

LESSON AIM: Don't allow anything to take God's place in your life. Watch out for danger areas and take steps to protect your relationship with God.

KEY SCRIPTURES: I Kings 18

REVIEW QUESTIONS: (*“Ok, who remembers from last week’s story...”*)

- 1) Who was the woman who was an outsider? What happened?
- 2) What was the name of the man who became her “kinsman redeemer”?
- 3) Can someone explain last week’s Bible verse in their own words?

I. INTRODUCTION

Elijah: the name synonymous with strength. Throughout the ages, he has been called the prophet of power, the Iron Man of God. The days of Elijah were dark, disgusting, despicable days. Carnal King Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel led the nation of Israel into the folly of idolatry. The people plummeted into pollution beyond belief.

But God was preparing a powerful prophet, a man who would stand in the presence of the Lord, a man who would speak with the power of the Lord, a man who was familiar with the Holy Scriptures, a man who was filled with the Holy Spirit. There was a severe famine in the land and King Ahab was blaming Elijah and his God. In I Kings 18:17 he calls Elijah, “he that troubles Israel”. When things go wrong, especially national disasters, people often blame God. Even insurance companies have referred to tornadoes and earthquakes as “acts of God”.

Elijah went to Ahab and answered I have not troubled Israel, vs 18, “but you, and your father’s house, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and have followed Baalim” And he set out to prove it and whose god is the true God.

II. PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

- A. As the drought came to an end, the Lord instructed Elijah to go to King Ahab with the message that God would send rain (v. 1-2).
- B. King Ahab blamed Elijah for the drought, but Elijah reminded him that God had sent it because Ahab had led the people to serve idols (v 17-18).
- C. Elijah challenged the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah to a contest on Mount Carmel (v. 19).
- D. As the people gathered at Mount Carmel, Elijah sternly told them to decide between God and Baal (v. 20-21).

The people of Israel had combined the worship of Baal with the worship of the living and true God. But God had clearly taught them that they were to worship Him alone

(Exodus 20:3-5). Some Christians today want to worship God, yet they continue to give other things first place in their lives. Often the things that take that special place are not sinful in themselves (clothes, television, sports, money, cars, etc), but these, and other "idols", like famous people or the desire for popularity, can become more important to you than God is. Though they are not wrong in themselves and though you do not bow down to worship them, they can still become almost like idols, taking the place God wants to have in your heart.

If you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, don't allow anything to take God's place in your life. The Bible warns us not to let things become too important because soon that is where all our time and interest will be **(Matthew 6:19, 21)**. King Ahab and the Israelites had sinned by trying to serve both God and Baal. Now Elijah told them they would have to choose.

- E. Elijah explained how the challenge would be carried out (v. 22-25).

F. Baal's prophets prayed, but received no answer (v. 26-29).

Baal could not answer because he was a false god. Only God, the Creator, who lives in heaven can answer prayer (**Jeremiah 33:3**). This living and true God loves you and wants you to call on Him to save you (**Romans 10:13**).

G. Elijah repaired a broken altar of the Lord with twelve stones; then he prepared his sacrifice and poured water over it all (v. 30-35).

H. Elijah prayed, asking God to show the people that He was the true God (v. 36-37).

I. God sent fire, completely consuming Elijah's sacrifice (v. 38).

In a spectacular way, God had proven that He, alone, is the true God. You and I know from the Bible who God is and that He is the only One worthy of our worship. Yet it is easy to allow other things to become more important to us than He is. If you have called on the Lord to save you, don't allow anything to take God's place in your life. Look for warning signs that other things are becoming idols to you. (*Discuss--spending less time each day with God; spending so much of your money on things that you have nothing left to give God; talking so much with your friends about your hobby or hero that you never think to mention God; and so on.*)

When you see these warning signs, what should you do? First, admit you were wrong to let other things become so important and ask God to forgive you. Second, tell God how wonderful He is and that you want Him to be first in your life. Third, ask God to help you put Him first (only He can). Set a definite time each day to spend with God and refuse to let anything keep you from it; set aside your offering money so you won't be tempted to spend it on other things; look for ways you can talk to you friends about the Lord. As you are faithful to give God His rightful place in your life, He will bless you and meet your needs (**Matthew 6:33**). God longed for Israel to give Him all their worship. By sending fire from heaven, He showed them in a miraculous way that He is the true God.

III. CLIMAX

Convinced by what they saw, the people bowed in worship, exclaiming, "The Lord, He is God" (v. 39).

IV. ENDING

A. Conclusion

1. The prophets of Baal were put to death (v. 40)
2. Announcing the end of the drought, Elijah sent Ahab to Jezreel; then he went up on the mountain, where he prayed for rain (v. 41-44).
3. God sent heavy rains, ending the drought (v. 45-46).

B. Challenge

Israel learned a great lesson that day on Mount Carmel: "The Lord, He is God!" Have you learned that great lesson? If you have asked the Lord Jesus to be your Savior, don't allow anything to take God's place in your life. Every day this week thank the Lord for being your wonderful God. And look out for those warning signs! Ask God to show you if anything or anyone becomes more important to you than He is. If you realize you have allowed the television, a hero, or a hobby to become an idol, confess it to God, and then ask Him to help you find ways to correct that problem. As you put God first in your life, He will bless you. (**Read Matthew 6:33**)

MEMORY VERSE:

**"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things,
which you do not know."**

Jeremiah 33:3