

**Elijah and Elisha Class 6**  
**1 Kings 18:1-16**

**As we have proceeded through the text, we have seen the conflict between Ahab and Elijah, between Baal and Yahweh escalate in intensity and scope. This week we see the King and the Prophet come face to face and resolve to settle things once and for all...or at least that's what they each think.**

**We read that “many days have passed and the drought has lasted around three years”. See Luke 4::25 and James 5:17 as they mention a total period of three and a half years or half of a sabbatical cycle. See Lev 25:1ff. I do not believe this is random, but one of those intentional assertions of Yahweh's sovereignty and signatures...that this is due to his assertion of power. He has sent his prophet to confront Ahab with his violation of the covenant. He has confronted him in ways that intentionally confront and challenge Baal's supposed areas of strength in realms thought to be Baal's strongholds.**

**The vegetation was so sparse the animals had no grazing. Assyrian records relate that Ahab had 2000 chariots...so grazing was essential to maintaining military power. So he sent Obadiah to search while he went the other direction. Obadiah's name means Servant or slave of Yahweh...and that is exactly what he turns out to be. He has acted to preserve Yahweh's prophets from the murderous Jezebel who had begun a campaign to wipe out the prophets of Yahweh from the land.**

**Obadiah, the governor or steward of the King's palace, is not the same man as the prophet Obadiah, though their names mean the same thing. He had acted to preserve 100 prophets faithful to Yahweh in a cave. This was Jezebel's act of frustration at not being able to get**

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**her hands on Elijah. Further, with each passing day her embarrassment grew at Baal's seeing impotence to overcome the curse pronounced by Elijah.**

**Elijah shows himself to Obadiah and tells him to go announce his presence in the kingdom to the King. Obadiah protests that bearing such news to the king could cost him his life, especially if the Spirit of God, the wind of God, the glory or Shekinah swept him away...as would ultimately happen to Elijah in 2 Kings 2.**

**He asks the same question the widow of Zarephath asked at the death of her son...what have I done to deserve this?**

**So Elijah swears an oath in the name of the Lord...an oath of malediction...or the pronouncement of a curse for non-performance. So Obadiah goes and tells Ahab and the king comes to meet Elijah.**

**Vv.17-19 When the king sees Elijah, he asks him a question...“Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” In Jewish judicial action the accusation will be adjudicated and someone found guilty...So Elijah takes up the challenge and turns the charge back on the king. Someone will be found guilty of the charge. God is witness...a charge has been made...now it will be determined who in fact is guilty...the accuser or the defendant.**

**A Proposal is put forward by Elijah, the accused, as to how to determine guilt or innocence. Let the court be gathered. Let us see who in fact represents the true and living God and who is the real ‘troubler of Israel’. So the 450 prophets of Baal are to be assembled and the 400 prophets of Asherah...who eat at Jezebel's table...at the kingdom's expense...while the people of Israel starve**

**and while even the armed forces are put at risk...the political class seems to be doing all right.**

**Turn to Deuteronomy 13...terms of lease on the Promised Land**

**Let's meet at Mount Carmel...Why Mount Carmel?**

*Where is Mount Carmel? The ridge of Mount Carmel points in a northwesterly direction for thirty miles, ending in the Mediterranean Sea. It is thick with vegetation which is noted in Is 35:2; Jer 50:19; Amos 1:2 and Song of Sol. 7:5. Because of its unique geography it extracts the rainfall from the air masses at a far greater rate than the lower elevations that surround it. Its proximity to the sea also guarantees it regular and abundant dewfall.*

*Why is it important? The contest takes place on Mount Carmel because it was, once again, Baal's home turf. This was the most favorable venue from Baalism's perspective. If Baal failed to come through in a place of abundant rainfall and exceeding fertility...what possible excuse could he have?*

*The famine had already called into question Baal's power and raised questions about whether he really existed. On Mount Carmel surely Baal was given every advantage. Also it was convenient to Samaria. It would be easy to get all of the prophets of Baal there and it would be easy for the news of the outcome of the contest to be spread far and wide throughout the kingdom.*

*Mount Carmel creates the most fertile farmland in the Promised Land. It forms a watershed that feeds the Kishon River or Brook...it is the place where the Romans caught water and channeled it to their capital at Caesarea Maritima...the viaduct still stands along the coast that brought the water from Carmel to Caesarea.*

*In this one prophet against the combined forces of pagan religion, corrupt secular power, and military power we see a foreshadowing of what awaits the quintessential prophet...our Lord's battle leading up to and including the Cross.*