

The Sacrifice is Greater!

1Ki 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

1Ki 18:39 When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God."

There is a very interesting story in 1 Kings in which Elijah has a "throw down" with the priests of the false god Baal. The nation of Israel had largely forsaken the Lord God who delivered them out of Egypt and followed after Baal, the god of the Canaanites. God sent Elijah to restore the hearts of His people back to him. Elijah called the priests of Baal to a contest to see who the real God was. He told them to meet him on Mt. Caramel and they would prepare an offering and the one who answered by fire would be the true God. **The priests of Baal did their best to get their god to answer them all day. They yelled, jumped, danced, and even resorted to cutting themselves until their blood flowed down their bodies.** Eventually, Elijah mocked them and had his turn. He built his alter and placed the burnt sacrifice upon it and even drenched it with so much water that the trench he had dug around it was filled with water! **Elijah simply prayed to the covenant keeping God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** God immediately answered by fire and the fire consumed the sacrifice and every thing else even the stones, wood, dirt, and water! **The fire was greater than the sacrifice itself. It also consumed everything else around it and under it!**

This fire represented the judgment of God upon sin. The holy wrath of God was so intense and great that day it consumed the sacrifice and every thing else. **God's wrath was never satisfied by animal sacrifices. It was always greater than those sacrifices.** The sacrifices of the Old Testament were all a picture of one sacrifice that would one day satisfy the wrath and judgment of God upon sin. That was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Upon the cross our sacrifice, Jesus, was offered. God holy wrath was poured out on His Son. God had to turn away from His Son that day, and Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me!" On that day the fury of God towards our rebellion and sin fell upon His Son and He bore the full brunt of that holy fury. However, unlike the sacrifice Elijah offered this sacrifice was greater than God's judgment! For three hours complete darkness covered the land as Jesus endured not only physical torment but the wrath of God upon Him. Right before He died, He cried, "It is finished!" He absorbed the wrath of God and died. He then suffered in hell for us, but in three days the Lamb of God arose from the dead triumphant over death, hell, and the grave. **Our sacrifice was greater than the judgment!!** He was not consumed but came up and out of the fire of God's Judgment victorious and triumphant. **He did it all for us and as us! He brought us up out of the judgment and wrath of God with Him!**

Today you need to not try to get God to do things for you. He has already given you His Son, how much more will He freely give you all things. You need to not look to your own performance in asking God for things because Jesus paid for all your sins for all time. He has given you his perfect righteousness. You now are blessed because of the obedience of Jesus and not your own. The blessings of God are always tied to obedience, but the question you must settle with finality in your mind and heart is whose obedience? Are they based upon your imperfect obedience or the perfect obedience of Christ? My friend it is only Christ's perfect obedience that prevails with God. It is His perfect obedience that brings all the blessings of Heaven down to earth. You need not try to get your God to answer you by your own efforts like the priest of Baal. You need not punish yourself to atone for your wrongs in order for God to bless you like the priests of Baal who cut themselves. You need not live in condemnation any longer. A perfect sacrifice has been found for you –Jesus the Son of God. His sacrifice was greater than all of God's Judgment. Call upon your covenant God today based upon that greater sacrifice and experience all the blessings His obedience purchased you. Instead of judgment you will experience the blessings of God fall upon you to the point it overflows and be more than you can contain. Amen.

1. Have you been trying to get God's blessings by your own efforts?
2. What are some ways that people try to get God to answer them?
3. Faith exercise: The next time you pray, focus on the sacrifice of Christ and His perfect obedience of God in your behalf. It was all for you. He did it so that God could bless you. If you focus on yourself your faith will falter. If you focus upon Christ your faith will be strong to receive.
4. Confession: Father I thank you that all your anger and wrath towards me and my sin have been fully poured out on Jesus. You punished Jesus for my sin so I know you will never punish me because of them. I thank you that I don't have to try to get you to answer me. You answer my prayers and bless me because of the perfect offering and obedience of Jesus who was my sacrifice. I receive the things from you right now because of Jesus. Thank you God for loving me and showering me with blessings!