

Showdown on Mount Carmel (c. 857n BC)

1 Kings 18

God Sends Elijah Back to Ahab

- 1 Now it happened *after* many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.”
- 2 So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine *was* severe in Samaria.
- 3 Ahab called Obadiah who *was* over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly;
- 4 for when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.)
- 5 Then Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys; perhaps we will find grass and keep the horses and mules alive, and not have to kill some of the cattle.”
- 6 So they divided the land between them to survey it; Ahab went one way by himself and Obadiah went another way by himself.
- 7 Now as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him, and he recognized him and fell on his face and said, “Is this you, Elijah my master?”
- 8 He said to him, “It is I. Go, say to your master, ‘Behold, Elijah *is here*.’”
- 9 He said, “What sin have I committed, that you are giving your servant into the hand of Ahab to put me to death?”
- 10 As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to search for you; and when they said, ‘He is not *here*,’ he made the kingdom or nation swear that they could not find you.
- 11 And now you are saying, ‘Go, say to your master, “Behold, Elijah *is here*.”’
- 12 It will come about when I leave you that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you where I do not know; so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although *I* your servant have feared the LORD from my youth.
- 13 Has it not been told to my master what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, that I hid a hundred prophets of the LORD by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water?
- 14 And now you are saying, ‘Go, say to your master, “Behold, Elijah *is here*”; he will then kill me.’”
- 15 Elijah said, “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.”

Elijah Orders Ahab to Assemble Israel and the Prophets of Baal

- 16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.
- 17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is this you, you troubler of Israel?”
- 18 He said, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house *have*, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and you have followed the Baals.
- 19 Now then send *and* gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, *together* with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”
- 20 So Ahab sent *a message* among all the sons of Israel and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel.

Elijah’s Challenge

- 21 Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long *will* you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him a word.
- 22 Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men.
- 23 Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire *under it*; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire *under it*.
- 24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” And all the people said, “That is a good idea.”

Elijah Mocks the Prophets of Baal

- 25 So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*.”
- 26 Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, “O Baal, answer us.” But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made.
- 27 It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.”
- 28 So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them.
- 29 When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, 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 near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD

which had been torn down.

31 Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name."

32 So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed.

33 Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid *it* on the wood.

34 And he said, "Fill four pitchers with water and pour *it* on the burnt offering and on the wood." And he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time.

35 The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water.

36 At the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word.

37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, and *that* You have turned their heart back again."

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

39 When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God."

Prophets of Baal Executed

40 Then Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape." So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

The Prayer of a Righteous Man

41 Now Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a *heavy* shower."

42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees. [[James 5:16-18](#)]

43 He said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go back " seven times.

44 It came about at the seventh *time*, that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare *your chariot* and go down, so that the *heavy* shower does not stop you.'"

45 In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.

46 Then the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.

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

1 Kings 19

Jezebel Threatens to Kill Elijah

1 Now 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, "So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

Elijah On the Run

3 And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

5 He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, "Arise, eat."

6 Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake *baked on* hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again.

7 The angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you."

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

Yahweh Questions Elijah

9 Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 He said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

11 So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake.

12 After the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing.

13 When Elijah heard *it*, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice *came* to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

14 Then he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”

Elijah’s Commission

15 The LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram;

16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.

17 It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death.

18 Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.” [\[Rom 11:1–5\]](#)

The Call of Elisha

19 So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs of *oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him.

20 He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?”

21 So he returned from following him, and took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave *it* to the people and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and ministered to him.

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

1 Kings 20:1–22

Ben-Hadad Besieges Israel’s Capital Samaria

1 Now Ben-hadad king of Aram gathered all his army, and there *were* thirty-two kings with him, and horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria and fought against it.

Negotiations Fail

2 Then he sent messengers to the city to Ahab king of Israel and said to him, “Thus says Ben-hadad,

3 ‘Your silver and your gold are mine; your most beautiful wives and children are also mine.’”

4 The king of Israel replied, “It is according to your word, my lord, O king; I am yours, and all that I have.”

5 Then the messengers returned and said, “Thus says Ben-hadad, ‘Surely, I sent to you saying, “You shall give me your silver and your gold and your wives and your children,”

6 but about this time tomorrow I will send my servants to you, and they will search your house and the houses of your servants; and whatever is desirable in your eyes, they will take in their hand and carry away.’”

7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land and said, “Please observe and see how this man is looking for trouble; for he sent to me for my wives and my children and my silver and my gold, and I did not refuse him.”

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

9 So he said to the messengers of Ben-hadad, “Tell my lord the king, ‘All that you sent for to your servant at the first I will do, but this thing I cannot do.’” And the messengers departed and brought him word again.

10 Ben-hadad sent to him and said, “May the gods do so to me and more also, if the dust of Samaria will suffice for handfuls for all the people who follow me.”

11 Then the king of Israel replied, “Tell *him*, ‘Let not him who girds on *his armor* boast like him who takes *it off*.’”

12 When *Ben-hadad* heard this message, as he was drinking with the kings in the temporary shelters, he said to his servants, “Station *yourselves*.” So they stationed *themselves* against the city.

Yahweh Promises to Deliver Ahab

13 Now behold, a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel and said, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver them into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the LORD.’”

14 Ahab said, “By whom?” So he said, “Thus says the LORD, ‘By the young men of the rulers of the provinces.’” Then he said, “Who shall begin the battle?” And he answered, “You.”

God Helps Ahab Defeat the Syrians

15 Then he mustered the young men of the rulers of the provinces, and there were 232; and after them he mustered all the people, *even* all the sons of Israel, 7,000.

16 They went out at noon, while Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the temporary shelters with the thirty-two kings who helped him.

17 The young men of the rulers of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out and they told him, saying, "Men have come out from Samaria."

18 Then he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; or if they have come out for war, take them alive."

19 So these went out from the city, the young men of the rulers of the provinces, and the army which followed them.

20 They killed each his man; and the Arameans fled and Israel pursued them, and Ben-hadad king of Aram escaped on a horse with horsemen.

21 The king of Israel went out and struck the horses and chariots, and killed the Arameans with a great slaughter.

Ben-Hadad's Second Attack Foretold

22 Then the prophet came near to the king of Israel and said to him, "Go, strengthen yourself and observe and see what you have to do; for at the turn of the year the king of Aram will come up against you."

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