

Depending on God's Power

Key Verse: “*When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.*”
—*I Kings 18:39*

Selected Scripture:
*I Kings 18:20-24,
30-35, 38,39*

DURING THE REIGN OF KING

Ahab of Israel, wickedness and idolatry flourished for a time along with national prosperity. Then a change came, a severe drought and subsequent famine gripped the land due to God's providence—a retribution of punishment upon Israel.

Elijah, the prophet, was God's messenger for reproving King Ahab, Jezebel his wife, and the ten tribes of Israel who supported them. “Elijah . . . said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, . . . there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.”—*I Kings 17:1*

Every form of drought or famine should not be considered a punishment from God. These are part of the general curse of sin and death upon the earth, which has not yet been lifted. In the case of Israel, we must realize that matters were different. At Mt. Sinai Israel entered into a covenant relationship with God. (Exod. 19:5) As his people, they would receive blessings if faithful, and were sure to receive punishments if they were disobedient and forsook the LORD.

As months grew into years and the drought continued,

the king ordered that a search be made for Elijah, that the drought might be broken. But Elijah, under the LORD's direction, hid himself near the brook Cherith, where ravens brought him food morning and evening. When the time was fulfilled under Divine guidance to relieve the drought, Elijah would present himself to King Ahab. Upon arriving at the palace, Ahab called for the royal governor, Obadiah. He was a godly man, and was distressed by the idolatry that surrounded him. He was so moved when seeing the persecution of God's people to death, "that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them."—I Kings 18:1-4

When the king met Elijah his first words were, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" (vs. 17) Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim." (vs. 18) Elijah asked that the prophets of Baal, and the chief men of Israel should meet at Mt. Carmel to hold a contest. Elijah declared, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." (vs. 21) The test involved the building of two altars upon which two bullocks would be sacrificed. Whichever god accepted the offering would be acknowledged as the true God. The priests of Baal prayed and shouted to their god all through the day, but nothing happened. After commanding that water be used to flood the altar, Elijah prayed calmly, earnestly, and reverently. The answer came—a fire from heaven consuming the sacrifice and licking up even the water in the trench. The people then fell on their faces declaring, "The LORD, he is the God."—vs. 39

Our lesson shows us that we need to depend on a power greater than ourselves—the true and living God. Elijah depended upon God's power, and he was not disappointed. We should strive to act in ways that show our own trust in his power. "They that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing."—Ps. 34:10 ■