

Homework 1 Kings 19

Vv.16-21 The King and The Prophet meet

The king accuses the prophet of troubling Israel. He has troubled all of Israel but he has most certainly troubled the king. Elijah accuses the king of being the troubler of Israel, and ties the drought to the king and his family's introduction of Baalism. This is exactly what God promised in Lev 26:4 and Deut 28:12. Because the king feels confident of prevailing in the proposed trial, he makes no move against Elijah, but shows up for the showdown.

Vv.22-25 The Committed and the Uncommitted

The king has gathered the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah and the crowd gathers in this 'high place' for both faiths. This is a battle royale! Elijah rebukes the crowd and begins a play on words...Notice in the English translation the word limping used both for the doublemindedness of the people and for the dance of the prophets of Baal. This is intentional and in Hebrew the same word is used for both...pasha...often translated as waver or sway, a figure of scorn and instability. It is a term of mocking and derision...in both cases. The word for opinions occurs only here in the OT. This word is also used for Mephibosheth who became crippled or a limper.

Ironically, the only ones with real zeal and confidence are the prophets of Baal and Asherah and Elijah...everyone else is uncommitted and hedging their bets, playing the odds. Elijah is convinced that there is no God but Yahweh and proceeds on that conviction. Ahab may be wondering whether Yahweh really is more powerful than Baal but at this point cannot change horses.

Vv.26-29 The Prophets of Baal their shot

Now the mocking and ridicule begins in earnest. Their antics, ritual, liturgy, and confidence are all held up to scorn and

Elijah and Elisha Class 7
1 Kings 18:20-46

ridicule as hour after hour passes without response from Baal. Baal himself is mocked by the prophet as he questions... "Where is Baal?" Is he deaf, daydreaming, in the john, on a trip, or perhaps he is sleeping...the prophet begins to posit excuses for Baal and his lack of performance. Even the writer mocks them, saying as midday passed they 'raved on.'

Vv.30-40 The Elijah steps forward

Elijah's behavior is in direct contrast from the prophets of Baal...they are frenzied, he is not...they are dancing and jumping around and he is not...they are noisy but he is not...

Both Elijah and Baal's prophets really believe...but only one God is the true God. This reality is incredibly unpopular today. That things are true or false...that things are right or wrong...that things are good or evil, borders on hate speech in today's thinking.

He ups the ante by having the sacrifice doused with water not once, not twice but three times so that the wood is soaked, the trench around the rebuilt altar...presumably to catch the blood of the sacrifice is full of water.

Elijah prays a covenantal prayer and Yahweh answers and the fire falls from Heaven as in Lev 9:24; 1 Chr 21:26; 2 Chr 7:1. See also 2 Kings 1:10,12 and Lk 9:54 for an incorrect Elijah renez connection from the disciples.

The day in which Elijah lived is different in some ways than ours. Deuteronomy is the constitutional document that governs life in the land. Deuteronomy establishes the life of God's people in the Promised Land, in God's presence, in his glory. This means that the rules that apply there are the rules of the theocracy. This is different than the rules that applied during the Patriarchal period of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in terms of relations between Israelites and their neighbors, between followers of Yahweh and the worshippers of other gods, and the rules that apply in terms of life within the community. Under this administration of Torah, false prophets were to be adjudicated according to the principle of Deuteronomy 13:1ff. This trial is a

Elijah and Elisha Class 7

1 Kings 18:20-46

capital crime, a death penalty case, and everybody knew it. The king and all of the prophets of Baal were certain they knew how it would turn out...but they were incorrect...in other words...they were dead wrong. As Yahweh executes his justice and displays his glory in the fire falling from Heaven, the death sentence is pronounced and Elijah calls for Israel sitting in judgment to execute the sentence and all the prophets of Baal and Asherah are slain at the Kishon Brook or River.

Vv.41-46 The Drought Ends

With his enemies dead, Elijah demonstrates one last time that Yahweh is Lord. It is time for rain. He counsels Ahab to hurry home so he will not be caught in the rain. When the rains come, the Lord's victory is complete. Yahweh sustains and protects his prophets, while Baal let his die. Yahweh feeds the orphans and widows and raises the dead, while Baal let the needy suffer and requires Anat to raise him from death. Yahweh can send fire or rain from Heaven, but Baal cannot respond to his most valiant worshippers. A god like Baal is no god at all. Yahweh not Baal is God...the rain is evidence that Yahweh is absolutely sovereign over nature, national, international, and human affairs.

Once again we see that the first command is really a promise in disguise...Thou shalt have no other gods before/beside me...what is the promise?