



HG270: Mountain Top Experiences (Part 2)
Carmel: Mount of Fire

1 Kings 18: 20-46

Home Group Study Notes

28th January 2024—Christine Williams



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and other
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



Welcome (10 mins)

Ice Breaker

What is the biggest answer to prayer that you
have
ever had?



Looking Upwards (10 mins)

Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs
of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using
Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



HG270: Mountain Top Experiences (Part 2)
Carmel: Mount of Fire

1 Kings 18: 20-46

Home Group Study Notes

28th January 2024—Christine Williams

(Mount Carmel is the little knobbly bit that sticks out into the Mediterranean Sea in the north of Israel.) To understand the reading, we need a bit of the back story. After the death of King Solomon, the kingdom of Israel divided into two parts; the Kingdom of Israel in the North and the Kingdom of Judah in the south which was governed from Jerusalem and the Temple. Our story is based in the northern kingdom of Israel several generations after Solomon. Without the temple as a focus for worship the Jews of Israel tried to worship him where they could and often this was on hill tops. But their worship became less focussed as time went on. King Ahab, the king in our story married the daughter of the king of the Sidonians who worshipped Baal. She brought priests and prophets of Baal to Israel with her, to help the people of Israel worship Baal. Baal had the head of an ox and his worshippers worshipped him for power and sex. Baal-worshippers used child sacrifice and did other abominable things. Ahab's wife was called Jezebel, a name that is synonymous with all that is evil.

Elijah was a prophet who was faithful to the Lord God. he went to Ahab and announced that there would be a complete drought because God was angry with the way the king and queen had led the people astray. 1 Kings 17:1. In the third year of drought Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest on Mount Carmel. *Now read 1 Kings 18:20-46*

There is an extraordinary statement in James 5:17 which says, 'Elijah was a man like us.' James was writing to early Christian about praying in faith. Elijah was a man like us in that he was a human and he had human faults, but the confidence of his prayers is astonishing, even when you compare him to Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate saying, 'Rise and Walk'. He is one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament and he was with Jesus and Moses on the mount of the transfiguration which comes later in our series. How does a mere human being become a person of such faith and confidence in their prayers? I want to talk about supernatural praying that calls down fire from heaven. How does a person grow to have a powerful prayer life such as Elijah's?

He knew God. Elijah had a relationship with God. He knew how God felt about the awful things that were happening in Israel. It was a terrible thing that the people were doing in abandoning their own true God. God loved them and had rescued their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. Yet they had adopted a false God. Elijah knew that God still loved his people and wanted to win them back. Elijah wanted to see God restored as the God of his people. The people, the land and their God was a unit that should not be broken.

God had done miracles already. Elijah had already seen God at work in causing the drought. He had known God's protection during the drought. God had kept him safe. He had seen God answer prayers for food and water on a daily basis. He had seen God heal a young boy. The prayer for a miracle on Carmel was not a prayer 'out of the blue'. He had prayed and seen God at work in many different little ways before this big challenge. His faith had grown as he had seen so many answers to his prayers.

Elijah had nothing to lose. Elijah thought he was the only person left who had not started to worship Baal. He had publicly proclaimed his allegiance to the Lord God in a place where everyone else was worshipping Baal. In reality the clock

was ticking before he got himself assassinated. He had nothing to lose. If God did not answer by fire then it meant that God was not worth worshipping. But if God did send down fire then it would be a public demonstration of his power and authority which would win back the people who had been led astray. It was a make or break moment in the history of Israel.

The battle was not his. Elijah knew that Baal worship was wrong and Baal was evil. Fundamentally this was a battle between God and evil. The people of Israel were people of the covenant. The covenant said that God would look after his people and in turn they would worship him and keep his commands. Their ancestors had known the provision of God and had received all the benefits of the law but the people had been subverted and led away from trust in the one true God. God could win them back from the brink. He was in charge of the situation.

So we read in the passage the remarkable account of how Elijah watched as the prophets and priests of Baal tried to get fire down from heaven. Of course there was no fire. Baal worship was totally useless because Baal was useless. He was no god. he had no power. After a day of useless activity, it was Elijah's turn to pray. He remade the altar and used 12 stones to remind people of the 12 tribes of Israel. He put the pieces of the bull sacrifice on the altar and prayed a simple prayer to God asking for fire to come. There were no dramatics about his prayer or his offering except that he poured water all over the altar to prove, in case there was any doubt, that he was not tricking people. His God, the one and only true God, could ignite the fire even if the wood was soaked.

Fire came from heaven. The false prophets were killed and the people of Israel turned back to worship the Lord God. Later that day the rains returned.

It is an amazing story with once in a Bible's times event that changed people for a little while at any rate. But James comment about Elijah suggests that he was someone we need to

learn from. What can we take from this story that will help us in our day to day living?

Our first and main priority is to **get to know God well**. Learn to listen. Learn to talk to him. as we get to know him we will get to know when he is pleased or unhappy with what we are doing.

Trust God in the small things. Pray for the small miracles; the small provisions, the parking space, the appointment, the chance meeting, the extra time. Thank God for his provision when we receive these answers. Tell other people about answers to prayers. Where have you have seen God at work this week?

Don't be afraid of risk. We are by nature very risk averse. We like insurance and security. We like routine and being settled. Yet most miracles seem to happen when people step out into the unknown simply because they believe that God is calling them. We have to be open to God so that we can hear him calling us to something new. Anything new always appears to be risky. Sometimes God speaks through the crises in our lives. It is remarkable how often God speaks to us when we are already unsettled, perhaps by a change of job, an illness or a bereavement. We all should be living with the thought that God may want us to do something new. Put another way, we need to ask ourselves if God has called us to be doing what we are doing at the moment. Am I in the right job? Am I in the right role within the life of the church? I may well be in just the right place but maybe there is something more. In fact, there is almost inevitably something more that God is calling each one of us to.

The good news is that as we risk stepping out of our comfort zone we will depend more deeply on God. Our prayers will be more significant and God can really use us. Elijah had nothing. He had no home and he felt that everyone was against him except God. but he discovered that, when it came to it, God was all he needed.



Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. Read James 5:13-18. How has God answered prayer this week?

2. Is it easier to pray for yourself or to pray for other people? Why?

3. Why do we not ask God for more? What holds us back?

4. What do we need God to do for us as a community here at Emmanuel?

5. Elijah knew what was right and what was wrong. Where do we find this especially hard in our post-modern society?

6. What needs do we need to pray about for ourselves and our Home Group right now?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Inwards (15 mins) Caring For Each Other

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) Concern For Others

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

Emmanuel Church, Laindon Road, Billericay, Essex. CM12 9LD

P 01277 632120 E Emmanueloffice@billericaychurches.org W Emmanuel-church.info
FB [Emmanuel Church Billericay](https://www.facebook.com/EmmanuelChurchBillericay) T [EmmanuelCM12](https://www.facebook.com/EmmanuelCM12) YT [Emmanuel Church Billericay](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Part Of The Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry