

ELIJAH

A MAN LIKE US

January 28, 2024

“The Showdown at Mt Carmel” || 1 Kings 18:20-40

SUMMARY

In 1 Kings 18, the narrative centers around the prophet Elijah's bold confrontation with the idolatrous practices promoted by King Ahab and the worship of the false god Baal in Israel.

Elijah challenges Ahab, accusing him of leading the people astray by embracing the worship of Baal. The prophet proposes a dramatic contest on Mount Carmel to decisively demonstrate the superiority of the one true God. Ahab agrees to the challenge, and the stage is set for a confrontation between the prophets of Baal and Elijah.

The scene on Mount Carmel unfolds with Elijah challenging the prophets of Baal to call upon their god to bring fire upon an altar. Despite their fervent prayers, dances, and self-inflicted wounds, there is no response from Baal. Elijah then rebuilds the broken-down altar of the Lord, placing a sacrifice upon it.

Elijah's prayer is a remarkable moment in the narrative. He addresses the Lord as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, emphasizing the covenant relationship. In stark contrast to the futile efforts of the prophets of Baal, God responds dramatically, consuming the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and even the water in the trench around the altar with fire. The people witness the undeniable power of the true God, and Elijah's victory is clear.

Following this demonstration of God's supremacy, Elijah commands the people to seize the prophets of Baal, and they are executed. This event serves to purify the land from idolatry and reestablish the worship of the Lord.

Despite the victory on Mount Carmel, the land has been suffering from a severe drought. Elijah, undeterred, climbs to the top of Mount Carmel to pray for rain. In a position of humility, he persists in seeking God's intervention. After seven attempts, a small cloud appears, signaling the end of the drought.

NOTES:

QUOTES FROM THE SERMON:

“In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship.”- David Foster Wallace

“An idol is something that we look to for things that only God can give. Idolatry functions widely inside religious communities when doctrinal truth is elevated to the position of a false god. This occurs when people rely on the rightness of their doctrine for their standing with God rather than on God himself and his grace. It is a subtly but deadly mistake. The sign that you have slipped into this form of self-justification is that you become what the book of Proverbs calls a 'scoffer'.”

–Tim Keller

QUESTIONS

- What lessons can the church draw from the events on Mount Carmel?
- How did Elijah demonstrate faith and courage in confronting the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel?
- In what ways can we apply Elijah's boldness in standing for our faith in our own lives?
- In what ways can the church actively confront societal challenges and promote faithfulness to God?
- Reflect on Elijah's role as a leader and influencer. How did he impact the people and the nation?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Consider using Deuteronomy 6:4-9 to guide you as you pray.