

# Elijah Defeats The Prophets Of Baal

1 Kings 18:1-40

## **MEMORY VERSE**

1 KINGS 18:39

“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!’”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

A list of 10 – 15 statements about God; some true and some false (false questions can range between sounding absurd and being close to the truth).

Picture of an altar (check a Bible encyclopedia or dictionary), construction paper, glue, regular crackers, red, yellow and orange crayons.

A copy of the curriculum template (provided with the curriculum) for each child, red construction paper, glue stick, scissors, clear contact paper and magnetic strips with adhesive backing.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **True or False Game**

Before class, come up with a list of 10 – 15 statements about God. Make some of them true and some of them false. Some can sound absurd, and some can be close to the truth, but untrue.

When class time begins, tell your class that you are going to be reading several statements to them about God. The class will then “vote” on whether the statement is true or false. With each question, record how many votes for true and how many votes for false.

At the end of your list of questions, read through the questions again and give the right answers. Ask the children if there were any surprises. In today's lesson we will be learning about true prophets and false prophets. Be careful of false prophets--they seek to deceive! We are going to see what God does when 450 false prophets try to gang up on *one* of God's prophets.

## LESSON TIME!

How many of you have ever had a contest? Maybe you've had a contest to see who was the strongest or the fastest? How did you do? In today's lesson, the true and living God has a contest with the false idols in the land of Israel. Who do you think wins?

Ahab was the king in the land of Israel (10 northern tribes). His wicked wife, Jezebel, was a princess from another nation. Jezebel, like the people of her home country, worshiped a god by the name of Baal. This beautiful and convincing queen brought prophets from her home country and persuaded King Ahab to build temples for Baal in Israel.

Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel led the people of Israel away from worship of the Lord and into the worship of idols. At this sad time in Israel's history, few worshiped the true God. God loved His people even though they were sinning against Him. God sent Elijah to turn their hearts back again.

### 1 KINGS 18:17-21

Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"

And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals.

Elijah had been rightly critical of King Ahab, because Ahab was leading the people into sin. Ahab calls Elijah the “troubler of Israel.” Elijah answered that Ahab and his family were really the troublemakers, for they promoted the worship of false gods.

Sometimes the people who are willing to stand up for what is right, like Elijah, will be called “troublemakers.” If you stand up for what is right, you may not be the most popular person around. Sadly, because of sin, the world twists things around and will call sin good and call what is right bad. We can not let the pressures of worldly people keep us from serving the Lord and doing what is right.

### 1 KINGS 18:19-21

"Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

Elijah told King Ahab to gather the people and the prophets of Baal and to meet him on Mount Carmel. He told the people that they could not worship both God and Baal; they would have to choose whom they would follow. If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is god, follow him! But, the people would not decide; so they did not answer.

We, too, have to choose whom we are going to follow, either God and His ways or the world and its ways. We cannot have both. The world has its own gods. As Christians, we can be distracted by the gods of this world. We may not bow down to wooden or stone statues; but, we certainly can give all of our time, energy and money to things that do not glorify the Lord. Even if the whole world is following other gods, we need to be committed to serving the one true God! **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

When Joshua and the children of Israel came into the Promised Land, they faced the temptation to serve the gods in that land. Joshua made a stand for what is right. He told the people to choose whom they would serve; but, for he and his family, they would serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15). Will we, as Joshua, take a stand--make a clear choice--to serve the true and living God?

#### 1 KINGS 18:22-24

Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

"Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it.

"Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

Elijah suggested a contest between God and Baal. He said that he was the only one left to represent God. There were 450 prophets to represent Baal. He suggested that each side would prepare a sacrifice with a bull cut into pieces and placed on wood on an altar. The prophets were to pray to Baal, and Elijah would pray to God. The one who would send fire from heaven to burn the sacrifice would prove to be the one true God. The people agreed.

God only had *one* representative there on Mt. Carmel--Elijah. There were 450 prophets of Baal. Yet, to God, numbers matter little. There is nothing too hard for God (Jeremiah 32:17). **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.** This contest was set up by a loving Father to win back the hearts of His wayward children. The false gods the people of Israel were serving would not satisfy their needs; they would not answer them when they called. God was longing, waiting and wanting, for His people to return to Him, so He could bless them.

### 1 KINGS 18:25-26

Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it."

So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

The 450 prophets of Baal prepared their sacrifice. They prayed to their god to send the fire to burn it. They started dancing around their sacrifice. They were jumping up and down, turning in circles, and yelling loudly to get their god's attention but nothing happened. It must have been quite a scene!

But, Baal was an idol, a false god. Baal *would never* answer because he *could never* answer. Wood or stone can never answer back or set a sacrifice on fire. That which a person makes with his own hands cannot provide help in time of trouble. **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

If we rely on anything other than the Lord to help in time of need, we will be let down, disappointed. Our help is only in the Lord. He wants to help us and will help us when we follow Him.

## Elijah's Altar

For this craft, you will need a picture of an altar (check a Bible encyclopedia or dictionary), construction paper, glue, saltine crackers, red, yellow and orange crayons.

Review the story and talk about altars. What were they used for? How were they built, etc.? Use a picture of an altar to help to describe it. Explain to the children that they will be making a picture of an altar.

Glue the crackers onto the paper to form an altar shape. You can place four crackers in a row on the bottom of a sheet of construction paper. On top of that row, place three crackers and on top of the second row place two crackers. Center the crackers on each row. On top of the altar, use red, yellow, and orange crayons to make fire. Allow the children to be creative and draw Elijah if they like or even a trough of water like in the story.

## 1 KINGS 18:27-29

And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened."

So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them.

And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

Elijah started making fun of them and their gods! He asked them if their god was too busy to answer. It is pretty silly to worship wood, metal, or stone statues. But unfortunately, people still worship all kinds of things other than God today. Anything that we give all of our focus or attention to other than God is an idol. Although we may not bow down to a hunk of metal, we still must be careful not to let anything other than God take all of our attention.

As Elijah questioned whether their god was even real, the Baal prophets started dancing and jumping even harder. They began to cut themselves with swords and spears while they chanted to their gods. They tried all day to get their god to send the fire to burn their sacrifice. Of course, because their god was not real, there was no answer.

It would seem that the prophets of Baal really believed that their god would answer. They thought that by hurting themselves Baal would be pleased and would finally respond. Isn't it great that our God *will* answer! He does not require that we hurt ourselves to somehow earn His listening ear. God wants only good for us. He loves us, and wants to help us.

The prophets of Baal had put their trust in the wrong god, a false god. Like Elijah, let us put all of our trust and faith in the "true and the living God." **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**



## 1 KINGS 18:30-35

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name."

Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed.

And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood."

Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time.

So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

Elijah prepared his sacrifice explaining the significance of each step as he built the altar, cut the bull, and put it on the wood. Then he told the people to pour water on the sacrifice. Have you ever tried to light a fire with wet wood? All you get is a little bit of smoke. It just won't burn.

Elijah poured twelve large containers of water on his sacrifice and on the wood under it. It was soaking wet with water standing in a trench all around it. How could it burn? It couldn't! But what is impossible for man is not impossible for God. With God all things are possible. **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

### 1 KINGS 18:36-38

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and

Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word.

"Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."

Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.

When it was time for the usual evening sacrifice, Elijah called upon the Lord God, of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. The people there would identify well with these names—the names of the patriarchs of children of Israel, men who followed the one true God. Elijah made it clear that he was not in charge—he was God's servant, following His instructions. Elijah was careful that God would receive the glory for the miracle He was about to perform.

As the people looked on, God sent fire down from Heaven to burn the wood, sacrifice, the dirt, and to dry up all the water. The prophets of Baal could not even get dry wood to start on fire, but

God did something pretty amazing with a bunch of wet wood and a drenched sacrifice. This proved without a doubt that the Lord is the one true God and there is no other. While Baal did not even answer, God went above and beyond what was necessary to demonstrate His power to His people. **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

### 1 KINGS 18:39

**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!"**

The people fell down flat on their faces in true worship. They chose to return to God and repent of their sins, declaring "the Lord, He is God." Though the people had disobeyed God and had foolishly begun to worship idols, God loved them and desired that their hearts turn back to Him in true worship. God was willing to even do the impossible to win His people back to Himself. God loves us deeply, even when we fail. He loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins on the cross so that we could be saved. What a privilege we have to be able to turn to God and worship Him.

### 1 KINGS 18:40

**And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.**

Elijah had the false prophets of Baal arrested and put to death for the terrible and very evil things that had been done to the people of Israel in the name of religion and for leading them to stray from the one true God.

God sent Elijah to the people to turn their hearts back to God and to keep them from the sin of worshipping idols. The question is “Who will we choose to serve? Will we serve God or the idols of this world. Will we walk in the ways of God or the ways of the world?” The things of the world can seem fun and exciting for a little while; but they, will not bring fulfillment, true love, or lasting happiness. Only God can make our lives worthwhile. **The world’s gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

God has sent Jesus to turn our hearts back to God. He wants all our love and worship. Jesus paid the price for our sins and became our sacrifice. If we ask Jesus to come into our hearts and forgive us for our sins, He will; and He will always be with us, now and into eternity. Truly, “...the Lord is God, follow Him!

## “No Idols!” Magnet

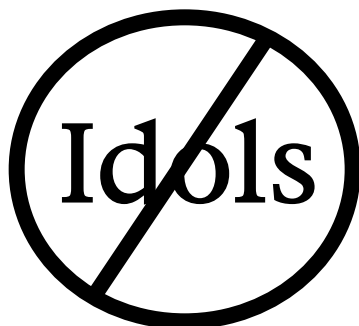
You will need a copy of the curriculum template (provided with the curriculum) for each child, red construction paper, glue stick, scissors, clear contact paper and magnetic strips with adhesive backing.

Copy the template onto white cardstock (1 sheet per child). Using red construction paper, have the children cut out a circle, approximately 1/8 to 1/4 inches thick. The circle should be large enough to fit around the word “idols” (the idea is to make a red circle with a line through it to communicate “no idols”). Next cut out a line the same width as the circle which will go from one end of the circle to the other. Glue the circle around the word “idols.”

Next, glue the line through the word “idols.” Cut around the outer rim of the circle to cut out the craft. Using clear contact paper, stick over front and back of the craft. Next, place a small strip of magnet with adhesive onto the back.

Review the lesson and remind the children how important it is to only serve the true and the living God.

Example:



## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to follow the Lord, even if the whole world turns away. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

# IDDOLS