

Elijah On Mount Carmel

1 Kings 18:1-40

The prophet Elijah lived during the terrible reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel . They **“did evil in the sight of the Lord** (1 Kings 16:30; 21:25). In fact, **“Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him”** (1 Kings 16:33).

The situation was grim to say the least. Jezebel, Ahab’s wicked wife, hated Israel’s God so much that she massacred most of His prophets. Elijah went into hiding and Ahab was hunting him down, blaming him for the devastating drought that God had brought upon the land.

ELIJAH’S INTERACTION WITH OBADIAH

Before Elijah meets up with Ahab again , he meets Obadiah . Obadiah was a true prophet of the Lord , who oversaw Ahab’s house. He greatly feared the Lord , but he also feared the king and his evil wife .

He must have been “ a secret believer ” , that is probably why he was still alive . He hid a 100 of God’s prophets from Jezebel’s wrath in caves, bringing them bread and water .

Elijah tells Obadiah to go tell Ahab , **“Elijah is here.”** But Obadiah was afraid for his life , should Ahab never meet up with Elijah. But Elijah reassured him , letting him know that he was not going anywhere , but was ready to meet Ahab.

Obadiah represents the Christian who fears God in secret , but fears man in public. Obadiah was unequally yoked with an evil ruler , pretty much as Mike Pence was unequally yoked with Donald Trump. When someone entangles himself that way, he compromises his testimony and greatly limits his spiritual growth. Such compromise results in spiritual instability for any Christian.

2 Cor. 6:14 –**Do not be yoked up with unbelievers .**

ELIJAH'S INTERACTION WITH AHAB

By divine appointment , Elijah stages a confrontation with Ahab for a second time.

Three years earlier rain was withheld at the word Elijah in the presence of the king , now the coming of the rain must also be announced in the presence of the king . This would again prove that Elijah was God's spokesman.

Elijah and the king met privately. Ahab greeted Elijah as the **"troublemaker of Israel"** (1 Kings 18:17). Elijah responded, **"I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals"** (1 Kings 18:18).

Elijah then challenged Ahab to a showdown between himself and the prophets of Baal and Asherah. Ahab agreed and assembled the Israelites along with 450 pagan prophets of his on top of Mount Carmel, at Elijah's request . Mt Carmel was linked with Baal worship ; therefore, Elijah was taking the battle right into enemy territory.

The two major sins that brought about the judgment of drought on God's people were: 1) the rejection of God's word , and 2) the serving of other gods. It was fitting , by God's righteous standards , that all those who contributed to these sins must be present. The false prophets were to be exposed and judged, so that the rain may come again. Moreover, God's people might have their hearts turned back to Him.

The challenge between Elijah and the prophets of Ahab consisted of an animal sacrifice . A bull for Jehovah , and a bull for Baal. The test was that each party would call on their god , so that , the god that answered by fire , would be the true God.

ELIJAH'S INTERACTION WITH ISRAEL

Before the contest began, Elijah charged the Israelites to commit to God fully and reject Baal. ***“How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him,”*** he shouted (1 Kings 18:21).

They were halfway serving God and halfway serving Baal. By profession they were God’s people . By practice they were worshippers of Baal. They must stop that . There was no more room for compromise. God is giving them an ultimatum. God was implying , “ You are either for me or against me . You cannot have it both ways.”

Many are like that today . They do not oppose Christ , but they will not accept and confess Christ. They say they believe in Christ but show no evidence of living for Christ. They would like to die as saints but live as sinners. They may have Christ on their lips , but He is far from their hearts.

If you still have not made your decision to surrender your life to Christ once and for all , the Lord says to you, “ *How long , will you sit on the fence?” How long will it take you to settle you soul’s destiny ? How long , will you waste your life , play with sin , neglect salvation, and play with God and not take Him seriously ?*

God is saying, “ Its decision time.” The bible says, “ ***Today , if you hear my voice , do not harden your heart. Do not receive God’s grace in vain. Now is the time of God’s favor. Now is the day of salvation.***”

You can be saved today. Turn to Christ , He is Lord and be saved . Do not be double minded about giving your life over to Christ. Make up your mind, tomorrow might be too late . Hell waits for you , if heaven is not desirable for you .

As the people stood before Elijah, they were dead silent . They were obviously guilty , conscience-stricken, and self-condemned, because of their sins.

ELIJAH’S INTERACTION WITH BAAL’S PROPHETS

In that dark period in Israel's history , God empowered Elijah to perform one of the greatest miracles in the Old Testament.

Standing before all Israel, the lone prophet , Elijah faced off with the prophets of Baal, each praying to their god and asking for fire from heaven to burn the sacrifice on the altar. The true god would be the one who sent fire to consume the sacrifice.

Elijah let the prophets of Baal went first . When they called on their god, nothing happened. They danced hard , cut themselves and cried out to Baal for hours, but 1 Kings 18:26 says, ***“There was no voice; no one answered.”***

Then Elijah taunts them with humorous sarcasm, saying, “ shout louder to Baal , maybe he's deaf, maybe he is asleep , maybe he's on journey somewhere , maybe he is relieving himself in the washroom.”

Their god was a non-entity, a nothing, a nobody. Baal was supposed to be the god of weather ,the god of the storm , but he had no power to bring the rain, and now he was powerless to bring the lightning bolt to start the fire. He was a sham god.

Next, it was Elijah's turn. He avoids Baal's altar. God's man has no busy there. 2 Cor. 6 : 16 – ***“What agreement has the temple of God with idols?”*** So, he called the people to himself and began to repair Jehovah's altar on Mt. Carmel , which was in ruins, having been destroyed by the false prophets.

He used 12 stones , one for each tribe to erect it . This meant God was not pleased that the kingdom was divided in the first place . God's wants his people united. Paul 1 Cor. 1:10 , exhorts us, ***“let there be no divisions among you , but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought .”***

Elijah ***built the altar in the name of the Lord*** (V32). The bible says , in Col.3:17, ***“and whatever you do , whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”***

To eliminate any natural explanation for the miracle God was about to perform, Elijah had the people saturate the altar with 12 pots of water. They drowned the wood, the sacrifice, and the space under the wood (1 Kings 18:30-35). When the fire fell, Elijah wanted to make sure nobody would doubt it came from the one true God.

Then the prophet Elijah offered up a simple prayer, consisting of 4 essential requests .

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. 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 (1 Kings 18:36-37).

Elijah did not have to say much because he knew his God was real, alive, and listening. Anyone who worries about having the right words to pray can take comfort in this fact: ***“If anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him”*** (John 9:31). The power of prayer does not reside in the many words that are spoken, but in the God to whom the prayer is addressed.

The false prophets practically prayed all day with no results . Elijah prayed under one minute with great results, because his prayer was to the right God and coupled with faith .

Jesus says in Matt. 21: 22— ***“If you believe , you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”***

Vs 38, ***Then*** , the fire of the Lord fell from heaven, consuming Elijah’s sacrifice, the wood, stones, water, and everything surrounding it. Everything! And the response to this miracle was undeniable: ***“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).

Then Elijah gave the order to slay all the false prophets, sparing none.

The issues in Elijah's day were more like our own than you might imagine. It is not so much that we have rejected God, but we have made Him an insignificant part of our lives. He is our Sunday God—our church God.

We put Him in a little section of our life, not in the driver's seat. When we are not worshipping Him, we worship things like success, financial achievement, and popularity. Little "g" gods claim our affections, and little by little, they become substitutes for the one true God, Jehovah. Jesus said we cannot serve two masters. God is a jealous God. He is not going to tolerate any rivals.

The prophet Elijah stood alone. We will be called to stand alone at times. But remember, one with God is a majority. Elijah stood alone before an entire nation and demanded that they make a choice. He offered no room for compromise. The children of Israel could align themselves with the prophets of Baal, or they could discard everything that opposed the one true and holy God. The showdown on Mount Carmel became the defining moment in Elijah's life.

The sacrifice he offered on Mt. Carmel foreshadowed Calvary. The bull was the innocent victim that absorbed God's judgment, so that the nation could go free. On the cross, Christ was our sin offering, judged by God, and consumed on our behalf, so that we might go free.

But let us not fail to see the striking contrast between the two sacrifices. On Mt. Carmel, the fire of God consumed the sacrifice for good. On Mt. Calvary, however, the sacrifice consumed the fire of God's judgment for good. Christ exhausted the judgment he bore.

The Mount Carmel miracle is not comparable to the miracle of Calvary. No sacrifice is! Christ kindled the greatest fire which has ever been burnt in this world.

The greatest showdown ever, between the true and living God and the god of this present world was not on Mt. Carmel, but on Mt. Calvary. God's archrival, Satan, who is behind all false gods was judged and defeated by the sacrifice of His Son on the cross.

Elijah summoned Israel to return to God by sacrifice. Jesus Christ our Lord summons the world to return to God through His own sacrifice .

To God be all the Glory !