

# UFC Main Event on Mt. Carmel: The LORD vs. Baal

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well good morning and pleased to have your Bibles open to 1st Kings 18. That'll be really helpful to have that open in front of you. My friends, there are many great fight scenes in the Bible and this chapter contains one of them.

Last Sunday evening, if you were out, you would have heard that Ahab has just become king of Israel. And along with his wife Jezebel, he pumped foul, raw paganism into Israel. That is, he established Baal worship in the land. Totally deplorable in the Lord's eyes. But remember, the Lord wasn't surprised by any of this evil. He was ready with his counter-movement and Elijah, his prophet, appears and announced that there would be a covenant curse coming upon Israel for their evil. And that was drought. The Lord was going to shut off the rain, was going to dry up the land. Not a drop of dew would be found anywhere. And remember, the Lord chose that particular curse because of who Baal was believed to be back then in paganism. He was believed to be the god of the storms. Rain was supposedly his thing, his area. Well, the Lord cuts off the rain in order to show that he himself is the real God who controls the climate, not Baal. And you know, everything happens as the Lord promised.

The rain stops and the land shrivels up. And you know, this goes on for over three years. Over three years. Just imagine that. I know it's quite hard for us in Glasgow to imagine it being drier for like more than three minutes. Although this morning's looking pretty good, I suppose.

But over three years. No rain. We're told that famine spread over the whole land. But at the start of chapter 18, the Lord, in his mercy, says, Enough. Please look at verse 1.

After many days, the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.

[ 2 : 1 9 ] And friends, by the end of this chapter, the Lord will show himself yet again to be faithful to his word. He will send the rain. But the Lord doesn't send it at that precise moment.

First, he sends Elijah to present himself to King Ahab in order to pick a fight. To set up a public contest between the Lord and Baal.

In order to show categorically who the real and living God is. Publicly. You see, if the Lord simply gave people rain there and then, then the people might be tempted to believe that Baal had done it.

That Baal had been angry with them for about three years, and all of a sudden he'd relented. So before the Lord turns on the rain again, Baal must be discredited publicly, clearly, obviously, and decisively.

In front of everyone. And only after that can the Lord send the showers. So we're going to look at the chapter now over four points, and we will eventually get to the main fight event.

[ 3 : 2 4 ] The main fight of the scene. Firstly, let's look at the first point. Verses 3 to 16, we see contrasting servants of the Lord.

Contrasting servants of the Lord. Now this scene is really an account of the build-up to the main fight event, and most of it is focused upon these two contrasting servants of the Lord.

In verse 3, we are in famine-ravaged Samaria, and King Ahab is talking to one of his chief servants. And to our surprise, this chief servant of Ahab is really also a servant of the Lord, named Obadiah.

Now we might be tempted to think of Obadiah as being wicked, or maybe wrong, for living and working under such an evil king. But he wasn't. That's not what God's Word says.

Look at verse 3. Obadiah feared the Lord, not just a little bit, but greatly. He was one of the many servants of the Lord in the Bible, who is able to serve the Lord with integrity under an evil administration.

[ 4 : 36 ] Other examples would be Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, or think of the end of Philippians 4. Paul speaks of Christians who served in Caesar's household.

Obadiah is one like them. He fears the Lord. And notice, his fear of the Lord is not a private feeling. Actually, it's something that produced really bold and good works for the Lord.

Look at verse 4. When Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.

As I said this last week, Jezebel utterly detests the Lord. She hates the Lord. And that often brings out all sorts of things in her behavior, all sorts of evil fruits.

One of them was, she launched a plot to eradicate all of the Lord's prophets in Israel. That's what's being spoken about here. To cut off the prophets. The Hebrew word for cut off means to root something out and destroy it.

[ 5 : 41 ] But her evil scheme was thwarted by Obadiah. He hid them and he fed them. And the Hebrew verb translated as fed in verse 4.

It's the same verb that's used to describe the activity of the ravens and the widow in chapter 17, when they fed Elijah. The author wants us to see clearly the Lord is using Obadiah in the same way.

He thinks very positively of Obadiah, our author. Of kings. He is a faithful and bold servant of the Lord, being used for good in these days of evil.

Yes, he is very different to Elijah. He's very different. But he is faithful nonetheless. You see, sometimes the Lord attacks evil with a sort of in-your-face confrontational style of an Elijah.

And sometimes the Lord frustrates evil by using a much more quieter servant. One author calls Obadiah a single subversion of an unobtrusive agent.

[ 6 : 47 ] That's what we're reading of here. We'll come back to think about this more in a minute because I think there's a great encouragement for us here. But look at what happens next in verse 5. Ahab tells Obadiah to go look for water in the land because there might be some grass there to feed my animals, my horses, and my mules.

Just goes to show you where Ahab's priorities lie, doesn't it? His people are dying of thirst and starvation, and all that he's fixated upon is feeding his pets. You know that you're living in evil days when animal life is prized even more highly than human life.

Well, Obadiah heads out on his search, and verse 7, Behold! Just look who so happens to be walking by. What a chance. Yeah, right. He meets Elijah, and he falls on his face.

He humbles himself before the one who carries the word of the Lord. And in verse 8, Elijah says to him, Go and tell Ahab that Elijah is here.

And this unsettles Obadiah. And really from verse 9 to 14, Obadiah gives this short speech expressing that he is afraid that Ahab will put him to death.

[ 8 : 07 ] He says that in verse 9, verse 12, and verse 14. He's afraid. Now, if you read the commentators on 1 Kings, I've read a lot of commentaries on 1 Kings.

Some of them I'm thankful I've read. Others, not so much. But you will see that a lot of them absolutely tear Obadiah to shreds for this. One even calls him a coward.

Others suggest that what he is really worried about is protecting his career and his status that he holds in the royal household. Even though there's not a hint of that in the text, that's what people just assume.

Most commentators rebuke this man fiercely. And maybe, you know, right now you're doing the same. Maybe when it was read earlier, you were doing the same. You were thinking, how dreadful.

As if you or I would be any better in that situation. Well, notice please that the Lord God does not rebuke Obadiah at all here. Neither does Elijah, and neither does the author of Kings and thus the Holy Spirit.

[ 9 : 12 ] And anyway, if you look carefully at the text, Obadiah is not actually afraid of facing Ahab. In verse 12, he states that he's really fearful that once he's told Ahab that Elijah is here, the Lord, by his spirit, will suddenly whisk away Elijah and Ahab will then take his rage out on Obadiah.

Ahab, that's what he's really afraid of. Well, in verse 15, Elijah, he is so kind and calm, and he gives this sincere servant of the Lord the encouragement that he needs.

Look at what he says. As the Lord of hosts lives, that is, as the Lord God, who is the commander of the armies of heaven, as he lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to Ahab today.

Now we'll look at what happens next in a moment, but before then, let's just ask, what are we to learn from these contrasting servants of the Lord? Well, friends, I find this so encouraging.

I think this tells us that not everyone is expected to be an Elijah. Isn't that great? Not everyone is expected to be an Elijah.

[ 10 : 24 ] Actually, all of God's servants are different. Obadiah is obviously very different from Elijah. Elijah, Elijah's ministry is more public, confrontational. Obadiah works quietly, behind the scenes, in a behind-the-scenes fashion, and yet he is faithful in the place where the Lord has placed him.

And that should be a great encouragement to us, especially if you are not like Elijah by nature. As one writer puts it, the Lord and the Bible never tell us that there is only one kind of servant of the Lord.

We are not called to be Elijah clones. Faithfulness is not so dull that it comes only in one flavor. The service of the real God is actually wonderfully diverse.

So let that encourage you. Let that encourage you. Well, secondly, second big point, next scene in the passage, from verse 17 to 21, we hear a challenging summons to follow the Lord.

So before we get to the big fight scene, we have yet another confrontation that takes place. There's a lot of tension that builds up in the passage. And in verse 17, Ahab confronts Elijah.

[ 11 : 43 ] And as soon as he sees the prophet, he's full of rage. And he says, Is it you? You troubler of Israel. That just goes to show you how skewed the king's thinking has become.

He looks at the prophet of God, the one who brings the good and holy and just word of the Lord, and he accuses the prophet of the Lord to producing evil for Israel.

And Elijah's just having none of it. Look at verse 18. He says, I have not troubled Israel. You and your father's household are to blame. Don't blame me. Don't blame God.

You have refused to walk by the obedience of faith, rejecting the Lord's commandments, and have gone to follow, notice, the Baals. Let's just be clear on this. Back then, Baal singular could refer to the one pagan god of the storms and fertility.

But Baals was also a collective term for a number of different pagan gods at the time, including Baal singular. It seems to be that Ahab's idolatry was wider than just Baal.

[ 12 : 49 ] But anyway, in verse 19, Elijah says to Ahab to gather all Israel and get 450, the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, the Canaanite goddess, and all who eat at Jezebel's table, and come and meet me on Mount Carmel.

And I think rather surprisingly in verse 20, Ahab accepts. He accepts the request. He's up for the fight. And he gathers all Israel and the prophets of Baal together.

It's only Jezebel and her pals who are where are no show. And in verse 21, they gather together at Mount Carmel. Now Mount Carmel, we tend to think of it as one hill, but actually it was a term that referred to a range of mountains and hills in the northwest on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea near the border of Tyre and Sidon, Jezebel's homeland.

And back then, the pagans believed that that particular area was Baal's home. Mount Carmel was his holy hill. It was a sacred site for the worship of Baal.

And with everyone gathered before him, Elijah draws near to the people and he sticks it to them. Look at what he says, verse 21. He says, How long will you go on limping between two different opinions?

[ 14 : 15 ] If the Lord is God, follow him. But if Baal, then follow him. And friends, in these two sentences, the spiritual sickness of the people is exposed and laid bare.

And the question, the one question that could not be avoided was posed with stark clarity. See, under Ahab, the people of Israel had become so corrupt in their thinking, they actually believed that they could serve both the Lord and Baal, limping between the two.

It is a pitiful image. And in Ahab's multicultural society, it was not a matter of either or. They welcomed the religion of Jezebel and gave it a respect alongside what they imagined to be the worship of the Lord.

And Elijah lovingly says to the people, that is just not right. Stop it. Stop it. You can't serve both the Lord and Baal.

If the Lord is God, then follow him. But if Baal is God, then follow him. And friends, really what the prophet is trying to get the people to ask is the question that even many today refuse to face.

[ 15 : 36 ] And the question is, who is God? Why do people avoid that question? Well, because once you know who God truly is, you must honor him as God.

Give thanks to him as God. Worship him as God. Serve him as God. Otherwise, you are denying that he is God and you're exchanging the truth about God for a lie.

But friends, Elijah's question is compulsory. That is, it is not possible to avoid answering this question because the one that you follow, friends, is the one that you decide is God.

In other words, whatever determines the direction and the shape of your life and my life is our God. As one writer puts it, if you're stumbling along, limping between many different opinions, if one moment your God is Baal and the next moment your God is the Lord, you are headed for a fall.

If one moment you're driven by your selfish ambitions and the next your passions and the next by peer pressure and the next by your greed and the next by your anger, your jealousy, your love of pleasure, your love of money and occasionally you imagine by the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are no better off than the people of Israel back then in those days.

[ 16 : 58 ] So friends, we all need to listen to Elijah. If the Lord is God, follow him. And look at how the people respond in verse 21 to the challenge.

The people did not answer. And begins here, what begins here is a theme that runs through the next bit of the chapter and that brings us on to our third point this morning.

We see the contest which shows the Lord as God. The contest which shows the Lord as God. And a big theme of this passage will be that there is someone who does not answer.

There is someone who does not answer and someone who does. So here's the main event, a public prime time fight between the Lord and Baal to see who the real God is.

And the one who shows himself as the real God is to be followed. That's the key issue in this section. And as I said back then, according to the pagans, the favorite to win this fight would have been Baal, actually.

[ 18 : 08 ] For as I said earlier, the fight is taking place in Baal's home stadium. This was an away match for the Lord God. And look at the support. The support for Baal far outstripped the support for the Lord.

Baal has 450 prophets crying out and praying to him. The Lord has just one. There's just one faithful servant of the Lord on that mountain. And what we're going to see is a shock result for all those who put their money on Baal.

Well, in verse 23 and 24, Elijah lays out the laws of the contest. Firstly, two bulls are to be selected. The prophets of Baal get first choice.

They will pick their bull, cut it into pieces, and they will lay it all onto wood of an altar to Baal. Then Elijah will do the same with the other bull, except he will lay his pieces on a repaired altar to the Lord.

We'll think about that altar in just a minute. In other words, both sides are preparing a sacrifice to the Lord God. Neither side is allowed to set any fire to the wood to their altar.

[ 19 : 19 ] Instead, they're to look to the Lord their God in order to turn it into a burnt offering. The prophets of Baal are to call out to Baal to see if he will send down fire.

And Elijah will call out to the Lord to see if he will answer and send down fire. And the winner of this fight, friends, is the God who torches his sacrifice. The loser is the God who does not answer at all.

Verse 24, everyone agrees, everyone's happy and things proceed. Verse 25, Elijah says to his opponents, oh, you first, after you. I'll let you prophets of Baal, you go on, I'll just wait my turn.

Go on, you crack on. And in verse 26, the prophets of Baal step up to the challenge. They prepare the bull, set it out on the altar and they start crying out to the Lord not to the Lord, sorry, not to the Lord, to Baal in prayer.

And they are at it for hours. They pray for hours and hours and hours from morning until noon. They will not stop crying out, oh, Baal, answer us.

[ 20 : 27 ] But verse 26, there was no voice. No one answered. And notice that these prophets are described as limping around the altar.

the same word used by Elijah back in verse 21 to describe Israel and their pathetic rebellious state. The Hebrew word they are limping, it means to bump into stuff uncontrollably in chaos.

That's what they were doing. They are limping around, crying out for hours. And in verse 27, Elijah starts with what I call godly mockery.

Godly mockery. There's a type of mockery, friends, that it is very godly. And here's an example of it. And I paraphrase verse 27. He says, come on, lads, come on, keep on crying out to Baal.

Oh, go on, you can do it. I'm sure he'll hear you eventually. Perhaps he's away thinking about the answer he's going to give you. Perhaps he's gone to the facilities to spend a penny.

[ 21 : 29 ] That's in the Hebrew. That's what it means to relieve himself. It means going to the toilet. Or perhaps he's just gone away for a little bit, popped down the shop to buy some milk and a paper. Perhaps he's having a snooze.

Maybe he's gone for a sleep. And all you need to do is just wake him up by crying out a bit louder. Come on, guys. I know you can do it. Go on. Friends, clearly Elijah knows that Baal is not answering these prophets because Baal does not exist.

Yes? Baal is a figment of their imagination, a creation of the hands of man, an idol who is dead, utterly powerless and lifeless.

And that is why Elijah is so confident in his mockery. And we laugh at verse 27, but in verse 28, things take a more sinister turn. And they cried out aloud and cut themselves, as was their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them.

In Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 14, the Lord commanded his people never to cut themselves. He says, you never cut yourself in the worship of me because that is what the pagans do.

[ 22 : 41 ] That's what the Canaanites do. And that's what the prophets of Baal are doing here. There's an important lesson there, friends. At the end of the day, all false religion and all idolatry and evil ideologies, all that they bring is ultimately great harm to the people who are captured by them.

Well, verse 29, more time passes and this is turning into an all-day prayer meeting for the prophets of Baal. The blood was gushing, the prophets raging and raving.

They cried and cried and cried and still there is no voice, no one answered, no one paid attention. Baal did not answer because Baal was not there.

He does not exist. And friends, whilst the prophets of Baal carry on, because we're not told that they stopped, they carried on, we're told, until Elijah offered his sacrifice. Whilst they're carrying on raving over here, Elijah, in verse 30, takes action.

And what he does is he calls to all the people. He says, come near to me. And notice, we're told twice that the people came near to him. That's an important detail in verse 21.

[ 23 : 54 ] Yeah, in verse 21, when they gathered on Mount Carmel, Elijah had to draw near to all the people. But here in verse 30, Elijah calls the people and they come near to him.

Already, there is a change of heart happening in the people as they witness the impotence of Baal. And in verse 30, Elijah repairs an old altar of the Lord.

It's most likely this altar was used a long time ago in the past, back when sacrifices were permitted to happen in such places. But at that particular time in history, there was only one main sanctioned altar of the Lord and it was found down south in Judah and Jerusalem in the temple.

But it seems for this one time only, in this one circumstance, this altar was repaired to be used again. And in verse 31 to 32, we're told how Elijah repaired this altar.

He uses 12 stones according to the symbolic of the tribes of Israel. What a statement that was. That would have been a reminder to the people that the Lord has gone over all Israel, both Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

[ 25 : 11 ] And that the current division of the kingdom was not how things should be. And we're also told that this altar was repaired in the name of the Lord. That is in line with the Lord's will.

All this was not simply Elijah's idea. And with the stone structure in place, Elijah then proceeds to dig a trench around the altar. A little strange.

We'll find out why he does that in a minute. But verse 33, he sets up the wood, he chops up the bull, and he places it all on the altar. And then he does something remarkable.

He does something remarkable. He orders the altar and the sacrifice to be saturated in water. He orders four jars of water to be filled and then poured out on the altar.

You might ask yourself, where does he get the water in a time of drought? We're not sure, we're not told, so therefore it doesn't matter. It could have been from one of the streams that you find on Mount Carmel, might have been operating.

[ 26 : 11 ] It could have been from the Mediterranean Sea, which was not that far. However they did it, we don't know, but they did it. And then Elijah gets them to repeat this another two times.

And if you do the math, Elijah got 12 jugs of water, another 12, poured out on the altar. Again, another reminder that all Israel belongs to the Lord, all 12 tribes.

And verse 35, there is so much water poured out that it filled up the trench that surrounded the altar. What is Elijah doing? Well, friends, he is making it crystal clear that any fire that appears on this altar, it has not come from a natural source.

It can only be the fire of the Lord that has set this soaking wet sacrifice ablaze. And with all of that in place, in verse 36, Elijah starts to cry out loud and lips around like all the prophets of Baal, and he's at it for hours and hours in order to try and manipulate the Lord into answering.

No. He doesn't do that. Verse 36, Elijah simply prays. He says, O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and that I have done all these things at your word.

[ 27 : 40 ] Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God and that you have turned their hearts back. And verse 38, the fire of the Lord fell.

And what a fire it is. It is so powerful. It consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, the dust, it even licked up all the water.

The water was absolutely no hindrance to the Lord and his fire. And look at the result. The Lord answers Elijah's prayer not only by sending the fire, but the Lord has also turned the hearts of all Israel that were there that day away from Baal back to himself.

Verse 39, all the people when they see the fire, they fall on their face just like Obadiah did in front of Elijah at the start of the chapter. They fear the Lord and they cry out, the Lord, he is God.

The Lord, he is God. And the bell rings. Ding, ding, ding. The fight is over. The winner undisputedly is the Lord.

[ 29 : 00 ] He is the undisputed living and true God. And Elijah, his prophet, is vindicated as well. My friends, there is a lot of implications from this passage that we could spend weeks on.

But let me just give you three implications today. Firstly, it's obvious. The Lord is God back then and the Lord is God today. The Lord God is the real God, the God of the Bible.

So we really must heed Elijah's call today. He is the Lord who's shown himself, not just here, but time and again through history, to be the living God.

The greatest moment that he showed him to be himself as the Lord was when he came in the flesh himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So follow him.

If you've not surrendered your life to this God, Elijah says, you must stop limping about between all these other things in your life that rule you and let him rule you as king.

[ 30 : 02 ] Secondly, there's a lesson here about how not to approach the Lord. Now we might be tempted to look at the prophets of Baal and have a little bit of a chuckle at the way in which they carry on in their madness, desperately seeking to try and manipulate their God into action.

We may look and think, well, I'm just so glad that I'm not like that today. I'm not like those pagans. Well, actually, is it not often the case, even with evangelical Christians today, that we can slip into a kind of Baal prophet-like behavior in our lives?

Friends, is it not true that sometimes we are guilty of thinking that God will begin to do things if only we get into a flurry of passionate religious activity?

You know, God will surely work if only I run a 24-hour prayer meeting or I spend longer in my personal devotions or more time in private prayer or go along to my growth group more often, sign up for a serving team, et cetera, et cetera.

So often, actually, as Christians, we can be guilty of taking the means of grace, like the ones I've just mentioned, that the Lord has given us and we use them in a way so as to try and manipulate, impress, and stir up God.

[ 31 : 23 ] Friends, when we do that, we're actually behaving like the prophets of Baal. Jesus says, don't pray like the pagans. When you pray to your heavenly father, you just pray to him.

He knows what you need already. There's no manipulating the true God. So don't try. Don't try. Why? Thirdly, there's a lesson here about the grace of the Lord.

Just, did you notice how Elijah's sacrifice is frequently referred to as a burnt offering? It's probably the burnt offering of all burnt offerings. But friends, the fire coming down from the Lord from heaven to consume the offering, if you know your Bible, then you would know that this actually isn't a one-off thing.

This has happened a few times already in the Bible. Back in Leviticus, 9, when worship at the tabernacle kicks off, the Lord God showed his acceptance and validation of the sacrificial system by sending down his fire on a burnt offering.

Come forwards in time to 1 Chronicles 21, we're told again that the Lord sent down fire upon a burnt offering of David in order to show where the temple should be built.

[ 32 : 41 ] And a little later in 2 Chronicles 7, when the temple was finally built under Solomon, again, the Lord sent down fire on a burnt offering indicating that he would graciously accept his people's worship and that they should approach him through this way and through the sacrificial system.

And friends, knowing all of that should really help how we read 1 Kings 18. in light of all these Old Testament parallels, the miraculous fire here, it shows you that we are dealing with a God who accepts sinners, just like Elijah.

Friends, just think about the hope that this would have declared to Israel on Mount Carmel. The Lord is not saying, not only saying to his people, I am the true living God, he is also saying, I am also the gracious God who accepts burnt offerings.

I am the God who has sanctioned and given the sacrificial system. I am the God who has provided you already with the way of reconciliation through the appointed altar.

Not this altar up in Mount Carmel, but the one down in the temple. It's almost like the Lord is saying, oh Israel, turn to me, turn to me, come to me through the way that I have graciously provided for you.

[ 34 : 02 ] Come through the burnt offering and offer it up for your sin and you will be restored. And friends, when we, the covenant of people today, when we stumble and when we fall short of the Lord's glory, whether by rebelling explicitly or by wandering from him, wandering from him, the Lord our God says to us, I am still the same God today who's provided the way back for you.



Restoration and reconciliation are found through the altar of Golgotha, the cross, the death of my precious son. So turn to him.

Maybe today that you've messed up big time over the last week. Maybe you've consciously come to church this morning knowing that you have been limping around between the Lord Jesus and something else in your life.

Well, the Lord says, come to me, come to my son once again and you will be restored. Well, our fourth and final point this morning, very briefly, the last thing we see is the consequences of seducing the Lord's people.

Please look at verse 40. And Elijah said to them, seize the prophets of Baal and let not one of them escape. And they seized them and Elijah brought them down to the brook's kitchen and slaughtered them there.

[ 35 : 31 ] Friends, if that verse chills you, that is good. You have understood it. It is chilling. It is a sobering verse. But let's just be clear on this.

Elijah here is not carrying out some kind of cold act of vindictiveness here. He's not doing that. Actually, Elijah and the people who slaughtered the prophets of Baal are obeying the Lord.

In Deuteronomy 13, it says that anyone who attempts to seduce Israel into worshipping another god, anyone who succeeds in that, they forfeit their lives.

The penalty was death. And in verse 40, Elijah is simply carrying out the provisions of the Lord's covenant law. And friends, here's a challenge for us.

If this violence of the Lord against such evil, if that offends us, then friends, it reveals that we've never really grasped just how serious sin is.

[ 36 : 34 ] And we haven't really grasped how horrific it is to turn someone's heart away from the Lord their God to a false god. Friends, those who manipulate and cause professing believers to turn away from the real Jesus, to turn away from his teaching, to turn away from what his word actually says, and to turn away from his true church, those who do that, they're going to face serious consequences.

One day, they will stand before the Lord and have to give an account for it. It is serious business, my friends, with serious consequences.

So may the Lord keep us from such evil. Well, come back next Sunday where God willing, we will see the Lord sends the rain.

But let's bow our heads, be quiet for a moment, and then I'll pray for us. We praise you, our Lord and our God, that you have revealed yourself as being the true and living God, the only God.

You are God and there is no other. We thank you too that you have revealed yourself fully and finally and clearly in the person of your Son, the Lord Jesus.

[ 38 : 09 ] And in him, you have shown us your way of reconciliation and the forgiveness of our sins. May we always trust in him alone. May we, in our hearts, humble ourselves before him.

And we pray this in his name. Amen.