ELIJAH

A Man of Like Passions

1 - Ahab's Israel

SERIES OUTLINE







1 - Ahab's Israel

2 - Elijah's Drought

3 - The Ravens

4 - The Widow

5 - Carmel and Judgment

6 - The Voice







Goal: to see how God was working with Elijah.

Core Message:	God:
1 - Ahab's Israel	is in control.
2 - Elijah's Drought	hears prayers.
3 - The Ravens	gives lessons that push us beyond our comfort zones.
4 - The Widow	gives lessons with fantastic blessings.
5 - Carmel and Judgment	decides when it is time for judgment.
6 - The Voice	doesn't relent.

I - Ahab's Israel

- Jeroboam's Religion
- Omri's Religion
- Ahab's Religion

Core: God is in control.

Education is powerful.

Why: was Ahab worse than everyone else?

Scripture uses a phrase to describe many of the kings of Israel.

The king "walked in the way of Jeroboam."

JEROBOAM'S RELIGION



1 - Jeroboam	
2 - Nadab	1 Kings 15:26
3 - Baasha	1 Kings 15:34; 16:2
4 - Elah	N/A
5 - Zimri	1 Kings 16:19
6 - Omri	1 Kings 16:26
7 - Ahab	1 Kings 16:31
8 - Ahaziah	1 Kings 22:52

9 - Jehoram 2 Kings 3:3

10 - Jehu 2 Kings 10:29, 31

11 - Jehoahaz 2 Kings 13:2

12 - Jehoash 2 Kings 13:11

13 - Jeroboam II 2 Kings 14:24

14 - Zechariah 2 Kings 15:9

15 - Shallum N/A

16 - Menahem 2 Kings 15:18

17 - Pekahiah 2 Kings 15:24

18 - Pekah 2 Kings 15:28

19 - Hoshea N/A

Only 3 of 19 are not directly associated with Jeroboam's sin.

But, God's divine summary of Israel is:

2 Kings 17:21-23 - "When he had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD and made them commit great sin. The people of Israel walked in all the sins that Jeroboam did. They did not depart from them, until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day."

But why?

What was Jeroboam's sin?

1 Kings 12:26-29 - "And Jeroboam said in his heart, 'Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.' So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, 'You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.' And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan."

1 - Golden calves and Exodus 32:4

2 - Strategic locations: Bethel = house of God Genesis 28:17

Dan = ancient worship site Judges 18:30

3 - Kept the priesthood but removed the exclusivity

4 - Created a feast "like the feast that was in Judah," just one month later

This religion simply included a number of subtle changes.

Jeroboam likely still stated that he was worshiping Yahweh.

Hence, his son was named *Abijah.* = Yahweh is my father



But things were about to change.

Ahab's dynasty began one generation earlier.

OMRI'S RELIGION

Omri took the leadership during a civil war.

Elah = king

Omri = commander of the army

Zimri = a leader of the calvary 1 Kings 16:9 killed Elah and family v. 11

Israel did not support Zimri…

…made Omri king…

…and besieged Zimri in Tirzah. v. 17

Zimri burned himself alive—ruling for 7 days. v. 18

But war continued.

Omri was challenged by Tibni.

Half the people followed Omri, and half followed Tibni. v. 21-22

1 Kings 16:15 - "In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri reigned seven days in Tirzah. Now the troops were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines."

1 Kings 16:23 - "In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri began to reign over Israel, and he reigned for twelve years; six years he reigned in Tirzah."

This war lasted 3-4 years!

Finally, Omri brought a measure of stability.

But, he was worse than all those who had come before him.

1 Kings 16:25-26 - "Omri did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did more evil than all who were before him. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in the sins that he made Israel to sin, provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols."

But how could Omri have been worse than Jeroboam?

There's one place outside of the narrative that mentions Omri.

Micah 6:16 - "For you have kept the statutes of Omri, and all the works of the house of Ahab; and you have walked in their counsels, that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing; so you shall bear the scorn of my people."

More fervent false worship:

1 Kings 18:19 - "Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

אֹכְלֵי שֻׁלְחָן = 2 Samuel 9:7, 11, 13 19:28 1 Kings 2:7

David was bringing people into his family!

So, perhaps similar was beginning during the time of Omri.

Another direction:

Micah 6:11-12 - "Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights? Your rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth."

Micah 7:2-4 - "The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind; they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net. Their hands are on what is evil, to do it well; the prince and the judge ask for a bribe, and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul; thus they weave it together. The best of them is like a brier, the most upright of them a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen, of your punishment, has come; now their confusion is at hand."

The vestiges of truth in Jeroboam's day, perhaps had a restraining effect.

But, that disappeared during Omri's reign.

The violence that characterized his ascent characterized his whole reign.

Note the contrast in their son's names:

Jeroboam: Abijah = "My father is Yahweh"

Omri: Ahab = "My father is my brother"

This is all about Omri and preserving *his way!*

So Ahab continued his father's legacy, but became even worse.

Ahab and Jezebel continued this antagonism toward God.

But, they went farther than Omri.

1 Kings 16:30-31 - "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him."

How?

This is the exact opposite of what the law commanded.

Exodus 34:16

Deuteronomy 7:3

Joshua 23:12

AHAB'S RELIGION

1 Kings 16:32-33 - "He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. And Ahab made an Asherah. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him."

This was also against the law. Exodus 34:13 Deuteronomy 7:5 12:3

But, a lot of kings broke the law. Jeroboam probably married an Egyptian (LXX).
He set up asherim. 1 Kings 14:15

This phrase is used of a number of kings. Jeroboam 1 Kings 14:9, 15
Baasha 1 Kings 16:2, 7, 23
Elah 1 Kings 16:13
Omri 1 Kings 16:26

It comes from Deuteronomy and describes idol worship. 4:25 32:16, 21

It thus appears as though Ahab simply worshiped idols *more* than everyone else.

But that's why the last verse of the chapter matters so much.

1 Kings 16:33-34 - "And Ahab made an Asherah. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun."

??????

All of Hiel's kids died! But he did it anyway!

Yet why did Joshua put this curse on Jericho in the first place?

Jericho was the first city Israel took.

It symbolized Israel's conquest of the land.

Hiel was advocating a return to Canaanite life!

Thus, God has a word to describe Jericho: חֵרֶם H2764 חָרַם H2763

"accursed"

"devoted to destruction"

It was devoted to God and destroyed for all other uses.

God describes Jericho this way repeatedly: Joshua 6:17, 18, 21 7:1, 11, 12, 13, 15

22:20 1 Chronicles 2:7

Hiel was reversing this devotion.

Maybe that's why this vignette is here.

It gives a sense of how terrible things were.

Ahab and Jezebel didn't just worship idols *more* than everyone else.

They tried to *reverse God's rule*.

Think about what life was like under these people:

1 Kings 18:3-4 - "And Ahab called Obadiah, who was over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly, and when Iezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.)"

Nothing like this had ever been done before!

Jeroboam tried to capture a prophet. 1 Kings 13:4

But he also enquired of one. 1 Kings 14:2

Ahab and Jezebel didn't practice hybrid worship.

They actively attacked anything that appeared to worship Yahweh.

Hence Elijah's words to the people:

1 Kings 18:21 - "And Elijah came near to all the people and said, 'How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.' And the people did not answer him a word."

These two ways of life were mutually exclusive.

This is why Elijah sought the need to prove that Yahweh was God. 1 Kings 18:24

Under Jeroboam, the people would have known that.

But not under Ahab and Jezebel.

This is why Elijah felt so alone. 1 Kings 19:10

ALONE



Indeed, there were others. 1 Kings 19:18

This number shows that Elijah was out of touch.

But it also shows the effect of Ahab and Jezebel's campaign.

1 Samuel 11:8 - "When he mustered them at Bezek, the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand."

1 Samuel 15:4 → 200,000 from Israel

2 Samuel 24:9 → 800,000 from Israel for a draft

1 Chronicles 27:1-15 → 288,000 from Israel and Judah (12 x 24,000 troops)

2 Chronicles 13:3 → 800,000 in Jeroboam's army; "chosen mighty warriors"

Army = 800,000

One woman for each man = 800,000

One child for each couple = 400,000

Total = 2,000,000 7,000/2,000,000 = .35%

Ahab and Jezebel's campaign was extremely successful.

But why?

Surely there would have been historic and cultural ties to worshiping Yahweh.

Jeroboam acknowledged these in creating his religion.

How did Ahab and Jezebel so successfully fight that?

BAAL

On one hand, violence is effective.

And they replaced God with another.



בַּעַל H1168 = lord very generic

So, there appear to be multiple baals:

Baal-peor "lord of the gap" Numbers 25:3, 5 Deuteronomy 4:3

Baal-berith "lord of the covenant" Judges 8:33

Baal-zebub "lord of the fly" 2 Kings 1:2, 3, 6, 16

So what was *this* baal?

It would appear that each of these was a regional variation on Baal.



"Our Lady of Guadalupe"



"La Naval de Manila"



"Our Lady of Vladimir"

This god was the universal god of fertility.

"Prince, Lord of the Earth"

"Lord of Rain and Dew"

By conquering Yamm, the sea god, Baal became king of all gods.

His partner was Astarte, or Asherah. אֲשֵׁרָה H842

Thus, the two of them often appear together:

Judges 6:25 - "That night the LORD said to him, 'Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it.'"

1 Kings 18:19 - "Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

2 Kings 21:3 - "For he rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed, and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them."

Perhaps it was the fact that Baal had a partner, or his role in fertility…

…that led to prostitution as an integral part of Baal worship.

Numbers 25:1-3 → "the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab"

1 Kings 14:23-24 → "there were also male cult prostitutes in the land"

2 Kings 23:6-7 → "he broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes"

Revelation 2:20 - "But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols."

Probably not surprising, then, that Jezebel had 850 men who *ate from her table.*

Nor that she tried to seduce Jehu. 2 Kings 9:30-31

This whole cult revolved around her.

At some point, however, things changed.



1 Kings 21:13 cursed *God?* and two witnesses! Deuteronomy 17:4-6

Deuteronomy 17:4-6

"And it is told you and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently, and if it is true and certain that such an abomination has been done in Israel, then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has done this evil thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death with stones. On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness."

1 Kings 21:13 - "And the two worthless men came in and sat opposite him. And the worthless men brought a charge against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, 'Naboth cursed God and the king.' So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones."

Yahweh and the law were respected by 1 Kings 21.

Or at least, they were given lip-service.

This is just the first of some surprising incidents.

1 Kings 21:27-29 - "And when Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went about dejectedly. And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days; but in his son's days I will bring the disaster upon his house.'"

It was at this time in Ahab's reign that Jehoshaphat partners with him.

1 Kings 22:5-6 - "And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, 'Inquire first for the word of the LORD.' Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, 'Shall I go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I refrain?' And they said, 'Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.'"

And, Ahab knows where to find a real prophet of Yahweh: 1 Kings 22:7-8

Finally, Ahab's sons are named…

Ahaziah: Yahweh holds

Jehoram: Yahweh is exalted

So what changed between 1 Kings 18 and 1 Kings 21?

First, this wasn't a total change. 2 Kings 3:2 2 Kings 10:18

Second, Mount Carmel wasn't the catalyst.

Second, Mount Carmel wasn't the catalyst.

1 Kings 19:1-3 - "Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.' Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there."

Nothing had changed after 1 Kings 18!

1 Kings 20 was the lynchpin.

God saved Ahab in 1 Kings 20.

1 Kings 20:13-14 → Nameless prophet tells Ahab that God will save him

1 Kings 20:15 → Ahab does what God commanded

1 Kings 20:22, 28 → God guides Ahab through the battle

1 Kings 20:41-43 → Ahab recognizes God's power

Do you notice what's missing? There's no Elijah.

God changed Ahab's heart.

He did it through His word—through teaching.

This is a major lesson of Elijah's life.

CONCLUSION

The nation of Israel deteriorated to open hostility with God.

But God acted to stop that hostility.

Because God is in control.

He will take care of situations. He gives the increase.

Our job is to be the word.