

Elijah Calls Fire from Heaven

Level C | Lesson 4 | Teacher Overview

Key Message: A life founded on the truth brings happiness.

Text: I Kings 18:1-2,18-46

Activity Options (choose 2 or 3)

1. Talk About It
2. Take Action: Building a Strong Foundation
3. Look Closer: What Are the Prophets of Baal in Our Lives?
6. Meditate and Activate



I Kings 18:38-39

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice.... Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!”

Talk About It

I Kings 18:1-2,18-46: Fire from Heaven

1. Today's story is about the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Why was the competition held? (So that the people could see who was the true God.)
2. Elijah communicated the Lord's message to people. The people did not always like his messages! What messages do we know that are God's message to us? What acts like Elijah's voice in your life? (parents, conscience, the Word, etc.)
3. Baal was a false god. Baals were wooden statues picturing the Canaanite god of storms whose voice was thunder. The people of the land of Canaan did not worship the Lord, but instead put their faith in these statues. We have different "false gods" today. They are false ideas—e.g. nobody will know if I take something that I want, so nobody will be hurt by it. Can you think of some other examples?
4. Elijah and the Prophets of Baal set up two altars on Mount Carmel—one altar dedicated to Baal, the other altar dedicated to the Lord. Elijah rebuilt the Lord's altar with care—setting the stones straight, then laying on wood and the sacrifice, and finally drenching it with water again and again. We do something similar in our own minds when we are deciding how we should act—e.g. whether we will tell a lie to cover up a mistake we have made, or whether we should tell the truth and face the consequences. We build arguments to support each side.
5. Then the Lord brings a miracle! Fire comes from heaven to Elijah's altar. In a similar way, by choosing to follow the Lord and do what is right, our hearts can be warmed by the fire of the Lord's Divine love.
6. From the clear perspective of accepting the truth, we are able to see our false ideas for what they are. Just as Elijah got rid of the prophets of Baal, we can rid ourselves of our false notions of happiness.
7. And then a wonderful thing happened! The drought ended. Elijah sent his servant to look for rain clouds. The boy went, and after looking out to sea seven times, he saw a tiny cloud coming up from the sea. It was like a man's hand. And then the rain came—ending the three and a half year long drought.

Take Action: Building a Strong Foundation

I Kings 18:1-2, 18-46: Fire from Heaven

Choose an activity to illustrate the importance of choosing a firm foundation for success (be it a person, a stone or background knowledge.) Follow up with a discussion on the implications of a firm foundation for our own lives.

Warm-up

Choose one or more of the following options to get the students thinking!

Human Pyramid

If you have a large group of students, have them build a “human pyramid” (see picture). Work inside on a carpeted surface or mats, or outside on a lawn or other soft-landing area. Use the largest and strongest students as a base and balance smaller students on top. As the pyramid is being built, discuss what structure will make the best foundation, the strongest structure, etc. What can you do to make the pyramid less likely to topple?



Build an Altar of Twelve Stones

Find twelve large stones. Have the students build an altar like Elijah. Encourage them to look for flat surfaces to make a sturdy structure. If the stones are not uniform, consider careful strategic placement of the stones for the strongest altar. Discuss what it must have been like for Elijah to take the stones of the destroyed altar and build a new sturdy one.

Play a Game without Explaining the Rules

Here is a game that will tease the brain! At least two people in the room must know the rules before the game starts. Everyone else will try to discover them when playing the game. The game is called “Black Magic!” One person (who knows the rules) will leave the room. The remaining group will decide on one object in the room for the person to guess when they are invited back. Once the person returns, a Questioner (who also knows the rules) will ask simple questions: Is it (name object)? Or is it (name object)? The trigger question for revealing the real object is that the penultimate object will be black in color. After asking about the black object (with a negative

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response) the chosen object will be selected, and the answer will be “yes!” If nobody is able to figure out how the game is played, continue with another round. The Questioner can exchange places with the person who goes out. When someone thinks they know the answer, they should not divulge it, but should be the next to leave the room and guess. If they are able to guess correctly, they have figured out the simple rule to the game and may then be the Questioner. If they have not guessed correctly, the game continues. Stop when you have spent enough time on it. This game may baffle people for a long time. Do not reveal the rules to those who are unable to figure it out! This game may be played again and again.

Discussion

1. What does it mean to “get a firm footing in life” or be grounded? Have you met people who are like this? What are their main characteristics?
2. Compare this person with someone who changes their mind every time the wind changes. What might be missing from the life of a person like this?
3. Elijah re-built the altar of the Lord. Over time it had fallen apart—it had fallen out of use. In a similar way, we may know truths from the Word, but we may not always put them together in ways that help us form a solid plan of action in our lives. When we take all of the separate things that we know and put them together in an organized way in our minds, we forge a strong platform on which to base our actions.
4. What would have happened to the Human Pyramid or Altar of Twelve Stones if we had not taken time to select the strongest foundation? What might this look like in a person’s life?
5. What is the difference between knowing the rules (Ten Commandments) that make us eternally happy, and not knowing them? (Think about this by considering who was more frustrated when playing Black Magic—those who knew the rules, or those who did not know them?) How might this compare with people who know what will bring true happiness in their lives vs. people who do not have faith or read the Word?
6. After Elijah carefully prepared the altar and the sacrifice, the Lord came and consumed the altar with fire from heaven. What do we need to do in order for the Lord to come into our lives?
7. How might we support our friends in making choices that will bring the Lord closer? (There are many ways to approach this, e.g. we may simply separate ourselves from negative behaviors, and so not support their choices, or we may say something to them directly to help them think about what they may be doing to themselves and others. We can become a friend to what is true and look for that in other people.)

Look Closer: What Are the Prophets of Baal in Our Lives?

I Kings 18:1-2,18-46: Fire from Heaven

Compare and contrast what it means to worship Baal or the Lord. Take a closer look at the Baals in life and how worshipping them affects us.

Supplies Needed for Each Student

- copy of “What Are the Prophets of Baal in Our Lives?” (see attached sheet)

Activity

1. Read the introduction and table depicting “Baals” and “The True God” aloud with students, discussing as appropriate.
2. Discuss wider implications of these ideas.

Wrap-up

Encourage students to be on the lookout for false Baals this week. Look for alternative ways of acting if they find them, and look for ways to support others in their efforts.



What Are the Prophets of Baal in Our Lives?

Baal was a Canaanite god. The name Baal means literally “lord.” In Canaanite mythology, Baal was lord over all—especially the fertility of the land. Every person born into the world has the opportunity to choose what thoughts and feelings will rule their lives. This quality will be the “lord” that “rules over them.” Let’s take a closer look at what some of the false “Baal” might be in our own lives.

Baals pose as holy men. They appear to be mediators of Divine power. They look good! They appear to make us successful. But their long-term effects in our lives may be quite different.

False gods—“Baals”	The True God
It is more important to cheat on a test so that I do well in school than to fail.	It is more important to face the consequences of not studying so that I can learn not to make that mistake again, and so that I can really learn what I was supposed to.
Watching a fun movie with characters who continually make poor moral choices can’t hurt me. Everyone does it, so what can be wrong with it?	Watching movies that show other people making poor moral choices and telling me that they are OK, normal or acceptable may hurt my moral values if I make a habit of watching them often.
It’s fine to talk another person into being intimate with me. Besides the other person is fine with it, and it feels right.	Intimacy is reserved for marriage. I can show my friends respect by honoring their freedom instead of talking them into making bad choices that we will both regret later.
I feel really down. If I get drunk or high then I will feel much happier. Feeling happy is important. It’s what the Lord wants for me.	I will be happier in the long run if I face up to choices I have made. I will be truly happy if I make a better choice the next time I have the chance to try. This will bring me eternal heavenly happiness.
I am completely justified in being angry with my friend. My friend said something that really hurt me—and it was not even true. I think everyone should know what a rotten person she is.	Letting bad feelings rule the way I see things and think about people may lead to a destructive and self-centered mental outlook. These feelings come from evil spirits wanting to pull me down to their level. I will be happier if I do not make them welcome in my life.

1. The Land of Canaan in the Word represents the kingdom of heaven. If we are to experience states of heavenly peace and joy, we need to drive “Baal” out of our own lives. What steps can a person take to do this?
2. Why was it important for Elijah to kill all the prophets of Baal—not letting even one of them escape? In what ways might this relate to the Baals of our lives? What could be the consequence of letting even one live?
3. How might knowing about this affect the way you think about friendship with other people or the ways you spend your free time? Can we help others with these problems?

Meditate & Activate

Thinking or meditating about a passage from God's Word and finding opportunities to put it into action can be a powerful experience. Keep this card intact or cut out the illustrated quotation to use as a bookmark or put up somewhere in your home.

Meditate: The Lord wants to do amazing things for you! How can you use the gifts He has given you to bring His presence more fully into your life?

Activate: Identify something you feel passionately about, whether it is a dream for your future, a job you do now, or a hobby you enjoy. How could the Lord help you in this area of your life? What part can you take in making your hopes come true?

If you abide
in Me, and
My words
abide in you,
you will ask
what you
desire, and it
shall be done
for you.

John 15:7



To make a stronger bookmark, print this page on heavy paper or cardstock, cut in half and give half to each student.

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