A Homiletical Study of
I Kings 18:16-45

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The sermon serves a very important function in the church service. The preacher gets to stand in front of his congregation and proclaim law and gospel. The text has been studied. Much time and preparation went into outlining, writing and memorizing the sermon. The preacher prays throughout this entire process that God may grant him wisdom and guidance.

As rewarding as a sermon is, it can be a daunting task. It takes much time in our weekly schedules. The eyes of the entire congregation fix themselves squarely on the pulpit. The knees shake. A lump sits right in the middle of our throat, before the sermon begins. Once again the preacher takes their concerns to God and asks for his strength. We trust that he will guide us. We take comfort in knowing that we are not speaking for ourselves, but we say with confidence, “This is what the Lord says.”

The topic of this paper is a homiletical study on I Kings 18:16-45. I make no claims to be the greatest preacher among this crowd. Many of you might feel the same way. However, God has entrusted to us this opportunity to study his Word. Through the study of these verses we can apply them to our lives as well as to the lives of our members. This paper will consist in three parts: the context of the text, a look at the verses with some applications and finally some ideas on how the sermon might begin to take shape.

I. The Context
This text falls on the fifth Sunday after Easter in year A of the lectionary found in Christian Worship Supplement. This year that day will be Sunday, May 22, only a few weeks from now. The Easter season allows the preacher to focus on the victory Christ won for us. The resurrection serves as a main theme throughout the Easter season. This tells us that Christ has been raised. He has kept his promise. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection we also see that he has procured the victory over all his enemies.

At first reading it might be hard to see the connection between Easter and Elijah’s battle on Mt. Carmel. However, through these verses we see emphasis on God’s power and victory over the prophets of Baal. This shows us that God will not only win the victory over idols, but he has also won the victory over the devil.

The second lesson for this Sunday comes from I Peter 2:4-10. The Apostle Peter talks about the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. It is easy to see the connection between the first two lessons. Many people will reject Christ, just as the nation of Israel did. The Jews rejected Christ. In the world today many people reject the gospel message. That rejected stone becomes the chief stone by which believers build their faith. Jesus, our Savior, will reign as King of kings over everything.

The Gospel lesson comes from John 14:1-12. Jesus prepares his disciples for his departure from the world. Jesus comforts his disciples with the fact that he is the way to the Father. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. This shows that there is only one way to Christ. It goes against the unionistic thought that permeates in the world today, which we will talk about later in the paper.
We will move from the context of the church year to the context of our text. Professor Gurgel instills in his homiletical students to remember that a text is part of a pericope. This means it is cut out from a larger section. One important part of looking at any text is to examine the immediate context as well as the wider context.

Elijah serves as one of the main characters in this account. Elijah might be one of the most courageous prophets to serve in Israel. He works at a time of great spiritual lethargy among the people of Israel. The Israelites have become entrenched in the worship of Baal and Asherahs. They had forsaken God’s covenant. They still knew about God. They worshiped him sort of. They just combined the worship of the true God with various false gods promoted by other countries and people.

King Ahab ruled over the nation of Israel at this time. We know him as one of the most evil kings that ruled over the Israelites. He married the even more wicked Queen Jezebel. These two pushed the worship of the true God aside. Jezebel brought the worship of the Asherahs and Baal to new heights. The people followed blindly behind Ahab and Jezebel. Not the ideal situation for anyone to work under. However, Elijah worked among these conditions. The people did not care what God said. Elijah’s message fell on deaf ears. God’s patience wears thin with the people’s hard hearts.

Elijah prophesied that God would send judgment upon the land. He says, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word” (I Kings 17:1). During this severe famine Elijah fled to the Kerith Ravine. He then moved on to stay with the widow of Zarephath. After three years from the time of the famine God told Elijah to present himself to King Ahab (I Kings 18:1).

God gave Elijah a message to give to Ahab. After the land suffered under this severe drought, rain would once again come upon the land. As Elijah made his way to meet the king, he probably wondered what was going to happen. How would Ahab receive me? Will I be thrown in prison or killed? These are questions that I am sure Elijah asked himself, as he went to meet Ahab.

Before Elijah met Ahab, he saw Obadiah. Obadiah served as a faithful follower of the true God. He saved many prophets of God by hiding them in a cave. This was strange especially since Obadiah worked in the service to King Ahab. Right away Obadiah recognized Elijah. He was overjoyed to see this prophet from God. Elijah then told Obadiah to announce his arrival to Ahab. Obadiah’s joy turned to fear. Ahab has been searching for Elijah for a long time. Obadiah did not want to go and tell Ahab, and then Elijah would disappear. Surely Obadiah would then be killed. Elijah promised to remain in this place, so Obadiah went off to fetch Ahab. Now come the verses for the topic of this paper.

II. The Text

1 Kings 18:16-18 (NIV)
16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 17 When he saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is that you, you trouble of Israel?”

18 “I have not made trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the LORD’s commands and have followed the Baals.”

Ahab comes out to meet this fugitive, whom he has been looking for since the time of the famine. Ahab’s first words to Elijah are so telling. He calls Elijah the trouble of Israel. אָבָא is the Hebrew word Ahab opens up with. The opening prefix, א, of this word shows more of an exclamatory force than anything else. 2 Ahab blames Elijah for everything that has happened in the land of Israel. Ahab does not confess his sins. He shows no signs of repentance. He passes the blame to someone else. Elijah brought this trouble, יָשָׁב, or social chaos among the nation of Israel.

Does this accusation sound familiar? The pastor who faithfully proclaims law and gospel to a world will be seen as a trouble by many people in the world. God’s Word does not always coincide with what the world wants to hear. The members of our congregations sit in the same boat. This faithful proclamation of law and gospel makes one an easy target. The world wants to constantly pass the blame to someone else. They do not want to hear what they are doing is wrong. They look for a church that will speak the words they want to hear. While doing this, they look for a scapegoat. The one who faithfully proclaims the Word of God makes an easy target.

Elijah does not take the bait. Instead he turns the tables on Ahab. Elijah places the blame where the blame properly lies. Ahab’s family was to blame. Ever since the nation of Israel split into two kingdoms, the Northern Kingdom did not follow God’s commands. King Jeroboam introduced the worship of idols. Things quickly went downhill from that point. Ahab, the worst of the kings, introduced more pagan rituals for the people. Elijah mentions one god in particular, Baal. We hear about Baal in the pages of the Old Testament. A few words on Baal might be in order at this point. The Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly gives us an insight into what Elijah faced.

The Ras Shamra texts have provided an essentially new picture of Baal, the major figure among the 70 gods which comprised the Canaanite pantheon. Baal is the vigorous young fertility god, the god of rain and storm. Elijah’s struggle (1 Kings 18) was not against some local godlet, but against the god whom the Ugaritic epics call “Great Baal,” the one who occupied the leading position in the religions of the ancient Near East. “Elijah “was at


grips with an opponent whose power and importance were manifest to all who were present and to those who heard the narrative” (Kapelrud, p. 34).³

The nation of Israel has abandoned the worship of the true God. How could they do such a thing? Really, all we need to do is look to our world to see how easy it is to abandon the worship of the true God. Murmurings take place in Bible Classes. Many of our members scratch their heads as they look out into the world. Homosexuality runs rampant. The biblical view of marriage seems to be a thing of the past. Millions of babies are aborted every year in the name of “choice”. People believe that every religion should work together for the common good. It does not matter if doctrine is compromised. They tell themselves everyone believes the same thing. Everyone worships the same God, at least so they think. How long before trouble comes upon this country? If you would talk to some of the more venerable members of our congregations or brother pastors, they might say trouble is closer than one thinks. They might be right. Only God knows.

1 Kings 18:19-20 (NIV)

19 Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table."
20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. ⁴

Elijah issues a challenge to Ahab. He wants all the false prophets from all over the land to come to Mt. Carmel. This showdown between Elijah and the false prophets of Baal and Asherah would prove which God or gods were the most powerful. One amazing fact in these verses is the sheer size of the prophets of Baal and Asherah. Four hundred fifty prophets serve Baal. Jezebel brought another four hundred prophets of Asherah. Jezebel, the queen of the land, supplies for these false prophets. These false prophets ate at the queen’s table, while the true prophets of God hid in fear from the royal family. This just echoes how far Israel has fallen.

In this section we hear about another idol, Asherah. This word is used 40 times in the Old Testament, most of the time in the books of Judges, Kings and Chronicles. This idol caused much trouble for Israel. We cannot pin down exactly what the Asherah was like. We do know that Baal and Asherah often went together.


As the wife of El, Asherah is called on to intercede with her husband on behalf of the project of building a palace for Baal. Her relationship with Baal is perplexing. Baal’s assault on the offspring of Asherah is once narrated, yet Asherah advocates for Baal the role of king and judge among the gods. A Canaanite myth that survives only in a Hittite version (‘El, Ashertu, and the Storm God’) reveals that Asherah once sought the storm god (Baal) as a lover, a quest achieved with El’s approval but to the eventual humiliation of Asherah. In the Ugaritic legend of Kirta (Keret).

Jezebel brought this god with her to Israel. She bears the blame for this idolatry in the land. Elijah now challenged those false gods, which became so entrenched in the religious life of Israel.

The challenge has been accepted. Ahab gathered together all the prophets on Mount Carmel. The place for this battle cannot be determined with any amount of certainty. It must have been a well known place for everyone to come to. Matthew Henry in his commentary says, “Probably on that mountain they had an eminent high place, where formerly the pure worship of God had been kept up as well as it could be anywhere but at Jerusalem.” Keil-Delitzsch offers this explanation, “A mountain ridge with many peaks, intersected by hundreds of larger and smaller ravines” (p. 243). Wherever it was, the people gathered together to do a great battle.

1 Kings 18:21 (NIV)

21 Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”
But the people said nothing.  

Before the battle began, Elijah laid out the reason for the battle. He says that for many years the people have been on the fence with religion. They would worship the true God at times, although this seems to have been afterthought. They also worshiped false idols, whichever ones were around. This was a very unionistic religious practice. They combined everything. Elijah wants the people to make a choice. Any choice would be better than riding the fence. This calls to mind John’s letter to the church in Laodicea in Revelation 3, where the Lord says to be either hot or cold. Elijah wants Israel to make a choice.

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The people’s response is deafening. They say absolutely nothing. Is this from a sorrowful heart? Deep down the people know that Elijah is right. They are Jews. They remember the stories of Adam and Eve, Noah and Abraham. Or do they not care about what Elijah says? We cannot say for certain, but the possibility remains open for both instances.

This kind of attitude mirrors the attitude of many people in the world. People will mix and match various other religions to get what they want. They do not care about the truth. They treat religion as a buffet of options to choose from. The truth found in the Bible does not really matter to them. Permit a personal story to help illustrate this point.

In my young ministry it is easy to think that things should be black and white. People should know why and what they believe and why. It does not always work this way. I have heard, even from prospects and young members that it does not matter what you believe. As long as you do good and go to church, you will be saved. I know that this is an over simplification of the whole point, but we do hear it many times. Even our members experience the same thing. They hear about how their friends go to churches, not because the truth is proclaimed there, but because they have been going there for years. I am sure that many people here can come up with other stories about people wavering between two opinions. Examples like this remind us that we do battle with the same attitude as Elijah did. People straddle the fence.

Unionism becomes a very dangerous practice. It is downplayed in so many religious circles. The thought process is that we are all the same. “The peril that lurks in religious unionism is that by an unfortunate consistency in the profession of falsehood one error always produces another.” This quote rings clear in so many instances. All it takes is one error. Then another error enters easily into the mix. There will always be hypocrites in the church; we are not talking about that. We are talking about joining forces with blatant unbelievers. The Israelites, as well as us, would have done well to heed the following warning.

Hence Christians should view the existence of heterodox churches not with indifference, but with horror, since every error is an offense (σκάνδαλον), which not only provokes God to anger, Deut. 32:5, 6; 28:15–68, but also endangers the salvation of all who are brought into contact with it, 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Tim. 2:16, 17.

Like Elijah, the truth cannot be compromised in anyway. The true marks of the church need to be kept.

The church is not merely an association of outward ties and rites like other civic governments, however, but it is mainly an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men’s hearts. To make it recognizable, this

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association has outward marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the
administration of the sacraments in harmony with the Gospel of Christ.\textsuperscript{11}

People need to make the decision. Follow God or follow idols. One path leads to eternal life; the
other path leads to eternal destruction. People will not be able to give God this excuse, “I
followed you half the time, while following another idol the other half.” God will not accept that
excuse. God wants our full allegiance to him and to him alone.

\begin{verse}
\textbf{1 Kings 18:22-26 (NIV)}
\end{verse}

\textsuperscript{22} Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only one of the LORD’s prophets left, but
Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. \textsuperscript{23} Get two bulls for us. Let them
choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood
but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not
set fire to it. \textsuperscript{24} Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the
name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God.”
Then all the people said, “What you say is good.”
\textsuperscript{25} Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one of the bulls and prepare it
first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not
light the fire.” \textsuperscript{26} So they took the bull given them and prepared it.
Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. “O Baal,
answer us!” they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And
they danced around the altar they had made. \textsuperscript{12}

Elijah feels like he is the only prophet left. It is interesting to note that. Elijah shows up
alone. His opponents show up with four hundred fifty prophets. Where have the prophets of
Asherah gone? Perhaps they are not present. We only hear people calling out to Baal. Maybe the
author of the book simply wants to focus on those prophets, since Baal is the main god.
However, the numbers are deceiving. Elijah is not the only believer left. God reveals to him later
on that he has reserved seven thousand people who have not bowed their knee to Baal (cf. I
Kings 19:18). What do you think went through Elijah’s mind as he surveyed the prophets of
Baal? The odds are stacked against him. It would be like the Green Bay Packers going up against
a local high school football team. Confidence comes over Ahab at this point. He thinks that his
prophets and his god will win the victory.

Elijah knows where his strength lies. It does not come from numbers. Elijah will not win
with his own strength. He will overcome only with God’s strength. By himself Elijah would just

\textsuperscript{11}Tappert, T. G. (2000, c1959). The Book of Concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church
be set up for failure. With God on his side Elijah was confident that he would come out victorious.

This is the same place where our trust lies. Sometimes it looks like the true Church dwindles in numbers. We might cry out like Elijah, “I am the only one left.” Our local churches look and wonder why no visitors grace our pews. They wonder why the Bible does not hold much value in our world. At times like this we need to remember that God is still with us. He will not leave us nor forsake us. Against all odds God will be with his people and will always be with his people (cf. the Gospel lesson of the day).

Now Elijah gets to the challenge. He lays out the ground rules. Two bulls will be brought out to the venue. One bull is for Elijah; the other will be for the prophets of Baal. They will cut the bull into pieces, and place those pieces on the altar. Each group will pray to their respective God or god. The winner of the challenge is the one whose prayers are answered.

The prophets of Baal went first. They prepared their sacrifice. Then they called out to Baal from morning till noon. Over those hours of prayer no answer was found. How sad of a sight this is. Baal cannot answer any prayer; he cannot even hear any of those prayers.

How sad it is when people pray to gods that cannot help them in their hour of need. It seems like every religion places a high priority on prayer. They offer up prayers, but often to gods or people that will not listen to them. Some people pray to dead relatives. Other people pray to a dead hero. Still others pray to statues or pillars of wood. These people can pray until they are blue in the face. All those prayers will fall on deaf ears.

1 Kings 18:27-29 (NIV)

27 At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.” 28 So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. 29 Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

Elijah did something that none of us would recommend to anyone. He begins to taunt the prophets of Baal. “Shout louder! Baal just cannot hear you. He might be on vacation. He might be sleeping on the job. If he is a god, then he will hear your prayers.” Elijah laughs to himself, as he wonders why the nation of Israel would ever follow a god like this. The true God of Israel has shown numerous times throughout their history. He sent the plagues upon Egypt; God gave the nation of Israel the land of Canaan; he saved them from their enemies just to name a few events. The people forgot all of those events. Instead, they followed after a made up god.

The prophets of Baal shouted louder. They cut themselves until blood flowed, which was a common practice among the cultic religions of the day. Noon passed. The prophets continued to cry out to Baal. The last part of verse 29 sums it up well, “But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.” All their yelling, the blood that flowed and the frantic crying out could not capture the attention of this god.

Mocking unbelievers will not help in our ministry. This will do more harm than good. A better idea is to show how God answers prayers. The Christian holds onto the hope that God will hear and answer all our prayers. Our God wants us to bring any request to him. True believers do not have to cut themselves and scream at the top of their lungs to grab the attention of God. Our God does not go on vacation to leave the world to fend for itself. Thank God that he does this, or the world would not be able to survive.

1 Kings 18:30-35 (NIV)

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come here to me.” They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which was in ruins. 31 Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Your name shall be Israel.” 32 With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 33 He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, “Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.” 34 “Do it again,” he said, and they did it again. “Do it a third time,” he ordered, and they did it the third time. 35 The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

Elijah takes his turn in the challenge. He calls together the people. He repairs an altar to the Lord. Elijah took twelve stones to build this altar. These twelve stones show the entire nation that God’s desire was for them to be one (Keil-Delitzsch, p. 248). Elijah shows the unity that the people share. It comes from the worship of God. Then Elijah arranges the wood and cuts the bull into pieces and places them upon the altar. Elijah gives the order to pour water upon the offering. Is Elijah trying to sabotage his chances of winning? The crowd wonders if this prophet has fallen off his rocker. This can hardly be the case. Elijah tells the people to do this again. Now, the crowd looks on with more curiosity. The people carried out this order. Elijah wants it done one more time. Water flowed down the altar and filled up the trench around it.


Why would Elijah do such a thing? Elijah wants to leave no doubt in the minds of the people the power of God in this battle. The god of the people, Baal, could not even accept a sacrifice lying upon the altar all day. Down in the South cut up pieces of meat, which are placed on rocks, might start cooking in the heat of the summer. Elijah wants there to be no doubt in the minds of the people. Elijah knows that God will accept his water drenched sacrifice. This will prove once and for all who the God of Israel is.

1 Kings 18:36-40 (NIV)

36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.” 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. 39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!” 40 Then Elijah commanded them, “Seize the prophets of Baal. Don’t let anyone get away!” They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

The time has come for the evening sacrifice, a fitting time for Elijah to step up to the plate. Soon the Lord would display his power. This would serve as a wakeup call for the Israelites. Elijah steps forward and opens up with a prayer. Right away this prayer catches the attention of the people. Elijah calls on the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Throughout the Old Testament God makes himself known in this way. This recalls the promises that God made to the people long ago. Elijah asks God to show his great power, so that the people would know who is God.

The result that Elijah wants is simple. He wants the people to repent of their great sins. Elijah desires that the hearts of the people turn back to God. No longer does Elijah want the people to waver between two opinions. They should come down on one side, the side of faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In this opening prayer Elijah places no power upon himself. He makes sure that the people understand that this is from God himself. Our members need to hear this. No power or trust can be placed in ourselves. We constantly look forward to God for the power in all things.

Elijah’s prayer does not continue for hours like the prophets of Baal did. God answered in an instant. Fire from the Lord came down and burned up the sacrifice, more than that the fire licked up the water poured over the altar. Right away the people fall to the ground. They yell out,

“The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God” (I Kings 18:39)! The people had to admit this. God’s great show of power was not carried out without any witnesses. He had an audience.

Let it for ever be looked upon as a point adjudged against all pretenders (for it was carried, upon a full hearing, against one of the most daring and threatening competitors that ever the God of Israel was affronted by) that Jehovah, he is God, God alone.¹⁷

Elijah took vengeance upon the false prophets of Baal. He summoned the people to take up their swords and kill all the false prophets. God wanted to eradicate the false teachers. They should hold no place among God’s people. God wanted the people to return to him with no distractions.

God won the victory in very convincing fashion. People might lament, “Oh, if only God would come with great power in the world today like that. This will catch people’s attention and they will put their faith and trust in him.” Would a person really put their faith in God even if he displayed some great power? The answer might never be known to that question. However, we can say that God does work some very powerful miracles for us to see today.

We see that power in action every time someone comes to faith. God takes a sinful person; yes we can even include ourselves. He sends the Holy Spirit into their life. He creates faith and makes that person a new creation. We see the power of God working through the sacraments. We behold the miracle every time we come up to partake of Jesus’ true body and blood in Communion. We do not need to look only at that; all we need to do is to look outside. We see God’s power in nature. He protects and preserves his creation, both the good and the evil.

One other very important application to point out in these verses is that God answers prayers. He will not always answer like he did with Elijah. We can pray for a million dollars every night. This does not mean a million dollars will show up in our bank accounts. This does not mean that we should give up praying. God hears all our prayers. He promises to answer all of those prayers. He will answer with a yes, no or not yet.

Since this sermon would be preached in the Easter season, this part of the text also gives the preacher an opportunity to talk about the victory our Savior has won. In this section God wins the battle against Baal. We cannot just take a look at this victory. God has won the victory over all his enemies. By his death on the cross Jesus won the victory over our greatest enemy, sin and the devil. Through faith God grants this victory to each and every Christian. The battles might be lost here on earth. We know that the war has already been won. Our eyes stay focused on this victory. Our thanks arise for this wonderful victory over sin, death and the devil.

¹ Kings 18:41-45 (NIV)

And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.” 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. “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.”

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.’”

Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel.

The battle is done. God has shown his power over Baal. God will now bring an end to the drought upon the land of Israel. Elijah tells Ahab to hurry home. He does not want Ahab to get caught up in the approaching rainfall. After Ahab leaves, Elijah ascends higher up on Mt. Carmel. He does not gloat in his victory. Elijah bows down to the ground in prayer. Elijah has just won a decisive victory on behalf of God. However, he humbles himself in prayer. What an example for believers everywhere. No matter how great the victories on earth amount to. The believer will constantly go back to God in prayer. A person needs to remain humble. They will constantly take all their concerns to God in prayer.

In this part of the text we also see the end to a severe drought. Elijah sends his servant seven times to look for a raincloud. On the seventh time the servant sees a cloud the size of a man’s hand. God sent rain upon the land for the first time in three and a half years.

III. The Sermon

Over the course of this paper applications have been made. However, now we will take a look at the beginning parts of the sermon. The malady of the text can be easily seen. God demands our full obedience to him. Hopefully none of our members have a Baal set up in their backyard. This does not mean idolatry is dead. Idolatry still rears its ugly head. It takes on more subtle form, materialism, pleasure and the god of self just to name a few. God warns against the dangers of these.

Another warning to take out of this section is unionism. A person cannot ride the fence in their allegiance to God. Sides need to be chosen. A person cannot serve an idol and serve a God at the same time. This warning needs to ring true among people today. We cannot take a little from this religion and a little from that religion. We need to follow what God has laid out for us in his Word. He deserves nothing less than that.
The corresponding virtue can easily be seen as well. God is always in control. He is the all powerful God over all things. We can take anything to God in prayer and know that he will be with us and answer all those prayers. How can one look at this text and not see the victory of our Savior? He wins the victory over all false gods. He has won the victory over sin, death and the devil through his death and resurrection. We need to point our hearers to the cross. We need to remind them to flee to the cross for Christ’s strength and power in their life.

How will one preach on this text? This can be a complicated question. At first glance we see the enormous amount of verses. One might try and divide out this text. A few verses could easily be taken to preach upon at a time. For the purpose of this paper I will give a couple of basic outlines. Perhaps if there is enough time, we could discuss other possibilities.

You Cannot Waver Between Two Sides
I. Following a false god will lead to despair.
II. Trust in the true God who is in control.

One thing that could make it difficult to preach on this text would be part one is law and part two gospel. This sermon could give the preacher the ability to proclaim God’s Word and how unionism destroys religion. It will also end with the fact that we place our trust in God, who will always remain in control. We place our trust here and know that it will never be shaken.

God Conquers All his Enemies
I. He will be with the faithful all the time.
II. God is in control

This outline gives the preacher the chance to show the wonderful victory that our Savior wins. In the first part the Christian can be encouraged that against all odds God will be with his followers all the time. We do not need to doubt in this confidence. Even facing difficult odds, God will always be with the faithful. In part two the preacher can talk about God’s supreme power.

God Remains in Control
I. Through insurmountable odds.
II. To gain the victory over his enemies.

This outline would be my choice. It gives the preacher opportunities to speak on various topics contained in many verses. In part one the preacher can talk about the hope that we have. God will always be with us, even when we think that we are by ourselves. Part two would show the victory and power our Savior has over all his enemies.

I pray that God may be all of us as we proclaim his Word to his people. Enjoy the process of writing sermons. Know that God will be with you. Keep speaking the truth to heart that need to hear it!

To God be the Glory!
Bibliography


Appendix

1 Kings 18:16-45 (BHS/WTS 4.0 Morph)