

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 6

Fire from Heaven

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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 To teach the students that God is the One true and living God. He desires to turn our hearts back to Him when we go astray.

Key Verses

1 Kings 18:30-40—Main Teaching Passage

Isaiah 53

James 4:8

Leviticus 1:3-9

Memory Verse - James 4:8

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Exodus 20:3

Ask the students, "Did you ever believe that something was true, but later found out it wasn't?"

It's easy to get caught up in believing certain things are true just because everyone else believes the same thing! But we don't have to guess what's true or not, God's Word makes it clear. The Israelites should have known better, but let's take a look at what God wanted to teach them (and us) in our lesson today.

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

The prophets of Baal had exhausted themselves with desperate prayers and rituals that continued from the morning all the way through the evening. Baal had remained silent, and it was now Elijah's turn. He called the people of Israel to draw near to him as he rebuilt a broken-down altar with 12 stones. He dug a trench around the altar, laid the wood in order on the altar, and cut the bull in pieces and laid that on top of the wood. He then had the people fill large water pots and pour them over the altar, not once, not twice, but three times, so that the bull, the wood, the stones, and even the trench and the ground around the altar was soaked.

Elijah turned from his work and prayed that God would let it be known that the God of Israel is the true God, and Elijah was His servant. He admitted that everything he had done was done because God told him to do it. And the reason God had told him to do it was to turn the people's hearts back to God. Immediately, fire fell from heaven, consuming not only the bull and the wood, but also the rocks and the ground around the altar. All the people fell on their faces and declared, "The LORD, He is God," and Elijah had the prophets of Baal destroyed.

LOOK

Last week we learned that idols are lifeless, as are the people who serve them. After an entire day of watching the prophets of Baal run wild without result, I wonder what the Israelites were thinking. Elijah got everyone's attention and told them to come close. As they drew near, he rebuilt an old altar that had been broken down. An altar was a place of sacrifice. This altar was a place of worship that had long been pushed aside, rejected, and forgotten. Elijah wanted the Israelites to watch him go through the process of rebuilding the altar so they would understand that the same God who brought the 12 tribes of Israel into the Promised Land was still their God, and still worthy of their worship.

After he rebuilt the altar, he laid the wood on top and prepared the sacrifice. The way the sacrifice was prepared was something to behold. The bull's head would be placed on the altar first, then the fat placed on top of the head, and the insides placed on top of that, and finally, the legs placed on the very top. It was a gruesome sight, and probably difficult to watch and look at. But it didn't remain like that for long, because unlike the false prophets who cried out all day to a god who wasn't there, Elijah prayed to the true God, and God's response was immediate and clear.

Fire fell from the sky! Can you imagine? The fact that the sacrifice and the altar were soaking wet didn't stop God. The fire was so intense that it even disintegrated the rocks and the ground around the altar. There was nothing left! And there was no denying it. Surely, the God of Israel was the true God.

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

LOOK (Continued)

For us today, we look at this story and can't help but see what is called a foreshadowing of Jesus. Jesus would go up to a mountain, the perfect Sacrifice. He was laid upon the wood and nailed there, so disfigured that those who knew Him could hardly recognize Him. It was a gruesome picture, just like the bull. But why had He come? For the same reason Elijah had prayed: to turn the hearts of people back to God.

The fire fell. God's wrath was poured out on His beloved Son. Jesus took the punishment for our sin upon Himself, sacrificed in our place, so that we could receive the gift of forgiveness and eternal life. Like the Israelites on the mountain, it's so important to see this and declare, "The LORD, He is God!" There is no need for us to falter between two opinions.

The LORD is God, and we must serve Him! This is why the prophets of Baal had to be removed and destroyed. As we serve God, one of the first things we do is stop serving things that pull our hearts away from Him. God doesn't share worship with idols. By His Spirit and strength, we put off the old man and put on the new. God wants our hearts. He wants us to draw near. He wants us to rebuild the altar that we may walk in His forgiveness each and every day, and He made all of those things possible through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

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

As a class, memorize James 4:8.

Pray: Thank God for making a way for us to draw near to Him. Ask God to help you serve Him every day, and for strength to remove the things in your life that keep you from serving Him as you should.

Parent Question: Why did God have Elijah hold a contest between Baal and God?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 1 Kings 18:30-40 by David Guzik

5. ([1Ki 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. ([1Ki 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. ([1Ki 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](#), [13-18](#); [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.