

## Elijah — A Prophet of Conviction

### 1 Kings 18:17-20 (KJV)

**17** And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? **18** And he 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. **19** Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. **20** So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

### Conviction

Conviction in the heart of a man of God will do things to him that causes him to be a clarion voice to all of those who oppose the works and ways of God.

Conviction:

Gives a man boldness.

Helps him have the power to say 'no' to the mob.

Adds strong passion to what he believes in.

Gives him energy to climb uphill against the odds.

It will cause disregard for the enemies of your beliefs.

Will force a man to defeat his own discouragements within so he can build up without.

It will cause you to have pity on the poor souls who never even taste what conviction will do for them.

*"You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life."* – Winston Churchill

*"You can't be neutral on a moving train."* – Howard Zinn

*"That people do not believe in you or in your ideas does not necessary mean that you are not good or that your ideas are not good enough. The problem is not with you but with them. For every great invention, we have today encountered this*

*opposition. If you, therefore want to be great you must learn not to live your life based on the opinion of others but on your convictions.” – Dr. Bein Sufficient*

*“Courage results when one's convictions are bigger than one's fears.” – Orrin Woodward*

Glenn Beck released a new book entitled *It Is About Islam*. He gives a good overall history of Mohammed and the quest the Muslims are on in our present age. He offers the plan through documented examples about the twenty-year plan that radical Islam has with its intent to take over the world. As he marches through all their accomplishments beginning prior to September 11, 2001 and presently to the ISIS caliphate that has come from the Muslim Brotherhood, you have to witness the fact that the Muslims have one intent in mind—control of the world. As I have been reading this book, I have found myself asking hard questions about the American church and its apparent weakness for the overall advancement of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. What I mostly see is a very worldly church that has bought into the idea that the job of church leaders is to provide an atmosphere of self-help and entertainment for those who give a half nod toward the Lord.

As I have read the book by Beck, I have started reading some of the Rukmini Callamachi. She is a Romanian American journalist who writes for the New York Times and has worked there since 2014. She has spent much of her reporting on Islamic extremism. About two weeks ago, I read an article (*Isis and the Lonely Young America*, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?_r=0)) she wrote about a young woman who lived in a very remote part of Washington State. Through the efforts of radical Muslims, she and her cousin were converted through social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Skype. The story was unbelievable and despite the intervention of this 20-something year old woman's grandmother she was considering buying a one-way plane ticket to Austria where she and hundreds of other young women were to be transported to the nation of Syria to be brides for Muslim Brotherhood soldiers. One writer explained that these young women had no idea the terror that was awaiting them in that place.

What was it that had caused these young women to be duped? They had run into people who had strong convictions that overwhelmed their own

## Israel's Real Troublemaker

### 1 Kings 18:17-18 (KJV)

**17** And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? **18** And he 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.

Elijah is now in fulfilling the call of obedience to God by going to see Ahab. What is notable about this is that God is protecting Elijah, because it appears that Ahab is alone. He has not brought any of his assassins with him to kill Elijah. God has caused the angst to disappear from Ahab. He might have attacked him, but the Lord has restrained this king.

The Lord is still holding men at bay in their attack against the Church even now. Increasingly there are a host of people in our country who are beginning to consider the fact that we may very well come under the attack of persecution at some point in the future.

God still has power:

To restrain the mouths of lions

To give believers power to tread on serpents and scorpions

To be a wall of fire around the Ahab's who would trouble His people

To be a deliverer as He was with Daniel and his friends

To direct the release of Peter from his prison

The prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2) would do his best to destroy the church, but it will not take place. In eternity, there will be a great discovery of the repeated times that we were protected from the malice of the devil on this earth.

**Proverbs 18:10 (KJV)** The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

There are times where that we can see the strength of God's enemies come to nothing when they are confronted by the people they have attacked from the cover of distance. Their threats that may have been so bold from a distance come

to nothing when people who have the power of God get close to them. This is what happened to Ahab. The very mouth that had demanded that he die now very weakly asks, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”

What caused Ahab to say this to Elijah? Faithful living and faithful preaching. So simple and yet so effective. Sometimes the very thing that brings out great calamity in the life of those who witness the work of God. Tobiah and Sanballat cannot stand to see the progress of restoration and revival taking place. Nehemiah didn’t even give them the satisfaction of a response.

### **Matthew 5:10-12 (KJV)**

**10** Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11** Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. **12** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

### **Hebrews 13:12-14 (KJV)**

**12** Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. **13** Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. **14** For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

But there is also another reason that people often react toward a voice of righteousness negatively... Because they love darkness more than light (John 3:19). The attack of the righteous is just a natural outflow of the condition of the heart.

### **Matthew 10:24-25 (KJV)**

**24** The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. **25** It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

“Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” Notice how Elijah meets the charge from Ahab:

He does not shirk his duty  
He does not cry for mercy  
He does not use flattery to distract Ahab  
He does not try to save his reputation  
He does not make an effort toward prophesying smooth things  
He does not diminish God's judgments  
He does not even tell him the good news that rain is on the way!

"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" No! I am not the one troubling Israel. You are the one who is troubling Israel. Ahab, you are the man! You and your father's house have forsaken the commandments of God and the result of that is Baal worship. Ahab and Omri are the reason for the shape that we are in right now!

There is a horrific pattern in these two verses: Forsake the Word and before long you will follow Baal. Pursuing Baal was simply a result of forsaking the Word.

Love doctrine!  
Love the Word!  
Love Jesus Christ!  
Love the Cross!  
Love the Commandments!

All of Israel's trouble can be laid at the feet of Ahab, not Elijah. If breaking the commandments of God is the greatest sin of all and it brought so much trouble to Israel, where does that place America?

*"There is no higher testimony to the consistency of our life than the hearty hatred of the Ahab's who are around us."* – F. B. Meyer

Thank God for a prophet... a pastor... a teacher... an evangelist... who has the willingness to be a voice of truth in an hour of darkness.

You have forsaken the commandments!  
You have followed the idolatrous ways of Baal!

Truth can never be preached in generalities! It must be specific before it will make a difference!

### **Revelation 18:4-6 (KJV)**

**4** And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. **5** For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. **6** Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

This is the voice of the angel crying for God's people to come out of Babylon. Babylon was filled with false prophets and unclean spirits and the pleading angel was preaching for them to step away from her because her destruction was near. Separate from her:

Harlotry  
Fornication  
Drunkenness  
Blasphemy  
Abominations  
Luxury  
Persecution  
Violence  
Sorcery  
Submission to the Beast  
Warring against the Lamb

It literally had become a habitation of devils, but its deception was that it offered "delicious living" (vv. 7, 9). That is a portion of the America that we are living in right now.

"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" More than one preacher has had to endure that accusation and they will continue to have to endure them if they are specific about sin. That is why in the Word when a preacher cries out with a precise voice, it will cause a stirring, an objection...

The unclean shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9).  
Demand no more than is thy due.  
It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife (Mark 6:18).

If Ahab compliments you instead of criticizes you... you are in a world of danger.

Before passing on to the next point, there is something that we need to consider with this confrontation between Elijah and Ahab.

The words of Ahab were a great revelation of the condition of his soul. He was a sinner who had been left to himself. Let Divine restraint be removed and a soul madness will come on that man! No matter how hard the famine had been and how difficult the affliction was, the judgment of God was thundering in his ears, but he was deaf to it.

This is an example of a man who does nothing more than try to strengthen himself against the Lord.

**Job 15:25 (KJV)** For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

Here is what we need to consider greatly. What is it that keeps us from being just like Ahab? The answer is found in 1 Corinthians 4:7.

**1 Corinthians 4:7 (KJV)** For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

That passage should encourage strong worship in our life. Give great consideration and thought to the fact that it could have been you... that became so entangled in the bondage of sin that it destroyed you.

### **Truth Will Always Have a Showdown with Trouble**

**1 Kings 18:19-20 (KJV)**

**19** Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. **20** So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

The ultimate outcome when truth meets up with trouble... when an Elijah meets up with an Ahab... Is a showdown that will take place.

If ever there should be a quest in all our lives, it should be to know the truth. Truth will always lead to a confrontation of sorts. In fact, before any matter of salvation can take place there must be a confrontation first.

Notice what Elijah does. He literally stacks the decks against himself and calls for the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah (Baal's female counterpart). But there is one more detail that is notable in this. Mount Carmel was looked upon by the Phoenicians as the sacred dwelling place of Baal.

If there was a home-field advantage, then Baal had it. But by this time in Elijah's life and ministry, he has come to trust in the Lord in such a way that he has learned that the Lord is on his side. He learned that at Cherith and Zarephath and he is about to watch the explosive and miraculous hand of God work on this mountain.

We will come to that the next time...

### **Your Own Fight with Baal**

All of us must fight against the Baal-like attitude that would attempt to take us in the end time. We must faithfully take up our fight as we are called to do.

Don't forsake the Lord because you fear this world. The peer pressure that you feel in this life isn't worth missing heaven over.

Don't let a spirit of apathy and unbelief seize you when you look around and it feels like there is an overwhelming minority against you.

Don't be swayed by the riches of this world... they are fleeting and will pass away.

Don't fall into a romance with worldliness... and lose out on eternal life.