



Church of God Sunday School

ELIJAH AND THE IDOL WORSHIPERS

1 Kings 18:1-46

Rain and dew had not fallen in all of Israel for three years, just as the Prophet Elijah had said. A terrible famine was the result. Hard times had come to the people because their leader, King Ahab, had turned away from God.

The day came when God told Elijah to go to King Ahab and tell him that, finally, it would rain on the earth. During the drought Elijah had hid—first by the brook Cherith (*KER-ith*) and then with the widow in Zarephath (*ZAIR-uh-fath*).

While looking for pasture to feed the horses and mules, the governor of King Ahab's house (Obadiah) met Elijah. Elijah told Obadiah to go and tell King Ahab that he was there. (Obadiah was a good man who had hid a hundred prophets in a cave to protect them from the wicked Queen Jezebel.)

King Ahab had searched for Elijah in every nation and kingdom. When he came to where Elijah was, he said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah answered that he was not the one who had caused Israel's trouble. It had been the king and his family, because they had forsaken the true God to worship idols, especially Baal.

Elijah told Ahab to call together all the people of Israel, the 450 prophets of the idol Baal, and the 400 prophets of the groves. They were to gather on Mount Carmel. The prophets, the people, and King Ahab came, as Elijah had commanded.

When everyone had come, Elijah said to them,



"How long halt ye between two opinions? [In other words, 'How long are you going to continue to try to worship both Baal and God?'] if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." No one said a word!

Elijah told the people that he was the only prophet of the Lord, but

there were 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah said that there would be two altars with a sacrifice on each one. No fire was to be lit under either of the sacrifices. The prophets of Baal were to call on their gods, and Elijah would "call on the name of the LORD."

Elijah said, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." Then "all the people answered and said, It is well spoken." Elijah told the prophets of Baal to prepare their sacrifice first, because there were so many of them.

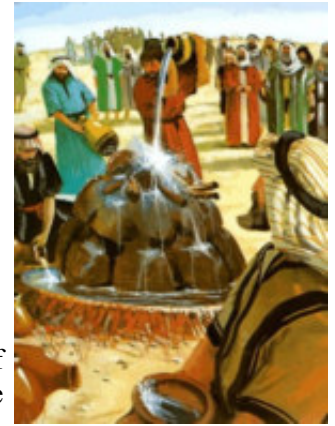
After the sacrifice was ready, the prophets prayed to Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us." Could Baal hear them? "But there was no voice, nor any that answered." The prophets of Baal became so stirred that they jumped up on the altar!

After Elijah had watched them all morning, he said to the prophets that maybe Baal was talking or on a journey or asleep. Elijah knew they would get no answer from an idol. Baal would not send fire upon the sacrifice, for he was a false god.

The prophets of Baal kept on trying to get Baal's attention. (How could they get the idol's attention if he was not even alive?) They tried cutting themselves with knives to show how sincere they were! They cut themselves so much that blood gushed out upon them! This continued until it was time for the offering of the evening sacrifice. Yet, Baal still had not answered their pleadings.

When it was Elijah's turn, he said to all the people, "Come near unto me." He wanted them to hear what he had to say, to see what he did, and to see that he did not have any fire hidden anywhere.

Then Elijah "repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down." He took twelve stones—one for each tribe of Israel—and "he



built an altar in the name of the LORD."

All the people watched Elijah closely as he began to do something very differently from what the idol worshipers had done. First, Elijah dug a large trench around the altar. Next, he put the wood on the altar and cut up the bullock and placed it on the wood. Then Elijah called for "four barrels with water" to be poured over the sacrifice. This was done three times, until water ran from around the altar. Lastly, the trench was also filled with water.

Elijah did not cut himself with knives or shout to get God's attention or jump on the altar, as the prophets of Baal did. He only prayed, saying: "LORD God . . . of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD . . . that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

God answered Elijah's prayer by sending fire that burnt up not only the sacrifice but also the wood, the stones, the dust, and even all the water that was in the trench! When the people saw what God had done, they all fell on their faces. They cried, "The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God."

Elijah then told the people: "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." So all the prophets of Baal were rounded up and taken to the brook called Kishon (*KI-shon*) where they were put to death. (This was in obedience to God's law that such people be killed; Deuteronomy 17:2-5.)

Elijah then said to Ahab, "Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain." (There was not a cloud in the sky. What did Elijah hear? By faith, Elijah heard the coming rain.)

Ahab went to eat, and Elijah went to the top of Mount Carmel. There he threw himself down on the ground. With his face between his knees, he started to pray, after telling his servant to go and look toward the sea. The servant went and looked. He came back to Elijah and told him that he had seen nothing. Elijah said, "Go again seven times."

Elijah continued to pray. On the servant's seventh time to look out to the sea, he saw "a little cloud . . . like a man's hand," rising up out of the water. He went and told Elijah, who told him to tell Ahab, "Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not."

Before Ahab could return to the city of Jezreel (*JEZ-ree-uhl*), "the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain." As Ahab rode in his chariot, Elijah was also headed to Jezreel. But the Lord

helped Elijah to run faster than Ahab's chariot! He ran so fast that he beat King Ahab to Jezreel!

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him."  
 —1 Kings 18:21*  
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FILL IN THE BLANKS

"And it came to pass at the _____ time, that he said, Behold, there _____ a little _____ out of the sea, like a man's _____. And he said, Go up, Say unto _____, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the _____ stop thee not."

—1 Kings 18:44

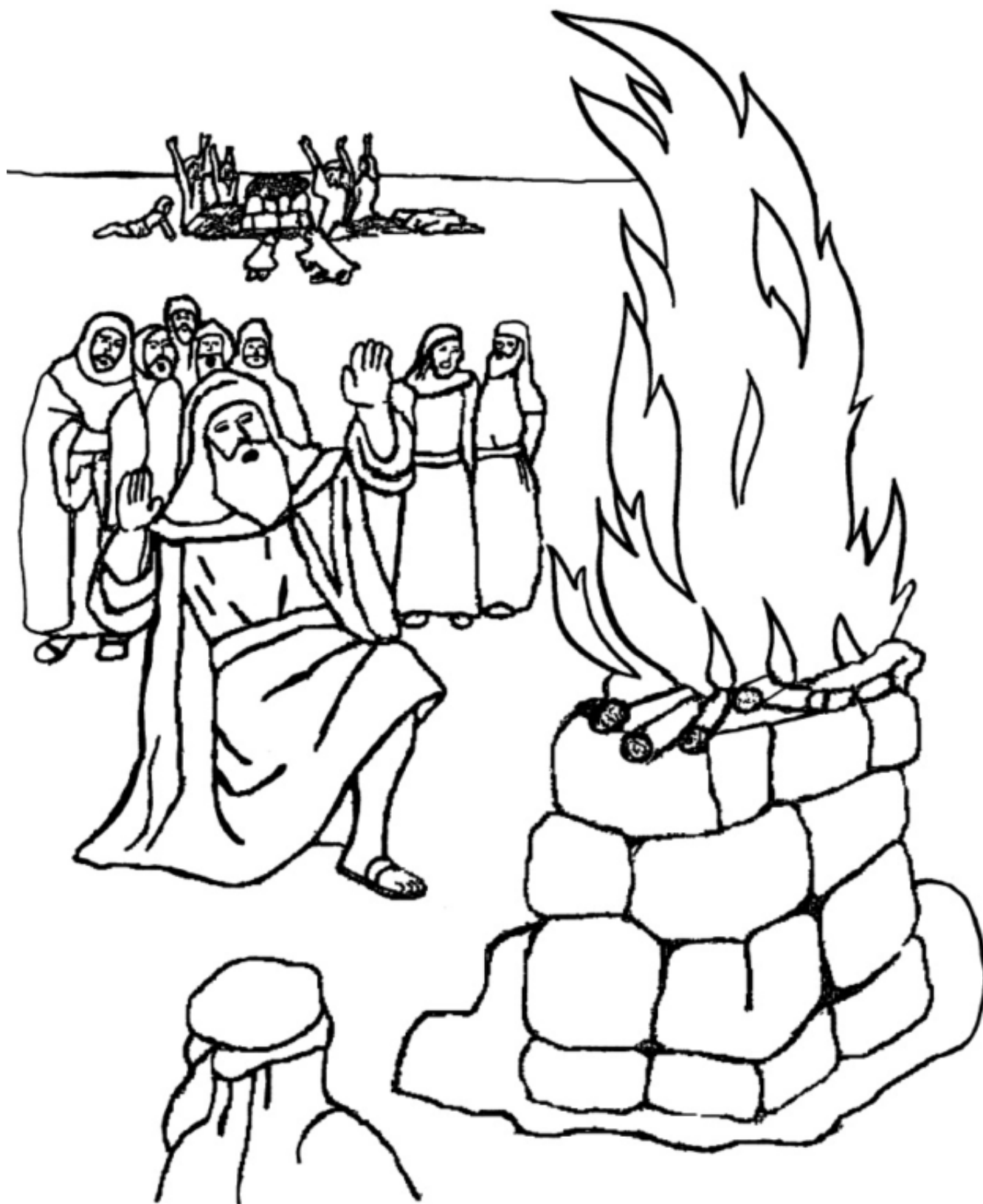
Elijah and the Idol Worshipers

WORD SEARCH



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Baal	Elijah	Ahab	fire	sacrifice
Mount Carmel	Israel	rain	prophets	chariot



God Answers Elijah's Prayer