

Between Two Opinions

By Zeke Flores

(1Kings 18:21) Who can forget the awesome test between the impotent Baal and the omnipotent Yahweh, God of Israel, described in 1Kings 18? Or the frenzic ranting and raving of the prophets of Baal as they entreat their god to fire up the sacrifice on Mount Carmel? Or the humorous mocking of those prophets by Elijah, God's true prophet? Or the way that God sent fire from above to completely engulf a water-saturated sacrifice, along with the wet wood and stones with fire so hot it even licked at the water in the trench surrounding the altar?

It's a wonderful story indeed, but it all came about because of the divided mindset of the people of Israel. They were on a seesaw ride as far as their relationship with God was concerned and had been since they left Egypt. Though Yahweh had set Himself apart from all other gods by means of exceedingly marvelous miracles, still the fickle people sought out false gods and false religion whenever and where ever the whim hit them. Yet they seemed to think they could always "fall back" on the true God of heaven whenever they were distressed and oppressed. It is to this attitude that Elijah asks, "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If Yahweh is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him" (1Kings 18:21). The word "hesitate" in the Hebrew means to hop or skip hesitatingly, or to limp. It carries the idea of going back and forth from one thing to another unsure of where one should really be. Of course, this is exactly what the Israelites were doing. The people couldn't help but see the persuasive logic of Elijah's argument but they were apprehensive to act immediately upon it. Perhaps for this reason, the record tells us that the people answered Elijah "not a word."

The question echoes back to how Joshua challenged the Israelites a few centuries before: "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). The people had a decision to make as they occupied a land infested with false gods, false religion, and immorality of every type.

Let's fast forward some 2,800 years. The question asked by Elijah is as valid today as it ever was. God's people today occupy a land, wherever on the globe that land may be, filled with false religion, exceeding immorality, and ultimately false gods. Christians must make the decision daily as to who we will serve: the gods of the ungodly people around us, or the God of heaven. And we must make the decision now, not assuming we will have time in the future to make it then. Elijah's question indicates some urgency that must be acted upon and it is so for God's people today.

As Matthew Henry states, "It is a dangerous thing to halt between the service of God and the service of sin, between the dominion of Christ and the dominion of our own lusts." We must make the decision as to who deserves our attention and loyalty and give it all. If it is this world and its attendant desires, then serve materialism and greed; but if Christ and His will, then serve Him completely and without hesitation. If Jesus is truly the only Savior and has complete authority, then let us cleave to Him for everything; if the Bible is truly the word of God, then let us receive it and submit ourselves to its teaching wholly and without wavering.

The Almighty demands, and rightly deserves, a firm decision. The Lord tells us that "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other" (Matt 6:24). Too many try to juggle allegiance between this world's system of selfishness and the Lord's requirement of selflessness and just as He said, one suffers. Unfortunately, it's usually the One to whom we must submit that gets put on the back burner. And while we postpone making a real decision for Him, in reality the decision has been made. "He who is not with Me is against Me..." Jesus says (Matt 12:30).

How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the world or any part of it can guarantee you salvation and real joy, then abandon the facade of discipleship to Christ and serve your lusts with gusto. But, if Jesus has a true right to us by virtue of His sacrifice and purchase of us by His blood, and if you are convinced that He alone can be your best Master, then throw off the yoke of lukewarmness and serve Him completely, whole-heartedly, and unhesitatingly.

Good Marriages

“Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Eph. 5:33).

A marriage may be "made in heaven" but its maintenance must be done on earth. A wife once said, "It takes both of us to take out the garbage. I can't carry it, and my husband can't remember it." Marriage is man and woman pulling together, not in competition, but with mutual love and respect for each other. Being happily married in the "maintenance" of love.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her...” (Eph. 5:25).

An older couple were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary. The husband was asked what the secret was to his successful marriage. As the elderly are accustomed to do, the old gentleman answered with a story. His wife, Sarah, was the only girl he ever dated. He never had time to date until Sarah swept him off his feet. Before he knew it she had managed to get him to ask her to marry him.

After they had said their vows on their wedding day, Sarah's father took the new groom aside and handed him a small gift. He said, "Within this gift is what you really need to know to have a happy marriage." The nervous young man fumbled with the paper and ribbon until he got the package unwrapped. Within the box lay a large gold watch. With great care he picked it up. Upon close examination he saw etched across the face of the watch a prudent reminder he would see whenever he checked the time, words that, if heeded, held the secret to a successful marriage. They were, "Say something nice to Sarah" (From Morris Chalfant). Let us say something nice to our companions day by day.

A Moments Wisdom

- A family is a place where minds come in contact with one another. If these minds love one another, the home will be as beautiful as a flower garden. But if these minds get out of harmony with one other it is like a storm that plays havoc with the garden.
- Remembrance of things past is not necessarily the remembrance of things as they were.
- Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of its trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse for impossibility, for it thinks all things are possible.
- Tomorrow, you promise yourself, will be different, yet, tomorrow is too often a repetition of today.