



Walnut Street Church of Christ
306 Walnut Street
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36037

Vertical Limits – Lesson Four

Mount Carmel

The Way To Faith – Elijah & The Prophets of Baal

(1 Kings 18:17-40)

Theme: Vertical Limits: God both made and used Mountains and we are using Mountains in Vacation Bible School 2013 to gain some great Bible Lessons. God said, “And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.” (Isaiah 49:11) This “Vertical Limit” lesson deals with Elijah and his contest with the prophets of Baal. Elijah, a great prophet of God showed us the way to faith!

Elijah was a great prophet of God. His name is not found in “God’s Honor Roll of Faith” in Hebrews 11. However, there is no doubt that he was included when the text says, “And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins;

being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” (Hebrews 11:32-40)

Of all the prophets, only Elijah appeared on the mountain with Moses and Jesus, when Jesus was transfigured. There were many great prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Elisha to name only a few. In Matthew 16:13-20 we have record of an event that took place in Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Elijah was such a great prophet that, though they were very much mistaken, they thought Jesus could possibly be him. Elijah was selected, by God, to appear along with Moses when Jesus was transfigured. “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” (Matthew 17:1-5) Malachi had predicted an appearance by Elijah. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” (Malachi 4:5) When they came down from the mountain where Jesus was transfigured they asked Him, “Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.” (Matthew 17:10-13)

Elijah never wrote a book, but he was a great prophet of God. He was not a prophet like Isaiah or Jeremiah who was used by God to write a book of the Bible. However, he preached the word of God with truth and might, even at

great personal cost and much suffering. He was a courageous man to whom God meant everything. Elijah was a prophet when Ahab was king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The Scripture says of Ahab, “And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.” (1 Kings 16:29-33) Ahab was a very wicked man on his own; he was also married to Jezebel. She was an ungodly and wicked woman. Baby girls are named Eve, Sarah, Ruth, Mary and many other Bible names. However, no baby girls are ever named Jezebel.

Elijah told Ahab that there would not be rain for three years. Elijah was bold before Ahab. He said, “As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” (1 Kings 17:1) God told Elijah to flee from Ahab. “Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.” (1 Kings 17:2-3) The famine was severe. God provided for Elijah while Ahab and Jezebel searched for him. In the process of searching for Elijah they killed many of God’s prophets. Finally, God commanded Elijah to go confront Ahab. When Ahab saw Elijah he said, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17) Ahab was wrong, but Elijah had it correct when he said to Ahab, “I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.” (1 Kings 18:18)

Elijah challenged Ahab and Jezebel and 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah (the groves) to meet him on Mount Carmel. “Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.” (1 Kings 18:19-20) This is not an ecumenical council where they are going to try to establish fellowship. Elijah

stood boldly to challenge their false religion. Elijah challenged the people of Israel saying, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.” (1 Kings 18:21) Each side in the contest was to make an altar, offer a sacrifice and then pray to their God to send fire to burn the sacrifice. (1Kings 18:17-40) God answered with fire and thus proved Himself to be the one true God. Baal was silent. Elijah mocked the prophets of Baal, but still he did not answer. Even with much water poured upon Elijah’s sacrifice God revealed Himself by consuming the sacrifice and altar with fire. “Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” (1 Kings 18:38) There was the proof, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" Elijah had the people kill all the prophets of Baal. Following this God sent an abundance of rain. (1 Kings 18:41-46)

Lessons learned and points of interest about Elijah and the prophets of Baal: (1) False religion does not please God. (2) At times more people follow false religion than follow the truth. (3) Some have difficulty ever deciding what they will believe and which God they will follow. (4) Wicked people, like Ahab and Jezebel, do much harm to the cause of Christ. (5) Rain is one of the many blessings that God gives to mankind.

In order to be saved, a person must do exactly what God commanded, in exactly the way God commanded it. To become a Christian God commanded people to hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus as the Christ (Hebrews 11:6), repent of all sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ as Lord (Matthew 10:32) and be baptized to be saved. (Mark16:16) When a person hears, believes, repents, confesses, and is baptized for the forgiveness of his sins, that person becomes a Christian and only a Christian. God adds that Christian to His Son’s one church. The child of God who remains faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10) is promised a crown of life and eternity in heaven as a result of his faith, his obedience, God’s mercy, and God’s grace. (John 14:15, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 1:5)

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