

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
THE REAL TROUBLEMAKERS
1 KINGS 18:1-18

Introduction

We have seen how that **after the death of Solomon, the once great united Kingdom of Israel was divided** between ten tribes to the north (known and referred to as Israel) and two tribes to the south (known and referred to as Judah.)

We have also seen how that almost from the very outset, the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel **“*did evil in the sight of the LORD.*”** While the first king of Israel, Jeroboam, **started out well and with a great promise from the LORD if he would listen to the LORD and walk in the LORD’s ways, he quickly fell out of favor with the LORD by leading Israel into idolatry and all that goes with it!**

All the other kings of Israel were wicked during their entire reigns!

(Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and now the most wicked of them all, Ahab!) These were all idolatrous men! They brought idols into Israel from their heathen neighbors!

Just think about this...**NONE of the previous kings were as wicked as Ahab!** In fact, put all of the previous wicked kings together and Ahab beat them all in the degree of his wickedness! **The Bible says that Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God than all of the Kings in Israel’s history!** (*1 Kings 16:30-33*)

Ahab’s pagan wife Jezebel doubled down on the wicked reign of Ahab!

She was ungodly, unruly, and unmanageable. She brought into God’s holy nation her pagan gods and forced Israel to worship them.

When we read what the LORD says about Ahab and his wife Jezebel, He has absolutely nothing good to say about them! Listen, when the LORD has nothing good to say about you, you are in bad shape!

Ahab and Jezebel provoked the LORD! They tried God’s patience! When God’s judgment came on Ahab and Jezebel and Israel, **they denied the source of the judgment and chose rather to lash out at God’s prophets who delivered the warnings and prophesied of the judgment!**

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Again, **Ahab did more to provoke God than any King in Israel’s history!**

Now listen, God is longsuffering, Amen! He is full of mercy and grace, but **sooner or later judgment will come on those who choose to continue in sin!**

Three and a half years previous to this chapter God’s judgment began on Ahab, Jezebel, and Israel! Have they repented up to this point? No!

In fact, **Ahab and Jezebel doubled down on their wickedness by attempting to cut off all the prophets of the LORD out of the kingdom!**

But the LORD had a servant in Ahab’s own house! In fact he was the governor of Ahab’s house! His name was Obadiah! (*Vs 3-4*)

Obadiah was a godly man, and the LORD used Obadiah to hide one hundred of the prophets of Israel in caves and feed them.

Maybe Ahab and Jezebel thought that Elijah would be hiding among the prophets and they could kill him by seeking out and killing all the prophets! (Because, *“birds of a feather, flock together”* you know!) We’re not told!

What we do know is that the LORD has been hiding Elijah! Elijah has been in the LORD’s secret hiding places! First, by the brook Cherith for about the first six months to a year of the drought and then with the widow of Zarephath and her son for about the next 2 ½ to three years.

When the LORD is hiding you, you are safe! But listen, when the LORD brings you out of hiding you are safe as you walk according to His Word and obey Him! (*Vs 1-2*)

James 5:17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

Ahab and Jezebel had an APB out (so to speak) on Elijah! (Vs 10) Elijah was a wanted man! And God appears to send Elijah to the firing squad!

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But again, the safest place for Elijah to be was walking in obedience to the LORD!

We see that Ahab and Obadiah went out in opposite directions of Israel looking for fountains of water and brooks trying desperately to find grass to save the horses and mules alive. *(Vs 5-6)*

As Obadiah was going his way, lo and behold, Elijah met him in the way! *(Vs 7-14)*

We see Obadiah was reluctant to go tell Ahab that Elijah was there wanting to see him as he was afraid that Elijah might pull a disappearing act on him and he might lose his life in the process!

But Elijah assured Obadiah that he wasn't going anywhere and would be there to meet with Ahab! *(Vs 15-16)*

As Ahab meets with Elijah, we can clearly see that Ahab and Jezebel blamed Elijah for this drought and resulting famine that it brought in the land! *(Vs 17)*

Since Elijah had been the one who announced drought! Ahab blamed him for the misery since he was the one who brought the message!

In Scripture we find this quite frequently, God's prophets delivering bad news who were shamefully and spitefully treated and sometimes even killed when all they were doing is delivering what the LORD told them to deliver! (e.g. In Judah, the Prophet Jeremiah.)

Stephen preaching in *Acts 7:52* his message that caused him to be martyred said, *"Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:"*

James 5:10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

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The blame game goes all the way back to the garden of Eden! Adam blamed the woman (and God) and Eve blamed the serpent! It began there but it continues! Cain blamed Able! Saul blamed David! And here Ahab blames Elijah!

So who are the real troublemakers? Who is really to blame?

I. TROUBLEMAKERS ARE REVEALED BY THEIR WALK!
Those who forsake the LORD and walk contrary to His Word and His Way! *(Vs 18)*

It was easier for Ahab to blame the prophets rather than himself! He wasn't going to blame himself!

It is amazing even today how, when trouble plagues our nation, people will look at anything and everything and everyone else and everywhere else instead of looking at themselves as being part of the problem!

Look no farther than many of our leaders and even many of the people in our dear country! **It is easier for people to blame guns, global warming** (excuse me, *"climate change"*), **even God and religion and specifically Christianity and many other things, rather than to take responsibility for the judgment that comes on our nation for our sins against the LORD and our nation's drift away from him!**

The greatest problems of our nation comes from ignoring God and His ways! Whenever folks forsake God and His ways, especially folks in leadership, then trouble is on the horizon!

II. TROUBLEMAKERS ARE REVEALED BY GOD'S WORD!
It is not your opinion or my opinion or even the majority opinion that matters! What matters is what *"Thus saith the LORD!"*

In the matter of abortion, the Bible is clear! Abortion is not a right... abortion is a choice, but it is a wicked choice...abortion is murder!

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Plain and simple and our country is responsible for 61.5 million abortions since 1973. 1 in every four deaths in our nation is caused by abortion! Abortion and those who support/promote it are troubling our nation!

In the matter of immorality the Bible is clear! It is sin against God! Fornication, adultery, and sodomy are all against God! And all of them are troubling our nation in some way!

Kicking God out of our schools troubled our nation in egregious ways! Forsaking our country's godly and Christian heritage is troubling our nation! But more and more in our nation are living in denial of this!

Let's not quit there. The great number of Churches that have become nothing more than entertainment centers has troubled our nation too!

Troublemakers are revealed by their walk!

Troublemakers are revealed by God's Word!

III. TROUBLEMAKERS ARE REVEALED BY THEIR JUDGMENT!

With what had gone on in the previous 3 ½ years in their nation with the drought and the famine, one would think that alone would bring about confession and repentance from the Ahab and Jezebel all the way down to the least person in the kingdom of Israel! But it didn't!

Even the wicked, pagan Assyrians of Nineveh, had sense enough that when Jonah came preaching about their impending judgment, they repented of their sin in hopes that the LORD might change His mind! And He did and they were spared!

Here we see that 3 ½ years of drought and famine brought nothing but hardness of heart and a determination to rid their land of the prophets of God, especially Elijah!

Conclusion

Well, Elijah calls for a showdown between himself and the false prophets! Actually it would be a showdown between the LORD God and Baal!