

## Elijah – A Trailblazer of Commitment

I Kings 18: 20-40

### Elijah--influential prophet of Israel

- 9th century BC – imagine all that happened between him and Christ
- 1st introduction I Kings 17:1
- Nothing of childhood known
- Name: "Yahweh is My God."

### Background:

- Divided Kingdom (Saul, David Solomon, split)
- Idolatry widespread – God disapproves of – Exodus 20.
- Ahab – most wicked king [874-853BC]
- Jezebel – wife
  - Two married to form an alliance
  - Dad: Ethbaal (I Kings 16:31) [915-847BC] king of Sidon
  - Overthrew other dynasties
- Jezebel influenced Ahab to build worship centers to Baal
- Jezebel declared war on Israelites, slaughtered (I Kings 18:4 B)
- God sends Elijah to declare a drought ( I Kings 17:1) (cf Js. 5: example of prayers)
- God ready to prove to the nations who He is.

### I Kings 18

#### 1 Told to go to Ahab

- 3rd year of drought. Imagine what would happen if there was no rain!
- Ahab had been looking for Elijah but he was hiding.
- Presenting himself meant he was willing to die for God.

#### 2 He went.

True obedience: God says, you do.

17 Elijah knew he was not Israel's problem-idolatry was.

18-19 Elijah is willing to stand up for what is right.

- How would you act in his place?
- If it is not like Elijah, how could you get like him?

#### 20 Mount Carmel:

- Part of a mountain range 13 miles from Med. Sea SE to plain of Dothan
- Rises sharply from seacoast to 470 feet--47 stories
  - "Top of the Rock" 850 feet--½ that
  - Tall mountain, easily seen
- Canaanites built sanctuaries to deities on this mountain
- Near northern border of Israel
- Perfect place

21 They could not waffle between two options--choose one and choose God

Joshua 24:15

Mt. 6:24

People say nothing.

23-24 Rules for contest:

- 2 bulls
- Cut in pieces
- Lay on wood
- NO FIRE--do everything you would normally do but don't light it!
- Call on the name of your god/gods
- People determine which is God!
- Challenging Baal on his terms
- Baal--storm god who rides the clouds, worshippers thought he could send lightning

25-26 they do it from morning to noon

No answer--never could there be an answer.

They jumped up and down, made a show, tried everything they could think of to get Baal to act

27 Why I like Elijah--he is sarcastic like me!

He knew Baal was not a real God--showing them how futile their "worship" is.

James said our worship could be "vain" or "useless" if we do not have the correct relationship/bridles tongue. James 1: 26

28-29 Their response:

- Loud cries
- Cut themselves
- Up til evening time

They have spent an entire day and what do they have to show for it? Nothing, except some lunatics jumping up and down, yelling, and getting lightheaded due to blood loss

30-33 Elijah's answer:

- Called all the people
- Rebuilt the altar--altar previously to Jehovah--torn down
- Made a trench
- Commanded it to be filled with water 3x
- Imagine their reaction in a drought to all of this good water being "wasted"!!

35 Why? To burn something from Heaven is a great feat--yes, to burn something from Heaven that is drenched in water could not leave room for doubt.

36-37 teaching through prayer

38 An answer--and one that proved a point!

39 The people answered the only way they could--in complete submission to God!

40 Wicked never escape punishment.

3 groups:

1--followers of Baal  
2--followers of God  
3--confused and not sure  
End of day--all together as one!

Conclusion:

41-46 Baal was defeated  
God was praised  
Today--there is a statue of Elijah on Mt. Carmel commemorating this event!

Application: Always an application in studying from God's Word!

1--study the OT to learn cf Rom. 15:4  
2--Imagine seeing Elijah--put in a place when your faith conflicts with the government. Happens often today. What do you do? How do you react?  
3--Don't give in to pagan worship--just because the world is doing it doesn't mean you should to!

You compared to Elijah:

1--He was confident in his faith--proud to tell others. Are you? Or do you shirk it off "somebody else will do it!" What if you are the somebody else?  
2--We need to turn people back to God.  
3--God can do anything! Why should we doubt Him?  
Romans 8:31

Lesson - be willing to stand up for God and what is right!

Trailblazer--literally with God's fire, commitment - never gave up against tremendous odds (in the world's eyes)

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