

MAY 12, 2024

3.2

SERIES 3: ELIJAH AND ELISHA

FIRE FROM HEAVEN

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God demands exclusive loyalty and worship.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will only worship the one true God in my life.



FOCUS VERSE: I Kings 18:21

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

LESSON TEXT: I Kings 18:20-39



Lesson Title: Fire from Heaven

Icebreaker: How many other Apostolics work or go to school with you?

I. THE SHOWDOWN

» *Why do you think sinners often blame the people of God or the ministry for troubles caused by sin?*

A. Elijah Challenged Ahab

B. I Will Challenge Those Who Would Lead God's People Astray

» *When should we contend for the faith? When should we be silent?*

II. GOD'S PROVISION AT ZAREPHATH

» *Why do you think some people fail to make the obvious choice to serve God?*

A. Prophets Sacrificed to Baal

B. Elijah Sacrificed to Jehovah

C. I Will Stand for Jehovah Alone

» *In what way can you stand up for God and demonstrate your faithfulness?*

III. JEHOVAH DEFEATED BAAL

A. Jehovah Answered by Fire

B. The People Recommitted

C. I Will Only Worship the One True God in My Life

» *What do you need to restore to your life in order to be more faithful?*

Prayer Focus

- For courage to stand up for God
- For God to use us for His glory when we stand for Him

BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: I Kings 18:20-39

Elijah's experience on Mount Carmel is possibly the most memorable miracle of Elijah's prophetic career. Leading up to this event, Ahab had accused Elijah of being a troubler of Israel (I Kings 18:17), to which Elijah stated that Ahab and his idolatrous ways had been the true troublers of Israel (v. 18). Elijah then boldly requested for all of Israel, including the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, to meet him on Carmel.

The dynamics of this meeting are incredibly unique. Ahab agreed to this probably out of fear of further hardship. The last time Ahab had met with Elijah, the prophet had initiated a drought that plagued all Israel. For the duration of the drought, the people witnessed Jehovah's ability to stop the rain and dew and Baal's inability to provide—despite being the god of bountiful crops. Even though this had been Israel's most recent and ongoing experience, not a single Israelite responded when Elijah challenged them to choose between God and Baal (I Kings 18:21). Their lack of response demonstrated the hardness of their hearts and how deeply they were entrenched in their wicked idolatry.

The challenge between Elijah and the prophets of Baal was clear and simple, and everyone present quickly agreed upon the terms. Elijah gladly gave every advantage to the worshipers of Baal. Obviously, no voice responded to the Baal worshipers' prayers, nor did any fire fall. However, fire fell immediately when Elijah prayed a simple prayer of faith.

The Israelites immediately bowed down and worshiped Jehovah. Then they slaughtered the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:39-40). It is interesting that the drought ended and rain returned only after the prophets of Baal were purged from Israel. The abundance and provision that God offers cannot coexist with idolatry because God will not share His glory with false gods who do nothing to provide.



THE CHALLENGE BETWEEN ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL WAS CLEAR AND SIMPLE, AND EVERYONE PRESENT QUICKLY AGREED UPON THE TERMS.

DAY 1

I Kings 18:20–24

²⁰ So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

²¹ And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

²² Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

²³ Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:

²⁴ And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

Biblical Insight

Elijah's command for the people of Israel to choose between Baal and Jehovah was reminiscent of Joshua challenging the Israelites to make a decision to choose whom they would serve (Joshua 24:15). However, Joshua's listeners responded positively; the silence of Elijah's audience demonstrated the level of apostasy to which Israel had fallen. Their silence fueled Elijah's belief that he was truly all alone in his mission. Elijah would repeat a version of his "I, even I only, remain" speech during his time in a cave on Mount Horeb (I Kings 19:10, 14), although under very different circumstances.

Daily Devotion

Martin Niemöller pastored an important Lutheran congregation in Germany. As the Nazi Party gained prominence, Niemöller initially appreciated their platform. His opinion changed in 1933 after Adolf Hitler rose to lead the Nazis. Niemöller condemned Hitler's meddling with churches. Deeming him a rebel, the Nazis placed the minister in a concentration camp from 1937–45. Niemöller decried the violations that occurred in prisons and concentration camps.

When World War II ended, Niemöller confessed that he and many of his fellow Germans had effectively aided and abetted the Nazi Party in imprisoning, persecuting, and slaughtering millions since they remained silent in the face of these extreme horrors. Wishing that he had spoken out sooner, Martin demonstrated that silence was not merely a passive act; it was essentially commiserating with the wicked.

The silence of Elijah's audience spoke volumes. Our silence as Christians speaks volumes. Now is not the time for Christians to be silent as the world follows false gods. Instead, we must speak up, share Jesus, and speak the truth in love.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 2

I Kings 18:25-29

²⁵ And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

²⁶ And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

²⁷ And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

²⁸ And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

²⁹ And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

Biblical Insight

Elijah suggested Baal might have been talking, deep in thought, on a trip, or even sleeping. One translation even suggests Elijah mocking Baal for relieving himself. These mocks insinuated the worshipers were unimportant in their deity's eyes; perhaps Baal did not think about them as much as they thought. The idea that Baal might be on a journey underscored that Baal was not omnipresent like Jehovah. Finally, since the prophets of Baal worshiped throughout the day, the suggestion that Baal was sleeping implied their lazy deity was wasting away daylight hours.

Daily Devotion

One day in India, a parade of celebrating Hindus tried to navigate a trailer-mounted, elephant-headed idol through a narrow alley. The parade of people encountered a low tree limb that blocked the ten-foot tall idol's progress. The crowd could not back out of the alley, so they tried in vain to sever the tree limb.

While watching the parade, a former Hindu commented, "This is the perfect picture of idol worship. People are expecting this god to remove obstacles in their lives, but it cannot even remove a tree limb." The former Hindu went on to explain how his own conversion to Christianity began when he realized that idols were powerless. This revelation opened His heart to Jesus.

Today millions of people in the world still worship physical idols. Pray that God will reveal himself to them and open their eyes to the emptiness of idol worship. Pray that we will not let idols of our own making receive our worship.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 3

I Kings 18:30–32

³⁰ And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

³¹ And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

³² and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

Biblical Insight

The altar of the LORD was broken down and in need of repair, serving as another sign of Israel's backslidden condition. Who knows how long it had been since a sacrifice was performed on the altar of the LORD?

Elijah gathered twelve stones, one for each tribe of Israel, reminding the onlookers of Israel's original state: twelve tribes, unified and formed by Jehovah. Despite their current division, they were originally one people, and despite their current idolatry, they were originally created and shaped by Jehovah.

Daily Devotion

During the firebombing of Dresden, Germany, in World War II, the 200-year-old Baroque-style Frauenkirche church was destroyed. After the war, rebuilding the church was impossible, so officials in East Germany left the rubble as a memorial to the fallen. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, people began to envision restoring the Frauenkirche church.

Together, Germans who were once divided by a physical wall and the wall of communism, raised money to restore the church. From 1993–2005, former enemies rebuilt the church, and today the church stands as a physical reminder of restoration and reunification.

It is not God's will for His children to be divided. We are a part of one body—His. Ask yourself, is there any division between you and a brother or sister in Christ? If so, pray and seek paths toward restoration.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 4

I Kings 18:33-35

³³ And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

³⁴ And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

³⁵ And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

Biblical Insight

Elijah was so confident in Jehovah’s supremacy that Elijah seemingly gave the idol worshipers the upper hand in the contest. Elijah let his opponents go first. He gave them the entire day to worship. Perhaps the sun might have serendipitously lit a spark to the benefit of the Baalists, leaving Elijah to sacrifice at night. Furthermore, Elijah drenched the sacrifice, wood, and stone with water, forming a small moat around the altar. Some doubtless wondered why he wasted so much water during a drought. Elijah wanted there to be no question that Jehovah alone made the fire fall.

Daily Devotion

On January 13, 2011, in Nigeria’s Plateau state, Alice watched as her husband was killed by their Fulani neighbors who were members of the Boko Haram terrorist organization. Taking shelter in a nearby village, a Christian family offered her an apartment. There she made a vow to God that she would live for Him.

A few days later, Alice saw the neighbor who had killed her husband. In that moment, God did the impossible: He filled her heart with love for the man’s soul. Gathering what little food she had, Alice went and shared a meal with him. After that day, Alice made it her life’s mission to extend love to the Fulani.

Our God specializes in making the impossible possible. For Elijah it was fire from Heaven consuming a wet altar and sacrifice. For Alice, God empowered her to love her husband’s killer. Journal things in your life that you thought were impossible until God made them possible.



Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 5

I Kings 18:36–39

³⁶ 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 of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

³⁷ Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

³⁸ Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.

Biblical Insight

In contrast to the prayers of the prophets of Baal, Elijah's prayer was simple and quiet. Elijah's desire for the fire to fall was not for his personal vindication but so Jehovah's power and glory would be demonstrated to every onlooker. The fire fell and consumed everything—even the twelve stones that represented the twelve tribes of Israel. Perhaps by consuming the twelve stones, Jehovah was demonstrating that even Israel was not exempt from being consumed if they did not turn away from Baal worship.

Daily Devotion

Six-year-old Shiloh used to have vivid nightmares. In the middle of the night, he could be heard yelling for help, and other times he would be begging for the wolves to go away. One morning Shiloh was busy getting ready for school. He was smiling, laughing, and in good spirits when he nonchalantly mentioned that he had a nightmare the previous night.

Then Shiloh said, "It's okay. I told Jesus about the nightmare and how I do not like being scared. I asked Him to take care of my fear, and He did! It was easy!" Sometimes we can overcomplicate prayer. We may get caught up in the appearance of prayer or feel self-conscious that our prayers may not be elaborate as others' prayers.

Prayer was never meant to be complicated. Just like Shiloh discovered, prayer is meant to be easy. Share your cares with Jesus, and then trust Him with childlike faith.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*
