

Chapter Twenty Four – Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

At last, God told Elijah that he was sending the rain, and Elijah should go back to Samaria and tell King Ahab that he and his father had caused all the trouble. On the way back, he met Obadiah, the person-in-charge of King Ahab's palace. Unlike King Ahab, he was faithful to God from his youth. When Queen Jezebel ordered the killing of God's prophets, he hid them in caves and supported them with food and water. Obadiah was thrilled when he met Elijah.

Elijah said to him, "Take your master here to meet me." Obadiah could not believe his ears because he would be risking his life if he did that.

"I have always been devout to God. King Ahab will put me to death if he cannot find you here. How can you do this to me?" Obadiah said.

"I promise you that I will stay right here. And I am certainly meeting him today," Elijah promised.

Obadiah gave in and brought King Ahab to Elijah. When King Ahab saw Elijah, he was very angry. He thought that Elijah had brought the drought to his land.

"It is you and your father who cause all the trouble. Why should God take care of you when you worship Baal? Bring your 450 prophets of Baal and all your people and meet me on Mount Carmel. There we will see the true God," Elijah challenged King Ahab.

So, all the people and the prophets of Baal went up Mount Carmel. Only Jezebel was missing as she was away in her country-house. When they were ready, Elijah stood up and said, "Today we will see the true God. Let the prophets of Baal build their altar and I will build mine. Put the wood on the altar and lay the sacrifice on it but put no fire. I will do the same. The God who answers by fire and burns the sacrifice is the true God and we will all follow him."

All the people shouted, "Very well, let it be as you say."

Elijah told the prophets of Baal to begin first. They built the altar and laid the sacrifice on the wood. Then they began to dance around and to shout, "Baal, Baal, hear us." But nothing happened. Elijah said, "Shout louder. Perhaps he is asleep. If he is a god, he will hear you." They danced wilder and wilder. They even cut themselves with their knives. They shouted louder and louder but there was no fire. When they gave up, Elijah built his altar and laid the sacrifice. He even took some water and poured it over the offering. Then he prayed aloud, "Lord God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bring back all these people who have strayed away from you. Send fire from heaven to consume this sacrifice."

As soon as he had ended his prayer, fire came from heaven and burnt up not only the sacrifice but also the wood, the water and even the stones. When the people saw this, they fell on their knees to worship God saying, "The Lord is God, the Lord is God."

Elijah asked King Ahab what to do with the prophets of Baal who had deceived them. The people all cried out, "Put them to death."

Then Elijah told them to hurry home as God was sending the rain and so it happened.



The killing of Baal's prophets

Questions:

1. How did Obadiah show his faith in God?
2. Why was Obadiah afraid to bring King Ahab to Elijah?
3. Why did God send Elijah to confront King Ahab?
4. What was wrong with the way that the worshippers of Baal prayed?
5. How did Elijah make fun of the prophets of Baal?
6. How do you think we should pray to God?