

I. Intro

A. Text: **1 Kings 18:20-24**

<sup>19</sup> Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, 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 for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. **21** And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. **22** Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. **23** Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. **24** Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken." (**1 Kings 18:20-24**)

B. Context

1. National Emergency
  - a. False worship
    - i. Baal and Asherah Worship
  - b. Self-Pleasing
    - i. Doing whatever seemed right in their own eyes.
    - ii. Having it their way
  - c. Division and civil unrest in the nation.
  - d. Void in National and Spiritual Leadership
2. Elijah Stepped on the Scene and called the nation's attention back to Yahweh: The True God (**1 Kings 17:1**).
  - a. No Rain or dew (except at my word)
    - i. Wasn't actually Elijah's word.
  - b. Elijah Proclaimed God's Word: "No Rain"
  - c. Elijah Prayed God's Word:
    - i. James 5:17: <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not

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*rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.*

- ii. **Deut. 11:16-17:** *<sup>16</sup>Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, <sup>17</sup>lest the LORD 's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.*

### C. Get Ready for Rain (**18:1-2**)

*<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth." <sup>2</sup>So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria. (**1 Kings 18:1-2**)*

- 1. 3 ½ years with a closed heaven
  - a. No refreshing from the Early and Latter rain.
  - b. No divine relief and comfort in the middle of a deserted, parched land.
  - c. Baal (and his wife Ashterah) were supposed to be the gods of rain, fertility and increase.
- 2. Present yourself to Ahab
  - a. Stand in the presence of your people (even though they didn't invite you).
  - b. Confront Injustice
    - i. Jezebel had massacred the prophets (**1 Kings 18:4, 13**)
    - c. Challenge Idolatry
    - d. Unpopular stance
      - i. Hated for standing (**1 Kings 18:17**)

*<sup>17</sup>Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" (**1 Kings 18:17**)*

- ii. Sought to eliminate Elijah for standing (**1 Kings 18:10**)

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**<sup>10</sup>As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. (1 Kings 18:10)**

## II. The Showdown

**<sup>19</sup>Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, 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 for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. (1 Kings 18:20-21)**

### A. How Long Will You Falter (1 Kings 18:21)

1. Double-Minded Man (James 1:7-8)
  - a. Let not that man think that he will receive anything ...
2. Laodicean Church: Neither hot nor Cold (Rev. 3:15-16)

**<sup>22</sup>Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. 23 Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. 24 Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken." (1 Kings 18:22-24)**

### 3. I Alone (450:1)

- a. Wasn't Elijah's Battle.
- b. Who can be against us?

### B. The True God Answers By Fire (1 Kings 18:24)

1. No need for human strength or ingenuity
  - a. No need for human logic or explanation
2. Set up your altar, prepare your sacrifice.
  - a. Call on the god of your own understanding (v.25-26)
    - i. Cry loud.
    - ii. Much effort and theatrics.
  - b. Is Baal... Meditating? Busy? On a trip? Asleep? (v. 27)

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- i. Wake him up with your customs (cutting)
- ii. Work harder.

3. Worked from Noon til Time of Evening Sacrifice (**v. 29**)

- a. No results.

C. The True God Turns \_\_\_\_\_

1. Come Near (**v. 30**)

<sup>30</sup>Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was broken down.* (**v.30**)

- a. Declared a place for God to perform a miracle.
- b. Cleared the Clutter

2. Arranged 12 Stones (**v.31**)

- a. Represented the 12 Tribes of Israel.
- b. Reminder of the covenant that God kept with their fathers.
- c. Reminder of what God had done in the past for their fathers.
  - i. Ex.: **Josh. Ch's 3-4**
  - ii. Israel finally marching into the promised land.
  - iii. Came upon the banks of the Jordan river.
- d. As soon as the priests who bore the ark hit the water, the river split in two.
- e. Appoint 12 men to go back and grab a stone (**Josh. 4:5-8**)

<sup>5</sup> and Joshua said to them: "Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, <sup>6</sup>that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' <sup>7</sup>Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever." (**Josh. 4:5-8**)

- f. Appropriate to reach back and grab reminders that God is in fact a miracle worker.
  - i. Already showed up and showed out.

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- ii. Already showed up on the stage of eternity and rocked the mic so swift that it left the crowd speechless.
- g. God had just shut up heaven for 3 ½ years.
  - i. That was miraculous, but Elijah kept stacking stones.
  - ii. God had already showed out, but Elijah ain't went nowhere! Still stacking stones!
- h. Encore
  - i. Will you do it again?

3. More Prep
  - a. Cut up the bull and laid it on the altar
  - b. Demanded that 4 water pots be poured on the altar, the bull, the wood.
    - i. 2<sup>nd</sup> Time.
    - ii. 3<sup>rd</sup> Time.
  - c. Stark contrast to the manner in which the idol worshipers called on Baal.
    - i. They tried to help their god out.
    - ii. Elijah was convinced that only God could do what this situation called for.
4. Elijah Called on the God of heaven (v. 36-37)

<sup>36</sup> And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “**LORD** God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word. (**1 Kings 18:36**)

- a. You Are God Alone
  - i. You can close up heaven.
  - ii. You can split seas/ rivers
  - iii. And you can turn hearts back to you

#### D. The True God Turns Hearts

<sup>37</sup> Hear me, O **LORD**, hear me, that this people may know that You are the **LORD** God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back to You again. (**v. 1 Kings 18:37**)

1. Do it again, that you may turn hearts back to you

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- a. Heaven had yet to yield rain, but fire fell from heaven (v. 38)

<sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench. (1 Kings 18: 38)

- b. The people fell on their faces and declared that Yahweh, He is God. (v. 39)

<sup>39</sup> Now when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!” (1 Kings 18: 39)