

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Sep. 10

MONDAY

Elijah allows the prophets of Baal to go first. They build an altar, kill a bull and lay it upon the altar. Then, all day long, they cry out to Baal to send fire from Heaven. Because no fire is forthcoming, they grow more and more desperate as the day moves along.

READ: I Kings 18:25-29

As he writes this story, Moses emphasizes that there was no reply from their god, Baal. Moses wants us to get the message: what sets the living God apart from other gods is that He hears and answers His people! We have a most astounding and awesome God! He hears us when we cry out to Him! He regards our lowly estate - that we are vessels of clay, as Paul writes. In other words, He knows that we are fragile and weak and prone to failure. But He loves us and cares for us anyway. What an amazing God is ours!

TUESDAY

Elijah goes next. He repairs the altar (the priests of Baal had been jumping on it!) using 12 stones to do so, and digs a trench around it. He prepared a bull to be sacrificed on the altar, and then instructs that the whole thing be wet down. This is done not just once, but three times, and each time, the trench is filled with the water run-off from the altar.

READ: I Kings 18:30-35

In remarkable fashion, Elijah demonstrates complete faith in God. He will not only send fire down from Heaven, Elijah believes, but He will do so in a way that His glory is magnified. As the crowd gathered there on Mount Carmel looked at the soak and wet altar, they knew that there was no way on this earth that it could be lit and burned without drying out first. That seems to be the point Elijah is making: God delights in doing no-way-possible things! That would be true of the no-way-possible things in our lives, as well.

WEDNESDAY

Elijah prays for God to send fire so that everyone there would know that He is the true and living God. God sends a fire which consumes the bull on the altar and everything else which had been drenched. Then Elijah orders the prophets of Baal to be killed.

READ: I Kings 18:36-40

When God does something, He does it right. That's true in our lives, as well. God saves us completely! From sin and guilt and despair and doubt - saved to the uttermost! When we read those words - saved to the uttermost - in Hebrews 10:25, the connection is made to what Jesus is doing now - interceding for us before the Throne of God! That is truly salvation done right! What a Savior! What a great salvation!

THURSDAY

Elijah tells Ahab that rain is coming. Then he sends his servant up the mountain to look

for rain. His servant makes seven trips to the summit before he sees a rain cloud. But it does come, and comes hard, and King Ahab heads back to his palace with Elijah running along before him.

READ: I Kings 18:41-46

Don't you love the servant's description of what he saw on the seventh try? "I saw a rain cloud the size of a man's hand." He's saying that "Yeah, there is a cloud, but there's no way that puny little puff in the sky is going to bring any serious rain, and surely not enough to quench all the years of drought" Elijah knew God better than that and he turns around and tells King Ahab to get back to his palace with all speed before torrential rains prohibit travel. Knowing God is what enables us to trust Him better. We come to know God by reading His Word (good for you - reading it now!) and by committing our way to Him and experiencing His direction, peace, and blessing (good for you as you do that, as well).

FRIDAY

Ahab returns home from Mt. Carmel and reports to his wife Jezebel all that had happened. She is furious and swears that she will see Elijah dead within twenty-four hours. Hearing that, Elijah runs for his life to the edge of the Sinai desert - to Beersheba, in the southern part of Judah.

READ: I Kings 19:1-3

We can't help but notice a big and noticeable change in Elijah: a few moments ago, with the Spirit of the Lord upon him, he was running along side of the king's chariot headed back to the palace. Now, with a spirit of fear and trepidation upon him, he's afraid for his life and trying to get as far away from the palace (and the queen) as he possibly can. We all have the choice moment by moment to live by the Spirit, or to let some other spirit have its way with us. The spirit of fear can really get a grip on us. Don't let that happen. Do not quench the Spirit today. Give yourself to Him!

SATURDAY

Leaving his servant in Beersheba, Elijah travels another day's journey into the desert. There he collapses under a large bush, and begs God to let him die. He falls asleep and an angel comes and provides him with some food and drink. After eating and drinking, Elijah is refreshed and then he sleeps some more.

READ: I Kings 19:4-6

How does a person sink as fast and as far as Elijah sank into defeat and self-pity? It's not all that hard! Just start focusing on the cares of this life. That focus will keep the seed of faith from growing in your life and will rob you of the joy of knowing that your sins are forgiven. It will block you from experiencing the peace that God would pour into your heart. If you do find yourself in that sad state, all is not lost. We have a pursuing God who may even send an army of angels (if that's what it takes) to strengthen and revitalize you!