

sacrifice when worship was expected. Others did the same and God moved (Dan. 9:21).

b. A special address. Elijah is called a "prophet" here for the second time since he appeared on the scene (vv. 22, 36). He spoke to God as the LORD (covenant-keeping God), as God (The Strong One), and as associated with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (note the change from Jacob since Israel means "prince with God").

c. A special energy. Twice he asks God to hear him. The verb "hear" means "to answer." Results were expected.

d. A special purpose. Five are listed:

- 1) To prove He was God in Israel. Despite apostasy, God was still God for the nation.
- 2) To prove Elijah was God's servant. In opposition to false prophets, a defense of Elijah as a true prophet was important.
- 3) To prove Elijah's obedience to God. The prophet was not a carnal performer, but one who followed God's Word (17:1, 15).
- 4) To prove that God is God. The point here is that the "people" might know indeed that He is such. There was need for experiential knowledge (cf. 17:24).
- 5) To prove that God had worked. The Hifil form of the verb shows that it was God who would turn the hearts of Israel (John 16:7-11). Repentance is a divine work (Phil 2:13).

NOTE: These intents of prayer move in an ascending order with the last two giving place to the Lord effectively.

Conclusion False prophets and faith can only be overturned by a resort to the Lord Himself. When He does it: 1. The fire will fall (v. 38). 2. True worship will occur (v. 39) 3. Evil will be destroyed (v. 40).

## BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES ON ELIJAH

"The Challenge on Mount Carmel"

1 Kings 18:17-40

### Introduction

1. Here is another historical event in the life of Elijah. It's the great challenge between him and hundreds of false worshippers (v. 19).

2. Apostasy had moved in on the nation Israel. Something drastic was called for by God. His chosen vessel for leadership was Elijah. How faith-confirming all of this is. It stands as a challenge to every child of God today. What was needed then is needed today, namely, a demonstration of the presence and power of God. We don't need more men, money, methods, and machinery, but the Lord of Glory in glory! It was so in the old days and should be today (Ex. 3:2; 13:21; 19:18; Lev. 9:24; 1 Chron. 21:26; 2 Chron. 7:1; Isa. 4:4; Luke 3:16; Acts 2:3, 4; Heb. 12:29). The specific member of the Trinity who conveys the presence and power of God is the Holy Spirit. It is His power we need today (Acts 1:8).

3. With such a need, is there anything in the text which suggests how this can be experienced? The figure for His presence and power is given as "fire" (v. 38). Using the simple "law consecutive," the Hebrew is rendered in English "then the fire of the Lord fell." What were the antecedents to the "then?" Here are some which appear baldly:

1. The REPAIRING of the altar. v. 30

The original Hebrew term for "repair" is the verb "heal." Originally it meant to "sew together" or "mend," hence of a broken altar to "rebuild." The verb "broken down" expresses a violent notion of tearing, rending, and pulling in pieces. The whole context suggests malicious destruction. This is what apostasy really is: willful rejection of the truth which has been known!

The thot is clear. God has been misplaced. He

was not in His rightful position in the nation.

true restoration was required. Getting the Lord in first place was the first step taken by Elijah. That this is the true significance of the rebuilt altar is clear from the text (v. 18).

Two charges are made by Elijah here:

a. The forsaking of God. They had deliberately left God. There is no power of His presence in a situation like this. "Commandments" is equivalent to His Word.

b. The following of Baalim. No one ever displaces the true God without seeking a dreadful substitute. This is the sun-god of the Philistines.

One should not neglect the fact that the altar speaks of worship. When genuine and true worship is neglected, you can be certain there will be apostasy. Its restoration will bring the "fire!" God is looking for worshippers (John 4:24). Oh, examine your heart today so that you will be certain the altar is built in the Name of the Lord (v. 32). God must be first (Col. 1:18).

2. The OFFERING of sacrifice. v. 33.

A number of sacrifices are outlined for the nation in the Mosaic ordinances (Lev. 1-7). The one presented here is the "bullock." An altar without a sacrifice is as useless as a sacrifice without obedience (1 Sam. 15:22). Note two items about the sacrifice:

a. It was actual. The bullock was indeed and in fact on the altar. The covenant relationship which God sustained with Israel was entirely of grace (Gen. 12:1-3) and accepted through faith (Gen. 15:6). The effective experience of the presence and power of God, however, hinged on a sacrifice. So it is in the N.T. scheme of doctrine (cf. Rom 1-11 with 12:1, 2).

b. It was total. The "pieces" of the bullock are significant. Every section of the sacrifice was on the altar. The teaching of total surrender and utter capitulation to the Lord is

considered by many as passe, but not so the Bible. Who can read the Word and discover otherwise (cf. Rom 12:1, 2 with Rom. 6:13). It was Paul who urged by personal example the truth of utter and full handing over of oneself to the Lord for power and His presence (Phil. 3:7-10). All the pieces must be on the altar for the fire to fall!

3. The POURING of water. vv. 33-35

The false prophets of Elijah's day had many bags of tricks. They had false signs and lying wonders. The same is true today. In place of the power and the presence of God, there are beautiful church buildings, a fine organ, a well-trained choir, an academic degree, dazzling oratory, great crowds, collections, and items ad nauseum. The flesh has never failed to come up with some sort of substitute for the real thing. but with all of our fleshly, worldly, Hollywood-style contemporary approach, there is a deeper and more acute awareness of lack in power than ever.

It was to offset any sense of carnal and human trickery that Elijah ordered water to be poured profusely on the altar, the wood, and the sacrifice. This was done three times! This number speaks of a triad of completeness. If fire were to fall, it must be a divine one! Brethren, this is the need of the hour. Churches, individuals, and families must come to that place where they acknowledge by every circumstance that if souls are to feel the impact of God's presence and power it must be by an invasion from heaven!

4. The EXERCISING of prayer. vv. 36, 37.

Elijah was a man of prayer (James 5:16-18). This he showed in the current situation. See how he did it:

a. A special time. It was at the evening