

PROVEN

1 KINGS 18:25-39

(Prepared by Gene Thompson)

In the 50 years after Solomon's death, there were 7 kings in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Ahab was the seventh and the Scripture says of him "he did what was evil in the Lord's sight more than all who were before him." 1 Kings 16:30.

In chapter 17 verse 1 from out of nowhere "Now Elijah the Tishbite, from the Gilead settlers, said to Ahab, 'As the LORD God of Israel lives, I stand before Him, and there will be not dew or rain during these years except by my command.'"

(Fill in the narrative from 1 Kings 17:2-18:24. You may want to have a class member prepare and present this narrative.)

So, Elijah challenged the false prophets to show the power of their god. He invited the people to decide for themselves between the one true God of Israel and the false god of Baal—who ironically was their god who controlled storms.

FUTILITY! Read 1 Kings 18:25-29

1. How would you describe the way these false prophets started out and how they finished their pleas? (They started out just pleading for Baal to hear them, and then they grew louder and louder, dancing in a frenzy and finally cutting themselves.)

"What an unforgettable scene of chaos and madness! It was as if the forces of hell had been unleashed and were on display in these out-of-control human bodies. But still, nothing happened in the heavens."—Charles R. Swindoll.

2. Did they believe Baal would answer their pleas? (Yes.)
3. Which is more important how much you believe or what/who you believe in?
4. What happened around noon that would have drawn an "un-sportsman-like" penalty on Elijah if it were a football game? (Elijah began to taunt the false prophets.)
5. What did Elijah say to the false prophets? (See verses 27-28.)
6. Why was (and is) God the only one to worship? (Deut. 20:3 "Do not have other gods besides me.")
7. To what extremes might a person go with the hope that their false gods will be sufficient? (Today we might create our own reality; say we can believe anything if we are sincere; select only certain Bible verses to obey; call other people intolerant while we pretend to be tolerant; "value cast" in ways that make us sound righteous but it's all talk; define love; or seek to prove that our own approach is good.)
8. What motivates people to pursue things other than God as their highest priority? (They are easily enticed by Satan.)
9. What tests besides the 1 Kings 18 test would show who is truly God? (Beliefs are not something we decide; beliefs are based in what is real. Elijah said it like this: "If the LORD is God, follow him. But if Baal, follow him"—v 21. We don't have to make up the proofs; God has provided them.)

Proofs include textual proofs of Scripture, historical, archaeological, and prophecy fulfillment. Jesus is the only One who has risen never to die again—1 Cor. 15:15. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1 KJV.

Despite the frantic efforts of the prophets, Baal was silent. Notice that fact was emphasized three times in verse 29.

PREPARATION! Read 1 Kings 18:30-35

1. Why was it important for Elijah to repair the altar and prepare the sacrifice as he did? (He repaired an altar dedicated to God!)

Using the repaired altar was Elijah's way of separating himself and the people from Baal. Part of Elijah's charge against the people was that they had attempted to blend the worship of Baal with the worship of God. They were trying to straddle the fence, so to speak.

2. How did Elijah remind the people of God's covenant? (He placed 12 stones—one for each of Israel's 12 tribes—around the altar.)
3. Why did the people need to be reminded of God's covenant? (Not only had they forsaken their commitment to God, but there were also none of the Levites in the Northern Kingdom to teach them. They all remained in the Southern Kingdom, and it had been 50 years or so.)
4. Do we need reminders today? (Yes. We have two ordinances that continually remind us of Jesus' sacrifice for us—Baptism and The Lord's Supper.)
5. Why did Elijah have the water poured over the altar? (He wanted the people to know that there were no tricks here. What was about to happen was from the LORD.)
6. How can we tell when we are trusting in God's power and when we are showing off or drawing attention to ourselves? (The key is always pointing to God's power and love, not our own. We must also be honest with ourselves and be sure our desire is for God to receive the glory.)

Through his careful preparations around the altar, Elijah allowed the people to see that what happened next could only occur through God's power!

RESPONSE! Read 1 Kings 18:36-39

1. How would you describe Elijah's request? ("Let it be known that You are God in Israel;" "that I am Your servant;" "That at Your word I have done these things;" "answer me so that this people will know that You, Yahweh, are God;" "that You have turned their hearts back.")
 2. How would you describe God's response? (Swift & complete.)
 3. How does Elijah's prayer help us understand how we ought to approach and pray to God? (Humbly seeking God to be honored and receive all the glory. Simple words that express our heart's desire.)
- Elijah is praying in harmony with God's purposes, including asking God to show His power and presence and wanting people to know that He is God.
4. How does God demonstrate today that He alone is the LORD? (The Heavens are telling the glory of God. Changed lives are evidence of His great power over our enemy, Satan. We demonstrate God's power when we as believers live obedient lives and serve God alone.)

God answered Elijah's humble, confident, yet powerful prayer. The LORD had proven Himself to be the one true God.

"The prophets of Baal were immoral, hostile, and anti-God malignancy in the land of Israel. Elijah knew he had to cut away all evidence of such a godless menace. —Charles R. Swindoll.

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE!

1. How can we make sure we are not serving a false god? (Stay in God's Word daily. Measure what you believe by what you see in God's Word.)

Sometimes worshiping a false god sets up complex situations such as people we might need to break ties with, patterns we need to openly change, or other actions that feel embarrassing.

2. Do you live and pray expectantly?

Read 1 Kings 18:42-43.

Prayer.