

Fire and Rain From Heaven

TEXT I Kings 18:17-46

OBJECTIVE The students will understand that God used Elijah's prayers, the resulting fire sent from Heaven, and the rain to show all the people He alone was the true and living God.

MEMORY VERSE The God that answereth by fire, let him be God.
— I Kings 18:24

MEMORY VERSE SONG

The God that answereth by fire, let him be

God. The God that answereth by fire, let him be

God.

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

THE GOD — Point up.

THAT ANSWERETH — Point to mouth, move hand away from face.

BY FIRE — With palms up, wiggle fingers like flames.

LET HIM BE GOD — Point up with both hands.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Cut apart the fire, the altar, and the cloud over the top. (See pattern at end of lesson.) Display the arrangement a portion at a time as the students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Bring a photograph or article from a newspaper or magazine describing a famine or drought. Relate this to how dried out everything became after three years of no rain, due to Elijah's words to King Ahab.

1. When Elijah and Ahab met, the king accused Elijah of being the one who troubled Israel. Elijah responded by telling him it was because the people had forsaken God and turned to false gods that the drought had occurred.

2. Elijah arranged a meeting on Mt. Carmel with the false prophets and challenged them to make a sacrifice and call upon their gods to send fire from Heaven.

3. The false prophets tried desperately for the entire day but no fire fell.

4. Elijah made an altar and covered it with water, and then prayed.

Climax: God sent fire from Heaven and consumed the sacrifice. Then, at the further prayer of Elijah, he ended the drought by sending rain.

Conclusion: Through the prayers of Elijah and the resulting miracles of the fire from Heaven, and the rain after the drought, God proved that He alone was the true and living God.

Response: Your students will be able to describe how Elijah used God's power to prove to the people that He was the true God.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Without rain the region of Palestine withers into a desert. After three years of drought, Elijah knew that it was time for the rains to come again. In a dramatic scene Elijah, the only prophet of the Lord, stood on the moun-

tain with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves (sacred to the Baal worshipers) in a test designed to prove whether Baal or the Israelite God was the true God.

Elijah directed the whole proceeding: how an offering was to be made by the prophets of Baal, and later his own. It is interesting to note that, after three years of drought when water was undoubtedly a precious commodity, he ordered twelve barrels of water to be poured over the sacrifice. In striking contrast to the frantic efforts of the false prophets, Elijah prayed with simple, majestic directness — and the fire fell, burning up the sacrifice, the altar, the dust, and even licking up the water in the trench.

Immediately following, Elijah climbed to the top of Mt. Carmel to pray for rain. His power in prayer and his faith in God was evidenced as he prevailed — and after sending his servant out the seventh time, a cloud “like a man’s hand” was spotted. Elijah sent his servant to warn Ahab to hasten “that the rain stop thee not.”

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring pictures of dry deserts or newspaper articles telling of a famine and share with the class. This should illustrate how dried out everything was when Elijah came to see Ahab again.

Build a small altar and tell the story with dolls or figures. Dress one doll as Elijah. Pour water over the altar and explain to the children that in the natural it cannot be lit, but God was able to perform the seemingly impossible.

Tell how Elijah believed in God and had faith that He would send rain again. Hold a dry sponge in your hand as you tell how even a little cloud was enough to let Elijah know his prayer was answered. Dip the sponge into a dish of water and let it rain as Elijah and his servant run to the city.

Bring a wooden or ceramic figure to represent Baal. Ask your children if this statue can hear. Can he talk? Can he answer prayer? Explain that the Baal worshippers in Elijah’s time thought a figure like this could do so.

Use divided picture of altars (see Patterns). Have children draw the people and what happened for each side, Baal and Elijah.

Use 12 rocks to build the altar as you tell the story. Explain why that number of stones was used.

Give each of your students one or two of the finger puppets representing the prophets of Baal (see Patterns). Let them act out the prophets’ efforts to call down fire from Heaven. A tape-recorded background

might encourage their participation in this scene. Then use the finger puppet representing Elijah to portray the climax to the story. A pattern for a stand-up altar and fire are also provided for use with the finger puppets.

QUESTIONS

Elijah was an example to the people that he believed in and served the living God. How can you be such an example at school?

What are some examples of idols today?

Why can’t idols made of stone and gold answer your prayers and heal you? Can you tell of times when God has answered your prayers or healed you or someone else?

How did King Ahab greet Elijah? What was his attitude or feelings toward Elijah?

What was the trouble Ahab referred to? Who was to blame for the trouble?

What did Elijah hope to prove on Mt. Carmel? Why was this important?

Do you think there are people today who do not know who is the true God? Explain.

We may not see fire come down from Heaven, but what are some of the things that prove to us that God is real and that He is always the same in His power and His goodness?

What happened when the people saw that fire came from Heaven and Elijah’s prayer was answered?

PRE-SCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Use the pattern of praying hands provided for Lesson 1e, making a copy from felt or construction paper for each student. Talk about how God answered Elijah’s prayers, and will also answer our prayers.

Make paper cone people using a half circle of paper taped to form a cone, with a round circle attached for the head. Make the Baal worshippers of one color (green) and the people who loved God of another color (blue).

Cut out white, gray, and black paper clouds for children to hold up as Elijah prays. Have paper raindrops for children to drop on Elijah as he runs to the city.

REVIEW IDEAS

Have a skit about a family situation where God answered prayer. Having faith in God is believing that He will answer your prayers. An example would be when Mom and Dad promise you something and you believe they will do it.

