

## Threat of False Gods

### Scripture Reading — 1 Kings 18:15-46

*“How long will you waver . . . ? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” — 1 Kings 18:21*

Elijah’s confrontation with the prophets of Baal is one of the most dramatic stories in the Old Testament. Here God’s people are called to choose whom they will follow, the Lord God of Israel or Baal, the generic name for the fertility gods of the nations surrounding Israel.

After the prophets of Baal have failed in their frenzy of self-mutilation to rouse their god, who doesn’t even exist, Elijah raises the stakes and then prays that the people may know *the* Lord, who totally annihilates the stone altar. Then, after three long years of drought, starting from a tiny dark cloud, it begins to rain. Elijah’s God shows himself to be both powerful and gracious.

Whom will we follow, false gods or the one true God, the maker of heaven and earth? That is still the question we face. The false gods of today may not have names and temples like the gods of ancient times, but they still deceive and enslave human hearts.

Not so the Creator. Both power-ful and gracious, he frees our hearts from sin. Look no further than the miracle that takes place in Bethlehem. Jesus was born with a heart filled with grace and love, and in the new birth he gives us, he replaces our hearts of stone with hearts of flesh.

On which altar will you lay your heart today?

### Prayer

*Jesus, you gave yourself as a sacrifice for us. Help us to offer our hearts in loving service to you and the world around us. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Bible](#), [Bible Characters](#), [Elijah](#), [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Grace](#), [Life](#), [Christian Life](#), [Following Jesus](#)

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