

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Mount Zion A.M.E. Church of New Brunswick, NJ

03/28/2021

Elijah: Prophet of Courage 1 Kings 18(1-4)5-18a

By Paul T. Bennett Church School Superintendent

Section Preview

- **Faithful Prophets**

- **3/7: Deuteronomy 18:15-22**

- Moses: Prophet of Deliverance – examining Moses' credibility as a prophet and God's call for integrity as a prophet

- **3/14: Joshua 5:13-6:5, 15-16,20**

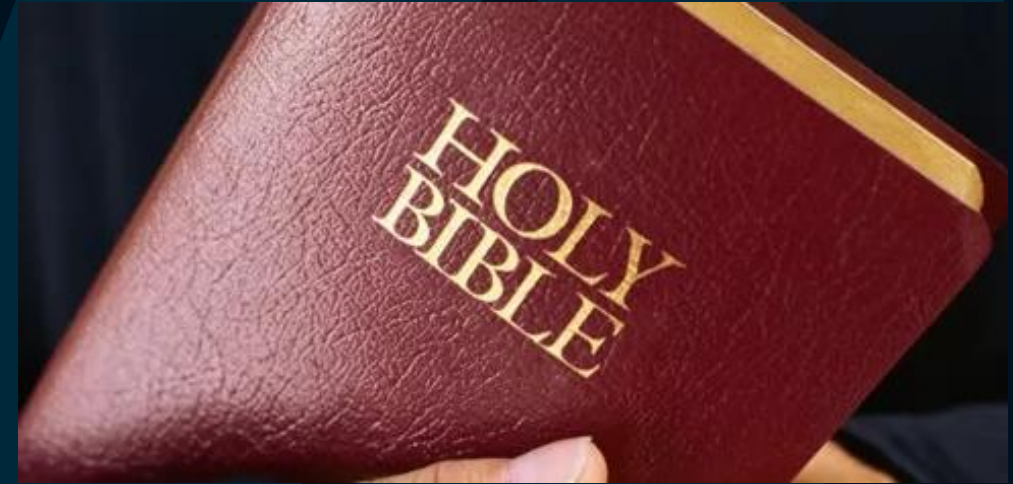
- Joshua: Prophet of Conquest – examining Joshua's fidelity to God's way of taking the city of Jericho, not deviating from God's explicit instructions

- **3/21: 2 Kings 22:14-20**

- Huldah: Prophet of Wisdom – examining Huldah's fidelity to God by speaking truth to power on the fate of Judah in their last days before their captivity

Lesson Text

2 Kings 2:9-10 (NKJV)



⁹ And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?"

Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

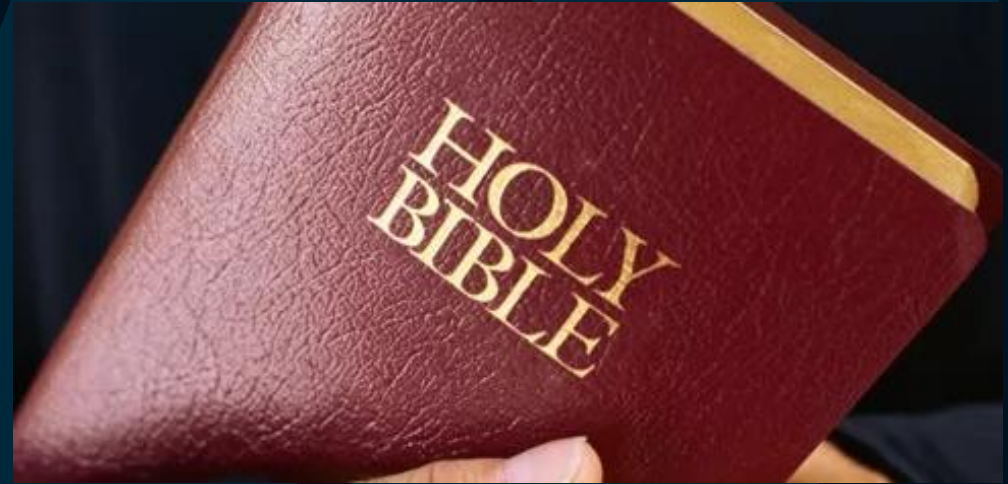
¹⁰ So he said, "**You have asked a hard thing**. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."

Background

- King Ahab served in Israel (Northern Kingdom) and like his father before him, did evil in the eyes of the LORD (1 Kings 16:29-34)
- Ahab married Jezebel – a Phoenician princess who had him bring in idol worship of Baal to Israel
 - Marriage to foreign women was forbidden – not because of race or ethnicity, but because of their values (Deuteronomy 7:3-4)
- For any prophets that spoke out against Ahab and Jezebel, they sought to kill them.
- Elijah prophesied a famine in Israel. The famine lasted 3 years and 6 months (Luke 4:25)
- Obadiah in this book is not the minor prophet Obadiah – who penned the Old Testament book
- After Elijah's prophecies come to pass, Jezebel, rather than accepting Elijah as a man of God but fights more diligently to have him killed
 - In the end, Ahab and Jezebel suffer horrific deaths

Lesson Text

1 Kings 18:1-5 (NKJV) Elijah's Message to Ahab

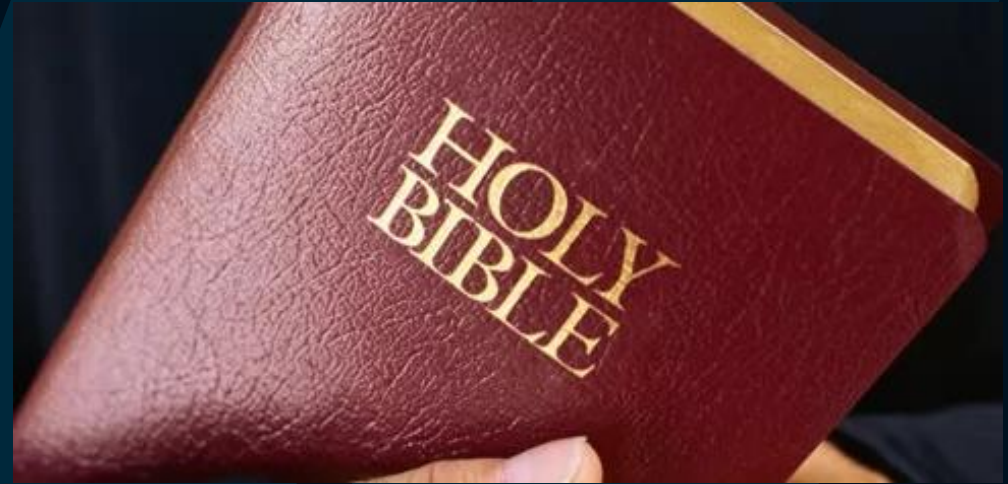


18 And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth."

² So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria. ³ And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was ^[a]in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly. ⁴ For so it was, while Jezebel ^[b]massacred the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) ⁵ And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses ⁴ and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock."

Lesson Text

1 Kings 18:6-8 (NKJV)



⁶ So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

⁷ Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is that you, my lord Elijah?"

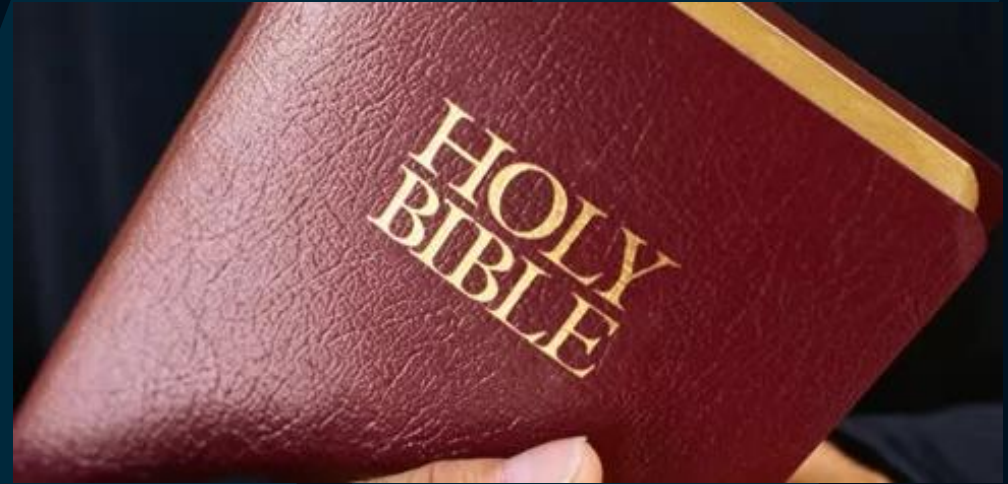
⁸ And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.' "

Commentary: Facing an adversary

- With the false god Baal representing rain and dew, Elijah's prophecy of drought was in direct opposition the false god the people had chosen
- After the pronouncement of the famine, God led Elijah to hide out – first brook of Cherith (1 Kings 17:2-7), then to a widow's house where he performed several miracles (1 Kings 17:8-24)
- King Ahab engaged in a manhunt for Elijah over a 3-year period with no success
- Unlike Huldah, Elijah has a faceoff with an adversarial king, whereas King Josiah of Judah was humble, faced the nations iniquity and responded to Huldah's words from God

Lesson Text

1 Kings 18:9-14(NKJV)



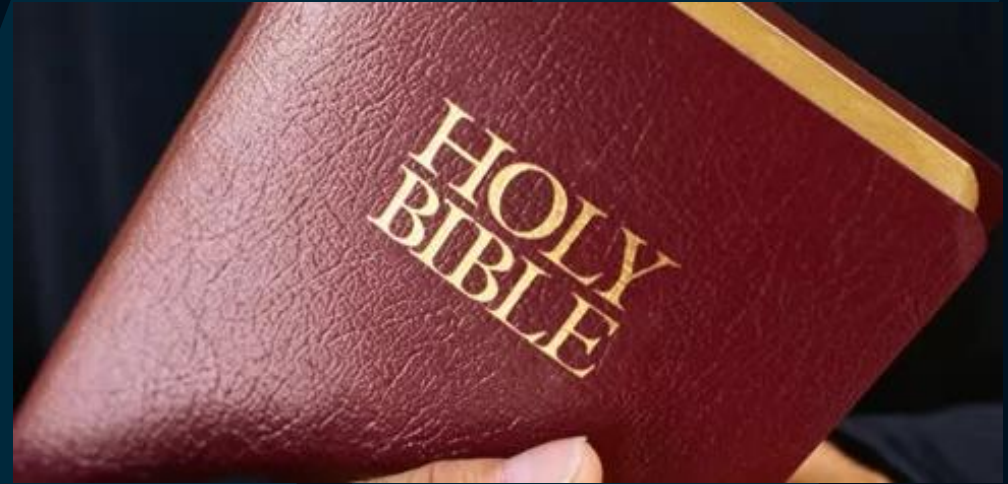
⁹ So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? ¹⁰ As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. ¹¹ And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here"'! ¹² And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth. ¹³ Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, how I hid one hundred men of the Lord's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? ¹⁴ And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here."' He will kill me!"

Commentary: Courage or Cowardice?

- Both Obadiah and Elijah operated from a fear of the LORD, but their approaches were very different.
- Obadiah used his position to protect the prophets but did so in secret. He was not willing to stand up to Jezebel & Ahab directly on behalf of God and the prophets – but did he have the authority to do so?
- Elijah showed boldness in proclaiming the famine, but heeded the voice of God to leave the land. And even after he returns to declare the famine over and to have 450 of the pagan prophets killed (1 Kings 18:18b-41), he still flees Jezebel when she plots revenge
- Fear is present in BOTH the coward and the courageous. It's not about the absence of fear but how you deal with it
- Can you truly serve God while being fearful? Can faith AND fear co-exist?
- Is there more than one way to serve a cause and not be considered a coward?

Lesson Text

1 Kings 18:15-18(NKJV)



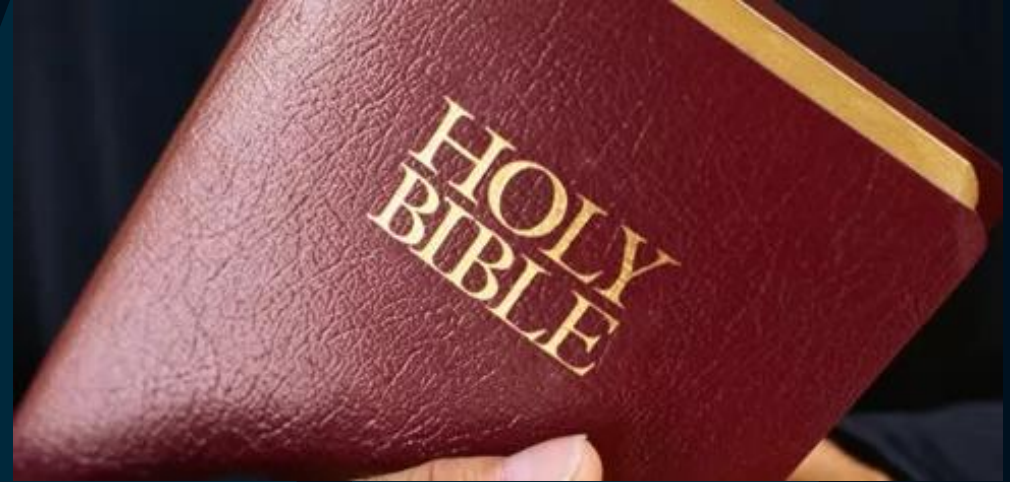
¹⁵ Then Elijah said, "As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today."

¹⁶ So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

¹⁷ Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"

¹⁸ And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals.

Scripture References



Refer to Slides

Church School Creed & Benediction

CREED

Our Church School must grow & grow
And we must help to make it so
Every member a **Christian**
Every Christian a **worker**
Every worker **trained**
A worker that **will not be ashamed**
This we ask in Jesus' name

-AMEN

BENEDICTION

We have come
We have studied
We have learned
So until our next coming together
To study God's word
May His rich blessings reside with you
And may His Grace be eternally yours

-AMEN