

1 Kings 18:41-46

January 29, 2023



SCRIPTURE

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 started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ The power of the LORD came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

COMMENTARY

The Lord next revealed himself as the God of rain. He had promised Elijah in 18:1, “Present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.” With the coming of rain, the defeat of Baal would be complete. His claims would be shown to be bankrupt and God’s claims to be authentic.

Elijah’s confidence in the Lord was revealed by his instructions to Ahab: Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain. While Ahab went to eat, Elijah climbed to a high point on the mountain where he could look westward toward the Mediterranean Sea, the direction from which a storm would come. Elijah took a position of humility and concentration, bent down with his face between his knees, and began to pray for rain. He used his servant as a lookout, to peer out into the cloudless sky over the Mediterranean. Elijah’s prayer for rain was based not only on God’s promise in 18:1 but also on God’s covenant promise for repentance in Deuteronomy 28:12.



Six times the prophet sent his servant and received the report that there was no sign of rain. Still he continued to pray, and the seventh time he received the report that a cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea. Elijah's confidence that God would answer his prayer was so great that this was all the evidence he needed. He sent the servant to advise Ahab to head for home as quickly as possible, before the storm overtook him. Torrential rain after a drought presented the likelihood of swollen streams, mudslides, and flash floods that would make chariotting dangerous.

The rain that followed was not just much-anticipated drought relief; it was visible evidence that God, not Baal, was sovereign over nature and life. Once again, the power of the Lord came upon Elijah, enabling him to run the seventeen miles back to Jezreel, arriving ahead of Ahab.

MAIN POINT

The power in prayer comes from faith in a powerful God.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is something you are waiting on from God right now? How long have you been waiting?

What promises of God are you trusting in as you wait for these promises to come true?

Elijah's greatest achievement as a prophet was not something he did in one moment but what God did through him over time. God did not help Elijah accomplish something great; He worked through Elijah to do something miraculous—in His timing. There is much to learn from this story, but here's a key truth: God can do tremendous things through those who continue to seek and trust Him in prayer.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 KINGS 18:41-46.

In this passage Elijah was still contending with the Baals. Read Deuteronomy 28:12. What did Elijah know to be true about God that gave him confidence to make this request of God?



What do you know to be true about God that gives you confidence to pray boldly to Him?

With his enemies dispatched, Elijah demonstrated again that Yahweh is Lord. It was time for rain. Elijah had seen God's power at work to reveal His glory to the nations, and he knew God would continue to reveal His glory—even when that revelation did not come immediately in Elijah's timing.

Why did Elijah assume the posture that he did on Mount Carmel (see verse 42)? What did it communicate about his devotion to God? About his faith in God?

Elijah was persistent despite not seeing immediate results. Think about your own prayers. Are you persistent when things are not going your way, or do you move onto something else?

Elijah prayed seven times for the same request. Maybe you have prayed hundreds of times for the same thing without seeing God's answer. It is no mistake that God waited until Elijah had prayed seven times before He answered. In the Bible, seven is the number of completion. In this account, seven represents the completion of God's process in that time of prayer.

God does not want merely to answer our prayers; He wants to spend time with us to prepare us for the answer that will come. Many times, we want to skip over the process involved in engaging God in prayer as we wait for our answer. This very process grows our maturity and prepares us for His answer.

What is the most you have ever prayed for something? How did this prayer affect your faith?

What have you learned about God through prolonged seasons of prayer that you wouldn't have had if God had answered your request immediately?

God always acts in our best interest. There was something God wanted Elijah and His people to learn and a relationship He wanted them to experience, so He did not immediately answer Elijah's prayer. Instead, He made them wait, and they were better for it. Elijah knew God better after praying seven times than he would have if God answered the prayer the first time. Prayer teaches us to love God and depend on Him in a meaningful relationship.

Elijah trusted that God was working when he saw a cloud the size of a man's hand; that was all the proof he needed. Do you ever miss God's work because you are unwilling to see the work He is showing you? Explain. When God responded, it was so fast that the torrential storm overtook Ahab's chariot. When has God given you more than you could've asked for or imagined?



He counseled Ahab to hurry home so he would not be caught in the rain. When the rains came, the Lord's victory was completed. God sustained and protected His prophets, while Baal's prophets died. Yahweh fed the orphans and widows and raised the dead, while Baal let the needy suffer. Yahweh sent fire and rain from heaven, but Baal could not respond to his most valiant worshipers. Baal is no god at all. A God like Yahweh is God of all. The rain that fell was not just rain; rather, it was evidence of the Lord's absolute sovereignty over nature and human affairs.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

When you are experiencing a personal drought, why it is important to always remember that God is faithful to His promises despite appearances?

What are you learning or what have you learned about the need for faithful endurance in the Christian life?

PRAYER

Thank God for always working to bring renewal and life in His perfect timing even when it seems like you have to wait. Ask Him to help you endure in prayer and trust Him completely in that process.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we continue our study of the life of Elijah.

February 5, 2023 --- 1 Kings 19:1-9

