

Do Powerful Demons Run Religion and Government Through False Prophets?

- All right, we've taken a few week break. We're back into the study of the life of Elijah. You ready for that? All right, this is gonna be a little bit of a mind meld. The question today is, do powerful demons run religion and government through false prophets? The answer is yes but will take an hour to explain. That being said, just so you know, I'm not feeling the best and my throat is really bothering me. Usually I'm pretty intense and loud, and this is gonna be a little quieter. And so just listen louder. That's what I'm asking you to do. And so let me pray and just pray I can get through it and do a good job. And just, I'm hoping to have the strength and the stamina and just the clarity to teach some complex things very simply. So I actually wore, you know, full denim today. It's a Canadian tuxedo. If you need strength and power, you just gotta dress for the job. So let me pray. Father, I'm not feeling the best but I'm super excited about this text. And I pray that my voice would hold up, and I pray God, that I'd be able to work by the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of Elijah, to love and serve these people. God, you love these people. I love these people, these are dear people. God, I thank you for everybody who joins us here at Trinity Church. I thank you for everybody who joins us online at Real Faith. I thank you that this is the most popular sermon series I've ever preached in 27 years. And, God, it's an important word. And so God, I'm just feeling the weight of the moment and I'm just asking that you would work through me and help me to do a good job in Jesus' good name, amen. All right, so what I want to do, and we're in 1 Kings chapter 18:20 through 40. If you wanna find that in your Bible, 1 Kings 18. We're looking at the ancient life of the prophet Elijah. And the goal is this, to look at the story and to look through the story. That's my objective. To look at the story. You've got King Ahab, passive king. Queen Jezebel, demonic, controlling queen. You've got Elijah, the prophet of God. You've got the false prophets against them. You've got God interceding and intervening. There's all these characters. I want you to look at the story and then look through the story and look through the story 3,000 years to today. Because the thesis is this. The Bible doesn't tell us just what happened, but what always happens. And even though people come and go, the demons remain the same and the same spirits are working through different people in every generation. So if you see something from a few thousand years ago, don't be surprised when that pattern continues into our present day. Let me start with one image that I really want you to consider and to take with you. So, where's this? It's famous, it's the White House. Right now, maybe it's the outhouse but that's the White House and probably shouldn't have said that but anyways, it's the White House. And so that's called the Resolute desk. And the Resolute desk is where the president sits and makes decisions that affect all of us. To use the language of the Bible, if we were to call this what the Bible calls it, the Bible called this a throne. A throne is where a king sits. And there are various thrones where various leaders sit and they have authority and they make decisions that affect everyone who is under their oversight. The Bible speaks of the throne around 200-plus times. It's a major theme. The story behind the story in the story of Elijah is that there is a king on a throne, his name is Ahab. You're going to meet him again in a moment. But over his throne is the throne of our great God and Savior, the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. And ultimately, the battle has always been over who gets to sit on the throne. Before there were any wars, there was a great war. Revelation 12:7 through 9 says that there was war in heaven. And ultimately, God was high and exalted and he was ruling and reigning over his kingdom, which is everything and everyone he

created, from his throne. And what happened is Satan and demons decided, we think we want that throne. They wanted to remove God and they wanted to replace God. And so there was a war in heaven between God, and the angels and the demons, these created beings over the throne. Here's how Isaiah explains it, Isaiah 14:13 and 14. God says to Satan, "You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven.'" Okay, what we're talking about here is high places. You're gonna see a high place called Mount Carmel when we get to the day where Elijah has the showdown with the counterfeit prophets. It's a high place. Satan said, "I will ascend to heaven above the stars of God." Stars often is ancient language for angels. God's up there, we're down here; the angels are mediating between us. And sometimes they're called stars. He goes on to say, "And I will set my throne on high." Satan said, "I'm gonna set my throne on a high place and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds and I will make myself like the most high." Before there were any problems, there was the first problem. Before there were any battles, there was the first battle. God who was creator, created angels. Some of those angels led by Satan decided we don't want to serve God, we want to usurp God. We don't want to be under God's authority, we want to be god with our own authority. They wanted to live rebellious against and independent of God. The heart of the demonic is rebellion against God and independence from God. You need to know that. If you rebel against God and you live independent of God, what you're doing is satanic. And so what happens then? Satan and demons declare war on God. God doesn't fight them, Revelation 12:7 through 9, instead the angels do because they're not equal to God. Satan and demons are created beings. The angels defeat the demons and cast them down to earth. What happens now is, up until this point in history, there's only one throne. And God alone sits on the throne. Satan has a war for the throne, loses the war, and decides that he will set up his own throne. Everything that God creates, Satan counterfeits. So he sets up his throne and he has his dominion and his followers. Now what happens when he's cast down to the earth? Now there is God's throne and there is Satan's throne. And then what happens on the earth, there's a lot of thrones. There are various nations, political leaders, governments. There's smaller thrones like education, entertainment, culture-making, the economy. There's lots of thrones. To think biblically, the throne is where the leader sits. And the big throne is where the highest leader sits. Well here's where we find ourselves today. We've got God's throne and Satan's throne. We live between these thrones. We live between heaven and hell. And on earth every day there is a battle over whether the thrones will be reigned kingdom down or hell up every day. So right now there's a battle in every nation. Is God or Satan gonna sit on the seat of authority, rule from the throne through a human leader? The same is true everywhere. We're seeing this in the economy, we're seeing this in the education of our children, we're seeing this with the Center for Disease Control and medical decisions. We're seeing this in the courts of law. Everywhere there seems to be a war, there seems to be a battle, there seems to be a conflict because there is. The question is, will the thrones, the big thrones and the little thrones that dominate our world, will they be ruled kingdom down or hell up? Will the person on that throne be filled by the Holy Spirit or an unholy spirit? Will the person sitting on that throne bring forth the kingdom of God or the kingdom that is against God? And so the whole backdrop of Elijah and the whole Bible is spiritual warfare. And these thrones, they are literal thrones in the Bible, they're what the ancient Christians in the Celtic world would call thin places. God's in heaven, and a thin place is where

God rules and reigns through someone or something. The demonic counterfeit of that would be an evil thin place. It'd be a place where there is a demonic stronghold where evil has taken root and Satan is ruling and reigning with authority. Well this brings us to the story of Elijah. There's God in heaven and he's got a throne. There's Satan. And then there is the nation of Israel. And the nation of Israel has a throne. The king who sits on the throne is supposed to be under the throne of Jesus and do what Jesus says. Instead, what we have in Israel is we have a king who sits on the throne and he is serving Satan, he is literally pulling the culture of hell up into the nation. I'll give you two scriptures in the backdrop of Elijah. Stick with me. This is gonna be the deep end of the pool and a bit of a mind meld. So we're in 1 Kings 18. Let me go forward and then we'll come backward. 1 Kings 22:19 says: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne. Okay, who's that Lord? It's the Lord Jesus Christ. What he says is, I saw into the unseen realm, I saw into heaven. And there's the Lord Jesus seated on, what? A throne. And all the hosts of heaven standing beside him. All the angels and the departed saints on his right and on his left. So he goes from the unseen realm to the seen realm. He goes to the history of the earth. And then we read this in 1 Kings 22:10: Now the kings of Israel were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes. The reason it says kings, the nation had been judged by God and divided into two kingdoms. There was the northern kingdom called Israel. Pretty much all their kings were demonic and evil. Satan got the throne of that nation. And then in the other kingdom also called Judah, that which is the southern kingdom, they had a succession of good and bad kings. It was a bit of a hit and a mess. Now regarding the kings who sit on the throne, they were given some commands by God. All of this is in the study guide. It's free at realfaith.com if you look in the store. But they were, the king was supposed to be under the throne of Jesus. And God was saying, "If you're gonna sit on that throne, you need to submit to my throne. Your throne is not the high throne. My throne is the high throne. And your throne needs to obey my throne. You need to marry- You need to be a Hebrew, marry a Hebrew." Ahab didn't do that. He married Jezebel who was Sedonian. You need to live in obedience to the word of God and the fear of God. He did not, he disobeyed the word of God, had no regard for God. "You need to guard your heart," God told the the kings, "of the false trinity of greed and pride and pleasure," and he indulged in all those things. God said, "You need to care for my children and your children." Ahab cared for neither. And they were supposed to lead the Lord in singular devotion to God and Ahab did not. So here's what we have, okay? Not just what happened, but what always happens. What we end up with is God versus the government. This sound familiar? Okay? God versus the government. Because the government had decided this throne belongs to Satan, it doesn't belong to God. It's gonna pull hell up, it's not gonna invite heaven down. We're gonna join Satan in his war against God. That's the backdrop of the story of Elijah. Now I don't mean to get political but I'll give you one example. This is just a category and then we're gonna get into the story. Is it still true that there is a battle over leadership and who sits on the thrones of authority and decision-making, and there is still a conflict between God and government? Absolutely. I'll give you one modern day example. Look, not just at the story of Elijah, but through it. So, I grew up in the state of Washington, met my wife there, we raised our kids there. And recently the state of Washington was afraid that the abortion pill might not be readily available. So the state purchased 3,000, excuse me, 3 million abortion pills to hold on backstock, okay? And just passed SB 5599. My phone's been ringing off the hook all week

'cause we still got a lot of family and friends there. SB 5599 is this, if there is a child and they have gender dysphoria- Take that down, I'll explain this and then we'll put it up. So if a child has gender dysphoria, and that is, that your mind isn't congruent with your body. So if your body is male but your mind is female or your body is female and your mind is male, you said "I don't feel congruent, I feel incongruent," that's called gender dysphoria. It's a mental disorder. If your child feels that way, the state has decided that you need to give them puberty blockers, hormone treatment for the rest of their life which really alters their body chemistry and also take them in for gender transition and genital mutilation. Literally castrate children. And the state has decided, if as a parent you say we're not gonna do that, then the state can seize custody of your child and you no longer have parental rights. So I've got people calling me, they're like, "What do we do?" Move. Move, move. Move to Arizona, we'll take you. So you think about it, at the end of the day, the government is saying, "You know what, we don't care what God says." 'Cause here's what God says, we're made male and female. And if you're a parent, you raise sons and daughters, and that the parents are responsible before God for the wellbeing of the child. And the government says, "No. We disagree with everything God says." And now we have a war. And the question is, well who sits on the throne at the school? Who sits at the throne at the State house? Who sits at the throne in the government? Who sits on the throne literally in the courthouse? It's a spiritual war. And so if you're a parent who says, "No, wait a minute. You know, we don't think that a child should be able to make a life-altering decision that'll never allow them to have children or normal marital relations. In fact, their crayons are still a major part of their diet. We don't feel like they're ready to make major decisions. Let's just wait." The state says, "No, you have no rights or authority." And the same week as well, there was a study that came out, it's very, very interesting. It comes from the National Library of Medicine. The question was, does maltreatment in children affect sexual orientation in adulthood? Here's the first line of the study, I'll read it to you: Epidemiological studies find a positive association between physical and sexual abuse, neglect and witnessing violence in childhood and same sex sexuality in adulthood. Here's the study, non-Christian study, today, teens in 20-somethings that are struggling with mental illness and gender confusion, it's because many, if not most of them, were abused and have trauma.

- [Congregant] That's right.

- They either were sexually abused, physically abused, or they witnessed trauma and abuse. And so wouldn't the healthy thing to be say, well if they have trauma and abuse, let's get them some help and some healing and see if they're doing better and see if they think differently. No, let's seize their custody from their parents who can no longer care for them and let's mutilate them. It's new days but it's old demons. These are the exact same things that were happening in the nation of Israel. The government had overtaken the parents. The government had overtaken the church. The government had overtaken the economy. The government had overtaken the educational institutions. They closed all the Christian schools, they killed all the Bible teachers, they eradicated all the parental rights and they brought demonism into the nation. The result is when that happens, you have to practice civil disobedience. This is not where you're rebellious, you hate authority; it's where you recognize that God's authority is the highest authority, and

when government goes against God, you need to go against government. Right? That's my introduction. Okay, now we'll get into the story. Okay. Number one, sometimes it's godly to fight publicly, okay? Some of you have been told that Christians should only and always be nice, say nice things, and no one should ever get their feelings hurt. 1 Kings 18:20 through 26: So Ahab, the demonic king, he's the man on the throne, but he's not serving Jesus, he's serving Satan. Sent all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. Again, this is a high place. This is a high place where there is a throne that they would worship demon gods. And sometimes the king would go, be demon possessed, and then he would literally be the thin place between hell and earth. And Elijah, here's the man of God, filled with the spirit of God. Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you go limping," literally dragging your feet, "between two different opinions?" It's very simple. "If the Lord is God, follow him. But if Baal, then follow him." Make a choice. And the people did not answer a word. They weren't ready to decide, are we for or against God? Let's see how this plays out. They're living by sight, not by faith. Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. Let two bulls be given to us and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. And when you call upon the name of your God"- Here's what we'll do, we'll put a bull out, we'll see which God sets it on fire. You go first. You go first. Your god, your demon god. "And I will call upon the name of the Lord. And the God who answers by fire, he is God." It's gonna be very clear. You ask for fire, I ask for fire, we see which God can do fire. And the people answered, "It is well spoken." Right, that's a good idea. Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first for you are many and call upon the name of your God but put no fire to it." And they took the bull that was given them and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal, it's a demon God, from morning until noon, hours, saying, "O Baal, answer us." But there was no voice and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. A couple of things I wanna point out here. This is the showdown. And eventually things come to a head and it happens right here. First and foremost, I want you to see that the decision is very binary. Here's what Elijah says, "God or Satan, typified by Baal." Very simple. People are like, "What about the spectrum? What about the option?" There's two. Heaven, hell. Life, death. Truth, lies. Right and wrong. God and Satan. There's two categories. You're like, "I don't think so." Well then you're in the wrong category. So it's a very binary choice. In addition, God has been very patient. You're gonna see God do some very judgmental things in a moment. But God had waited five generations for them to repent and this family of leaders never did. And then God told them there will be no rain for three plus years and there was no rain for three and a half years. That is judgment. Every day, more livestock are dying, more of the crops are dying, more people are dying, the nation is dying, the economy is dying. And no one is repenting. No one is saying, "God, you're the real God. We were wrong." No one is doing that. In addition, the lack of rain for three and a half years preceding this moment was a judgment on Baal. He was called the storm god. He was over the rain. And he can't make it rain for three and a half years. Because as the Puritans used to say, "The devil is still the Lord's devil." The devil is still the Lord's devil. Satan and God are not even. Satan is still under God 'cause God is creator. Now where is, for those of you who are paying attention, where is the showdown between Elijah and the prophets of Baal

and Asherah, where is it?

- Mount Carmel.

- Mount Carmel. This one of the most famous stories in the whole Bible, especially for the story of Elijah, Mount Carmel is a high place, okay? I told you about Isaiah, that the war in heaven was over who sits on the throne in the high place. When they would have high places, they would build thrones there. The throne was literally to be a counterfeit of Jesus and they were to get as high above us and as close to heaven as they could. And then a throne would be built where a demon god would be worshiped and the king would come and he too would worship the god and be filled with demonic power. A high place is, so it's two things. It's a counterfeit. A high place is a counterfeit and it's also a thin place. Just as there are places where it seems like the seen and the unseen realm, heaven and earth are closer together. This is the Garden of Eden. This is the temple where the presence of God is there in a unique way in the Old Testament with his people. This is Jacob's ladder where the angels ascend and descend between heaven and earth. This is the body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Today, this is the body of a believer filled with the Holy Spirit. My friend, if you are living in the Spirit, you are a thin place. Right, you're living a little closer to heaven than everybody else. And the demonic counterfeit of that is a thin place where hell is a little bit closer. So they would go there to have sex and to sacrifice children and to commit murder and to cast spells and to do evil. Now what's interesting is, what I want to do is, when you see something in one period and then you see it again many years later, you need to see that there is a spiritual connection between those two things, okay? So here's what I want to do. You ready for, if you don't have a headache yet, you ready for the next level mind meld?

- Let's do it.

- Let's do it, okay? So, the story of Elijah is then something that is echoed a thousand years later in Revelation chapter 2 by the Lord Jesus Christ. In Revelation chapter 2, there's a high place. It has a throne where they're worshiping a demon god. It's a town called Pergamon. The high place in Mount Carmel would have been called Satan's throne. In the days of Elijah, the high place on Mount Carmel where Elijah is picking the fight with the demon prophets of Baal was considered in that day, Satan's throne. They would have said that is the spiritual source of authority, that's where we worship and meet with our demon gods. That is a uniquely powerful place to connect with the divine realm. The same thing happens a thousand years later. And Jesus says this in Revelation chapter 2:13. He says, "I know where you dwell," where Satan's throne is. He's talking to a church in Pergamon. And what Jesus says is, there's a high place there, that is the place of Satan's throne. It's demonic and it's evil. Now what's interesting, if you look at the story of Elijah and you go a thousand years later to Jesus' rebuke in Revelation 2, in that same chapter, Jesus talks about Jezebel. Talks about a high place and Jezebel. He says, "I have this against you, you tolerate that woman Jezebel." Because the spirit of Jezebel was at work in the church as it was in the days of Elijah. What's really interesting, in the days of Elijah, and the days that Jesus is rebuking the church at Pergamon, their worship was for a male and

female deity. In the days of Elijah, it was Baal and Asherah. In the days that Jesus is rebuking the church, it's Zeus and Athena. In addition, overseeing the worship at the high place in the days of Elijah were a king and a queen, Ahab and Jezebel. And in the days that Jesus is rebuking, it's King Eumenes and Queen Apollonis. So just get this straight, here's this pattern we see throughout history. There's a high place, it's a thin place between earth and hell. It's where demons want to rule and reign. It's where male and female deities are worshiped with sex and with evil and with the sacrifice of children. And it's where kings and queens come to get their divine power. What happened in the days of Elijah happens in the days of Jesus. And somebody asks, "These are weird old stories, what does it have to do with anything?" Well, okay, ready to go deeper? So the throne, Satan's throne at Pergamon, it still exists. In fact, it was in ancient Turkey. I've been there and I've been to Pergamon and I've been to the high place. The Germans took it. They brought it to Germany. The Nazis reconstructed it because they wanted to have Satan's throne in their nation so they could have that power. Today you can go to Germany, you can go to the Pergamon Museum and you can see it. That's what an ancient throne looked like. It was a place of worship, sex, sacrifice. Kings and queens ruling and reigning by the power of demonic spirits. See, we live in a day when Satan has just told everybody, don't be judgmental, don't render verdicts, don't live in black and white categories. Instead just practice tolerance and diversity. Everything is literally 50 shades of gray. Okay? So, let's go deeper. So they're on Mount Carmel, they're on the high place, and they're sacrificing what animal? The bull. Why the bull? The bull was the icon for the worship of the demon god Baal. It meant fertility and strength. So when those people saw a bull, it opened up to, oh well that's our religion, that's our demon, that's our holidays, that's our sexuality, that's our child sacrifice. It opened up a category in the same way today. Let me say this to you. This worship of Baal through the icon of the bull, it went all the way back to the days of Moses. Do you remember when Moses went up on the mountain? What the people did? They made a golden bull and they worshiped it. And so this demon keeps trying to get into that nation. And so what happens is the entrance of the worship of Baal through the icon of the bull, it started with not Ahab but his family ancestry. In fact, it started with his great, great, great, great grandfather, King Jeroboam, 1 Kings 12. The point is this, God has a legacy and so does Satan. God works through a family, so do demons. So for generations, this family had worshiped Baal through a bull. Now we tend to overlook this, but true or false, in our day, we still have icons that are animals that reveal to us bigger categories. I'll show you. See, we do this all the time. And I'm not saying the Bulls are demonic, they may be, but at the end of the day, we still use icons of animals. And Revelation 1, the Holy Spirit just reminds me, says that people tend to worship birds and reptiles and creatures. And what those are, those are icons representing bigger realities. So the sacrifice of the bull is a judgment on Baal. That being said, last point in this section, how many real prophets are there in the story, okay? There's 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah. They're all employed by Jezebel, says that they eat at her table. So just for those of you who are good at math, okay? It's one versus 850. Let me say, these are always the odds of the Bible teacher and the truth teller. For every prophet, there's 850 false prophets. For everybody who tells the truth, there's 850 people that are gonna get paid for the lie. See, in our day, people talk about fake news. That's nothing new. It's always been fake news. Satan has always dominated the messaging. And what's happening here is the people,

they've seen the schools closed, they've seen the pastors killed, they've seen the churches destroyed, and they're scared, they don't know who to listen to. Well over here, there's 850 people that all have degrees and they've got platforms and, you know, they've got coifed hair and nice suits and they speak articulate English and have charts and graphs. And then here's one homeless guy named Elijah who hasn't taken a shower since his third birthday and he lives in the woods and he's wearing camel's hair and he eats what he can kill and his breath is not awesome, okay? And his beard makes ZZ Top look groomed. He's that guy. So if you're looking at him, you're like, I think the crazy homeless guy may be off. 'Cause these 850 guys who are all educated beyond their intelligence, their resume says that they know what they're talking about. Don't believe everything you hear. Do your homework. And so it's always been this way. The number of false prophets always outweigh the real prophet. And that's the story of Elijah. Okay that being said, I'll say this too, I just got all kinds of weird thoughts. Every time there's a demonic battle for a throne, this can be a government, this can be a church, this can be a school, this can be a business, this can be an educational center, wherever there's leadership, Satan wants to dominate. And he wants to overtake every sphere of culture because he wants to have his kingdom replace God's kingdom. Every time that happens, there are false prophets who come up and they lie to empower evil to take over the throne. The Jezebel spirit is a spirit of false prophecy. Jesus says this in Revelation 2: I have this against you. You tolerate that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess. The Jezebel spirit is a spirit of false prophecy. And she employs 850 false prophets. These are the people that show up and they're like, I'm in charge, I need to talk to the leader. I need to speak, I need to set the message. I need to be in charge, I have something to say. The Lord told me. I had a vision, I had a dream. They're pushing to be heard. And if you tolerate, they will dominate. That's why the Jezebels always find the Ahab's. The Ahab is like, "I don't do conflict." And the Jezebel says, "That's perfect 'cause I do control. And if you won't do conflict, I will do control." Okay, ready to go back to the story? It's very quiet today. Before we do, let me do one more thing. It's gonna be like that, I can just sense. Here is Elijah 1 versus 850. How many of you felt like that? How many of you are like, did I miss the rapture? Like, you know, are all of God's people gone? Like, you know, how many of you, the world today, it feels like, yeah, it feels like we're living hell up and the false prophets are telling the story. Right? That's where we are. There is an encouragement that many years later, a thousand years later, the apostle Paul writes the book of Romans. And he talks about the days of Elijah. Romans 11:2 through 5: God has not rejected his people. The scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel. "Lord, they've killed your prophets, they've demolished your altars, and I alone am left and they seek my life." But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself 7,000 men who have not bowed their knee to Baal." Right? There's still a few. So too, at the present time, there is a remnant chosen by grace. The point is this, even as it gets dark and bleak, there's always a remnant. This is the encouragement and the hope in the story.

- Amen.

- How many of us, we look at the culture, you're like, "I think I'm the last one," you know? And God's like, "No, actually there's 7,000 men, strong men in that day, in addition to the women and

children who have not bowed their knee to Baal." I love the fact here that God says there's some men. The key is always you need some men. That's why the government tries to brainwash the children and to eradicate the men because then there's no one to stand up against evil. There's always a remnant. And the way this works, there's two reasons here for the remnant at the days of Elijah. Number one, all the people are hearing is the false prophets. So they're scared and getting lies and demonic information. They don't know what's true. So what the remnant needs to do, they need to come out of the closet. If you're part of the remnant, Jesus can't just be Lord of your heart, he needs to be Lord of your life.

- Amen.

- Yes.

- And if everybody else is gonna come out of the closet, you should too. Right? I love Jesus, I believe the Bible. You know. You know, I'm on team Jesus. That's me. Just go public. Elijah's doing that, and that'll encourage, which is literally to pour courage into those who are like, I don't know if I wanna go public. The other thing is, God preserves the remnant not only to witness to the majority, but when they get saved, to also disciple them. If a bunch of people get saved, he needs some people who know God to help the new people learn about God. And so here what Paul encourages in Romans, he says that there's gonna be times in history where you just feel like God, is it over? Like, did you lose? Are we done? Like, is this the end? And when you feel that way, just ask yourself, am I part of the remnant? I'll give you an analogy I've shared before but I'll share again. It's the best one I've got for the remnant. So, some years ago we moved, we've moved many times in our life for safety, security. We've had all kinds of craziness. So we moved again, when the kids were little, and there was a series of homes that were built on what was previously a large apple orchard. There were originally apple trees. They cut all the trees down, they subdivided the land and they built the homes. So we moved into one of these homes. And there was only two trees left, like in this entire former orchard and they were in our yard. And nobody had pruned these trees for a very long time. Very long time. So there was this one tree and it took up a huge section of my yard 'cause the branches came up, they came down, and they literally just were on the ground filling much of the yard. Guess how many apples that tree produced? Zero. That was a zero- That was a fruitless tree. I didn't know what to do. I called a gardener and I was like, "Okay, what do we do?" He's like, that tree's never been pruned. He's like, if you don't prune a tree, eventually you're gonna kill the tree. The only way for a tree to be fruitful, it needs to get pruned. I said, "Okay, what do we do?" He said, "We gotta prune that tree." He said, "We gotta get the dead branches, cut them off. All those sucker branches that are taking the life out of the trunk, we need to get rid of the sucker branches. We need to take the fruitful branches and we need to severely prune them. And then just wait. The life energy will go back to the branches. They're fruitful and you'll have a lot of apples." But the tree, because it's not been pruned for so long, it's gonna be, it's gonna be traumatized. This is gonna be a lot for the tree. So we went from this giant tree to what looked like the Christmas tree from the Charlie Brown Christmas special. There was very little left. And guess what happened? Tons of apples. It took a while but there was tons of apples. And the gardener said,

"We just need to keep trimming that tree. If you don't prune it, it'll go back to being a fruitless tree." What's happening in the days of Elijah, what's happening today is a pruning. It's a pruning. We're getting rid of the false prophets and the false teachers and the counterfeit doctrines and the Woke progressive ideology and those who use Jesus but don't really love Jesus. There's a pruning and so as you hear, even in our day, you hear like attendance in church is down, Christians are fewer. You're like, oh my gosh, is it over? No, it's just pruning. Don't lose hope. Right, the church will be here when Jesus comes back.

- Amen.

- That's what he says. But the pruning is this, who or what needs to get cut away so that we can get back to the remnant and the remnant can be nourished and then it can bear fruit.

- Amen.

- Amen.

- And this is true in your life. Right now, probably what you're going through is not a punishment but it's a pruning. And even, and it hurts. You're like, God, why am I going through this? It hurts. I thought you love me. God was like, I do love you. I'm not punishing you, I'm pruning you. And you're gonna be fruitful but today we need to cut away some behaviors, some attitudes, some doctrines, some relationships that are sucker branches in your life. So what we've seen at this point in the story is there is a remnant, there has been a pruning, and here's the good news. I don't wanna I spoil it, we'll keep going. God starts by pruning to get down to the remnant, and then there's a revival. Lots of people get saved. This is the only hope for Western culture in the United States of America. Because right now what has happened is, Satan's got all the thrones. Education, he owns it. Economy, owns it. Politics, owns it. Entertainment, owns it. Medicine, owns it. Like well, what do we need? Well, we need that throne to rule over all these thrones and to bring life to God's people so that that remnant can become a revival. Back to the story. So first point, sometimes it's godly to fight publicly. Secondly, you may like this, sometimes it's godly to mock publicly. I know that some of you didn't know that there was a ministry of mockery. You didn't know that, okay? You're gonna get healed today and delivered. This is gonna be a great day for you, okay? Some of you're like, I'm sarcastic. Thank you, Lord. You know? And so 1 Kings 18:27 through 29, we're back to Mount Carmel, the high place. It's literally Satan's servants, God's servant, it's the showdown, public. And at noon, Elijah, what? Mocked them. Hurt their feelings. It wasn't a safe space. He used the wrong pronouns. It's terrible. Didn't recycle. I mean it was just , it's wheels off. Just, they were, you know, super . I mean it was- They were triggered. They were all triggered. Just triggered. And he mocked them saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god." Maybe your god's a little old, hard of hearing. Maybe turn up the volume. Either he's musing, maybe he's surfing the internet, maybe he's busy. Or he's relieving himself, literally taking a dump. That's literally what it means. You know, lactose intolerant. Did ice cream last night. Can't make it. He's tied up, he's got a tummy day. You know, he's got a situation. We've all been there, you know? I love queso. Next day I'm like, I don't. You know? He's just-

He's having a moment, okay? Okay? Or he is on a journey. Maybe he got lost, like an old guy out on a walk. Like, where did you lose him? I don't know. Or perhaps he's asleep. You know, maybe he's lazy. Maybe he's taking a nap. Maybe he's a Democrat. You know, maybe he's sleeping.

- [Congregant] Ooh yeah!

- You're like, that's offensive. It's an illustration of the point, okay? So. And he must be awakened, you know? You gotta wake him up. And so what is he doing? He's making fun of what they take seriously. When someone takes everything seriously but God, you can't take them seriously. See, we believe in being serious about God, but not about stupidity. Some things are just stupid. Just absolutely stupid. And if you treat them with seriousness, you're empowering them and honoring them.

- Yes.

- So don't. If everyone's watching and that's what's happening, all the people are watching, and all of a sudden it's like, here's the prophets of Baal. They come out, you know they're all dressed up, they're all professionals. They got the prophets of Baal's, there's 850. They're all very seriously and Elijah is like, I think your God is taking a dump. You know, it's- They're like, oh! Wasn't expecting that. But again, you guys are laughing and the point is that we don't mock God but we mock the things that mock God.

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- If they're gonna mock God, we're gonna mock them. And what we're saying is, you don't take him seriously, so we don't take you seriously. Now what this does, this allows the people to not be gripped by fear. There are some things going on right now that are just stupid. Like this week, there was a man who identifies as a woman, who plays volleyball and smashed a volleyball into a young woman, gave her a concussion and she's got injuries and is hurt. And we call that tolerance and diversity. That's stupid. That's stupid. That's just stupid. That's stupid. You know, this week there was a man who felt like he was a woman, walked into a girl's locker room, took all his clothes off and took a shower with the girls. That's stupid. My wife says evil. And so at the end of the day, we don't mock the victims of these things, but we say this is stupid. You have denied nature, you have denied reality, you have a mental illness and you are a joke with no punchline, right? And we don't just pick fights, we're not just making, but there's certain things you're like, that's just stupid, that's crazy. And I know that you got 850 false prophets educated beyond their intelligence with more degrees than Fahrenheit, but you're an idiot. You're an idiot with a degree. Okay? So, where was I? I got lost at the dump part. And they cried aloud and they cut themselves after their custom, this is what they always did, with swords and lances until blood gushed out of them. And as midday passed, they raved on until about the time of the offering of oblation. That's the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention. So here's what happens. This is a counterfeit of Jesus.

They were like, you know what? We are going to flog ourselves and shed our blood. It's a counterfeit. Our God doesn't take our blood, he sends his son to offer his blood.

- Amen.

- Whoa! In addition, let me say this, when you see people cutting a healthy body for no reason, you know that it's demonic.

- That's right.

- That's good.

- They are literally damaging the body that God gave them, as an offering to Baal. And so the false prophets are a counterfeit. And what the real prophet does, he mocks a little bit. You're gonna need to live in this world with a little thicker skin and not take everything personally and make it personal. And sometimes have a ministry of mockery. Just something to pray about. Okay, here's the last. I always say the last one and I don't mean that. But I feel like they're not paying attention. So let's just, let's keep them going. Okay, here's the big question, we're coming to the conclusion. There's the battle on Mount Carmel, Satan versus God, the people are watching. Are you ready for the last question? Are you going to be slaughtered or saved? Just like you, dear people, at that moment, there were those dear people. Verse Kings 18:30 through 40: Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me, everybody, it's time." And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that had been torn down. That's honor and respect. He said, "You know what? People worshiped God here for a long time and then they tore this down. We're gonna build this back." It's the same thing we're doing with our Rebuilding Home campaign. Like God was worshiped here, it's kind of fallen apart. We're gonna put it back together, we're gonna worship God here. Elijah took 12 stones, according to the number of the tribes, the sons of Jacob to whom the word of the Lord came saying, "Israel shall be your name." And with the stones, he built an altar in the name of the Lord. He's said, "We're gonna worship God here." Wherever you're at, worship God there. If you're at work, worship God there. You're at school, worship God there. Don't just come to church and worship. Build an altar wherever you are, okay? Because every inch of all creation belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ and we surrender no ground.

- [Congregants] Amen.

- And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces, laid it in the wood and he said, "Fill four jars with water," probably salt water 'cause there was a drought, "and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." And he said, "Do it a second time." He's gonna double drench the sacrifice in the wood. And they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time." And they did it a third time. It's very wet. And water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water. At that time, the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet, came near and he said, he's gonna pray. You

need to see this. The only thing that Elijah does over and over and over is pray. James 5:17 says that Elijah was a man like us and he prayed fervently. There's power in prayer. And if you don't pray, you won't have power. He prays, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel." It's Jacob but they changed his name to Israel, hence the nation of Israel. Goes on to say: "Let it be known this day that you are God in Israel." Here's what Elijah is saying, it's not between me and them, it's between them and God. And the issue is not whether they like me or approve of me. The question is whether they know that he is the only God. And that I am your servant and that I have done these things at your word. Answer me, O Lord. Answer me that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God. That's the big issue. Everybody needs to know that Jesus Christ is God. That's the issue. The Lord hears the Lord Jesus Christ. And that you have turned their hearts back. Then in an instant, the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water in the trench. We would call that a victory. And he, they're like, it burned the bull, it burned the wood, it burned the stones and it burned the water. God showed up. Let me say this, when God shows up, there's no doubt that God showed up. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces. They're like, okay, we're in. We now know. They fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is God, The Lord, he is God." They worship God and Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal and let none of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and? Slaughtered them. Right? All of you pacifists gotta rethink your position. Right? A couple of things here. First, this is a one-time occasion. There are things that only happened once, those are significant miracles in history. In Jesus' day, two disciples, James and John, and Jesus came into a town and they rejected him. And James and John were just, they're interesting brothers. They're like, "Would you like us to call down fire from heaven?" they asked Jesus. First of all, like Jesus couldn't take care of that himself. He's like, you know what? Actually I sent the last one, I can do it again. But also, it's just weird that they're like, we got this ministry where we call in lightning strikes from heaven. And so this is a one-time occasion. But what I love that Elijah does, he honors God by rebuilding the altar and he prays. And he's like, "Lord, I'm gonna honor you and I'm gonna invite you, and you need to do the rest." This is literally an airstrike from heaven. Literally. Just like in the days, do you remember in the Old Testament, another time when fire came down? Sodom and Gomorrah. There are times where God says, "You are not listening and I am not waiting." Here God reveals himself as a warrior, as a soldier. This is like calling in a military airstrike and then immediately it hits the target. In 1 Kings 18 and 19, this orbit, three times God is called the Lord of hosts. Bible commentary says this: It's a phrase describing Yahweh's role as the Lord of the heavenly armies, commander of the cosmic forces, head of the Divine Council, and the leader of Israel's army. God's role as warrior who fights both in the cosmic conflict against divine forces and through human historical events for his people appears 285 times in the Old Testament. Here's what you need to know. I won't yell or turn up my volume, but God will not be mocked. Everyone will reap what they sow. It is a fearful, dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And every day, we sort of presume upon the grace of God and once in a while we just see the justice of God. It's to remind us that he is a just God and that justice is coming. For them that day, it's the day of judgment. It's the day of fire. And then what does Elijah do, the Spirit-filled man of God, to the false prophets? He slaughters them. He slaughters them. How do you feel about that? Who cares? You got a chair,

not a throne. You don't make these decisions. God gets to do what God wants to do. And some people will look at this and rather than judging themselves before they're judged by God, they'll judge God. That's not loving, that's not color tolerant, diverse, kind. God of the old Bible, he's a maniac. That's what they said at my community college and I agreed. So, let me ask you this. God waited five generations, we looked at this in the first sermon. Five generations. And then he sent Elijah and he said, "You know what, I'll give you three more years." Patient. Nothing changed. No one changed. And then God says, "Okay, today let's just duke it out." Let's, you know, high noon, center of town, old Western. Baal, Yahweh, pull your guns. Last one standing, that's the real God. They just saw fire come down from heaven. Many of the people converted, they became believers. They fell on their face say, "The Lord is God. The Lord is God." How many of the false prophets or political leaders got converted? Zero. Zero. There are some people that are demonic and they're never going to change. Now we don't know who they are. There was a guy named Saul of Tarsus, he was as bad as it gets and he flipped and he writes 13 or 14 books of the New Testament. You're like, I didn't see that coming. There was a guy named Pastor Mark who wasn't originally Pastor Mark. And I'm shocked he's in. If I was playing Duck Duck Dam, I wouldn't be a duck if I was picking. You know, and God saved me. So, you know, you don't know who God's gonna save. So our job is not to judge but to know that God can judge the heart. And these evil men, they are like Judas Iscariot. They're filled with Satan, committed to evil, and everything they do is anti-Christ. And God has waited five generations. And God sent the prophets. And God sent the prophet Elijah. And God sent the drought. And then God sent the fire from heaven. They didn't care. My question is, do you care? You care about what God says and does? If not, you're like the prophets of Baal. If you do care, you're like Elijah. And what we see in this, there's a difference between what I'll call God's active wrath, God's passive wrath. This is a massive concept. And this is a historical illustration of that concept. What happens in our day, we think that God is like Ahab. Ahab is tolerant and passive, right? And we think, well, you know, I'm, every day, I do what I want. I sin. I rebel, I do- And God doesn't do anything to me. God- I'm doing great. See, up until this moment, these false prophets, they were rich, they were powerful. They had secure employment. They had authority. They were public figures. They were winning. And then they were slaughtered. And what people tend to think is, because God hasn't shown up and stopped me, either, number one, he doesn't exist; number two, his word isn't true; or number three, I'm a good person. Or number four, you're storing up wrath for the day of judgment. Here's what the apostle Paul says in Romans 2:5: Because of your heart and impenitent, that means unrepentant, unwieldy, unwilling heart, you are storing up, what? Wrath for yourself. That's God's passive wrath. You're storing it up on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. Active wrath. Active wrath. And so what it is, every day that you sin, you're not getting away with anything, you're storing up everything. Judgment, vengeance, wrath, hell, consequence, punishment. And that's passive wrath where you're filling up your account of wrath. And then the day comes where God's active wrath punishes you for all of your sin collected during your period of passive wrath. That's exactly what happens in the days of Elijah. Every day, they weren't getting away with anything. They were storing up everything for the day of wrath. You need to know, if you don't know Jesus, there is wrath coming for you. You are living in the path of the wrath of God. That no one escapes the all-knowing all-seeing eye of God. I tell this not to scare you but to terrify you

because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and this world is filled with a bunch of idiots. People aren't getting away with anything, they're storing up everything. And these were judged by God because demons can't be saved. Jesus didn't come in the image and likeness of a demon and he didn't die and rise to forgive demons. Only human beings can be forgiven. You and I are given a special grace of God. Demons never get that grace of God. There will be no demons in heaven. For some reason, God has chosen to bestow on you and I a special grace. Demons can't be saved, but you can. And just like these people who are slaughtered, if every day you just resist him and reject him, then one day he will pour out his wrath on you. Now for those of us who know the Lord Jesus, I love this about Jesus, back to the story, he doesn't ask us to shed our blood, he sheds his blood. And so what happens with our Lord Jesus, he comes off his throne and he comes down and he allows us to pour out our wrath on him. And he allows the Father to pour out that wrath on him. And Jesus endures the Father's wrath and humanity's wrath. And he sheds his own blood in our place for our sins so that we could receive the grace of God. You need to know, friend, it's Jesus or wrath. That's it. And to this day, we know where this slaughter occurred. This is the statue at Mount Carmel. It's dedicated to? Elijah holding a sword. So, let me close with this and I do mean closing. What we just studied, and I know it's sober and let me say this, I love you very much. I planted a church 'cause I love people. I'm here every week 'cause I love people. I get on head-on collisions on the internet 'cause I love people. That's what I do. But what we've just studied here is there was a day of decision. This is a day of decision. This is a day of decision. God said, "Today's the day for you to decide." And what we see in the story is Elijah says it this way, "How much longer will you try to have it both ways? If the Lord is God, worship him. If Baal is God, worship him." And what we see is quote: The people fell on their face and said, "The Lord, he is God. He is God." And what we see in the story is that God kept a remnant. My question is, if you're a believer, are you part of that remnant, are you a true believer? Are you a hyphenated believer, are you a progressive believer? Are you a Woke believer, are you a compromised believer or are you a true believer, right? He was pruning down to the remnant and then God sent a revival. Fire came, the people realized who the Lord truly was, the Lord Jesus Christ. And as a result, they had a change of heart and they started worshiping God and publicly declaring his goodness so that others would come to meet him as well. And all of this happens with a fire. So bring the band up, we're gonna spend some time in worship. This theme of fire appears about 400 times in the Bible. It's a mega theme. Number one, sometimes it's a literal fire. You make a fire to warm yourself or cook a meal. Number two, sometimes God appears as a fire. Here he does in the days of Elijah. And Deuteronomy says in the New Testament, quotes, "Our God is a consuming fire." Number three, sometimes fire refers to hell. Five times in Revelation 19, hell is called the lake of fire. So let me say this, there's only two options. You reject Jesus, you continue in your sin. You don't live in relationship with God. And then you spend forever in a lake of fire. The other option is that God doesn't set you on fire, he sets a fire in you. And this is through the person, the power, the presence of God the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that empowered the life of Elijah wants to empower you. We hear this in Matthew 3. John said that Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The Holy Spirit is the fire of God. Friends, there's only two options. The fire of God burns in you or the fire of God burns you. All of history ends with those two categories. And in the days of the New Testament in the early church, it says in Acts 2: Fire appeared and

rested on each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Friend, is there anything in your life that needs to be pruned? Bad doctrine, sinful behaviors, self-justifying, rebellion against God, relationships that are not honoring of the Lord. In addition, are there any thrones in your life where Jesus is not ruling and reigning? Does he rule over your bedroom, your bookkeeping? Does he rule over your alcohol, your internet consumption, your relationships? Is there anything that needs to be pruned? Is there any throne that you have not yielded to the Lord Jesus Christ? Today is the day. Today is the day for decision. My job is to tell you the truth, your job is to make a decision. And I really hope and pray, and I won't raise my voice and I won't emotionally manipulate you, but I've sure been praying for you and I'm burdened for you, I want the fire of God to burn in you. I want you to love Jesus. I want you to follow Jesus. I want you to serve Jesus. I want you to live under the lordship of Jesus. I want you to trust in Jesus. I want you to live in a way that you can stand before Jesus and hear him say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Father, would you please send the Holy Spirit, your fire. Not the fire that consumes us but the fire that empowers us. Would you please send the Holy Spirit, God? Before there can be a revival, there has to be a pruning. And God, we are in a state as a nation and a culture where it is dark and demonic. It seems like Satan and his minions have taken over every throne. They're ruling and reigning in every area of culture. God, like the believers in the days of Elijah, many of us are scared and we're fearful and we're quiet and we're anxious, and we're doubting. Holy Spirit, as we come to worship, would you please just come with fire, ignite life and passion and love for Jesus among your remnant? And we ask this in your good name. Amen.