

ICE BREAKER

- Special Week. This is the week of all the answers to life the universe and everything.
 - Teaching calendar/sermon posting; It is Week 42
 - If you wonder why – ask your neighbor.

INTRODUCTION

- Speaking of teaching team calendar (**The show-down**) (I titled it, “Idol, What Idol?”)
 - Third week in a series looking at Elijah and Elisha
 - ❖ (Hopefully we will get them straight after this)
 - Elijah: God is YHWH (El – I – aho)
 - Elisha: God is salvation (yeshuah)
 - Stories of Gods providence, and the faith of the prophets (and those who they meet)
 - ❖ During a time that Israel was divided and Idolators.
- Today we are looking at the “showdown” is between YHWH and ba’al
- Let’s look through the story – and along the way map the characters of the story to ourselves.
 - It is too easy to read this story and see on the surface.
 - ❖ Ancient weird rituals and distant lands and time – punch line, “God wins – idols suck”
 - ❖ But humans haven’t changed so much. Idols don’t just disappear, they are reshaped.
- We don’t often have a battle of gods around a sacrifice and slaughter the losers... or do we.
 - How to make this accessible.
 - I am to point to some things allegorically. Meaning: ‘*It is like this*’
 - Typology; Israel = Believer
- We left off with Elijah and the widow.
 - Israel had been through a soap opera of kings. (Power struggles and assassinations) the kingdom was split and in disunity. Ahab succeeds his father Omri as king.
 - ❖ Omri had caused a coup – took over kingship.
 - ❖ His big glory was building up the city of Samaria.
 - ❖ He married the daughter (Jezebel) of the neighboring Phoenician king.
 - Relations with neighboring states, but falls prey to worshipping their god
 - Ahab built a temple to ba’al and a worship pole to Asherah.

- Elijah just showed up prophesies against Ahab that there will be no rain for three years.
 - ❖ God provided for Elijah by raven dropping food, then a widow who's jugs of flour and oil never deplete. [MAP 1]

Story is going to take place on Mount Carmel [MAP 2]

- Now three years have gone by, the king and his household manager Obadiah are out searching the land for grass to feed the horses and mules. They each go a different direction searching the land for enough grass to save the animals of their household. (~10min)

1 Kings 18:5 And Ahab said to Obadiah, "Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys. Perhaps we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, and not lose some of the animals." **6** So they divided the land between them to pass through it. Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadiah went in another direction by himself.

- Obadiah is an interesting character here.
 - We are told by the narrator that Obadiah feared the lord, Obadiah reiterates that to Elijah

1 Kings 18:3b-4 Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly, and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.
 - But then, Elijah shows up Obadiah and tells him to go get the king – he wants a meeting.
 - ❖ Three times Obadiah, in fear for his life. (Fears the Lord, but also fears man)
 - ❖ When things are reiterated in ancient writing it is adding emphasis.
 - He isn't just scared to die – he is really, really scared to die.
 - He isn't just brave for the LORD; he was really brave for the LORD.
- So, what does it look like if we map this character to ourselves?
 - Living a dichotomy. Divided. Fear, serve and honor the LORD, and fear man.
 - Our nation and the world is in a state of division and fear. Where are we in this? [15min]

Jams 1:5-8 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. **6** But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** he is a **double-minded** man, unstable in all his ways.
 - Obadiah is mixed – double minded. Serves the Lord but lives in fear.
 - Not that his salvation is in question – but that he is carrying a burden – enslaved to an idol

- Elijah convinces Obadiah that he won't leave, so he goes and gets Ahab. [Caramel Popcorn]

READ 1 Kings 18:17-21 (Deception) [Mount Carmel]

- "You, troubler of Israel" **1 Kings 18:17**
 - Self-deception. Who caused the drought? Elijah? Ahab? God? (all played a role)
 - ❖ Be careful who you blame. Maybe start with yourself (**Matt 7:5** "plank in your own eye")
 - "Of all deceivers, fear yourself the most." -- Soren Kierkegaard

Jeremiah 17:9-10a “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? **10** I the LORD search the heart and test the mind...”

- “How long will you go limping between two different opinions” **1 Kings 18:21b** (Homonym)
 - Double minded – – similar strand as Obadiah (Individual and a Nation)
 - Gosh life is not black and white. – I had to ask myself this question recently
 - ❖ Does it honor the Lord? (Ask yourself and maybe each other)
 - ❖ “Let others complain that the age is wicked; my complaint is that it is paltry; for it lacks passion. Men's thoughts are thin and flimsy like lace...” -- Soren Kierkegaard ???

READ **1 Kings 18:22-27** (Who is God)

- Elijah’s sarcasm.
 - Referring to gods with human traits. – Archaeology Bible notes
 - That is what is so unique about the Judeo-Christian God
 - ❖ Not subject to any other law. God **IS** the law.
 - ❖ That is why Paul can say that the law is holy righteous and good. (**Rom 7:12**)
 - ❖ Sumerian/Mesopotamian/Babylonian creation story (oldest found) - pottery 3000 BC
 - Marduk chops Tiamat in half, one halves becomes heavens the other earth.
 - Then Marduk kills the god Qingu and his blood splatters and creates humans
 - Battles and blood, pride and power ... All humanity projected onto deity.
 - gods like humans – humans like gods

READ **1 Kings 18:28-31** (Who’s Blood?)

- Donnie mentioned the ancient city of Ugarit last week. In the archaeology excavation pottery was uncovered described a worship ceremony where, “My bothers bathed in their own blood, like ecstasies.” – (ecstasy) mystical, unstable
- Following the pattern of Marduk. Spilling their own blood to get attention of the gods.
 - Israel had to spill the blood of goats and bulls to propitiate – appease (pay for)
 - But we have a greater priest – we have a new covenant.

Hebrews 10:8 (Psalms 40:6) when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me;

Hebrews 9:13-15 when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) **12** he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. **13** For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, **14** how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

- We live in a new covenant – that of the grace of the Risen God.

READ 1 Kings 18:32-35 (Oh – what to do) (Who are You?)

- Unity – put the stones of Israel back in order.
- Cleansing – Often this is seen as showing God’s power by drenching the alter
 - But I think it has more to do with cleansing. – Notice emphasis by 3 times.
 - ❖ (John baptizes with water – He will baptize with fire) **Matthew 3:11**

[20min]

READ 1 Kings 18:36-40 (Prayer and Provision)

- Elijah’s prayer. Simple and powerful
- Reflection of the presence of God in the tabernacle.

READ 1 Kings 18:41-46 (Grace)

[read?]

- Elijah has grace on Ahab
 - All of this needs to be seen through the Covenant of Grace
 - We are not called to slaughter those of an opposing belief system – different time/culture
 - We are called to slaughter that which causes us to sin (**Matt 5:29, 18:9**)
- I believe we are entering a new era. United States is no the back side of the ‘golden age’
 - We see division repeated cycles of division since the 60’s
 - Larger and larger wealth gaps
 - A government that has less and less unity and less ability to address the problems
 - New forms of imperialism and tribalism
- It is times like these that God makes heroes.
 - Not in the headlines in the day-to-day acts of the faithful.
- Be wary of our idols. Be careful to not invite temptation and justify our acts of putting an institution, ideal or
 - Does it honor God?

[30min]

CONCLUSION

- Boil it down to four verses.
- **1 Kings 18:17-18** "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?" (Deception) – Search our hearts, confess **Psalms 139**
 - "Of all deceivers, fear yourself the most" -- Soren Kierkegaard
 - Bonhoeffer, "Christians ***should be*** the least deceived people in the world."
 - Who or what are we relying on? Not to be a toxic skeptic, but question.
 - ❖ Kierkegaard was an advocate of constantly wrestling with ourselves.
- **1 Kings 18:21** "How long will you go **limping** between two different opinions?" (Who is God)
 - **Idols** seal your identity; causing self-harm and slavery.
- **1 Kings 18:31-35, 40** "Israel shall be your name." (Who are You?)
 - Know who you are. Your identity in Christ is PARAMOUNT.
 - Remember **Gen 32**, God asks Jacob his name and then says – no you are Israel!
 - ❖ And YOU are a child of God! >> Not a slave to idols.
 - Do your work – Let God do his
 - ❖ (Our work) Unity, Cleansing (encouragement), Purge the fake
 - ❖ (God's work) The refining fire!
- **1 Kings 18:36-7** "You, O LORD (YHWH), are God, turn their hearts back." (Prayer and Provision)
 - Elijah prayed and God provided. – This is life and death to an agricultural community.
 - Jesus has provided us with living water.

John 4:13-14 Jesus said to [to the Samaritan woman], "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, **14** but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."
 - (Point back to identity) Where is your source? What idols are deceiving you?

PRAY

- Jesus the greater than Elijah
- Jesus the anchor in our identity
- The destroyer of idols and the filler of my soul, provider of my life
 - Creator and sustainer.
- Give us grace and wisdom to be the next chapter of your Church.

FINAL SLIDE

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 - Prayer and Provision