

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

4 Year Olds

Sunday Morning

Study 24

X is for eXalted

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The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the students that God is greater than any other person, created thing, or false god and therefore greater than anything they face.

Key Verses

I Kings 18:16-39—Main Teaching Passage

Psalm 97:9, 99:2, 138:2, 148:13

I Corinthians 1:25

Memory Verse - Psalm 145:3 (June Memory Verse)

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable."

Hook

Ask the students who the smartest person they know is. Then ask about the strongest, fastest, biggest, etc.

After these questions, ask if any of these people are wiser, faster, or stronger than God. Ask if anyone is greater than God.

Today, we are going to learn that God is exalted. This means that He is greater than any person or thing in the universe. Today's Bible story will demonstrate this.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Today's story comes in a time in Israel's history when the Israelites did not agree on who the true God was. Even though some believed in the true God, most believed in a false god named Baal. In fact, the evil king of Israel, Ahab, commanded all the Israelites to worship Baal or else.

However, in I Kings 18, God's prophet Elijah refused to bow down to a false god like Baal, so he challenged the Baal-worshippers to a contest.

Elijah and the prophets of Baal each made an altar and provided a bull for a sacrifice, but they did not set fire to the altar. Each would pray to their god and ask him to burn the sacrifice. The prophets of Baal cried out for hours, but because Baal is a false god, he could not and did not answer. Then Elijah commanded servants to put water on his altar, not once or twice, but three times. After that, Elijah prayed, and the Lord sent down fire from Heaven, consuming the altar and the sacrifice. This proved that God is the only true and living God. The Israelites responded, "The LORD, He is God!" That day, God showed Himself to be exalted above any other person, thing, or being in the universe. In fact, Psalm 97:9 says that He is high above the earth and exalted far above all other gods.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

In today's passage, we see that God was exalted over Baal. The word "exalted" is used to describe something that is elevated above other things. When we use the word to describe God, it means that He is greater than any person or thing. The Bible describes God as exalted many times, particularly in the Psalms (see Psalm 97:9, 99:2, 138:2, 148:13). But does that just mean that God is a little bit better than others? Of course not! Psalm 97:9, says God is *most high* above the earth and exalted *far* above other gods. God is stronger than the strongest man alive. He is wiser than the wisest man alive. He is more righteous and holy than the greatest person who ever lived. He is more beautiful than the most fantastic sight in nature and bigger than the tallest mountain. Comparing God to any created thing is like comparing the sun to a flashlight. They might both produce light, but the flashlight is nothing compared to the sun. The same way, the Bible says that the "foolishness of God" is wiser than men and the "weakness of God" is stronger than men (I Corinthians 1:25). Compared to God, man's wisdom and strength is like nothing! As for other gods, we know that God is far greater because He is the only real, true, living God. All other so-called "gods" are fake, imitation gods that don't even come close to our God.

LOOK (Continued)

What does this mean for us? God is greater than anything or anyone we might face. Are you afraid of something? God is greater than whatever you are afraid of. Are you being made fun of for believing in Jesus? God is greater than your mockers. Do you or a close friend or family member have a major illness or injury? God is greater than any disease. No matter what we might face, we do not have to worry, because God is greater than anything and anyone in the world.

Last week, we talked about how God is worthy of praise not just for what He has done, but for who He is. This week's lesson shows why God is worthy of praise for who He is: He is exalted, which means He is the greatest One in the universe. When we see someone show greatness, we recognize it with awards and other accolades. We give prizes to great scientists and trophies to great athletes. The same way, we ought to recognize the fact that God is exalted through worship. When we worship God for who He is, we recognize that no one deserves worship more than Him.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the students if anything or anyone is greater than God. Ask them in what ways God is the greatest. Encourage your students that because God is exalted and greater than anything or anyone else, He is big enough to handle their problems.

Pray: Pray a prayer of worship to the Lord, speaking of how He is exalted far above all gods, men, and other created things. Thank Him for being great enough to handle our problems.

Parent Question: Is anything or anyone greater than God?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on I Kings 18:16-39 by David Guzik

3. (15-16) Elijah assures Obadiah that he will meet with Ahab.

Then Elijah said, "As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today." So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

a. **I will surely present myself to him today:** Kindly and wisely, Elijah responded to Obadiah's legitimate fears. He would not make Obadiah a martyr for Elijah's deeds.

4. (17-19) Elijah and Ahab trade accusations.

Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "*Is that you, O troubler of Israel?*" And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house *have*, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. Now therefore, send *and* gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

a. **Is that you, O troubler of Israel?** Ahab was easily the worst, most ungodly king that Israel ever had. Yet he did not hesitate to blame the godly prophet Elijah for the problems of Israel. If Ahab would at least stop the active persecution of the people of God, God would relent in the drought. But the wicked king of Israel found it easier to blame the godly prophet.

i. According to his theology, it made sense for Ahab to blame Elijah. Ahab believed in Baal, so much so that his government promoted and supported Baal worship and persecuted the worshippers of Yahweh. Ahab believed that Elijah had angered the sky-god Baal and therefore Baal withheld rain. Ahab probably thought that Baal would hold back the rain until Elijah was caught and executed.

ii. Instead, Ahab should have turned to the Word of God. Deuteronomy 28:23-24 promised that drought would come to a disobedient Israel.

b. **Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel:** Elijah challenged King Ahab to gather the idol prophets of Baal and Asherah for this meeting at Mount Carmel.

i. "*Gather to me all Israel, by their deputies, or heads, or representatives, that they may be witnesses of all our transactions.*" (Poole)

ii. 1 Kings 18:36 makes it clear that Elijah did all this at the command of God. This wasn't his clever idea or strategy. This was a God-inspired plan that Elijah obeyed.

iii. It was important to confront and eliminate these prophets of Baal *before* God sent rain to the land of Israel. It was crucial that everyone understand that the rain came from Yahweh, not from Baal.

c. **Who eat at Jezebel's table:** This refers to fact that these prophets of Baal and Asherah were sponsored and supported by the government of Israel, having a special patron in the wicked Queen Jezebel.

B. Elijah's victory on Mount Carmel.

1. (20-21) Elijah challenges Israel to make a decision.

So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

a. **Ahab sent for all the children of Israel:** It is hard to know why Ahab did this, carrying out the instructions of Elijah. Perhaps he hoped that the people would be so angry with Elijah for the last three years of drought that this crowd would turn against the prophet.

b. **And gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel:** These prophets of Baal *hated* Elijah. They loved the favor of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, and they enthusiastically promoted the persecution of any true follower of Yahweh. But over the last three years they had been severely humbled by Elijah and the drought sustained by his prayers. All their cries to the weather-god Baal were ineffective for three years. They *hated* this prophet of God who humiliated them and their sham priesthood so thoroughly.

i. "See, with what malignant glances his every movement is watched by the priests. No tiger ever watched its victim more fiercely! If they may have their way, he will never touch yonder plain again." (Meyer)

ii. "That lone man, of heroic soul, stemmed the fearful torrent of idolatry, and like a rock in mid-current, firmly stood his ground. He, alone and single-handed, was more than a match for all the priests of the palace and the groves, even as one lion scatters a flock of sheep." (Spurgeon)

c. **How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him:** This was a logical and useful question. In general, the people of Israel were in a spiritually lukewarm condition. They wanted to give some devotion to *both* Yahweh and Baal, but the God of Israel was not interested in such divided devotion.

i. Spiritually speaking, Israel was like an unfaithful partner in a marriage who doesn't want to give up their marriage partner, but also does not want to give up their illicit lover. The marriage partner has a legitimate claim to the *exclusive* devotion of their spouse.

ii. **How long will you falter:** The ancient Hebrew word translated **falter** means "to limp, halt, hop, dance, or leap." (Dilday) It is the same word used in 1 Kings 18:26 where the prophets of Baal leaped about the altar. It may be that Elijah meant, "How long will you dance between two opinions?"

iii. Adam Clarke had a slightly different understanding: "Literally, 'How long hop ye about upon two boughs?' This is a metaphor taken from birds hopping about from bough to bough, not knowing on which to settle."

iv. The appeal of Elijah made it clear that there was a *difference* between the service of Baal and the service of Yahweh. Perhaps in the minds of many, there was not a great difference - the only important thing was to have *some kind* of religion, and to be sincere about that, following your heart to whatever god your heart might lead you to. Yet Elijah knew that it could never be this way. You either served Baal *or* you served Yahweh; there was a difference.

v. Elijah's appeal also called his hearers to account for the period of time in which they had made not decision between Yahweh and Baal. "**How long,**" he asked them. "How many more sermons do you want? How many more Sundays must roll away wasted? How many warnings, how many sicknesses, how many toilings of the bell to warn you that you must die? How many graves must be dug for your family before you will be impressed? How many plagues and pestilences must ravage this city before you will turn to God in truth? How

long halt ye between two opinions?" (Spurgeon)

d. **But the people answered him not a word:** There was no object and no repentance. They lacked the courage to either defend their position or to change it. They were willing to live unexamined lives of low conviction.

i. Elijah could so accurately see their hearts because he could see their *actions*. It was as if he said, "I know you are not decided in opinion, because you are *not decided in practice*. If God be God, *follow him*; if Baal, *follow him*. You are not decided in practice." (Spurgeon)

2. (22-24) Elijah proposes a test between God and Baal.

Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it*; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it*. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

a. **I alone am left a prophet of the LORD:** This was probably not true and Elijah had reason to know that it was not true. In the recent past Obadiah told him that he sheltered 150 prophets of God against the persecution of Jezebel and Ahab.

b. **Let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves:** In this proposed test, Elijah was careful to give the prophets of Baal every potential advantage. They picked the two bulls, and picked which one they would sacrifice and which one Elijah would sacrifice.

c. **And the God who answers by fire, He is God:** The fire would not come from either Elijah or the prophets of Baal. It had to be supernatural in origin, and supplied by either Baal or Yahweh.

i. Again, Elijah gave plenty of advantage to the prophets of Baal. It was thought that Baal was the sky-god, lord of the weather and the sender of lightning (thought to be fire from the sky). If Baal were real, he certainly could send fire from heaven.

ii. To put God and himself on the line before the gathered nation of Israel took a lot of faith. Elijah learned this faith over the many months of daily dependence on God, both at the Brook Cherith and at the widow's house at Zarephath.

iii. Of course, Elijah had plenty of reasons for confidence in the LORD God. First, he was following express instructions from the LORD (1 Kings 18:36). Second, he knew from the history of Israel that God could and would send fire from heaven upon a sacrifice (Judges 6:20-21 and 2 Chronicles 7:1-7).

3. (25-27) The prophets of Baal pray for fire from their god.

Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare *it* first, for you *are* many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*." So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But *there was* no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he *is* a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, *or* perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened."

a. **Called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!"** The prophets of Baal had a devoted prayer life. Here they prayed long and with great passion. Yet because they did not pray to

the *real* God, their prayer meant nothing. **There was no voice; no one answered.**

b. **They leaped about the altar which they had made:** The prophets of Baal had a energetic prayer life. Their worship was filled with enthusiasm and activity. Yet because it was not directed to the *real* God, their prayer meant nothing.

c. **Elijah mocked them:** Elijah could not resist the opportunity to mock the prophets of Baal for their evidently foolish faith.

i. "Elijah's irony bordered on sarcasm." (Patterson and Austel) The words **meditating** and **busy** can be translated "to be engaged in business" and may be a euphemism for bodily elimination.

ii. "Rabbi S. Jarchi gives this the most degrading meaning; I will give it in Latin, because it is too coarse to be put in English; *Fortassis ad locum secretum abiit, ut ventrem ibi exoneret*; 'Perhaps he has gone to the -----' This certainly reduces Baal to the lowest degree of contempt, and with it the ridicule and sarcasm are complete." (Clarke)

4. (28-29) The prophets of Baal work harder at their prayer.

So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. And when midday was past, they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

a. **They cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them:** The prophets of Baal were utterly *sincere* and completely *devoted* to their religion. They were so committed that they expressed it in their own blood. They had zeal, but without knowledge - therefore their zeal profited them *nothing*.

i. "The practice of self-inflicted wounds to arouse a deity's pity or response is attested in Ugarit when men 'bathed in their own blood like an ecstatic prophet.'" (Wiseman)

ii. "This was done according to the *rites* of that barbarous religion; of the blood of the bullock would not move him they thought their *own blood* might; and with it they smeared themselves and their sacrifice." (Clarke)

b. **But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention:** This is the sad result of worshipping an imaginary god or the god of our own making. We may dedicate great sincerity, sacrifice, and devotion to such gods but it means nothing. There is no one there to answer.

5. (30-35) Elijah prepares his altar.

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid *it* on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." Then he said, "Do *it* a second time," and they did *it* a second time; and he said, "Do *it* a third time," and they did *it* a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

a. **Come near to me:** When it was Elijah's turn to sacrifice, he first wanted to get the *attention* of the people. This was for their benefit, not his own or really primarily for the benefit of God. They needed to pay attention so they would see that the LORD was a true God, in contrast to the silent Baal.

b. **He repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down:** Elijah was very aware that he repaired something that once stood strong. There was once an altar of the LORD at Carmel and in Israel in general. Elijah looked to *revive* something that *once was*.

c. **Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood:** In wanting to make a deep impression upon the people, Elijah required more of Yahweh than he did of Baal. Elijah did not even suggest to the prophets of Baal that they wet down their sacrifice once or twice, much less three times. Yet Elijah did this, confident that it was no harder for God to ignite a wet sacrifice than it was for Him to set a dry one ablaze.

i. "There can be no question of trickery, such as the use of naphtha [a flammable liquid often used as a solvent] instead of water, or mirrors for ignition as suggested by some scholars. The opposition was observant and close." (Wiseman)

6. (36-37) Elijah's prayer.

And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back *to You* again."

a. **At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice:** Some 50 years before this, Jeroboam the King of Israel officially disassociated the citizens of the northern kingdom from the worship of the God of Israel at the temple in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Elijah still remembered the **evening sacrifice** that was offered according to God's commandment every day at the temple in Jerusalem.

b. **Let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant:** Both were important. It was important for the people of Israel to know who their God was, and who *God's servant* was.

c. **And that I have done all these things at Your word:** This also was essential, and helps us to understand the whole event. Elijah did this according to the word of God. It wasn't prompted because of his own cleverness, because of presumption or because of vainglory. *God* led Elijah to this showdown with the prophets of Baal.

i. "It was no whim of his to chastise the nation with a drought. It was no scheme of his, concocted in his own brain, that he should put the Godhead of Jehovah or of Baal to the test by a sacrifice to be consumed by miraculous fire." (Spurgeon)

ii. Spurgeon recommended that believers use the same principle in prayer, especially those who preach the Word of God: "Go you to the mercy-seat with this as one of your arguments, 'Lord, I have done according to thy word. Now let it be seen that it is even so. I have preached thy word, and thou hast said, "It shall not return unto me void." I have prayed for these people, and thou hast said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"; let it be seen that this is according to thy word.'"

7. (38-40) The result: Yahweh answers by fire.

Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench. Now when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!" And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

a. **Then the fire of the LORD fell:** The prophets of Baal had passion, commitment, sincerity, devotion, and great energy. What they did *not* have was a God in heaven who answered by **fire**.

i. "The action of this fire was in every case *downward*, contrary to the nature of all earthly and material fire." (Clarke)

ii. "Elijah's petition had lasted less than a minute but produced spectacular results. The difference lay in the One addressed." (Patterson and Austel)

b. **The fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench:** When the fire of God fell, its work was *beyond expectation*. It would have been enough if merely the cut-up pieces of bull on the altar were ignited, but God wanted more than simple vindication - He wanted to *glorify* Himself among the people.

c. **Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!"** At this moment, the people were completely persuaded. Asked to choose between Baal and Yahweh, there was no choice to make - obviously, the LORD was God.

i. Tragically, this was only a momentary persuasion. This was no lasting revival in Israel. The people were decidedly persuaded, but not lastingly changed.