

The LORD Displays His Power and Patience unto Our Repentance**Wednesday, June 29, 2022 ▫ Read 1Kings 18:19–39**

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom does Elijah command Ahab to gather in v19? And which 450 and 400 more specifically? How does Ahab respond (v20)? With what question does Elijah begin to address them (v21)? What does he demand they do? What does Elijah think about himself (v22)? How many are the prophets of Baal? Whom does he suggest will choose which bull to take (v23)? What would they do with it? What will they not put under it? What will Elijah do with the other bull? Then how would the challenge proceed (v24)? How do the people respond to this plan? Who goes first (v25)? And how long do they call out what (v26)? What do they begin doing at noon? But what does Elijah begin doing at noon (v27)? What four suggestions does he make? Now what do the prophets of Baal do (v28)? And then what (v29) until when? What does Elijah invite the people to do in v30? What do they observe, thus up close? What does he now take up (v31)? According to what number? In what Name does Elijah build the altar (v32)? What does he make around it? Once he makes his own preparations in v33, what does he tell them to do? How many times (v34)? With what results (v35)? What does Elijah do at what time in v36? What three things, specifically, does Elijah ask God to show in v36? What does he add at the end of v37? What falls in v38? What five things does the fire do? How do the people respond in v39?

How might God show mercy to a people who have fallen for appearances of worldly power? 1Kings 18:19–39 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these twenty-one verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that the Lord reigns supreme, despite any appearances to the contrary, and He is profoundly patient to keep reminding His people to turn their hearts back to Him.

“Odds” are not as they appear. Now, biblical believers will object to the word “odds,” and well they should. Because it doesn’t matter if on one side there is the power and wealth of the throne together with 850 government-subsidized prophets (v19), and on the other side there is just the one prophet. Later, the prophet will emphasize this point by having them triple-stack the “odds” against him. If God is almighty, then He is sovereign.

In fact, earthly power and influence are mockable. This passage contains one of the most sarcastic, humorous portions of all Scripture. The word translated “busy” in v27 means to go aside in order to relive oneself. Of course, Baal is even more mockable, because he doesn’t exist. He’s not actually able to be preoccupied or journeying or napping. But the kings of the world and “prophets” of the world are subject to all those things. It is utter folly for the wicked to trust in them, and it would be utter folly for the godly to fear them. And as the frenzy and self-mutilation ensue, the self-mocking of the idolaters’ actions is even more scathing than Elijah’s words had been.

A lowly one, with God, is always in the majority. This was a big part of what the Lord was showing, as heard in Elijah’s prayer in v36. Elijah wasn’t trying to be known as greater than the prophets of Baal or Asherah. He was trying to be known as a servant. Yahweh alone is God, and one lowly one with Him is more powerful than all other creatures taken together.

God is profoundly patient to keep reminding His people to turn their hearts back to Him. Elijah has reminded them about God, and about himself as God’s servant, but he also reminds them about themselves in the building of the altar in v31. The twelve stones hearken back to before the divided kingdom, to their origins as a people whom God had taken for Himself. Their hearts have been turned away from Him Who chose them, but Elijah prays that Yahweh’s display of Himself would be the trigger for turning their hearts back to Him again (v37).

The fire falls—something that happened at Sinai, upon the consecration of the tabernacle, and the consecration of the temple. It is as if the Lord is giving them an opportunity to start over with Him. And, for the moment, it appears as if they have done so. Yahweh, He is God! Yahweh, He is God! Every time we hear the gospel preached, every time the Lord’s death is shown forth at the table, God reminds us of the fire that consumed the sacrifice at the cross. Let us respond in the same way: the Lord, He is God!

What situations seem hopeless for God’s people? Who in the world are fools to think that they have the upper hand? Whom have you been tempted to the folly of fearing? Where, especially, does the Lord remind you that He is God?

Sample prayer: Lord, how often it seems like the powers and authorities of the world have all combined against You and Your people! The wicked are laughably foolish to think they have the upper hand. Forgive us for when we enter into the same folly by fearing them. Bring our hearts and minds back to when You took us for Yourself, and renew our commitment to You. For we ask it through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP32AB “What Blessedness” or TPH434 “A Debtor to Mercy Alone”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

First Kings 18 verses 19 through 39. These are God's words Now. Therefore, send and gather, all Israel, to me on Mount Carmel. The 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 Prophets of Ashrah, who eat at Jezebel's table. So it have 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 you always God full of him, but if they help all of Him but the people answered him, not a word.

Then Elijah said to the people I alone and left they profit of Yahweh. But val's prophets are 450 men. Therefore, let him give us two bulls and let them choose one bowl for themselves. Cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it.

And I will prepare the other bowl and lay it on the wood butt. Put no fire under it, Then you call on the name of your gods and then I will call on the name of

Yahweh and the God who answers by fire. He is God. So all the people in certain and said it as well spoken and all I just said to the prophets of BL choose one bowl for yourselves and prepare it first for you or many and calling the name of your God.

But but no fire. So they took the bowl, which was given them, and they prepared and called on the name of AI from morning. Even until noon saying oh well hear us but no voice, don't want to insert Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. And so it was noon that Elijah mocked them and said, cry aloud for.

He's a god either he is meditating or he is busy or he's 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, gosh down on them. And one midday was passed, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice.

But no voice. No, one answered. No one paid attention Then. All I just said to all the people come near to me So all the people came near to him and you repaired, the altar of Yahweh that was broken down and Elijah took 12 stones. According to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob to him.

The word of Yahweh had come saying Israel, shall be your name Then with the stones, he built an altar in the name of Yahweh and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two say as of seed and he put the wood in order, cut the bull and pieces and laid it on the wood and said fill for water pots with water and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.

And he said, do a second time, and I did a second time. He said do a third time and they did a third time. So the water ran all around the altar and he also filled the trench with water and it came to pass the evening. Sacrifice that allowed to the prophet came near and said Yahwe God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.

Let me know in this day that you are, God in Israel and I am your servant that I've done all these things that your word Here, me. Oh, you hear me? That people may know that you or you always got and that you have turned their hearts back to you again, Then the fire of Yahweh 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. Now, when all the people sought they fell on their faces and they said You always He is God your way. He is God so far the reading of God's inspired and inherent work.

Well, in the passage begins Ahab and Jezebel and anybody who is on the side of the owl. I think that that they all has the advantage or that the odds are in his favor. But although the odds or advantage are at least presently here, 850 to 1 profits of bail for 50 profits of ashra 400 and government subsidized, approved endorsed profits at that.

They're actually there's no such thing as odds is there because God works all things. According to the Council of His will or as We may well summarize what we learned from scripture. He hath for ordained whatsoever comes to pass, So there's no such thing as odds. And ultimately there's no such thing as advantage.

God God has the advantage and that's something that those who are His enemies need to be reminded of if they are going to be made into subjects, it's a kindness to remind people that Jesus is in control now and he does destroy all his enemies later. Well, hear that in the preaching this evening and Romans 2 1 through 5 and again next Wednesday night in the following part in Romans do.

And we heard it a couple days ago when we previewed that passage in the family worship. And that's actually a big part of this passage, as we'll see later, that the reason God is reminding them that he is always in control and that he always has the advantage as it were, is because he's offering them an opportunity to turn their hearts back to him.

And next week Lord willing in the following passage. When Elijah does the thing where God has him run in front of the chariot of Ahab. God will re-offer to Ahab to have his own word in the person of his prophet run before the king and for Ahab to have the same odds with respect to the rest of the world, as Elijah did with the prophets of Baal and Asherah.

And this is, of course, something that believers know that one with God is always in the majority. So the contest seems lopsided enough, but it's not lopsided enough enough, very similar to when Gideon has a few thousand men. Remember and and God keeps saying too many because he wants to save with less so that they will get the point that you know, God could take on the Chinese Army with a half, a dozen amoebas and destroy the Chinese army and he may or may not let the amoebas eat some brains along the way but God himself can wipe out the entire army And he lets us eat a little bit of brain as the amoebas.

He's giving us a privilege of being used by him just in the illustration. I may have used taken the analogy too far, but That's that's a lot of the point, isn't it? With the well with not just the don't put any fire under it but now dig a trench around it and douse it with water and do it three times.

And So he's he's making the point that you can make the odds even way worse than they appear to be. And you know how we're using the word, there's such thing as odds. You can make the advantage appear to be even way worse than it appears to be now.

And it's immaterial because one with God wins, That's what we do and sometimes we win by dying, right? Love, not our lives, even unto death. And it says they overcome by the blood of the lamb and the Word of his testimony in Revelation. 12. It's talking about guys that got executed for believing.

So if you're you're understanding of victory doesn't include the possibility of getting executed, you're not thinking the same way that the Bible is. You know so you know raise your 21st century Crusader Army that's gonna march out of Moscow Idaho and take over America when when the culture falls but that's not victory.

As far as perhaps that's not victory as the Bible is concerned. And the Lord mayor may not give such temporal victories in his providence and we should love neighbor and and do all the right things are not pacifists, but sometimes we win by dying. Sometimes we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of his testimony and our blood gets spilled and tests and testimony to His blood.

And at the resurrection, we are victors all the more. But one with God, one with God is always in the majority. And part of the reason is that he is the god of creation and providence and redemption. Now he reminds them of their origins by the 12 stones. You remember the 12 memorial stones when they had crossed over into the Promised land?

He refers to him as the god of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob the fire coming down from heaven of course reminds them of the fire at the bush on Sinai. The fire that came down and consumed. The the sorry the pillar of fire that led them in the wilderness.

The fire that came out from the Lord and consumed, the sacrifice accepting it at the inauguration of the tabernacle. Even the fire that consumed, Nadab and

Hawaii who a couple hours later for offering worship in a way that God had not commanded, There are many instances in which Yahweh had displayed himself and his acceptance of his people.

Their relationship, they're being bound to him by use of fire. And so the that particular mechanism reminded them of whom they were supposed to be who they were supposed to be, They weren't supposed to be like these Canaanites worshiping Baal and Asherah. No, no. God called Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and he judged and destroyed the Canaanites, and he made a covenant.

With his people, bound them to him, which excluded the worship of any other god or the service of any other god. And of course, got alone is God, not only are other powers, not able to stand up to him. They're all laughable mockable. A bail is a ridiculous idle.

People say, well, I think God has a sense of humor? Yes. When when he is mocking, sometimes pretty vigorously our stupidity, our wickedness, our foolishness, you know, the, you know, maybe Biala's Bell is meditating, you know, God's needed will their gods needed alone time. Sometimes the thought was a God needed to regroup and recharge the word translated, busy is a word that is generally used for turning aside and defecating.

When it says, busy there in verse 27 is and maybe your god is on the potty or maybe he's out of town because he's, you know, you can't be in more than one place at a time. So, that's a limitation of being bail. And, apparently, not only does he need to recharge mentally, but he also has to recharge, physically, whatever that is perhaps, he is sleeping and must be awakened all of this mocking.

But you know what? Bell is even more mockable than that if he was asleep or using the potty. Then, at least you would have been real Bell doesn't exist. He can't go potty, even Sophia can go potty on the potty, but bay, I can't go potty on the potty.

And so God is and Elijah. God's prophet here is, is using humor to show how ridiculous it is to trust in other gods. And of course to trust in ourselves, as ridiculous as well. But God shows himself not only the God of redemption, the covenant, God who joined himself to his people and return for their sins by sacrifice and displayed the burning that was for his people.

But against his enemies by way of the different fire moments that we've already referred to, but he's also the God of creation. It's one thing to burn, a sacrifice and to burn wood and to burn up or boil off water by fire. The fire consumed, the stones too. Did you notice that There are 12 stones to start and the stones burnt, Think about the burning bush, right?

The burning bush should have been consumed but wasn't That was an amazing sight. How amazing is the sight? When the stones burned ash and is they're not a picture there because the 12 stones represent what the 12 tribes of Israel is. They're not a picture there of what we actually deserve but what has not happened to us?

And we'll hear a little bit more about that in the sermon tonight as well. And so when they're reminded of all those things and what they when they see what they deserve, then for about three seconds, the S-right say Yahwe, he is God, You always, He is God. And how dreadful that so many of those who are gathered there, their repentance did not last even after they had had such a display of the wrath of God to the.

And we must ask God, to give us soft hearts. That in the moments that we read His Word, or, or before him in prayer or hear a sermon. And we're realizing what we deserved and that he didn't get, he didn't what we deserved on us, but he took it on himself and that what that he offers himself to be our strength and life and victory and hope so that.

So that we are guaranteed resurrection and and the overcoming of all our enemies, ultimately, all the stuff that God has done for us and we have that moment. Maybe not so much in Terror is probably theirs was, but amazement him having flood to Christ for our refuge. And we say, the Lord Lord, you are God and our hearts are renewed into repentance.

And we can't wait to, to go, you know, put our shoes on and brush our teeth and do our, our homework, and everything else that we do as unto the Lord who has redeemed us for himself. And we get that moment of renewed, desire and dependence upon him and devotion to enlighten him.

One of the things we need to ask Lord is to make those things endure to keep who he is and what he has done for us and whom he has made us to be into himself to keep all those things on our heart and on our mind that the Spirit would do that.

So that we wouldn't be like Israel. Who can say oh he is God Yahweh, He is God and see this great display and then

And then very quickly kind of forget it. And back to life, as normal businesses, normal devoted to other things, depending on other things, delighting, and things all apart, from him, forget it. Forgetting him in all of our devotion and dependence, and, and delight. But the Lord here is showing himself, very merciful.

When, when Elijah prays, he doesn't just pray. Let it be known that you are God in Israel. He wants the people to know that Yahweh alone has gone and that I am your servant. He wants the people to know that God's Word and Elijah's mouth is true, but and that I have done all these things that your word.

But he says, then, in verse 37 here, me. Oh, you always hear me that this people may know that you are always God and that you turn their hearts back to you again. But they may see how they ought to have been consumed like those stones, but instead, you gave them a moment to see your patients.

Lord. And to know that you are a giver of repentance so that as they see what they deserve, as you see what you deserve and you want to turn from your sin, but you've tried so many times and you keep doing what you keep sinning and you come back and the Lord shows you again from his word and his spirit gives you that desire to repent and you're tend to be discouraged and say, well I've had that desire, a whole lot of times and I've repented a whole lot of times But the follow-through on the repentance seems to be something that I can't do.

And the Bible says, yes, you can't do it. That's true. God is the one who gives it and He will keep giving it. He's still being patient with you. And so he actually prays that, they would know that the Lord is the one who gives repentance. So they can see that that power by which the fire comes from, heaven burns, all those things.

And even the stones is the Almighty power, that promises to give us repentance by His grace repentance that we can't give ourselves. And so God is holding himself before us as a merciful patient, powerful Savior that we would hate our sin that we would hate all idolatries and that we would turn to him in.

Dependence upon him. I'm in. Let's pray.

Lord, when we think carefully about Israel, We are amazed to outpatient. You were with them and we thank you for giving us that glimpse that window into the

greatness of your patients and your grace and your salvation, and your power and also of your wrath that we might not take sin lightly.

But then, when we think about ourselves carefully and accurately, we realize how greatly we have provoked, you and how horrible our stubbornness and remaining ongoing sinfulness are against all the grace that you have shown us. But we thank you that your patience has included for us. Just now a reading and considering of this portion of your word and that as an act of worship as well.

So that we bring you our hearts and minds before your Word trusting that as we interact with you and worship, your spirit will help us. So we ask for that. Now we ask that your spirit would write the truths of this passage on our hearts, that he would work in us.

According to that promise that has held fourth here of your being a God of patience and power to give us repentance to uphold us in renewed repentance help us Lord to renew our repentance now. Help each of us to rejoice to belong to you, through Jesus the sacrifice upon him.

The fire fell in our place so that your power would be for us to turn our hearts and to walk before you to know you to acknowledge your word. Do this for us. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.