

## Applications from the Ministry of Elijah (925-896 BC)

By Dave DeWitt

**First**, we should note that the dominant theme of the ministry of Elijah was his strong, uncompromising, intolerant stand against idolatry (1 Kings 18:27-31). He killed at least 550 men (450 prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel + two groups of 50 sent from Ahaziah) because of idolatry. The majority of his ministry was battling the idolatry of Ahab and Jezebel and their son Ahaziah.

**Application:** Never tolerate, compromise, or blend any other religious practices into Christianity. Take a strong stand against things like dream catchers, Ouija boards, astrological signs, horoscopes, and eastern meditations. Do not respond positively to people who go to false religions for help.

**Second**, we should notice that Elijah always and only followed the verbal revelation from God (1 Kings 17:8-24). He never looked to his feelings, circumstances, or advice from others to get a leading from God. But then Elijah seemed to apply that revelation in a creative way. We know of no command from God for him to pray for the widow's dead son or lie on his body three times. Calling the prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel and all that he did there seems to be Elijah's idea. Killing 450 prophets of Baal, calling down fire from heaven on three different occasions, all seem to be Elijah's initiative to fulfill God's commands.

**Application:** Understand the Word of God literally and apply it creatively. Take the initiative to creatively apply the written Word of God. Look for creative ways to do evangelism, discipleship, and teach the Bible to your children or grandchildren. For example, travel together, read together, evaluate movies together, go listen to an evolutionist talk about something from nature and evaluate it together from the Bible. Get your children used to evaluating the world's lies with biblical truth.

**Third**, Elijah's dependence upon God increased as he entered increasingly difficult situations (1 Kings 17:1-6). His obedience went from being fed by ravens, to being supplied by unending grain and oil, to raising a boy from the dead, to calling down fire from heaven when challenging the prophets of Baal, to running for his life.

**Application:** maturity will probably include increasingly difficult situations requiring our faith to mature. Faith will have to increasingly be dependent upon understanding truth, if we are to mature.

**Fourth**, as with all the heroes of God recorded in Scripture, Elijah understood and communicated obedience to God rationally, with logical answers. For Elijah, the miracles of God were supernatural, contrary-to-nature, real-world events, not religious stories and ideas (1 Kings 18:36-38). Baals were chiseled out of stone. Asherah were carved out of wood. The only reality in them was the religious mysticism in the minds of the worshippers. But the supernatural acts of God were real and demonstrated that God was not just an idea, but the real Creator and Judge of the world.

**Application:** Never call anything a miracle of God that is not a supernatural real-world event. The beauty of a flower, the birth of a baby, the wonders of nature are not miracles. Raising someone from the dead and calling down fire from heaven are miracles. The miracles recorded in the Bible are real, contrary-to-nature, interruptions in the natural course of history.

**Fifth**, Elijah mocked the mysticism of the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:27).

**Application:** Tell the truth about God's Word even when the world is going in the opposite direction. It is even sometimes appropriate to mock the foolishness of the world, such as its blind faith in evolution, feminism, and humanism.

**Sixth**, Elijah also had a significant failure. After his success at Mt. Carmel, he feared for his life because Jezebel made an oath to kill him (1 Kings 19:1-4). But what seems to have led him to leave the Land was not a fear of dying, because he asked God to kill him near Beersheba. He was (something like) depressed because he had the idea that all was lost, and he was the only one left who was following God. Like all the prophets of Israel, Elijah was distraught because the nation had left God for idolatry. But there were 7,000 who had not bowed to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). God would judge Israel as a nation, but there were also individuals faithful to God. It appears that Elijah was focused on the nation collectively and missed the 7,000 individually.

**Application:** Don't get depressed if your nation is rejecting God, the truth, and the Bible. Minister to those who are believers, reason and give evidence to those who will listen. But thinking about converting a nation to move away from idolatry and back to God will only lead to discouragement and depression.