

Session 3: Behind Enemy Lines

Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only one of the LORD’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let Baal’s prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God.”

1 KINGS 18:22-24



CONNECT

What wars or conflicts are center stage in the news today? What in particular is driving those conflicts?

When have you felt harassed or exposed because you were different from those around you? What did you do in response?



WATCH

Watch the video for this session, Below is an outline of the key points covered during the teaching. Record any key concepts that stand out to you.

OUTLINE

I. Elijah understood what it is like to live behind enemy lines.

- A. Most of the inhabitants of Israel no longer served the God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob.
- B. Led by Ahab and Jezebel, Israel had turned to worshiping the false gods of the Canaanites.
- C. This idolatry had Satan’s fingerprints all over it—rebellion against God.
- D. Israel was now especially hostile to prophets from God like Elijah.

II. God sent Elijah into enemy territory because the situation was intolerable to him.

- A. God did not want the depravity of pagan worship for his people.
- B. So after three years of drought, he instructed Elijah to present himself to Ahab.
- C. At this time, Ahab and Jezebel were still actively seeking to kill Elijah.
- D. It took unbreakable courage for Elijah to present himself to his enemies.

III. Elijah called for a contest between God and the false Canaanite gods.

- A. This was the Lord revealing just how powerless Satan was before him.
- B. The false prophets spent hours calling on their false gods—but with no result.
- C. Elijah called for twelve buckets of water to be poured over his offering.
- D. God likes to show up and show off in a way that leaves no doubt who is in charge!

IV. What this story teaches about how to be strong and courageous in a fallen world.

- A. Heaven opened and fire fell, consuming the water, rocks, wood, and even the dust.
- B. For the first time in three generations, the people of Israel cried out, “The Lord—he is God!”
- C. This world is enemy territory, but the God we serve is stronger than the devil.
- D. God has sent you on a mission behind enemy lines—so step out with your comrades-in-arms.





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Discuss

Discuss what you just watched by answering the following questions.

1. To say that our world is “enemy territory” is to recognize Satan’s influence across the globe—not to mention across human history. In your own words, how would you describe who Satan is and what he desires to do in our world?

2. Ask one or two volunteers to read aloud 1 Kings 18:25–40, which describes the confrontation between Elijah and the false prophets. What do those verses teach about the values and the worldview of those who worshiped Baal and Asherah?

3. Where do you see similar values or a similar worldview on display in our culture?

4. Read aloud John 3:16–18. God sent Elijah behind enemy lines because he wanted to rescue his people from depravity. How does Elijah’s mission compare with that of Jesus? In what ways was Jesus sent behind enemy lines to rescue us from depravity?

5. Confrontations such as those we read about between God’s prophets and false prophets might seem like a thing of the past, but it is also necessary for modern believers to demonstrate real courage as we live behind enemy lines. When have you recently had an opportunity to take a stand for your faith? What happened as a result?



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Respond

When it comes to choosing conflict for righteous reasons, there is no greater example than Christ himself. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke relate one moment in particular that came near the end of Jesus' public ministry. In fact, it occurred the last week before his crucifixion. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a foal of a donkey and heard the crowds sing out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:9). He then stepped into the temple courts. Here is what Matthew records happened next:

12 Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 13 "It is written," he said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.' " 14 The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. MATTHEW 21:12–15

Jesus denounced the moneychangers and merchants for transforming the temple into a "den of robbers." His anger was ignited by the injustice taking place within its walls. Based on what you know of God's character, why would this have been so egregious to him?

There are times when Christians should respond to the world with grace and other times when they must take a stand for the values of God's kingdom. What have you learned that helps you discern when conflict or confrontation is necessary?



Pray

When the time comes to close this session, talk with God about the many ways he has prepared and equipped you to be servants in his kingdom—including seasons of solitude. Express gratitude for those seasons and for the ways God has preserved you and provided for you in the midst of them. Commit to actively making time for God to fill you each day so you have something to give at home, at work, and beyond. Use the space below to write down any requests so you and your group members can pray about them in the week ahead.