

## **Will Jesus Burn Evil Doers Like in the Story of Elijah?**

- All right, we are almost at the end of our multi-month study of the great story of Elijah, in first of 2 Kings. I hope you've enjoyed it and if you're new, you've missed a lot, but we'll try and catch you up. We're in 2 Kings 1. We're just going verse by verse through this section of the Old Testament, looking at the life of Elijah. And just to set this up, and here's where we're going. Will Jesus burn evil doers like in the story of Elijah? We'll talk about that at the end, the answer is yes. And if you're an evil doer, take notes, pay attention. And so that's where we're going. Nonetheless, the story of Elijah is about 3000 years ago. He's a prophet of God and he's up against the politicians and it's always the prophets versus the politicians. And it happens in the setting of the ancient nation of Israel, which is still a nation today. So we'll go back 3000 years. And what's really curious about the nation of Israel is that God had a particular plan for it. It's the only nation in the history of the world that God tells us these are their borders and boundaries. God establishes the nation of Israel and it was his plan that Jesus Christ, God, would come into human history, into the nation of Israel, that he would die and rise as our savior for our sins in the nation of Israel. And that from Israel, the good news of Jesus would go out from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth. Well, knowing this, Satan was doing everything he could in the seasons leading up to the first coming of Jesus to stop and to thwart this plan of God. And so what we see in that day is that the nation of Israel, God's people are under attack. And just to give you some indication, the nation of Israel's always been under attack. It's surrounded on all sides by enemies. It's a very small nation. It's about the same size as New Jersey. And so, when you read the Old Testament and you hear about the prominence of the nation of Israel, it's the size, geographically, roughly, of New Jersey, and today it has about the same population. All of this conflict, all of this intrigue, all of this history, all of this bloodshed for this little piece of land, because that was the piece of land that God chose to put his people on, to send his prophets to and ultimately to send his son to die. And what happens in the days of Elijah is that all of the evil in all of the cultures surrounding the nation are invading and overtaking. And I was thinking about it today, if people were living in Israel and they wanted to worship demon gods like Chemosh, or Bael, or Astaroth, all the surrounding nations worship those gods, you could just move. For example as well, if you wanted a evil government and you wanted to have your Christian schools canceled, and you hated all things God, you could just move to any one of the surrounding nations. They were all set up for evil and for the devil. Nonetheless, the people who stayed in Israel, many of them wanted to bring all of the outside forces of evil into the nation that was supposed to be devoted singularly and uniquely to God's people. Tell me if this doesn't sound familiar, it was in that day that they were trying to overtake every area of society. Evil was trying to overtake the government and politics, the economy, education, and the church, and the family, and gender, and marriage, and the future. It was a complete effort to overtake every element of the culture. And what had happened was one generation after the next had just made a series of compromises and tolerating that which is evil. And then comes the man of God, Elijah, who draws the line and says, "No, God's word is clear, and this is God's standard for right and wrong, for good and evil." And he stands against all of the government and all of the culture. And what's really interesting in their day as ours, they kept saying, "Well, you just need to tolerate some things that are against God." And what's really interesting was, they were intolerant of God. See, everyone is intolerant, let me just tell

you a fact. The question is, who or what are you intolerant of? They were intolerant of God, so they opposed him. They were intolerant of the word of God, so they closed all the Bible teaching, believing schools. They were intolerant of the prophets of God, and so they canceled and killed them. In the name of tolerance, everyone was welcome except for God and God's people. And so the culture started to feel less and less like a home or an inviting place for God's people. Sound familiar? The government wasn't friend, it was foe, the culture wasn't friend, it was foe. Education wasn't friend, it was foe, the economy was not friend, it was foe. Everywhere you went it seemed like evil had invaded and it was tolerating everyone and everything except forgotten his people. And so then Elijah comes and he confronts all of this. So we're gonna jump right in. 1 Kings 1:1, neutral is not possible in a culture war. This is an ancient case study in a culture war. And I told you last week, the issue is not left versus right, but good versus evil. And when it is good versus evil, there can be no compromise. Here's what we read, "After the death of Ahab," he was the demonic evil king of Israel. "Moab rebelled against Israel." And what it's talking about here is a dual culture war. There is a war within the nation and then there is war between the nations. What this means for God's people, there is nowhere that is for God, and for them, and good for their family. It is an absolute culture war externally and internally. And when it speaks to the Moabites, some of you may know the story, but in the Old Testament there was a guy named Lot in the book of Genesis, because he is a lot of drama, a lot of problems, and a lot of issues, okay? He is the guy in the family that is the total disaster, and always makes the worst decisions, and the family has to come and rescue him from all of his foolishness. How many of you have someone in your family who's a self-destructive idiot? Okay, and if somebody, don't say their name, you know? And so if you're like, "I don't," well it may be you, I'm just saying, you know? So, what happens with Lot, Lot moves his family to a place called Sodom and Gomorrah, which in Hebrew is Vegas or LA, that's where they moved. They moved to Sodom and Gomorrah, and there he lets his kids go to the school, and they get educated, and they get brainwashed, and they're very perverted, and the whole family's very nasty. And then God decides He's gonna send flaming road tar on Sodom and Gomorrah, He's just done, He's done with the whole country, He's gonna turn on the self cleaning oven, and just be done with these people. And so then He tells Lot, "You better go, you better run for your life." So he grabs his wife and his daughters and they're fleeing, and his wife looks back because she misses living in Sodom and Gomorrah. See he not only moved his family into Sodom and Gomorrah, Sodom and Gomorrah moved into his family.

- [Congregation] That's right.

- [Pastor] And now his wife is thinking, "I wish we could live the way we used to live, in rebellion against God." So she turns into a pillar of salt, and then he flees into the mountains with his two daughters. His two daughters are poorly informed, they think it's the end of the world. He's not been a good leader of his family. They're afraid they're never gonna have children. So do you know the story?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- [Pastor] Yeah, this is not the verse of the day for the family in the minivan going to the Christian school, but it's in the Bible, and it says that, they got their dad drunk and they slept with him and got pregnant. And their descendants are called the Moabites. So this is the part of the family. You're like, "Tell me about that side of the family." You're like, "Oh, I don't wanna talk about it." "But what happened?" "I'll throw up in my mouth if I think about it. Don't ask me again, that side of the family is just gone. Those people are just, that's just, it's sad, okay?" These are the Moabites. So what keeps happening is, the Moabites keep trying to intermarry with God's people, and the Moabites, now they've created their own religion. What God creates, they counterfeit. They think that they're the people of God, they're not. They create their own religion, their own worship of God. And everything about it is just a demonic counterfeit. Well, what happens then in the days of King David, he had a battle against the Moabites and defeated them, and he drew a clear line. He is like, "You guys don't love our God, and we can't marry you, we can't do life with you. There needs to be a firm hard boundary 'cause you're anti and we are for God." And then his son Solomon erased that line. His son Solomon married numerous women, including Moabite women. He married Godless, demonic women that were forbidden to be married by God's people, especially God's king. So then he brings the Moabites into the nation and the worship of Bael and Astaroth, the demon gods that they've been battling throughout the totality of the story of Elijah. And this included human sacrifice of children. When you worship sex, you sacrifice children. And so, what happens in 1 Kings 11:9, "The Lord was angry with Solomon," that's what the Bible says. "The Lord was angry," and the Lord looked at Solomon and said, "You were supposed to be the king, and the father, and the pastor, of the nation. You've dishonored your earthly father by marrying women you should not marry. You've also dishonored your heavenly Father by disobeying, disregarding the word of God." So God punished him, judged him. Because of that action, the nation was torn into the Northern kingdom, Israel, the Southern kingdom, Judah. And that's the backdrop for Elijah. Jesus says something similar, "Whoever is not with me is against me." What we have here is full blown culture war. It's good versus evil. And Jesus says the same thing, "You're for me or you're against me." And the Moabites were against God, and so God's people were not supposed to be with them. But in this instance the Moabites now see that the culture is in decline. There are certain people that wait for a great nation to go into decline, and then they see an opportunity that the culture is so compromised, so perverted, and so tolerating, that there is an opportunity for them to bring a greater depth of evil and depravity. We see this in our own day, the sexualizing of children, the declaration that parents don't have authority and right to raise their children according to their convictions. What we're seeing is degeneracy at historic levels like the days of Elijah. Things as a man who is now 52 years of age, that I would've never anticipated that I could see in my lifetime are just now normal and commonplace. The decline is rapid and incredibly concerning. And so, in their day that's what the Moabites are there. You're like, "Oh my gosh, the culture's gotten so bad that the people that we knew were all wrong are now accepted, celebrated." And here's what happens, a little compromise over a long time is a big problem. 2 Kings 1:2, "Now Ahaziah," this is Ahab's son. King Ahab is dead, this family we looked at in 1 Kings 16, ruled for five generations, Ahab was the fifth generation. This is his son Ahaziah, he is the sixth generation of demonic, evil, corrupt government leadership. He, "fell through the lattice in his upper chamber in Samaria," he got injured. I don't know what

happened. I don't know if he tripped over his feet, I don't know if he's drunk. I don't know if the lattice guy didn't do a good job. I don't know what happened. But he gets injured and he lays sick. So he sent messengers telling them, "Go in inquire of Baalzebub, the God of Ekron." And that little word there for, "God" is literally demon. God creates, Satan counterfeits, and demons are counterfeits of God. They establish religions. They will do even supernatural signs and wonders to deceive people, "Whether I shall recover from this sickness. But the angel of the Lord," and will talk about that, that's Jesus, "said to Elijah the Tishbite, 'Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, is it because there is no God in Israel that you're going to inquire of Baalzebub, the God of Ekron?'" He's like, "You rule a nation that has a God. Why do you go to another nation inquirer of another God? 'Now therefore you will surely die.'" God just puts a death sentence on this man. "So Elijah went. The messengers returned to the king and he said to them, 'Why have you returned?'" And they said to him, 'There came Amanda meet us.'" We met a really eccentric guy and here's what he said. "He said to us, 'Go back to the king who has sent you and say to him, thus says the Lord, is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baalzebub, the God of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" It was weird, we went and we were out and this dude showed up and he said, "You're dead." Then he said to them, "What kind of man was this who came to meet you and told you these things?" And they answered him, "He wore a garment of hair and a belt of leather about his waist." And then the king said, "That's Elijah the Tishbite." Okay, so let me explain all of this, King Ahaziah, his father died and here's what you need to see. Six generations of evil. This is the opposite of the progressive myth. The progressive myth is that we're good and over time we get better. The biblical reality is we're bad and we get worse over time and people think, "I think we're doing better." You're so bad you think you're good. And so what we see here is, evil never stops itself. And so every generation it just gets worse and worse, darker and darker. And this man is as bad as it gets. So he gets injured, he gets sick. What he doesn't do is he doesn't pray to the God of the Bible, "God please heal me." What he doesn't do, he doesn't ask the people of God to pray for him. He doesn't ask the prophet of God to pray for him. Instead, what he says is, "I'm going to go to another nation and I'm going to inquire of a demon, Baalzebub, the prince of Ekron." Now, what's interesting about this, how many of you have heard of that old book, "Lord of the Flies?" Baalzebub means, Lord of the Flies. That's exactly where the title comes from. And Baalzebub, throughout the Old Testament, Bael is considered the chief demonic, ruling false God in the male realm, female is Astaroth, they're working together in this culture. But what you'll see throughout the Bible, you'll see Bael or Baal, which is a derivative of Baal, and then some other word, and what that is, that's a local Baal. So, Baal is like the chief demon and then Baalzebub would be the demon over Ekron, it would be the regional demon that was part of this group of Baals or demonic counterfeits. What's really interesting, he says, "I'm gonna go to a demon and get healed." Let me say this about demons, they can heal you. This is why you need to be very careful that you seek the will of God, not just your will. Lemme just go down a rabbit trail for a minute, explain how the demonic works. Sometimes Satan and demons will oppress someone, and then if you worship, or pray to them, or make an oath to them, then they will heal you, because they will be trading your body for your soul. This is why when Jesus comes, he casts demons out and people are what? They're healed. Sometimes our sickness, our injury,

our illness is physical, sometimes it's spiritual. Sometimes the body is broken, sometimes it is tormented and oppressed or even possessed. What happens then? Jesus comes along and He's healing people by casting out Baals, demons. And what the religious leaders say is that He did it by the power of Baalzebub, the prince of demons. They accuse Jesus of operating by the same power as this demon in the days of Elijah. The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is saying that what Jesus does is by the power of the devil, and that He is the devil and not the Lord. And when Jesus does a miracle, the negative narrative from the religious leaders is, He's demonic. Imagine that, Jesus they said was demonic. And He did heal people. They didn't even deny the healing, but they say that he did it by Baalzebub, the prince of demons. And the point is, the demon that is at work in the days of Elijah, is at work in the days of Jesus 1,000 years later. Because though people come and go, the demons are the same. Now, when it comes to this demon and this demonic counterfeit, what's interesting is, Ekron is a place that's mentioned about two dozen times in the Bible. It's always negative and pejorative, and it's the home of the Philistines, and it is on the outskirts of Israel, and it's a constant problem. Surrounding God's people are demons, counterfeit religions, spiritualities, darkness, seduction, temptation, and sexual sin. And it's always trying to get in to the church. It's always trying to get in to the family. It's always trying to get in to the government. It's always trying to get in to the educational system. Sound familiar?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- [Pastor] We're dealing with the same thing. Now, the problem that they had is they had compromised and tolerated for so long, that they had lost sight of where God's line of right and wrong was. And what happens is, when it comes to evil, Satan is very crafty and wise, and he knows if the lights are on and God's light is shining and then he just turned the lights off, we'd all see it. But it's like a dimmer switch, just a little more darkness, and a little more darkness, and then one generation's born, and they've never seen a pure light. They think that this darkness is actually pretty light. And just one generation after another you just turn the dimmer switch toward darkness, and that's what had happened. Far earlier, God's people took this land and they defeated its occupants. And guess what God told them, "Zero tolerance of evil and demonic." It needs to go, it's like cancer. If you let anything in your marriage, if you let anything in your family, if you let anything in your church, if you let anything in your ministry, or if you're the head of your company, if you let anything or anyone into your company, that's darkness, eventually it's only gonna get darker. And that's what happened. God said this previously in Deuteronomy 18:10-12, "Never sacrifice your son or daughter as a burnt offering." That's what the Moabites did. "Do not let your people practice fortune telling," that's what the king of Israel is doing. "Or use sorcery, or interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth spirits of the dead," ancestral worship, which is the heart of Native American shamanism and many Eastern religions. "Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord." And what happened was, they had God's standard. God said, "This is right, that is wrong." And then they moved the line, and guess what happens? Once the line is moved, it's going to move again, then the line is moved again, and then the line is moved again. What happened was they tolerated the worship of the Baals up on the high places. "Well it's far

away, it's on the fringe of culture. It's not in the center of our life. We just let it be out on the fringe." And then eventually it comes into town, and then eventually it goes to the church, and then eventually it goes to the government, and eventually it's in the family, and eventually it's in the marriage, and eventually it's in the school curriculum, and eventually it's ruling and reigning. That's where we find ourselves. And what's interesting, here we are in the middle of pride month and the entire message is, just tolerate, tolerance. The issue is, well do you tolerate God and the word of God? No, we do not, no, we do not. Tolerance means everyone is welcome except for God and everything is welcome except for the word of God.

- [Congregation] That's right.

- [Pastor] And it all begins with compromise and intolerance. That's why Jesus tells the church at Thyatira 1,000 years after Elijah, "You tolerate that woman Jezebel." He's saying that's the whole problem. And here's what happens, friends, once the line is moved, it's just a war. And eventually the goal is that there would be no line. I'll give you an example in our culture. So, marriage is between a man, well here's a crazy one. There's men and women. We'll just start, like I gotta, a verbal process, just hang with me, okay? So the Bible says that there's men and women, and that they get married and have sons and daughters that they raise as sons and daughters. I know we're talking crazy now, okay? So then, what we got rid of is the line that there are males and females, and then we got rid of the line that marriages for a man and a woman. And now we're getting rid of the line that there are sons and daughters, and you know what's gonna come next? Polygamy, and after that, the age of consent, because evil is always moving the line that God drew. And you think, "Well, let's just compromise and meet in the middle." It's like an invasion, if you step back, they march forward and they don't stop marching forward until you are run over. And so Elijah is the guy who literally is holding the line, he's like, "That's anti God, that's wrong, the answer's no." And he holds the line. And it's time that God's people have the spirit of Elijah and say, "We don't do life like that. We don't do marriage like that. We don't do family like that. You can have your school, you can't have the Christian school."

- [Congregation] Amen.

- [Pastor] Right, you can have your convictions but not at our church, okay?

- [Congregation] Right.

- [Pastor] You can quote any book you want, but the word of God belongs to God and you can't edit it.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- [Pastor] That there has to be a line for God's people. And that's the line that Elijah is drawing. So here comes Elijah, and we've talked about this. We don't know anything about his family, his

history, his lineage, his qualifications. We look at this we're like, "Dude just comes outta nowhere." He literally lives in the woods, he is a mountain man. He's from Tishbe, we don't even know where that is, It's so small, and it's in Gilead. That's a remote, rugged mountain town. So we talked about, in one of the early sermons that, if you've seen that show alone, where they drop somebody in the wilderness all by themselves, they're like, "You gotta feed yourself, house yourself, make fire, get water. And the last one, who doesn't tap out as the winner." For him, that wasn't a show, that was a lifestyle. He's that guy, we talked about it. He's the Rip of the Old Testament. They took Yellowstone 'cause they take everything good, they take everything good. But, and I'm not saying Rip is a type of a godly man. But I'm saying, if Rip in Yellowstone got saved and filled with the spirit, he'd have to change his name to Elijah, he's that guy, okay? So, he's a dude. And there was an old Baptist preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He said, "The myth has gotten out that to be a man of God, you need to sink your manliness." I love Elijah 'cause he's a dude. You know what he eats? whatever he kills. You know what he wears? Whatever he kills. You know what he has for a weapon? He doesn't have a weapon, he is the weapon, that's Elijah, okay? He's awesome. Let me say one thing and then ask something. Number one, the problem is, with the family of Ahaziah, they are loyal to their family, not their Lord. This is where it goes astray friends. You should love your family, but be loyal to your God.

- [Congregation] Yes.

- [Pastor] If your loyalty is to your family, and they were loyal to their family for six generations, and God killed six generations of their family. Because if you're loyal to your family, if your family isn't loyal to God, you will be just like that family. They got power, they got money, they got fame, they got a kingdom, but they didn't know the Lord. And what happens as well, the people in that nation, they tolerate certain things in their own life, their own marriage, their own home, their own church, their own school, my question to you is, what needs to go? Who needs to go? Some of you're believers and you're dating unbelievers, you're doing the same thing that got the nation split in half in the days of Solomon. Some of you have kept mementos from previous romantic relationships, or former boyfriends or girlfriends, and you're married, but you're holding onto something that's like a soul tie or a connection, that needs to get burned. Some of you have spiritual things in your home, icons, dream catchers, Buddhistic statues, various religions, yins and yangs, and all of that, just go home and burn it. You shouldn't have anything in your home that isn't devoted fully and entirely to the Lord.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- [Pastor] Are there books that you're reading that you should not be reading? Are there things that you are doing that you should not be doing? A little compromise over the course of many generations leads to complete apostasy and collapse. And that's the story of Israel. Well, if you're a little discouraged, it's gonna get worse. And some of you are very optimistic, you're like, "God loves everybody, everybody's gonna be fine, God's gonna work it all out." All right, first we'll just jump into 2 Kings 1:9, not everyone gets saved. "Then the king sent to him a captain of 50 men with his 50," this is a military regiment, this is like Navy Seals, right? These are the elite

forces. They send 50 dudes to deal with one guy, I love that. How many pastors would it take 50 guys to take down, just Elijah? When I get to heaven, knuckles, love this guy, okay? They send 50 armed soldiers to take care of one pastor. Love that guy. "He went up to Elijah who was sitting on top of the hill." We don't know how Elijah got there. He's like a rock climber mountain man. The 50 dudes are at the, you gotta see this it's funny. The 50 dudes are at the bottom. They're like, "King says, come down." He's like, "WhY can't you come up?" And they're like, "We can't." I love that, I love that the prophet is tougher than the Navy Seals, I love that. Top of the hill had said to him, "Oh man of God the king says, come down," They can't get up. But, "Elijah answer the captain of the 50, 'If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your 50.'" Okay, question, can he do this?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- [Pastor] He's already already did it once. Mount Carmel, 1 Kings 18 fire. You think somebody would've wrote that down? Like, "Hey, that dude does fire, like write that down. If we forget somebody remind us that guy does fire." Nope? Then, I just love how the Bible says it. "Then fire came down from heaven and consumed the 50." It's so, just like, and then what happened? Fire, I love how simple it is. It's not like he prayed, he fasted, he wept, he took a pole, he's like, fire, fire, that was it, love that. Don't you wish you could do that?

- [Congregation] Yes,

- [Pastor] It just dawned on me, you're a target, fire. You know, it's, whatever. So I dunno, anyways, probably shouldn't have said that. Anyways, but I will try it. "Again, the king sent to him, another captain of 50 men with his 50," sends another 50 dudes. These are not the valedictorians, right? "Okay, so wait, so he burned. Okay, all right, we'll try." Okay, so 50 more guys, 50 more guys. And they do what they're told and he answered, "He said to him, 'Oh man of God, this is the king's order.'" This is hilarious. Elijah's up on the mountain he like, "Come get me." They're like, "we can't," they're like, "the king says, come down." He's like, "Did you check with the previous 50 guys? I said, no," "Well, yeah, they're all on fire." Yeah, so okay, "Come down quickly," they're gonna give him orders, "but Elijah answer them, 'If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your 50,'" this matter of fact report, "Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his 50," more fire. If I'm Elijah, I'm like, "I can do this all day." "Keep it coming boys." "Again, the king sent," now we read this, how many of us know we've done the same stupid thing a few times, okay? A lot of wives are looking at husbands. Okay, we read the story, we're like, "Did they not learn?" How many of us, we didn't learn. You're like, this sounds familiar, right? Like we've all done a stupid thing. You're like, "I'm gonna try again," nope. "Then the king sent the captain of third 50 with his 50 and the third captain of 50 went up, came, fell on his knees before Elijah." He's begging for his life, "And entreated him, 'Oh man of God.'" He's like, you are a man of God, "Please let my life and the life of these 50 servants of yours be precious in your sight," don't kill us. "Behold," I love this guy. It's captain obvious, he's gonna summarize what's happened as if Elijah's like, "What fire came down and killed all your guys?" I know, I had this great seat and I just watched, you know?



"Behold fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of 50 men with their fifties, but now, let my life be precious in his sight. Then the angel of the Lord said to Elijah," this is Jesus, His Lord is our Lord, we'll talk about this in a moment. "Go down with him and do not be afraid of him. So he rose and went down to the king and said to him, 'Thus says the Lord, because you've sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the demon God of Ekron, is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you will surely die.'" So he died. I mean, there's not a lot of wasted words like, fire, dead, okay? "He died according to the word of the Lord, that Elijah had spoken. Jehoram," the next guy, "became king in Israel in his place in the second year of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, because Ahaziah had no son," he was cursed. "Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah, that he did, they not written, and it quotes this old historical recording, the book of Chronicles of the kings of Israel." So here's what we see, we see Elijah versus Ahaziah, and there's really only two options, witchcraft or worship. That's it, Ahaziah does witchcraft. He's like, "I'll go for any religion, any spirituality, any God other than the one of the Bible. I don't like that God," so he does witchcraft, and Elijah does worship. Witchcraft is where you worship evil and worship, according to the Bible, is where you worship God alone. And friends, we need to just look at this in our own lives and say, "Okay, am I fully and wholeheartedly devoted to the one true God, or is there some compromise in me? Because there are some things that the real God says and demands that I disagree with." And what we see here mentioned repeatedly, is someone called the angel of the Lord, the angel of the Lord, and it is the angel of the Lord who sends fire from heaven. You need to know that this is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the angel of the Lord. In the Old Testament, sometimes it will say, an angel of the Lord, angel means messenger. God can speak for himself or He could speak through another divine being like an angel. On the occasions where God shows up and speaks for Himself, it's called the angel or the messenger of the Lord, it's Jesus Christ. When an angel or a messenger of the Lord shows up, it's usually a created being, it's an angel. Here, Jesus gives the call for the lightning strike from heaven. Elijah's Lord is our Lord, this is the Lord Jesus Christ. And what we see here as well, is that throughout the story there's angels, and angels are called the heavenly host. In the previous chapter 1 Kings 22:19, it talked about the heavenly host. The heavenly host is a military term. Here we had a human fighting unit of 50 soldiers. Heavenly host is a divine fighting unit for God's angelic army. And what happens is, when King Ahaziah shows up, he does so with his soldiers. When King Jesus shows up, He does so with his soldiers. And it is not just physical, but spiritual war. This is where Paul tells us in Ephesians, our war isn't just against flesh and blood, but powers, principalities, and spirits. And so, what happens here is that the angelic army, well, I'll tell you a little bit about them as well before I explain what's happening here. Individually, the soldiers that are angels are called the mighty ones. All this is in the study guide. You can get it at [real fate.com](http://real fate.com) or in the store on your way out, they have high ranking officials called a captain or a prince, that the angels are set up like a military unit with ranking commanders and chain of command. And what happens is, when Israel goes to war throughout the Old Testament, it's the heavenly host that shows up to do war with the soldiers to defend the nation. That's what's happening here. So we saw in 1 Kings 18 on Mount Carmel a fire strike. You know what that is? It's like God's air force, some of you're a pacifist, you just freaked out, you're like, "God's got air force?" Yeah, and he sets people on fire,

right? God's not a pacifist, He's more like a pass the fist at certain points in the Bible. How many of you didn't know that God has an air force and he has an army? And when you're fighting against his people, he's gonna show up and defend them. Now, if you're not one of his people, like I hate that, if you're one of his people you're like, "Yay, I'm glad that my God fights for me and fights for us."

- [Congregation] Amen.

- [Pastor] And so what we see here is, this lightning strike comes as it did on Mount Carmel. And what's really interesting is, God's defending his people and his nation. And here we are, we're 3000 years later. True or false, the nation of Israel is still a nation, still a nation. I told you, it's the size and population of New Jersey. For 3000 years the nation has been attacked, invaded, hated, opposed, surrounded by enemies. And guess what, it's still there, it's a miracle. Because God is involved in the defending of this people and place. I was in Israel some years ago, this is the shirt that I saw that was pretty amazing. It lists all the nations that have opposed Israel through the history of the world, ancient Egypt, gone, the Philistines, gone, the Syrian empire, gone. Babylonian empire, gone Persian empire, gone. Greek empire gone, Roman empire gone. Byzantine empire, gone, crusaders, gone. Spanish empire, gone, Nazi Germany, gone, Soviet Union gone. Iran, bring it on, you know? And so what it is, it's like how do you explain a little tiny nation surrounded by enemies, constantly attack exists for 3000 years? Divine intervention. And that's what's happening here, God is protecting. Now, let me pivot the conversation. What we see here is people doing evil, disregarding, disobeying God. God patiently waits six generations of this evil family. The church goes apostate, woke, the Bible teachers are canceled and killed, God patiently waits. God sends a drought for three and a half years to decimate the economy and they still don't repent and say, "You're right and we're wrong, you're God, we're not." God sends the prophet Elijah and they don't listen to him. God sends fire from heaven three times, nothing. And it should cause us to ask, is there a day coming where there is fire for judgment? And the same Lord Jesus who judged in fire in the days of Elijah will judge in fire in the last days. And so here, the the small fire that destroys some who are unrepentant is to warn all of us to repent before the fire comes for us. So what I want to do, I'm gonna talk about hell for a while. And I'm gonna talk about the flames and the fires of hell. Jesus says this in Matthew 25:41, the same Lord that sent down fire in the days of Elijah, he talks about, "The eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Let me say this, Satan and demons can only go to hell, they do not have an opportunity to go to heaven. Jesus didn't come in the image and likeness of a demon, He came as a human. Jesus didn't die on the cross for Satan and demons, but for men and women. What's amazing to me is that we did the same thing that the demons did. We rebelled against God, we sinned against God. We lived independent of God, and what they get is hell, and what we get is Jesus. And we're no better than they are, but God did something for us that he didn't do for them, and that is provide a way of salvation and forgiveness. Hell was made for the devil and his angels, and people don't need to go there if they receive Jesus Christ as Lord. Here's what it talks about regarding hell. Hell is often referred to in the Bible with the imagery of fire. Revelation 20, "The devil was thrown into the lake of fire." It's gonna talk a lot about a lake of fire. Imagine standing on the edge of a great

lake, like let's say for example the Great Lakes, just a massive sea, but it's not water, it's fire, it's all burning fire. "The devil was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night, forever and ever. Death and Hades." That is the holding place of those who die before the final judgment and the eternal sentencing, "Were thrown into the lake of fire. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life," if you belong to Jesus, your name goes on God's list. If your name is not on that list, he was thrown into the lake of fire. "The cowardly, the faithless, the detestable. As for murderers, the sexually immoral." Our culture needs to hear this and heed this. "Sorcerers," again like the days of Elijah, "Idolaters and all liars," including those false prophets in the pulpit who would say something that is against what God has already spoken, liars.

- [Congregation] Yes.

- [Pastor] "Their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." You die once physically and then hell and the lake of fire is where you spend eternity experiencing eternal death. Here's what Jesus says, the same Lord that sent fire in the days of Elijah, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." What Jesus says is this, that you are one person in two parts, body and soul. We tend to fear what is done to our body. We don't want to get sick, we don't want to get injured, we don't want to get abused, we don't want to die, which is well and good, but once your body dies, your soul continues to live. Friends, you are not just a material being, you are a spiritual being. Your soul will outlive your body and what he's saying is, you need to give grave concern to the eternal state of your soul. You are not a body with a soul, you are a soul with a body. The deepest part of you is the soul, and the soul needs to belong to the Lord so that when you die, the soul goes to be with the Lord. Do not fear those who can only take your body. Jesus says, "fear him who has destiny over your soul." And what happens in our day, there is a misrepresentation of Jesus Christ. And let me just be very clear about this. In the book of Revelation, I think it's around chapter five, it portrays Jesus as simultaneously a lion and a lamb. Jesus came the first time as a lamb. He's coming the second time as a lion. He came the first time in humility. He'll come the second time in glory. Everyone in heaven only knows Him as lamb. Everyone in hell only knows Him as lion. Not everyone is saved. Not everyone dies and goes to a better place. It comes down to you and Jesus Christ. If you don't believe in Jesus, you will. If you don't bend your knee to Jesus, you will. If you're not sure you're gonna spend forever giving account to Jesus, you will. I love you, I know my words are strong. It's my job to tell the truth. It's your job to make a decision. Will you receive or reject Jesus Christ? Jesus talks about hell more than anyone in the whole Bible, the progressives, the liberals, those who weaponize the word of God, rather than teach and heed, they will just present Jesus as all loving, all tolerant, all compassionate. He is for his people, and he's fierce with his opponents and enemies. And this does not make Jesus unloving. Heaven is called the father's house. How many of you are a father and you've got a house? Imagine somebody evil was trying to break into your house and harm your family. Out of love for your family, you would go to war against those who wanna harm your family. That doesn't mean you are unloving, that means you are loving, you love your family. And it doesn't mean that you hate them, but you hate what they're

trying to do, so you need to stop them.

- [Congregation] Yes, that's right.

- [Pastor] This is justice according to the Bible. Not just social justice but cosmic justice. If you have a right to have a door on your house, God has a right to have a door on his house, and the name of that door is Jesus Christ. Jesus talks about hell more than anyone in the Bible. He speaks of it about 13% of the time in his teaching. He refers to judgment, heaven, and hell frequently in his parables, which are little stories that communicate big truths. Words like fire, weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, and darkness depict the torments of hell. Jesus uses this imagery on 11 occasions to speak of hell in terms of a place called Gehinnom. In the ancient world, they would've been keenly familiar with this. So they lived within the city walls of the ancient city of Jerusalem. Outside, there was a garbage dump, it was a cursed place, perhaps human sacrifice, the burning of bodies, the discarding of children who were unwanted to be left in the trash, all of that was in Gehinnom. It was a garbage dump. It was an a cursed garbage dump outside of the city walls. And all day as the smoke burned in the garbage dump, they burned the garbage. You could see the smoke rising all day and then you could see the flames ascending all night. Isaiah quotes it, so does Jesus, and what he says is that the smoke of their torment rises day and night. That hell is like a garbage dump outside of the new Jerusalem. Just as Gehinnom was a place of burning, and judgment, and justice outside of the first Jerusalem, Gehinnom is the place of burning, torment, and judgment outside of the new Jerusalem. Let me tell you what hell is. It's conscious you are awake, you are alert, you know exactly what you are experiencing and enduring. Number two, it is eternal, you do not cease to suffer. God is an eternal God, when we sin against an eternal God, an eternal consequence is required. It's eternal, it doesn't stop. When it says that it goes forever and ever. Those that's the language of Jesus, forever and ever. It is conscious torment, it is eternal torment. Number three, it is irreversible. There is no salvation after death. Hebrews 9:27 comes to mind. It's appointed once to die then for judgment. You die once and then you're judged, that's it. There's no reincarnation, there's no karma. There's no second chance. There's no universalism where in the end everyone is saved. This life is where you make the most important decision you will ever make. Number four, it is just, it is just. There are degrees of reward in heaven as there are degrees of punishment in hell. God is a just God. There are some who suffer greatly for the cause of Christ and their reward is great in the kingdom of God. There are some who do great and grave evil, and their consequence in hell is more extreme than those who just live a rebellious life of independence. And number five, it is punishment, it is punishment. The question then is, who rules hell? There is a myth within much Christian teaching that God rules heaven and Satan rules hell, and that's a lie. When all is said and done, Jesus Christ is Lord overall. There is not an inch of creation, there is not one being over which his rule does not reign. It says this in Revelation 14:10-11. "He will also drink the wine of God's wrath." We'll talk about God's wrath in a moment, "Poured full strength into the cup of his anger." I don't know about you, I find myself looking at this world every once in a while and getting pretty angry, like we're doing that to children? That the most dangerous place is still a mother's room? We're seizing children from their parents so that we can mutilate them in the name of care? We're telling people that

everything that the Bible says is oppressive and repressive? If you don't get angry, you're not paying attention. Now, if you're always angry, you're not healthy, but if you're never angry, you're not sane. God gets angry, "And will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." Jesus Christ rules hell. That's how we know it's perfect justice. "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever," never ends. "They have no rest, day or night." Jesus rules heaven, Jesus rules hell. Satan rules no one, Satan rules nothing when it's all said and done.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- [Pastor] That's why we read this in Philippians 2:10-11, "At the name of Jesus." That's why we don't just talk about God, but Jesus. We don't just talk about spiritual things, but Jesus. our God has a name and a face, his name is Jesus. "At the name of Jesus every knee," not just those who want to, "should bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Let me be as clear as I can. You will bend your knee to Jesus in life or death. You will bend your knee in this life to go to heaven, or you will bend your knee and that life in hell. The question is not will you bend your knee to Jesus? The question is, will you bend your knee to Jesus before it's too late? And every tongue confess. For the saint, this is our great proclamation. Jesus Christ is Lord.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- [Pastor] That's our proclamation.

- [Congregation] Yes.

- [Pastor] For those who don't receive Jesus, they will still confess him as Lord, not for their salvation but for their damnation. And what we're talking about here is, when the Lord Jesus sends fire and he consumes two regiments of 50 soldiers in the days of Elijah, it is a foreshadowing and a forewarning, and what we're talking about is the wrath of God. People don't talk about this. All they talk about is the love of God. And God is love, that's what the Bible says, and that must mean that everything God does is loving. And that means that when God pours out his wrath, it's because he's protecting those that he loves. The wrath of God and the love of God, they are aligned together to protect the children of God. I'm sure when the report went in the days of Elijah to the 50 soldiers families, God killed your husband and father. They said, "I thought God was loving." Yeah, he loved Elijah so he protected him. And if your husband and father wasn't doing evil, God wouldn't have had to deal with him. There is a, lemme just verbal process. There's so much weak Bible teaching, so much soft Bible teaching, so much fearful, cowardly, Ahabian Bible teaching. You're a good person, everything will be fine. There's nothing to worry about. That's a lie, you're a bad person, there's a lot to be worried about, and not everybody dies and goes to a better place. You need Jesus and you need him right now. And the wrath of God is the result of our sin. Here's what Jesus says, John 3:36, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life." Lemme tell you, everybody that you meet is an eternal

being. They're all gonna live forever somewhere. If you believe in Jesus Christ, the son of God, you have eternal life. "Whoever does not obey the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." The wrath of God is connected to the holiness of God. The holiness of God is the most frequent attribute of God, more than the love of God, mentioned in the Bible. In the Old Testament, there are at least 20 words denoting the wrath of God. The wrath of God is spoken of throughout the scriptures more than 600 times. The wrath of God is real, the wrath of God is passive and active, let me explain this. What people will do, they will live their life in sin and rebellion against God. That's all we've studied in six generations of Ahab's family, particularly with his wife, Jezebel. And they live a long life, and they're healthy, and they make great money, and they're powerful, and they're they're sexual and all their pleasures are met, and they think that they're getting away with everything and they're not, they're storing up everything for the day of wrath. God's passive wrath allows people to do whatever they want until his active wrath judges them and punishes them for everything they have done and failed to do. Now, if you're not a Christian, some of you may wondering like, "Is he trying to scare me?" Yes, it's a fearful, dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. There's only two ways that the wrath of God is satisfied, either by Jesus or by you, that's it. If you reject Jesus, the wrath of God is poured out on you forever, and ever, and ever by Jesus. I could just see it. If you reject Jesus and you die and go to hell, if he rules hell and he's still in his physical body, the Holy Spirit reminds me in Zacharia it says that, "when he returns, that we will look upon him whom we have pierced." That means that he will return in a scarred, risen body. What I see is if you reject Jesus and you die and go to hell, you'll be looking at the face of Jesus forever, and ever, and ever, and ever. The Jesus who is willing to love you, the Jesus who is willing to save you, the Jesus who is willing to forgive you, the Jesus who is willing to heal you, the Jesus who is willing to raise you from the dead, and to bring you into his kingdom forever and ever. If you receive Jesus, the wrath of God was satisfied at the cross of Christ. This is the good news of the Christian faith. This is why the cross is the symbol of our faith. It's why the church historically has had a cross on the building or a cross in the room's to remind us that at the cross, the love of God and the wrath of God intersected in the suffering of Jesus. Because he loved us, He endured wrath for us. Jesus says this, on the cross, "Our God becomes one of us." Our God looks at this mess that we've made. All the rebellion, all the sin, all the folly, all the evil, all the injustice. And rather than sending fire down, He comes down. And what He doesn't do is just destroy us, He allows us to destroy him, and Jesus lives without sin and he loves and he serves. We treat Him like we did Elijah, we lie about Him. We falsified legal documents. We say that He's working by the power of Baalzebub, the prince of demons. We see Satan fill Judas Iscariot. We see him betrayed, we see him wrongly convicted. We see him crucified in the middle of the night. He's on the cross. He says, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In that moment, the Son of God endured the wrath of God so that you could be forgiven and adopted as a son of God. Jesus took your place and put you in his place. He died so you could live. He suffered the wrath of God so you could enjoy the grace of God. And if you reject Jesus, there's no excuse for you and there's no blaming him. Friend, you need Jesus, we all need Jesus. And I was thinking about it as I was praying for ya, and I've been praying for ya. Here we are 3000 years later, Elijah, 3000 years ago. Jesus, 2000 years ago. How many of you're like, "God, are we done yet? Can you just come back and just burn it all up and start over,

can we get some fire please?" Why is God so patient, why has he waited so long? Well, maybe it's so that you can get saved. Maybe it's so you can get saved. Ezekiel 33:11, God says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but the wicked would turn from their way and live." I'll close with a story and then we we'll... Last night I went to a friend's house, a guy I've been praying for, for over a year. He's literally in the battle of his life for cancer. He's a smart guy, he's got a great sense of humor. I really like this guy, he's a great guy. His mind is very sharp, but his body is really battling cancer. And he's been considering Jesus, and studying, and praying and last night, he's probably watching, so probably should have asked if he could be an illustration but thank you for the illustration. I was sitting down with him last night, went to visit 'cause I love him and I'm worried about him. The worst thing friend is not to die, it's to die and not know Jesus. The Bible says, "To live is Christ, to die is gain, to depart and be with the Lord is far better." If you're a Christian, this is your hell. If you're a non-Christian, this is your heaven. I sat down with him and I said, "Okay, it's really you and Jesus, he endured the wrath of God or you'll endure the wrath of God." We talked for a while, I looked at him, I said, "This is it, you gotta make your decision." I said, "Is Jesus Christ your God, Lord Savior?" He started crying, he said, "Yes, he is." I told him, I said, "I don't know if cancer's gonna take your life or something else, but here's what I do know. Jesus awaits you on the other side. And here's what I know, one day Jesus is gonna rise your body from the dead and you're gonna be perfect forever. And Jesus is gonna lift the curse, and Jesus is gonna heal the sick, and Jesus is gonna deal with Satan, and demons, and evil doers and they're gonna be sent to prison, and God's family's gonna be together and blessed forever." I said, "And you're gonna see your wife and your daughter who loved Jesus and there's gonna be a family reunion. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind can conceive of the good things that God has in store for those who love him," Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- [Pastor] Let me ask you to stand, and I'm gonna call the band out out at this time, and just, I just wanna say some things over you and then we want to sing. Lord Jesus, you are our God. Lord Jesus, you are our Savior, Lord Jesus, you are our Creator. Lord Jesus we are under your authority, we are dependent, created beings. Lord Jesus, like Satan demons, we've all sinned, and rebelled, and lived wickedly, and independently, and we've gone our own way. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you did not treat us like Satan and demons, that you gave us grace, and mercy, and love, and a path to salvation. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you didn't send fire down from heaven, but that you came down from heaven. We thank you that we don't need to experience wrath, we can receive grace. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you took our place and that you put us in your place. Lord Jesus, I thank you that there are people who are hearing this and it's not too late for them. I pray, holy Spirit, now that you would convict them of sin and convince them of Jesus. I pray that we would love Jesus. I pray that we would serve Jesus. I pray that we would obey Jesus. I pray that we would thank Jesus. I pray that we would sing to Jesus. I pray that we would trust in Jesus. I pray that we would hope in Jesus until we see Jesus. And Jesus, we thank you that there is a day that you are coming back, and until that day we say your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.