

Elijah: Prophet of Fire

Part 3: Clash at Mt. Carmel

Timeline so far:

- The prophet Elijah appears from obscurity to confront the wickedest yet of Israel's kings, Ahab.
- His message is a fearful sentence of judgement: 1 Kings 17:1.
- Elijah immediately steps out of the public arena and goes into seclusion by the brook Cherith. There, God miraculously takes care of him and trains him in the school of faith.
- He also dispatches Elijah to the home of a humble widow where God would continue to display His mighty power in response to obedient faith.
- Now, the time has come – 3 years into drought and famine – to once more face Ahab.

1 Kings 18:1-2 (ESV)

¹ After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth." ² So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria.

A confounding reality: The stubbornness of the _____ heart:

1 Kings 18:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?"

A clear mark of an unrepentant heart is to ...

Amos 7:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words ..."

Luke 23:5 (ESV)

⁵ "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place."

Acts 16:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ ... they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. ²⁰ And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city..."

1 Kings 18:18-20 (ESV)

¹⁸ And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." ²⁰ So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel.

Why would Ahab comply so quickly with Elijah's demand?

2 Kings 16:3 (NCV)

³ Ahaz did the same things the kings of Israel had done. He even made his son **pass through fire**. He did the same hateful sins as the nations had done whom the LORD had forced out of the land ahead of the Israelites.

But fire also reminded the Israelites of their own past:

Exodus 3:2 (ESV)

² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

Exodus 13:21 (ESV)

²¹ And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

Exodus 19:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.

Leviticus 9:24 (ESV)

²⁴ And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

1 Chronicles 21:26 (ESV)

²⁶ And David built there an altar to the LORD and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings and called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering.

Why did Elijah set up such an elaborate test of God? I thought we weren't supposed to test Him?

1 Kings 18:36 (ESV)

³⁶ And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word.

Truth: When I completely obey a _____ of God, I can be confident of the _____.

1 Kings 18:25-29 (ESV)

²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it." ²⁶ And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. ²⁷ And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." ²⁸ And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. ²⁹ And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.

Lesson 4: _____ don't answer! (Enthusiasm and sincerity are not proofs of _____!)

The powerlessness of the false prophets (and their "god"):