I Kings 18

Review…

- **I Kings 17 – The Prophet Elijah…**
  - God sent Elijah to speak to King Ahab - there will be no rain in Israel for many years…
    - Then God told Elijah to go and hide – because Ahab would be hunting for Elijah!
    - God had the prophet hide out by the brook Cherith (*near Bet Shan*)…
    - There God would provide water from a spring for Elijah to drink…
    - And he would send ravens to bring Elijah food to eat – for a whole year!
  - God told Elijah to got to a town in Sidon - to the home of a widow...
    - He saw a widow and asked her for a cup of water – which she was happy to provide…
      - Elijah assuming she was the widow God spoke of – asked her for some food too…
      - That was a problem – she only had enough flour to make one loaf of bread…
      - She planned on cooking a last meal to eat it with her son – then die!
    - Elijah told the widow not to be afraid – cook her 'last meal'… vs. 13-16
      - But give some of the bread to Elijah first – then she and her son could eat…
      - God had told Elijah – He would multiply her food until the famine ended!
  - Some time later – the son of widow grew sick and died…
    - Elijah brought him upstairs and laid him down on a bed…
    - He then prayed to God 3 times – Lord please let the life of this child return…
    - God heard his prayer – and the boy was brought back from the dead!

Dueling prophets… (*3 things*)

- **1st – Meeting with Ahab… vs. 1-16** Read: I Kings 18:1-8
  - 1st – During the 3rd year of the draught – God spoke to Elijah… vs. 1-2
    - He was to go and meet with King Ahab – and tell him the rain was coming!
    - This took incredible faith – Ahab was furious with Elijah and wanted him dead…
    - Like walking into the den of a hungry lion – God was leading Elijah into danger!
    - **Matthew 10:16** – "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves."
    - As we go to out into the world we are walking into a hungry pack of wolves…
    - People would like nothing more than to devour us – with hurtful words…

- They would love to make fun of us – belittle us – make us look foolish…
- Sad that we can be involved in almost an kind of activity and people do not care…
- Yet if we choose to live and stand for Jesus – we are a target for ridicule!
- But with God on our side there is nothing that can come against us - **Romans 8:31**

o 2nd – Ahab was out with his servant Obadiah (*serving God*)… vs. 3-6

- Ahab and Obadiah were looking for food for the King's horses…
  - King Ahab did not want to have to put down all of his livestock…
  - So they split up searching for any springs that might still have some grass…
- Obadiah was a man who feared God – even if it put his life in danger…
  - When Elijah could not be found – in 'revenge' for the drought in Israel…
    - Jezebel massacred the Prophets of the Lord – but Obadiah had hidden 100…
    - He put them in two caves – and provided them with food and water…
  - Obadiah was in a difficult position – serving an evil King / while still serving God!
    - You might ask why did he not just leave – why stick around…
    - If Obadiah had not stayed – then who would have saved the prophets of God!
    - It can be hard as a Christian to live in a world that does not know Christ…
    - The temptation can be to want to hide from the world – avoid unbelievers…
    - Yet if we are not out in the world - we cannot show the world the hope of Jesus!
    - But though we are in the world - we should not be like the world - **John 17:15**

o 3rd – As Obadiah was walking – Elijah came up to him… vs. 7-16

- He asked Obadiah to go and let King Ahab know he wanted to meet with him…
  - But Obadiah protested – 'What have I done that you are sending me to my death'…
  - For Ahab had searched EVERYWHERE for over 3 years trying to find Elijah…
  - And Obadiah was convinced the moment he went to tell Ahab Elijah was here…
  - The Spirit would sweep Elijah away – and Ahab in his wrath would kill Obadiah!
- Elijah gave his word – As the Lord lives I will see king Ahab today…
  - So Obadiah went to let the king know Elijah was waiting for him…
  - If Elijah had broken his word – as Obadiah feared – he would have been a dead man!
  - People tend not to break their word – they take their promises lightly…
  - Forgetting the effect breaking their word has on the lives of others – like Obadiah…
  - God does not treat our words lightly - He expects us to fulfill our promises...
  - If we do not follow through with our promise - it is sin - **Deuteronomy 23:21**
  - So if we are not sure if we can keep our promise - better to say nothing at all!
  - **Ecclesiastes 5:5** - "It is better to say nothing than to promise something that you do not follow through on."
  - Too often we speak - then we stop to think about what we said...
  - Better to think first about what we are going to say - the consequence of our words...
  - It is easy to say something - it is almost impossible to take our words back...
  - **James 1:19** - "My dear brothers, be quick to listen, slow to speak..."

- **2nd – Lighting the Altar… vs. 17-40** Read: I Kings 18:21-29
  - 1st – When Ahab saw Elijah – he called out – 'Is that you troublemaker'… vs. 17-18
    - Ahab blamed Elijah for causing the drought – bringing the famine to Israel…
      - But Elijah corrected Ahab – Israel was suffering because of his sins…
      - It was Ahab and his family who had broken the commands of God!
    - When things go wrong in life - we are quick to blame others...
      - When I was a kid – took a toy from a friend without asking…
      - When he found out I was FULL of excuses – 1000 reasons why what I did was OK…
      - But he rebuked me – just say you are sorry so I can forgive you!
      - It is far easier to blame others / make excuses – then to admit to our own faults…
      - But until we admit we are the problem – there is nothing God can do to help us!
  - 2nd – Elijah suggested a test – to see who was the real troublemaker… vs. 19-21
    - He told Ahab to gather all 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah…
      - They would meet at Mount Carmel for a duel – a test to who was the real God!
      - And all of Israel was to come and be a witness to the outcome!
    - When the multitude had gathered Elijah addressed the people…
      - Why do you waver – if Baal is God worship him – if it is the Lord worship Him!
      - But the people were silent – they were not willing to choose…
      - Because although they feared the Lord – they also feared the King!
      - I know a lot of people who have a hard time standing up for Jesus…
      - They believe in Jesus – but they are afraid of what people will say…
      - They might upset their family - or they might loose their boyfriend / girlfriend…
      - But if we are not willing to stand up for Jesus – He will not stand up for us!
      - **Luke 12:9** – "He who denies Me before men will be denied before… God."
  - 3rd - Elijah had the people bring two bulls for a sacrifice… vs. 22-29
    - The 450 prophets of Baal who came – had the honor of going first…
      - They would prepare their altar – but the fire had to come from their God…
      - This should have been easy because Baal was the 'god of fire'…
      - So the prophets of Baal danced calling out to their god – but there was no answer!
      - A lot of people believe that money is the answer to a happy life…
      - If you have enough money you will not have any problems…
      - That is why people give thousands of Pesos every day to the Lotto - just hoping...
      - But it turns out that it is a lie – there are 'no answers' in money…
      - We need to stand up like Elijah and challenge the false ideas of this world…
      - Prove to people they have been listening to a lie – this world does not have the answer…
      - Because if we do not stand up for the truth – who will!
    - About noon time – Elijah began to mock the prophets…
      - Perhaps your god is deep in thought / or maybe he has fallen asleep…
      - Then Elijah made it personal - maybe your god is taking a dump!
      - The point was simple their god was not answering – maybe you need to make more noise!
      - If we are trusting in anything but Jesus – we can make all the noise we want…
      - We can pray for hours – but nothing will happen because no one is listening!

- At that the prophets of Baal cut themselves all afternoon till blood gushed out…
  - The cutting was meant to get the attention of their god…
  - Apparently their god delighted in their suffering – hurting themselves…
  - Which was true – for the god they were worshiping was the god of this world…
  - Satan does not have our best interest in mind – he wants to suffer…
  - The devil is a murder – he seek only to kill and destroy – **John 10:10**…
  - So many people waste their lives in misery – trying to find answers apart from Jesus…
  - But all they end up doing is harming themselves – they are left empty!

- 3rd – The ONE true God… vs. 30-40
  - Finally towards evening Elijah called the people to come closer…
    - He took 12 stones – one for each tribe – and rebuilt the altar to God…
    - He prepared the sacrifice – dug a ditch around the altar that could hold 12 liters…
    - Elijah then told the people to pour 4 large jars of water over the altar – 3 times…
    - The water overflowed the altar and filled up the ditch!
    - Have you ever tried to light wood that has been soaked by water…
    - It might smoke a little bit – but it is almost impossible to start a fire…
  - Then Elijah prayed to the God of Abraham – Isaac – and Israel (*Jacob*)…
    - There was no doubt on whom Elijah was praying to…
    - So there could be no doubt who lit the fire and consumed the sacrifice!
    - Did you ever wonder why we close our prayers with 'In Jesus name – amen'…
    - If is not because we are afraid the prayer might get lost without the right address…
    - It is because we want everyone around us to know who we are praying to!
    - That way when God does a work – they know who to give the credit to!
  - Immediately the fire of the Lord fell down from heaven…
    - It consumed the sacrifice – the wood – the stones – and all the water!
    - When the people saw it they fell on their faces – the Lord He is God!
    - Elijah had them seize all the prophets of Baal – and put them to death!
    - **Deuteronomy 18:20** – "Any prophet who claims to give a message from another god or who falsely claims to speak for me must die."
    - 3 ½ years of drought and famine were not enough – it took the fire of God…
    - But finally Israel realized their need to follow and obey the Lord!
    - **Hebrews 12:29** - "For our God is a consuming fire."
    - If we allow ourselves to drift away from God - He will start a fire...
    - He will allow anything in our lives that is distracting us from him - to burn...
    - Not to punish us - but because He loves us - and want to make sure we get to heaven!

- **3RD - PRAY FOR RAIN… VS. 41-46** READ: I KINGS 18:41-46
  - 1st – Elijah told Ahab to go and eat – the famine would soon be over… vs. 41
    - With the return of Israel to the worship of the ONE true God…
    - The blessing of God were immediately returned to the nation…
    - There would no longer be a shortage of food – rain was coming!

- God does not waste any time when it comes to blessing His kids…
- The moment we turn to the Lord – the trial ends – and the blessings begin!

- 2nd – Elijah climbed up to the top of Mount Carmel to pray… vs. 42-44
  - Mt. Carmel is located right on the Mediterranean Sea in the north of Israel…
    - From his vantage point Elijah could see the horizon over the ocean…
    - He asked his servant if he saw anything – even a single could – the answer was no…
    - So Elijah kept praying – and had the servant check 7 different times…
    - Until finally the 7th time – the servant saw a little cloud on the horizon!
  - When Elijah prayed for it not to rain – one prayer and the rain stopped...
    - But after 3 ½ years - when it came time to pray for rain - it was not so easy...
    - **James 5:17-18** – "Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for the next three and a half years! Then he prayed for rain, and down it poured…"
    - So often when we pray we give up after a week - or a month - or a year...
    - But God does not call us just to pray - God calls us to be a people of prayer...
    - **I Thessalonians 5:17** - "Pray without ceasing..."
    - We need to be persistent in seeking the Lord - don't give up!
    - I imagine we will be amazed at how much God wanted to do in our lives...
    - But it never happened simply because we gave up asking too quickly...
    - **James 5:16** - "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results."
- 3rd – As black clouds began to fill the sky – Elijah came down… vs. 45-46
  - Ahab rushed to his chariot to get Jezreel before the deluge struck…
  - But God gave special strength to Elijah and he outran Ahab to the entrance of the town!