

Elijah's Triumph Over the Priests of Baal

1 Kings 18:20-40

Elijah said to Ahab, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and followed Baal. Therefore, have all of Israel assemble for me at Mount Carmel with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

So, Ahab issued the order to all of Israel and the prophets to assemble at Mt. Carmel. Elijah then came near to all the people, and said, "How long will you go limping between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The people did not answer with a word.

Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets number 450. Let two bulls be given to us. Let the prophets choose one bull for themselves, cut it into pieces, and lay it upon the wood, but put no fire to it. Then they will call upon Baal and I will call upon the name of the Lord; the god who answers by fire is indeed God."

All the people cheered.

Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose your bull and prepare it first, for you are many. Then call upon the name of your god to set it afire."

They chose their bull, prepared it, and began to call to Baal for fire. "O Baal, answer us." But there was no voice; no answer. They limped about the altar that they had made. At noon Elijah began to mock them, saying, "Cry louder. Perhaps your god is meditating or has wandered away. Perhaps he is on a journey or is asleep and must be awakened. Perhaps he is on the toilet."

The prophets of Baal called out louder and louder. As was their custom, they began to cut themselves with swords and lances until blood gushed over them. Midday passed and they continued to rave. No answer, no response, no voice, no fire.

Then Elijah said to the people, "Come closer to me." And all the people came closer. Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord that had been torn down. He took 12 stones to represent the 12 tribes of Israel and he built his altar to the Lord. Next, he

dug a trench around this altar. He then put the wood upon the altar, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood.

Finally, he called to the people, “Fill 4 jars with water and pour it on the bull and the wood.” After the people did thus he said, “Do it a second time.” And then, “Do it a third time.” The people continued to pour water until water stood about the altar and overflowed the trench.

Now Elijah stepped up to the altar and called out, “O Lord, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, let it be known that this day you are God in Israel, that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your bidding. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so that this people may know that you, O Lord are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.”

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the bull, the wood, the altar, and licked up every drop of water in the trench.

When the people saw this, they fell on their faces and said, “The Lord is indeed God; the Lord is indeed our God.”

Elijah called out, “Seize the prophets of Baal; don’t let even one of them escape. Then they seized them and Elijah brought them to Wadi Kishon and killed them there.