

1 Kings 18
February 16, 2025

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: We don't worship statues, but we do face the temptation to put things before God with the hopes they will deliver what we think we need. What are possible examples of modern-day gods that we may be unwittingly worshipping? [Let people engage – Ex: career, money, advancement, family, comfort, control, pleasure]

Transition: I think we probably all struggle with times in our life where we are vacillating between obeying God versus a modern-day idol, especially idols like comfort and pleasure. How many times have we been invited by God to do something that might be inconvenient, or cut into our time, or it might be hard? If we face the decision tree of self-will vs God's will as Jim always says, when we choose self-will, I will bet that, most of the time, it's because our idol is comfort and pleasure. We have other things we prefer to do. We don't want to be bothered. We don't want to be uncomfortable.

In today's text, God is using Elijah to call his people back to faithfulness to him. It was a time in the history of Israel when King Ahab allowed a cult of a pagan god to run rampant in the nation. Ahab had married Jezebel and allowed the politics of Israel and the worship of this foreign god Baal, and it resulted in the people of God pursuing sin. The Israelites were led to worship Baal and dismissed God altogether! It's an amazing story, so let's read it and process it.

BOOK:

Elijah and Obadiah

18 After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: “Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.”² So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria,³ and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, who was in charge of his palace. (Obadiah was a devout believer in the Lord.⁴ While Jezebel was killing off the Lord's prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.)⁵ Ahab had said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find some grass to keep the horses and mules alive so we will not have to kill any of our animals.”⁶ So they divided the land they were to cover, Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another.

⁷ As Obadiah was walking along, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized him, bowed down to the ground, and said, “Is it really you, my lord Elijah?”

⁸ “Yes,” he replied. “Go tell your master, ‘Elijah is here.’ ”

⁹ “What have I done wrong,” asked Obadiah, “that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to be put to death?”¹⁰ As surely as the Lord your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you.¹¹ But now you tell me to go to my master and say, ‘Elijah is here.’¹² I don't know where the Spirit of the Lord may carry you when I leave you. If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn't find you, he will kill me. Yet I your

servant have worshiped the Lord since my youth. ¹³ Haven't you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the Lord? I hid a hundred of the Lord's prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water. ¹⁴ And now you tell me to go to my master and say, 'Elijah is here.' He will kill me!"

¹⁵ Elijah said, "As the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today."

Elijah on Mount Carmel

¹⁶ So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. ¹⁷ When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

¹⁸ "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

²⁰ So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. ²¹ Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

But the people said nothing.

²² Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. ²³ Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God."

Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

²⁵ Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." ²⁶ So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

²⁷ At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." ²⁸ So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. ²⁹ Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins. ³¹ Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." ³² With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs (13 quarts) of seed. ³³ He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

³⁴ "Do it again," he said, and they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. ³⁵ The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

³⁶ At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. ³⁷ Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

³⁸ Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

³⁹ When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!”

⁴⁰ Then Elijah commanded them, “Seize the prophets of Baal. Don’t let anyone get away!” They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

⁴¹ And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.” ⁴² So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

⁴³ “Go and look toward the sea,” he told his servant. And he went up and looked.

“There is nothing there,” he said.

Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”

⁴⁴ The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.”

So Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.’”

⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Beware of competing gods/idols in our lives. When Jesus calls us to follow Him, we either obey Him and discover the joy of being His follower, or we unwittingly follow our idols of comfort and pleasure. When we don’t want to be inconvenienced, or we think it cuts into our time, or the call looks hard, etc, we have potentially made our comfort and pleasure an idol that we are capable of worshipping on a regular basis.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1 Kings 18). Victor Books.

II. His Public Ministry: "Go Show Yourself" (18)

Having been trained and tested in private, the prophet is now ready for his public ministry, so God commands him to face wicked King Ahab (see 16:33). We must admire Elijah's patience as he waited three years to preach one sermon.

A. Elijah and Obadiah (vv. 1–16).

Obadiah is a picture of the compromising believer, and his life is in direct contrast to that of Elijah. Elijah was serving the Lord publicly and without fear; Obadiah was serving Ahab (vv. 7–8) and trying to serve Jehovah secretly (vv. 3–4). Elijah was "outside the camp" (Heb. 13:13); Obadiah was inside the court. Elijah knew the will of God; Obadiah did not know what was going on. While Elijah was laboring to save the nation, Obadiah was out looking for grass to save the horses and mules. When Elijah confronted Obadiah, the frightened servant did not trust the prophet. And note that Obadiah had to "brag" about his secret service to impress Elijah with his devotion (v. 13). Alas, we have too many Obadiah's these days and not enough Elijah's!

B. Elijah and Baal (vv. 17–29).

The prophet was not afraid to meet King Ahab; nor was he afraid to tell the king the truth. The wicked always blame the believers for the trouble in the world; they never think to blame their own sins. The contest was not between Elijah and Ahab. It was between God and Baal. The nation was "limping and tottering between two ways," and it was time to make a decision (see Ex. 32:26; Josh. 24:15; Matt. 12:30). Confronted with their sins, the people answered nothing (v. 21). Elijah asked for an impossible situation: the true God would answer with fire. Of course, he knew that God had often "answered with fire" in years past (Lev. 9:24; 1 Chron. 21:26). When the servant of God obeys and trusts the Word of God, he need not fear failure. Of course, Baal could not answer because Baal does not exist. Satan could have sent fire to deceive the people (Job 1:16; Rev. 13:13), but God would not permit this. Elijah mocked the prophets of Baal; "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh" (Ps. 2:4, NKJV). It is amazing to what wicked extremes the heathen will go trying to get their false gods to answer prayer. Look at Ps. 115. By the time of the evening sacrifice (three o'clock in the afternoon), it was obvious to all that Baal was a false god and could not answer.

C. Elijah and Israel (vv. 30–46).

Exposing the folly and sin of Baal worship was but half of Elijah's task for the day. More important was bringing the nation back to the true worship of Jehovah. Elijah was not out only to reform the people; he wanted to revive them too. First, he repaired the altar which the people had permitted to fall down. This is the first step toward blessing—repairing the personal altar of devotion, the family altar, the altar of sacrifice, and communion with God. By using twelve stones, Elijah reminded the people of their unity, because for many years the nation had been divided. To make it impossible for anyone to ignite the fire, Elijah had four barrels of water emptied on the wood and sacrifice three times, which would mean twelve barrels of water. The prophet prayed a simple prayer of faith, and the fire of God consumed the wood, the sacrifice, the water, and the altar.

But Elijah still had work to do. To begin with, the false prophets (850 of them, v. 19) had to be slain; see Deut. 13:1–5. It is not enough for us to acknowledge that “the Lord, He is God” (v. 39); we must also hate that which is evil and remove it from our lives. Judgment always prepares the way for blessing.

Then the prophet told the king to get back home, for rain was on the way. Baal was the “rain god,” but he could neither send fire nor bring rain! As the king started on his way, Elijah began to pray for rain, just as three and a half years before he had prayed for drought (James 5:17). He knew how to watch and pray (Col. 4:2), and he knew how to persist in prayer until God sent the answer. God does not send the showers of blessing until sin has been judged. Before long, the sky was black with clouds, the wind began to blow, and the rains came. God gave Elijah superhuman strength to run ahead of the king as his chariot raced toward Jezreel.

What we do with God in private is far more important than what we do for God in public. Our hidden life prepares us for our public life. Unless we are willing to go through such disciplines as the dry brook, the depleted barrel, and the dead boy, we will never have the victories of Mt. Carmel. “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength” (Isa. 40:31).

Constable, C.L. (1985). *1 Kings*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 525-527) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

c. Obadiah’s search (18:1–15)

18:1–6. In the third and last year of the famine God directed Elijah to present himself to King Ahab. Elijah had God’s word that He would soon end the drought.

The famine in the land was particularly severe in the capital, Samaria. (Cf. the famine[s] in Elisha’s days, 2 Kings 4:38; 6:25; 7:4; 8:1.) God was directing this calamity especially at the guilty parties, Ahab and Jezebel. This situation prompted Ahab and his trusted servant, Obadiah, to go in different directions, looking for some grass in the valleys or near the springs where the most necessary animals (horses and mules) might graze. Obadiah had great responsibility in Ahab’s court (in charge of Ahab’s palace). Obadiah was also a devout believer in the Lord (but not the writer of the Bible book of that name). Whether Jezebel knew of Obadiah’s commitment to the Lord is not clear, but undoubtedly he and the queen were not close friends. Jezebel’s aim was to replace the worship of Yahweh with Baal-Melqart worship. Her plan included killing off the Lord’s prophets (1 Kings 18:4). Obadiah, aware of her strategy, had hidden 100 prophets of the Lord in caves and was supplying them with food and water—a difficult task in days of extreme famine and drought. Obviously, there were many in Israel (cf. 19:18) and probably also in Judah at that time who believed in the Lord, though Israel as a whole had apostatized.

18:7–12a. Obadiah recognized Elijah when they met somewhere outside Samaria; Elijah was a “wanted” man in Israel. Out of respect for the prophet, Obadiah bowed down to the ground. He could hardly believe he had found Elijah. Elijah, wanting to talk with Ahab (vv. 1–2), asked Obadiah to announce him to his master. Obadiah, however, was afraid that Elijah would disappear again. Obadiah explained to the prophet how Ahab had searched for him at home and abroad (v. 10) to no avail. Obadiah affirmed that fact by the familiar words, As surely as the Lord your God lives (cf. 17:1, 12). If he reported to his king that Elijah had been found, and then

could not produce him (the Spirit of the Lord may carry you away; cf. 2 Kings 2:16), Ahab would regard Obadiah's words as a mocking trick and would probably execute him.

18:12b–15. To convince Elijah that his concern was sincere, Obadiah related proof that he was a devout believer in the Lord (cf. v. 3) since his youth. Obadiah seemed to think Elijah would have heard about his hiding and feeding the prophets of the Lord. Perhaps this was known among many of the faithful in Israel, especially the prophets, though of course not by Jezebel or her sympathizers. Elijah assured Obadiah that he would not disappear but would indeed stand before Ahab that same day. Elijah's description of God as the Lord (Yahweh) Almighty who lives and whom Elijah served (cf. 17:1; 18:36) indicates that he was confident in God's ability to handle the physical and spiritual situation in Israel, an assurance that had grown as a result of his experiences at Kerith and Zarephath.

d. Elijah's vindication of the Lord on Mount Carmel (18:16–46)

This popular story of Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal is both exciting and extremely significant in the history of Israel. The first part of this narrative (vv. 16–24) clarifies the reason for the dramatic encounter.

(1) The issue at stake.

18:16–18. When Ahab heard Obadiah's message the king went to meet the prophet; Elijah maintained the initiative as the spokesman of God to whom the king must submit. In Ahab's eyes Elijah was the troubler of Israel. Elijah set the record straight and instructed the king who did not perceive or was not willing to admit that *he* and his father's (Omri's) family (cf. 16:25–26) were the real reason for Israel's troubles. Ahab had abandoned the Lord's commands in His Law and had instead followed the Baals. The plural "Baals" refers to local idols of Baal (cf. Jud. 2:11) sometimes with differing names (e.g., Baal-Berith, Jud. 8:33; Baal-Zebub, 2 Kings 1:2–3, 6, 16). This was the real issue and the root cause of all the trouble in Israel, spiritual as well as physical.

(2) The proposed test (18:19–24).

18:19. In view of Elijah's directive that Ahab summon the people from all over Israel, it is likely that hundreds, if not thousands, congregated on Mount Carmel. The Carmel range of mountains, 1,742 feet in elevation at its highest point, extends about 30 miles to the southeast of modern-day Haifa from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. It is a beautiful series of rounded peaks and valleys from which the sea can easily be seen. It is not known exactly where along this ridge Elijah staged this test; any of several sites is possible; *Muhraka* is suggested by many as one of the more probable sites.

The extent of Baal worship in Israel can be estimated by the number of priests Jezebel regularly fed: 450 prophets of the male god and 400 ... of the female goddess Asherah, Baal's consort.

18:20–21. Mount Carmel was agreed on by Ahab. It would be a fitting site since it lay between Israel and Phoenicia, the lands of the deities in question. Also Mount Carmel was regarded by the Phoenicians as the sacred dwelling place of Baal. No doubt Ahab was highly pleased with this suggested site for the contest because it would have given the Baal prophets a definite

advantage; but this did not worry Elijah. It was also a geographically prominent location and thus a fit setting for Elijah's contest.

When all the people had assembled... Elijah stood before them and challenged them to end their doublemindedness, wavering between two opinions. It was not good to try to "walk the fence" worshiping two gods. Apparently, the Israelites thought that if Yahweh let them down, they could turn to Baal, and vice versa. Elijah was saying that if One is the true God and the other false, they should follow the true One wholeheartedly and forget about the impotent impostor. The people could not argue with this statement, so they said nothing.

18:22–24. Elijah then pointed out that in this contest the odds would be 450 prophets to 1—a humanly impossible situation in which to win! Elijah knew there were other prophets of Yahweh besides himself (cf. v. 13), but as far as this contest was concerned he was the only one of the Lord's prophets left.

Of the two bulls required, Elijah let his adversaries select their favorite. Each side would prepare to sacrifice its bull as a burnt offering to its god. Then they would each call on their god and the god who answered by fire would be shown to be the true God. Baal was supposedly a fertility god, the one who sent rain, caused the crops to grow, and provided food for his people. He was the one who supposedly sent fire (lightning) from heaven. The three-and-one-half-year drought and famine had been a great embarrassment to the worshipers of Baal. It seemed as if Elijah and his God rather than Baal were in control of the fertility of Israel. So Elijah's test to Baal's followers seemed like a good opportunity to vindicate their god and they readily agreed to it. When the preparations were completed, the test began.

(3) The false prophets' failure.

18:25–29. All morning Baal's prophets ... called on their god and danced around his altar to arouse him to action. At noon Elijah began to taunt them, mocking their ineffectiveness. Sarcastically he suggested that Baal was thinking about other things, or busy (lit., relieving himself), away on a trip (the Phoenician sailors believed Baal traveled with them on the Mediterranean Sea and elsewhere), or even sleeping! Surprisingly Baal's prophets responded by increasing the fervor of their appeals, working themselves into a frenzy. To propitiate their god they mutilated their own bodies as the custom of pagan worshipers has been for centuries. This continued for three hours (the time for the Israelites' evening sacrifice; cf. v. 36, was 3 p.m.), but still there was no response. No one answered or paid attention; that is, Baal did not respond to their six-hour chanting for lightning, though rain and lightning often come readily to the Carmel mountain range near the Mediterranean Sea.

(4) Elijah's success (18:30–39).

18:30–32. When it was obvious to all that the prophets of Baal had failed, Elijah invited all the people to draw near and observe what he would do. An altar to the Lord had been built on the site long before but it was in disrepair. Elijah selected 12 stones, one for each of the tribes. Though the tribes had been divided into two nations they were still one people in God's purposes—with a single Lord, a single covenant, and a single destiny. With these stones he built

an altar ... and ... dug a trench around it ... to hold about one-third of a bushel of seed (two seahs equaled about 13 quarts; cf. NIV, and a bushel has 32 quarts). Perhaps the trench on each side of the altar could hold that much seed.

18:33–35. After the bull had been slain and laid ... on the wood, Elijah gave another strange directive. He called for the whole sacrifice and its wood to be soaked with water three separate times. The excess water ... even filled the trench. The water—four large jars filled three times each!—probably was collected from a spring on the mountain or in the Kishon Valley below (v. 40), or from the Mediterranean Sea. The purpose of this soaking, of course, was to show everyone present that the burning of the sacrifice that was to take place was not a natural phenomenon or a trick but was a miracle. Also the time involved in securing the water would have added to the tension of the hour.

18:36–39. At the time of the Israelites' evening sacrifice (3 p.m.; cf. v. 29), Elijah stepped forward and prayed. Without any of the theatrics of his adversaries Elijah simply addressed God as one addresses another living person. His words were designed to demonstrate to the onlookers that all he had done as God's servant (cf. 17:1; 18:15) had been in obedience to God's command and not on the prophet's own initiative. Elijah simply asked God to show the people that He is the true God and to turn the hearts of the people back to Himself. Instantly fire ... fell from heaven (lightning), consuming the sacrifice ... wood, altar, and even the surrounding soil and water. Spontaneously the crowd cried out in amazement. Since the Lord (Yahweh) had answered by fire (cf. v. 24); they acknowledged that He is the true God. (5) The consequences (18:40–46).

18:40–42. The Kishon Valley ran parallel to the Carmel range on its north side. There the people slaughtered the false prophets in obedience to the command of God through Moses (Deut. 13:12–15) and Elijah. Previously Elijah had predicted the drought to Ahab (1 Kings 17:1); now the prophet told the king there would be a heavy rain. Ahab rode off down the mountain to celebrate the end of the drought by eating and drinking, but Elijah walked back up the mountain to pray for rain. His posture as he prayed reflected the earnestness of his petition, again for the glory of the Lord.

18:43–46. Rains normally came from the west off the Mediterranean Sea, so Elijah instructed his servant to look in that direction. God answered Elijah's petition as he persevered in prayer. At first the rain cloud was small (like a man's hand), but soon the whole sky grew black and heavy rain descended. The torrent evidently overtook Ahab as he rode in his chariot ... to Jezreel, his winter capital about midway between Mount Carmel and Samaria. Elijah overtook him, running the approximate 25 miles with divinely given energy. Tucking his cloak into his belt enabled him to run without tripping over the long garment (cf. comments on "Brace yourself like a man" in Job 38:3; 40:7).

Because of Mount Carmel Elijah had discredited Baal and his worshipers, but he had also humiliated vindictive Queen Jezebel.

Mathews, K. A. (1998). The Historical Books. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (pp. 142-143). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Choosing the Real King (18:1–46). For three years Ahab and his servant Obadiah desperately sought the elusive Elijah. Elijah unexpectedly met Obadiah in the road and promised Obadiah that he would see the king. When Ahab met the prophet, he called Elijah the “troubler of Israel.” Yet it was Ahab who caused Israel’s distress. Elijah proposed a contest with the prophets of Baal and Asherah at Mount Carmel.

The contest was for the benefit of the people to learn who truly ruled Israel—the Baals of Ahab and Jezebel or the Lord God of their fathers. The contest consisted of preparing a sacrifice and praying for the deity to prove his existence by answering with fire from heaven. Baal was reputed to be the god of storm and therefore should at least have been able to bring down fire (lightning).

The prophets of Baal prayed all morning, but there was no answer. Elijah ridiculed their pagan theology. Then in ecstatic frenzy they frantically slashed themselves to draw their god’s attention (see Lev. 19:28; Deut. 14:1), but there was no answer. At the evening hour of sacrifice, it was Elijah’s turn. He rebuilt the altar of the Lord and called upon God, identifying Him as the “God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel.” Fire fell and the people exclaimed, “The Lord—he is God!” The people executed the evil prophets.

God also sent a great rainstorm to end the drought. The storm rained upon Ahab as he hurried to Jezreel. The hand of the Lord empowered Elijah to run ahead of Ahab’s chariot to the city.

Tatum, S. L. (1972). 1 Kings. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher’s Bible Commentary (pp. 202-203). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:1–46)

The passage—After three years God told Elijah to go before Ahab again. Ahab had been looking everywhere for water for his horses. Obadiah, a servant of Ahab who had remained true to God, was also looking for water for the king’s horses when he met Elijah. Elijah told him to inform Ahab of his whereabouts. He feared at first, but trusted Elijah and did his bidding. When Ahab saw him he said, “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” (v. 17). Elijah told Ahab that he and his family were the real troublemakers in Israel because of their sins.

Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest on Mount Carmel. He called all the people of Israel to witness it. He said to them, “How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him” (v. 21).

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Kings 18). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.