



Elijah on Mount Carmel

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

1 Kings 18



God's people, the Israelites, had turned away from God. Under King Ahab, they worshipped false gods. God would soon use His prophet Elijah to show them that He was the one true God.

Day #1: Obey God, Not Men

King Ahab was married to a very wicked woman named Jezebel. She not only worshipped false gods, but she also wanted to kill all of the prophets of the one true God!

There was a man named Obadiah who worked for King Ahab, running the palace. The Bible says this about Obadiah:

+ *He faithfully worshiped the Lord. In fact, when Jezebel was trying to kill the Lord's prophets, Obadiah hid one hundred of them in two caves and gave them food and water. - 1 Kings 18:3b-4 CEV*

Let's look at how **God provided** for His prophets. God knew ahead of time that the evil Queen would one day try to kill His prophets. So God made sure that the faithful Obadiah had an important job in the palace. His job gave him access to the King's food and special water supply. In this way, God saved 100 prophets from the hand of Queen Jezebel. God is faithful, and He always supplies the true needs of His people.

Obadiah was a good servant to King Ahab, but when the Queen wanted to do something against God, Obadiah would have no part of it. Obadiah knew it was more important to obey God than to obey any man - even the King.

***** Just like Obadiah, we should respect God far more than any person (Luke 12:4-5). If someone asks you to do something that is against what God says in His word, do NOT do it. Instead, obey the God who created you, loves you deeply, and always wants what's best for you.

Day #2: Obey Right Away

Last week we learned that God had sent a severe drought throughout the land to get His people's attention. Elijah the prophet announced it ahead of time to King Ahab (1 Kings 17:1). It's amazing to see in the Bible that whenever disaster is coming, God sends a clear warning. He loves His people, and He gives them the opportunity to turn back to Him. The drought lasted for a very long time.

+ *It was now three years since it had rained. A message came to Elijah from the Lord. He said, "Go. **Speak to Ahab.** Then I will send rain on the land." **So Elijah went to speak to Ahab.** - 1 Kings 18:1:2a*

The verse above gives us a beautiful picture of Elijah's obedience. God told him to go to the King, and Elijah went. He obeyed completely, and he did not hesitate.

Notice that even though Elijah was one of God's prophets whom Jezebel wanted to kill, he didn't say, "Well, the Queen wants to kill me, so how about if I just send Ahab a note?" Elijah went to talk to the King exactly as God had instructed.

And Elijah didn't say, "I think I'll go next week." When a person "puts off" obeying, it very often leads to disobedience. The person might become distracted and forget to obey. Or he might change his mind and decide not to obey at all.

Obeying God completely, right away, is ALWAYS the right thing to do!

***** Learning to obey your parents and teachers is one way to practice obeying. If we can't obey the people that God has put in authority over us, we will not be able to obey Him. Remember to obey completely and right away.

Day #3: Make a Choice

Finally, Elijah was face to face with the King. Led by the Lord (1 Kings 18:36), Elijah posed a challenge to King Ahab, all the prophets of the false gods, and all the Israelites.

+ *Elijah went there and stood in front of the people. He said, "How long will it take you to make up your minds? If the Lord is the one and only God, follow Him. But if Baal is the one and only God, follow him." - 1 Kings 18:21*

Day #3 continued:

Elijah said they should set up two altars, with a bull sacrifice on each one. He would pray to the Lord, and the prophets of Baal would pray to Baal. Elijah said that the god who answered by setting fire to the wood on the altar was the only true God. Everyone agreed that this was a good idea.

The prophets of Baal set up an altar and placed the sacrifice on it. They prayed all morning for Baal to send fire to their altar - *but nothing happened*.

They shouted louder to Baal - *but nothing happened*.

They danced around the altar - *but nothing happened*.

At noon, Elijah began to tease them, so the men shouted even louder - *but nothing happened*.

Why do you think nothing happened? Baal was no god at all! Baal was an idea made up by men. No matter how much the men *wanted* him to be real, he was a worthless idol. He could do NOTHING for anyone (Jeremiah 2:5).

 God will not allow people to worship Him sometimes, and worship other things at other times. He requires us to make a choice (Joshua 24:15). He wants every person to choose to follow Him (2 Peter 3:9).

Day #4: One True God

We can just imagine the prophets of Baal, with the entire nation watching them. They were probably exhausted from shouting and dancing, trying to make their false god do what only the real God can do.

Then it was Elijah's turn. He rebuilt the Lord's altar that had been destroyed. He placed firewood on the altar, and dug a ditch around it. Then he placed the bull sacrifice on top.

Then Elijah did something really amazing! He told some people to fill four large jars with water, and pour them out on the altar! The water was probably salt water carried up from the nearby Mediterranean Sea. They soaked the bull, the wood and the stones with water. Then he told them to do it again. Then Elijah had them do it a third time. The altar was drenched with water!

Elijah wanted to prove - beyond a doubt - that God was all-powerful. By pouring water on the altar, he showed that he was not cheating in any way. He wanted to take away every excuse the people might come up to explain how the Lord's altar would catch on fire.

Day #4 continued:

Elijah prayed for God to send fire, so that all of the people who saw it would know that God was the one true God, and they would turn their hearts back to Him (1 Kings 18:37).



The fire of the Lord came down. *It burned up the sacrifice. It burned up the wood and the stones and the soil. It even licked up the water in the ditch. All of the people saw it. Then they fell down flat with their faces toward the ground. They cried out, "The Lord is the one and only God! The Lord is the one and only God!"* - 1 Kings 18:38-39



Make no mistake! The Lord is the one and only God! No matter what people believe, **He is the Lord**. Only He could burn up a soaking wet altar. Nothing is impossible for our amazing God (Mark 10:27).

Day #5: Turn From Idols

Because of His great love and mercy, God spent three years trying to get His people's attention. That's how important it was to Him that the Israelites turn away from idols that could not help them, and turn their hearts back toward Him.



God is patient, because He wants everyone to turn from sin and no one to be lost. - 2 Peter 3:9 CEVb

The three-year drought accomplished what God had intended. The people saw that the Lord was the one and only God, and they turned back to Him. Then God sent the rains. We can just imagine how the thirsty ground drank up the rain. This was a picture that the hearts of the Israelite people were no longer dry either. Because they turned away from their worthless idol, and back to the Lord, they could once again have life. They would be able to live in God's blessing and bear spiritual fruit.

Like the Israelites, we are called to place God above everything else in our life. But sadly, many of us also "worship idols." They may not be golden statues, but we have other ways of putting something in the place of God. For example, some of us care more about what our friends think than what God thinks. And, some of us care more about our sport or hobby than spending time with God.

Think about what is the absolute most important thing to you. If it is not God, ask Him to change your heart (Psalm 51:10). Turn away from the thing that you have put in God's place, and turn back to the Lord.



On a dry day, go outside and pour some water on the dry dirt. Let this remind you that when you love God and put Him first, He will pour out His grace on you, and bless you with spiritual fruit.