



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Kings 18:1-46

Lesson 2 of 6

2020

"Fire and Rain"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Mark. We have started a brief series on the life of Elijah and his ministry—and this morning we are in I Kings, chapter 18. It's a lengthy chapter, so I'm not going to read the entire chapter. I'm going to read verse 1 and then verses 30 through 40.

You will remember from last week there has been a three-year drought on the land of Israel when chapter 18 begins; "Now it happened *after* many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth."" So Elijah met Ahab and he challenged Ahab's prophets to a contest on Mt. Carmel. It would be a test by fire. The king agreed, gathered Israel to the top of Mt. Carmel with 450 prophets of Baal, and the contest was on. All day long the prophets of Baal prayed to their god that he would send fire down on their altar, but nothing happened. Finally, time ran out and beginning in verse 30:

³⁰Then 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 which had been torn down. ³¹Elijah took 12 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." ³²So 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 measures of seed. ³³Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid *it* on the wood. And he said, "Fill four pitches with water and pour *it* on the burnt offering and on the wood." ³⁴And 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. ³⁵The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water. ³⁶At the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. ³⁷"Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, and *that* You have turned their heart back again." ³⁸Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God." ⁴⁰Then 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 slew them there.

1 Kings 18: 30-40

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of studying it together. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for this time together, this opportunity to do what we've been doing; singing hymns of praise, reading the scripture and then taking the opportunity to consider it at some length, what we have read, what it means, and how it applies to us—because it does. It is Your Word: It is Your revelation, it is inerrant, and it is always relevant. It is as relevant today as it was in these ancient times.

The problems that Israel had we have. Your people are always tempted to go a different way, to get off the old path and get onto something new. And so Father, we pray that You would guard us from doing that and teach us the lessons we need to learn from this great text—this familiar incident. May we learn from it, and we will if Your Spirit teaches us. And so we pray for that. May the Holy Spirit not be quenched by any of us, but guide and direct us, illuminate the scripture for us, show us the application, and give us the desire to live a life that's pleasing to You.

So Lord, we look to You to bless us spiritually and bless us materially as well. You know all our needs. You know that each one of us here has needs, maybe needs that

we're not even aware of; but certainly, there are those who are dealing with physical issues, matters of health. Bless them, strengthen them physically, encourage them spiritually. May this text of scripture be an encouragement for You are faithful, and You will always bless us when we follow Your way and Your Word.

So Lord, build Your people up in the faith this morning. Bless the music. Bless the special music that we will enjoy. May it all have a ministry to us, and then prepare our hearts for a time of study and worship. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

The Christian life is a walk of faith. I think one of the best pictures of that is given by the priests of Israel when they carried the ark through the Jordan river to enter the land of Canaan. It's in Joshua, chapter 3. The Jordan was at a flood stage. It was a raging river. It was unpassable. But the Lord commanded the priests to carry the ark into the river, and the nation to follow them. He promised that when the soles of the priests' feet rested in the waters, that the flood would stop. They acted on His command. They walked into the flood. And the moment their feet touched the river, it stopped.

Well, that is walking by faith. As we step out, sometimes against what seems to us common sense, despite the circumstances, God changes the circumstances and blesses. Israel crossed the river on dry ground. Sometimes it may seem like the Lord is leading us into harm's way. But when we follow, He does amazing things. I Kings 18 gives an example of that; gives a series of examples of that when God made fire and rain fall from heaven. That is our God. The God Who is.

So, what keeps us so often from following Him; taking that step in the river; walking by faith daily? Maybe it's life's routine that keeps our eye on other things than the Lord. We get very busy with life, with the things of life. Or maybe it's the world—just the longing for the things of the world. Distractions. Indifference. Worldliness. Whatever. It's all symptomatic of a divided heart—of living with one foot in the church, and the other in the world.

This problem is common among us and is the reason for the events of our passage: events that end in dramatic demonstrations of God's power and proof that He

is real. The lesson of I Kings, chapter 18 is: We serve a living God, not a myth. Nothing is too difficult for Him. He overcomes circumstances—so walk by faith. He is faithful to provide for us as we trust Him.

He provided for Elijah. God had hidden him from wicked King Ahab for three years. Ahab had searched all over the land, even in foreign lands, hoping to find the prophet, and when he found him, to kill him. In that time the drought had become even more severe. Everything was dying. Ahab must have feared his kingdom was on the verge of extinction. So his anger at Elijah had only increased over time.

That was the situation when the Lord told Elijah, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth." (vs1). This is the first of the challenges to Elijah's faith in this chapter. The Lord told him, in effect, to step into a raging river, into the lion's den. Go find and speak to the king who wanted to kill him—who had the power and the authority to kill him.

But Elijah didn't hesitate. He went. He stepped out in faith. And here we meet one of those minor but memorable characters in the Bible, Obadiah, a true servant of the Lord who was also the man in charge of Ahab's household. This is very interesting, and you find this sometimes in scripture, and I think we find it, probably, a lot in life. And that is that the Lord has His people in every place, to do His work. And Obadiah was in a very unusual place. He was in the home, in the household of King Ahab, whose queen was Jezebel. And Obadiah, in this situation, did a courageous work. It's recorded in verse 4: When Jezebel was killing God's prophets, Obadiah hid 100 of them in caves. And he regularly fed them with bread and water throughout the famine. He had put his life at risk; and the reason he did we are told in verse 3: He "...feared the Lord greatly." He was a man of God.

Still, Ahab trusted him. And both were out searching for grass and water to graze the king's animals, each going out in different directions, when Obadiah met the prophet in verse 7. He recognized him, fell on his face and said, "Is this you, Elijah my master?" Elijah answered (vs8), "It is I. Go say to your master, 'Behold Elijah *is here*.'"

And this is the next challenge in the chapter to a man's faith. Obadiah was a courageous servant of the Lord, but he felt that the prophet was telling him to go and sign his death warrant. Verse 9, he said, "What sin have I committed, that you are giving your servant into the hand of Ahab to put me to death?" Obadiah was afraid that when Ahab arrived Elijah would vanish; for he had done that before. He feared that this is what would happen: The Spirit of the Lord would carry Elijah away somewhere and Ahab would be so angry at losing the prophet again, that he would kill Obadiah.

So he resisted. He told Elijah how he had hidden the prophets, to show that he had already put his life on the line, and to ask, so to speak, 'Haven't I done enough? Why are you asking more of me? This is a very difficult task you're putting me to.' I find his response to be completely realistic, which shows how true to life the scriptures are in the things that we read of men doing, and their responses and reactions. And this is certainly one of those. So he resisted. He told Elijah about these things and sought to escape this chore that Elijah had given to him, because he knew, (at least he felt certain), that it would mean his life. F W Krummacher commented on this. He said that we often speak confidently of dying and we imagine that it is no terror to us. But he said, "A glimpse of 'the king of terrors' will easily dissolve our heroic courage." I think this is probably true. And we see that here. Elijah understands and then he reassures Obadiah that he would not vanish, 'So go and do what I told you to do. I will be here when the king arrives.' So, Obadiah went on his errand. I am sure he went fearfully, but he went obediently, trusting the Lord, walking by faith in the face of death.

And Ahab came. Finally, the illusive prophet was in front of him; and he said, "Is this you, you troubler of Israel?" (vs17). Elijah had no fear of Ahab, and he threw the accusation back at him. It wasn't Elijah who troubled Israel, but Ahab with his gross idolatry, "...you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and you have followed the Baals." Next, he issued a challenge to the king, really a prophetic command, in verse 19, "Now then send *and* gather to me all Israel at Mt. Carmel, *together* with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table." And the king obeyed the prophet. He didn't kill Elijah and he didn't kill Obadiah, because the God

who sent them is the God who shuts the mouths of lions and quenches fire, according to Hebrews 11, verse 33. He is faithful. He protected them, His servants, and He delivered them. And He does the same for us, in more ways than you and I can even count or know. I think it's true, and it's been said that in eternity we will be amazed at how many dangers the Lord prevented from injuring us; things that we are not even aware of. He is always protecting us. We are in the hand of the Sovereign God, (that's Proverbs chapter 18, verse 10). Knowing that should give us the confidence of that proverb. "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe." We should know that and believe that.

Now I'm sure Ahab liked the odds of Elijah's challenge. 450 prophets of Ba'al and 400 prophets of Asherah. 850 against one prophet of Yahweh. They'd win easily. So Israel and the prophets of Baal gathered on Mt. Carmel, which overlooks the Jezreel Valley and Ahab's palace, where Jezebel waited, and overlooks the Mediterranean to the west. It's a large mountain with spectacular views and lots of space. It was filled with people. So when everyone had gathered, Elijah spoke to the nation (vs 21) and challenged the people, "How long *will* you hesitate between two opinions?...", (Or literally, "How long will you limp between two opinions?"), "...If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. But the people did not answer him a word." They didn't answer him because they were "limpers", crippled spiritually, unable to decide between two very different theologies, two very different gods: Between two paths, the broad way and the narrow way.

Now they were compromising, and compromise happens in the most orthodox of places. It's always the temptation. The world is pressing in upon us, and we are to stand against it, and not conform. It's difficult to do that. There are always dangers to the believer of this problem of compromise with the world and allowing the world into the assembly; into the church; and allowing it into the believer's heart.

Israel was caught between two opinions. Israel was sitting on the fence regarding Yahweh and Baal and was involved in a synchronistic kind of worship, a combination of both; evidently praying to the LORD but making offerings to Baal at the

same time. But that's illogical. And that is ultimately, for the believer, impossible. Many, if not all, of these people on Mt. Carmel were not believers. So Elijah felt the urgency of the moment and he said, in effect, 'Choose today! And choose rightly!' But they were not ready to do that. "...the people did not answer him a word."

So Elijah went on to make his challenge. He first points out that he was outnumbered, 450 to 1. Numbers that clearly favored Baal's prophets. But again, that's where life, the life of faith, sometimes brings us; to a place where the odds aren't fair and the outcome seems very much in doubt...like walking into a raging river. But Elijah's faith wasn't shaken. In fact, he even proposed a test that favored these prophets, a test by fire. In Canaanite myths, Baal rode across the sky on thunderclouds, and threw lightning bolts. He was the 'god of fire and rain'. So Elijah told them to choose an ox, cut it up, and put it on an altar of wood; but without a fire under it. Leave it unlit. "...the God who answers by fire, He is God." He said. And all the people liked this challenge.

And no doubt the prophets of Baal did. Elijah had proposed a contest that gave all of the advantages to Baal. But he knew that Baal had a fatal disadvantage— Baal is a myth. The LORD is real, Baal isn't. This was not a contest to see which god was stronger, but to demonstrate which one really exists. Elijah knew who existed, and who would win. So he had all the confidence, and could make such a challenge.

Well, the prophets built their altar, laid their sacrifice on it, and then began to call upon Baal. From morning till noon, they called to him, "O Baal, answer us." But there was no answer. And so to get Baal's attention, they got more active. They started jumping or leaping. Verse 26, "They leaped about the altar..." (Now this is the same word that is used of Israel '*limping*' between two opinions. Here it may have the idea of dancing around the altar, or something less organized, just a frenzied, chaotic behavior to show their devotion to their god.). This went on from morning till noon. Still no answer.

So Elijah began to give them counsel by reminding them of the things that Baal did in the stories about him. He slept. He traveled. He did various things. And so playing upon that, Elijah told them to, 'cry out louder. Maybe Baal's asleep, and they needed to

wake him up. Or maybe he was on a journey or engaged in business. They needed to make more noise to get his attention.' I'm sure Elijah was having a good time with the advice that he offered, which were thinly veiled taunts, but it was all to make a point. And that is: 'The idea of Baal was complete nonsense!' What kind of god sleeps, or is hard of hearing? The answer is: The god(s) of men's imaginations. Those 'gods' act like men. When people reject scripture, when people reject God's revelation of Himself, when they reject the truth, when they reject the light, they cannot rise above themselves. Their gods are like creatures. Not The Creator. Men can never come to a knowledge of God through their own meditations and speculations. Their minds are darkened. That's how they begin. And darkness cannot produce light, only more darkness.

So this was Elijah taunting them, showing their folly through sarcasm. He wasn't being a gentleman, I suppose. He was being a scoffer, publicly mocking them. But the error of their idolatry was so great and idolatry is so destructive that it called for this kind of response. 450 prophets heard Elijah; couldn't help but hear him. And no doubt, everything he said stung. But instead of giving up and repenting, they doubled down and became even more frenzied in their attempt to get Baal to answer. Verse 28, "So they cried with a loud voice, and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until blood gushed out on them." This was an attempt to prove their devotion to Baal and move him to sympathy and pity by their self-inflicted wounds. It's always a sign of false religion to injure and deface the body. We find this in other religions, all kinds of religions; this kind of activity of wounding oneself to the drawing of blood.

The Law of Moses took account of that, knew about the religions of that region, but really religion broadly. And in Leviticus 19, verse 28, it prohibited such self-destructive acts. But that is what sin produces. That is what error produces. And ultimately what it produces in this kind of behavior is an attack upon God, because it is an attack on the image of God that all men and women bear. And these false prophets were cutting themselves and drawing blood until late in the day—till the evening

sacrifice. There was no voice, no one answered, and no 'god' payed attention. For all their activity, what they received was silence.

No one could complain that they had not been given enough time, or that the rules were unfair. And now, finally the clock had run out on the 450 prophets of Ba'al and it was Elijah's turn. Beginning in verse 30:

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 which had been torn down. Elijah took 12 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." So 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 measures of seed. Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four pitchers with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." And 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. The water flowed around the altar. And he also filled the trench with water."

1 Kings 18:30-35

Someone said that Elijah was loading the dice against himself. Well he was. He'd done that all through this entire contest. But he could do that because he was confident that the Lord would answer his prayer and bring down fire on the mountain and wanted to remove any reason for doubt that a miracle had not occurred. He wanted to make sure they knew that a miracle had occurred. And so all of this was done.

So after soaking the sacrifice in water he prayed. His prayer is simple, calm, and well-reasoned; unlike the prophets of Baal. He asked God to vindicate His prophet, prove Himself, and convert His people: "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word." (vs36b). I think there is a very important point that I want to make for a moment. He did things according to the Word of God. When we talk about walking by faith, we are not talking about having some grand idea and doing it and expecting God to bless it. Walking by faith is walking in obedience to His Word. The

prophet had been given revelation: 'It's going to rain. Go do this and that.' And he obeyed the Word of God. He responded to the revelation of God. And he is making that point here: 'I have done all these things at Your Word. You have spoken and I have obeyed.'

Well he prays that simple prayer and there is no delay: Verses 37-38, ""Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back again." Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." It burned up everything that was combustible, and incombustible. Wood, stone, and water.

With that, the cult of Baal was unmasked as a fraud. The people fell on their faces, and they worshiped the Lord. "The LORD, He is God," they said. "The LORD, He is God." (vs39). Or, 'Yahweh is God, Baal is not'. Verse 40, "Then 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 slew them there."

Today on top of Mt. Carmel, there is a statue of Elijah with a sword raised above his head and a prophet of Baal under his foot, memorializing this event, (which may seem to celebrate cold blooded killing). Well it may seem to be rough justice, but it was not excessive: It was according to the Law of Moses. In Deuteronomy 13, prophets who tried to lead Israel into false worship were to be executed. That's how serious heresy is, how serious error is, how serious apostasy is.

Now we live in a new dispensation, established by Christ under the New Testament. The swift judgment at the foot of Mt. Carmel is replaced by the last judgment at the end of the age. In the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 25, Jesus taught that the wicked and the righteous grow on together until the harvest—until the judgment. And then they are separated: And God will separate them—He will do that. And the tares, the unbelievers, will be burned up.

So we live in a different age. We live in an age of patience. Our sword is not made of iron, it's scripture. We seek to save the lost and protect the church from false

teaching and heresy. But Idols and false prophets are still with us. They're just as bad as these prophets that Elijah slew. And their gods are just as powerless and hopeless as Ba'al and the Asherah and all of the gods of the ancient world.

A year ago, the president of Union Theological Seminary, Serene Jones, gave an interview to the New York Times, and she stated her idea of God. She said, "At the heart of faith is mystery. God is beyond our knowing. Not a being or essence or an object." Now I'd like to ask her, "If He's beyond our knowing, how can you know that He's beyond our knowing; and how can you know that He's not a being, or an essence?"

She went on to say, "I don't worship an all-powerful, all controlling, omnipotent, omniscient being." She called that doctrine, (which is biblical doctrine), "a fabrication; the product of Roman law and Greek mythology." (She did not explain how that's the case.) But her idea is really a 'no god' that only mystifies. There's no light in her god. There's no understanding. There's no god. And it's comfortable to some because that's the kind of god that doesn't make any hard demands, doesn't call us to a narrow way. But it's not much of an idea, a god who doesn't love, who doesn't hear, who doesn't answer, who isn't a being. But that's the god of modern liberalism, not the God of Elijah.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was at Union Seminary twice in the 1930s. After his first visit there ... he was there for about a year, I think ... he wrote back to a friend, "There is no theology here." Now that's quite a condemnation for a seminary. His second trip, the day after I think it was that he arrived, he went to the Riverside Church across the street from Union Seminary, that John D. Rockefeller Jr. built for Harry Emerson Fosdick, the famous liberal preacher of that day. Bonhoeffer came back very discouraged from what he heard, and he wrote in his journal of that church, "It's a temple of Baal."

There's no gospel in liberalism. The cross, sin and forgiveness, are all absent. It is faith in human progress. That's how Bonhoeffer himself described it. So without theology, and with faith in man, there is no God. There's no need for a god.

But theology is also missing from places that would claim to be Bible believing churches, where God is more like a genie in a bottle, (than He is the Triune God), where faith is in self-help.

I like the definition of God given in The Shorter Catechism. In fact, it's been called perhaps the best definition of God given outside of the Bible: "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." That is Biblical. That is the God of I Kings 18, Who hears our prayers and answers them. The God of Isaiah 43:2, Who promises to be with us when we 'pass through the waters and protect us when we walk through fire'. Baal couldn't do that. He didn't rescue his prophets from the sword; he didn't send rain on the parched land—because the storm god isn't real. But God **is**. As Cowper put it in his hymn, "He rides upon the storm."

That was His next proof 'Of Being'. Elijah told Ahab to go home and eat and drink, "...for there is the sound of the roar of a *heavy* shower." (vs41). Well, it was the sound Elijah heard by faith, because of what God had declared to him, once, at the beginning of the chapter—and he believed. Because he believed it, Elijah returned to the mountain top. He sat down on the ground, put his head between his knees to pray, and he prayed for the rain that he just prophesied. He prayed according to the will of God. That's the proper way to pray. And that's faith. That's trusting in the Word of God. Trusting the Lord for the unseen. Trusting the Lord to send rain when there isn't a cloud in the sky.

This portrait of the prophet with his head between his knees explains everything about Elijah. The source of his greatness was not himself. James said, "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours,..." (Js 5:17). He is just like you and me; the same weaknesses and challenges. The source of his courage and power was the Lord. And he had it through prayer. That is how he accessed the great power of God. He knew God. He knew that He **is**. He is real. Not some mystery. But a **Being**; a personal Being; infinite and eternal and powerful, who hears and helps.

And Elijah knew, as James said, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (Js 5:16). So he sent his servant to look out to the west, to look out to the sea for a sign of rain, while he stayed back and prayed. When the boy returned, he said, "Nothing." Elijah sent him again, and again, and he continued praying. Why? Well

again, because in verse 1 God said, "...I will send rain on the face of the earth." The Lord is good for His Word. So even though the young man returned again to say, "Still nothing," Elijah continued praying, because he knew God's promise, and he knew God is faithful.

Often answers don't come immediately. We don't like that. That's discouraging to us. But delays test our faith, (and it's really not proper to call them delays, because God has it all planned out like that. He tests our faith). But genuine faith, and the real prayer of faith is prayer and faith that persevere. And Elijah wrestled with the Lord about this, like a godly man who is trusting in the Lord—who believes the Lord. The seventh time the boy returned. He said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." That was very small, a very small answer to prayer that one might dismiss. But it was enough for Elijah—he knew. He sent the boy to tell Ahab, 'Prepare *your chariot* and ride home. Hurry up or you'll get wet and stuck in the mud.' And after three years of severe drought, what glorious news that was.

The chapter ends, "In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel." (vs45-46). He ran in front of the chariot all the way. The storm was a sign to Ahab that the Lord is God. He is governor of the world. He's sovereign over the elements, the wind and the rain and the lightning. He's the one who sustains the earth. He is the only God. And Elijah's speed was a sign to Ahab that God gives strength and perseverance to even the lowly, and those who wait on Him. And He answers their prayers. —That's Hebrews chapter 11 in verse 6. "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." By fire and rain the Lord God demonstrated that He **is**. And through Elijah's perseverance in prayer, his faith in the Lord, the Lord showed him that He is the rewarder of those who seek Him.

But, we will not seek Him or trust Him or walk by faith if we are double minded; if we are 'limping between two opinions' with one foot in the church and the other in the world. We need to resolve to serve the Lord with a whole heart: To break up the fallow ground as the prophet put it; to ask the Lord to expose our self-love and the idols that are in our hearts and make that known to us; to give us a desire to get rid of that stuff; and to love Him. Then we will walk by faith, even when that walk leads us into very hard places. And the more we grow, the more that will happen. But as we walk into those hard places, we can do so confidently because we know God **is**—and He is faithful.

But what of King Ahab? What of him? What of this man who called Elijah the troubler of Israel? Did he learn his lesson? Recognize it was he, not the prophet, who troubled Israel by his worship of Baal? Well you would think, wouldn't you? He's witnessed both fire and rain. Surely, he would be convinced of God's truth, and the error of his ways. But no, as we see in the next chapter, Ahab was unresponsive, and Jezebel was furious. She vowed to kill Elijah and Ahab supported her. Now that's the heart of man apart from God's grace.

Don't be surprised if you show an unbeliever the unreasonableness of unbelief; or the illogic of atheism; or show how unscriptural his or her ideas of God are—and he still doesn't believe. God alone makes the blind to see. And He does that as we give the gospel and an explanation of the hope that's within us. God uses this to open eyes and hearts to believe.

So if you are here without Christ, don't be an Ahab and reject God's revelation of Himself—Believe. The God who sent fire is Himself, the author of Hebrews said, "a consuming fire." (12:29). And he also said, "It's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (10:31).

But He is also merciful. And Isaiah (65: 1-2) speaks of Him with His hands wide open to the rebellious to come to Him, and He will receive them. And His son spread out His hands and received nails in them. "He was pierced through for our transgressions..." (Is 53:5). His sacrifice is sufficient for all who trust in Him.

So if you've not done that, look to Him, believe in Him, trust in Christ. And then, by God's grace, may you and all of us walk by faith to God's glory. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Father, we do thank you for Your goodness to us, and we thank you for this great text of scripture that reminds us of how faithful You are. And how we are to live by faith, believe Your Word, and act upon it. May we have the strength to do that; strengthen our faith to that end. And may we live lives of faithful service to You. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)