

FOUR THINGS GOD DOES IN REVIVAL
1 Kings 18:29-40

Text: 1 Kings 18:36, 37.

- Intro: The god, Baal, appears many times on the pages of OT Scripture, and was one of the greatest reasons for the spiritual declension particularly of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Baal means owner, master, lord, or husband (Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Vol. I, p. 431). Thus, the very name was in competition with Lord and God.

The introduction of Baal worship into the lives of the Israelites is a longer story than I can tell, or need to tell, this morning, but let me give some details so we can appreciate the situation that Elijah faced in his day.

Several things are significant:

- 1) Baal worship was introduced into Jewish life because the people of Israel failed to obey God regarding the Canaanites and their gods.
- 2) It was thought wise by many of the kings of Israel to try to combine the religion of the Canaanites with the worship of the God of Israel, and so a syncretism came about (a joining together of various religions).

The reason for this was that it was thought that, while God had been their God in the wilderness (or desert), Baal was the recognized god of the land. Therefore, if the Israelites want to prosper in the land, they felt that they needed to worship Baal.

- 3) There were two areas in which Baal was supposed to be supreme in Canaan:
 - a) In controlling the rain (which had a direct bearing upon their crops).
 - b) The fertility of the land.
- 4) Two very evil practices were promoted by the worshippers of Baal:
 - a) Prostitution.
 - b) The sacrifice of their children.

These help us to understand the situation which Elijah faced in the day that he was raised up to be a prophet in Israel. His message would have been very unpopular, and the very nature of his ministry would pose a constant threat to his life. But, as with any other true prophet of God, Elijah was not one to run away from trouble or danger, and so we have the familiar and very wonderful story of his contest with the prophets of Baal.

The issue which Elijah faced at this time is described in 1 Kings 18:17-24. (Read, paying particular attention to v. 21.)

After the prophets of Baal had failed to get Baal to answer by

fire, then Elijah prepared his sacrifice, and called upon the Lord God. It is his prayer in vv. 36, and 37 that I want to consider with you. Obviously it was a prayer which expressed the will of God for that time when revival was so sorely needed in Israel, and gives to us four things which God always does in times of revival and spiritual awakenings. Obviously the Lord does not do exactly what he did in Elijah's day, but the fourfold work is there nevertheless!

Let us notice what they were, and then we will consider them.

The four things:

- 1) Twice in Elijah's prayer we have this:
 - a) "Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel" (v. 36).
 - b) "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God . . ." (v. 37).
- 2) — "Let it be known . . . that I am thy servant" (v. 36).
- 3) "Let it be known . . . that I have done all these things at thy word" (v. 36).
- 4) "That this people may know . . . that thou hast turned their heart back again" (v. 37). This is revival--when the people of God have their hearts turned back to the Lord, to do His will, and to seek His glory.

Let us look briefly at each one of these.

We can see from the first three that revival involves learning, or re-learning, certain important truths about the Lord and His servants.

I. THE LORD IS GOD (1 Kings 18:36). See also v. 37.

Look again at vv. 21, 24.

There can only be one who is God. We cannot have two sovereigns. If we do, there are certain areas in which neither one is completely sovereign.

Remember this as far as salvation is concerned. If man determines his own salvation, then that is an area in which God is not God!

There can only be one who is supreme, omnipotent, all-sufficient!

Spiritual declension sets in when God ceases to be God in the thoughts and lives of His people. They may profess that He is, but their practice indicates that He is not!

Cf. Psa. 46:10; 100:3; Deut. 4:35-40.

"Thou" is emphatic in "that thou art God in Israel."

The fact that this is mentioned twice by Elijah shows that this was of primary importance. Revival means that there is a return to a recognition of the sovereignty of God--not just in word, but in life, in practice.

— II. I AM THY SERVANT (1 Kings 18:36).

What do you find in this chapter? You have the prophets of Baal, and you have Elijah the prophet? Who was really the true prophet?

Even the Law instructed people so that they would know how to distinguish a true prophet from a false prophet.

This is crucial. It is crucial today. What are the characteristics of a true servant of the Lord.

Again, "I" is emphatic! "That I (not they) am thy servant."

Let me point out four characteristics given to us in the NT.

- A. He will be a follower of the Jesus of the Bible. Cf. John 12:26.
- B. He will be unflinchingly true to the Gospel. Cf. Rom. 1:1-6.
- C. He will be determined to please God, not men. Cf. Gal. 1:6-10.
- D. He will not be a syncretist, an ecumenicist. There will be a clear, permanent, unmistakable break with all other religious teachings and practices. Cf. 1 Thess. 1:9.

III. THE PREEMINENCE OF SCRIPTURE (1 Kings 18:36).

Cf. Noah in Gen. 6:22; 7:5, 9, 16.

Cf. Moses and Aaron in Ex. 7:6, 10, 20; 8:5, 6, 16, 17.

Note how Paul wrote to Timothy about the Word of God:

- 1) The inspiration of Scripture, and consequently its inerrancy. Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16.
- 2) The authority of Scripture. Cf. 2 Tim. 3:14, 15; 4:2.
- 3) The sufficiency of Scripture. Cf. 2 Tim. 3:17.

— In times of revival not only are the true servants of the Lord identifiable, but their identification is made clear by their unswerving loyalty to the Word of God in their lives as well as in their preaching.

IV. THE WORK OF THE LORD (1 Kings 18:27).

Listen to the way people talk, and you can usually tell where they are spiritually--especially those who claim to be the Lord's servants. Do they talk about how they do things, or do they talk about what the Lord is doing? Do they talk about their programs, or do they talk about the purposes of God? Do they give glory to men, or do they glorify God?

What was the burden of Elijah's prayer?

Clearly it was that all of the people there would see what the Lord was doing!

Cf. Psa. 80:3, 7, 19 -- the refrain of the Psalm.

Psa. 85:4.

Psa. 126:1, 4 -- the whole Psalm.

See also Phil. 2:12, 13 and Heb. 13:20, 21.

Concl: Do you see any of these indications of revival among us today? Do you see any of these in your own heart?

When the Lord worked in answer to Elijah's prayer, what did the people say?

See 1 Kings 18:38-40.

Let us continue to look for these signs, in our hearts, and in the Lord's work, when the Lord's people are concerned about:

- 1) The glory of God.
- 2) Those who are true servants of the Lord.
- 3) The Word of God.
- 4) The work of God.

Close with Ex. 6:1.