

# Chapter 63: The Sacrifice of Elias

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## Commentary for Chapter 63

**The purposes of the miracles in this chapter.** The **first miracle** was the drought that lasted for three years and a half. By a miracle God caused the rain not to fall as it normally would. The drought was sent both to punish Achab and the people for their idolatry, and to help them convert. The silence however of the people, when Elias demanded of them to make an act of faith, shows that paganism was still very strong among them. The priests of the true God had been killed, so that there was no one to teach the truth to the poor people. The priests of Baal taught them that the famine had been sent by Baal as a punishment for their lack of faith in the pagan belief. But God in His mercy worked a **second miracle** to convince the people of the folly of idolatry and to help them to return to the true faith. It was in the presence of them all that He rained down this wonderful fire from a cloudless sky, which consumed even the wet stones of the altar. The people were overwhelmed by the stupendous miracle and fell on their faces and adored Him, confessing aloud their faith in Him. Then, by a **third miracle** He sent the wished-for rain, so that all men might know that the drought had come from Him, and that from Him came help and salvation.

**Fortitude.** Achab hated Elias, and his hatred was increased by the long drought which he attributed to the prophet. Elias knew of the hatred that the king had for him. Nevertheless, at the Lord's bidding, he fearlessly confronted him. He showed equal fortitude when he challenged the priests of Baal in the face of all the people. If God had not heard his prayer and sent fire from heaven, he would most certainly have been killed. His ardent faith and zeal for God's glory induced him to risk his life in the hope of bringing back the people from the worship of false gods.

**The lack of priests.** The people of the kingdom of Israel sank deeper and deeper into idolatry and crime, because the priests who taught them the true religion were killed. It is a great misfortune for Christian countries when there is a lack of good priests. When this is the case, faith grows weak, morals become lax, and many souls are lost.

**Figures in this chapter.** The land of Israel, suffering from the long drought, was a figure of the great spiritual drought from which the whole world suffered before the coming of Christ. Elias bidding the heavens to rain was a figure of Christ opening the fountains of grace to a perishing world. The rain itself, which gave a new life to the earth, is a figure of the grace of God, which renews the soul of the converted sinner.

## Questions to be Answered Using the Bible History Book:

1. How long had the earth remained without rain or dew when God told Elias to go to King Achab?

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2. How many prophets of Baal were there that were called to Mount Carmel?

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3. What plan did Elias make to show Achab and all the Israelites that the God of Israel and not Baal was the true God?

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4. (a) How many stones did Elias use to make an altar? (b) Why do you think he would use this number?

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Why would Elias put water on the victim till it ran down on every side and filled the trench around the altar?

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6. What did the fire that came down from heaven consume?

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### Questions to be Answered Using the Commentary:

7. List the three miracles God worked in this chapter:

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

8. How did Elias show fortitude?

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9. What happens to us Christians when there is a lack of good priests?

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10. Explain what the (a) draught, (b) Elias, and (c) rain were symbols of.

(a) Draught: \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Elias: \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Rain: \_\_\_\_\_