

The Lord, He Is God

FOCUS THOUGHT

God is God alone and has all power.

▶▶ FOCUS VERSE

I Kings 18:39

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

▶▶ LESSON TEXT

I Kings 18:30–39

30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and 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.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.



A GRANDPA'S PRAYER

On Friday, December 8, 2017, Rick Carter received a call that his four-month-old grandson was admitted to A. I. duPont Hospital for Children. He was having trouble breathing, his heart was racing, and he was running a fever. Twenty-four hours later the doctors still had no diagnosis and were struggling to stabilize him.

Two days later, on Sunday, December 10, Pastor Steven Beardsley preached a sermon entitled "The Test." What grabbed Rick's attention was his pastor's emphasis that to pray for miracles and healings, a pastor is not always needed because we serve the same God and have the same power within us.

By Monday evening the doctors had diagnosed Bryce with RSV, but he was not better and was looking at another week in the hospital. Rick told his daughter, "I'm coming to pray."

Rick stood alone in the room, holding Bryce. Rick laid his hand on the baby's chest and began to pray. "God, I am stepping out in faith and enacting what my pastor preached. I am Your servant and if You choose not to heal Bryce, You are still God. Please heal Bryce and let him be released tomorrow."

Instantly Rick felt the warm presence of God lay upon his hand and go into Bryce's chest. Bryce began to convulse in his arms and scream. He was shaking and moving so much, Rick thought he was going to drop him. At that moment, the alarms started going off, alerting the nurses' station that there was a problem.

As this was happening, Rick could hear nurses and doctors running to the room. When the first hand touched the doorknob, Bryce was at complete peace and smiling at Rick. The next day, Bryce was released from the hospital at 10:00 AM; all his vital signs were normal and stabilized.



OUTLINE

I. SAMARIA HAD TURNED TO FOLLOW BAAL

- A. Ahab and Jezebel Led the People to Follow Baal
- B. Leaders Can Influence the Hearts of Their Followers

II. SHOWDOWN ON MOUNT CARMEL

- A. The God Who Answers by Fire
- B. We Can Be Confident That Our God Will Answer

III. PROPHETS OF BAAL BUILT AN ALTAR

- A. Offered Their Sacrifice
- B. Those Who Serve False Gods Have No Hope

IV. ELIJAH REBUILT AN ALTAR

- A. Prepared His Sacrifice and Prayed
- B. Those Who Serve the True God Have Hope

V. THE LORD, HE IS GOD

- A. We Serve the One True God
- B. We Have Hope Because God Has All Power



CONTEMPLATING THE TOPIC

During the 1960s a family accepted a global missions assignment to a remote African village. Several Christian missionaries had tried unsuccessfully to establish a church in that particular area, but the village witch doctor held great power over the people of the village. They had seen him do mystical acts that brought them into submission under his power. He was successful in driving off the previous missionaries, and the people of the village were witnesses to these acts. Believing him to have special powers from numerous gods, they were understandably hesitant to embrace another religion.

The missionary family arrived and set up a small hut for church. They held services faithfully, worshiped, sang, prayed, and preached. They interacted daily with the villagers, who welcomed them. However, the villagers did not discuss religion or attend any functions the

missionaries offered. The witch doctor told the missionaries that their God was weak and they would leave within ninety days. This family was not weak in faith and knew with all confidence they served the one true God. A full calendar year passed, and the missionaries continued faithfully in their duties, holding services each week. Desperate for a move of God, they sought an answer from God in prayer to confirm their calling to this place that seemed hopeless to receive God.

One Sunday the entire village showed up for service. While the missionaries were ecstatic, they were also puzzled by the sudden turnout. Every villager was baptized that day, even the witch doctor. After a few days, the missionaries were approached by the witch doctor. They asked him what had happened to bring about the sudden change of heart. The witch doctor told them that like their predecessors, he began to slowly poison their water supply the first day they arrived in the village. It usually took a few weeks before the missionaries would be so physically ill they had no option but to leave their work and the village to seek medical assistance. The witch doctor went on to say that not only had he poisoned their water, but he had continued to increase the poison each week for the past year.

The amount of poison he last put in the water was enough to kill a herd of elephants, yet this family never suffered one day of sickness throughout the entire year. When the villagers asked him what was happening, he told them, “Surely they serve a true God that He has protected them from certain death.” So He led the entire village to their service to learn about their God.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

I. SAMARIA HAD TURNED TO FOLLOW BAAL

I Kings records the plight of Israel as each leader took them further and further away from serving God. I Kings 16:30–31 tells us, “Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him” (NKJV).

A. Ahab and Jezebel Led the People to Follow Baal

Ahab inherited a kingdom that had been led astray for generations. The significance of his tenure was not because of his disobedience so much as it would be the time God would reveal His might and power to the people of His promise. Ahab’s marriage to Jezebel brought the situation of Israel’s sin to a greater depth. I Kings 16:32–33 states, “He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to arouse the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him” (NIV). The people of Israel followed along as if they had forgotten what God had done for them.

Much like in our society today, the gift of salvation purchased at Calvary seemed to have been lost on a generation seeking self-pleasure and personal fulfillment

through the lust of the flesh. Much like in I Kings, humanity today suffers from short-term memory based on carnal desires passed from generation to generation.

» *What are some ways our world today reflects the days of King Ahab?*

B. Leaders Can Influence the Hearts of Their Followers

The Bible gives us numerous examples of leaders who influenced their subordinates—some for good, others for evil. Ahab and Jezebel must have given the people of Israel some false sense that Baal would offer them hope and peace like they had never known. Perhaps the idea of living and fulfilling any desire was appealing. Whatever the reason, the people received and followed the influence given by their leaders. Only a few of the prophets would stand strong for the law of God in the face of adversity. Many of us today are facing similar circumstances; our beliefs are questioned and mocked by those who proclaim faith, yet they serve a different master entirely.

» *How do our world leaders influence people today?*

II. SHOWDOWN ON MOUNT CARMEL

Every good story has a showdown between good and evil. The characters are developed through the story line, culminating in a climactic showdown at the anticipated moment of suspense. The Bible is unique in this literary technique in that the timing of the showdown is never when we anticipate. Lamentations 3:25–26 tells us, “The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

It would be over four hundred years before God would deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians. Waiting on the Lord often brings out the worst in humanity. When Moses was on Mount Sinai, the children of Israel became impatient and made an idol to worship. This act was within a short time of the Red Sea crossing. As Ahab came into power, the Israelites had once again turned their backs on God. The prophet Elijah would stand as the representative of God.

In I Kings 18:19 Elijah told Ahab, “Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel’s table.” The stage was set. Elijah would stand before all of Israel and declare that the Lord, He is God.

A. The God Who Answers by Fire

Fire is unlike any other natural element that destroys. It is a force of nature with unlimited destructive power. God has unlimited power. Just like Moses before him, Elijah knew God could demonstrate His power in any way He deemed fit for the occasion. He knew God would use fire to consume the offering He would present before the Lord. The situation concerning Israel’s disobedience in worshiping Baal had come to a point where only a massive demonstration of the power of God would

turn them back to worshipping Him. Only an all-consuming fire would vanquish the enemies of God.

The Bible tells us Hell will be a place of unquenchable fire, a place where all the enemies of the Lord will spend eternity. Yet the Bible also uses fire to demonstrate the all-consuming power of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 3:11 records the words of John the Baptist, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” This fire consumes us and gives us authority and power to profess the Word of God and demonstrate His power through signs, wonders, and miracles.

B. We Can Be Confident That Our God Will Answer

The Bible promises God will never forsake us, even though it also gives examples of His people feeling forsaken by God. This is where our faith must come into play. Our relationship with God must be made strong through daily prayer, worship, and Bible study. Only then will our faith hold up when we feel forsaken. During those times we must rely on the words given to us by divine Scripture. Psalm 86:7 states, “In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.”

The examples of holy men in Scripture demonstrate that each had a relationship with God that was nurtured faithfully. When we see faithful men and women of God today doing miraculous things, we can infer they have a faithful relationship with God. Often they speak of hearing from God, giving testimony to what He has spoken into their lives and ministries. It is important to understand that any time God speaks to us, it will always comply with the Word He has given us through the Scriptures.

» *Have you known someone to claim to have received a word from God, but it went against Scripture? Explain.*

III. PROPHETS OF BAAL BUILT AN ALTAR

The Bible does not give a detailed description concerning the particular altar the prophets built for Baal; it only tells us an altar existed where they placed the bullock. We can assume that with four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, it most likely was a sizable structure. The various means of worship and sacrifice to the false god would have been taken into consideration during construction. There is no mention of any particular material that was used or any particular manner of design. Simply stated, an altar existed for the Baal prophets to offer their sacrifice to their god.

Our modern society has many “altars”; some have a specific design, while others do not. Some people worship technology, while others simply worship the theories and discoveries offered by science. There are too many “altars” to name, yet we all know of the false gods we encounter every day.

A. Offered Their Sacrifice

The prophets of Baal must have been pleased at this opportunity to demonstrate the greatness of their god. They were great in number, so surely this proved their god was great also. The Bible records that after they prepared the bullock, they began to cry out to Baal. After some time had passed with no response, they began to climb on the altar and cry out even more. After more time had passed, Elijah began to mock them, saying their god must not be able to hear them. Perhaps he was on a long journey and was not available or perhaps he was sleeping so deeply they would need to cry louder to arouse him from his slumber. After several hours of no response, Baal's prophets began to cut themselves in desperation. At no time during this process does the Bible declare they ever gave up on Baal.

Too often in society, people will "go down with the ship." In other words, they will not relent from their position, even in the face of certain destruction or failure. Pride is the reason many people will not concede a position. Blinded by their arrogance, they often go to greater extremes to prove themselves superior or not in error. We have seen this behavior in the church when men and women have failed to humble themselves and repent. Proverbs 16:18 states, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

B. Those Who Serve False Gods Have No Hope

Jeremiah 10:2 states, "Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them." There is no hope in anything outside the one true God. Those who serve Him are consistently blessed with goodness, while those who serve false gods and idols are consistently wrought with sin and the consequences that arise from it. God has declared that we should serve no other gods. Deuteronomy 12:30 tells us, "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise." Israel had fallen into Baal worship, and God would stay true to His Word by destroying those who served Baal.

» *Can you list some things people worship that will not offer them hope?*

IV. ELIJAH REBUILT AN ALTAR

The first thing we should notice when Elijah proceeded to build his altar to the Lord is the deliberate actions he executed. The New Testament declares in I Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order." God has a design in everything He does. The Scriptures give no detail on how the altar to Baal was constructed, yet when we read about Elijah's altar, we are given a list of details. I Kings 18:31-32 records, "And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made

a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.” There is purpose in the details and the order in which things are presented before the Lord. Throughout all sixty-six books of the Bible, God demonstrates order and purpose.

It is noteworthy that Scripture states Elijah built the altar before the people of Israel. It implies that the altar of God was in a state of disrepair. Elijah worked to restore it to service. It is also important to note that it took some labor on the part of the prophet to restore the altar. When we fail God, often our prayer life goes into disrepair. We must work and repair what has been broken by our disobedience. Yet God will restore us time and again because of His love for us.

A. Prepared His Sacrifice and Prayed

Restoring the altar to God was only the beginning for Elijah. I Kings 18:33 states, “And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.” Once again Elijah performed his task of preparing the sacrifice according to the law of Moses. In painstaking detail the prophet went about his duties preparing the sacrifice and the elements of the altar to be presented to the Lord at a prescribed time. One detail was not part of the sacrificial ritual—Elijah had the altar and sacrifice doused in water three times. The altar, wood, and sacrifice were completely wet. This would make it impossible for any human to ignite the sacrifice with fire. When the time came, Elijah offered up his prayer to God. He prayed the Lord would turn the hearts of His people, so they would know He was God. The fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the water, and even the dust. When the people of Israel saw it, they fell on their faces and declared, “The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God” (I Kings 18:39).

B. Those Who Serve the True God Have Hope

Romans 5:3–4 states, “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.” Those who serve the Lord have always had hope, even during times of great tribulation. The children of Israel had the hope of a deliverer during the four hundred years they were held in bondage by Egypt. Jesus has come, and we now have the blessed hope of salvation and eternal life. No one can escape the consequences of sin, yet we can all overcome by the sacrifice of God through His Son, Jesus. The glorious hope we have is recorded by miraculous events in the Old and New Testaments. No other religion, philosophy, or even science gives the promise of eternal life. The hope found in serving God is beyond comprehension.

V. THE LORD, HE IS GOD

Psalms 100:3 states, “Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” The idea of only one God has lived long beyond the multiple false gods of antiquity. There are some religions that still serve multiple gods, yet the significance that one God

made Himself known to the world has caused many religions to embrace only one god. They may still serve a false god, yet the impact of the power of the one true God cannot be denied.

A. We Serve the One True God

Many claim to serve the one true God. Therefore, it stands to reason that the Lord would validate Himself to those who serve Him. God has always revealed Himself to His people in some fashion. Since the Day of Pentecost, He has revealed Himself to the individual believer through the infilling of the Holy Ghost. No other religious group outside of Christianity makes such a claim, to have the Spirit of God living within the believer. This unique characteristic not only sets us apart from others because it is different, but it sets us apart because of the power it gives us. Deuteronomy 4:35 states, “Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.” Once we have received His Spirit, there is no doubt whom we serve.

» *Have you ever struggled with doubt? How did you overcome it?*

B. We Have Hope Because God Has All Power

Our hope comes from God. Romans 15:13 states, “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” God created all things in Heaven and in Earth. He spoke it all into existence, yet He has a love for humanity that surpasses all understanding. The Creator could have easily destroyed humanity after the Garden, yet He instead chose to redeem them. The power of love is greater than any power we know. It influences us to make choices that defy logic, that go beyond logical reasoning. I John 4:8 states, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” You cannot know God if you do not love others as He does.

▶▶ INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

The witch doctor from the village mentioned at the beginning of this lesson witnessed firsthand the power of the one true God. Neither he nor the other villagers could deny what they had witnessed. When God puts His Spirit within us, we cannot deny that something miraculous has occurred. Ezekiel 11:19–20 states, “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” Elijah was faithful to God and led Israel to a place where they would see His awesome power in full demonstration. Just like the men and women of Israel from that era, we can know today that the Lord, He is God.