

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:16-46)

Who

- **Elijah:**
 - **Ahab:**
 - **Jezebel:**
 - **Prophets of Baal:**
 - **The People of Israel:**
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What

- **The Contest on Mount Carmel:**
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Where

- **Mount Carmel:**
 - **Israel:**
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When

- **During Ahab's Reign (circa 9th century BC):**
 - **Three-Year Drought:**
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Why

- **Purpose of the Contest:**
 - **Spiritual Confrontation:**
 - **Call to Repentance:**
 - **Divine Judgment:**
- **God's Desire to Reveal Himself and Redeem His People**

1 Kings 18:16-19 – Elijah Confronts Ahab

- **Elijah’s Boldness:**
 - Elijah confronts King Ahab, accusing him of causing trouble by leading Israel into idolatry.
 - Discuss Elijah’s courage in standing up to the king and the significance of speaking truth to power.
- **Ahab’s Accusation:**
 - Ahab accuses Elijah of being the “troublers of Israel,” trying to deflect blame.
 - Reflect on how people often resist facing their own sin and blame others.

1 Kings 18:20-24 – The Challenge on Mount Carmel

- **The Gathering at Mount Carmel:**
 - Elijah summons all Israel and the prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel, setting the stage for a divine showdown.
 - Discuss the significance of public challenges in biblical narratives and how God uses such moments to reveal His power.
- **The Challenge:**
 - Elijah proposes that the God who answers by fire is the true God.
 - Explore the clarity and decisiveness of Elijah’s challenge, emphasizing the need for clear choices in matters of faith.

1 Kings 18:25-29 – The Futile Efforts of the Prophets of Baal

- **The Prophets of Baal’s Futile Efforts:**
 - The prophets of Baal call on their god from morning until noon with no response.
 - The prophets cry out to Baal, they dance, cry, plead, and cut themselves but there is no response from Baal.
- **Elijah’s Mockery:**
 - Elijah mocks the prophets, suggesting their god might be asleep or busy.
 - Contrast of Baal’s utter silence to the cries, dancing, and self-mutilation of his worshipers

1 Kings 18:30-35 – Elijah Prepares the Altar

- Elijah Prepares the Altar:
 - Elijah repairs the altar of the Lord with twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Drenching the Sacrifice with Water (in a drought!):
 - Elijah drenches the altar and the sacrifice with water to make it clear that only a miraculous act of God could ignite it.
 - Elijah's actions demonstrate his confidence in God's power.

1 Kings 18:36-39 – God's Fire Falls

- Elijah's Prayer:
 - Elijah prays for God to reveal Himself so that the people will know He is the true God.
- Fire from Heaven:
 - God answers by immediately sending fire that consumes the sacrifice, altar, and water, leading the people to declare Yahweh as God.

1 Kings 18:40 – The Execution of the Prophets of Baal

- The Defeat of Baal's Prophets:
 - Elijah orders the prophets of Baal to be seized and executed, showing the defeat of idolatry.
 - The seriousness of idolatry required decisive action to remove it.
- The End of the Drought:
 - Elijah prays for rain, and God ends the drought, symbolizing the restoration of blessing.
 - Connection between repentance, restoration, and God's mercy.

1 Kings 18:41-46 – The End of the Drought

- Elijah's perseverance in prayer and God's perfect timing in sending the rain.
- The small cloud and the gradual but sure end of the drought.

Conclusion

- **Key Points:**
 - **Elijah's Faithfulness:**
 - **God's Power and Authority:**
 - **The People's Response:**
 - **Foreshadowing:**

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways does Elijah's boldness inspire you in your own faith journey? How can we cultivate a similar courage when faced with spiritual opposition today?
- Why might the people have remained silent until the fire fell? What does this reveal about the challenges of living in a society where faith in God is not the norm?
- What does Elijah's mockery teach us about the difference between the living God and false idols? How can we apply this understanding in a modern context where idolatry might look different?
- What does this event teach us about the seriousness of idolatry and leading others astray? How should the church today respond to false teachings and practices within its midst?

Personal Reflection

- Reflect on a time when you felt a strong contrast between truth and falsehood in your spiritual life. How did you respond, and what did you learn from that experience?
- How can we cultivate a heart that is ready to repent and turn back to God, even without dramatic signs and wonders?
- How can the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel inspire you to take bold steps of faith in your own life? What might God be calling you to do that requires a similar boldness?
- In what areas of your life do you need to decisively turn away from idolatry or spiritual compromise? How can this passage guide you in making those changes?