

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 38

Mount Carmel

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The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective The goal of this lesson is to use the story of **Elijah and the prophets of Baal to show that the Lord is the only true God.**

Key Verses

1 Kings 18—Main Teaching Passage

1 Kings 16:29-17:7 (Background)

Memory Verse - Proverbs 3:12 (June Memory Verse)

"For whom the LORD loves He corrects,
Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights."

Hook

Take an extra craft and tell the students that today, you are going to make a craft as well. However, instead of using real scissors, glue sticks, and crayons, you are going to use imaginary art supplies. Mime as if you were trying to use these invisible supplies and act surprised when they do not work.

Just like you were trying to use imaginary art supplies, the Israelites in today's story tried to believe in an imaginary god. And just like the imaginary supplies, this god couldn't do anything.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

As we saw last week, Israel at this point was divided into two kingdoms. While the southern kingdom called Judah went back and forth between godly and wicked rulers, the northern tribes (still called Israel) had only wicked kings. These kings led the nation of Israel into idolatry.

In today's story, we see that Israel's most wicked king and queen, Ahab and Jezebel, have caused almost the entire nation to worship the false god Baal and tried to kill anyone who worshipped the Lord. However, there was a righteous prophet named Elijah who was willing to stand up against these Baal worshippers. To show the Lord's displeasure, Elijah prayed and a drought came over Israel for 3 years. This made Ahab and Jezebel very angry at Elijah, so that they wanted to kill him.

Elijah challenged 450 prophets of Baal to a contest to see who the true God is. Each group would offer a bull on an altar, and whichever God sent fire to consume the sacrifice would be victorious. The prophets of Baal spent hours crying out to their god, but no matter what they did, nothing happened to their sacrifice. Finally, it was Elijah's turn. To show his confidence in the Lord, Elijah ordered twelve large pots of water to be poured over the sacrifice. Then Elijah prayed, and immediately the Lord sent fire to consume the bull. Once this happened, the Israelites cried out that the Lord was the true God. Elijah then sent them to destroy the prophets of Baal. The Lord proved to all Israel that day that He alone is God.

LOOK

When the prophets of Baal heard the terms of this contest, it sounded like a fair challenge. Both they and Elijah had one bull, one altar, and one chance to prove that their God was greater. However, Elijah knew that this was an unfair contest, because only his God is real. The prophets of Baal could pray and cry out all they wanted, but Baal would never listen or respond because Baal isn't real. Only a real God can do anything. Elijah did not challenge the prophets to this contest to prove to himself that the Lord is the true God. He already knew that. He made this challenge to prove to the children of Israel that the Lord, not Baal, was the true God.

The Israelites should have known what Elijah knew. They had tons of proofs in their history that the Lord is the true God. He had sent a flood in the days of Noah, brought plagues upon Egypt, parted the Red Sea, brought down the walls of Jericho, and enabled a small shepherd boy named David to slay a huge giant, among many other miraculous signs. Baal had done none of those things. Only a God who is real could have done any of those things. The difference between the Lord and Baal is like the difference between a real car and a model car. They might both look like a car, but only the real car can drive anywhere. The same way, Baal

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

and the Lord might both be called Gods, but only the Lord can do what He says He can. Imaginary gods can't do anything.

There are many people today who believe in many different gods. There are also many people who think that it doesn't matter which god you believe in. You can believe in the Muslim god Allah, the millions of Hindu gods, or even no god at all. They say that all that matters is that you believe in something. However, we know that those gods cannot save you from your sins. Only a real God can do that. Only our God can do that. Just like an imaginary god like Baal could never send fire from heaven, an imaginary god like Allah can never save people from their sins. That is why it is so important that everyone believes in Jesus and trusts Him as their Savior. Only He can save people from our sins. First of all, it is important that every student believes in Jesus and trusts Him as Savior and Lord. Second, it is important for us to share this message with anyone who does not believe it, but believes in a false god instead.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class why Elijah was able to get God to send fire and the prophets of Baal were not.

Pray: Worship the Lord for being the one true God. Ask Him for help to proclaim this truth to those who believe in false gods.

Parent Question: How did Elijah show that the Lord was real and Baal is not?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 1 Kings 18 by David Guzik

ELIJAH'S VICTORY AT CARMEL

A. Elijah meets Ahab.

1. ([1 Kings 18:1-2](#)) The end of the drought.

And it came to pass *after* many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth." So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and *there was* a severe famine in Samaria.

a. **In the third year:** This remarkable drought lasted three-and-one-half years by the fervent prayer of Elijah.

b. **Go, present yourself to Ahab:** Earlier, God told Elijah to *hide* himself. Now it was time to *present* himself. There is a time to hide and be alone with God, and there is also a time to present yourself to the world. Some wish to always remain hidden when they should step up and **present** themselves.

i. Elijah simply obeyed God's command. Though it happened through the prayers of Elijah, his prayers were sensitive to the leading of God. The drought did not begin or end as a result of Elijah's will, but at God's will.

2. ([1 Kings 18:3-14](#)) Elijah meets Obadiah.

And Ahab had called Obadiah, who *was* in charge of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock. So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is that you, my lord Elijah?" And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'" So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? *As* the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here"'! And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here.'" He will kill me!"

a. **While Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water:** This man Obadiah was a brave man who stood for God and His prophets in a difficult time.

i. This may be the same Obadiah whose prophecy against Edom is recorded among the Minor Prophets. It is a little difficult to be certain, because there were 13 Obadias in the Old Testament. The Hebrew name **Obadiah** means "Worshipper of Yahweh" or "Servant of Yahweh."

An Obadiah was sent out by King Jehoshaphat of Judah to teach the law in the cities of Judah ([2 Chronicles](#)

[17:7](#)).

An Obadiah was one of the overseers who helped repair the temple in the days of Josiah, King of Judah ([2 Chronicles 34:12](#)).

An Obadiah was a priest in the days of Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 10:5](#)).

ii. **One hundred prophets:** “*Prophets*: this name is not only given to such as are endowed with an extraordinary spirit of prophecy, but to such ministers as devoted themselves to the service of God in preaching, praying, praising God, and the like” (Poole).

iii. “Account for it how you may, it is a singular circumstance that in the center of rebellion against God there was one whose devotion to God was intense and distinguished. As it is horrible to find a Judas among the apostles, so it is grand to discover an Obadiah among Ahab’s courtiers. What grace must have been at work to maintain such a fire in the midst of the sea, such godliness in the midst of the vilest iniquity!” (Spurgeon)

iv. “That Obadiah would have little difficulty in finding caves for the sons of the prophets can be seen in that over two thousand caves have been counted in the Mount Carmel area.” (Patterson and Austel)

b. **Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him:** The drought was so severe that King Ahab himself and his trusted servant Obadiah were out searching for pastureland. God arranged this unexpected meeting between Obadiah and the prophet Elijah.

i. “We might have supposed that he would set himself to alleviate the miseries of his people; and, above all, that he would have turned back to God: but no — his one thought was about the horses and mules of his stud; his only care was to save some of them alive... What selfishness is here! Mules and asses before his people! Seeking for grass, instead of seeking for God!” (Meyer)

c. **How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me:** Obadiah knew that King Ahab conducted an exhaustive search for Elijah to punish him for the drought that his prayers imposed on Israel. Obadiah feared that if he announced that he met Elijah, and the prophet disappeared again, Ahab would punish Obadiah for letting Elijah get away.

3. ([1 Kings 18:15-16](#)) **Elijah assures Obadiah that he will meet with Ahab.**

Then Elijah said, “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today.” So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

a. **I will surely present myself to him today:** Kindly and wisely, Elijah responded to Obadiah’s legitimate fears. He would not make Obadiah a martyr on Elijah’s behalf.

4. ([1 Kings 18:17-19](#)) **Elijah and Ahab trade accusations.**

Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, “Is that you, O troubler of Israel?” And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

a. **Is that you, O troubler of Israel?** Ahab was easily the worst, most ungodly king that Israel ever had. Yet he did not hesitate to blame the godly prophet Elijah for the problems of Israel. If Ahab would at least stop the active persecution of the people of God, God would relent in the drought. But the wicked king of Israel found it easier to blame the godly prophet.

i. According to his theology, it made sense for Ahab to blame Elijah. Ahab believed in Baal, so much so that his government promoted and supported Baal worship and persecuted the worshippers of Yahweh. Ahab believed that Elijah had angered the sky-god Baal and therefore Baal withheld rain. Ahab probably thought that Baal would hold back the rain until Elijah was caught and executed.

ii. Instead, Ahab should have turned to the Word of God. [Deuteronomy 28:23-24](#) promised that drought would come to a disobedient Israel.

b. **Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel:** Elijah challenged King Ahab to gather the idol prophets of Baal and Asherah for this meeting at Mount Carmel.

i. “Gather to me all Israel, by their deputies, or heads, or representatives, that they may be witnesses of all our transactions.” (Poole)

ii. [1 Kings 18:36](#) makes it clear that Elijah did all this at the command of God. This wasn’t his clever idea or strategy. This was a God-inspired plan that Elijah obeyed.

iii. It was important to confront and eliminate these prophets of Baal *before* God sent rain to the land of Israel. It was crucial that everyone understand that the rain came from Yahweh, not from Baal.

c. **Who eat at Jezebel’s table:** This refers to the fact that these prophets of Baal and Asherah were sponsored and supported by the government of Israel, having a special patron in the wicked Queen Jezebel.

i. “Jezebel was not content with a private chapel, nor with her husband’s readiness to pay lip-service to Baal; she meant to dethrone the God of Israel, and make her Baal the chief deity and her faith in the official state religion.” (Payne)

B. Elijah’s victory on Mount Carmel.

1. ([1 Kings 18:20-21](#)) Elijah challenges Israel to make a decision.

So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.

a. **Ahab sent for all the children of Israel:** It is hard to know why Ahab did this, carrying out the instructions of Elijah. Perhaps he hoped that the people would be so angry with Elijah for the last three years of drought that this crowd would turn against the prophet.

b. **And gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel:** These prophets of Baal *hated* Elijah. They loved the favor of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, and they enthusiastically promoted the persecution of any true follower of Yahweh. But over the last three years, they had been severely humbled by Elijah and the drought sustained by his prayers. All their cries to the weather-god Baal were ineffective for three years. They *hated* this prophet of God who humiliated them and their sham priesthood so thoroughly.

i. “See, with what malignant glances his every movement is watched by the priests. No tiger ever watched its victim more fiercely! If they may have their way, he will never touch yonder plain again.” (Meyer)

ii. “That lone man, of heroic soul, stemmed the fearful torrent of idolatry, and like a rock in mid-current, firmly stood his ground. He, alone and single-handed, was more than a match for all the priests of the palace and the groves, even as one lion scatters a flock of sheep.” (Spurgeon)

c. **How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him:** This was a logical and useful question. In general, the people of Israel were in a spiritually lukewarm condition. They wanted to give some devotion to *both* Yahweh and Baal, but the God of Israel was not interested in such divided devotion.

i. Spiritually speaking, Israel was like an unfaithful partner in a marriage who doesn’t want to give up their marriage partner, but also does not want to give up their illicit lover. The marriage partner has a legitimate claim to the *exclusive* devotion of their spouse.

ii. **How long will you falter:** The ancient Hebrew word translated **falter** means “to limp, halt, hop, dance, or leap” (Dilday). It is the same word used in [1 Kings 18:26](#) where the prophets of Baal leaped about the altar. It may be that Elijah meant, “How long will you dance between two opinions?”

iii. Adam Clarke had a slightly different understanding: “Literally, ‘How long hop ye about upon two boughs?’ This is a metaphor taken from birds hopping about from bough to bough, not knowing on which to settle.”

iv. The appeal of Elijah made it clear that there was a *difference* between the service of Baal and the service of Yahweh. Perhaps in the minds of many, there was not a great difference — the only important thing was to have *some kind* of religion, and to be sincere about that, following your heart to whatever god your heart might lead you to. Yet Elijah knew that it could never be this way. You either served Baal *or* you served Yahweh; there was a difference.

v. Elijah’s appeal also called his hearers to account for the period of time in which they had not made a decision between Yahweh and Baal. “**How long**,” he asked them. “How many more sermons do you want? How many more Sundays must roll away wasted? How many warnings, how many sicknesses, how many toilings of the bell to warn you that you must die? How many graves must be dug for your family before you will be impressed? How many plagues and pestilences must ravage this city before you will turn to God in truth? How long halt ye between two opinions?” (Spurgeon).

d. **But the people answered him not a word:** There was no objection and no repentance. They lacked the courage to either defend their position or to change it. They were willing to live unexamined lives of low conviction.

i. Elijah could so accurately see their hearts because he could see their *actions*. Spurgeon explained Elijah’s idea: “I know you are not decided in opinion, because you are *not decided in practice*. If God be God, *follow him*; if Baal, *follow him*. You are not decided in practice.”

2. ([1 Kings 18:22-24](#)) Elijah proposes a test between God and Baal.

Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” So all the people answered and said, “It is well spoken.”

a. **I alone am left a prophet of the LORD:** This was not true and Elijah had reason to know that it was not true. In the recent past, Obadiah told him that he sheltered 100 prophets of God against the persecution of Jezebel and Ahab.

b. **Let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves:** In this proposed test, Elijah was careful to give the prophets of Baal every potential advantage. They picked the two bulls, and picked which one they would sacrifice and which one Elijah would sacrifice.

c. **And the God who answers by fire, He is God:** The fire would not come from either Elijah or the prophets of Baal. It had to be supernatural in origin, and supplied by either Baal or Yahweh.

i. Again, Elijah gave plenty of advantage to the prophets of Baal. It was thought that Baal was the sky-god, lord of the weather and the sender of lightning (thought to be fire from the sky). If Baal were real, he certainly could send fire from heaven.

ii. To put God and himself on the line before the gathered nation of Israel took a lot of faith. Elijah learned this faith over the many months of daily dependence on God, both at the Brook Cherith and at the widow’s house at Zarephath.

iii. Of course, Elijah had plenty of reasons for confidence in the LORD God. First, he was following express instructions from the LORD ([1 Kings 18:36](#)). Second, he knew from the history of Israel that God could and would send fire from heaven upon a sacrifice ([Judges 6:20-21](#) and [2 Chronicles 7:1-7](#)).

3. ([1 Kings 18:25-27](#)) The prophets of Baal pray for fire from their god.

Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare *it* first, for you *are* many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*.” So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us!” But *there was* no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Cry aloud, for he *is* a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, *or* perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.”

a. **Called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us”:** The prophets of Baal had a devoted prayer life. Here, they prayed long and with great passion. Yet because they did not pray to the *real* God, their prayer meant nothing. **There was no voice; no one answered.**

b. **They leaped about the altar which they had made:** The prophets of Baal had an energetic prayer life. Their worship was filled with enthusiasm and activity. Yet because it was not directed to the *real* God, their prayer meant nothing.

c. **Elijah mocked them:** Elijah could not resist the opportunity to mock the prophets of Baal for their evidently foolish faith.

i. “Elijah’s irony bordered on sarcasm” (Patterson and Austel). The words **meditating** and **busy** can be translated “to be engaged in business” and may be a euphemism for bodily elimination.

ii. “Rabbi S. Jarchi gives this the most degrading meaning; I will give it in Latin, because it is too coarse to be put in English; *Fortassis ad locum secretum abiit, ut ventrem ibi exoneret*; ‘Perhaps he has gone to the -----.’ This certainly reduces Baal to the lowest degree of contempt, and with it the ridicule and sarcasm are complete.” (Clarke)

4. ([1 Kings 18:28-29](#)) The prophets of Baal work harder at their prayer.

So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. And when midday was past, they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

a. **They cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them:** The prophets of Baal were utterly *sincere* and completely *devoted* to their religion. They were so committed that they expressed it in their own blood. They had zeal, but without knowledge — therefore their zeal profited them *nothing*.

i. “The practice of self-inflicted wounds to arouse a deity’s pity or response is attested in Ugarit when men ‘bathed in their own blood like an ecstatic prophet.” (Wiseman)

ii. “This was done according to the *rites* of that barbarous religion; of the blood of the bullock would not move him they thought their *own blood* might; and with it they smeared themselves and their sacrifice.” (Clarke)

b. **But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention:** This is the sad result of worshipping an imaginary god or the god of our own making. We may dedicate great sincerity, sacrifice, and devotion to such gods, but it means nothing. There is no one there to answer.

5. ([1 Kings 18:30-35](#)) Elijah prepares his altar.

Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Israel shall be your name.” Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid *it* on the wood, and said, “Fill four waterpots with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.” Then he said, “Do *it* a second time,” and they did *it* a second time; and he said, “Do *it* a third time,” and they did *it* a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled

the trench with water.

- a. **Come near to me:** When it was Elijah's turn to sacrifice, he first wanted to get the *attention* of the people. This was for their benefit, not his own or really primarily for the benefit of God. They needed to pay attention so they would see that the LORD was a true God, in contrast to the silent Baal.
- b. **He repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down:** Elijah was very aware that he repaired something that once stood strong. There was once an altar of the LORD at Carmel and in Israel in general. Elijah looked to *revive* something that *once was*.
- c. **Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood:** In wanting to make a deep impression upon the people, Elijah required more of Yahweh than he did of Baal. Elijah did not even suggest to the prophets of Baal that they wet down their sacrifice once or twice, much less three times. Yet Elijah did this, confident that it was no harder for God to ignite a wet sacrifice than it was for Him to set a dry one ablaze.
- i. "There can be no question of trickery, such as the use of naphtha [a flammable liquid often used as a solvent] instead of water, or mirrors for ignition as suggested by some scholars. The opposition was observant and close." (Wiseman)

6. (1 Kings 18:36-37) Elijah's prayer.

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."

- a. **At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice:** Some 50 years before this, Jeroboam the King of Israel officially disassociated the citizens of the northern kingdom from the worship of the God of Israel at the temple in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Elijah still remembered the **evening sacrifice** that was offered according to God's commandment every day at the temple in Jerusalem.
- b. **Let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant:** Both were important. It was important for the people of Israel to know who their God was, and who *God's servant* was.
- c. **And that I have done all these things at Your word:** This also was essential, and helps us to understand the whole event. Elijah did this according to the word of God. It wasn't prompted because of his own cleverness, because of presumption or because of vainglory. *God* led Elijah to this showdown with the prophets of Baal.
- i. "It was no whim of his to chastise the nation with a drought. It was no scheme of his, concocted in his own brain, that he should put the Godhead of Jehovah or of Baal to the test by a sacrifice to be consumed by miraculous fire." (Spurgeon)
- ii. Spurgeon recommended that believers use the same principle in prayer, especially those who preach the Word of God: "Go you to the mercy-seat with this as one of your arguments, 'Lord, I have done according to thy word. Now let it be seen that it is even so. I have preached thy word, and thou hast said, "It shall not return unto me void." I have prayed for these people, and thou hast said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"; let it be seen that this is according to thy word.'"

7. (1 Kings 18:38-40) The result: Yahweh answers by fire.

Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

a. **Then the fire of the LORD fell:** The prophets of Baal had passion, commitment, sincerity, devotion, and great energy. What they did *not* have was a God in heaven who answered by **fire**.

i. “The action of this fire was in every case *downward*, contrary to the nature of all earthly and material fire.” (Clarke)

ii. “Elijah’s petition had lasted less than a minute but produced spectacular results. The difference lay in the One addressed.” (Patterson and Austel)

b. **The fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench:** When the fire of God fell, its work was *beyond expectation*. It would have been enough if merely the cut-up pieces of bull on the altar were ignited, but God wanted more than simple vindication — He wanted to *glorify* Himself among the people.

c. **Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!”** At this moment, the people were completely persuaded. Asked to choose between Baal and Yahweh, there was no choice to make, obviously, the LORD was God.

i. Tragically, this was only a momentary persuasion. This was no lasting revival in Israel. The people were decidedly persuaded, but not lastingly changed.

d. **Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape”:** Since this was a contest between Yahweh and Baal, the prophets of each deity had to be responsible for their respective results. The great sin of King Ahab was his official sponsorship of the prophets of Baal, and now that the fraud of Baal was exposed, his prophets had to answer for it and were dealt with according to the Law of Moses ([Deuteronomy 13:5](#), [13:13-18](#), [17:2-5](#), and [18:9-22](#)).

i. Elijah simply demanded that the prophets of Baal receive the treatment they promoted for the prophets of Yahweh.

C. Elijah goes to Jezreel.

1. ([1 Kings 18:41-44](#)) Elijah prays for rain.

Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for *there is the sound of abundance of rain.*” So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So he went up and looked, and said, “*There is nothing.*” And seven times he said, “Go again.” Then it came to pass the seventh *time*, that he said, “There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!” So he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare *your chariot*, and go down before the rain stops you.’”

a. **Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain:** Elijah knew that once the *official* worship of Baal had been defeated, the purpose for the drought was fulfilled. Rain was on the way. Elijah and Ahab would now each do what they wanted to do — Elijah would pray and Ahab would eat.

b. **He bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees:** This was an unusual posture of prayer for Elijah. He wasn’t kneeling, he wasn’t sitting, he wasn’t standing, and he didn’t lay prostrate before the LORD. This shows that the power in prayer resides in faith in the living God.

i. “We scarcely recognize him, he seems so to have lost his identity. A few hours before, he stood erect as an oak of Bashan; now, he is bowed as a bulrush. Then as God’s ambassador he pleaded with man; now as man’s intercessor he pleads with God. Is it not always so — that the men who stand straightest in the presence of sin bow lowest in the presence of God.” (Meyer)

c. **It came to pass the seventh time:** This was stubbornly *persistent* prayer. It was as if Elijah would not take “no” for an answer, because he had confidence that God’s will was to send rain. He stubbornly furthered the will of God by his persistent prayer.

i. “Go again seven times; let us not be dejected for some disappointments, but continue to wait upon God, who

will answer me, and that speedily.” (Poole)

ii. “God’s promises are given, not to restrain, but to incite to prayer. They show the direction in which we may ask, and the extent to which we may expect an answer They are the mould into which we may pour our fervid spirits without fear.” (Meyer)

d. **There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea:** Elijah prayed, asking in faith for God to send the rain. Elijah obviously *sensed* this was the will of God, yet it was his fervent prayer that brought the rain. The evidence of the rain came slowly and in a small way, but out of this small evidence God brought a mighty work.

i. In the November 9, 1904, edition of *The Life of Faith*, a London newspaper dedicated to the deeper life movement, a writer named Jessie Penn-Lewis reported on a remarkable work just beginning in Wales under the ministry of men like Evan Roberts and Seth Joshua. She reported that a *cloud no bigger than a man’s hand* had arisen in Wales. It was a fitting description of the clear but small beginning of what became a mighty work.

ii. Charles Spurgeon used this text as an illustration of the small signs that precede a mighty work of God. He spoke of four “certain signs and tokens for good which prayerful faith clearly perceives when an awakening, a genuine revival is about to come.” Christians should regard the following things as clouds, **as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea:**

- A growing dissatisfaction with the present state of things, and an increasing anxiety among the members of the church for the salvation of souls.
- When this anxiety leads believers to be exceedingly earnest and importunate in prayer.
- When ministers begin to take counsel one with another, and to say, “What must we do?”
- When we shall see the doctrine of the individual responsibility of each Christian fully felt and carried out into individual action.

e. **Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you:** This was a word of faith from Elijah to Ahab. Based only on the sighting of a **cloud** that was **as small as a man’s hand**, he knew a torrent was on the way.

2. ([1 Kings 18:45-46](#)) Elijah’s amazing 14-mile cross-country run.

Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

a. **There was a heavy rain:** God’s word through Elijah was proved true. The long drought was over, and it was demonstrated that the prayers of Elijah both *withheld* the rain and then subsequently *brought* the rain.

b. **Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab:** This was an obviously supernaturally empowered 14-mile cross-country run. We don’t know exactly why it was important to God for Elijah to reach Jezreel first; perhaps it was so that he would be the first to tell Queen Jezebel.

i. “To demonstrate that he was neither ashamed of, nor afraid for, what he had done, though he knew how Jezebel would resent it, but durst venture himself in the midst of his enemies, as being confident of the Divine power and protection.” (Poole)

ii. “That Elijah could have made such a run is assured in the Arab runners could easily cover one hundred miles in two days.” (Patterson and Austel)