harness *your* horses and go down, lest the rain stop you.’”

45 In no time the heavens grew black *with* clouds and wind, and there was heavy rain. Ahab rode and he went to Jezreel,

46 but the hand of Yahweh was on Elijah; he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab as one comes to Jezreel.

The Aftermath—Elijah’s Discouragement and Elisha’s Call (c. 857n BC)

1 Kings 19

Jezebel Threatens to Kill Elijah

1 Then Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “Thus may the gods do *to me*, and may they add *to it*, surely at this time tomorrow I will make your life as the life of one of them!”

Elijah On the Run

3 Then he became afraid, got up, and fled for his life. He came *to* Beersheba which belongs to Judah, and he left his servant there.

4 Then he went into the wilderness one day’s journey, and he went and sat under a certain broom tree. Then he asked Yahweh that he might die, and he said, “It is enough now, Yahweh; take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.”

5 He lay down and fell asleep under a certain broom tree, and suddenly this angel *was* touching him and said to him, “Get up, eat!”

6 He looked, and behold, a bread cake on hot coals *was* near his head and a jar of water, so he ate and drank. Then he did it again and lay down.

7 The angel of Yahweh appeared a second *time* and touched him and said, “Get up, eat, for the journey is greater than you.”

8 So he got up, ate, drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights up to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Yahweh Questions Elijah

9 He came to the cave there and spent the night there. Suddenly the *word* of Yahweh came to him and asked him, “Elijah, what are you doing here?”

10 Then he said, “I have been very zealous for Yahweh the God of hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant. They have demolished your altars, and they have killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left over, and they seek to take my life.

11 He said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before Yahweh.” Suddenly Yahweh was passing by, with a great and strong wind ripping the mountains and crushing rocks before Yahweh; *but* Yahweh was not in the wind. After the wind, *there was* an earthquake; *but* Yahweh was not in the earthquake.

12 After the earthquake *was* a fire, *but* Yahweh was not in the fire. After the fire *there was* the sound of a gentle whisper.

13 It happened at the moment Elijah heard, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood *at* the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice *came* to him and said, “Elijah, why are you here?”

14 He said, “I have been very zealous for Yahweh the God of Hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, demolished your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword; I alone am left, and they seek to take my life!”

Elijah’s Commission

15 Then Yahweh said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. Go and anoint Hazael as king over Aram; 16 and Jehu son of Nimshi you shall anoint as king over Israel. You shall also anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-Meholah as prophet in your place.

17 It shall be that the *one* who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill.

18 I will leave in Israel seven thousand, all of the knees that have not bowed down to Baal and all of the mouths that have not kissed him.” [\[Rom 11:1–5\]](#)

The Call of Elisha

19 So he went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat while he *was* plowing *with* twelve pairs of oxen before him. When he and the twelve passed Elijah, he threw his cloak on him.

20 Then he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will go after you.”

Then he said, “Go, return, for what I have done to you?”

21 So he returned from after him, and he took a pair of oxen and slaughtered them, and with the yoke of the oxen he boiled the flesh and gave it to the people and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and served him.

Ben-Hadad of Syria Attacks Ahab (c. 857n BC)

1 Kings 20:1–22

Ben-Hadad Besieges Israel’s Capital Samaria

1 Ben-Hadad king of Aram gathered all of his army, and thirty-two kings *were* with him, and horses and chariots. He went up and laid siege against Samaria and fought with it.

Negotiations Fail

2 He sent messengers to the city to Ahab king of Israel.

3 He said to him, “Thus says Ben-Hadad: ‘Your silver and your gold are mine, and your women and your best sons are mine.’”

4 Then the king of Israel answered and said, “As your word, my master the king; I *am* yours, and all that is mine *is yours*.”

5 The messengers returned and said, “Thus says Ben-Hadad, saying, ‘I sent to you saying, “Your silver and gold are mine, and your women and your best sons you must give to me.”

6 So *at this* time tomorrow, I will send my servants to you that they might search your house and the houses of your servants. All the desire of your eyes they will lay hands on and take it away.”

7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land and said, “Please know and realize that this *man is* seeking trouble, for he sent to me for my women, my sons, my silver, and my gold, and I did not withhold *anything* from him.”

8 All of the elders and all of the people said to him, “Do not listen and do not consent.”

9 So he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, “Say to my lord the king, ‘All that you demanded from your servant at the first, I will do, but this thing I am not able to do.’” Then the messengers went and made a report to him.

10 Then Ben-Hadad sent to him and said, “Thus may the gods do to me and thus may they add if the dust of Samaria is sufficient for the hollow of a hand for all of the people who are at my feet.”

11 The king of Israel answered and said, “Tell *him*, ‘Let not him who girds on his armor boast as one who takes off his armor.’”

12 It happened at the moment he heard this word, he and the kings *were* drinking in the tents. He said to his servants, “Get ready to *attack*.” So they got ready to *attack* the city.

Yahweh Promises to Deliver Ahab

13 Suddenly a certain prophet approached Ahab king of Israel and said, “Thus says Yahweh: ‘Have you seen all this great crowd? Behold, I *am* giving it into your hand today, that you may know that I *am* Yahweh.’”

14 Ahab said, “By whom?” And he said, “Thus says Yahweh: ‘By the servants of the commanders of the provinces.’” He asked, “Who will begin the battle?” And he said, “You.”

God Helps Ahab Defeat the Syrians

15 So he mustered the servants of the commanders of the provinces, and there were two hundred and thirty-two. After them he mustered all of the army, all the sons of Israel, seven thousand.

16 They went out at noon while Ben-Hadad *was drinking himself* drunk in the tents, he and the thirty-two kings helping him.

17 Then the servants of the commanders of the provinces went out first, and Ben-Hadad sent, and they reported to him, saying, “Men have come out from Samaria.”

18 Then he said, “If they have come out for peace, seize them alive; and if they have come out for war, seize them alive.”

19 But these had come out from the city, the servants of the commanders of the provinces, and the army that *was* after them.

20 Each man killed his man, and the Arameans fled, so Israel pursued them, but Ben-Hadad king of Aram escaped on a horse with cavalry.

21 The king of Israel went out and attacked the horses and the chariots and defeated Aram with a great blow.

Ben-Hadad’s Second Attack Foretold

22 Then the prophet came near to the king of Israel, and he said to him, “Go, strengthen yourself; consider well what you should do, for the king of Aram is coming against you at the turn of the year.”

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