

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“Outnumbered (by One)”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): 1 Kings 18:16-40; Lev. 4:13-20; Matt. 6:24; Rom. 1:18

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where standing for what is right meant standing alone? It's not easy to stand for truth when opposing voices seem so much louder and more numerous. But here's the reality: silence is itself a choice. And sometimes the LORD calls us to take a stand, even when we feel terribly outnumbered. That's where we find Elijah in 1 Kings 18, during some of Israel's darkest days. Ahab, who was supposed to shepherd God's people, had utterly violated that responsibility.

Alongside Jezebel, he was replacing the worship of ADONAI with the worship of Baal and Asherah. Yet the LORD, in His slow-to-anger kindness, had not abandoned His people. He sent a devastating drought to awaken the king and the nation and call them to repentance. For three and a half years the land suffered, but Ahab's heart remained hardened. Instead of taking responsibility, he accused Elijah of troubling Israel. Now the LORD would confront Israel with a choice that could no longer be avoided. One man would stand before hundreds of false prophets and a nation of indecisive people. Yet he wasn't really standing alone.

1. OUTNUMBERED BY THE FALSE AND THE INDECISIVE (1 Ki. 18:17-22)

Elijah tells Ahab to gather Israel at Mount Carmel, along with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table. The nation is suffering under a terrible drought. The land is dying, and the people are hungry and thirsty. Yet 850 false prophets are eating comfortably at the queen's table. Elijah then turns to the people and asks, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If Adonai is God, follow Him; but if Baal is, follow him.” (1 Ki. 18:21). And the people don't answer him—not even a word. Nevertheless, their silence is a decision. Wavering is a choice. No one wants to take a stand, and that silence has helped bring the nation to this place.

It's easy for us to read this story from the safety of our comfortable seats and shout, “Come on, Israel! Choose the LORD! Get off the fence!” But are we really so different? Baal was associated with prosperity, and Asherah with fertility and sensual pleasure. The gods of prosperity, personal power, and pleasure haven't disappeared. They've simply taken different forms. And unfortunately, believers can try to mix these pursuits with worship of the One True God. We want ADONAI, but we also want to hold onto the values of this world. Yet Yeshua says, “You cannot serve God and money.” (Matt. 6:24). The LORD doesn't share His throne. So ask yourself: Am I trying to worship Him while still serving the gods of this age?

2. OUTNUMBERED BY THE GOD WHO SHOWS UP (1 Ki. 18:23–29)

Elijah proposes a simple test. Two bulls will be prepared for sacrifice, one for the prophets of Baal and the other for Elijah. Neither will have fire placed beneath it. The prophets of Baal will call on their god, and Elijah will call on ADONAI. “The God who answers with fire, He is God.” (1 Ki. 18:24). The people agree. He's supposed to be a storm god! He hasn't managed to provide rain, but surely he can produce a little lightning. So his prophets cry out from morning until noon. Elijah mocks the absurdity, suggesting perhaps their god is thinking, traveling, or sleeping. They shout louder and cut themselves until their blood flows. Still, nothing happens. Scripture says, “But there was no voice—no one answering, no one paying attention.” (1 Ki. 18:29). All their desperate efforts cannot produce a response from a god who isn't there.

There's something important here about worship. These prophets are doing everything they can to manufacture an experience and get their god's attention. But their god is powerless. Worship of ADONAI certainly doesn't exclude our emotions or our full participation. But the purpose isn't simply to make us feel something or give us an experience. Worship isn't about me. It's about Him. All the noise and frenzy of Baal's prophets accomplish absolutely nothing. Then Elijah will step forward with a simple prayer, not because he has discovered a better technique, but because he knows the Living God. The gods of this world may promise security, prosperity, or pleasure; they may demand our devotion, but they cannot save us. Their gods number zero against the One True God.

3. NEVER OUTNUMBERED WHEN THE LORD IS WITH YOU (1 Ki. 18:30–40)

Now Elijah does something remarkable. He calls the people near and repairs the broken altar of ADONAI. Why now? Instead, he shows them what needs to be done. With twelve stones representing the tribes of Israel, he rebuilds the altar in the Name of ADONAI. It's as though he's saying, “Remember who you are. Remember who you belong to.” Then he prepares the sacrifice and pours water over it three times until everything is soaked. What an extravagant offering from a place of scarcity. But this is more than a contest about fire. Elijah is presenting a sacrifice on behalf of a sinful nation. Lev. 4:13–20 describes atonement for the sins of the congregation. Before the rain of mercy comes, the problem of sin must be addressed. God isn't indifferent to sin. He hates what destroys the people He created in His likeness. His holiness demands justice, but His mercy makes a way for restoration.

Then Elijah prays, “Answer me, Adonai, answer me, so that these people may know that You, Adonai, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again.” (1 Ki. 18:37). Just a servant praying in obedience to God's Word. And suddenly, the fire of ADONAI falls! It consumes the offering, the wood, the stones, the dust, and even the water in the trench. The people fall on their faces, crying, “Adonai, He is God! Adonai, He is God!” (1 Ki. 18:39). Notice that Elijah's prayer wasn't merely about demonstrating God's power. It was about turning hearts back to Him. That's what the LORD was after all along. Ultimately, Yeshua's

sacrifice reveals both the seriousness of sin and the mercy of God, making reconciliation possible. Elijah looked terribly outnumbered, but he stood with the One who actually shows up.

CONCLUSION

So what do we do with this? First, don't be an Ahab. When the LORD is trying to get your attention, don't immediately point fingers and blame everyone else. Humble yourself and ask Him what He's trying to reveal. Second, don't be like the indecisive people of Israel, wavering between two opinions. The gods of prosperity, power, and pleasure still compete for our hearts. We cannot serve the LORD while giving our allegiance to the idols of this age. And finally, remember whom you've chosen. No matter how overwhelming the opposition looks, you're never outnumbered when ADONAI is with you.

Perhaps there's a broken altar in your life that needs rebuilding. Through neglect, compromise, or divided loyalties, something else may have taken the place that belongs to Him alone. Or maybe you've been afraid to stand because you feel outnumbered. Today, hear His invitation: "Come near." Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Confess the idols, surrender what you've held back, and turn to the LORD. Yeshua has made the way for you to be reconciled to the Father. The God who answered Elijah is calling His people back to Himself. He is not looking for a performance from us. He is calling us to wholehearted faithfulness, to trust His Word, and to live in such a way that others recognize who truly reigns, even right now. If ADONAI is God, will you follow Him?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Israel remained silent when Elijah challenged them to choose between ADONAI and Baal?
2. What was Elijah communicating by repairing the altar with twelve stones before praying for fire?
3. What modern gods of prosperity, power, or pleasure are most likely to compete for your heart?
4. When hardship exposes something in your life, do you tend to blame others or humble yourself before the LORD?
5. Where do you feel outnumbered today, and what would it look like to stand faithfully with ADONAI?

CLOSING PRAYER

Abba Father, You alone are God. Forgive us for our divided hearts, our silence, and the idols we've allowed to compete for Your place. Search us and reveal what needs to change. Restore the altars we've neglected and turn our hearts wholly toward You. Thank You for Your kindness, even in discipline, and for the sacrifice of Yeshua that makes reconciliation possible. Fill us afresh with Your Holy Spirit. Give us courage to stand for truth when we feel outnumbered. May our lives declare that You alone are God.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.