

THE LORD, HE IS THE GOD

1 KINGS 18

Text: 1 Kings 18:39

(1 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."

Introduction:

This passage has its setting when the spiritual tide in Israel is at an extremely low ebb. The people have, for the most part, turned their backs on the Lord and have gone after the Canaanite god Baal. It is against this backdrop of apostasy and idolatry that the prophet Elijah strolls onto the stage. He is introduced in 1 Kings 17:1. When he makes his appearance, he comes with a message from the Lord. It is a clarion call for repentance and for a renewal to loyalty to Jehovah.

In this passage, things come to a head. On the one hand there is Ahab, Jezebel, the prophets and priests of Baal and an entire nation, less 7,000 people of God, 1 Kings 19:18. On the other, there is Elijah and Jehovah. The odds may look stacked in the favor of evil, but Elijah is about to experience the truth that one plus God is a majority.

As we spend a few minutes looking into this great passage this evening, I want you catch a glimpse of the spiritual peaks that jut from the clouds of this dark setting. A few that come to mind now are:

- There is a desperate need for spiritual heroes who will stand against the tide of heresy and apostasy.
- There is a need for the people of God to gage their allegiance to the Lord and to determine where we really stand when it comes to being on the Lord's side.
- There must be a willingness to flee the evil that surrounds us and be a separate people for the glory of the Lord.
- There must be a willingness to renew our commitment to the Lord and place Him above all other pursuits, interests and loyalties.

With these truths plainly given to us in the text before us, let's take a closer look at this great day when there was a showdown on Mt. Carmel. As we look into this passage, let's take the time to allow the Lord to speak to our hearts and to reveal things that might not be as they ought to be whether it is in our personal, private lives, or whether it is in the life of our church. Then, let's be quick to see that for those who are willing to

obey the Lord and follow Him single mindedly, there is the great promise of His presence, power and personal ministry in and through our lives. With all this in mind, let's join Elijah and consider The Showdown On Mount Carmel.

1. THE DILEMMA OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD (V. 21-24)

A. Their Waywardness (V. 21a)

This verse tells us that the people of Israel were possessed of a divided allegiance. On the one hand, they enjoyed their name as God's people, but on the other hand, they loved the sensual, fleshly appeal of Baal worship. Elijah described their condition as "one limping along a fence." They were torn between two ideas and as a result, they were accomplishing nothing!

1. That is the way of compromise!
2. Baal was the principle deity of the Canaanites. He, along with his associate, Ashtoreth was worshiped through such abominable practices as human sacrifice and sexual immorality. In some places, women were forced to serve as prostitutes in the groves!

3. These people had fallen a long way from the nation that had entered and conquered Canaan hundreds of years before. Now they are a politically divided and apostate nation.

4. Can we be honest and say that the same is true for the church at the end of the 20th century? Whether we like to admit it or not, the visible church is in the midst of apostasy and waywardness.

5. However, the Lord said that things would be this way.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3) "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"

(1 Timothy 4:1-3) "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; {2} Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; {3} Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

(2 Timothy 3:1-3) "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. {2} For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, {3} Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,"

(2 Timothy 4:3-4) "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; {4} And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

(III. When we see denominations and churches argue over issues like abortion and homosexuality, when we see them turn from the proclamation of the truth and see them begin to produce error, such as new translations of the Bible. When we see these kinds of things beginning to take place, isn't it plain to see that we are living in an age of apostasy? I think it is. Some, sadly, refuse to see the truth though it stares them right in the eye. People can attempt to justify it by citing "denominational loyalty" or some other weak excuse, but may I remind you that our loyalty is to the Lord and to Him alone?)

B. Their Warning (V. 21)

1. Elijah's message is direct and to the point.

a. He tells them that they have to make a choice!

b. Elijah sees their compromise as an affront to God.

c. He is telling them that they must choose which side they will be on, since they cannot genuinely have 2 gods

(Matthew 12:25) "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:"

2. The hundreds of years that have elapsed since Elijah faced the Baal prophets on Carmel, many things have changed.

a. Culture is vastly different now than it was then, religious practice has changed, the world itself is nothing like it was back then.

b. However, one thing remains the same, God!

c. If a man is going to be right with God, then he must take his stand apart from the world. No one can have both. It is either God or it is the world. There can be no compromise.

(James 4:4) "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

3. We need the same spiritual fortitude that Joshua displayed when he made his great declaration in Joshua 24:15.

a. It is either God, or it the world. It can never be both!

4. Notice their response - silence!

a. Many think by being quiet about something and maintaining a low-profile that it will just go away.

b. If you feel this way, then I must tell you that you are deceiving yourself, and anyone who may decide to follow you!

C. Their Willingness (V. 22-24)

1. The context.

a. Elijah describes the terms of the challenge and the people accept.

b. I find it interesting that this people had the audacity to expect God to prove Himself to them.

c. After all, look at all the God-sized things He had done for them over the years and still they are willing to give Baal a chance to compete with God.

d. We should give them points for being willing to play along with Elijah, but they need to find themselves humbled before a holy God, instead of trying to find a way around His will for their lives!

2. THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE POWER OF GOD (V. 25-38)

A. The Futility Of Following Baal (V. 25-29)

1. The contest.

a. All day long the prophets of Baal prayed and cried out to their god.

b. Yet, they received not so much as "small still voice."

c. Elijah saw the folly of what they were doing and mocked them, v. 27.

d. This sent them into a frenzy.

e. But, when the smoke had cleared and the dust of their activity had settled, Baal was still as dead as he had ever been and they stood humiliated and defeated before the lone prophet of God.

2. This will be the experience of every person who attempts to follow the false gods of religion and of this world.

a. They are all dead and can do nothing for those who cry out to them.

b. I am sure that many who are caught in this trap feel that they are right and that men who cry out for change and separation are fanatics and are people to be pitied.

c. However, I would like to remind anyone who feels that they can hook up God with worldliness that they are doomed to failure, no matter how right they think they are.

(Proverbs 16:25) "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

3. When this thing is over and the dust of this life has settled outside the memory of eternity, God will still be God and His way and His Word will still be right and everything else will still be wrong!

a. It is futile to follow the course of this world!

B. The Faith Of The Prophet (V. 30-37)

1. The context. After the prophets of Baal had finished with their shenanigans, Elijah stepped forward. Looking at what he did is very interesting.

a. First, he repaired the altar of God, v. 30.

b. Then, he chose 12 stones to remind Israel that they were one nation in the eyes of God.

c. Then he had 12 barrels of water poured over the sacrifice and the wood and the altar.

d. He did this final thing to remove all doubts as to who was to get the glory for that which was about to happen.

2. He stepped forth and prayed a simple 63 word prayer and the fire of God fell from Heaven and consumed every part of the sacrifice, the altar, the water in the trench and even the dust round about.

a. God answered in a spectacular display of power in response to the faith of His servant.

3. Folks, it takes faith to be an Elijah!

a. This man had honed his faith on the grindstone of affliction.

b. He had already see God do the miraculous,

1. No rain - 1 Kings 17:1

2. Food supplied by ravens - 1 Kings 17:2-7

3. An endless supply of meal and oil 1 Kings 17:8-16;

4. The resurrection of the widow's son - 1 Kings 17:17-24.

c. This man knew that this little thing was nothing for the Lord.

d. He was willing to put his life on the line because he believed that he served a God who moves in response to His people's prayers.

4. We need that same faith today if we are to take our stand with the Lord and do what He leads us to do.

a. We need to exercise faith in the Lord God of Heaven.

C. The Faithfulness of The Lord V. 38

1. The context. God responded to the cry of His servant and gave Elijah just what he asked God to do.

3. THE DECISION BY THE PEOPLE OF GOD (V. 39)

We will have to give these people credit. They said they would honor the God who answered by fire and when He did, they did! These people made a decision on Mount Carmel.)

A. They Had Experienced God In Power

1. He had answered the prophet by fire in their very presence.

2. There is no other way to know God than to experience Him in a personal way.

a. I am convinced that this is the root of all apostasy.

b. When men meet the Lord they are changed.

B. They Extolled God In Prostration

1. When the people see the Lord move in such a miraculous manner, they fall on their faces before Him in genuine humility.

C. They Exalted God In Praise

1. The context. The last sound the Baal prophets and priests heard as they were being led away to their deaths, v. 40, was the sound of the people of God shouting praises to their Lord.)

Close:

Are there areas of your life that, if you were honest, you would have to say were worldly and abhorrent to God? Maybe you would like to come to this altar and

confess those things and experience God's power in forgiveness. Are you able to see to apostasy that abounds all around us? If so, maybe you would like to come and pray for churches, and pray for this church that we will ever be quick to recognize apostasy and that we will take our stand for Jesus.

Maybe you have never been saved and you would like to meet this all-powerful, all-loving God. If you will come to Him, He will receive you and He will save you soul if you will ask Him to. Whatever the need of your heart and life this evening, please bring it to the Lord. Will you do that right now?