Elijah and the prophets of Baal

1 Kings 18:20-40

1. Intro
   1. Second set of Bible Stories will focus on the Power of God
   2. He is Powerful to bring dead things to life, and He is powerful to overwhelm His enemies
   3. He is also willing to show His power to get His point across
   4. Elijah and the Prophets of Baal:
      1. Setting…during a time of wickedness and division in Israel
      2. On top of Mount Carmel
      3. The Mediterranean was to the west, and the Jezreel Valley to the east
2. Text
   1. Summary of 18:1-19
      1. A confrontation between Elijah and Ahab
      2. Ahab is accusing Elijah of being a “troubler of Israel”, and Elijah says “No Way! You are.”
      3. So they agree to meet up and let God decide
      4. Ahab:
         1. father's brother. (1.) The son of Omri, whom he succeeded as the seventh king of Israel. His history is recorded in 1 Kings 16-22. His wife was Jezebel (q.v.), who exercised a very evil influence over him. To the calf-worship introduced by Jeroboam he added the worship of Baal. He was severely admonished by Elijah (q.v.) for his wickedness. His anger was on this account kindled against the prophet, and he sought to kill him.
         2. 1 Kings 16:29-31
      5. Baal: lord. (1.) The name appropriated to the principal male god of the Phoenicians. Also referred to in Caananite worship.
   2. Verses 20-22: set the scene
   3. Verses:23-29
      1. They set up the altar for the prophets of Baal
      2. Elijah used the opportunity to point out the obvious lack of attention Baal was giving them.
      3. “No One Paid Attention”
         1. So this spawned a joke in my brain…
         2. Their god is so broke He couldn’t even pay attention.
   4. Verses 30-35: Elijah prepares the altar
   5. Verses 36-40
      1. Fire from Heaven showed the POWER OF GOD and did so in quick fashion.
      2. The immediate response was for the people to recognize the one true God.
      3. Then there is a portion of this story that was left out of VBS when I was growing up…Elijah killed the prophets of Baal by the Kishon brook.
3. Points
   1. There is one true God
      1. No matter the size of the crowd, no matter the clever philosophy, no matter the tradition of man…THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD.
      2. This God:
         1. Spoke and creation came into being
         2. Promises a way to salvation
         3. Entered into relationship with a people that had to power to keep their end of the commitment
         4. Delivered His people into Egypt, and then brought them out.
         5. And countless other examples of His power…
         6. And in this story, He overwhelms the false teachers and false gods, with a demonstration of what genuine power can look like.
      3. Make no mistake, there is no one worthy of our worship and our praise other than Jesus!
      4. So, be careful what you worship.
         1. Don’t worship a person, unless it is Jesus
         2. Don’t worship a movement
         3. Don’t worship a thing.
         4. We were made to worship God, and we should not replace Him with anything.
   2. Enthusiasm does not equal Truth
      1. One spokesperson with the POWER of GOD can overwhelm the false teaching and enthusiasm of the worlds religions.
      2. NOT BECAUSE THE PERSON IS POWERFUL, GOD IS POWERFUL
      3. Just because it sounds exciting, and people are excited about it, and it may even appear good, does not mean its from God.
      4. We see complete devotion and enthusiasm in the prophets of Baal, but this god could not replace the one true God.
      5. Devotion to something does not make it right.
      6. Illustration: Practice does not make perfect
   3. Faith can be Misplaced
      1. Faith is a beautiful thing to see in action.
      2. Misplaced faith is really hard to watch.
      3. “Faith to live by had better be good enough to die by.”
      4. In what do you place your faith?
         1. Not blind faith…because there is evidence all around
         2. But faith in the POWERFUL GOD OF THE BIBLE!
      5. People will die for a lie, but it takes a special kind of imbalance to die for a known lie.
      6. Our Faith can only be fulfilled by the person of God and the truth found in the Word
      7. God has:
         1. Never failed
         2. Never been shocked or surprised
         3. Never lost a battle
         4. Never, no not ever, asked us to have faith in the flesh.
      8. Flesh:
         1. Fails
         2. Leads us to man-centered thinking.
         3. Refuses to get out of the way and let God do His work in us.
      9. Place your faith in Jesus, and never be misplaced.
4. Close
   1. In Elijahs story from Mt. Carmel we see the powerful working of God.
   2. We see God with sovereign power and man corrupt and in need of a savior.
   3. I trust in Christ!