

## True Power, True Trouble, and True Escape from It

**Wednesday, June 22, 2022 ▫ Read 1Kings 18:1–18**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What came to whom when (v1)? What the LORD tell Elijah to do? What did the LORD say that He would do? What is the condition of Ahab's capital city (v2)? Whom had Obadiah called to do what (v3)? Whom did Obadiah fear? How much? Who had done what in v4? But what had Obadiah done? What project was Obadiah in the middle of in v5–6? What was Ahab's plan? Whom does Elijah meet in v7? How does Obadiah react? What does Elijah tell him to do in v8? What does Obadiah think will be the certain outcome (v9)? What actions and behavior of Ahab bring Obadiah to this conclusion (v10)? What does Obadiah fear will happen now (v12)? For what does Obadiah consider this to be a poor repayment (v12–13)? How does Elijah reassure him in v15? What does Ahab say to Elijah in v17? How does Elijah answer (v18)? Who has troubled Israel?*

**Where does man's troubles come from?** 1Kings 18:1–18 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these eighteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that wickedness is the troubler of man, because a holy and just God is sinful man's greatest trouble.

Ahab and Israel are in great trouble of famine. Elijah is being hunted by the Ahab (v10). Obadiah is afraid of being killed by Ahab. How can these troubles be resolved?

The Word of the LORD is in control. Ahab seems to think that Elijah is in control (v17), but Elijah is under the direction and control of the Word (v1a). It is this Word that has withheld rain for three years, causing a famine (v2). It is this Word, which will restore rain again (v1b). By comparison, Ahab is helpless to track down the prophet (v10), and has to mount a nationwide campaign just to track down grass (v5–6).

It is the LORD Who must be feared. Obadiah feared Ahab's sword (v9, 12b). But he feared the LORD more (v3, 12c), which is why he saved the lives of a hundred true prophets (v4, 13). His fear of the LORD was not that slavish fear that shrinks from punishment, but a fear that believes that God is, and that God is a rewarder of those who seek Him (cf. Heb 11:6). So Obadiah pleads this reward, when he says, "was it not reported to my lord what I did?" in v13.

Therefore the commandment of the LORD must be obeyed. Ahab had not feared the LORD, and Ahab had not obeyed the LORD. Therefore, Ahab had only Himself to thank for his and Israel's troubles. He wanted to call Elijah the troubler of Israel (v17), but that trouble didn't start in the mouth of the prophet but in the disobedience of things. "I have not troubled Israel, buy you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals" (v18). Our sin, and its consequences, is our great trouble. So, we are our own greatest troulers.

Sin and its guilt are our great trouble. Ahab thinks the famine was severe trouble (v2), but the fate of the prophets of Baal in the next episode should have disabused him of that mistaken thinking. Whatever our troubles are in this world of misery, they are a reminder that our sin is the great troubler, and our guilt is our greatest trouble. If like Ahab we fail to take the hint, then we will fail to see and receive the wonderful grace of God. For that is the story here. The Word is being preserved. The LORD still maintains to Israel His primary prophet Elijah. And He even maintained, through Obadiah, a hundred other prophets. His Word persisted, even with such a stubbornly wicked people. May His patience lead us to repentance! God forbid that we would be stubborn against His mercifully extending unto us His Word.

What situation feels out of your control? What "powerful" people are really out of control? What troubles do you have? What do they remind you are your real trouble? What is your hope in it?

*Sample prayer: Lord, we praise and thank You for maintaining Your Word to us. We are tempted to consider those who rebuke and correct us as our troulers. But truly, as with Ahab, we are our own troulers. Forgive us our sins, and forgive us our dullness to Your Word and resistance to Your Word. Grant that we would fear You greatly and look to You for our safety and blessing, which we ask in Christ, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH434 "A Debtor to Mercy Alone"**

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First, Kings, 18 verses 1 through 18. These are the words of God and it came to pass after many days. That the Word of Yahweh came to Elijah in the third year saying, go present yourself to Ahab and I will send rain on the earth. So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab, and there was a severe famine in Samaria and they have caught called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house now, over die, a feared Yahweh greatly for.

So, it was while Jezebel massacred the prophets of Yahweh. That Obadiah had taken 100 prophets and hidden them 50 to a cave and had fed them with bread and water. And they have had said to Obadaya go into the land to all the springs of water. And to all the brooks, perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive so that we will not have to kill any livestock.

So they divided the land between them to explore it. They have went one way by himself and Evidaiah went another way by himself. Now is Obadiah was on his way suddenly Elijah met him and he recognized him and fell on his face and said, is that you my Lord?

Elijah and he answered him. It is I Go tell your master Elijah's here. So he said, how have I sinned that you were delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab to kill me as you all for your God lives. There is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you and when he then when they said he is not here, he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you.

Now you say go tell your master Elijah's here and then she'll come to pass this as soon as I'm gone from you that the Spirit of Yahweh will carry you to a place. I do not know. So when I go until Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me but all your servant to feared.

You always from my youth, Was it not reported to my Lord? What I did When Jezebel killed the prophets of Yahweh. How I hid 100 men of Yahweh's, prophets, 50 to a cave and fed them with bread and water. And now you say go, tell your master Elijah is here.

He will kill me. Then Elijah said, as Yahweh of hosts lives before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today. So but I went to meet a heaven and told him and Ahab went to me to Elijah and it happened when Ahab saw allijah, that Ahab said to him is that you owe troubler of Israel.

And he answered. I have not troubled Israel. But you and your father's house have and that you have forsaken, the commandments of Yahweh and have followed the Bayels. Now, therefore send, sorry and have followed the way else. That's it, since this reading of God's inspired and and Aaron twerked.

Well, where do men's troubles come from? The ultimate answer is man's troubles. Come from ourselves because we are sinners. And we provoke the wrath of God and his word. That demands that he be feared and he alone. Be worshiped in the EB obeyed. He is faithful to himself. His faithful to his word.

And so our sin and our guilt is our, as our great troubler man wants to blame other things. However, Ahab didn't understand or would refuse to acknowledge. Perhaps was a better way to say it. The fact that the Lord and his word are in control of all things at all times.

And so, Ahab went after Elijah, as he says in verse 17, he thought Elijah was the one troubling Israel. He thought Elijah was the one making it not rain for three years. He thought Elijah was the one who had brought this very severe famine to Samaria And so Ahab was ready, wanted to do everything that he possibly could to hunt down and kill Elijah.

In fact, he was willing to sacrifice what was left of his infebled kingdom, that weakened as they were by famine to go to war with anybody, who hid Elijah from him. And so, as I would, I have said, Ahab had gone from nation to nation, seeking an Elijah. And if they said he's not here he would require of them and oath.

It's very, it's kind of a similar dynamic to what at least ostensibly or is the claim. Russia is so upset about as these oaths that exist between the NATO countries and the possibility of Ukraine or Finland or so forth entering entering NATO. One of the ways that countries interact with one.

Another is by swearing us and the breaking of the oath, then would be an act of of war. And so, when Obadiah tells Elijah about these oaths, that Ahab had been. Requiring is basically saying if it turned out that one of these nations was in cahoots with you, Ahab was willing to take the armies of Israel and go to war against the nation over that.

That's why I overdias said Freight. So Ahab thinks Elijah's in control but Elijah's not in control. It's the word of the Lord that is in control, and may, maybe Ahab was unimpressed by the word of the Lord, because his, his wife Jezebel whom he had gotten from FBL. The king of the Cydonians.

She had successfully slaughtered as as Ahab apparently, thought all of the prophets of Yahweh except Elijah and so if God's word in those prophets mouths and protected them, perhaps it's not so much the word itself, but Elijah who is powerful and and doing this to him. So Ahab is really messed up.

Of course, he doesn't know that the God who uses Ravens to feed his, his prophet by the brook Kerrit that bring like clockwork bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening. The God who uses a widow who's been of flower and jar of oil, don't run out until they're rained on the earth.

He can even use a, a government official high up like Obadiah to hide and feed with bread and water. A hundred profits and he can even use the wicked preference of a king of the lives of beasts, over the lives of prophets. Doesn't seem to have been bothered at all, that his wife was slaughtering prophets, but he didn't want any of the animals to die Would not want.

We wouldn't want to have to kill any of those animals to eat them. Especially the particular animals that were symbols of the power of the great bail. The new God, whose temple and image. That Ahab had set up in Samaria. The capital city in the center of the Northern Kingdom, and you remember there was the Jeroboam worship at the northern and southern borders of, of the northern kingdom.

So he prepared, he preferred the lives of animals, over the lives of men and particularly the lives of animals who are associated with bail, over the lives of men who were particularly associated with Yahweh and what does he do? He says all right Obadiah you go one way, I'll go another So Ahab's not going to be with Obadiah to see what he does.

He says make sure you go to all the springs of water in your section and what is that? That's God. Providentially using King Ahab to send Obadiah, exactly to the places. He needs to go to collect the rations for the hundred profits that he has hidden in the cave.

So, Ahab is in one half of the northern kingdom, tracking down water, and whatever he can get water and hopefully, grain, or grass, or whatever fodder for his livestock. And in the other half of the kingdom God has used Ahab to send overdaya to track down water and rations that Ahab thinks are for livestock.

But the really for the profits that Jezebel his wife has not been able to kill the Word of the Lord is always in control of everything. It uses Ravens. It uses widows. It uses government officials. It even uses wicked kings, trying to make wicked plans and carry them out.

And the reality is that they can only ultimately carry out that which God intends for good. The Word of Yahweh is in control, Ahab is helpless to track down the profit. And if Obadiah had not been given Elijah's word that the spirit was going to make sure he met ahead today.

Oh, but I understood, You always in total control and a hat or Elijah might be whisked away by the spirit as he later would be carried up in and to heaven. So the word of you always controlling, it's Yahweh. Who must be feared, open. Audio was afraid of Ahab sword for the prophets that he hid and even for himself.

He needed assurances. If he was gonna deliver the message that, that Elijah is here waiting for you. He didn't want to be killed by had sword but he feared something or rather someone more whom did Obadiah appear. Even more than Ahab, even more than Jezebel. This text says, he feared yahweh greatly when it introduces him to us.

And then up in verse 3, and then when he is talking to Elijah, he describes something that he learned as a lad. We don't know who Obadiah's daddy is, but God blessed Obadiah's daddy. Daddy is almost certain that his daddy was the one who had taught him to fear Yahweh.

If not, then his daddy was even more merciful or God was even more merciful to his daddy and was gracious to bring his son into the knowledge of the Lord, even apart from him. But Obadiah says, from my youth I have feared you. All right, This is the ordinary way of God's working.

My dear children that you would learn to fear Him. Now, that it would not just be something that we do a couple of times a day, or one great day a week, but that you would learn to know, God, as your God. God, as the mighty God, whose Word rules, all things that God, who is to be feared, more than any of the enemies on earth who can only kill your body.

But God, who would rightly destroy body and soul in hell? And yet has given himself has given his himself in the person of his son. Whom he gave that we might be brought to fear Him with that, holy fear, that reverential fear, which finds in him. All power, all goodness, all purpose, all pleasure.

And we're so amazed at the greatness of who He is and the goodness of who he is, that we would want to do anything that would please such a God as he is and hate to do anything that would displease such a such a God as he is. You need to learn the fear of the Lord, the knowledge of his greatness and His goodness.

Now so that when you come later into your life, you're having feared him from your youth will bloom in, in your maturity, in your fearing him. Greatly that each of you. My dear sons and daughters. What be a man or a woman of such conviction and courage as Obadiah here in 1st Kings 18.

So the word of Yahweh is in control and it is Yahweh. Who must be feared and therefore, the commandment, the commandment of Yahweh must be obeyed. We're getting close now, to answering the question of, what was the trouble in Israel? Ahab thought Elijah was the troublemaker of Israel happened when they have saw Elijah?

That Ahab said to him is that you a troublemaker of Israel. Now I know what it's like to receive this because if you are in a declining denomination and you were a faithful minister, there are definitely opinions at Presbytery about who the troublemaker of the Presbytery is. But the fact of the matter is that it is our sin, which provokes the wrath of God, for unbelievers and even for a believer, it is your sin that either provokes, the discipline of God.

In a particular way, the Lord disciplines those children, whom he loves Or your sin that requires the, the purifying, and growth of your character, You might not be being disciplined for a particular sin. But you still need that holiness without which you won't see the Lord. And so in order to give you that holiness by eradicating your remaining sin, the Lord does permit those who are wicked and intend wickedness to be instruments by which he who is good.

Does his good for us? And we have those trials that produce character and character hope and hope does not disappoint us because the love of God is shut abroad. In our hearts Romans chapter 5 or the trials, through which we are made complete and perfected, the various trials of various kinds, James chapter 1.

So and of course, when there are troubles that that the Lord is using to sanctify us from things that other people do, they are responsible for their sin and it's actually encouraging to know not just that there's ascension, which our sin requires that we continue to be sanctified that we continue to be purified, but it's it's comforting to know that God knows who the real troublemaker is, and it may be everyone against you.

But if you are walking with God and they are being wicked, and their wickedness is the trouble. However, at peace. They feel among themselves, the god knows the truth and the reality. And he will repay. There's no sin that goes unpunished. God is just his righteous. And when you realize that others are, troubling you in their wickedness, you may shudder for them Last day, not have the atonement of Christ.

When they pass when this world and never let yourself worry or be frustrated over the fact that God's justice had not answered yet. Because it's justice is perfect. He will answer. And the answer will be full, The commandment of Yahweh must be evaded and therefore sin. And its guilt are our great trouble.

And so the question for you is, are you in trouble or not? If you have the righteousness of Jesus and the sacrifice of Jesus, if he is yours by living faith, not just because you're in a family that belongs to Jesus and you're in a congregation that belongs to Jesus, But if you belong to him by your resting on the fact, and rejoicing over the fact that he is your God and He has become a man so that he could obey with obedience that is counted for you.

If that is your hope, you are not in trouble because your sin and its guilt. Are your trouble. And he has a toned for everyone who believes in him. There's already no condemnation for you and he will give you everything you need to make you. Holy and it won't be pleasant and it will feel like trouble.

But you will be receiving it precisely because you are not in trouble because you are in Christ, but if you are not in Christ, then you're in trouble and a troublemaker. So we see in this passage sin and its guilt or our great trouble and how wonderful to know that a few belong to God in Christ Jesus.

If you trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins that the Lord has taken from you your trouble, There are a lot of people who seem like they're in trouble in this passage. Maybe Elijah certainly the hundred profits Obadiah feels like Israel in trouble. At what point. But it's really Ahab and unbelieving Israel who are in trouble, isn't it?

The Lord grant that we would know ourselves to have been gotten out of trouble by the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's pray our Father in heaven. How we thank you that our family might come before you in your wonderful word. We praise you for the many things in this passage, that remind us of your great power, the power of your word, Your mercy to us in Christ to get us out of our trouble, the hatefulfulness of our sin that we might see it as the last remnants of our trouble and fight against it.

We bless your name for your word. We ask that your Holy Spirit now would take the things that we have heard and that they would not just be data that is accumulated in a way of thinking, but that they would also be that by which you direct our lives.

That your word would be the implanted word for us, which is able to save our souls. Make us wise for salvation and sanctify us, that we might be fit for glory, to which we look forward. And of which we are confident in your son, our Lord Jesus and whose name we pray.

Amen.