

## **Elijah's God Lives Today** **I Kings 18:17-40 (New King James)**

Many years ago, as is recorded in the Bible, Ahab ascended to the Throne of Israel. He married an idolatrous woman and became a very wicked king. He led the children of Israel into idolatry, and turned them from worshipping Jehovah. God sent a prophet, Elijah, to bring judgment on Ahab. Elijah promised Ahab that there would be no rain until Elijah called for it. Then God told Elijah to leave. For almost three full years Elijah and Ahab did not meet. God then told Elijah to go to Ahab and He would send rain.

### **I. The Challenge**

#### **A. The Controversy**

Immediately upon greeting one another, a controversy arose. In verses 17 and 18 we read, *“And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubled Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baal.”*

#### ***Application for today***

When we are asked “Who is right in their religious teachings?” what do we respond? Are we like the people in verse 21 who did not answer Elijah when he questioned them *“if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.”* Are we afraid to speak up about God? Are we hesitant when friends are discussing the “big bang theory” vs creation? Do we get nervous when someone asks us about how the Bible could possibly be true? If so, then we are no better than those who worshipped Baal. Remember in Revelation 3:15-16 *“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”* I don’t know about you but I certainly do not want God to spue me out of His mouth – do you?

#### **B. The Contestants**

##### **1. Baal’s followers**

The King and Queen had different religious establishments. Prophets of Baal were for the King and his servants. To them, Baal was the supreme lord and master of the world - the sun. 450 priests were

maintained as prophets of Baal. The 400 prophets of the Grove were the Queens and they ate at her table. They worshipped Asherah or Venus.

### ***Application for today***

Who do we worship? While we may not worship Baal, there are many gods that tempt us. Gods such as our job, position, money, house, etc. Do we just drift from one to the other seeking to find peace and fulfillment? We need to remember that the Lord God is the only way to have true peace and fulfillment in this lifetime.

## **2. Elijah**

He could not have swayed the people but he knew God would undertake this on his behalf (Isaiah 41:10 – *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*)

### ***Application for today***

When we face circumstances beyond our human understanding, do we feel alone/angry with God or are we confident that God is with us. Like Elijah, if He is with us, we can face anything.

## **C. The Conditions**

Verse 23, 24 – *“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: And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answers by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.”* Elijah gave them every advantage when he said the God who answered by fire would be the true God, for Baal worship was sun worship. Baal being therefore the god of fire and could work in his special magic.

## **II. The Contest**

### **A. Priests**

To perform these sacrificial attitudes, they have persons who are taught to practice them from their earliest years, according to directions laid down in their religious books. They are also taught to

make their joints and body pliant. They have masters, whose business it is to teach these attitudes and contortions according to the rules laid down in those books. It seems this was the general practice of idolatry.

### ***Application for today***

You can be trained from childhood and still be wrong. We need to read the Holy Scriptures for ourselves and ask the Lord to show us truth. Once we know the truth, we need to repent and return to God. Do we profess or possess the Messiah? Your answer could affect you for eternity.

## **B. The Cold Sacrifice**

The cold, unburnt sacrifice vs. 25-29. Vs. 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.”*

Verse 27 – *“And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud (make a great noise), for he is a god (he is the supreme God – you worship him as such, he must answer); either he is talking, or he is pursuing (on some special business), or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth (among Asiatic idolaters, their Gods have different functions to fulfill and require sleep and rest), and must be awaked.”* Elijah was conscious of God’s presence or he never would have mocked his enemies.

Verse 28 - *“And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.”* This was done according to the rites of that barbarous religion; if the blood of the bullock would not move him, they thought their own blood might; they smeared it on themselves and the sacrifice. This was done in all of the heathen world – Syrians, Persians, Greek, etc.

### ***Application for today***

Baal failed as will all false gods fail in a crisis. The only one who will never fail or sleep is Jehovah. He is awake 24/7 and available anytime we cry out to Him. We may not always agree with His plan for our lives but I can assure you, His plan is the perfect plan for our lives. The result of our crying out to God is that we know He will hear us and will comfort us no matter what we are going through. There

are times when we have made bad choices and must suffer the consequences of those choices. God, however, will give us peace to see those consequences through to the end.

### **C. The Consumed Sacrifice** (verses 30-38)

1. Verse 30 – *“And Elijah said unto all the people, come near unto me.”* Previously there had been 450 wild incensed men raging about the altar. Now only one quiet man, so the crowd could come closer.

#### ***Application for today***

Are our lives so quiet and peaceful, with the presence of God that others will draw near to see God work through us? Are we nervous and snappy, thus hindering our testimony. “In quietness and confidence is your strength.” “In patience possess ye your souls.”

2. Verse 30 – *“Repaired the altar of the Lord”* There had been an altar of Jehovah in that place, called even among the heathens, the altar of Carmel, probably built in the time of the judges, or by Saul. Elijah could not build on something of God that had been tainted by the world. It had to be clean.

#### ***Application for today***

We must be clean in order to be used. Clean of anything that would mar us. How do we get clean? We do not have sacrificial animals any more, but rather we have the sacrificial blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all our sins – no matter how little or how large. There is no sin greater than the sacrificial blood of Jesus.

3. Verse 31 – *“And Elijah took 12 stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob”* to show that all the 12 tribes of Israel should unite in the worship of Jehovah.

4. Verse 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.”* Verse 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.”* Pouring all that water on sacrifice and wood took away all suspicion of tricks.

An ancient writer has said that he had seen holes dug in the earth under heathen altars with funnels proceeding from them and connecting with openings on the tops of the altars. In the holes the

priests concealed fire, which coming through the funnels with the holes, set fire to the wood and consumed the sacrifice. The simple people were deceived into thinking it was a miracle.

### ***Application for today***

How are we deceived? How many people believe that a bigger house, a more prestigious job with a corner office, the new car which is newer than our neighbor, our child going to an exclusive college (even if we have to bribe someone to get them in), will bring us happiness.

5. Verse 36 – *“Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel”* He addressed the Supreme Being that the people might know when the answer was given that it was from the God whom the patriarchs worshipped and thus have their hearts turned back again in the true religion of their ancestors.

6. Verse 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.”* Everything was consumed including the stones to show that it was no common fire.

### **III The Conquest Completed (verses 39-40)**

Verse 39 - *“And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.”* No praise to Elijah, all to the Lord. This is the way it should be otherwise Elijah would have a problem with a prideful spirit.

### ***Application for today***

This miracle working Jehovah is on the throne today. He can meet whatever need you may have, regardless of what it might entail. Elijah’s God still lives today and is able to send down to each one of us, wherever we might be and whatever our circumstances, the cleansing fire.