

YEAR 2, PROPER 18, THURSDAY: EVENING PRAYER

For use with the First Lesson

Adapted from *The Vocabulary of the Church* (1960):

Ba'al
Ashe'rah

BAY-uhl
uh-SHEE-ruh

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the First Book of the Kings

After many days the word of the LORD came to Eli'jah, in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.” So Eli'jah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Sama'ria. And Ahab called Obadi'ah, who was over the household. (Now Obadi'ah revered the LORD greatly; and when Jez'ebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadi'ah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) And Ahab said to Obadi'ah, “Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys; perhaps we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, and not lose some of the animals.” So they divided the land between them to pass through it;

Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadi'ah went in another direction by himself. And as Obadi'ah was on the way, behold, Eli'jah met him; and Obadi'ah recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, “Is it you, my lord Eli'jah?” And he answered him, “It is I. Go, tell your lord, ‘Behold, Eli'jah is here.’” And he said, “Wherein have I sinned, that you would give your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord has not sent to seek you; and when they would say, ‘He is not here,’ he would take an oath of the kingdom or nation, that they had not found you. And now you say, ‘Go, tell your lord, ‘Behold, Eli'jah is here.’’ And as soon as I have gone from you, the Spirit of the LORD will carry you whither I know not; and so, when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have revered the LORD from my youth. Has it not been told my lord what I did when Jez'ebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid a hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now you say, ‘Go, tell your lord, ‘Behold, Eli'jah is here’’; and he will kill me.” And Eli'jah said, “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.” So Obadi'ah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab

went to meet Eli'jah. When Ahab saw Eli'jah, Ahab said to him, “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and your father’s house, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and followed the Ba'als. Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Ba'al and the four hundred prophets of Ashe'rah, who eat at Jez'ebel’s table.”

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Sama'ria, reporting the conversion of the Gentiles, and they gave great joy to all the brethren. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the

apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up, and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.” The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. And after there had been much debate, Peter rose and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.