

IF GOD BE GOD

If God truly is God, then we must seek and follow Him.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ Is God real? And if He is, is He *really* in charge? Having clear answers to those questions has the power to determine everything else about the way we live. If He truly is the boss of this world, we should probably try to find out how He wants us to carry on in it.
- ❖ Let's go back to the nation of Israel at around the year 850 B.C. The people of Israel had been delivered from centuries of slavery by a God known as YWH, or the One Who Is, or the Self-existent One, or the inexpressible Breath of Life. They were in Canaan now.
- ❖ Most of them had abandoned the God of their desert wanderings. Now they worshiped the gods of these green valleys and sea shores, the gods of the Canaanites and Phoenicians, gods like Baal and Asherah. Israel even had a Phoenician queen, Jezebel, and 850 prophets devoted to Baal and Asherah (1 Kings 16:31; 18:19, 40).
- ❖ Things came to a crisis point in 1 Kings 18:21:

Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.
- ❖ Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. ²³ Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." (vv. 22-24)
- ❖ The god, Baal, was positioned as the lord, owner and ruler of this world. Baal's worshipers endured him with the ability to send fire from heaven.
- ❖ Verses 25 to 29 (NASB) recount the prayers of Baal's prophets, accompanied by "limping around the altar", cutting themselves and "raving" – to no avail. There was no answer from their "fire God".
- ❖ Yet, when Elijah called on the God of Israel, after pouring water on the altar several times, fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice on the altar as well as all the water that had been poured (vv. 30-38).
- ❖ Then verse 39 tells us, "Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!'"
- ❖ The spiritual entity embodied by the god Baal has been itching and aching for worship for a long, long time. He (Satan) even showed up to try to get Jesus to worship him. (See Matthew 4:8-9; Luke 4:6-7).
- ❖ Satan may position himself as the lord/owner/ or ruler of this world. We definitely see his evil, manipulative fingerprints all over the operations of many people,

KEY SCRIPTURES:

1 Kings 18:19-40; 1 John 2: 15-17:15-17

- governments, corporations and institutions.
- ❖ But Jesus' close disciple, John, gives us a look at reality from God's point of view in 1 John 2. John says don't even concern yourself with all the devil's claims and powers (vv 15-17):

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.
- ❖ John says that when you consider this world, there are three main principles operating in it, which we can summarize into one word each: Pleasure. Possessions. Power.
- ❖ These are the principles on which this world operates; principles embodied in the concept of Baal, the god of this world.
- ❖ And John warns us -- when we feel those drives, those desires; when the need for pleasure and possession and power are filling up our mind: know what is true. None of that is of the Father, it is of the world. It makes no sense to pursue or hold on to any of it because this world is, in fact, passing away.
- ❖ But the person who operates on completely different principles, focused on seeking and doing the will God, abides forever. This thought is echoed in Colossians 3:1-2 (KJV):

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ²Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
- ❖ Another way to say that is: If God be God, set your mind on Him. Seek after everything to do with His kingdom. Set your focus on things above. Put your attention, your affections, your efforts there. Follow Him. Serve Him.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Why do you think the people in 1 Kings 18 did not answer Elijah's challenge? Discuss. Are there lessons we can learn from this?
2. Based on scriptures, what are "the world/the things in the world" we should shun? What are some "things above" that we should seek out?

PRAYER TIME

Lord, I believe You are God. I will seek for You and serve You only. In Jesus' name, amen.

Start-up: is there something you were taught when you were young that you have since learned to be incorrect (e.g., was later proven to be untrue)?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2022

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) ☁️ (Think about)

! (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↔️ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline