

10/25/20

Sun pm

“An Offering to the Lord in a Hostile Land”

1 Kings 18:20-40

Elijah is surrounded by people who are hostile to or have walked away from the Lord. I'm sure it's a lonely position, even for a prophet of the Lord!

In this account we see a confrontation between Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, and the prophets of Baal and Asherah (450 + 400 = 850 false prophets); also a confrontation with the people of Israel (vs 21ff)

- History
 - Ahab had become king, and did evil in the sight of the Lord (16:29-34)
 - He worshiped and served Baal, set up altars to the false gods and helped to prompt the people to turn from the Lord their God.
 - Because of their turning, Elijah prayed for and announced a drought
 - 1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17
 - Significance of the drought:
 - This was one of the consequences listed for turning from the Lord in Deut 28:23-24
 - Baal, the predominant god in the region, was the storm god, providing rain necessary for the fertility of the land.
 - Purpose of the drought: to turn the people back to the Lord
 - Discipline
 - A reminder of the Law and their leaving
 - A cause for them to question the potency of the little god, Baal
 - Ahab remained unrepentant, still considering Elijah the troubler of Israel (18:17)
- The Event on Mt Carmel
 - The attendees
 - All of the people of Israel
 - The challenge
 - Elijah directly confronted the people of Israel, telling them to get off the fence
 - They could not play around with the Lord. He cannot be one among many. He is to be worshiped and served above all. Even in a culture that had slipped so far and had normalized rebellion against the Lord, they were being called to repent and turn back to the Lord.
 - The two altars
 - A bull, prepared as each side saw fit
 - No matches. The only way to light it is to call on your God – the God who answers by fire, He is God. Deal?
 - False prophets: No answer. All day.

- Elijah's turn
 - Added difficulty of water
 - But not just a difficulty to the fire starting process:
 - A rare luxury in that day (remember the drought? Prob made a trip)
 - It was poured out on the altar and spilled onto the ground.
 - This was a sacrificial offering – in the midst of company who, for the most part, wouldn't understand why he would do this.
 - He was soaking the altar to make it all the more obvious that the lighting was the Lord's doing
 - But it also seems that he was demonstrating absolute faith in the Lord – "I don't have much, but it's yours. I trust you to give what I need."
 - Demonstrated his faith that God could start the fire
 - And that God could provide the rain
 - His prayer
 - The answer of God
 - The Lord showed Himself strong, it was confirmed to Israel that He is God