

## **Elijah Took A Stand**

**BIBLE BASIS: Lesson Scripture:**

**1Kings 18:20-24, 30-35, 38-39**

**BIBLE TRUTH:**

**If Gods message fails to point out the sin of the people, then we have not been faithful to Gods Word.**

**Isa. 58:1, Ps. 94:12, 16-17, Eph. 6:10-15**

**MEMORY VERSE:**

**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. 1King 18:39**

**Lesson Aim**

**That each student will learn to have the confidence to stand up and the courage to speak out for God when it appears as though all odds are against you. When we stand up for God, God will stand up for us. Joshua 1:1-9, 24:15**

# Introduction

- We may regard ourselves as smaller than Elijah, but we have something that he did not have. We have the Holy Ghost abiding in us. Giving us access to the powers of heaven. 1Cor. 4:7, Jam. 5:16-18
- Elijah was a ordinary man, that did extra-ordinary things because he was willing to have faith in the true and living God. Mark 11:22-25
- We first read of him when God revealed to him that there would be no dew or rain in Israel until the Lord declared otherwise. 1King 17:1
- Little is said in Scripture about Elijah's parents. But we learn much about their testimony by the name they gave their son. The name Elijah means Jehovah is God, spoke to their testimony which was courageous, continuous, and correct.
- In this lesson we see him at his best, bravely meeting Satan's prophets and proving them wrong. Elijah thought he was God's only prophet in Israel, but he was told that there were 7000 people who had not bowed the knees to Baal. God will never be without a witness. 1King 19:18
- **The Bold Confrontation:** The King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Ahab, call Elijah a trouble maker and blamed him for the famine that was in the land. Elijah turns around and placed the blame on King Ahab and his leadership for forsaking the commandments of the Lord and for following Baalim. Then challenged the king to send the false prophets to Mt. Carmel for a contest. 1King 18:17-19

# Real Authority

- **1Kings 18:20-21 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.**
- Ahab obeyed Elijah! We are surprised that Ahab did not make some negative remarks, or ask Elijah who he thought he was to be ordering the king around. Ahab went along with Elijah's assignment and plan for the Mt. Carmel confrontation. Why? [1] partly because it was so fair and reasonable that he could not refuse it with honor, nor without the discontent of all his people; [2] partly, because the urgency of the present distress made him willing to try any means to find relief from the famine; [3] partly, out of curiosity of seeing some extraordinary miracle; and [4] God inclined his heart to agree with it. Prov. 21:1
- Ahab's cooperation was a result of the power of God. This event demonstrates the power of a believer when we are walking in the authority we have in Christ. 1John 4:4
- A Prophet of the Lord could, if he were firm and brave, exercise authority even over the most powerful even the king. Ahab obeying Elijah was nothing short of a miracle. When we are doing God's work, we can expect God to work mightily on our behalf. 2Cor. 6:1
- To settle their differences, Elijah asked Ahab to send for all the children of Israel, and gathered all the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the whore goddess Asherah unto Mt. Carmel.

# Silence Is Not Always Good

- [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.
- The big problem Elijah deals with is that the people were wavering. The contest on Mount Carmel was to stop this wavering. There was no middle ground with Elijah. It is the same with God. We must be for Him or against Him. God has no use for a lukewarm saints. Rev. 3:16
- Israel was paying a big price for their wavering habit. A drought had come and devastated the land. What a price to pay for trying to please both the world and God. Taking a stand for God will cost you something. What we need to realize is that failure to take a stand costs so much more. The wavering practice looks like the easy road; but it isn't. Israel wavering cause the famine in the land to continue.
- We should not be surprised at their silence for that is exactly what a waverer would do. They would not “amen” Elijah for fear of offending the Prophets of Baal, but they would not “boo” Elijah either lest they incur more of his wrath.
- Power is not needed if we just sit around and remain silent about Christ. The Holy Spirit releases power only when we begin to minister and actually need it. It is when we speak up for Christ, that the Spirit of God activates the power within our spirit and releases the power to face the difficulties of life and transform cities for Christ. Acts 1:8

# Don't Believe Everything You Think

- [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.
- The prophets of Baal represented quite an impressive group in both numbers and worldly status. On Mount Carmel they outnumbered the prophets of Jehovah 450 to 1. They had more followers than Jehovah, too. There were only 7,000 which have not bowed unto Baal. The population of Israel at time exceeded 3 million. 1Kings 19:18
- Which meant those who bowed to Baal numbered in the millions. Truth is not verified by popularity nor by the celebrity status of its members. It is not who is the loudest and largest or the most popular that establishes which is right. Too often we, as believers fall into this trap of judging things by its outward appearance. John 7:24
- The church with the biggest offerings and the most impressive statistics is judged the best church. But on Mount Carmel it would be the fire, not any of these other things, which would establish Who was God.
- Feeling like a minority seems to be a common thing among believers. Elijah thought he was the only prophets that had not bow to Baal. We must be careful not to believe everything that we think.

# A Fair Contest

- [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:
- The proposed contest was proposed to examine the claims of two opposing religions. It was not just for mere entertainment.
- This contest was a fair contest. Each religion was given the same test. It was one bullock and one altar for each. The contest was needed because it would expose the truth. In Israel, the truth was being dishonored, rejected, and despised. It was time to reverse that practice. Having this contest was following a principle to examine religious claims to check on their validity. 1John 4:1, 1Thes. 5:21
- Israel had paid a terrible price because of Baal worship. The drought had nearly destroyed the land and the people. Examining religious claims is so necessary if one wishes to avoid the devastating consequences of being deceived by false religions.
- Unfortunately, when it comes to religion, many are like Jacob was in regards to the report about Joseph's death. He did not examine things carefully. If Jacob had examined Joseph's coat, he would not have been in hopeless misery; for he would have seen that his boys' story was full of holes because the coat was not full of holes. Gen. 37:20-34

# A God That Answers By Fire

- [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.
- Both the prophets of Baal and Israel's own history saw fire as a means of showing divine approval for a sacrifice. In Baal religion, Baal was considered the fire-god. Baal was considered the fire or body of the sun, rather than the light.
- Israel's religion not only focused on fire on the altar; but fire was prominent in other significant experiences such as the burning bush which Moses saw and the pillar of fire which led the Israelites at night in the wilderness.
- Fire was the sign. Why? Because fire spoke of judgment, and judgment must first come before blessing.
- Though circumstances did call for rain, they first called for judgment upon Israel's sin. Before God's blessings come upon mankind, the principle is that judgment must fall upon the sin of man. 2Chr 7:13-14
- Elijah said, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God. The people finally made a decision to endorse the plan.

# Reminding Israel Who They Are

- 1Kings 18:30-31 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:
- Elijah says, Come near unto me. It appears he wanted the people to see the altar of the Lord. It was broken down and neglected which would represent the physical evidence they had turn away from following the Lord.
- True religion has nothing to conceal, nothing to hide. It can invite people to come near to examine closely the facts. Truth begs to be examined, investigated, and scrutinized; for when it is, it will shine forth in its glory. Jesus said, “Search the scriptures. John 5:39
- The 12 stones which represent the 12 sons of Jacob of whom the word of the Lord came. Israel shall be thy name. Gen 32:22-28
- Israel, like Jacob, didn't know who they were. God had called them out of the world to be his representative. They had not only lost their identity they had also lost their purpose for being. This is a major problem in the church today. It is important that we come to understand who we are in Christ and what our purpose is in the church. 2Cor. 5:17-19 . Du.7:1-9 Rev. 5:10



# Elijah Reconstructs The Altar

- [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.
- Elijah built the altar with 12 stones. This spoke of the twelve tribes of Israel and was a rebuke of the division of the nation—a division which had its root cause in idolatry. It started with Solomon because of his many wives, and it ruined him and divided the nation. 1Kings 11:11:29-33
- False religions divide, they put a great division between God and man,
- Note here that Elijah built the altar “in the name of the Lord”. It was not constructed in the name of Elijah or in some denomination. Elijah has his place and so do denominations; but we need to build our churches, our schools, and our ministries in the name of the Lord, not in our own names. Religions and religious leaders which emphasize themselves and not God expose themselves as fraudulent.

# Doing Things Decent And In Order

- [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..
- Then he prepares the wooden altar to place the sacrifice on, after the sacrifice was cut in pieces. Then he tells the people to fill 4 barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wooden altar 3 times. Till the water had drenched the altar and filled the trench.
- A bullock was a sin offering. It recognized the sinfulness of man and the need for the mercy of God. Ex 29:10-14
- How appropriate this was in the case of Israel. Sin was the problem in the land of Israel, and God's mercy and blood was desperately needed to forgive the people and heal the land. Heb 9:22
- Sin brings disorder and confusion. But true religion takes us to the Lord Who straightens things out in our life.
- Neatness, tidiness, efficiency, and orderliness are often lacking in the care of facilities and in the administration of the business of the church. Oftentimes the reason the wood is not put in order is that people simply do not care. We only want to do just enough to get by. We at times are not respectful of God's work. 1 Cor. 14:40

# The Water Of Integrity

- [35] And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water
- The water demonstrated the practice of integrity. Baal worship was notorious for deceit, as are all false religions. The worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob required the integrity of the people to be acceptable with God. Amos 5:21-27
- Pouring water on the sacrifice emphasized that the fire would be supernatural—not started in secret by man, which was the practice of the prophets of Baal.
- As believers, we should be characterized by truthfulness. But, this is often not the case. Church statistics are often padded to appear to be something it is not. Church members are often dishonest when they file their income tax reports. Rom 12:17
- One would think that people would have rejected Baalism a long time ago because of its obvious dishonesty and would have followed a man like Elijah whose honesty was so evident. But the fact is people often prefer dishonesty to honesty. The unholy prefer the unholy. Isa. 30:10
- The water demonstrated the power of God. False religion could not get a fire started in the middle of the day when the sun was the hottest and when everything was dry. But true religion can start a fire when the sacrifice, wood, and altar are all saturated with water. Du. 4:23-24

# Elijah Prays

- 36 Then Elijah prays; 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.
- Elijah prayed before the altar. But his praying was unlike the praying of the prophets of Baal. It did not include loud shouting, was not long, and was not accompanied by the cutting of the body. The key to Elijah's prayer is seen in the four requests he made to God.
- First, he prayed for the *glory of God*. It was not rain first, but God's glory first. The reason for their problems was that God was not first. In our praying we must correct the lack of honor for God before we get to the lack of rain. Luke 11:1-2
- Second, he prayed for his own *testimony*. This is a wise prayer which says he wants everyone to know Whom he lives for and Whom he serves. It is a prayer that his testimony might ring true regardless. That is not an easy prayer to pray when you are outnumbered 450 to 1 as Elijah was. Job 16:19 .
- Third, he prayed according to God's Word. As we noted earlier, true religion will put great emphasis on the Word of God. It will want the Word to be the authority. The carnal churches give themselves away by their lack of emphasis on the Word. Matt. 4:4

# Elijah Prays

- 37Hear 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.
- Fourth, he prayed for *revival* amongst the people. He still has not prayed for rain yet! He is wise; they needed revival before they needed rain. Our primary need is spiritual, not material; and true religion puts the emphasis on spiritual programs, not on social programs. Keep first things first. It is revival then rain, not rain then revival. 2Chr. 7:13-14
- The words of this prayer indicate that this prayer came from the Lord. He did not pray from his emotional feelings, his personal thoughts, his own intentions, mood, or in any kind of motivation from the circumstances confronting him or for the fulfilling of his own purpose. He prayed according to the prayer given him by the Lord for the accomplishing of His will.
- Here we see Elijah not only worship God by offering the evening sacrifice, but, he calls on the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel to turn the heart of the people back to Him. Jer. 31:32-24

# The Truth Of The Gospel Displayed

- 1 Kings 18:38-39 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.
- God responded when the Elijah prayed because his prayer was according to Gods will. 1John 5:14-15
- It shows us that the prayers of one sanctified believer can be effective. When our walk matches our talk we are armed and dangerous and fit for the masters use. We dare not under-estimate what God will do in response to a faithful servant on his knees. Jam 5:15-17
- The Fire fell on the *altar*. It did not fall on the people. This event gives us an illustration of the Gospel message of the substitutional death of Christ. Notice where the fire fell. The fire didn't fall on the people but on sacrifice. So it is that Jesus took our judgment on Himself. Christ is the great substitute for our sins. He died on the cross and the judgment of God fell on Him instead of on us. Isa 53:1-5
- The rich man in hell cried for water because he was experiencing the fiery judgment of God upon him for his sins. Christ was not his Savior; so he suffered for his own sins and is still suffering in the fire.
- That is the great message of the gospel. it does not focus on works, on our own merits, on our own blood shedding, but it focuses on the work of Christ on the cross for us. John 17:4, 19:30, 1Cor. 15:1-4

- Attached is the Sunday School lesson for this week. You must read every scripture references to receive the maximum benefit from these lesson. Isa. 55:8-9
- Brother Michael