

Elijah and the Priests of Baal

Children will be invited to come to the front of the church to hear the story. The Desert Bag should be waiting in front of the Altar with the story materials beside it.

1 Kings 18

Ahab went to meet Elijah, and when he saw him, Ahab shouted, "There you are, the biggest troublemaker in Israel!"

Elijah answered: "You're the troublemaker—not me! You and your family have disobeyed the Lord's commands by worshiping Baal.

"Call together everyone from Israel and have them meet me on Mount Carmel. Be sure to bring along the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."

Ahab got everyone together, then they went to meet Elijah on Mount Carmel. Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How much longer will you try to have things both ways? If the Lord is God, worship him! But if Baal is God, worship him!"

The people did not say a word.

Then Elijah continued: "I am the Lord's only prophet, but Baal has four hundred fifty prophets. Bring us two bulls. Baal's prophets can take one of them, kill it, and cut it into pieces. Then they can put the meat on the wood without lighting the fire. I will do the same thing with the other bull, and I won't light a fire under it either. The prophets of Baal will pray to their god, and I will pray to the Lord. The one who answers by starting the fire is God."

"That's a good idea," everyone agreed.

Elijah said to Baal's prophets, "There are more of you, so you go first. Pick out a bull and get it ready, but don't light the fire. Then pray to your god."

They chose their bull, then they got it ready and prayed to Baal all morning, asking him to start the fire. They danced around the altar and shouted, "Answer us, Baal!" But there was no answer.

At noon, Elijah began making fun of them. "Pray louder!" he said. "Baal must be a god. Maybe he's day-dreaming or using the toilet or traveling somewhere. Or maybe he's asleep, and you have to wake him up."

The prophets kept shouting louder and

Storyteller: When the Children of Israel entered the promised land, they asked God to give them a King. Some kings did good and the people were blessed by God; and some kings did evil and the people suffered.

Hold out the figure of Ahab. King Ahab did more evil than all the kings before him. He paid false priests to worship the false god, Baal.

God sent prophets to the Children of Israel to remind them, and their kings, to do good. *Hold out the figure of Elijah.* The great prophet Elijah spoke to King Ahab and all the people. He said "How long will you try to believe two different things? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal is god, then follow him."

Elijah said, "Give us two bulls, one for me and one for the prophets of Baal. They can kill their bull and lay it on a pile of wood. But don't light the wood on fire!. *Put out one of the wood-pile altars, and stand the priest-of-Baal figure in front of it.*

I will kill the other bull and lay it on a pile wood, and not light the wood on fire. *Put out the second wood-pile altars, and stand the Elijah figure in front of it.*

Elijah said: "Then you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the LORD; the god who answers by fire is indeed God."

The priests of Baal called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, crying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, no answer, and no response.

Story Materials

Dolls:

Ahab

Priest-of-Baal

Elijah

Two altars with bulls

jug for water

Tray, basket or shallow open box to hold the story

louder, and they cut themselves with swords and knives until they were bleeding. This was the way they worshiped, and they kept it up all afternoon. But there was no answer of any kind.

Elijah told everyone to gather around him while he repaired the Lord's altar. Then he used twelve stones to build an altar in honor of the Lord. Each stone stood for one of the tribes of Israel, which was the name the Lord had given to their ancestor Jacob. Elijah dug a ditch around the altar, large enough to hold about thirteen quarts. He placed the wood on the altar, then they cut the bull into pieces and laid the meat on the wood.

He told the people, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it over the meat and the wood." After they did this, he told them to do it two more times. They did exactly as he said until finally, the water ran down the altar and filled the ditch.

When it was time for the evening sacrifice, Elijah prayed: "Our Lord, you are the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. Now, prove that you are the God of this nation, and that I, your servant, have done this at your command. Please answer me, so these people will know that you are the Lord God, and that you will turn their hearts back to you."

The Lord immediately sent fire, and it burned up the sacrifice, the wood, and the stones. It scorched the ground everywhere around the altar and dried up every drop of water in the ditch. When the crowd saw what had happened, they all bowed down and shouted, "The Lord is God! The Lord is God!"

Just then, Elijah said, "Grab the prophets of Baal! Don't let any of them get away."

So the people captured the prophets and took them to Kishon River, where Elijah killed every one of them.

Then Elijah said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the wood." *Use the jar to mime pouring water on the wood:* One ... two ... three ... four. Then he said, "Do it a second time". *Use the jar to mime pouring water on the wood:* One ... two ... three ... four. Then he said, "Do it a third time"; and they did it a third time. *Use the jar to mime pouring water on the wood:* One ... two ... three.

Then Elijah said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel! Answer me, O LORD!

Bring down the felt flames (from the Pentecost lesson) so that they descend right past the wood and are in front of it. Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the wood, and the sacrifice, and even the water!. The people saw it and said, "The LORD indeed is God; the LORD indeed is God."