

The Salvation Test: Fire From Heaven Revival - William Blackburn

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

The salvation test is a series of questions to examine your salvation and ensure it is God's true plan of salvation, not the devil's counterfeit.

Duration: 55:31

Scripture: Matthew 7:13

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells the story of the rich young ruler who approached Jesus and asked how to inherit eternal life. Jesus responded by listing five of the ten commandments, trying to show the young man his sin. However, the young man claimed to have kept these commandments his whole life. Jesus then revealed that the young man's love for money was preventing him from fully following God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of true salvation, which involves a radical change in one's life and a genuine love for God. He also discusses the key to experiencing revival, using the example of Elijah and the importance of unity and repairing the broken altar.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit in Classic Sermons. Each week we bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith, and powerful sermons from modern preachers too. This week we have William Blackburn with his messages The Salvation Test and The Fire from Heaven Revival.

Enter ye then at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast in the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Have you ever wondered why there are so few people today in America who claim that they are Christian, and yet truly live a Christian life? Have you ever thought about why the divorce rate for church members is higher than the divorce rate for non-church members? Well, Jesus tells us the answer. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says that one day there are going to be many church members who will stand before the judgment of God, and these church members will not even know they're lost until Jesus tells them. The sad fact today is there are many church members who have been deceived about true, genuine salvation.

The Bible says that God loves us and has a plan for our life, and God wants to save us and take us to heaven. The Bible says there is a plan of salvation. But the Bible says there's a counterfeit plan of salvation also.

The Bible says there's a way that seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death. You see, my dear friends, the Bible says the devil has made a counterfeit plan of salvation. And there are many people who think they have God's salvation, but they don't.

They have the devil's counterfeit. There are many people today in our churches who will stand before the judgment of God, and here's what they will say. They will say, Lord, Lord.

They will actually call Jesus their Lord. They will say, Lord Jesus, we prophesied or preached in your name. We cast out demons in your name.

We've done all these wonderful works in Jesus. We did them in your name. And the Bible says the Lord Jesus Christ will say, I never knew you.

He'll say, I know that you exist because I'm God. I know all things. But he'll say, I never knew you in my heart.

I never knew you in the new birth. You took my name, but you never took my nature. You were baptized in some water, but you were never born again.

Oh, dear friends, what a sad thing for a man to spend his whole life in church claiming to know God, and then at the last moment find out that he's not truly born again and be not allowed to go to heaven. Well, how can you make sure you're a Christian? The Bible says examine yourself. Make sure you're really in the faith.

Well, how do you do that? How do you examine your salvation to make sure it's God's true plan of salvation and not the devil's counterfeit? Well, the Bible says God has made a salvation test in the Bible. You can examine your heart by the Word of God. The Bible teaches that what we're to do is to take our life, our testimony, we're to lay it on the Word of God.

And if our testimony matches the Bible, we have God's salvation. If our testimony does not match the Bible, then we have the counterfeit version. The salvation test.

Find out today whether you truly know God, whether you're truly going to heaven or not. If you were to die today, would you go to heaven or would you go to hell? How can you be sure? Well, the Bible says God wants you to be saved and He wants you to know you're saved. And the Bible says examine yourself.

Make sure you're really in the faith. Don't be one of those people that stand before the judgment of God to find out that you really don't have what it takes to get into heaven. In the book of 1 John of the Bible, God lays out a salvation test.

And God asks seven questions that we can ask ourselves to make sure that our faith is real. My dear friends, listen to me. You may have been in church all of your life.

You may believe in God. You may read the Bible. But if you cannot pass the salvation test, then you are not a true Christian.

You are not born again. You will not go to heaven when you die. The sad fact is that people examine all kinds of things.

They examine their bank book, their investment portfolio. But most people have never really examined the most important thing in all the world, and that is their true relationship with God. So let's take the salvation test today.

Let's examine ourselves from God's point of view to see if our relationship will get us into heaven. Test question number one is this. Do you obey the Word of God? Here's what the Bible says in 1 John 2, verses 3 and 4. It says, And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Now, the Bible is not saying, and I am not saying, that the way you become a Christian is to keep the laws of God. No, the Bible says that salvation comes by faith in Christ.

The Bible says the Holy Spirit convicts us. We repent of our sins. We receive Christ as our Lord and Savior simply by faith.

It is a gift from God, the Bible says. But the Bible teaches that when we truly give our lives to Christ, that God puts his Spirit within us. And when a person truly gets the Spirit of God, what happens? Well, that Holy Spirit is the one that wrote the Bible.

And so when we get the Holy Spirit, that produces in us a desire and a passion to obey the things of God. When you find a man who is truly saved, he'll be reading the Bible, he'll be obeying the Bible, he'll be living his life according to what the Word of God says. In fact, the Bible says this, Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

The Bible says you can claim to believe it, but if you don't do it, then you have deceived yourself, you don't believe it at all. And dear friends, our churches today are filled up with people who claim to love God, claim to believe the Bible, but when they leave the church, they don't think about it again, they don't obey God, they live for themselves, without a concern of what God has commanded them to do. But dear friends, that's a test question.

Do you obey the Word of God? If you wake up in the morning and you use the Bible as a road map for your life, if you obey what God tells you to do, if you're concerned about the will of God for your life, then you can know you have the Spirit of God. But dear friend, you may come to church every time the doors are open, but if you live a life of disobeying the Word of God, you have no reason to believe you're saved, you have no reason to believe that you'll go to heaven one day. That's a test question.

Do you obey the Word of God? Now, test question number two is this. What do you love the most? Do you love the things of God, or do you love the things of the world? What's your attitude about the things of the world? Here's what the Bible says. The Bible says in chapter 2, verse 15, it says, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Now, dear friends, I want to tell you something. You can tell whether a man really knows God or not by what he loves.

And what he loves is what he spends his time on, his energy on, his money on. A man who invests himself totally in the world does not know God. When a man gets the Spirit of God and he's truly born again, he understands this old life is just temporary.

He's just passing through. And he has his mind on the things of heaven. So, my dear friends, if you love the things of this world, you love your home, you love your family, you love your life more than you love God, then the Bible says you do not love God.

The love of the Father is not in you. We need to examine ourselves because, friend, this old world hates God. We claim to be a Christian nation.

We claim to believe the Bible. But the truth is the world hates God. And when a man is truly born again, when he is born again by the Spirit of God, he understands he's just passing through and he loves the things of God more than anything here on planet Earth.

That's a test question. Do you love the things of God or do you love the things of the world? The third test question is this. Were you changed when you made your profession a faith? Here's what the Bible says.

The Bible says in chapter 2, verse 29, If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him. Now, that word righteousness is just a word that means living right in the eyes of God. You see, when a man is lost, he's in total darkness.

The Bible says he's an enemy of God. He has his back against God. He's going away from God at 100 miles an hour.

But when he gets saved, he steps out of the darkness. He steps into the light. He goes from being an enemy of God to being a friend of God.

He goes from running away from God. He goes to running to God. You see, when a man is truly born again, it is a radical 180-degree turn in his life.

When a man truly turns away from sin, when he truly is born again by the Spirit of God, when he's really saved, it is like taking a golf ball and throwing it against a brick wall. That ball hits that wall and bounces straight back. That's salvation.

Now, my dear friend, if you walk down the aisle in your church and you prayed a prayer to God, got baptized, sprinkled, or confirmed, but God did not radically change you and cause you to begin to serve Him and obey Him, then you did not get God's salvation. If you came down and got baptized and joined the church and then you went outside and you lived the same way as before, you did not get saved. You are not a true Christian.

You will not go to heaven when you die. The test question is this. Do you obey the Word of God? Do you love the things of God more than you love the things of the world? And number three, when you walk down that aisle, did God supernaturally change you and cause you to begin to love Him and serve Him more than anything else in your life? That's a test question.

The next test question is this. What's your attitude towards sin? Chapter 3, verse 9 says, Now, this verse is not saying, and I am not saying, that the way you become a Christian is, when you become a Christian, you'll be perfect in every way, you'll never commit another sin. No.

What God is saying is this. When you get the Spirit of God, you'll have a different attitude about sin. You'll have a holy hatred of sin, and you will not practice sin in your life.

Now, we as Christians, we can sin. We sin every day. But when a Christian sins, what does God do? God convicts him and chastens him and draws him back.

And my dear friend, a man who is truly saved has a different attitude about sin. He hates sin. And when a Christian commits a sin, it breaks his heart.

He wants to get out of it as fast as he can. Oh, my friend, I can tell you on the authority of God's Word, if you can sin, and it does not bother you to sin, then you are not saved according to the Word of God. What's your attitude about sin? Do you play with sin? Do you trifle with sin? Or do you try with all your heart to stay away from sin and to live a holy and godly life? That's a test question.

What is your attitude towards sin? It tells whether you really know God or not. The next test question is this. Do you have the Holy Spirit living in you? The Bible says in chapter 4, verse 13, Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

See, when you get the Holy Spirit of God, friend, it produces certain evidence in your life. How do you know you've really got the Holy Spirit? Well, you don't know for sure you have the Holy Spirit just because you have some spiritual gifts in your life. You may have the gift of prophesying or preaching or praying or administration, but, my friend, the devil can imitate those things.

How do you know you've got the Holy Spirit? Well, the Bible says when you have the Holy Spirit of God, you'll have the fruit of the Spirit. Now, what's the fruit of the Spirit? Well, Galatians chapter 5 says the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance. Oh, my friend, do you have those things in your life? Do you have love? That word love, that agape, do you have that desire to put other people's interests ahead of your own because you love God? Do you have that joy that's unspeakable because you have the Spirit of God? Do you have that longsuffering, that patience in your life? Do you have the power of God to overcome the world? Are you pliable? That word meekness doesn't mean weakness.

It means you're allowing God to mold you and shape you. My friend, the Bible says if you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His. Oh, my friend, when a man gets the Spirit of God, you can see it in his

life.

You can see it by the way he walks, by the way he talks, by the things he loves, because he has the Holy Spirit of God living in him. That's a test question. Do you have the Holy Spirit? Do you have the fruit of the Spirit in your life? The next test question is this.

Do you love other Christians? The Bible says in chapter 3, verse 14, we know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Now, do you know church members who hate other church members? I do.

I heard about a lady one time that told her pastor, she said, Pastor, you see that man standing over there? She said, I hate him. She said, furthermore, God told me to hate him. Oh, my friend, listen to me.

Those people in church who are always complaining, always griping, they're not born again because when a man has the Spirit of God, he will love other Christians. He'll love the fellowship of the church. He'll follow his pastor.

He'll serve God. He'll obey God with his life because he really does have the Holy Spirit living in him. The final test question is this.

Did you truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? The Bible says in chapter 5, verse 13, These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that you have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. Now, dear friends, it is very clear that what makes a man a Christian is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what Paul told the Philippian jailer.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll be saved. My friend, that word believe is the key word. Whether you go to heaven or hell depends on this word believe.

It is the most important word in all the Bible, but it is also the most misunderstood word in all the Bible. What does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, my dear friends, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ does not mean to believe facts about Jesus. What I mean by that is you may believe that Jesus is God.

You may believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, that he died on the cross for the sins of the world, that he was buried in a tomb and raised from the dead. You may believe all that, but that does not mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in a way that will get you into heaven involves three things.

Number one, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ means to turn from your sin. The Bible says, except you repent, you'll perish. Oh, my dear friends, there's no believing on the Lord Jesus Christ while you hang on to your sin.

You see, sin is what separates you from God. Sin is rebellion against God. Sin is what condemns a man to hell.

Sin is what put Jesus on the cross. And when a man comes to Christ, he's got to say, God, I admit it. You're right.

I'm wrong. I'm a sinner, and I want to change my mind. I want to repent and turn away from that mess.

God, I want to serve you and live for you. No man believes on the Lord Jesus Christ unless he has turned away from his sin and stopped serving himself and serving the world. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ also means to leave your idols behind.

In the Gospel of Luke, there's a parable about a man who prepares a great banquet. And this banquet is symbolic of the Gospel. And this man asked three people to come to his Gospel banquet.

The first man he invites says, I'd love to come, but I just bought me some land, and I've got to go look at it. The second man said, I too would love to come to your Gospel banquet, but I bought me a team of oxen. I've got to go look at them.

The third man said, I would love to come to your Gospel banquet, but I've just gotten married, and I've got to go be with my new wife. And Jesus Christ said, none of these men would taste of the banquet. Here's what he was saying.

He was saying, listen, if you are not willing to leave your idols and come to me, then you cannot come to me. Now, you can join a church with your sin and your idols, but you cannot join Jesus with your sin and your idols. My dear friends, the way you come to God, as you say, God, I burn the bridges behind me.

Everything I used to love, everything I used to lust for, everything I used to desire, I count the world but done just to have you. Oh, my friend, have you come to God like that? You see, our churches today are filled up with people who have walked down the aisles with their sins in one hand, their idols in another, and many times we make them leaders in our churches. It is truly an abomination to God.

Oh, my dear friends, listen to me. You cannot be a Christian until you make up your mind you can only serve one God. It must be the God of heaven.

You must understand that your sin separates you from God. You must turn away from that sin. You must let go of your idols and stop serving other gods.

And then, number three, you must make a total surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Oh, my friend, you'll never find any teaching in the Bible that says you can take a piece of Jesus and be saved. It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ. He is either your Lord, your God, your boss, your master, your owner, or He is nothing in your life.

Let me tell you a story that'll make the point. In the Bible, there's a story about a young man who was interested in the things of God. We call him the rich young ruler.

He was a man who believed in God and he wanted to know God. The Bible says one day the Lord Jesus Christ passed by and this rich young ruler ran up to Jesus and he fell at the feet of Jesus. And he looked up and said, Lord, what must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus looked at him and Jesus said, Well, you need to do this, this, this, this, and this.

He gave him five of the ten commandments. He was trying to get this young man to see that he had sinned against God. But this young man was so deceived, he said, Well, Lord, I've kept those things my whole life.

And the Lord said, Well, there's one thing you haven't done. And Jesus looked right in his heart. He saw what the problem was.

He saw he loved his money. He saw that money was his God. He said, Well, here's what you need to do if you want to really be a Christian.

Go home, sell everything you have, give the money to the poor, then come and follow me. And the Bible says this rich young ruler, he went away sad because he was very, very wealthy. Now watch this.

Here's a young man that came to Jesus. We tell people all the time, If you come to Jesus, you'll be saved. Not necessarily.

This young man had an emotional experience. Can you imagine how emotional it was to be at the feet of Jesus himself? He even wanted to be saved. He said, Lord, what must I do to be saved? He was even drawn by the Holy Spirit.

You say, Well, how do you know that? Because Jesus said, No man can come to me except my Father. Draw him. Here's a young man that came to Jesus, but he didn't get saved.

He had an emotional experience, but he didn't get saved. He was drawn by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't get saved. He wanted to get saved, but he didn't get saved.

Why? Because when Jesus Christ told him that he must turn away from his sin, he must leave his idols behind, that he must make Jesus his God and his only God, this young man was not willing to pay that price. Oh, my dear friends, there are many people today who've done the same thing. They've walked an aisle to come to Jesus.

They've had a very emotional experience. They want to get saved. They want to go to heaven.

But when the Lord says, This is what you must do. You must stop serving other gods. You must stop loving your sin.

You must give me your life and serve me and only me. They're not willing to do that. Oh, they'll pray a prayer and join the church.

They'll get baptized, but they will not give God their life. My friend, let me ask you a question. Suppose that when you walked that aisle, that time you count as your salvation moment, when you walked down that aisle and you took the preacher by the hand and said, Oh, I want to be saved.

I want to ask Jesus into my heart. I want to be baptized. Whatever it was you said, what if the preacher had whispered in your ear, You can be saved, but what you must do is you must go home today, sell everything you have, give the money to the poor, and then come and follow Jesus the rest of your life.

If he had told you that, would you have given Christ your life then? Would you have been saved then? My friend, salvation is a radical thing. It is a supernatural thing. It is when the Spirit of living God convicts you of sin, shows you that you're a rebel against God, shows you that you're lost, and you make a conscious and willful decision to turn away from that sin, leave those idols behind, take Jesus as your Lord and your Savior, your God, and then you begin to follow Him and love Him and serve Him with your life.

Anything less than that is not true genuine salvation and will not get you into heaven. Here's what's happened. The children of Israel are in rebellion against God.

They've turned away from the living and true God and they've turned to worship the pagan god, Baal. And God, in His anger against their sin, He has sent a drought. For three years it has not rained.

There's a great famine across the land. And what this drought represents, it represents a spiritual drought. Yeah, these folks needed rain, but what they needed more than rain was, they needed for God to show up and refresh in their hearts and refresh in their lives.

And God calls out a man named Elijah. I want to tell you, friends, there's never a great revival of God without God calling out a man. God calls out a man named Elijah.

He says, Elijah, go and show yourself to Ahab, that wicked king, and show yourself and tell them that God is about to send rain to planet Earth. Friend, I want to tell you, what the Israelites needed more than anything else was an old-fashioned revival. They had turned their backs on God.

The rain had been cut off from heaven. Spiritually, they were in rebellion against God. What they needed was rain, but what they really needed was God to show up and refresh their hearts and draw them back to repentance.

Friend, that's exactly what we need. We need an old-fashioned, heaven-sent, holy ghost, devil-defeating. I'm telling you, we need a real revival from God.

And I am not one of those men that believe the time of revivals has ended. We live in a day where many prominent preachers say we cannot have revival anymore. I am not one of those men.

I believe with all my heart, we can have a real revival. I believe if we will meet the conditions of the Bible, if we will come to God on God's terms, if we will humble ourselves before a holy God and call upon the name of the Lord, I believe that God will send the refreshing rains of revival. He can cleanse our lives.

He can cleanse our communities. He can change this world. I believe just like in Elijah's day, God is willing and able to send the rains of revival if we will simply turn back to Him and call upon His name.

But there are a lot of enemies of revival. Did you know that? Not a lot of people want revival. You might be surprised to know there are a lot of enemies of revival.

There were enemies in Elijah's day. Look at verse 3 through 5. And I will talk about the first enemy of revival tonight, a man by the name of Obadiah, a teenage friend, listen very carefully. Obadiah represents the enemy of revival, the old-fashioned compromiser.

In verse 3 it says, And Ahab called Obadiah, which was governor of his house. Now Obadiah feared the Lord. For it was so when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord that Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifty in a cave and fed them with bread and water.

And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and into all brooks, peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mews alive, that we lose not all the beasts. Now the number one enemy of revival is a man by the name of Obadiah. Who was Obadiah? Well Obadiah was a man of God.

Listen to me. He was a man who feared God. Obadiah was a man who was really saved.

The Bible says when Queen Jezebel was chasing all of God's prophets and killing them, that Obadiah took them and hid many of them in a cave and fed them to save their life. So Obadiah was a man of God. He was a man who was saved.

He was a man who feared God and he wanted to serve God, but he was also a man who was aligned with a man by the name of Ahab. Ahab was the most wicked king that ever lived. And Obadiah was the governor of his house.

So here's what we have. We have a man who wanted to serve God on one hand, but he wanted to serve Ahab on the other hand. Here was a man who wanted to walk after God, but Ahab paid his salary.

He had a financial interest here. So here was Obadiah. He wanted to live with God, but he wanted to also live in the world.

You see, Obadiah represents the A number one garden variety compromiser that we see in our churches today. It's like on Sunday morning, those folks, they come to church on Sunday, but they want to live for the world on Monday. They want to have the good God and the good devil crowd wrapped up in one.

You see, our churches are filled up with Obadiahs. Our churches are filled up with people that want to serve God, but they don't want to separate from the world at the same time. And I'm telling you, friends, you cannot serve two masters.

You will love one and hate the other. And Obadiah was a man who really, really was saved. He was a man, the Bible says, a man of God.

And yet he had aligned himself with the most wicked, rebellious king that the nation of Israel had ever seen. Obadiah was an enemy of revival. In fact, I have found that Obadiah is the number one enemy of all revival.

You see, there are a lot of people sitting on the fence today. A lot of folks straddling the fence. They're the real enemies of revival.

The Bible says, wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean things and I will receive you. See, I've seen many times men and women come to church and they sit there and they complain and they grieve. They go home and they have roast pastor for lunch.

They complain and they whine. And I'm telling you, if their sons and daughters do get saved, they have to stumble over their old sorry testimony to get to Jesus. And I'm telling you, our churches are filled up with compromisers and I'm just sick and tired of it.

You see, if our faith is worth anything, it's worth everything. If you're going to give your life to the God of this universe, you ought to give him all of your life, not part of your life, not hang on to the world and hang on to God. Obadiah was a compromiser.

And I want to challenge you tonight, stop your compromising. Stop your compromising. See, I believe in fanaticism.

I believe in being a fanatic for Jesus. This old thing about kind of getting mellow in the middle, I'm not for that at all, friend. I mean, I'm sick and tired of that old limber-wristed, back-scratching, ear-tickling, iced tea-sipping, lace-on-the-bridges Christianity.

I want folk to be on fire for God. And Obadiah was an enemy of revival. He represents the compromisers of this world.

They are the number one enemy to the things of God. They are saved, but they live with the world. The second enemy of revival is represented by this man named Ahab in verse 17.

It says, Then it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Balaam. Now, Obadiah represents the compromisers, the saved people who have compromised with the world, but Ahab represents the corrupt. They represent those who are actually against God.

Now, when Elijah came to Ahab, here's what Ahab said. Ahab said, Hey, you're that preacher that's causing all the trouble. He said, you're the man that's got all of Israel stirred up.

And Elijah said, No, I'm not the troublemaker. You're the troublemaker because you have turned your back on God. You see, Ahab was a man who didn't like preachers.

Now, I can't imagine that, but Ahab was a man who didn't like preachers. He pointed to his fingers and said, Hey, man, you're stirring everything up. I mean, you're talking about heaven and hell.

You're preaching against sin. Man, you've got everybody in an uproar. You've got everything shaking up.

Man, you're the troublemaker. And the reason Ahab didn't like the preacher was this, because Elijah pointed out his sin. Elijah pointed out there was only one way to God.

Elijah pointed out that Balaam was a false god and a pagan god. And Elijah pointed out that the Lord God Jehovah was the only God and the troublemaker was Ahab. And he loved his sin.

And he pointed at the preacher and he said, That preacher who's pointing out sin and preaching about heaven and hell and being born again, he's the troublemaker. Ahab represents all those corrupt, wicked people in the world who love the devil more than they love God. They love their sin more than they love the Savior.

And I want to tell you, as you hear me tonight, if you really sell out to God, if you really get born again by the Holy Spirit and give everything you have to God, I'm going to tell you, you will be an enemy of the world. My friend, the Bible says, Be wary when all men speak well of you. I'm telling you, you can tell more about a man by who his friends are than who his enemies are.

I'm telling you, when you walk into a place filled up with lost men and you're just one of the same old good old boys and you strut up there, there's something wrong with your testimony, friend. I'm telling you, it's all right to witness the lost people. It's all right to get a relationship to win them to Christ.

But my friends, when you walk through the door and there's no difference between you and them, there's something wrong in your life. And I have found out if you will stand for God, you will serve God and you will sell out to God. I'm telling you, you will be an enemy to a lost and dying world because the world hates

Jesus Christ.

And so Obadiah was the compromiser. Ahab was the corrupt. But here's the good thing about it.

The Ahabs cannot stop revival. The lost, wicked world cannot stop revival. God did not say if the lost will call upon my name, I'll send revival.

He said if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Oh, the Ahabs of the world, they are wicked. They're enemies to God's people but they cannot hold back revival.

The only person who can really hold back revival is the Obadiah crowd. Those that are saved but are compromising. Now the third group that is an enemy to real revival is found in verse 20.

That is the people. I call the people the confused. And so Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel and gathered the prophets together to Mount Carmel.

And Elijah came unto all the people and said how long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him. But if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered not a word.

Now the people were an enemy of revival because I called them the confused. Now here's what old Elijah did. He got all those folks together in a big meeting house like this.

He said I want you to make a decision. He said is Jehovah God? They said we don't know. They said is Baal God? They said well we don't know that either.

He said well how long are you going to straddle the fence? How long are you going to stand between these two opinions? If Jehovah is God, serve him. But if Baal is God, serve him. Make up your mind.

Do you know why the people were so confused? Do you know why the people couldn't tell the true living God? Do you know why the folks were so confused and they couldn't make up their mind the living and true God? Because the Obadiah crowd had lived so sorry that there was no testimony. They couldn't look at any change in their life. There was no real change in the Obadiah crowd and the folks were confused.

They didn't know who the living and true God was. I want to tell you friends, there are a lot of people today just like that. We've got a lot of people going to hell because the church family is living like hell.

We've got a lot of folks that claim to know Christ but there's no power, there's no glory, there's no influence and the world around them looks at them and they can't believe in God because we don't live like there's a God. I'm telling you the people were confused and folks today are confused. I see people all the time and they say, well I've tried drugs but that didn't work.

I tried sex but that didn't work. I tried making money but that didn't work. Do you folks have the answer? Do you folks know what the answer's all about? And I'm telling you friends, when people look at our lives, they ought to have a supernatural observation.

They ought to see something in our life that's different than just a church membership. They ought to see the power of God. They ought to see a fanaticism.

They ought to see a passion for God that when they're confused looking at our lives, they say yes, there is a God in heaven and His name is Jesus. You see, the enemies of revival Obadiah the compromiser, Ahab the corrupt and the people, they were enemies because they were just confused. But the final enemy of revival are the false prophets.

Look at verse 22. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord. But Baal's prophets are 450 men.

Elijah said there are 450 false prophets and I am the only prophet of God left. 450 false prophets standing against the kingdom of God and one man who had sold out to Christ standing against them. My friend, I want to tell you, we look around today.

There are false prophets all around us. There are men preaching a false doctrine. We have the false doctrine of sex and drugs and alcohol and money.

There's a false doctrine of living a good life, just being a church member, giving your money to help the poor. We have false doctrine and false prophets all around us today, just like he had in Elijah's day. Can we overcome that? Can we have victory against the false prophets? I tell you we can.

When the demons of hell, when the angels rejected, rebelled against God in heaven, one third of the angels went with Lucifer. They became demons. But two third of all the angels stayed in heaven with God.

That means there are two times as many angels as there are demons. I'm telling you, there are not enough demons in hell to keep up from having revival. And I'm telling you, I don't care.

I don't care about the Ahab's. I don't care if everybody in town stands against revival. I don't care if all the folks stand up and say, I don't want revival.

I'm not gonna come down there and praise God. I don't care how many people we have that stand and preach a false doctrine. I don't care how many people in Laurel, Mississippi are confused.

My friend, we can have revival if the Obadiah's would just get off the fence and get on fire for God and stop compromising. Then we can have real... You see, we've been kind of floating here for a while. And God's gonna show us and present an opportunity to us to see if we can call fire down from heaven.

See, we're gonna get an opportunity. We're gonna get an opportunity to test our faith. We're gonna get an opportunity to put our money where our mouth is.

We're gonna get an opportunity to get all the way in or all the way out. What an opportunity God has presented to us. You see, we're in a drought.

We're in a drought. And what we need more than anything is we need the rains of a real revival. But before the rains of revival can fall, the fire from heaven must fall.

How do we do it? What's the key to real revival? How do we bring fire from heaven so that the rains will fall? What did Elijah do? Well, let's tell you. I'm gonna tell you about four or five things that Elijah did. Number one, he brought solidarity.

Look at verse 30. And Elijah said, And all the people come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him.

And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took 12 stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name. The first thing Elijah did to bring revival, he got all the people together in unity.

He got all the people together with one accord, with one mind. You know what he did? He picked up 12 stones. He got a stone over here and a castaway stone and a forgotten stone.

He got 12 stones together and those stones represent the 12 tribes of Israel. And he built one altar to one God. And I'm gonna tell you, friends, you cannot have real revival until the children of God come together in unity.

Till we put down our own prejudice, our own bias, our own denominations, our own ideas. We come together with harmony, with one heart to seek the things of God. The first step to real revival is solidarity, unity.

I'm telling you, when Pentecost came, the Bible says they were with one accord, one heart, one mind, one purpose to seek the things of God. There was a solidarity, a solidarity between the people who really love God. That's step one if we're gonna have a real revival.

But then number two, there was separation. Look at verse 32. And with the stones, and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord and he made a trench about the altar as great as would contain two measures of seed.

Now listen very carefully. Here's what he did. He took those 12 stones and he built an altar to the one and living true God.

He brought the folks together in unity and harmony. But watch this. He then, he dug a trench all the way around that altar.

Why did he dig that trench? He dug that trench to separate the altar of God from the altar of Baal. He drew a line in the sand and said, this is God's side. This is the devil's side.

And I want to tell you, if you're gonna have revival, if you're gonna serve God, there must be separation from the things of the devil. There must be separation from the things of the world. You cannot go out there and live with the world, love the world, like the world, and then expect the things of God to show up in your life.

Be ye separate, the Bible says. And I want to tell you, friends, when you're living for God, you'll be exactly what the Bible says. You will be a peculiar people.

When you love the things of God, you must be separated unto the things of God. Friend, I want to tell you, the church today looks like the world, acts like the world, talks like the world, lives like the world. No wonder God has not shown up yet.

I'm telling you, we must unify. We must build the altar to the one God. We must dig a trench.

We must separate ourselves unto the things of God. And then number three, he made a sacrifice. Look at verse 33, and he put the wood in order and cut the bullock in pieces and laid him on the wood.

What he did was he made a sacrifice. Now, here's what happened, teenage friend. Elijah showed up.

450 false prophets there. Elijah showed up by himself unashamed and unafraid. He said, let's find out who the real God is.

He said, you build an altar to your God. I'll build an altar to my God. You put a sacrifice on your altar.

I'll put a sacrifice on my altar. Then we'll both pray to heaven and we'll ask our God to show himself by sending fire down to consume this sacrifice. He said, the God that sends fire from heaven will be the living and true God.

He said, you pray first. And all the false prophets, they got over here, man. And they built a big fancy altar.

Probably had a bunch of stained glass windows in it. I don't know, but man, plus carpeting. And they had that big altar there and they put their sacrifice on the top.

And you know, I don't know what it was, but it had to be something that cost them a lot of money, you know, because they really wanted God to show up. And they began to pray, oh God, oh God, send fire, show yourself, oh God, show yourself. Hey, nothing happened.

They prayed all day. They prayed all night. Oh, Elijah said over here, he began to laugh.

He began to mock. Hey man, maybe he's asleep. Pray a little louder.

He may be having a business meeting. Wake him up, man, just keep praying. And you know what he said? He said, let them pray.

He said, just let them pray. Let them pray. Their God can answer prayers.

But then Elijah prayed and the fire fell. But listen to me, here's the point. We don't have to worry about false prophets praying.

What we have to be concerned about is God's people not praying. You see, that's the point. You don't have to worry about those quacks.

You don't have to worry about that false religion. You don't have to worry about that nonsense. They pray till they're blue in their face.

Their God can't send fire from heaven. What we need to do is to be concerned about we who know the living and true God making sure that we make a sacrifice to God in heaven. You see, when we make that altar and we make that sacrifice, it must be through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

My friend, the Bible says, make your body a living sacrifice. It is not enough to say, thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross. What we must do is we must get up on the cross with him.

The Bible says, die to self. Every day, we ought to put our bodies as a living sacrifice on the altar of God that he could send a mighty and dynamic revival to Laurel, Mississippi. So Elijah built an altar and he dug a trench and then he poured the water on.

The Bible says in verse 33, and he put the wood in order and cut the bullock in pieces and laid on the wood and said, listen, men, fill four barrels with water and pour it on the burnt, sacrificed on the wood. And he said, do it the second time and they did it the second time. And he said, do it the third time and they did it the third time.

And the water ran round about the altar and he filled the trench also with water. That's an amazing story. The water represents the spirit of the living God.

Elijah built an altar to the one and living, true God in heaven. He brought that unity together with the 12 tribes. He put a sacrifice on the altar.

He laid a cross and said, God, take me. But before he called fire down from heaven, he poured on the water of the Holy Spirit. He poured the water on bucket after bucket and to the world, it looked like foolishness.

But to God, it looked like faith. And he poured the water on to say, my God can send enough fire to burn the offering to take up the water. My God is not held back by the thoughts of men.

He can do whatever it takes to show his power. He poured the water on. That's the spirit of God.

You gotta have the spirit, man. You can advertise. You can promote.

You can run up and down the street. I'll tell you what, until the spirit of God shows up, you'll never have a real revival. You'll never have a real revival until the God that created the universe comes.

We've got to have faith. Trust God that he can do anything he says he can do. But finally, then Elijah, he prayed.

Verse 36, 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 of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord. Hear me.

That this people may know that thou art the Lord God and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Elijah prayed, and man, the prayer was only 63 words, but it went straight to the heart of God. He prayed for one reason.

You know why he prayed? He did not pray so that Highland Baptist Church could have a great revival and be glorified in the eyes of men. He did not pray simply because we could have a big revival and tell the whole country we've had a great revival. He did not simply want a big revival so that people could feel good about themselves.

He wanted God to send fire because he was jealous for the glory of God. He was jealous for the glory of God. These men had stood as false prophets and said, He's not God.

And Elijah was angry. He said, God, show these people who the God of heaven is. Are you angry? Are you jealous for the glory of God? Aren't you sick and tired of people taking the Lord's name in vain on television? Aren't you sick and tired of a wicked world living as if there is no God? Are you not jealous for the glory of God? And Elijah was jealous for the glory of God.

He said, God, I ask you, show yourself. Show them that I am your man. Show them I am doing exactly what you told me to do.

God, send fire from heaven. And the Bible says, God sent the fire. It consumed the sacrifice.

It consumed the altar. It consumed the water. It consumed the water in the trenches.

God showed himself as the one God of this universe. And then in verse 45, And it came to pass in the meanwhile that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. Before there can be a cooling rain, there must be a cleansing fire.

Before God can send a real revival, there must be real repentance. See, God wants to send a revival. And God has blessed us so far beyond anything we can conceive.

But I assure you, we have not seen the fire fall yet. We have not seen the fire fall yet. But I'm here to tell you if we will meet the conditions.

Because I'm telling you the day we are living right now is exactly like it was in Elijah's day. We are living in a day where there's a drought across the land. Where the leadership of the world have made a mockery of religion and made a mockery of the things of God.

Where sin is everywhere at every corner. People are laughing at morals, laughing at God. Things that we used to call evil are now called good.

Men that stand for right are mocked and laughed at as idiots. We live in a day where sin is abounding on all corners. We are living in a spiritual drought, my friends.

We are hungry for the rain. We are hungry for the rain. But there are enemies out there.

And the main enemy is Obadiah. That man who's really been born again. But he's got tangled up with the world.

He's a compromiser. One foot in the world, one foot with God. He has such a sorry testimony that the confused world, they can't even see there is a God because his life is such a hypocrisy.

I'm telling you, friends, Obadiah is causing the rain to be held back. Oh, Ahab's out there. He's corrupt.

He's pointing a finger at all the preachers. He's saying those preachers are the real enemies. We need to get those preachers straightened out.

We need to get that prayer out of the school. We need to stop having any kind of religious activity in our society because that's really the troublemaker. And a lot of false prophets out there.

But I'm telling you, if the Obadias would just get their life right, God will send revival if we'll come together in unity. If we'll build that altar, dig that trench. If we'll put our sacrifice of our lives on the altar, pour on the Holy Spirit, and pray to the one and living true God, God will send that fire to burn that sacrifice.

Then he'll send the cooling rain that a world here that is now lost and dying can see, yes, there is one living and true God. They will turn their hearts to him and be saved before it's everlastingly too late. My friends, we stand as Connie K. said, at the crossroads.

We really are at the crossroads. We're at the crossroads. We got 450 false prophets, but we got a God in heaven that will send revival.

The question is, are we willing to pay the price? Or are we satisfied with just a little drop that we felt so far? I'm telling you, the revival can come if we will simply stand on the promises of God, stand on the promises

of God that he desires for his people. He said, if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, I will forgive their sin, I will heal their land. You've been listening to the From the Pulpit in Classic Sermon Series.

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