

How Long Halt Ye Between Two Opinions

1 Kings 18:21

Please turn to 1 Kings 18 tonight as we're going to start there. How long halt ye between two opinions? There's this side. And then there's that side. There's God's side. And then there's the world's side. There's the Spirit. And then there's the flesh.

Why are you stuck in the middle? Why are you going that way? If God is really God, then follow Him and don't stop. If Baal is god, then follow him. But don't stand there in the middle. Don't go back and forth. Don't hesitate. God said to do it. Then do it. How long halt ye between two opinions?

Elijah's Bold Stand Against King Ahab

In 1 Kings 18, we see king Ahab has been searching for Elijah but couldn't find him anywhere. He had searches out in nations and kingdoms but Elijah was not found. Obadiah, the governor of Ahab's house, a Godly man, was out searching for grass to save the horses and mules alive.

Elijah met Obadiah out in the way. Elijah tells Obadiah to tell Ahab: "Behold, Elijah is here." Elijah tells Obadiah that he will show himself to king Ahab that day. Obadiah goes to meet Ahab, tells him, and Ahab goes to meet Elijah.

This is what I want you to focus in on today. Look very closely at the exact words of the Bible in verse 17.

Who's Really Troubling Israel—Elijah or Ahab?

""1 Kings 18:17

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

Elijah is a prophet of God. Ahab is doing wicked things. And Ahab accuses Elijah of troubling Israel. Many times, a pastor preaching God's words will be accused of troubling the people. For example, you might not like what I'm going to say tonight. Or, you might love it. But some might think I am troubling them.

Again, Ahab asks Elijah: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

Elijah had told Ahab in the previous chapter: "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." In 1 Kings 16, the Bible says: "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him."

He took to wife Jezebel and went and served Baal and worshipped him. He reared up an altar in the house of Baal. And Ahab made a grove and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel before him.

So, was Elijah, the man doing the will of God the one troubling Israel? In your life, have you setup altars to this world serving Baal that you can't quite recognize? Do you have things in your life that stop you from doing what God has asked you to do? Do you have to watch that TV? Do you have to scroll through that phone constantly? Is your family before God? Are your kids first?

Who is troubling who here? Is Elijah or Ahab the one troubling the people? Are you leading your family the right way? Or are you leading them the wrong way. I used to think going to church was all I needed to do. I did my good thing for the week. That's not it. Who is troubling who? I want you to think about this in your life. You got troubles? Who is troubling who?

Art thou he that troubleth Israel? Now, let's see what Elijah says back to king Ahab. Look there at verse 18 in 1 Kings 18.

Who's Really Troubling Israel—Elijah or Ahab?

""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.""

Elijah says, "I have not troubled Israel." Who has? Elijah says: "But thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim."

I remember reading my King James Bible when I was a kid growing up. My church growing up taught me I was good. The Bible said I wasn't good. But I didn't there was any way that was talking about me. My church said I was good.

Hey, there's no way this could be talking about any of us. "Ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord." Could that be talking about you? Could that be talking about me? Let me answer that. Yes, it could and it does at times in our life. But our job is to get it fixed. And I want you to fix it today.

Ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and thou hast followed Baalim.

Modern Baalim: The Idols We Follow Today

Soul winning or TV? Soul winning on Saturday or something else more important? TV more important. Phone more important. You Tube shorts more important. Video games more

important. Golf more important. Sports more important. Lost souls going to hell and the things of the world are more important.

Fear of soul winning? Serving Baalim. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." You let your own fear stop you and you don't fear the Lord. He said to go out there and do it. You say I'm not. Imagine that. Who are you with? Whose side are you on?

And you might say, "I don't like this sermon." Art thou he that troubleth Israel? Am I saying something wrong? I'm not. Ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

Watch what Elijah says next in verse 19 to king Ahab.

The Mount Carmel Challenge: Gathering the People and the Prophets

""1 Kings 18:19-20

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.""

Elijah commands Ahab to gather all Israel unto mount Carmel. He commands Ahab to gather the prophets of Baal, all 450 of them. And the prophets of the grove, all 400 of them that eat at Jezebel's table. And Ahab does what Elijah commanded.

The children of Israel and the false prophets are all gathered together. Imagine this. Thousands upon thousands of people gathered together during this drought. Picture this in your head. Elijah comes to the people and watch what happens in verse 21.

Elijah's Famous Question: How Long Halt Ye Between Two Opinions?

""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.""

If you remember the title of this sermon, you'll notice it right there in verse 21. "How long halt ye between two opinions."

Elijah comes to all the children of Israel—to the people gathered there. You have the prophet of God standing there on one side. And you have the false prophets on the other side. There's an

obvious difference just as there's a difference in following after this world and following after the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's that side and then there's this side. There's church or there's skipping church. There's soul winning or there's skipping soul winning. There's caring for others or there's caring for yourself. There's reading the Bible or watching TV. There's studying the Bible or scrolling through the time wasting phone. There's prayer or there's Facebook gossip.

HOW LONG HALT YE BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS?

If the Lord be GOD (and understand what GOD means), follow Him. But if Baal, then follow him.

When the People Answered Not a Word

And look closely at what the people did. And make sure you don't do this today. When will you make the decision to be ALL-IN for God? It took me a while in my life. Don't make the same mistake as I did. Don't be like the people there. What did they do?

The Bible says very clearly in the last sentence of verse 21:

"And the people answered him not a word." NOT EVEN A WORD.

You've got the wicked king Ahab leading the people in the ways of evil and wickedness with his 450 false prophets on one side. And then you've got God's prophet, all alone, standing on the other side. Which side are you choosing? Don't play them both. Don't play both sides.

Lip Service Christianity: Choosing Church but Not Obedience

Well, I'll go to church. That's a good thing to do. But I won't do anything else. I won't go soul winning. I'll just let people look at my life and see how good I am and then maybe 48 years later they might get saved if they're still alive. Hey, it doesn't work that way. That's not a commandment from God.

Jesus, your Lord (no matter if you like that or not), your Creator, the one who breathed life into you, is the one who commanded YOU to "Go ye therefore and preach the Gospel." It's not optional. You say, "Well, I can't do it." Hey, Jesus doesn't care for your excuses. He doesn't. And you might say, "This guy is too harsh." Hey, read the Bible. Elijah was much harsher.

Which side are you on? "And the people answered him not a word." So they stood there and watched and listened to Elijah.

""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.""

One Man Against 450: Elijah's Bold Challenge

He stand there one against hundreds of false prophets. Let's have a little contest to help you with your decision today. Will you go soul winning as Jesus commanded you? Will you join the church and give it all you've got? Will you get it in gear for the Lord? Or will you serve the other side?

Elijah sets up a contest of sacrifices.

""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 that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.""

The people answer. It is well spoken. God versus Baal. Jesus versus Satan. Do we really need to do this? In your life, do we really need to see what happens? What are you going to choose? And don't act like you haven't chosen the other side in some things in your life. Don't even try it. Don't even think that you're perfect. The thought of foolishness is sin. It's time to get it fixed.

The Contest of Fire: God vs. Baal

The false prophets setup their sacrifice. They call on Baal for hours. O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice or any that answered. Elijah mocks them. "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."

The false prophets cut themselves till blood gushed out. They kept on all day long unto the evening. No answer. Now it's Elijah's turn.

""1 Kings 18:37-39

Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. 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.""

Turn Your Heart Back Again to the LORD

Hey, it's time right now to turn your heart back again to the Lord. Make a choice right now. Don't sit there and not make a choice. How long is this going to take in your life? How long will

you be silent? How long will you NOT go soul winning? Does it not even bother you any more that you aren't winning souls to Christ? What's going on in here?

Your heart is turned from the Lord. Turn it back right now. "O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou are the LORD God." He is turning your heart back to him. If you're hearing this right now, hey, it's time.

Elijah wins the contest. The fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and licked up all the water. Our Lord is a consuming fire. And he's not a joke. This life that He gave you to live, He wants you living every breath for Him. So, when you leave here tonight, I want you to pay attention to what you're doing with your life.

You Have a Choice—Make It Now

You have a great church here that most in this world don't have. You have a great leader here doing the Lord's work. Help him. Think of what you're doing tonight, in the morning, at breakfast, at lunch, at home, before bed. What could you be doing for the Lord?

"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!"

And it didn't end there that day. And don't let this end here for you right now.

""1 Kings 18:40

And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.""

Take the things out of your life that are leading you down the wrong way. If it's a phone, get rid of it. If it's a video game system, get rid of it. If it's so-called friends in your life taking you the wrong way, go another route. If it's fear of things other than the Lord, STOP NOW. Get rid of that fear and walk in the Spirit which is the Spirit of boldness.

The Golden Calf: Another Call to Choose Sides

Don't let this go in one ear and out the other. Have the strength to make the choice today. How long halt ye between two opinions? Please turn to Exodus 32 with the golden calf. Please hear this today.

Don't have a golden calf or many golden calves in your life stopping you from serving the Lord. You can make the change right now. God allows you to make your own choices. Look at verse 24 there in Exodus 32.

""Exodus 32:24-26

And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I

cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. 25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) 26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.""

Modern Golden Calves Christians Must Tear Down

You have that golden calf in your life. Maybe you can't figure it right now. But it's there. What can you get rid of out of your life so you can serve the Lord better? It's there. Ask God to open your eyes so you can see it.

But some won't give it up. Maybe it's that nasty music you can't get out of your life. Maybe it's Netflix. Maybe it's money and savings and possessions. Maybe it's your family. Maybe it's religious rituals and routines. Maybe it's self will or your feelings. Maybe it's sexual sin.

Maybe it's comfort. "I have to be comfortable. It's too hot out there to go soul winning. It's too cold out there to go soul winning. There's a lion in the streets." Maybe it's politics and nationalism. Maybe it's your reputation and image. Maybe you idolize celebrities.

Moses asks them to choose their side. You make the choice now. In verse 26, look closely. Moses stood in the gate of the camp. He says, "WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE? Let him come unto me." And who stood up? And who said not even a word?

"And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." And do you know what happened?

""Exodus 32:27

And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.""

The Cost of Compromise: It Destroys Those Around You

Having a golden calf in your life kills. It takes the life right out of you and out of others around you. Your brothers, your companions, and your neighbors—the people close to you. It kills you and it kills them. Let me give you an example to help you think this through. And I want you to hear this today.

You have a choice. God gave you a choice. You can change how you do things or not.

God commanded you to go out and preach the Gospel. You say No. Why aren't all the people in the saved churches out there doing it? How long halt ye between two opinions? He commanded you to go save the soul of the people out there through the preaching of Jesus Christ. Best job in

the world. And yet you say, "No, I won't do that." Not in word but in action. You answered not a word. Here's the example.

God Gave You a Choice—And a Command

Let's say my daughter Taylor was in trouble. Let's say she was stuck out on the side of the road. Someone attacked her. She's hurting. She needs someone to help. And I tell my oldest daughter Callie, who is the closest in distance to her, to go save her. "Callie, go save your sister's life. She needs help. Get to her and help her as fast as you can."

That's what God is commanding you today. I command Callie to go help her sister.

And let's say Callie responds and tells me, "No, I'm not going to do that, Dad." It's the same thing when you won't go out there and preach the Gospel with your church. It's the exact same thing but worse.

Do you know what's going to happen to Callie? Do you know what's going to happen to Taylor? It's not good.

No More Excuses: God Has Heard Them All Before

And you might be looking for excuses. "Well, I can't do it because of this or because of that." We have a lady in our church named Janie who can barely walk, from Park Hill Community Center, whose had a tough life of losing children to murder. She's taking her walker out there with us on Saturday. You might come up with another excuse here or there.

"I can't speak well." Moses already tried that. Jeremiah said, "I am a child." Already tried that. Adam blamed it on the woman that God gave him. Already tried that. The slothful servant said, "I was afraid." Fear is not an excuse. There were people invited that refused the invitation. Please turn to Luke 14 as we end there.

Are you refusing the invitation to go soul winning every week multiple times per week? Are you rejecting God's commandment to you? If you are saved and have the Holy Spirit within you right now, I hope with all I've got that this is hitting you hard. It's time to get going.

Refusing God's Invitation: Luke 14 and the Master's Anger

""Luke 14:16-18

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: 17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

""Luke 14:19-21

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

I'm not Joel Osteen. I don't say, "God isn't angry with you." You're invited to go soul winning. "I can't come. It's not for me. I've got this to do. It's too hot. I could never make it. I have a wife. I have kids. I can't make it." Then the master of the house being ANGRY. Bring in the poor, the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And that's what God does. You won't do it. He'll find someone else to do it.

""Luke 14:23-24

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.""

The Rewards You Lose When You Say No

You won't taste of the great rewards that God has for you. You won't. You'll lose your job to someone else. God gave you the job. You won't do it. You're fired. You lose that pay. You lose those rewards in heaven forever that you could have had.

There's not much time. How long halt ye between two opinions?

God commands you. You know the results. And yet you say no. And you continue on your way doing the same things. Don't keep going that way. You have the choice to make the changes right now. Make up your mind. Be strong and of a good courage. And do it.

Let's pray.