

NO WILD FIRE ALLOWED

TEXT:

1 Kings 17:

1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 And the Word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto the Word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

8 And the Word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

12 And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.



13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the

saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the Word of the LORD, which He spake by Elijah.

17 And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.



18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

20 And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.



23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

24 And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the Word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

Unfailingly, God must, in the process of time, send Judgment for sin. Violation of the law always means punishment. Sinai always precedes Calvary. The strength of the penalty of the law has always been its great restraining power over crime. God's law had been violated, and the punishment must be meted out. Is it not as reasonable for God to punish violations of His laws as it is for man to punish violations of the civil laws?

Elijah acted as God's messenger and pronounced judgment upon the wicked king and his people. After his pronouncement, Elijah disappeared into the wilderness where he was hidden and provided for by God. The Lord always protects His faithful servants in times of danger. When Jezebel learned of this strange and rugged prophet and of his threat, she was furious and issued orders that a search be made throughout the country until Elijah should be found. So we see poor little Ahab, supposedly the great and dignified king of Israel, out scouting the land,

hunting for one fearless prophet whom he supposed — at his wife’s declaration — was the “troublemaker of Israel”.

The drought became steadily worse, meanwhile, and the sufferings of the people more intense. Finally, God instructed Elijah to go and show himself unto Ahab. Elijah went forth and met Obadiah who was leading one of Ahab’s one-man search parties which Ahab finally had to send to every waterhole in his domain in order to find grass for keeping the horses and mules alive.



Obadiah was one of the Lord’s prophets who had tried to remain true to his God, but found himself in an impossible — as well as embarrassing — position. He had compromised himself by remaining in the royal court, and his hands were tied, just as are the hands of any preacher today who tries to remain in fellowship with godless members.

Obadiah, however, recognized Elijah as a true prophet of God, and Elijah instructed him to go and tell Ahab that Elijah was ready for a meeting with the king. Obadiah feared that Elijah might be mocking him, and reminded the prophet of how Ahab had searched every part of the domain for him and had the magistrates take oaths that they were not hiding him and knew not of his whereabouts. Obadiah further protested:



1 Kings 18:12: And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

Elijah answered Obadiah’s fears by declaring:

1 Kings 18:15: And Elijah said, As the LORD of Hosts liveth, before Whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.

Stop a moment and consider the immediate picture. God’s two chief men of Israel — Ahab the king, and Obadiah, the governor of Ahab’s house — were out hunting grass for keeping the horses and mules alive, all because they had fallen under the power of God’s enemies.

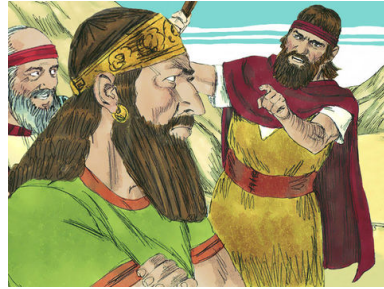
In this, you have a picture of people today who have compromised with the world and have accordingly been reduced to the low estate of hunting and preparing grass for the feeding of jackasses.

Elijah, according to his word, met Ahab, and as soon as Ahab saw the prophet, he cried out:

1 Kings 18:17-18:

17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the Commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.



Elijah certainly hurled a plain and harsh indictment against the old king, but every word was true. God's prophets are always called upon to rebuke sin and to give plain warnings. You may not heed them any more than did Ahab, but the judgments will come just the same.

We may receive warnings every day and pass them by unheeded; but in so doing, we only make our destruction more sure. If the steamship Titanic had heeded the warnings of the Arabic (a ship) concerning the icebergs, that awful disaster which overtook the majestic ship might have been averted. However, she simply thanked the Arabic for her warnings and sailed on in her course, confident of her safety. The ship and hundreds of her passengers paid for disregarding the warning.

Anybody who tries to silence God's prophet is a fool. If Germany had not silenced the mouths of her true messengers of God, she would never have fallen victim to the false philosophies that caused her downfall. There is no use in getting mad at the preacher when he warns you of the dangers that threaten you. He is but God's mouthpiece. If what he says is not true, he cannot hurt you. He is nothing but a man, and if he prophesies falsely, he will answer to God for it; but if he is God's prophet, you are a fool to disregard him and try to silence him. You might as well turn the hose on the fire bell that warns you of a fire, as to silence the preacher who warns you of the fires of lust that are threatening you.

Anybody who tries to silence God's prophet is a fool.

You don't become mad at your physician when he tells you of the disease that is daily weakening your body. You appreciate his truthfulness. Yet, when the preacher tells you of the cancer that is eating at your soul, you become angry and say, "I'll never go to hear him again".

The most foolish thing a person can do is to shut his eyes when he sees a cyclone coming. The ostrich that sticks its foolish head in the sand to keep from seeing the hunter only makes itself easy prey.

ELIJAH CALLS FOR A SHOWDOWN.

After delivering his stinging rebuke, Elijah challenged Ahab to assemble all the people — including Jezebel's lying preachers — and have a showdown contest to

determine who is God.



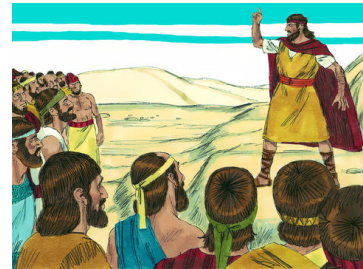
1 Kings 18:19: Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

Note at this point Ahab's character. When he was with Elijah, he did whatever Elijah said, but when he was with Jezebel, he meekly obeyed her orders. He could not stand alone. He was one of these easy-going, convenient fellows that just did what the crowd was doing.

He always followed some other person's lead. He was a good lord and a good devil; in general, he was a good-for-nothing sort of fellow. Like the chameleon, Ahab always took the color of his surroundings. He obeyed Elijah's instructions and ordered all the prophets of Baal and of the groves to go to Mt. Carmel. Of course, we may imagine how those old, false preachers tried to get out of going to Mt. Carmel. They were afraid of a test, because they had no real faith in their god, but there was no escape and they had to go.

Elijah met those false prophets and the people of Israel in a great, natural amphitheater at the top of Mt. Carmel. I tried to visualize the picture when I stood along Mount Carmel. I could see the great hosts of wandering, curious Israelites packed into the immense open-air amphitheater. Over on one side, I could see the stalwart, rugged form of Elijah, the lone prophet of God. On the other side were the 450 priests of Baal. Hanging around somewhere to see the test was old king Ahab. Elijah began speaking to the crowd:

1 Kings 18:21: How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.



Elijah then proposed a test to decide who is God. Baal was the god of fire and was supposed to have control of fire. So, Elijah put the terms of the test to his adversaries, and proposed that altars be erected, bullocks be placed thereon, and that the God who sent fire and consumed the offerings would be recognized as God. The priests of Baal could do nothing but accept the challenge.

1 Kings 18:22: Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

1 Kings 18:25: And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many;

and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

The priests of Baal put up their altar and commenced to dance and prance around it. They tore their hair and lacerated their flesh as they screamed to their god and begged him to send down fire. But their god did not answer.



Neither will that false god whom you have been serving answer your prayers when you are in a time of crisis and testing. Inevitably, the time will come when you will find that your god is a silent god. You who have been worshipping at the shrine of business, who have turned your back on God and His church for your

business, in the hour of your distress and trouble when you go and cry to your business to save you and comfort you, you will find a silent god. You turned your back on the only God that has the power to answer in the time of crisis.

You that worship your Lodge and put it before you do your God, your church, and your prayer meetings, call upon your Lodge to help you, but you will discover — to your utter dismay — that it is a silent god.

During war it is only necessary to miss once from the battle line to be shot as a deserter and a traitor. Nothing can come before God without causing great loss to your soul. Yes, you who have made pleasure your god will get no answer. You have turned your back on the only God Who does answer in the time of trouble. Yes, you will call, but God will mock you, just like Elijah did those old, raving prophets.

Nothing can
come before God
without causing
great loss to your
soul.

Elijah — calm, confident, and undisturbed — sat there and watched them. He knew that they would get no answer, just as I know that you will get no answer from your little gods. I have been studying the source from whence cometh our help, and I know that the little things you have set up as gods can bring no satisfaction.

Psalms 121:1-2:

1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

2 My help cometh from the LORD, Which made Heaven and earth.

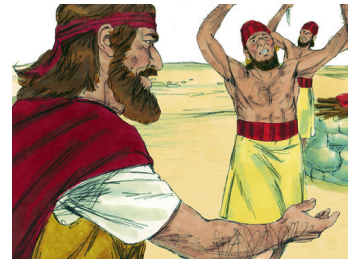
We all have noted how certain fellows go around and cuss out preachers, but then when they get into trouble, they want a preacher to help get them out. Why don't they call on the crowd they have been running with to help them out? I have seen folk cuss their pastor for the stand he had taken when he announced that the church would have soul-saving meetings. They tried to make it just as hard for

him as possible, but afterward — when some member of their family died — they ran to him and cried for help and comfort. You inconsistent folk want him to stand up and say nice things about your loved ones at their funerals, even though you know that he would have to lie to do it. You trot after Baal one day, and after Jehovah the next.

ELIJAH MOCKS HIS ADVERSARIES

All through the morning, the false prophets called on the name of their god, but with no answer. At noon Elijah began to mock them.

1 Kings 18:27: And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.



They were in a frenzy, but Elijah just sat calmly and unconcerned while he mocked those old, false preachers.

One of the most interesting things we notice in the study of God's Word is the calm confidence with which God's true worshippers and prophets conduct themselves in every critical hour. Look at Peter as he stood before the Sanhedrin. Against him were the leaders of the people — the men of light and learning — angry and vindictive. With a little imagination, we can almost hear them shouting at Peter and the apostles:



Acts 5:28: Saying, did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this Name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's Blood upon us.

Peter faced them calmly, a plain fisherman with no influence, yet he was confident and undisturbed as he replied:

Acts 5:29-32:

29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.

Why should Peter have been troubled as long as the Omnipotent God was upholding him?

Yes, Elijah — with God on his side — had nothing to fear from 450 adversaries who had only a delusion. David, with God helping him, had no need for fearing the giant, Goliath. Shamgar, with God, needed only a beanstalk to route an army.

Judges 3:31: And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

At Elijah's goading, the priests waxed even more frantic:

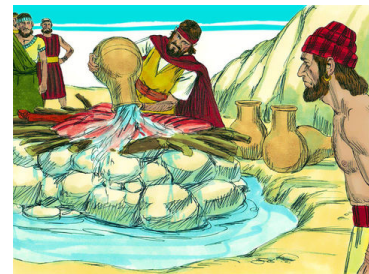


1 Kings 18:28: And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

Late in the afternoon, after the prophets of Baal had exhausted themselves, Elijah stood up and called the people unto himself. Without any further loss of time, he gave instructions that twelve stones be brought for repairing the Altar of Jehovah which had been broken down. Notice that Elijah didn't need a new Altar. The old one was good enough; it simply needed reconstituting and rededicating.

Friends, we today do not need any new religion or new philosophy if we are with God. All that we need is the simple old Gospel, and the courage to put it to the test. Never yet have I seen one of these preachers who dabbles around in science and philosophy that has had any power or done any real work for God.

The wisdom that the world acclaims and accepts is the worst enemy the Truth of God has ever had. Elijah used the same old altar, with only twelve new stones added — a stone for each of the twelve Tribes of Israel. His taking of the stones was customary. After the Altar had been prepared and dedicated, Elijah had a trench dug about it. Next he laid the wood and the pieces of the bullock upon the Altar, and finally ordered that twelve barrels of water be poured on the meat of the burnt sacrifice and on the wood. Twelve barrels — one barrel per Tribe — rested on the fact that its subjects have respect for its authority.



The turmoil of today which is about to plunge our world into chaos and which is hastening the end when the man of Sin (the AntiChrist) shall sit upon the Throne of God in the Temple, is caused by the fact that people have lost respect for the law.

Rulers no longer respect their own laws. They no longer respect the principles upon which all law must rest, and have cast off all respect for the higher laws of God. You can look for God very soon to vindicate His Own Righteousness and to Judge the evil of man. The contest on Mt. Carmel between Jehovah God and the prophets of Baal is typical of similar contests that God has provoked with the representatives of evil in all Ages for the purpose of vindicating His Own Righteousness.

If God didn't punish such apostates as old Ahab, He wouldn't be God. He couldn't be the Head of this great universe that moves with mathematical precision and smoothness, and not demand conformity to His laws. God demands respect, and He will have it.

Romans 14:11-12: [\[The Words of Jesus\]](#)

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

The child who is not restrained at home will be the first to fall into the clutches of the law when he leaves home. Increased crime among juveniles can be explained by the fact that our children are not being taught respect for law in their homes. When people become unafraid to sin and lose their fear of God, judgment of some kind is necessary, whether it be affliction, or impoverishment, or disgrace.

Listen, you mothers. In a little southern town where I once held a meeting, two fourteen year old girls were arrested. The lady in whose home I was visiting, prevailed on the authorities not to take the girls to jail but to bring them to her home. They conceded, and when the court met for a preliminary hearing, I was asked to review the affair. It was an awful mess. I sat in the courtroom and heard those two little adolescent girls tell how they had attended dances, with their own mothers acting as chaperones. They told how that while they were in the embrace of some of the youths at the dances, they had made dates. Later — on the very same nights of the dances after their parents had gone to bed — they slipped out of their homes and met the boys. They gave the names of fourteen young boys in that town with whom they had had these secret dates. Four of the boys were sons of Baptist deacons.



One of the mothers, when she heard her daughter tell this story, broke down and turned to her pastor saying, *“Brother C., you told me that I was ruining my daughter by allowing her to go to these dances, even though I did chaperone her. I became angry with you and wouldn't go to hear you preach any more. But you were right. And I see it now, but it is too late.”*

Those young people would have had to pay a dear price, but I went before the

authorities and asked that mercy be shown. I protested that the children were not to blame, but rather their fathers and mothers. The matter was finally adjusted, but the scars will forever remain upon the souls of those young people.

RIDING THE FENCE

You may defend sin, but you will pay a price. In our previous message, we told you how God demands that all of His children get out of Egypt, and in this lesson we have shown you why, because God will have everyone settle the question:

You may defend sin, but you will pay a price.

1 Kings 18:21: And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Matthew 7:13-14:

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

It is fashionable to be a church member. You may be religious, but wrong.

You may be religious, but wrong.

It was a day to be remembered when the multitudes of Israelites were assembled at the foot of Mt. Carmel, and when the solitary prophet of the Lord came forth to defy the 450 priests of the false god. We might look upon that scene with the eye of curiosity, as so many folk come to church to watch us enjoy our God. Wherever the Presence and Power of God arrives, there is always some excitement.

Here at Mt. Carmel, there were three kinds of people:

- The first was a devoted servant of Jehovah, a solitary prophet — Elijah.
- Second, on the other hand, was a collection of people who were decidedly servants of the devil — 450 prophets of Baal!
- Third, there was the vast mass of folk who had not fully determined whether to fully worship Jehovah, the God of their fathers, or Baal, the god of Jezebel. On the one hand, their ancient Scriptures led them to fear the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At stake, on another hand, was the popular approval of the backseat driver



of the government — Jezebel — who influenced them to engage in idolatrous worship. The whole of them, at this time, were half-hearted followers of the Lord, while they simultaneously were public worshippers of Baal.

Elijah did not address his sermon to the priests of Baal. He would have something to say to them later when he preached to them sermons on horrible deeds of blood. Nor had he ought to say to those who were the thorough servants of the Lord, for they were not there; but his main discourse was solely directed to those who were halting between two opinions.



Today, churches are a breeding place of hothouse plants. Like empty clouds, they are driven hither and thither by the wind. Brother Paul, encouraging the saints to steadfastness, declared:

Ephesians 4:14: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Peter added this:

2 Peter 2:14: Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

Jude concluded by saying:

Jude 1:12b-13:

12b clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Brother James, what saith the Holy Spirit thru you:

James 1:8 : A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Undecided persons, to you will I speak tonight. You who are like painted beauties, for you lack the freshness and real health of life in the Spirit. You have the appearance of life-painted fire, but there is no power or warmth of God in your soul.

God says:

Revelation 3:15b: I would thou wert cold or hot.

How long will you halt between two opinions? No man can serve two masters, yet you are trying to serve the Lord on Sunday, and the devil and his pleasures during the week. How can two walk together except they be agreed?

**No man can
serve two
masters**

IF THE LORD BE GOD FOLLOW HIM, AND IF BAAL BE GOD FOLLOW HIM.

1 Kings 18:21: if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.

I've never seen a man try to walk on both sides of the street, except a drunk.

HOW LONG HALT YE? You will be between opinions, I believe, until God shall answer by fire — IN FLAMING FIRE, TAKING VENGEANCE.

Fire was not what these poor people wanted.

SINNERS UNCONVINCED WITHOUT SUPERNATURAL POWER

Here is another lesson I want you to notice. Listen to:

1 Kings 18:21a: And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions?

You know, I have an idea that Elijah felt as I do — I would like to get a pitchfork and go up and down this land and make people get on one side of the fence or the other — be for God or be for the devil. *“How long halt ye between two opinions?”* He said, *“Do you believe in God or don't you? Do you believe in the Bible or don't you? Will you live for God or for the devil?”* I believe in their minds they were thinking, *“None of your business. We are not ready to decide for either one”*. The Bible says that they did not say anything, but I am sure that is what they thought. It takes more than just talk to win anybody.

I tell you, the trouble in this town is that some of you cannot win your own children. You say to your boy or girl, *“Look here, you ought not to go to this place or that and drink beer, dance, and mix with the devil's crowd”*.



They do not pay any attention to you, and the real truth is that in their hearts they do not understand why. I am sure they think, *“Any kind of religion that is not a miracle religion, any kind that cannot work miracles in my heart and give me what the world cannot give, I do not want.”*

This is no modern problem. It is as old as mankind itself. Hungry human hearts must have EVIDENCE FROM GOD, and if there is not a miracle worked in their hearts, they are not going to be saved.

“And the people answered him not a word.” All the preaching is not going to do any good. All the talking is not going to do any good until you can put up the goods. It must be proven that there IS a supernatural God.

Elijah said:

1 Kings 18:24: And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the Name of the LORD: and the God Who answereth by fire, let Him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

That is a plain statement. Elijah said, *“My God will answer my prayers. I can prove my God before the world. My God is one that can answer by fire, can work miracles, and He will prove it.”* The people said, *“That is fair enough. It is well spoken. If you can show the goods, we will believe”*.

I will tell you right now, this world has a right to expect something to happen to Christian people. They said, *“It is well spoken”*. And we read further that the fire came and burned up the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench; and when the people saw what happened, they fell on their faces that day and said, *“The Lord, He is the God! The Lord, He is the God!”*

1 Kings 18:38-39:

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, He is the God; the LORD, He is the God.



I tell you what we need here. You say, *“We want a revival.”* I tell you now, the religion we need is for people to say to us as was said to Paul, *“Paul thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad”*. Paul had said, *“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”* If He is a God, He can raise the dead, He can work miracles.

You cannot be a Christian without believing in miracles.

Dr. Blanchard¹ said, *“If He is God, He must act like God.”* And God is the One Who made the world, and therefore God can answer prayer and work miracles. You say you do not believe in miracles? It is high time somebody brought you to your senses. You cannot be a Christian without believing in miracles.

The Bible is a miracle Book, not an ordinary book. I do not have time here to prove — though I can — that the Bible is the Word of God. I can prove it by

¹Dr. John Blanchard was an internationally known Christian preacher, teacher, apologist and author. Banner of Truth.org.

historical facts so clearly written down before time. I can prove it so that no intelligent, educated person can doubt the authority of that Book or that it is historically correct, and the only absolutely accurate history Book in the world. It is scientifically accurate. This Bible is the only absolutely true book that has never become out of date. Some “discoveries” of so-called scientists turn out not to be so. **The Bible told that the world was round before scientists knew it.**

This Bible is the only absolutely true book that has never become out of date.

Isaiah 40:22: It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; Who stretcheth out the Heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

The Bible said 3500 years ago that the world hung out in space on nothing.

Job 26:7: He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

The Bible gave a law which evolutionists have not been able to break, that each species brings forth “*after his kind*”. The Bible told that “*The life of the flesh is in the blood*”. Scientists did not know that until modern times. Then the Bible has so many prophecies which have already come to pass — line for line — so that intelligent and informed people cannot doubt that this Bible is what it claims to be — a miracle Book. The Bible is the infallible Word of God, and you cannot be a Christian without believing in miracles.

The Bible is the infallible Word of God, and you cannot be a Christian without believing in miracles.

Now What Does It Mean To Be a Christian?

Some people think that to go to church and belong to a church and give a few dollars on Sunday is being a Christian, but that is not so. Some think that it might mean being a Baptist, but a man can be a Baptist without being a Christian. Being baptized does not make you a Christian. It takes more than being baptized, more than just water to be a Christian: it takes the Blood of Jesus to make one a Christian.

It takes the Blood of Jesus to make one a Christian.

Well, what does it mean? God has, for Christ’s sake, made you a new creature. There is something inside of you that truly makes you a child of God and a partaker of the Divine nature. The Spirit of God literally comes in and dwells in your body. If you did not have that miracle happen to you, you are no child of God. You may be a good moral man and a good clean man; you may understand the Bible, and live a good life; but that does not make you a Christian. You may

say, *“Brother, I am a member of a church”*. But being in a church does not make you a Christian any more than being in a garage makes you an automobile. Unless a miracle has happened to you, unless you have been born-again, my friend, you are not a Christian.



The other day, Saturday, on the street in Petersburg, Illinois, I preached on “Ye Must Be Born Again”. A Presbyterian elder came by in front of the church Sunday morning and said, *“Say, I am going to come hear you again. I heard you yesterday, and I haven’t ever heard anything like that. This business about being born-again, I would like to know more about that.”*

He was a member of a church, and had been for forty-three years, I believe he said, and I think he had been a Presbyterian elder for thirty years; yet he did not know about being born-again! He said, *“I want to know more about that”*.

The churches are full of people all over the country who have never really been born-again of the Spirit of God. That is the reason that on Thursday night I am going to preach on “Religious But Lost”, or “Deluded But Damned”. There are multitudes of people who have never been born-again, and if you have not been born-again:

- **you are not a Christian,**
- **you are not a child of God,**
- **you are still in your sins, and**
- **you are still damned.**

I use that term as the Bible uses it — you are a condemned sinner, undone forever, unless the miracle of being born-again has happened to you.

1 Kings 18:1: And it came to pass after many days, that the Word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

These two definite commands of the Lord to Elijah are the two centers of every well-balanced Christian life:

- 1. Hide thyself with God, and then**
- 2. Show thyself to man.**

We must never reverse the Divine order. It is dangerous to tamper with Heavenly laws. Men are their best when they hide away with God FIRST — before and after every great victory or battle. Otherwise, we will land under the juniper tree

with the blues, as Elijah soon learned.

1 Kings 19:1-8:

1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the Angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the Mount of God.

There, under the juniper tree, Elijah learned more about the God of Heaven as a living reality. “As the Lord God of Israel liveth before Whom I stand . . .”:

1 Kings 17:1: And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

God is real to the man of prayer. Strange, we want reality in everything but our spiritual life. We try to smack our lips over our dried theology — some homespun off-brand that is without life or vitamins in it.

Get a man alone with God who is pulling on the lever of prayer, combine it with the promises of God, and faith will rise to turn up a three year famine.

James 5:16b: The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.



Supernatural provisions are for the hidden ones. God commands ravens to feed his obedient servant. It is difficult to get alone with God. All hell will fight our separation unto the Lord, but obedience will produce wonderful results. Elijah learned that God will never forget to care for His own and has many ways of working. He learned that God works in the supernatural when He commanded



ravens to feed him, for He talks to His creatures and they obey Him. Twice each day Elijah was fed. His provisions were thereby never stale. God said: *“I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.”*

1 Kings 17:4: And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

If Elijah were to go elsewhere, he would go hungry. Then, by faithful surrender to the Will of God, the Lord sent him to meet the next step in the test of obedience. If we are faithful in the little things, we will be the same in the larger places. *“I have commanded a widow woman to sustain thee.”*

1 Kings 17:8-9:

8 And the Word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

Oh, what a test — to sponge off a poor widow woman would be hard on any preacher, especially if she is poor. He will not get fancy meals here. But he will know God better. The greater the need, the greater the miracle. God makes us so little that He can push us through a knothole, and then we are ready for the greater work.

If ever a man would be tempted to get discouraged it would be here.



Discouragement is an opiate to the soul that chills the spirit’s zeal, freezes faith, dishonors God, and gives satan free range to work on the fleshly carnal nature.

Then our faith leaks out, sure enough.

Obedience to God crucifies the flesh and strengthens us inwardly to face men or devils. This is what happened to Elijah, for He was preparing him to meet the backslidden monster — the king of Israel. God has such strange Bible schools to take us through, and the tests of life from the Lord are experiences so simple that many fail to detect their true purpose, and thereby lose the reward of obedience.

Obedience to God crucifies the flesh and strengthens us inwardly to face men or devils.

“Go show thyself unto Ahab.” Elijah obeys with promptness — obeying at once while knowing full well that Ahab is seeking his life.

He who lives the hidden life with God will have the power to stand against any foe.

There is no argument with God as to the possible results of meeting the enemy. There is so much fear of God in him that there is no room for the fear of men. He goes to face the angry king. He who lives the hidden life with God will have the power to stand against any foe. He meets a very frightened man — Obadiah — the governor of Ahab’s house, but Obadiah has great confidence in

the God of Elijah.

National decay is certain to come when people forsake the Lord, as darkness comes when the lights are turned out. America has turned her back on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is rotten to the core, being driven by the forces of Hell. Even buzzards flying over must hold their noses. The Children of Israel had forsaken the fountain of Living Water and had hewed them out cisterns — broken cisterns that could hold no water. Now wallowing in the cesspool of sin and ungodliness, the cup of judgment was fast filling to the brim. The draught, floods, increasing rainfall, and short crops were no accident. A sense of approaching doom took possession of the minds of the sin-loving, reveling house of Ahab and Jezebel, king and queen of backslidden Israel.

Elijah, the man of God, came to Ahab like a flash in a midnight sky:

1 Kings 17:1b: As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

God had given to Elijah the key to God’s water faucet, and told him He was leaving it in his hands. Alright, Lord, we will not have any rain until we have a revival of old-time, heaven-sent, sky-blue, sin-convicting, heart-purifying, soul-saving, Holy Ghost revival.

God prepared Elijah by sending him to a poor widow’s house to be sustained during a terrible depression. He was then commissioned by his God to appear unto Ahab. Ahab was hot with anger at Elijah and had sent others out to seek his life, as well as to hunt for a little water to save the cattle. Elijah met Obadiah — a man who feared the Lord greatly, and under great personal peril hid one hundred prophets in several caves, feeding them bread and water.



1 Kings 18:1-6:

1 And it came to pass after many days, that the Word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

2 And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore

famine in Samaria.

3 And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:

4 For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.



7 And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?

8 And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

Obadiah did not want to tell Ahab because, in the past, when Elijah was spotted and Ahab was notified, Elijah disappeared and could not be found. Obadiah feared for his life.

Some of you are afraid to testify to others, even to the members of your own household. I tell you, all over this country people are hungry, and we Christians ought to be able to convince them that we have a God who is real, and that He does miracles — first in us, and in our daily lives. People won't come to church and won't listen to our story if nothing happens when we talk or pray, and if there is no real joy in our midst.

The other day I asked a man how he was getting along. He replied: “*All right under the circumstances*”. Here is a lost man without a job, and here is a Christian in the same boat. The lost man can't make ends meet, and neither can the Christian. What impression does that make on a godless average sinner? It all depends upon how the Christian responds. How many — like Job — can say:

Job 13:15a Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him:

No wonder the outside world scoffs at our churches, our faith, our Bible, and our God.

You profess to be saved, but your children are not. When a sinner's children are in the same fix, what differences are there in your religion and his? The lost man has no God to save his children. Do you trust the Lord to save yours? Old man

Lot had a religion that was a joke to his children. It was all because he - as you - was not living the life. It was all form with no power. Your religion is negative — it's all a lot of don'ts: don't smoke, don't go to movies, don't indulge in immoralities. But there is no praying, shouting, singing, nor weeping because you are far from the Heavenly fire and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Don't

Obadiah was frightened at Elijah's orders, so Elijah said:

1 Kings 18:15: As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before Whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him today.

I tell you that a man who is filled with the Holy Spirit need not be frightened or scared of anything. Holy boldness and courage are for those who are all for the Lord and who do not soak up the blessings and power by doing nothing. Rather, they are giving out as God pours in. That is why a lot of you are dull, dried up on the stem, and stagnant, because you never pour yourself out for others so that God may fill you again.

Here comes Elijah toward Ahab, but the king is full of rage and bellows out:

1 Kings 18:17b: Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

"No, I am not. You are the troublemaker and your sinful household."

1 Kings 18:18: And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.



Ahab is not used to having people talk to him that way. Ahab, you are utterly helpless to save yourself and your people, and since your sin and iniquity has brought this ruin upon the country, you had better change your ways; for I had warned you a long time ago that this was coming. The prophet's answer was straight and as piercing as an arrow to his heart from Almighty God. Ahab knew he had forsaken the commandments of the Lord. Likewise, every backslider is a troublemaker for the church of God. We saw how Achan's secret sin brought trouble into the whole camp of Israel. (See **Joshua 7**)

"Now", says Elijah, "let us have this thing put to a test to see who is really God. You summon Israel up on Mt. Carmel."

1 Kings 18:19-20:

19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the

groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

20 So Ahab sent unto all the Children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel.

We can only wonder what the feelings of Ahab's messengers must have been as they went from village to village and from town to town to tell the people to come up to Mt. Carmel. When men's pocketbooks are going to be touched, they always get excited, and now there is going to be a showdown. The man Elijah who holds the keys to God's rain barrel has been located, and perhaps this is to allow them to hear the formal declaration that rain will come to give them a good crop and save their cattle. The whole country became excited and stirred, and people had not so much nervous preparations to go anywhere as to the mount.

I have seen men get so excited if the price of food or gasoline went up, while others got excited watching baseball or football. If only people would get excited and worked up about their soul's salvation or their religion.

On the day appointed, you could see the crowd moving up toward Mt. Carmel.



They came from every town and village. The chief men of the nation were all there. The leading men, magistrates, and seers moved up toward the top. At last you could see those four hundred and fifty prophets with their long flowing robes bedecked in the brilliant colors and trimmings of lace and jewels. The royal family was with this bunch of Baal worshippers and were escorted by them. Israel had left the Bible and its God for this outfit which only had an outward show, but on the inside it was

dirty, corrupt, rotten, and full of iniquity like the Pharisees who clean the outside . . .

Luke 11:39: And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

Along with Elijah's struggle to stem Israel's apostasy comes the alarming message to America. On every side, the modern prophets of Baal display the most bold and brazen claims of authority — Christian Science, Modernism, and other false cults — as Father Divine and Spiritualism with strange fire which are unchallenged by the servants of the Living God. People are wondering everywhere, whether the Lord is God, or these other systems. Many are wavering in the balances, halting between two opinions. They need Holy Ghost-filled ministers and saints to meet them in the POWER AND DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT.

At last you can hear the people wondering if Elijah would be there. Where is he? They don't care so much about these prophets of Baal. They had seen enough of them for these three and one half years.

Where is the Prophet who has the power to hold back rain for so long? At last Elijah makes his appearance. He has no royal court around him. He wears no gorgeous robe, but rather the same old game skin and leather girdle with his staff in his hand. He moves up the mountain like a giant and is in no hurry whatsoever.

HE THAT BELIEVETH SHALL NOT MAKE HASTE.

Jesus was in no stew nor nervousness when He stood before a multitude of hungry folk with only five loaves and two fishes. Every eye was on Elijah as he took his time and marched under orders from Heaven to bring Israel back to her God. No one was asleep on this occasion, they all looked right at him. Suddenly like a thunderbolt out of the skies, he burst forth with such shocking words that made the revelers of Ahab's court tremble and the false prophets of Baal change their countenance in petrified silence.



1 Kings 18:21b: How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.

Let us have this thing decided today. Let the prophets of Baal build an altar, and let them call upon their god, and if their god answers by fire and consumes the sacrifice, then that settles the question. If he doesn't and my God does, let Him be your God. In other words, the God that answers by fire, let Him be God. The people said, "That is well said." You cannot do it any better than that. And there were the priests of Baal, saying to each other, we didn't think that he was going to put it that way or say anything like that. He surely would not have caught us up here if we only knew. Ah, false professors are always afraid of the fire.



Gold can stand the solid test of fire, but guilt is afraid of it. So hypocrites and lukewarm professors of Christ are all afraid of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. What they won't think up to get away from such is really remarkable. Better test your doctrine of eternity. The man of faith in God is never afraid to risk his all on the Lord.

Gold can stand the solid test of fire, but guilt is afraid of it.

Finally and reluctantly, they built their altar, for they were on the spot. The king and queen tried to build up their spirits by clapping their hands. About nine o'clock in the morning, they had the altar fixed, placed the sacrifice thereon, and began to cry to Baal to come and consume the sacrifice. If the Lord had not withheld satan, I don't know but that he would have gotten a spark out of Hell to kindle a fire and help them out. It was a very earnest meeting. They cried out until their voices were hoarse. They become desperate and jumped on the altar,

then cut themselves until the blood spurted out.

THEN SOME OF YOU TRY TO TELL ME THAT IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHAT A MAN BELIEVES SO LONG AS HE IS SINCERE. That is absolute nonsense.

There is no fuss nor excitement conveyed by the man of God as the time of the evening sacrifice approaches. It is his chance to prove that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is alive, and that He still hears and answers prayer from a righteous man's heart.

Elijah began to build another altar, for he would have nothing to do with Baal's altar. Here is another lesson of separation to the children of God. While he is building, he took 12 stones, representing the 12 tribes, put on the wood, the sacrifice, and got everything ready. Then I can see him giving the people a rebuke directed at the false prophets of Baal. If your god can answer prayer, why didn't you cry out for rain? Why, if you are now trying to get fixed from your god, I should have thought he would have given you rain when I was gone. That is why I made this kind of proposition with you, for the thing you have needed the least, that is what we shall ask for. But first bring on four more barrels of water, and four more until the water fills the trench around and about the sacrifice. Elijah is simply following Divine instructions.



Here is the whole message God is bringing to your heart and mine. There shall be no human fire that comes on the altar of consecration — you know, the place you used to meet the Lord and had a sweet meeting place with Him — there where you sought the Lord, studied His Word, and enjoyed old-fashioned heartfelt Holy Ghost revival. Now, we will not put human fire on this altar. If God does not come, move, bless, save, and fill with the Holy Ghost, we will go home without it. It is only God Who can make a saint out of a sinner, and a powerful witness out of a bashful backward Christian.

God has so ordered this ministry of bringing satan-bound sinners through to a clean, clear-cut experience by rendering that it is impossible for one to put any human fire on himself. **The sacrifice must be water soaked and dripping with tears of repentance and godly sorrow, and then the fire will fall.** This is the sign Abel, Abraham, Gideon, and the Priests of the Tabernacle knew very well was God's sign of approval that they were accepted before Him.

This was the Pentecostal day for Israel. Gigantic sins and devil-possessed souls need a great remedy and cure. The Baal worshippers were in the majority, for broad is the way and wide is the gate . . .

Matthew 7:13: Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate,

and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there-at:

God chose by One to bring deliverance to Israel and Elijah.

God chooses One — Jesus — to bring all of us deliverance. We need as much as ever the message of Elijah. God never passes by sin. It must be recognized. It must be dealt with, either in the Substitute for your sin, or on your own head. May God give us in our hearts and in the spiritual work of our time a true ministry of conviction, of righteousness, and of a quickened conscience.

1 Kings 18:26: And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

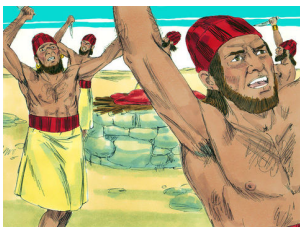
The conduct of the priests of Baal is, in many respects, well fitted to put to shame the disciples of Christ.

1. Notice first their zeal. They were willing to suffer and cut themselves with knives and lacets until the blood gushed out. The zeal and self-devotion with which idolaters will act on their mistakes ought to put us to the blush for the lukewarmness and cowardice which we often display in acting on our truths. The men who cheerfully acted on the precepts of sanguinary religion are confronted with those among us who will not submit to the precepts of a mild one.



2. Notice how the idolatrous priests persevered, in spite of the keen ridicule of Elijah. In the matter of religion, there is nothing which men find so difficult to bear as ridicule. It can never be said that the priests of Baal had better reasons for being staunch in their idol than the servants of God for confidence in His power and protection. They may be brought up as witnesses against us at the last if we show deficiency either in zeal or courage.

3. These priests furnish us with another lesson by their unrelenting persistence.



They persisted in praying, though no answer was heard. The silence of their deity appears to have been, with them, nothing but a reason for greater plea; they were all the more earnest because they had obtained as yet no answer. Thus they seem to have held fast the principle that the Divine unchangeableness is not an argument against — but for — the possible utility of importunate prayer. We must bring the supremacy of our God to the test to which

the idolaters were ready to submit to that of Baal. *“The God that answereth by*

fire, let Him be God.” There are those among us who have other gods than Jehovah. But can they answer by fire? It is the promise and the characteristic of the dispensation under which we live, *“Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”*

Luke 3:16: John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

1 Kings 18:3-4:

3 And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:

4 For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

1. All that we know about Obadiah is contained in this chapter, yet he was a great man in his day. He was, it seems, king Ahab's vizier, or prime minister, the first man in the court after the king. Of all his wealth and glory, the Bible does not say one word. His wealth and power did not follow him to the grave, but his good deeds live in the pages of the Bible. He lives in our minds and memories; and, more than all, by all his good deeds he lives forever in God's sight. In the day when Elijah met him, Obadiah found that his prayers and alms had gone up before God, were safe with God, and were not to be forgotten forever.
2. The lesson for us is to persevere in well-doing, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not.

Ecclesiastes 11:1: Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

1 Kings 18:22: Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.



1. The lesson of Elijah's history is the blessing and the glory of a constant will. It was this which made Elijah so great; it is this only which can make us great, for this is at the root of all true greatness. All actions of a seeming greatness which do not spring from this are nothing better than delusions and hypocrisy. Just so far as the will is truly purified by God's Holy Spirit and rules over all within us, just so far do we — as renewed men — rise up to the greatness of our redemption, and answer to our own trial.
2. We may further learn here how this strength of character is gained. One has, as

we say, naturally a far stronger character than another; but a constant will — that inner bond of humanity — is within the reach of all. Only let us strive after it aright.

- We must remember that the right exercise of our will is most properly a habit. All life is full of opportunities of choice, and as we choose them and abide by our choices, such as we.
 - We should do common actions with an aim at great objects. Habitually converse with such objects as a testimony against the lower life within us, and strengthen mightily the scepter of the will. He who acts for great objects is great indeed.
 - We must seek earnestly from God the strengthening and the purifying of our will by the renewing of His Holy Spirit.
3. Choose Him Who alone is to be yours, and henceforth, choose wholly to be His. Other lords may have had dominion over you, but say this day, with His converted people, ***“The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God.”***

The Lord,
He is God;
the Lord, He
is God.

E.B. Pusey, Parochial and Cathedral Sermons:

The “halting between two opinions” is one of the evils of the times, to some extent of all times. The world is singularly fond of compromises, and the same spirit finds its way into the Church. The appeal of the text has to do both with principles and practice.

It calls for a decision as to the truth itself. “If the Lord be God” - - that was the first point on which the people were to satisfy themselves. **The question which every hearer of the Gospel has to settle for himself is whether he will trust in Christ as his Saviour and serve Him as his Lord.** The one condition laid down by Christ Himself, and indeed, growing out of the nature of the requirement, is that your decision should be clear and absolute.

Akron Shalom Bible Learning Center

www.AkronShalomMinistries.org