

STANDING ALONE

Wednesday, September 13

Reading: 1 Kings 18

1 Kings 18:36 *At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and have done all these things at Your command. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that You, O LORD, are God, and that You are turning their hearts back again."*

For three years Ahab has searched in vain to find Elijah. Now he and his palace administrator Obadiah split up in a desperate attempt to find water and grass to keep his animals alive. What the king does not know is that Obadiah fears God and has secretly hidden 100 prophets to protect them from Jezebel's attempt to wipe out the worship of God in Israel. Elijah reveals himself to Obadiah who goes and tells the king. Elijah sets the record straight that he is not the one causing Israel trouble, but it is the sins of Ahab himself that have done so. He then challenges the prophets of Baal to a contest to prove once and for all who the true God is.

The people of Israel had been sitting on the fence. They still believed in the God of Abraham but saw no problem in worshipping other gods (like Baal) as well. Elijah confronts them with the fact that they must serve the Lord alone or not at all. The challenge will consist of which god can send fire from heaven to burn the sacrifice; a challenge the prophets of Baal would readily accept because Baal was the storm god. Their epic failure and mad frenzy proved that Baal was no god at all. Elijah's taunting of them was meant to show the people how silly it was to worship this false god.

Elijah then rebuilds an altar that had once been dedicated to God but now lay in ruins from neglect. He then dug a trench and poured 12 large jars of water over the altar to prove that he was not hiding fire or attempting to trick the people. In contrast to the loud screams and antics of Baal's prophets, Elijah's prayer is short and simple. It declares that despite their rejection, Israel are still God's people and that Elijah is only doing what God has commanded. His greatest desire is not to honor the name of Elijah, but that the people will know that God is God and turn back to Him.

When the fire of God falls the people fall on their faces in worship. At Elijah's command, they kill the prophets of Baal. Then Elijah once again prays and God sends rain to end the 3+ year drought.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. Just as God used the poor widow who had nothing to provide for Elijah, so He used Obadiah the court official to protect other prophets of God. It does not matter if you have little or much, God wants to use what you have to accomplish His purposes.
2. An altar was a place of worship. Elijah rebuilding the fallen altar of God was a picture of the rebuilding that needed to take place in the hearts of the people. What "altars" in your life need to be rebuilt? Has your relationship with God fallen down? Have you deserted your time spent with God through His Word and prayer? The fire of God can only fall on your life when you are wholly dedicated to Him. He wants to use you to let others know that "the Lord is God!"