

Who Thinks You are Trouble?

1Kings 18:5-18

Some of the most courageous individuals anyone could ever encounter are the prophets of the Old Testament. One of these is highlighted in today's lesson. He is Elijah, a man who was used by God to confront one of Israel's most wicked kings, Ahab, and his ruthless wife, Jezebel. The times demanded someone who would not back down in the face of brazen defiance of the true God of Israel, and Elijah was that man. He did not receive his courage from an event or circumstance it came from God.

Today's Scripture covers the early portion of the ministry of the prophet Elijah (who prophesied about 869 to 838 BC). He proclaimed the word of the Lord during one of the most critical periods of Old Testament history. His ministry began after the split of the nation into two kingdoms (931 BC): Israel (the northern kingdom and Judah (the southern kingdom).

The reign of King Ahab in northern Israel (874-853 BC) was characterized by economic prosperity, at least at the outset (1Kings 22:39; compare 2 Chronicles 18:1). It was also a time of spiritual poverty (1 Kings 18:17-40). Idol worship became more prevalent when Ahab married Jezebel. She was the daughter of King Sion and a devout worshipper of the god Baal (1Kings 16:31; 18:3, 19).

There are times in history where God is looking for someone who will trust him implicitly and believe that he will do what he says. Let us see what that kind of resolve looks like and how it can cause someone to say of that person, "Are you that troublemaker?"

I. Ahab and Obadiah (1Kings 18:5-6)

A. Surviving a Famine (v.5)

1. Obadiah is a name used to identify 12 different men in the Old Testament in addition to the book with the same name.
2. Obadiah is a man of great courage given that he is a man of faith in God working for an evil idolater. (v.3)
3. Ahab is a king who rules during a famine but is more concerned about his animals than his people. (v.5)

B. Surveying the Land (v.6)

1. Ahab realized how difficult it would be for one man to cover that extent of territory.
2. He proceeded to divide the northern kingdom between the two of them.

II. Elijah and Obadiah (1Kings 18:7-15)

A. Unexpected Meeting (v.7)

1. Obadiah and Elijah cross paths doing the work of service—Elijah served the widow at Zarephath (1Kings 17:8-24) Obadiah obeyed the king.
2. Obadiah's question reflects some measure of doubt that this was really Elijah.

B. Unwelcome Order (vv.8-14)

1. Elijah confirmed that he was speaking to Obadiah as part of a command to return to Ahab.
2. Obadiah very candidly confronts Elijah with a question as to his sin for requesting such an order as this (v.9)

3. Obadiah explains the magnitude of the search for Elijah by the king and the consequences of not returning to the king without Elijah. (v.10)
 4. Obadiah feared that if he did not come back with Elijah he would be killed by the king. (v.11-12a)
 5. Obadiah repeated to Elijah the danger he was putting him in (v.14).
- C. Unwavering Promise (v.15)
1. Elijah commands Obadiah's attention with his prophetic announcement "As the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve..."
 2. The additional words whom I serve show the intimate relationship of Elijah and God.
- III. Elijah and Ahab (1Kings 18:16-18)
- A. Antagonistic Reception (vv.16-17)
1. Elijah's words and oath satisfied Obadiah; he goes to tell the king
 2. Upon meeting Elijah, Ahab declares, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"
- B. Honest Answer (v.18)
1. Elijah did not back down in the face of the king's anger
 2. The famine had come on Israel because of the idolatrous practices that had been initiated by Ahab's father Omri.