

ELIJAH ON THE MOUNTAIN

Introduction

- 1) The story of the prophet **Elijah** is a thrilling account and full of lessons for us today
 - a) He is a major Bible character referenced in both the Old and New Testaments (Jas. 5:17-18)
- 2) Elijah is perhaps best known for his thrilling victory won for God on Mount Carmel
- 3) Let us observe and learn from Elijah *on the mountain* – **1 Kings 17-18**

I) Events Leading to the Mountain (1 Kings 17-18:18)

- A) Introduced to Elijah (“my God is Jehovah”), the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead (17:1-7)
 - 1) In the days of the idolatry and rebellion led by king Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs. 16:29-33)
 - a) Proclaims a drought – punishment on Israel (cf. Amos 4:7-8; Baal = fertility weather god)
- B) Elijah finds faith in a widow of Zarephath [non-Israelite] (17:8-16)
 - 1) Her son dies, is raised by Elijah, and the widow proclaims her faith (17:17-24)
 - a) Becomes a lesson to unfaithful Israel then and in Jesus’ time (Lk. 4:25-26)
- C) Elijah confronts king Ahab (18:1-19)
 - 1) Ahab’s servant, Obadiah, is a good, God-fearing man; fearful at first, but then gets Ahab
 - 2) Ahab blames Elijah for Israel’s famine/drought troubles
 - a) Elijah courageously and correctly identifies the true source of Israel’s troubles – the idolatry of Ahab and his failure to obey the Lord
 - b) True source of problems in the Lord’s church today is not those who warn about error and its consequences, but those who are involved in teaching and practicing error

II) The Contest between God and Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:19-24)

- A) Elijah calls for a public confrontation with the prophets of Baal and Asherah (vv. 19-20)
 - 1) The truth has nothing to fear from open investigation and challenge – debate, discussion
- B) Elijah challenges the children of Israel to stop wavering and take a stand on the truth (v. 21)
 - 1) Too many today refuse to take a stand for truth because of ignorance, fear, or loyalty to men
- C) *Proposed contest*: set up altar with bull offering, and see who will send fire (vv. 23-24)
 - 1) This did not originate from Elijah’s wisdom, but from the word of the Lord (v. 36)

III) The Victory of God over Baal (1 Kings 18:25-46)

- A) Prophets of Baal prepare their offering and call upon Baal – *no response* (vv. 25-29)
 - 1) Elijah mocks them (v. 27), using what they believed about how their gods acted
 - a) The Ugaritic Baal myths confirm these beliefs about their false gods – “Elijah’s taunt is that Baal was acting in a merely human manner. He uses terms known to the people from the Ugaritic Baal myths” (*Donald J. Wiseman, TOTC*)
 - b) Elijah knew that the one true God is always present (Psa. 121:1-4; Isa. 40:28)
- B) Elijah prepares his offering (vv. 30-37)
 - 1) Calls the people to come close (v. 30) – *get clear view; no deception*
 - 2) Does all in the name (authority) of the Lord (vv. 31-32, 36) – *proper guidance*
 - 3) Has water poured all over the offering three times (vv. 33-35) – *no trick fire possible*
 - 4) Prays that the people might know that the Lord is God (v. 37) – *correct goal*
- C) God answers with fire that consumes the sacrifice, wood, stones, dust, and water (v. 38)
 - 1) People of Israel confess the Lord God; false prophets executed (vv. 39-40)
 - 2) The drought ends with the coming of heavy, abundant rain (vv. 41-46)
 - 3) A great victory for God and His people over false gods, doubt, and rebellion!

Conclusion

Like **Elijah**, we need to have the courage to openly confront error and false ways in the church and the world around us. If we stand faithfully with God in the battle against evil and wickedness, truth will always be victorious, and so will we (1 Cor. 15:57; 1 Jn. 5:4)!