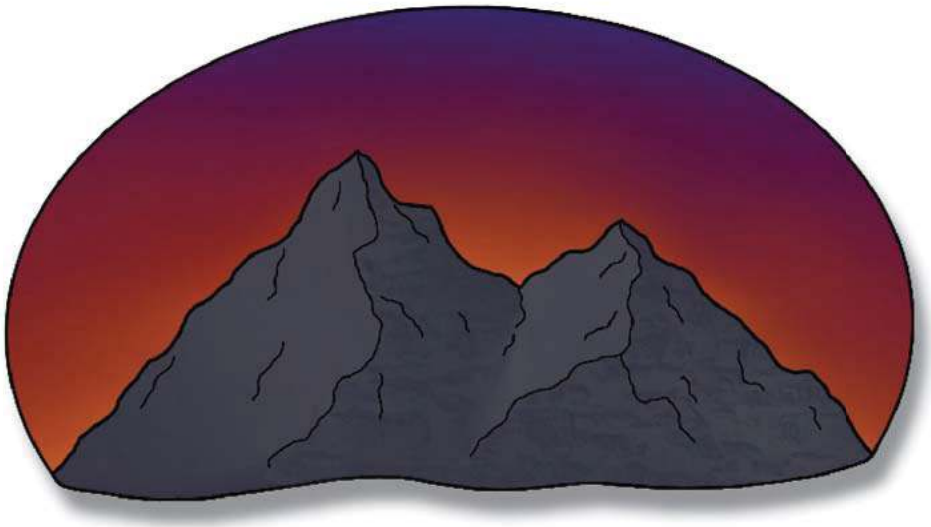
THE MISSIONARY BAPTIST VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
LITERATURE COMMITTEE PRESENTS

TELL IT FROM THE MOUNTAINS



AGES 10-13

THE MISSIONARY BAPTIST VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
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TELL IT FROM THE MOUNTAINS

For Grades 5-8 or Ages 10-13

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Lesson One: MOUNT ARARAT

Written By: Brother Brent Hall
BACKGROUND: Genesis 7:11-8:14
LESSON TEXT: Genesis 8:15 - 9:1

THE NEW BEGINNING

The flood had ended and the Ark now rested on Mt. Ararat, located in what is known as modern day Turkey. Ararat was a twin peaked mountain range, rising to a height of 17,000 ft. above sea level. It was almost an equal distance from the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black sea, and the Caspian Sea, *Harpers Bible Dictionary.* This is the place where Noah, his family, and all the living creatures, in whom was the breath of life, disembarked from the ark, and began to replenish the world with life.

First, I want to ask you to keep in mind throughout this lesson--and hopefully well beyond today—that for there to be a new beginning, there has to be several things present. There must have been a beginning of something, a change over the course of time (whether a short or long period of time) that makes a new beginning needful and beneficial, and there must be a desire and willingness for that change…a desire for that new beginning.

In the reading lesson, we have the story of the flood that covered the earth, destroying every living thing, both men and creatures. The scriptures cover from beginning of the rainfall to the drying of the earth. Once the flood ended and the waters had receded enough, the Ark came to rest on Mt. Ararat.

As the scriptures tell us, in THE beginning, God created the heavens, the earth, and all things that are in those heavens--which we know as outer space—and all things that are on and in the earth. Once he had done so, he

created the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve. God provided for them everything that they needed, and he gave Adam one law…one command: Genesis 2:16-17, *"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*

After giving Adam the law, God created woman for him, to be a help and a partner. Genesis 2:21-22 *"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."* Her name was Eve. At the moment God brought them together, they were made husband and wife.

Satan came to Eve and deceived her, causing her to partake of the forbidden fruit. She then gave to Adam, and when he ate, the Bible tells us in Genesis 3:7, *"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked."* They knew that they were physically naked, and they knew that they were spiritually separated from God, because they had sinned. They had broken the one law that God gave unto Adam. At this time, they were now without God—the perfect fellowship with him was broken. They were in need of a new beginning. They got it! We find in Genesis 3:21, it says, *"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."* The bloodshed required to kill the animals, skin them, and make the coverings for Adam and Eve represented the blood that would ultimately be shed by Jesus to pay the price for their sin, and for ours. As we're all descendants of Adam and Eve, we all have the exact same sinful nature. Having a sinful nature means that it is natural for us to sin…to do wrong. Think of it this way for

a moment, how many of you had to be taught how to do wrong? None of you. What we have to be taught is how to do right, and to be obedient. Furthermore, if we live long enough, the Lord will let us know—as he did them—that we have reached the time in our life that we are now accountable for our sin…and in grave need of the most important new beginning that we'll ever need. When the Bible said "and their eyes were opened," that included that their hearts were opened too, made to realize that they were guilty.

Now, let's go on with the story. After many more years of mankind multiplying, sinfulness was rampant upon the earth. Man was doing wrong, thinking wrong, talking wrong, and not honoring and serving his creator – God. Genesis 6:3-8, tells of when God had had enough of man's sin: *"And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD".* The sin and evil of man stirred God's wrath to the point that he was ready to destroy his creation. As verse 8 said, "*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord"*. Grace is undeserved mercy. Mercy is reserved judgement—judging and finding guilty, but holding off the carrying out the sentence, offering the opportunity for forgiveness, salvation, a new beginning; being changed from a sinner to a child of God. Noah had believed in the Lord, therefore he found that saving grace. Ephesians 2:8-9, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Noah knew—and we must know too—that there's nothing we can do to be saved, but believe.

Read Genesis 8:1-4. Noah and his family were in the Ark for a total of 371 days; that is 1 year and 6 days. Think about that for just a moment; the time afloat, the work, the caring for all the creatures on the Ark. They all exited the Ark to a new beginning. A time to go forward, an opportunity for a fresh start, to replenish the earth, and enjoy all the blessings that God had in store for them. Upon departing the Ark, the first thing that Noah did was to honor, thank, and praise God. Read and/or discuss Genesis 8:20-9:17. Included in the new beginning that God gave them was his promise that he would not destroy the earth by water again. The sign of that promise was (and is) a rainbow.

Many times throughout our lives, in just about every aspect of our lives, we find ourselves needing a new beginning. Whether in school to improve on a not-so-good grade, or in a friendship that's gone through a tough time, or time when we simply feel—for whatever reason or reasons—overwhelmed; and especially when the Lord "knocks" on our heart, letting us know that we're separated from him and in need of a peace that will only come from him, we desire a new beginning. If our desire is sincere, and our heart gets right with God—through repentance and faith...asking for forgiveness and believing that the blood of Jesus paid for our sin—we'll find that new beginning that will be granted unto us by a loving God. We'll find all those other new beginnings that we'll need from time to time, too. Feeling joy, Peace, and freedom as Noah and his family felt when the Lord opened the door of the Ark, once they'd come to rest—and the earth had dried enough for them—upon Mt Ararat.

Lesson Two: MOUNT MORIAH

Written By: Brother Jay Snoddy

BACKGROUND: 2 Chr. 3:1; Gen. 21:1-5; Heb. 11:17-19; 1 Peter 5:6-9 **LESSON TEXT: Gen. 22:1-9**

There are four notable events that took place in the Land of Moriah. They are: The test of Abraham's Faith; The purchase of Oman's Thrashing floor by David; The building of the Temple by Solomon, and the Crucification of Jesus Christ. In the "Land of Moriah," there is a mountain with several peaks which are called by different names; for example, Mount Zion, Mount of Olives, Mount Calvary, and Mount Moriah.

For the purpose of this lesson, we will focus on the test of Abraham's faith. Who was Abraham? He was the son of Terah, who was the great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandson of Noah, whom God commanded to build the ark. Abram, which means "exalted father," was his name at birth, but later his name was changed by God to Abraham which means "father of a great number." Terah had three sons—Abram, Nahor and Haran—and lived in Ur of the Chaldees, a wealthy, heavily populated, and sophisticated pagan center located about 220 miles southeast of modern-day Baghdad. Haran was the father of Lot; Haran passed away early in life. Abram's wife, Sarai, was barren and could not have children. According to Joshua 24:2, Terah was known to worship the idol gods of his native land up until he took Abram, Sarai and Lot and began a journey to Canaan. They later stopped in Haran where they lived out the remainder of Terah's life of 205 years.

When Abram was seventy-five years old, God spoke to him saying, *"…Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing;"* (Genesis 12:1-2) The promise that God made to Abram was that he would make him the father of a great nation and bless him beyond measure. This was the first test of Abram's faith. Here was Abram at seventy-five years old, his wife was not able to have children, and God was telling him he was going to make him the father of a great nation—if he would take his wife and nephew, pack up everything he could carry, and leave everything else behind to go to a land that God would show him when he got there. Genesis 12:5 tells us that Abram stepped out on faith and traveled to the land of Canaan. When they arrived, the Lord said to him, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." When they arrived, they found that there was a famine in the land. Soon it was too taxing on the land for such a large group of people and livestock to live in the same place, so Lot and his flocks separated themselves to the east and dwelt in the plain of Jordan while Abram stayed in Canaan.

Abram, now eighty-five years old, and Sarai were continually reminded of the promise the Lord had made to Abram about making him the Father of a great nation. Sarai, knowing that she was still barren, and that God had promised them children, took matters into her own hands and gave her handmaid, Hagar, to Abram in order that she might conceive and bear him a son. Let us point out here that God's ways are higher than our ways and we should only move as he directs, and not try to put our spin on things. *"And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; It may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai."* (Genesis 16:2) When Hagar conceived, she had a son and his name was called Ishmael. There was a continual resentment between Sarai and Hagar from that point on. At ninety-nine years old, the Lord once again visited with

Abram to seal his covenant with him. Genesis 17 tells us that God promised Abram he would multiply his children exceedingly and that He would be their God. As a sign that they were his people, God instructed Abram that he would no longer be called by that name, but Abraham, Sarai would be known as Sarah. He futher instructed him that all the men were to be circumcised as a token of the covenant between them. This fleshly circumcision, or cutting away of the flesh, was a foreshadowing of the circumcision of the heart in salvation when God cuts away the sinful nature and leaves a righteous soul. The Lord tells him again that Sarah would conceive and bear him a son. As all of us experience, Abraham's faith got weak at this point and he laughed at what God had told him. Abraham questioned God in verse 17 saying *"… Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah that is ninety years old, bear?"* With that God responded that "YES," Sarah would bear a son and that his name would be Isaac, which means "he laughs." In Genesis 21, it tells us that Sarah conceived and gave birth to Isaac. Proving that God always keeps his promise.

The true test of Abraham's faith came a few years later when God spoke to him again saying,*"...take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."* (Genesis 22:2) To paint this picture, here was Abraham, promised by God that he was going to be the father of a great nation and now God was telling him to take his son and offer him as burnt offeing. Abraham did not delay in what God had told him to do. Verse 3 tells us that he rose up early in the morning, saddled his donkeys, took two young men with him along with Isaac and a bundle of wood for the burnt offering. Three days later, Abraham looked up and saw the place God intended for him far off—Mount Moriah. When they reached the base of the

mountain, Abraham instructed the two young men to wait there while he and Isaac went up onto the mountain to worship. The later part of Verse 5 *"… and come again to you,"* confirms the solidity of Abrahams faith even at that point, because he believed God's promise and he knew that he had a plan in order to keep his promise that Isaac would be the father of many children. Abraham untied the wood from the donkey, took his knife and then he and Isaac started up the mountain. As they were walking along, Isaac questioned his father in Verse 7 *"… Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"* Abraham's reply comes in Verse 8 *"… My son, God will provide himself a lamb..."* Abraham's faith never wavered as they trudged up the mountain. They came to the place that God had showed him and Abraham began to lay the wood out, took Isaac his son, bound him and laid him upon the wood. He took out his knife and drew it back to slay his beloved son. AND THEN!!! The angel of the Lord spoke to him saying in Verse 12 *"…Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."* Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught up in a thicket and took the ram and offered it up to God in a burnt offering to Him in the boy's stead. Abraham called the place *Jehovah-jireh*, which means "the Lord will see to it".

Abraham's faith was tested time and again. Sometimes, like all of us, his faith wavered. Other times, we can look at his life and see a role model for ourselves in that when it counted, Abraham trusted in the Lord's promises and marched forward. Most of the time he didn't even know where it was that he was going, but he knew in his heart that "the Lord will see to it".

Lesson Three: MOUNT SINAI

Written By: Brother Jay Snoddy
BACKGROUND: Exodus 19
LESSON TEXT: Exodus 19:1-9

The Sinai Peninsula was a 260-mile long triangle. It was characterized by a mountain range of granite peaks rising up to 8,000 feet above sea level. The two most notable peaks are Sinai and Horeb (Sometimes identified as the same place). Sinai also had a 15-mile wide band of sandy dunes reaching south from the Mediterranean Sea; and also a high plateau of limestone and gravel, and dry steam beds, running 150 miles south of the sand belt.

Three months after leaving the Egyptian bondage and crossing the Red Sea, the children of Israel came to the Sinai desert and made camp at base of this mountain range facing Mt. Sinai. God knew that with as many people as were in the exodus from Egypt, there had to be some form of laws governing their interaction with each other and their worship of God himself.

As the children of Israel settled into camp, God called Moses up onto the mountain and spoke to him, offering the children of Israel an opportunity to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Let us point out that God has never forced anyone to follow him or commit to him, and that what he wants is for us to willingly want to be his children and obey his commands. Exodus 19:5 says *"…If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant..."* Here the children of Israel are presented with what is required of them—their part of the agreement. "*… then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all the people:…*" The second half of the proposal is what God is offering them if they will consent

to their part of the agreement. Just as God has offered us salvation from the certain punishment that awaits for unbelievers, it is ours to freely choose to accept or reject the offer. Moses then went to the people and told them what God had said. The people were all in agreement. Exodus 19:8 *says "…All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord."* The reply of the Israelites pleased God and he told Moses that he wanted to speak to them himself so that they would know and believe all that Moses had told them was of God. Just as we must prepare ourselves to be in the presence of God, the Israelites had to prepare for God's appearance to them. Exodus 19:10-13 tells us that God commanded Moses to sanctify, or set apart, and make sacred for the worship of God. They were to wash their clothing and they were to set a boundary around the mountain so that no one could even touch the base of it. The third day after, God was coming down in thunders and lightning and fire and smoke to meet with his people. Oh, what a sight it must have been to be present when God spoke to his chosen people with an audible voice! In order for us to truly commune with God, we must set ourselves apart from the world in salvation and cleanse ourselves of the worldly filth that clings to us on a daily basis. Hebrews 10:22 tells us that we must *"…draw near with a true heart… having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."*

Once the agreement or covenant was complete, God revealed his plan for establishing a government for them. There had to be rules for personal morality that would establish a standard for right and wrong in the eyes of God. There had to be rules governing social behavior in order for the people to know how to deal

with each other so as to please God. There also had to be a system of worship for the people to reverence God and strengthen their relationship with him, both on a personal level and as a whole.

The basis for all of the rules or laws are summarized in the Ten Commandments that we have learned so much about through our lives, but in reality there are thousands of laws and rules governing even the smallest of details. Jesus was asked at one point by the Pharisees when they were trying to trick him, *"…which is the great commandment in the law?"* To which Jesus replied *"...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind…"* and *"… Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* (Matthew 22:36-40) So, if we will truly love and reverence God with every fiber of our being and place him as our utmost priority, and love everyone, then we need not worry.

The laws concerning our moral and civil conduct are still in place today. God's laws concerning how we conduct ourselves and how we treat others have not, nor will they ever change. The golden rule says that we should treat others the way we want to be treated. Paul told the Philippians in his letter to them, *"…but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."* (Philippians 2:3-4) When one of these civil laws were broken, then restitution was made to the offended neighbor. An example of this can be found in Exodus 22:1 *"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep."* There were transgressions against laws that required punishment

up to and including death. An orderly society must have laws to regulate their conduct and behavior. There must be accountability for society to live in peace.

The laws concerning sacrifice were also given to Moses upon Mt Sinai. Time and space do not permit adequate explanation of all that was encompassed in these. Let us fully understand that the blood sacrifices made to God for the atonement for minutest of sins was a direct representation of the blood that Jesus would shed upon Mt. Calvary. Webster's 1828 dictionary states that a sacrifice is "an offering to God... as an acknowledgment of his power and providence, or to make atonement for sin, appease his wrath or conciliate his favor, or to express thankfulness for his benefits." Let us also fully understand that when Jesus went to the cross and offered his sinless blood for the atonement for all, he was a perfect sacrifice and there would never be a need for any other blood to be spilled. God was completely satisfied with the atonement for all of mankind's sins. Romans 5:19 tells us, *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."*

Just as God gave the first man Adam a single law that let him know what he could and could not do, God gave Moses the laws that were written in stone in order to teach us what sin is in order for us to repent unto him and bring us to Christ. Galatians 3:24 *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."*

Lesson Four: MOUNT CARMEL

Written By: Brother Tyler Burysek
BACKGROUND: I Kings Chapters 17 & 18
LESSON TEXT: James 5:17-18

The setting for this lesson is Mount Carmel. Although, called Mount Carmel, it is more like a hilly range that stretches for about 25 miles along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, between and behind, the modern-day cities of Haifa and Hadera. The highest point of Mt. Carmel is 1,791 feet above sea level and is about twenty miles long and eight miles wide. The Valley of Jezreel lies to the immediate Northeast of the mountain range. The brook Kishon is also nearby.

Through the first few lessons we have ventured from mountaintop to mountaintop learning very valuable lessons along the way. Through the generations, God has taught his people in ways they can understand and in ways that he can show his true power through the spirit that resides with us today. Each of these mountaintops give us new insight on various topics that we struggle with daily, in hopes of strengthening our faith and commitment to God. This lesson will center on Mount Carmel. This "mountain" is located in Israel, due west of Nazareth, the childhood home of Jesus.

Mount Carmel brings us the account of Elijah as described in 1 Kings, chapters 17-18. Elijah was a prophet of the Lord and was sent to King Ahab with a proclamation in the beginning of chapter 17 of 1 Kings. He proclaimed, *"As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (*I Kings 17:1). Basically, he was proclaiming that no dew or rain was going to occur in any part of the land unless God allowed it through his prophet Elijah. This proclamation proved to be true as all of the water dried

up in the land and a great famine occurred because they couldn't grow food or water the livestock. Ahab requested to his servant, Obadiah, to *"Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts"* (I Kings 18:5). During Obadiah's search for water, he met Elijah. Elijah requested to be in the presence of Ahab, so he was brought to Ahab. Immediately Ahab asked Elijah, *"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"* (I Kings 18:17). As you could imagine, Ahab was pretty upset and was looking to figure out the reason behind the famine and drought. Elijah immediately responded to Ahab, *"...I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim"* (I Kings 18:18).

The reason for the famine had been brought right in front of Ahab at that exact moment. He and his forefathers had not been following the Lord! Ahab and his predecessors had built groves and places to worship Baal. Baal was a "god" that was worshipped in many Middle Eastern communities at the time, especially among the Canaanites. Baal was worshiped as the "god" of fertility and was deemed as the "king of the gods." Ahab and his predecessors had made it a habit of worshiping Baal instead of God. This was a direct contradiction to God. Oftentimes, we find ourselves consumed with the things of this world. Ahab and his people were caught up in ceremonial worship of a "god" that they couldn't see or feel. In this case, Baalim (or Baal), was put before God. Do you put things before God? School? Sports? Anything that separates us from God is a hinderance. Directly, Elijah asked the people, *"...How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him..."* (I Kings 18:21).

Straightway, Elijah challenged the people. Elijah knew the power of God and knew that Baal had no dominion

over him. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal (the people who were choosing to worship Baal rather than God) to offer a sacrifice, then call on Baal. At the same time, Elijah would do the same, and call on the one and true God. Whichever deity answered and consumed the sacrifice with fire would be acknowledged as the "true God." The prophets of Baal were pretty confident that Baal would answer their call. They complied with the challenge. Little did they know that Elijah KNEW God would prevail. The prophets of Baal called on him from *"...morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made"* (I Kings 18:26). Elijah was so confident in his God that he mocked the prophets of Baal and said, *"...Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked" (*I Kings 18:27). The people cried louder and even resorted to extreme measures to convince Baal to consume the sacrifice. They were rewarded with disappointment. *"...they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded"* (I Kings 18:29).

Elijah brought the people to the altar of the Lord that had obviously not been utilized in some time as he had to repair it because it was broken down. Through and by the spirit of God, Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, and built an altar in the name of the Lord. Elijah went even further to build a trench around the altar. He prepared the sacrifice and requested that the people even pour water on the sacrifice. Have you ever tried to burn something that is wet? It is extremely difficult as the water distorts the chemical makeup of something that normally would burn easily, and makes it almost impossible to burn. The people poured the water over Elijah's sacrifice not once, but three times, so much

water that it filled the trench that was dug previously.

Elijah prayed, *"...LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again"* (I Kings 18:36b-37). Immediately, the Lord brought a fire down and consumed the wet sacrifice. Not only was the sacrifice consumed, but the stones, even the dust and water that was in the trench. OUR GOD IS A POWERFUL GOD. *"And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God"* (I Kings 18:39).

Not all of the people that witnessed God consume Elijah's sacrifice were "Prophets of Baal." I believe there were numerous people there who were confused on who and what to worship. They hadn't been raised worshiping God. Ahab and his predecessors had fallen away from the truth and several generations felt the impact of them not following the one and true God. 1 Corinthians 14:33 says, *"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace."* God is not the reason that we separate ourselves from him. We do it all on our own. We live in a world of distraction. Through social media, television, cell phones, we have the world at our beckoning call. Too much of the world is too much time away from God. The scriptures teach us to *"...Be ye separate..."* (II Corinthians 6:17) and *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (I John 2:15). The account of Elijah defeating the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel is the perfect example of how the True God can and will always prevail over this world.

Lesson Five: MOUNT CALVARY

Written By: Brother Tony Clark
BACKGROUND: I Kings Chapters 17 & 18
LESSON TEXT: James 5:17-18

The exact location is not known. It was called Golgotha, meaning "the place of a skull" (Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, John 19:17). Also, it was called Calvary (Luke 23:33). Although the Scripture does not call the location a mountain or even a hill, It was evidently an elevated place where the Romans crucified convicted criminals. It was outside the walls of Jerusalem, yet it was nearby.

Almost two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ suffered and died a horrible death on Mount Calvary so that you could be saved. In order for you to better understand what happened on Mount Calvary, it's important that we take the time to consider why Jesus had to die on Calvary for our sins.

There is only one God, and he is amazing. God created the entire universe! In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, it teaches us that God created everything from the smallest insect to the largest planet. He created the galaxies, the stars, the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth. He created all the plants and animals. The fact that God created all these amazing aspects of the universe gives us a glimpse into God's nature. First, we should understand that God is all-powerful. We as human beings like to think that we are strong or powerful, but the fact is that we are all quite weak. Even the healthiest man can be made ill by a small germ, and even the strongest man can be crippled by a car accident. God is not at all weak. By his power, he created the universe, and he continues to sustain the universe by his power. God is also all-knowing. As human beings, we have to

work to learn more and more as we continue in this life. God has never needed to learn anything, because he is all-knowing. You cannot surprise God and you cannot trick God. He knows everything about you – how old you are, your name, and even how many hairs are on your head! Also, God is everywhere. You cannot escape God. He is everywhere all of the time. If you could fly in a space shuttle to the moon, God would be there. If you took a submarine into the deepest ocean, God would be there. Finally, God is holy. This means that God is perfect in his morality. He is completely good and righteous. Unlike human beings, God has never sinned or done anything wrong.

On the other hand, human beings are quite different from God. We are not all-powerful; we are very weak and frail. God is all-knowing, but we as human beings are almost totally ignorant in contrast to God. God is everywhere, but even the largest human being can only take up a small amount of space. Most importantly, we have all sinned against God. What is sin? Sin is disobeying God. God has revealed to us in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) that we should not steal, lie, murder, or covet (want other people's things). He also expects us to worship him the way he desires to be worshiped, and to honor our parents. Jesus summed up God's moral standards by saying that we should love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and that we should love our neighbors as ourselves. The problem is that we have all failed to meet God's standards. The Bible says that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

God is holy, and the Bible says that God is angry with the wicked every day (Psalm 7:11). God knows everything about us. He knows all the wrong things we have done,

said, felt, and thought. He knows that we all deserve to be punished in Hell for all eternity. Hell is a place of everlasting suffering. Jesus said it is a place where there is eternal wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:42). Even though we have all rebelled against God, he does not want us to go to Hell for eternity. This is why Mount Calvary is so important.

How is it that a holy God can allow us to be forgiven of our sins and go to Heaven when we have sinned so often against him? We deserve to be punished in Hell for our sins, but God nevertheless wanted to show us his grace and love. God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to come into this world to be punished for our sins. Unlike us, Jesus was God and human all at the same time. He was completely holy and without sin. Jesus was born of a virgin, he taught many wonderful teachings, and did many amazing miracles. However, the main reason Jesus came into this world was so that he could suffer and die as an offering for our sins. John 3:16 says, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* Jesus came to die on the cross for our sins.

What kind of punishment did Jesus receive on our behalf?

Jesus was badly beaten. He was spit upon. They whipped him merciless. They placed a crown of thorns upon his head and smacked him with a reed. After all of this, they tried to force Jesus to carry his cross up to Mount Calvary. A cross was made of two pieces of wood that were nailed together in the shape of a small "t." Jesus was so weak from having been beaten, whipped, and tormented, that he was unable to carry

his cross up Mount Calvary. A man named Simon had to help him carry it. When he arrived at the top of Mount Calvary, the Roman soldiers nailed his hands and feet to the cross. Can you imagine how much pain Jesus suffered when they put nails through his wrists and his feet? Then they lifted up the cross, and Jesus hung on the cross for about six hours. This is about as long as the average school child is at school any given day. Before he died, Jesus said, *"...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34). Later, he cried out with a loud voice, and he died.

It was on Mount Calvary that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the whole world. It was the most incredible demonstration of love that has ever been shown. Jesus not only died on the cross for our sins, but he rose on the third day that we might have eternal life.

What should our response be to Jesus's death on the cross at Mount Calvary? Jesus said that we should repent and believe the gospel. Everyone needs to call upon God with a broken heart and a crushed spirit – asking him to save them from their sins. One should call upon God until God lets him know he is saved. The Bible teaches us that God lets us know we are saved because he gives us peace and joy that is beyond expression. If you have not been saved, please consider what Jesus did for you on Mount Calvary. Call upon God, and ask him to save you. Do not be satisfied until God lets you know you are saved. If you have been saved, it will help you in your Christian life to meditate and think about what Jesus did on Calvary for you as well.