

The Fuel and the Flame

Lesson 2—Elijah

OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: 1 Kings 18:20-39

Key Verse: Psalm 4:5

BEFORE CLASS



Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how strong is your passion for Christ? For the things of God? For His people? For the lost?
- To what extent are you prepared to be the “fuel” for what God wants to do in your life, family, church, and elsewhere?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed on Sunday morning.

CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.

CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.

CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.

THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, “It really doesn’t matter if you’re here or not.” Small things communicate great messages. Let the three “small” things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Opening Questions

- *What is the most daring thing you’ve ever done? Would you do this thing again? Why or why not?*
- *Would you consider yourself to be a bold person? Why or why not?*
- *Do you consider yourself to be a spiritually bold person?*
- *Who are some spiritually bold people you find in the Bible?*

BIBLE LESSON

SAY: Today we're going to take a look at a bold prophet named Elijah, but first let me give you some background on the story. Ahab was a bad king and had led the nation into idolatry and through Elijah God had caused three and a half years of drought as a judgment against them. During this time Ahab had looked for Elijah but God had sent him away. Now the time had come for Elijah's return and with it came one of the greatest showdowns in all of history. Elijah challenged the king to bring all the false prophets and prophetesses to him at Mount Carmel along with all the people. God had a special challenge for them. Let's see what happened next...

Choose a volunteer to read—Read 1 Kings 18:20-24

- *How do you think the false prophets of Baal felt when they heard Elijah's challenge? Do you think they were confident since they outnumbered him 450 to 1? How do you think the people felt?*
- *How would you feel if you were Elijah? Do you think you would've had the guts to "put God on the spot" like this? Would you have been intimidated standing against 450 people while an entire nation that has wavered in their faith watches the outcome?*
- *How do you think Elijah's words to the nation in verse 21 apply to Christians today?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read 1 Kings 18:25-29

- *How do you feel about these 450 "prophets" who believed the wrong thing? Do you feel sorry for them? How do you feel about their devotion to something so wrong and empty? Is there anyone in your life that is similar to this—fully devoted to the wrong things?*
- *What was Elijah's response?* (About noontime he began to mock them. In the Hebrew he refers to the idea that perhaps their god is "too busy" or "occupied" which has the indication of, "Perhaps your god is on the toilet and can't come right now!" It has also been translated as, perhaps he has "turned aside on the road"...possibly to relieve himself.)
- *Elijah was not wrong in mocking the false prophets, but sometimes Christians are guilty of mocking those who don't know Christ instead of reaching out to them and sharing the heart of God. Can you think of an example of this?* (Here's an idea: Picture the homosexual who sees someone with a sign that wrongly reads, "God hates homosexuals," which is not true. God hates the sin, but not the sinner.)
- *In what ways do you think Christians, by their actions, sometimes keep people away from Christ?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read 1 Kings 18:30-39

- *Why do you think Elijah drenched the sacrifice in water? (He obviously wanted to make it clear that God burned it up since there is nothing any man could have done to do it.)*
- *What do you think it must have been like to see God's fire fall and consuming everything, even the water in the trench? How do you think the 450 false prophets felt? How do you think the people felt? What was their response? (They fell facedown and said, "Yahweh, He is God!")*
- *What do you think we can learn from this story? (Consider Elijah's boldness and his willingness to be a man of action. Consider the people's wavering and then their decision after God moved. Consider the spiritual blindness of the false prophets.)*

SAY: Elijah's faith, his willingness and his boldness were the fuel that God used as the open door for Him to move a nation to repentance. Elijah was willing to be God's spokesman in a time when following God wasn't popular, in a time where there were very few left that had not bowed to false gods. He was willing to be a man of action at God's call.

- *On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing are you to be a person of action when God calls?*

KEY VERSE

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Psalm 4:5

SAY: This verse may not seem very outstanding and some people might even skip over it but I want you to understand what it's talking about. There were two general types of sacrifices in the Old Testament:

- (1) Repentant Sacrifices—Sacrifices offered in response to a person's sin.
- (2) Righteous Sacrifices—Sacrifices that had nothing to do with a person's sin. These were not sacrifices that could be given while a person was in rebellion against God, but were very special sacrifices freely offered as a righteous response to the Lord. There were three of these, namely the burnt offering, the meal offering and the peace offering, and each of these sacrifices presents a picture for us today of Jesus and the righteous person's response to Him. For example:

a. The Burnt Offering.

The burnt offering was all for God—It was wholly given and was a picture of Christ's *passion*. The smoke of the sacrifice ascended to God and was accepted by Him as an act of worship. The burnt offering spoke of Christ offering Himself to God in unwavering devotion, wholly given

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and obedient even to death on the cross. Everything in this sacrifice was consumed.

b. The Meal Offering

The meal offering, consisted of flour, even and smooth and pure. It was a picture of Christ's *perfection*. The flour had been evenly ground until it was flawless in texture. As such it pictured the life of Jesus.

c. The Peace Offering

The peace offering brought the worshiper and God together in communion and it was the means by which the worshiper and God to joined together in a ceremonial meal. This offering pictured Christ's *presence* and was not only a holy occasion but a happy occasion.

SAY: These three sacrifices gave a picture of Christ's *passion*, His *perfection*, and His *presence*. So what did David mean then when he told us to "offer the sacrifices of the righteous?"

- (1) What does Jesus' passion mean for us? In light of His crucifixion, how should we live? A crucified life that is wholly given, presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

● *THINK ABOUT IT: The way you live, are you wholly devoted and given to God?*

- (2) What does the Lord Jesus' perfection mean to us? In light of His flawless, perfect life, how should we live? A life that a reflection of His, allowing His Holy Spirit to daily refine us to be more like Him.

● *THINK ABOUT IT: The way you live, are you daily being made more like Christ?*

- (3) What does the Lord's presence mean to us? God has made it clear that He desires to meet with us and to enjoy our fellowship. How then should we live? A life of communion with Christ, celebrating and enjoying His presence every day.

● *THINK ABOUT IT: The way you live, are you daily enjoying the presence of Christ in your life?*

● *Are you happy with how you are living? Or, when you look at someone like Elijah, do you wonder what it would be like to be such a person?*

SAY: There is no limit to the closeness one can have with God but the limit that each of us sets for himself. Live a life like Elijah's—Be willing, be bold, and let your life offer back to God a reflection of what He has offered to you in Christ.

Consider the following questions:

- *Are you willing to be used by the Lord? Why or why not?*

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- *Are you willing to surrender all to the Lord? Why or why not?*
- *Are you willing to lay your life as a righteous sacrifice to the Lord? Why or why not?*

WRAP IT UP

Prayer Time

SAY: Spend some time thinking this week about the depth of your relationship with God. There is a Bible story where the question is asked, “Where is the God of Elijah?” (2 Kings 2:14). Now we should ask a different question: “Where are the Elijahs of God?”

Pray specifically today that your students will be willing to be the fuel to be used by God however, whenever, wherever and in whatever way He desires.

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

Prayer Requests

*John Phillips, *Exploring Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1988), 40-41.