

EPISODE NO. 172

1 Kings 18:17-40

Elijah Confronted King Ahab

17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is it YOU, the biggest troublemaker in Israel?”

18 Elijah answered, “I am not the one who has caused so much trouble for Israel! It is YOU and your father’s dynasty who have caused all this trouble! YOU have abandoned the commands of Yahweh! YOU have followed the Baals! 19 Now, tell all Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel. Gather the 450 prophets of Baal there. And, bring the 400 prophets of Asherah, too. They are supported from the rich supply of food from Jezebel’s table.”

God Prevailed over Baal

20 So, Ahab summoned all the Israelites, and Ahab gathered those false prophets to Mount Carmel. 21 Elijah stood in front of all the people. He said, “How long will you people try to serve BOTH Baal and Yahweh!? If Yahweh is the one true God, then follow Him. But if Baal is the true God, follow him!”

The people said nothing.

22 Elijah said to them, “I am the ONLY prophet of Yahweh here. But there are 450 prophets of Baal. 23 So, bring us two bulls. And, let the prophets of Baal choose one bull for them. Let them kill it and butcher it. Then, let them put the meat on the wood. However, they must NOT set fire to it. Then I will do the same thing with the other bull — I’ll lay it on the wood, but I won’t set fire to it, either. 24 Then you prophets of Baal should pray to your god Baal. And I, I will pray to Yahweh. The one who answers the prayer will set fire to the wood supernaturally — HE is the one true God!”

And, all the people agreed that this was a good idea.

25 Then Elijah said to the false prophets of Baal, “There are so many of you. So, you men go first. Choose a bull and prepare it. Pray to your god, but do NOT start the fire!”

26 So, they took the bull that someone gave them and prepared it. Then they prayed to Baal from morning until noon. They cried out: “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no sound. No one answered. They danced around the altar that they had built.

27 At noon, Elijah began to mock them. He said, “Pray louder! If Baal really is a god, maybe he is preoccupied with thinking about something else! Or, maybe he is busy . . . or he is gone away on a trip!? Perhaps he’s asleep!? You might have to wake him up!?”

28 So, the false prophets prayed even louder. They even cut themselves with swords and spears until their blood flowed out on them. (This was the way they usually worshiped.) 29 The middle of the day passed. The prophets of Baal were acting like wild men. They continued doing this until it was time for offering the evening sacrifice. But NO sound came from Baal. Baal did NOT answer. Baal paid NO attention.

30 Then Elijah spoke to all the people, “Come here to me.” So they all gathered around him. And Elijah rebuilt the altar of Yahweh because it had been torn down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones — each stone represented the twelve tribes of the twelve sons of Jacob. (Jacob was the man to whom Yahweh said: “Your name will be ‘Israel.’ ”) 32 Then Elijah used these stones to rebuild the altar in honor of Yahweh. Then he dug a small ditch around it. It was big enough to hold almost 3 gallons of seed. 33 Elijah arranged the wood on the altar. And, he butchered his bull and laid the pieces of meat on the wood. Then Elijah said, “Fill four big jars with water. Pour the water on top of the meat and upon the wood.” They did it.

34 Then Elijah said, “Do it again!” And, they did it again.

Then he said, “Do it a third time!” And, they did it the third time.

35 So, the water ran off the altar and filled up the little ditch.

36 It was now time for the evening sacrifice. So, the true prophet Elijah went near the altar. He prayed: “O Yahweh, You are the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. I ask You today to prove that YOU are the true God in the nation of Israel. And, prove that I am Your servant. Show these people that You commanded me to do all these things. 37 O Yahweh, answer me. Answer my prayer! Show these people that YOU, O Yahweh, are the one true God! Then the people will KNOW that You are bringing them back to You again.”

38 Suddenly, the fire of Yahweh came down. And it burned up the meat-sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the soil around the altar. It also dried up all the water in the little ditch.

39 When all the people witnessed this, they fell face-down to the ground. They cried out, “Yahweh, HE is the one true God! Yahweh, HE is one the true God!”

40 Then Elijah told them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let any of them run away!” So the people captured all those prophets. Then Elijah led them down to Kishon Brook. There he executed all the false prophets.