

Remnant Life Church
September 12, 2021
“Spiritual Warfare – Elijah’s Battle”
Pt 1

You know the name Elijah, but who is he and what made him such a powerful instrument of God’s work in the OT?

And then, how did he respond to the spiritual warfare he faced almost every day?

What can we learn from his example and apply to our own battles today?

- Elijah lived and ministered about 850 years before the birth of Jesus
- He is probably the only OT prophet who could stand with Moses in terms of the astounding miracles God performed through him
 - The primary purpose of his ministry was to remind the people of God’s power and to convince them that there were no other gods but God
 - It has been nearly 70 years since the reign of Solomon ended and the kingdom divided
 - There will be 19 kings of Israel - every one of them would be evil and lead the people away from God
 - And so the people of Israel have forgotten their history and are now worshipping other gods
 - And yet God, in His patience and forbearance, was still going to give the Israelites another 140 years of freedom before the Assyrians would conquer them and take them into captivity in 722.
- There are 3, possibly 4 men in the OT named Elijah
 - He lived in the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of 4 kings
 - With 2 of the most wicked kings – Ahaziah and Ahab
- Elijah set himself apart by standing against what was accepted by the people of the day but forbidden by God
 - In particular polytheism, or the worship of many gods, was considered normal and proper
 - Poly v monotheism
 - But the very first of the Ten Commandments in **Ex 20:3** reads, *You shall have no other Gods before me.*
 - And he not only stood up to the people’s thinking of the day, but to the ungodly laws and rule of the kings of his time
- Ahab is the 8th king of Israel, in particular, and has ushered in a tremendous darkness of evil into the land
 - In an effort to cultivate economic treaties and agreements with neighboring nations, he had struck a deal with the king of the Sidonians – a neighboring pagan nation
 - One of the conditions, however, was that Ahab was to marry the king’s daughter, a woman by the name of Jezebel
 - Because of that agreement, Ahab permitted idol worship, and in particular the demonic god worshipped by his new wife, Baal

- Baal was the chief god of the Canaanites
- The god of weather, crops, and fire (remember that)
- Ahab even established a center for Baal worship in the capital city of Samaria
- But Ahab not only permitted this happen, he became a worshipper of Baal as well

The story of Elijah that we want to focus on this morning is found in **I Kings 18**

- The land is in the midst of a drought that has lasted for 3 years
- Elijah has been instructed by God to go to Ahab and tell him that the drought is about to come to an end as God was going to send rain
- But before that happens a battle needed to be staged, fought, and won

Setting the scene: (Call up Tom)

- Ahab has made it his mission to kill Elijah because the prophet has been calling out the people for turning away from God
 - And Elijah did not mince words
- But there is a man by the name of Obediah, not the prophet with the OT book that bears his name – he is the governor of Ahab’s palace
 - A believer in the one true God
 - A man on the inside of the enemy’s camp
 - A man who has risked his life to serve God by hiding 100 prophets of God when Jezebel was killing all that she could find (**I Kings 18:4**)
- Elijah approaches him and tells him to go tell the king that he is coming to see him
 - Obediah asks Elijah why he is sending him to Ahab when he knows the lengths Ahab has gone to find Elijah
 - He declares that he has been serving the Lord ever since he was a little boy and is not sure why this “punishment
- Elijah is undaunted because it is by God’s command that he must speak to the king (**I Kings 18:1**)

Tom read: I Kings 18:16-20

The account goes on to detail what happened at Mt. Carmel

- Elijah addressed the people telling them that they are going to settle the matter of who is god (**I Kings 18:21-22**)
- 2 bulls, 2 altars, 2 gods, but no fire
- Whichever god sends fire to consume their respective altar would be then known to be god
- The 450 prophets of Baal cried out and wailed and danced and cut themselves for 6 hours in vain
- Elijah even began to taunt them half-way through whipping them into a further frenzy
- Of course, nothing happened
- Then it was Elijah’s turn
 - He arranged 12 stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel

- Then gave instructions to fill 4 jars (each would have carried about 3 gallons of water – notice that means 12 gallons of water each time) and pour it on the altar
 - I can't help but wonder if perhaps Elijah was symbolically showing the people that through their disobedience and the worshipping of false gods they had been extinguishing the power of God for their lives and the nation just as water extinguishes fire?
- This was done 3 times for a total of approximately 36 gallons
 - The reason Elijah did this was so that there could be no possible explanation of the altar being consumed then by the supernatural power of God
- Then we read in **verse 36** that Elijah simply lifted his hands toward heaven and prayed a very simple prayer
 - Notice the contrast
 - God is not moved by our histrionics
 - God is moved by a sincere, humbled, and grateful heart
- And when the fire came, it consumed not only the sacrifice, but the wood of the altar, the stones, the soil, and all of the water in the trench that had been dug

This is a great victory for the prophet as God answered his prayer and the people returned to worship God (at least for a time)

But then...we come to the 19th chapter (we will look at that next week)

For this morning...

1. You must guard your hearts and your minds to keep God first in your life
 - a. When Jesus was asked what are the two greatest commandments in **Matt 22** he replied...
 - b. *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*
2. We must hold to the truth of God's laws and His word regardless of the what the culture or even the majority says
 - a. What the majority thinks or believes does not make it true
 - b. Truth is true and the Word of God is absolute truth
3. Even the strongest of Christians and believers must deal with the lies of satan and the animosity of the world
 - a. Jesus said to His disciples in **John 16:33** - *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*
4. Finally, God is always present, always hears our prayers, and will have the final victory

God moved through Elijah in a powerful and undeniable way

But how did Elijah respond to the next battle that he was confronted with?

Hint: He started poorly but he ended well.

How are you facing your battles this morning?

- God is always present
- He always hears our prayers
- And He will have the final victory! (someone say amen)