



Daily Reflections

June 13, 2018

Scripture

1 Kings 18: 20-39

Ahab sent to all the children of Israel
and had the prophets assemble on Mount Carmel.
Elijah appealed to all the people and said,
"How long will you straddle the issue?
If the LORD is God, follow him; if Baal, follow him."
The people, however, did not answer him.
So Elijah said to the people,
"I am the only surviving prophet of the LORD,
and there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.
Give us two young bulls.
Let them choose one, cut it into pieces, and place it on the wood,
but start no fire.
I shall prepare the other and place it on the wood,
but shall start no fire.
You shall call on your gods, and I will call on the LORD.
The God who answers with fire is God."
All the people answered, "Agreed!"
Elijah then said to the prophets of Baal,
"Choose one young bull and prepare it first,
for there are more of you.
Call upon your gods, but do not start the fire."
Taking the young bull that was turned over to them, they prepared it
and called on Baal from morning to noon, saying,

"Answer us, Baal!"

But there was no sound, and no one answering.

And they hopped around the altar they had prepared.

When it was noon, Elijah taunted them:

"Call louder, for he is a god and may be meditating,
or may have retired, or may be on a journey.

Perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened."

They called out louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears,
as was their custom, until blood gushed over them.

Noon passed and they remained in a prophetic state
until the time for offering sacrifice.

But there was not a sound;

no one answered, and no one was listening.

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me."

When the people had done so, he repaired the altar of the LORD
that had been destroyed.

He took twelve stones, for the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob,
to whom the LORD had said, "Your name shall be Israel."

He built an altar in honor of the LORD with the stones,

and made a trench around the altar

large enough for two measures of grain.

When he had arranged the wood,

he cut up the young bull and laid it on the wood.

"Fill four jars with water," he said,

"and pour it over the burnt offering and over the wood."

"Do it again," he said, and they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he said,

and they did it a third time.

The water flowed around the altar,

and the trench was filled with the water.

At the time for offering sacrifice,

the prophet Elijah came forward and said,

"LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,

let it be known this day that you are God in Israel

and that I am your servant

and have done all these things by your command.

Answer me, LORD!

Answer me, that this people may know that you, LORD, are God

and that you have brought them back to their senses."
The LORD's fire came down
and consumed the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dust,
and it lapped up the water in the trench.
Seeing this, all the people fell prostrate and said,
"The Lord is God, the Lord is God."

Our Scripture Reflection

The number one sin committed by God's people and the sin that was at the foundation of all other sins, was the sin of idolatry, the worship of anything but the One, True God. Elijah is God's warrior on Mount Carmel as he battles against the many pagan gods of the corrupt king, Ahab. Through a highly dramatic act of power, Elijah demonstrates that there truly is no God but our God. Oh, how we need Elijah today!

Food for your Journey

On Mount Carmel, Elijah proves himself to be quite the showman. His careful arrangement of the firewood to heighten the dramatic effect evokes other great showmen.

Such as Harry Houdini, the legendary escape artist. Around 1912, Houdini first performed the trick that would become his signature act: the Chinese Water Torture Cell. As Wikipedia describes it: "In this escape, Houdini's feet were locked in stocks, and he was lowered upside down into a tank filled with water. The mahogany and metal cell featured a glass front, through which audiences could clearly see Houdini. The stocks were locked to the top of the cell."

It always appeared to Houdini's audiences that he had so stacked the deck against himself, with layer upon layer of challenges to overcome, that surely he would die. But each time, by means of his incredibly limber body, his skill at lock-picking, his knowledge of physics and his skills as an illusionist, he managed to escape.

In Houdini's case, it was artifice. But Elijah never needed such help. All he needed was the power of God unleashed.

A Prayer from the Heart

Heavenly Father, In a day and time when many people worship many false gods, help me to witness to the Truth that You are the only One and True God. Through my daily living of the faith, may I give witness to You in all things. Amen