

## **Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 14.1, 1 Kings 17-18, Part 1, Introducing Elijah Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 14.1, 1 Kings 17-18, Part 1, Introducing Elijah, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Oswalt's lecture examines the biblical Books of Kings, specifically focusing on the conflict between Yahweh and Baal.** He highlights the importance of this conflict in the narrative and its potential impact on the future of the Bible. **The lecture explores Elijah's role as a "man of God" and contrasts this with the role of a prophet.** He argues that Elijah's character and relationship with God are more crucial than his prophetic duties. **Oswalt analyzes the miracles in 1 Kings 17, not as mere legends, but as expressions of God's power during a crisis.** He connects these miracles to similar events in the Exodus and the ministry of Jesus, emphasizing God's self-revelation in these moments.

**2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 14.1 – Double click icon to  
play in Windows media player or go to the  
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link  
there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).**



**Oswalt\_Kings\_Sessi  
on14\_1.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 14.1, 1 Kings 17-18, Part 1, Introducing Elijah

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 1 Kings 17-18, focusing on the introduction of Elijah.

#### Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 1 Kings 17-18 (Introducing Elijah)

##### Main Themes:

- **The Central Conflict: Yahweh vs. Baal:** The primary theme is the conflict between the worship of Yahweh (the God of Israel) and Baal (the Canaanite god of storm, rain, and fertility). This conflict is presented as absolutely vital to the survival of the Israelite faith.
- Quote: "In many ways, this is the central conflict of the entire book. Because if the Northern Kingdom were to abandon Yahweh and make Baal their God, almost unquestionably, Judah would have followed sooner or later. And the result would be that we wouldn't have the Bible today."
- **The Nature of Faith and Trust:** The lecture contrasts the controllability of Baal (through ritual and manipulation) with the uncontrollable nature of Yahweh, who requires trust and surrender. This highlights a key difference between pagan worship and true faith.
- Quote: "A God that you think you can control to provide your needs, and a God you can't control, and you have to trust him and surrender to him in order to get your needs supplied."
- **Elijah as the "Man of God":** Elijah is introduced not primarily as a prophet, but as a "man of God," emphasizing his character and relationship with God as foundational to his prophetic role.
- Quote: "It tells us who this man is. He's a man of God. And I want to suggest to you that that lies beneath the prophet. The prophet is a profession. Man of God is a character, a nature, a being."
- **Miracles as Revelation in Crisis:** The miracles performed by Elijah are not seen as mere legends but as moments of intense revelation from God during a time of crisis, similar to the miracles during the Exodus and the ministry of Jesus.

- Quote: "I like very much what C.S. Lewis says somewhere. He says miracles are the sparks that fly up when the steel of revelation strikes the turning wheel of time. Isn't that good? Yes, God is particularly revealing himself in these crisis hours."

### Most Important Ideas and Facts:

- **The Drought as a Challenge to Baal:** Elijah's pronouncement of a drought is a direct challenge to Baal's claim as the god of rain and fertility.
- Quote: "Elijah says, Ahab, there's going to be no rain until I say so."
- **The Importance of God's Word:** The frequent mention of "the word of the Lord" in 1 Kings 17 emphasizes Yahweh's ability to communicate and reveal himself, contrasting with Baal's inability to speak.
- Quote: "The point that's being made here is Yahweh is the God who speaks. Baal cannot speak. Oh yes, his image has a mouth, but no sound comes from it. Yahweh does not have a mouth, but he can speak."
- **Progression of Miracles:** The miracles in 1 Kings 17 (ravens providing food, the unending oil and flour, and the resurrection of the widow's son) demonstrate a progression in God's power and revelation to Elijah.
- Quote: "Do you see what I'm saying about a progression? God, in many ways, I think, is demonstrating his power to Elijah as much as anybody else. Elijah, I have power over the ravens. Elijah, I have power over the basic staples of life. Elijah, I have power over life and death itself."
- **The Widow's Faith:** Elijah's encounter with the widow of Zarephath tests the concept of radical trust in God, requiring her (and Elijah himself) to step away from reliance on their own abilities. The principle of tithing was also mentioned in connection to her faith.
- Quote: "For us to genuinely trust God means again and again, we have to step away from any ability of ourselves to take care of ourselves. That's frightening."
- **Doubt and Faith Coexisting:** Elijah's questioning of God in the face of the widow's son's death shows that faith does not preclude doubt, despair, or uncertainty.

- Quote: "Faith in God doesn't mean we don't have questions. Faith in God doesn't mean we don't have moments of despair and uncertainty."

In essence, this excerpt from Dr. Oswalt presents the beginning of Elijah's ministry as a critical confrontation between true faith in Yahweh and the seductive, controllable allure of pagan worship. It underscores the importance of character ("man of God") over mere role ("prophet") and highlights the radical trust required to follow God's will, even when it defies logic.

## **4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 14.1, 1 Kings 17-18, Part 1, Introducing Elijah**

### **The Prophet Elijah: A Study Guide to 1 Kings 17-18 (Part 1)**

#### **Quiz: Short Answer Questions**

1. What is the central conflict explored in 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 13, and why is it so vital to the narrative?
2. Explain who Baal is and his significance to the Canaanites (and Israelites) of that time.
3. How does the speaker contrast Baal and Yahweh in terms of their relationship with the world and their followers?
4. In 1 Kings 17, what bold claim does Elijah make to Ahab, and what does it reveal about Elijah's understanding of his role?
5. Identify and briefly describe the three miraculous events in 1 Kings 17.
6. According to the speaker, why are miracles emphasized in the narratives of Elijah and Elisha?
7. Why is it significant that God directs Elijah to go to Zarephath, a Phoenician village, and seek help from a widow?
8. What does the speaker suggest is the main point of the tithing principle as illustrated by Elijah's interaction with the widow?
9. Explain the progression of God's displays of power to Elijah through the miracles described in 1 Kings 17.
10. What title is primarily used to describe Elijah in this section, and how does the speaker contrast it with the role of a prophet?

#### **Quiz: Answer Key**

1. The central conflict is between Yahweh and Baal. This conflict is vital because if the Northern Kingdom fully embraced Baal, Judah likely would have followed, potentially altering the course of biblical history and tradition.
2. Baal is the Canaanite god of the atmosphere, storms, rain, fertility, and vegetation. He was crucial because the Canaanites and Israelites relied on rainfall for agriculture and survival.

3. Baal is a god who people believed they could manipulate through rituals, while Yahweh is uncontrollable and transcendent. Therefore, the speaker argued that people must trust and surrender to Him.
4. Elijah declares there will be no rain until he says so, showing his understanding that his words carry the authority of Yahweh. It suggests Elijah sees himself as Yahweh's mouthpiece and agent.
5. The three miracles are: (1) Ravens bringing food to Elijah, (2) The widow's oil and flour miraculously replenishing, and (3) Elijah resurrecting the widow's son.
6. Miracles are emphasized during moments of crisis when God is particularly revealing Himself, such as during the Exodus, the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, and the ministry of Jesus. They are not mere legends but expressions of God's active presence and intervention.
7. It is significant because it requires Elijah to take a step of faith by going to a non-Israelite territory and trusting a widow, one of the most vulnerable members of society, to provide for him. This demonstrates complete reliance on God's provision.
8. The main point is to give to God "off the top," rather than waiting until the end when it is too late. This act demonstrates trust in God's provision, rather than attempting to manipulate Him.
9. God demonstrates His power progressively: first over natural resources (ravens, brook), then over basic staples of life (oil and flour), and finally over life and death itself (raising the widow's son). This progression serves to strengthen Elijah's faith in God's comprehensive power.
10. Elijah is primarily referred to as "a man of God." The speaker contrasts this with the role of a prophet by suggesting that "man of God" represents Elijah's character and relationship with God, which is deeper and more fundamental than his prophetic role.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the conflict between Yahweh and Baal in the context of 1 Kings 17-18. How does this conflict represent a larger struggle?
2. Analyze the role of miracles in 1 Kings 17. How do these miracles contribute to the portrayal of Elijah and the power of Yahweh?
3. Explore the theme of faith and trust in 1 Kings 17. How does Elijah's journey and his interactions with the widow of Zarephath illustrate this theme?
4. Compare and contrast the concepts of Yahweh and Baal as presented in the lecture. What are the implications of choosing to worship one over the other?
5. Discuss the significance of Elijah being called a "man of God." How does this title reflect his character and his relationship with Yahweh?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Yahweh:** The personal name of the God of Israel in the Hebrew Bible, often translated as "LORD."
- **Baal:** A Canaanite god associated with the atmosphere, storms, rain, fertility, and vegetation. A primary rival to Yahweh in the Old Testament.
- **Divided Kingdom:** The period in Israelite history after the reign of Solomon when the kingdom split into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah).
- **Elijah:** A prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah. Known for his miracles and opposition to Baal worship.
- **Ahab:** King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, known for his wickedness and promotion of Baal worship under the influence of his wife Jezebel.
- **Zarephath:** A Phoenician village near Tyre and Sidon, where Elijah sought refuge and was provided for by a widow during the famine.
- **Man of God:** A title used to describe Elijah, emphasizing his character and relationship with Yahweh above his prophetic role.
- **Miracle:** An extraordinary event that is attributed to divine intervention. The lecture argues they happen when God is especially revealing himself.
- **Prophet:** A person believed to be inspired by God to communicate His will or predict the future. In the book of Kings, prophets were messengers of God to the kings of Israel.
- **Canaan:** A region in the ancient Near East corresponding to modern-day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel. The inhabitants worshipped Baal.



## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 14.1, 1 Kings 17-18, Part 1, Introducing Elijah, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

### FAQ on Elijah and the Conflict Between Yahweh and Baal

- **What is the central conflict explored in 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 13, and why is it so important?**
- The central conflict is between Yahweh (the God of Israel) and Baal (the Canaanite god). This conflict is vitally important because if the Northern Kingdom were to fully embrace Baal, it was likely Judah would follow, potentially leading to the loss or radical alteration of the scriptures and the understanding of God's nature.
- **Who was Baal, and why was he so appealing to the Canaanites and potentially to the Israelites?**
- Baal was the Canaanite god of the atmosphere, storms, rain, fertility, and vegetation. He was particularly appealing because Canaan was heavily reliant on rainfall for agriculture, unlike regions with large rivers for irrigation. People wanted a god they could manipulate to provide rain and ensure their survival.
- **How did the prophet Elijah challenge the worship of Baal?**
- Elijah directly challenged Baal worship by declaring a drought, demonstrating that Yahweh, not Baal, controlled the rain. His words were presented as Yahweh's own, emphasizing Yahweh's power and authority.
- **Why are there so many miracles in the Elijah and Elisha narratives compared to other parts of the Old Testament?**
- The miracles in the Elijah and Elisha narratives, similar to those in the Gospels, occur during a time of crisis and revelation. They demonstrate God's power and intervention during critical moments, particularly in the conflict with Baal. They are not simply legendary stories but expressions of God's active involvement.

- **What is the significance of Elijah being sent to the widow in Zarephath?**
- Elijah being sent to the widow in Zarephath highlights the theme of trusting God, even when circumstances seem illogical or impossible. The widow, being poor and from a foreign land, represents a situation where Elijah and the widow must rely completely on God's provision, stepping away from their own ability to provide for themselves.
- **What does the miracle of the widow's oil and flour illustrate about trusting God?**
- The miracle illustrates the principle of trusting God with what one has, even when it seems insufficient. It highlights the idea of giving to God "off the top," trusting that He will provide. It is not about manipulating God but surrendering to his provision and care.
- **What is the significance of the widow's son being resurrected in this narrative?**
- The resurrection of the widow's son demonstrates God's power over life and death, further solidifying Elijah's faith and demonstrating God's comprehensive power to all those involved. It showcases God's ability to touch every aspect of life and deliver from it.
- **What is the difference between being a "prophet" and a "man/woman of God," as presented in the text?**
- The text distinguishes between the *role* of a prophet and the *character* of a man/woman of God. Being a prophet is a profession or role of speaking God's word, whereas being a man/woman of God represents a deeper connection, nature, and relationship with God. The latter is presented as more fundamental and essential than simply fulfilling the prophetic role.