

1  **Dealing With Drought: Then Comes the Rain**

1 Kings 18

2  **Review**

- Ahab has become king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and marries Jezebel, a Phoenician princess and daughter of a former priest of Ashtoreth.
- By their influence, Israel has turned away from Jehovah God to worship Baal and Ashtoreth, Canaanite sky gods who controlled crops, fertility, and the weather.
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3  **Review**

- In order to judge them for their idolatry, and also to prove His power and reality over their false sky gods, God sends a drought.
- God announces the drought through his prophet Elijah.
- This drought has been going on for 3 ½ years now, and for most of this time God has been providing for Elijah's needs in some miraculous ways.
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4  **Review**

- Elijah's ministry is in two parts:
 - 1 Kings 17 – "Go hide yourself"
 - 1 Kings 18 – "Go show yourself"
- The faith developed in his private ministry would be necessary to give Elijah the courage for his public ministry.
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5  **Review**

- Now, God has commanded Elijah to go and show Himself to Ahab. Why? Because God desires to make His power known to Israel and thus bring rain on the land.
- Elijah confronts Ahab and makes him a proposition: A showdown on Mount Carmel, one of the most sacred locations in the ancient pagan world.

6  **Dealing with drought**

- This passage is significant to us as Christians because it teaches us how to deal with spiritual drought.
- Have you ever experienced spiritual drought in your own life?
 - A lack of the water of the Word of God
 - A lack of hearing from God
 - A lack of growth or joy in your spiritual life
 - A lack of passion for lost souls or for your Bible
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7  **God's desire**

- God's desire for Israel is the same desire that He has for us today: to end the drought by showing his power and bringing rain to the land. And that is the theme of 1 Kings 18.
- *After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth."* (1Ki 18:1)
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8  **Dealing with drought, pt 1**

- 1) Counter disobedience with faith

- Let your trials grow into faith
- Let your faith enable obedience
- Stamp out idolatry with glad-hearted obedience
- 2) Look for water in the Word instead of the world
 - Rely on Christ instead of emotional, intellectual, or worship “experiences”

9 **Dealing with drought, pt 2**

- 3) Stop limping
 - Stop trying to fill the void in your life left by a drought of the Word and Spirit of God in your life by emotional sensationalism or intellectual stimulation
 - Stop trying to impress God or get God’s attention by flesh-empowered acts of devotion
- 4) Build an altar
 - Give back to God that which consumes your time, your attention, or your affections more than Christ

10 **DEALING WITH DROUGHT: THEN COMES THE RAIN**

1 Kings 18

11 **The contest**

- Elijah proposes a contest: him vs. the 850 prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth.
- The place: Mt. Carmel
- The rules: Each party will build an altar and offer a sacrifice to their god. Whichever god sends fire from heaven to devour the sacrifice first will be declared the one true god.

12 **The contest**

- What Elijah is doing, then, is proposing a contest that is:
 - On Baal’s terms (a contest of mastery between gods)
 - On Baal’s turf (at the pagan shrine on Mount Carmel)
 - In Baal’s territory (the sky, lightning)

13 **The sacrifice**

- The fact that the sacrifice that is being offered is a bull is significant since bulls were sacred to El, Ashtoreth, and Baal.
- Bulls and bull motifs even found their way into the artwork and statues of Baal and Ashtoreth that would have been present at the altar of Baal there on Mt. Carmel.

14 **Removing all doubt**

- All of these factors combine in what is far more than a string of fascinating coincidences.
- By the time this contest was over, all of Israel would know for a fact who was truly god: Jehovah, or Baal.

15 **Dancing and limping**

- The prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth dance around the altar, mutilating themselves and crying aloud, trying to get their god’s attention. But no-one answers their cries.
- This spectacle goes on from 6AM to nearly 3PM, and still there is no fire from heaven.
- *And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention. (1Ki 18:29)*

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- 16 **1 Kings 18:30-33**
- *Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down. Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, "Israel shall be your name," and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD.*
- 17 **The altar**
- Elijah goes about rebuilding the altar of God that had once stood on Mount Carmel.
 - He rebuilds it out of twelve un-hewn stones, according to God's instructions to Moses in Exodus 20:24-26.
 - Also note that he uses twelve stones to build the altar, to intentionally remind Israel that their disunity was not part of God's original plan.
- 18 **1 Kings 18:30-33**
- *And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood."*
- 19 **1 Kings 18:34-35**
- *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. And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water.*
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- 20 **5) Stop taking credit**
- This water was probably actually salt water, since they were relatively near the sea and other water would have been difficult to find because of the drought.
 - In doing this, Elijah ruled out all possibilities other than supernatural intervention.
 - True revival will only come when we stop feeling like we need to take the credit for where we are spiritually.
- 21 **5) Stop taking credit**
- God's desire for salvation is that He alone get the glory from it. This includes all aspects of sanctification – not just justification.
 - *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph 2:8-9)*
 - *Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (Gal 3:3)*
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- 22 **1 Kings 18:36-37**
- *And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God,*

and that you have turned their hearts back."

23 **5) Stop taking credit**

- Elijah's prayer is completely God-centric.
- He asks God specifically to answer his prayer, not so that Elijah won't look like a fool for having supported and followed a powerless God, but because he wants their hearts to be turned back toward God.
- Elijah gives God the credit for revival instead of taking it himself.

24 **The sacrifice consumed**

- When God consumed the sacrifice, he not only took the bull, he took the stones (which don't usually burn) and consumed the water that filled the trench around the altar.
- It is possible that the Israelites were expecting to see a display of lightning, and got something much more powerful instead.

25 **6) Kill the idolatry**

- *And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there. (1Ki 18:40)*
- Genuine obedience is always accompanied by genuine repentance.

26 **The end of the prophets of Baal**

- Elijah takes the 850 prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth, and, in an act which many would consider intolerant, he slaughters them at the brook Kishon.
- As harsh as this act seems to us by our culture's standards, it was totally in keeping with the law of God and was necessary to purge the land of its wickedness.
- Today it serves as a reminder of how seriously God takes our idolatry.

27 **The end of the prophets of Baal**

- The prophets of Baal had assisted in leading the entire nation astray from God.
- They and all of Israel with them, including Ahab and Jezebel, had had more than ample opportunity to repent of their sins and turn back to Jehovah.
- The application for us today is not violence against unbelievers: it is a willingness to purge our life of whatever stands between us and Christ.

28 **1 Kings 18:41-43**

- *And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain." So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again," seven times.*

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29 **1 Kings 18:44-45**

- *And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'" And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.*

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30 **7) Wait for rain**

- After all of this, God does not send immediate rain as we might expect him to.
- Instead, Elijah has to pray seven times to God before his prayer is answered.

- Throughout these verses there is a constant cycle of abasement and expectancy – Elijah is humbling himself before God and then he is waiting for the promised renewal.

31 **7) Wait for rain**

- When God sends renewal He does not always do it in our timing or in our way.
- Even after we have purged from our hearts the idolatry and iniquity that has cut us off from fellowship, we must wait for God to “send the rain.”
- This is one key reason that our faith must not be rooted in emotions.

32 **7) Wait for rain**

- But when the rain comes, it really COMES.
- *And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." ...And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.*
- We must be confident in the fact that God desires to have close communion with us and to make His power known.

33 **1 Kings 18:45-46**

- *And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.*

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34 **8) Gird up your loins**

- The KJV words this last verse:
- *And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. (1Ki 18:46)*
- This is a phrase that is used throughout Scripture to denote readiness for a great task that is before you.
- Elijah is supernaturally enabled to outrun even the king’s chariot.

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35 **8) Gird up your loins**

- When we have purged the idolatry from our lives that is hindering fellowship, and the renewal and revival we need finally comes, we need to be prepared to use that newfound joy in God to accomplish great things for Him.
- Idolatry purged always brings supernatural vitality.
- God intends that vitality to be used in obedience through faith, which will in turn bring further renewal.

36 **Taking it home**

- 1) Counter disobedience with faith
 - Let your trials grow into faith
 - Let your faith enable obedience
 - Stamp out idolatry with glad-hearted obedience
- 2) Look for water in the Word instead of the world
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your life by emotional sensationalism or intellectual stimulation

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- 4) Build an altar

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38  **Taking it home**

- 5) Stop taking credit

– God's desire for our salvation as well as our renewal is that no man be able to get the glory from it.

- 6) Kill the idolatry

– Pray that God will teach you to take your own idolatry as seriously as does He.

– For fellowship to be restored, we must be willing not only to sacrifice that which we love more than Christ, but to die to the attitudes of self which are the true root of our idolatry.

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39  **Taking it home**

- 7) Wait for rain

– Renewal and revival will come in God's timing, not ours

– This is why our faith must be rooted in Christ and in Scripture instead of our own fickle fervor

- 8) Gird up your loins

– God sends revival and renewal so that we would serve Him

– Examine yourself to make sure your unwillingness to serve God is not holding you back from a right relationship with Him

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