

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 9 (February 26-March 4, 2017)

We will continue to follow the miracles of Elijah in this week's devotions. I have not included a printed text to allow more space for commentary. (Reprinted and updated from week 27, 2013.)

Sunday, February 26 (read 1 Kings 18:22-26)

Elijah stands alone as God's representative while 450 false prophets represent Baal (v. 22). God's man lays out the ground rules for the confrontation (v. 23). Since Baal is worshiped as "a storm god," the people believe that he is the god of thunder, lightning and rain. Elijah is going to show them once and for all the God who controls those elements. The people agree to the challenge, thinking they are about to see an exciting show (v. 24). The 450 prophets of Baal choose and prepare their bull first (v. 25-26). After this, they call on the name of their false god from morning until noon to no avail because Baal does not exist. Review the characteristics of Baal worship from the February 24th devotions. It seems that many in our country have accepted as normal the lifestyles featured in this false worship. Pray that God will help us to reach this generation with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Monday, February 27 (read 1 Kings 18:27-29)

I love this passage as Elijah **taunts** the false prophets of Baal (v. 27). Many modern preachers have become so passive that they dare not even preach against the elements of Baal worship for fear of being called out of touch or out-dated or for fear of losing members. The false prophets slash themselves trying to get the pity of a god who does not even exist (v. 28). They do not realize that their own blood cannot bring them into the presence of Deity; only the blood of Jesus can accomplish that! This reminds me of the new prayer line for atheists: It just rings and rings and nobody answers. These men keep up their worthless prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice (3:00 p.m.). That's when our Lord takes over!

Tuesday, February 28 (read 1 Kings 18:30-35)

Elijah carefully constructs the altar, prepares the bull for the sacrifice and drenches it with 12 jars of water (32-35). The stage is set! God is going to reveal Himself as the only true God. How I wish he would do it again in our open-minded, tolerant and politically correct country! It is definitely time for true believers to repair the altar of the Lord where we meet Him in prayer (v. 30). Real heart-felt prayers are rare in today's worship services. Many churches fail to acknowledge that the Word of God came through the nation of Israel (v. 31). Today, the Jews need our constant prayers (see Psalm 122:6-9) because their enemies surround them. In your personal time with God, claim His promise that Israel will never cease from being a nation as long as the sun, moon and stars exist (see Jeremiah 31:35-37).

Wednesday, March 1 (read 1 Kings 18:36-39)

The time of the evening sacrifice is 3:00 p.m. This is the same time that our Lord cried out from Calvary, "It is finished" (John 20:30), becoming the permanent sacrifice for all those who receive Him. Elijah prays to God and requests confirmation that He is real and that His prophet is following His commands (v. 36). God's man wants his audience to know that a revival is about to take place in their land (v. 37). God answers Elijah with a powerful display of His presence (v. 38) and all the people fall on their faces and cry out, "The Lord---He is God! The Lord---He is God" (v. 39)! Wouldn't it be great if our country would experience the same miracle of God? This mighty outpouring of His power will happen when the requirements of 2 Chronicles 7:14 are met. Are you willing to let this revival begin in you?

Thursday, March 2 (read 1 Kings 18:40-46)

The 450 false prophets of Baal are slaughtered in the Kishon Valley (v. 40). Elijah confidently tells Ahab to prepare for the heavy rain that is coming, even though there is not a cloud in the sky (v. 41). The prophet then climbs to the top of Carmel and bends down with his face between his knees (v. 42). I'm sure he is praying, but I also know that he is exhausted from doing battle with 450 false prophets and an audience of stubborn people. Elijah commands his servant to "go and look toward the sea" (v. 43). The first six times the servant looks, he reports that the sky is still clear, but after the seventh trip, he says, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea" (v. 44). This reminds me that the hands of Jesus rising to be nailed to the cross preceded the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. The power of the Lord enables Elijah to run 25 miles in front of Ahab's chariot all the way to Jezreel (v. 46).

Friday, March 3 (read 1 Kings 19:1-9)

I want you to see how easy it is to go into depression after a great victory. God's man has just won a showdown with 450 false prophets, but now he is alarmed because one woman wants to kill him (v. 1-3). He requests **the Lord** to take his life, knowing that the Jews take a hard stance against suicide (v. 3-4). Exhausted, he lies down and sleeps until an angel awakens him with a command to "Get up and eat" (v. 5). The very first **angel food cake** has been prepared to give him strength for the journey ahead (v. 6). Elijah sleeps again, and God's heavenly representative awakens him once more and commands him to eat some more food (v. 7). This gives the prophet enough energy to make the forty-days trip to Horeb, the mountain of God where he enters a cave (v. 8-9). This cave continues to picture the depression Elijah is feeling. We will follow the story in tomorrow's devotions.

Saturday, March 4 (read 1 Kings 19:9-18)

From the cave of self-pity, God speaks to his depressed prophet: "What are you doing here, Elijah" (v. 9)? Has He ever asked you that question when you are feeling sorry for yourself? The prophet tells God that the Israelites are not obedient and that he stands alone as a faithful prophet (v. 10). God commands him to get out of the cave and go out on the mountain because "the Lord is about to pass by" (v. 11). A great and powerful wind shatters the rocks. An earthquake follows and then a fire, but the Lord is not in any of them (v. 11-12). Instead, the Lord speaks to His man in a gentle whisper (v. 12). When we are depressed and discouraged, we often look for God to do some powerful miracle. Our Lord still speaks to us in a still, small voice so that only those who follow closely will hear Him. Read the rest of today's text to see how God provides for His special representative (v. 13-18).