



# THE PROPHETS OF ELIJAH & THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

1 KINGS 18

## GOAL

▶ To teach children about the amazing power of God, and His ability to answer prayer.

## CHARACTERS

▶ **Elijah:** A prophet of Israel who boldly rejected idolatry and showcased God's amazing power

**Ahab:** The king of Israel who hated Elijah

**Prophets of Baal:** Tried, unsuccessfully, to get Baal to answer their prayers.

## MEMORY VERSE

▶ **1 Kings 18:39:** And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God."

## OVERVIEW

▶ **Read over 1 Kings 18:** After bringing word to King Ahab that God would punish his and Israel's idolatry by allowing a drought to lay waste to the land, Elijah went into hiding. King Ahab hated Elijah, and he hated God. One day, God told Elijah that the time had come for him to show himself to the king. Elijah told the king to bring all of Israel and all of the prophets of the false gods to Mount Carmel. There, Elijah challenged Baal's prophets to a contest. They would pray to Baal and Elijah would pray to God. The God to set fire to the prepared sacrifice was real. Baal's prophets prayed all day, but no fire came—their offering sat untouched. Elijah repaired the broken altar of the Lord and prepared the sacrifice. To further prove God's power, Elijah made it even harder for a fire to burn by pouring water over the sacrifice and the wood. Elijah prayed, and the fire of the Lord consumed the offering and dried up all of the water that had been poured over it. When the people saw this demonstration of power, their hearts were turned back to the Lord.



## SUGGESTIONS

▶ **In this story we see Elijah's confidence in the Lord and His power. This confidence comes from knowing that God hears the prayers of righteous people, and He responds in powerful ways. God gave Elijah a task, and he carried it out with boldness.**

1. Elijah told King Ahab to bring all of the prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel. Even though he was outnumbered 450 to 1, Elijah didn't back down. Elijah knew that whether there were 450 prophets or 2,000 prophets, praying to a false god would yield no results. One lone prophet praying to the one true God would be more powerful and effective than anything the false prophets could do.

2. The 450 prophets of Baal prayed by shouting and even cutting themselves. It must have looked so ridiculous! Elijah began to mock their behavior and their god by saying things such as "Pray louder! Maybe he's on a journey and can't hear you!"

3. Elijah was so confident in God and His power, he drenched the altar, the offering, and the wood. To get that offering to burn, a human would have to wait until at least the wood dried. As if witnessing fire coming from heaven weren't enough to convince the people of God's power, the wet altar only made it more obvious and undeniable.

## PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

▶ **Altar Builders | Supplies:** paper lunch bags, newspaper, and tape.

Have children make "stones" by filling paper lunch bags with crumpled newspaper, and taping them closed. Have the children build altars in groups or teams. Explain the purpose of altars.

## MEMORY VERSE MEANING

▶ **1 Kings 18:39:** This short prayer was how the people responded when they saw the fire come down from heaven and consume the altar and sacrifice. There is no other way to respond to God in the face of such power and answered prayer than to acknowledge that He is real.



## POST-LESSON ACTIVITY

- ▷ **Rain Clouds | Supplies:** construction paper, cotton balls, glue, markers, crayons, and other art supplies.

Have children glue cotton balls onto their construction paper. Next, have them draw rain drops coming from the cloud, and write the memory verse on the page. Let the students decorate the rest of the paper however they want.

## TAKE HOME

- ▷ To be as bold as Elijah, we need to be confident in our faith. Elijah built his confidence by praying and listening for God's still, small voice to guide him.

A strong relationship with God will help us to:

- 1. Be courageous.** If we know God is with us and that we are acting on His will, then we can boldly face any mission God sends us on.
- 2. Be certain** of what we are called to do and what our next move should be.
- 3. Be at peace.** If we know God is with us, and we know what we're supposed to do, then nothing can shake us!



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 1



**Q1a:** Why did God send the drought?

**A1:** He sent the drought to punish the people's disobedience.

**Q1b:** Have you ever grown anything in a garden or had a houseplant?

**TN:** Ask students what would happen if they forgot to water the garden of plant for a few weeks. The plants might start to wilt. Even if we finally remembered to water the plants, they might not recover from the lack of water.

### SLIDE 2



**Q2a:** What did Elijah tell King Ahab to do?

**A2:** He told the king to bring all the prophets of their false god to the top of Mount Carmel.

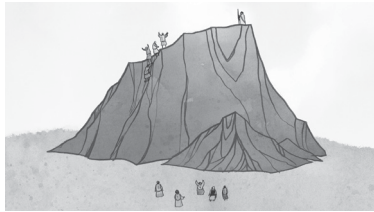
**Q2b:** Would anyone be able to convince you that the sun comes up at night?

**TN:** No. There is evidence every single day that the sun is up during the day. As ridiculous as this idea sounds, the Israelites had learned about God. They had experienced or had heard evidence proving that God is real, and yet, they still ended up worshipping false idols. At one time, they knew the truth, but they were led astray.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 3



**Q3a:** What did Elijah challenge the false prophets to do?

**A3:** He challenged them to build an altar and pray for Baal to send fire from heaven and burn up their offering.

**Q3b:** Why did people kill animals as an offering?

**TN:** Animals were killed to atone for sin. Scripture says that the wages for sin is death, meaning to make up for the mistakes a person made, he or she would have to offer a sacrifice. Not all offerings had to be animals; some offerings required fruit or grain. We do not need to do this because Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice to pay for all of our sins.

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### SLIDE 4



**Q4a:** How did the false prophets try to get Baal to set fire to their offering?

**A4:** They prayed, shouted, and hurt themselves.

**Q4b:** What would you have to do to get your favorite stuffed animal to grant you three wishes?

**TN:** Hopefully, there will be a lot of confused faces in the class, because there is no real answer to this question. Our stuffed animals are not alive. They have no power to grant wishes. There are no magic words, secret handshakes, or special dance moves that will get our stuffed animals to respond. Trying any of these methods to get them to respond to us would make us look as ridiculous as all of the prophets of Baal did on top of Mount Carmel as they tried to get their false god to light their sacrifice on fire.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 5



**Q5a:** How did Elijah make it harder for the altar and offering to burn?

**A5:** He threw 12 buckets of water on the altar and offering.

**Q5b:** Is it possible to start a fire with wet wood?

**TN:** Yes, but it requires a bit of work. God didn't come down from heaven and peel away the wet pieces of bark to get to the dry parts, build a pile of dry kindling that would burn, and then use that fire to dry out the larger pieces of wet wood. Instead, God just set fire to it. He is in control of the elements, and even though we wouldn't be able to set fire to the altar after 12 buckets of water were dumped on it, that posed no challenge to God. Funny thing is, even if God did have to come down from heaven and go through all of the same steps we would have to take in order to get the altar to light on fire, it still would have proved that He was the only true God; He just chose to prove this in a far more awe-inspiring way.

### SLIDE 6



**Q6a:** How did the people react?

**A6:** They fell on their faces before God and proclaimed that the Lord is God.

**Q6b:** Can you play video games and read a book at the same time?

**TN:** Maybe, but our performance on the video game probably wouldn't be that good, and our comprehension of what we're reading probably wouldn't be that great either. The Israelites were worshiping God and Baal at the same time, but they couldn't have been worshiping God truly if they were worshiping another god. In the very first of the 10 Commandments, God stated that we should have no other god before Him. By worshiping Baal, the Israelites had failed to follow the very first rule God ever gave us. To worship and follow God truly, we must have our eyes on only Him; our hearts must be turned only toward Him.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 7



**Q7a:** What did Elijah and the people of Israel do to the false prophets?

**A7:** They chased them away and killed them.

**Q7b:** Does this story mean we should chase away anyone who doesn't believe in God?

**TN:** Not at all. There are a lot of factors that led to God telling Elijah to chase away and kill all of the prophets of Baal. We are not called to do the same to people who don't believe in God today. Instead, we are called to talk to people about the amazing, life-changing grace we can find in Jesus. If that doesn't change their minds, we should pray for them. It is not our place to judge others; that's a big job that is best left up to someone who knows everything: God.



**MEMORY  
VERSE**

- ▶ **1 Kings 18:39:** And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.

**BIG IDEA**

- ▶ The one true God hears all of our prayers and answers them in a powerful way.

**CLOSING  
PRAYER**

- ▶ God, we praise You for being the one true God. Please help us to live our lives with a bold faith like Elijah. We ask these things in Jesus’ name, Amen.





## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 1



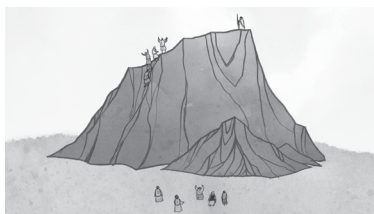
During the time and life of the prophet Elijah, drought filled the land. There had not been any rain for years. The Israelites' crops died. Their animals died, and they became hopeless. This drought was sent from God to punish the people and King Ahab for their disobedience. King Ahab hated God. He also hated Elijah, who was a prophet and messenger of God.

### SLIDE 2



One day, Elijah came before King Ahab to tell him what God was going to do. When the King saw Elijah, he became very angry and said, "What do you want? You are just a troublemaker!" Elijah looked at the king with stern disappointment and said, "No, King Ahab. You have rejected God and followed idols! God is going to show you that He alone is God. Bring all your false and wicked prophets with you and meet me on top of Mount Carmel."

### SLIDE 3



On Mount Carmel, Elijah told King Ahab's wicked prophets to build an altar to their false god, Baal. Then Elijah said, "Here are the rules. You put a bull on your altar, and I will put one on mine. Then we both pray. I will pray to the True Living God, Yahweh, and you can pray to your false god, Baal. If Yahweh is the real true God, He will send fire down from heaven and burn-up the altar. If Baal is a real god, he will send fire from heaven and burn up your altar."



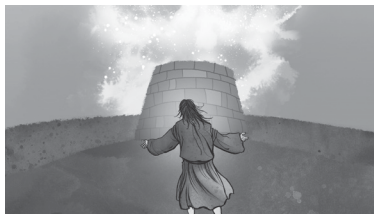
## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 4



Then the contest began. The wicked false prophets of Baal started first. They prayed, yelled, shouted, and even started hurting themselves. But nothing happened. Then they decided to shout louder, cry louder, and dance more. Still nothing happened. Baal was not a real god and all the people of Israel saw this.

### SLIDE 5



Then it was Elijah's turn. He rebuilt the altar, prepared his offering, and took 12 buckets of water and threw it on the altar, the offering, and the firewood. The altar was now soaking wet, making it impossible for a fire to burn on top of it. Then Elijah started to pray, "Lord, show these wicked people that you are the only true living God." Suddenly, the heavens opened up and a mighty column of fire exploded from the sky onto Elijah's altar. As the fire started to burn up the entire altar, the people of Israel became silent. They knew then that Yahweh was the only true God.

### SLIDE 6



The people were in shock and fell down on their faces before God. They knew the truth. So they shouted, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" They knew they had sinned and asked God for forgiveness.

### SLIDE 7



That day, Elijah and the people of Israel chased away and killed the wicked false prophets who hated God. They made sure that these wicked teachers would never again spread the false news about their gods. Baal was just a piece of stone with no life, but that day everyone saw the one true God's great power.