

Yahweh -v- Baal (1): the rain competition

1 Kings 16:29 – 17:24

The prize for being ... worst (16:29-34)

God *speaks* judgment, so it will happen (v1, v24)

- God says it won't rain (v1)
- The word of the LORD came to Elijah promising he would drink from the brook and be fed by the ravens (17:4). Sure enough, he drank from the brook and was fed by the ravens (17:6)
- Elijah prophesied that 'the jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty' (17:14) and sure enough 'the jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty' (17:16)
- So it won't rain! (v24)

God is merciful, in the midst of judgment, to those who trust him (vv2-23)

Yahweh –v– Baal (2): the braai competition

1 Kings 18

Baal loses

Yahweh wins

- He lights the fire

- He sends the rain

vv1-19 Elijah meets Ahab, no rain

vv20-40 Showdown with the prophets of Baal

vv41-46 Elijah meets Ahab again, rain

There is a God in Israel who is turning their hearts back again (v37)

- The before (true believers were persecuted, v4; others wavered, v21)
- The 12 stones and buckets of water
- The prayer
- The after: “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God” (v39)

The still small voice of calm?

1 Kings 19

Elijah's a bit down and needs God to softly whisper to him?

Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm.

The nation hasn't (as a whole) turned back

There won't be a second chance

- 1) Clear allusions to Exodus (QUOTATION/ALLUSION TOOL)

1 Kings 19	Corresponding feature in Exodus	Significance in Exodus
God sends Elijah to Mount Horeb (v8) where there is wind, earthquake and fire (vv11-12)	The people of Israel go to Mount Sinai (another name for Mount Horeb, see 3:12) where there is an earthquake and fire (19:16-20)	God made his covenant with the people of Israel (19:5-6)
Elijah hides in a cave (v9) as God 'passed by' (v11)	Moses hid in a cleft of the rock as God 'passed by' (33:22)	God renewed the covenant with the people of Israel after their apostasy with the golden calf (34:10, 27)

- 2) A clear *contrast* to Exodus, readily detected using the REPETITION TOOL: 'the LORD was *not* in the wind...*not* in the earthquake.... *not* in the fire' (vv11-12).

The assassins are coming (vv15-18)

Luke 3:7-22 alludes to 1 Kings chapter 19 at every stage

Elijah is dismayed by the apostasy of Israel and calls for their repentance	John the Baptist is dismayed by the apostasy of Israel and calls for their repentance (vv7-14)
Elijah is told that his successor (Elisha) will bring judgment	John announces that his successor (Jesus) will come to 'burn with unquenchable fire' (v17)
Elijah is persecuted by Jezebel, wife of King Ahab	John is persecuted by Herodias, wife of King Herod (vv18-19)
Elijah anoints Elisha to begin his ministry	John baptises Jesus to begin his ministry (vv21-22)

And so Jesus is ...

The prophet who refused to scratch where it itched

1 Kings 22:1-40

“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.” (2 Timothy 4:3)

“Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?” (v6)	“Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or not?” (v15)
The many prophets promise victory	Micaiah promises terrible Defeat
FALSE	TRUE

Would <i>like</i> to be true	True
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Swing low, sweet chariot

1 Kings 22:51 – 2 Kings 2:25

God *speaks* judgment, so it will happen (1 Kings 22:51 – 2 Kings 1:18)

‘You’ve turned to Baal? You will not *come down* from your bed!’ (vv3-4)

‘You’ve turned to Baal? You will not *come down* from your bed!’ (v6)

‘Man of God, the king says *come down*.’ (v9)

‘Let fire *come down*.’ (v10)

‘Man of God, the king says *come down*.’ (v11)

‘Let fire *come down*.’ (v12)

‘Man of God, please *come down* and don’t let fire *come down*.’ (v13-14)

Elijah *goes down*. (v15)

‘You’ve turned to Baal? You will not *come down* from your bed!’ (v16)

Elisha “took up the mantle of Elijah” (2:13, KJV)

A question of legitimacy: will Elisha succeed Elijah? (vv1-7)

The succession (vv8-15)

Ongoing doubts: the search for Elijah (vv16-18)

Elisha can save, just as Elijah did (vv19-22)

Elisha can judge, just as Elijah did (vv23-25)

“You shall anoint Hazael to be king of Syria. And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-Meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. *Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.*” (1 Kings 19:15-18)

A second Elijah, a second Elisha

"Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all the evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.... Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes" (Malachi 4:1, 5)

In Matthew chapter 3, John the Baptist

- wore "a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist" (v4, the Elijah signature outfit, cf. 2 Kings 1:8)
- spoke of a successor who will bring God's judgment "with unquenchable fire" (v12).
- passed the mantle on to Jesus at the Jordan river (v13)

And so Jesus is...

A Remnant saved

2 Kings 4

We were expecting judgment

“You shall anoint Hazael to be king of Syria. And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-Meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. *Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.*” (1 Kings 19:15-17)

- And there is a famine (4:38) – one of the curses for breaking God’s covenant at Sinai was that ‘the land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit’ (Leviticus 26:20 cf. Deuteronomy 28:17-18).

But Elisha brings salvation instead...

Elijah	Elisha (whose name means ‘God saves’)	Jesus (whose name means ‘God saves’)
Provides a miraculously-bottomless jar of flour and jug of oil (1 Kings 17:8-16)	Provides a miraculously-bottomless jar of oil (4:1-7)	Miraculously multiplies bread to feed 5000 men – in particular, he instructs his helpers to distribute a too-small amount of food, at which suggestion they are incredulous, but everyone eats, and there are leftovers (Luke 9:10-17).
	Miraculously multiplies bread to feed 100 men – in particular, he instructs his helpers to distribute a too-small amount of food, at which suggestion they are incredulous, but everyone eats, and there are leftovers (4:42-44)	
Raises a widow’s son from the dead, by prayer and bodily contact, in an upper room in the presence of an angry, distraught mother (1 Kings 17:17-24)	Raises a woman’s son from the dead, by prayer and bodily contact, in an upper room in the presence of an angry, distraught mother (4:18-37)	Raises a widow’s son from the dead with a word (Luke 7:11-17)

... for a remnant who stick close to him

- The fear of the LORD (v1)
- The ‘sons of the prophets’ (v1, v38 twice)
- The loft conversion (v10)
- The bringing of the ‘bread of the firstfruits’ to Elisha (v42, cf. Deuteronomy 18:4-5)
- The alternative place of worship (v23)

A Gentile saved

2 Kings 5

Salvation, by military victory, for the whole nation (3:1-27)
 Salvation for a faithful remnant, the 'sons of the prophets' (4:1-44)
 Salvation for a Gentile (5:1-27)
 Salvation for a faithful remnant, the 'sons of the prophets' (6:1-7)
Salvation, by military victory, for the whole nation (6:8 – 7:20)

Salvation is inclusive

Q: Who can be saved?

A: Anyone, even Syrians!

Yet it is exclusive

Q: How can Syrians be saved?

A: Only by the God of Israel (not by Syrian gods)

The faithful Israelite (vv1-5a)

The rich Syrian who becomes like the faithful Israelite (vv5b-19a)

'Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean' (v10)

So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored *like the flesh of a little child*, and he was clean. (v14)

The faithless Israelite who becomes like the rich Syrian (vv19b-27)

The gospel to the nations

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." (Luke 4:24-28)

The assassins

2 Kings 8:7 – 10:31

God loads the gun

Hazael anointed by Elisha (8:7-15)

Jehu anointed by Elisha, through an intermediary (9:1-13)

It's what God had instructed (1 Kings 19:15-17)

And God approves of what is carried out (10:28-36)

God fires the gun

	Memorable details	RECURRING THEME: Apostates change sides to join Jehu's 'remnant'	RECURRING THEME: God's word comes to pass
Joram and Ahaziah killed (9:14-29)	Is it peace? (v17) Is is peace? (v18) Is it peace? (v19) Is it peace? (v22) What do you think?	Joram's messengers on horseback now ride behind Jehu (vv18-20)	In 1 Kings 21:17-24, Elijah had promised that Ahab would be killed at the vineyard of Naboth, his victim. <i>Fulfilled</i> in 2 Kings 9:25-26.
Jezebel killed (9:30-37)	The palms of Jezebel's hands (v35)	Two or three eunuchs from Jezebel's household, throw her out the window in response to Jehu's cry, 'Who is on my side? Who?' (vv32-33).	In 1 Kings 21:23, the LORD said 'the dogs shall eat Jezebel within the walls of Jezreel'. <i>Fulfilled</i> in 2 Kings 9:36-37.
Ahab's other sons killed (10:1-17)	Head in baskets (v7) and piled high either side of the city gate (v8)	The 'rulers of the city ... the elders... the guardians of the sons of Ahab' (v1) surrender to Jehu: 'we are your servants, and we will do all that you tell us' (v5). In response to his command, they assassinate their wards, and he pronounces them 'innocent' (v9), literally 'right', the same word as in v30.	'Jehu struck down all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had wiped them out, according to the word of the LORD that he has spoke to Elijah' (v17)
Prophets of Baal killed (10:18-27)	The double cross (v20) The toilet (v27)	Jehonadab, is a little different. From the start his heart is true to Jehu (v15) and he co-orchestrates the plot against the prophets of Baal. (NB he is commended at length in Jeremiah 35!)	

Elisha is a type of Jesus, "God saves"

But it's Jehu who finishes Elisha's work. And he is a type of Christ too.