

Week 55 The Prophets of Baal [1 Kings 18:16-40]

Series: **Elijah**

Application: **“You shall have no other gods before me.”**

Memory Verse: **“The Lord alone is God.” 1 Kings 18:39 (Elijah’s name means ‘The Lord is God’)**

Preparation Notes

Drought afflicted Israel for three years. After this time Elijah went again to King Ahab as he was searching for somewhere to graze his herds in the dry and barren country.

He reminded the King of his failure to follow God’s commands and issued a challenge to the prophet of Baal to meet with him on Mount Carmel.

Ahab gathered together four hundred and fifty of these prophets and, together with many of the Israelites, they gathered at Mount Carmel.

Elijah told the people that they had to choose between God and Baal, and that it was not possible to worship both. He then outlined the nature of a contest between himself (and God) and the prophets (and Baal).

He and the prophets would build an altar each. He and they would sacrifice a bull, cut it up and place the pieces on the altars. Neither would light the fires that normally were used to burn the sacrifices, however. Instead, both sides would call upon their god to send down fire to burn up the meat.

(The bull was a symbol of Baal, he was worshipped on Mount Carmel and he was also seen as a god of lightning; therefore Elijah was challenging them on their ‘home ground’).

The prophets of Baal went first. From morning until evening they called upon Baal, danced round the altar, slashed themselves and frantically prayed. But no one answered.

Then it was Elijah’s turn. Just to make sure he could not be accused of trickery, he had the Israelites drench the altar in water three times, making the wood soaking wet. Then he made a simple prayer to the Lord. Fire fell that consumed the bull, the wood, the stone altar, the soil around and even the water.

The Israelites were convinced, and cried:

“The Lord – He is God! The Lord – He is God!”

Commanded to do so by Elijah, they seized the prophets of Baal, and killed them. (In accordance with the Law in Deuteronomy 13:13-18).

Elijah then told King Ahab that God would now allow the rains to come. Sure enough shortly after it began to rain and the drought was lifted.

Learning Points (Discoverers 1)

- The people believed in other Gods.
- Elijah held a contest to show them they were wrong.

Learning Points (Discoverers 2)

- The Israelites worshipped false gods instead of the real God.
- The false god could not do what God can (both bringing down fire and sending rain).
- The Israelites realised that they were wrong.

Learning Points (Discoverers 3)

- The Israelites worshipped false gods instead of, or as well as, the real God.
- The false god could not do what God can (both bringing down fire and sending rain).
- The Israelites realised that they were wrong.
- They returned to God by obeying His laws.

Discoverers 1

Bible Bit.

The story could be told using boxes for the altar, paper twists full for sticks, empty buckets for water and coloured paper for the flames.

Activity.

Discoverers 2

Bible Bit.

Continue to tell the story using the ‘fuzzy felt’ flannel board. The Teacher’s Manual, which accompanies these resources, outlines this story on page 122. Remember, it also has some tips for using the resource in the introduction.

Activity.

Make the fiery altar as shown in DWK 55:1.

Discoverers 3

Bible Bit.

This is a dramatic story; a contest, the frantic activities of the pagan prophets, fire from heaven and ending finally in a storm. The story

should be told in an exciting manner using the transparency pictures in DWK 55:2.

Activity.

‘Active’ fiery altars as shown in DWK 52:3.

Talk time.

- Why do you think that God dealt so harshly with the prophets of Baal?
- How should we treat people of different religions today?

Prayer and worship.