

DAY 4 – WHAT BRINGS GOD BACK

BACK TO THE ALTAR – REBUILD IT AND HE WILL COME — AGAIN!

“SO ALL THE PEOPLE CAME NEAR TO HIM. AND HE REPAIRED THE ALTAR OF THE LORD THAT WAS BROKEN DOWN” (1 KINGS 18:30).

WHEN THE RAINS STOPPED

The atmosphere that fateful day was charged, though an eerie silence had engulfed Mount Carmel. In previous times this wooded mount was lush, green, and beautiful. It received plenty of rainfall and was considered a holy place, a place of blessing and fertility (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 144). But all that had changed. What used to be green was now burnt and bare, the result of a painful, three-and-a-half-year drought (1 Kings 17:1; 18:1; James 5:17). Here's how Ellen White describes Israel at this time: The earth is parched as if with fire. The scorching heat of the sun destroys what little vegetation has survived. Streams dry up, and lowing herds and bleating flocks wander hither and thither in distress. Once-flourishing fields have become like burning desert sands, a desolate waste. . . Once-prosperous cities and villages have become places of mourning. Hunger and thirst are telling upon man and beast with fearful mortality. Famine, with all its horror, comes closer and still closer. (*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 124, 125)

THE DROUGHT WITHIN

Perhaps greater than the physical drought that gripped the nation was the spiritual drought that left God's people soul-thirsty and faith-depleted. Israel was ruled by the evil King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel. Ahab's Sidonian bride had helped weaken his allegiance to God. It was into this catastrophic spiritual apostasy that God called the prophet Elijah. Of Elijah, Ellen White writes, “there dwelt in the days of Ahab a man of faith and prayer whose fearless ministry was destined to check the rapid spread of apostasy in Israel” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 119).

ELIJAH REBUILDS THE ALTAR

After the prophets of Baal and Asherah failed to get their gods to send fire, it was “at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice” (1 Kings 18:36) that Elijah called the people near and rebuilt the broken altar to the true God. In a very real sense, Elijah was not just calling the nation back to the altar of true worship; rather, he was calling the nation back to the altar of regular, systematic worship of the true God! Israel's corporate worship altar was broken, but Israel's personal and family altars had been broken long before.

WHAT BRINGS GOD BACK

It was the restoration of true, heartfelt worship that moved God to respond at Carmel. Elijah's first act of national spiritual revival was to rebuild the broken altar. If your personal or family worship altar is broken, rebuild it, and let the fire of God's presence consume all who gather to worship Him!

Let's talk to our God.