

Week 4 Participant: The Mountains of God

Session 4: Week of March 8, 2026

The Mountain of Power, *1 Kings 18:16-39*

Brewster Baptist Church

Connecting Question

Have you ever been humbled by the sheer weight of God's power in your life? Where?

The Mountain of Power, *1 Kings 18:16-39*

***1 Kings 18:16-39* (NIV)**

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 17 When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

18 "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. 19 Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. 21 Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

But the people said nothing.

22 Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. 23 Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. 24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

25 Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." 26 So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

27 At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." 28 So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. 29 Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. 31 Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." 32 With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 33 He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

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

"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. 35 The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. 37 Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!"

Overview of 1 Kings 18:16-39 (read aloud in the group after reading the passage)

This week, we highlight the fourth and final major “mountaintop experience” found in the Hebrew Bible. The prophet Elijah – the last living prophet of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – finds himself discouraged, in a land plagued by idolatry and unfaithfulness. The Scripture tells us the false god, Baal, has 450 prophets, to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands of adherents in the land of Israel who are bowing down and worshipping Baal every day. Elijah was alone in his conviction that the God of Israel’s ancestors was the one true God, full of power. He climbs up Mount Carmel with a remarkable faith that, even though he’s alone, the true God who created the world will show up to prove his power to all.

This is the reason for Elijah’s bold demonstration with the offerings. First, he encourages the prophets of Baal to build an altar and sacrifice a bull on it, to see if Baal answers. After the false prophets’ persistence, and Elijah’s mocking, nothing happens. Baal didn’t come through.

He then builds an altar to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and even encourages the people to drown it in water many times over. When the bull is sacrificed, a great fire engulfs the altar, and God’s power is demonstrated. He’s the *true* God of heaven and earth. This demonstration proves the authenticity of Elijah’s God, and reveals Baal to be a fraud. We’re left with an image of the people falling prostrate in repentance, calling on the God of Israel as the Lord of their lives.

Questions for Discussion

1. Elijah took twelve stones, which stood for the twelve tribes of Israel, and rebuilt them on Mt. Carmel. How do you take time to prepare yourself to see God at work in the details of your life?

2. We see God show up in different ways through different stories. What can we learn from Ahab and Jezebel, the people of Israel, and the prophet Elijah, about God's power at work in their lives, and in our own?

3. Think about the places where Elijah's journey has taken him: into a foreign land, into a deserted place near a water brook, into confrontation with the ruling powers and the elite. What tools gave Elijah the ability to navigate these different seasons and circumstances so well?

4. Which mountain moment do you think stood out more for prophet Elijah: his time with the assembly of Israel on Mt. Carmel, or his time with God on Mt. Horeb? Why? Is it easier to hear God's voice in the busy, sensational, activity-filled moments of our lives, or in moments of quiet repose and retreat?

5. Read *1 Kings 18:46 (NIV)*. One of the often-overlooked portions of Elijah's narrative comes at the end of *1 Kings 18* – his run from the top of Mt. Carmel to Jezreel, the summer royal residence. This was a distance of up to 25 miles, depending on the route taken, and Elijah ran ahead of Ahab's chariot all the way. In the contest of running man versus king's horses, Elijah wins! What insight does the text give us about the source of Elijah's supernatural vim and vigor? Say more about how you think he was able to accomplish this amazing feat.

6. Take a moment to think about and describe the moment of life in which you find yourself. In what ways do you need God's power and provision in your life, and in what ways are you seeing God already at work in the details of your life?

Praying for Each Other

Are there any joys to celebrate, any burdens we can share?

Closing Prayer

Lord, We are awestruck and amazed by your power, and we pray that you prepare our hearts and minds to experiencing it, for we know we are prone to forget, otherwise. May we rest in the memory of your revelation to the world over thousands of years, and like Elijah, may we have the courage to **remind** others of it, even if we feel alone and are afraid to. Thank you for demonstrating your power to us. May you do so, so that the entire world might fall down prostrate and declare you as Lord, and believe. Amen.