

Halting between two opinions (Quality: Average)

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Preacher: Falkner, Leslie Walter (1904-1985)

- [0 : 00] And the part of the 21st verse, the first book of Kings, chapter 18, the part of the 21st verse.
- And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long hought ye between two opinions?
- If the Lord be God, follow him, but if they'll then follow him. How long hought ye between two opinions?
- If the Lord be God, follow him, but if they'll then follow him. Israel at one day in their national light knew full well whom they follow.
- They knew the Lord. They knew what wondrous things he had done for them. The great victories that had been achieved on their behalf through his servant David.
- [1 : 35] And yet here we have a picture of a complete contrast which has taken place in their national life. And how has it all come about?
- What is the source of all this which so requires an answer? And we find the key to it in Solomon.
- Solomon who in his old age became such a fool. Such a fool that he went after strange women.
- Of whom the Lord hath declared, thou shalt not go in unto them, they shall not come in unto thee. For they shall surely turn thine heart away unto idols.
- And yet we find Solomon with seven hundred wives. And we find him setting up varied houses.
- [2 : 45] For that which was relative to the numerous idols which these women of different nationalities had so brought into the midst of Israel.
- And so we find the beginning of the awful idolatry which spread so rapidly and so quickly.
- He erupted in the life of that nation Israel. Yes, we find at times that there are revivals of the national life concerning the acknowledgement of God.
- But we do not find in one of the kings that there is a clean riddance of all that was relative to the groves and the high places where the idols were found.
- Oh, it was a cancer in the midst of the life of Israel. It was eating out all that which was relative unto the very life of their national existence.
- [3 : 59] And then to crown it all, there comes a king who caused Israel to sing more than any that had gone before him. Namely Ahab.
- Ahab who married Jezebel. And by reason of marrying her became an ally unto Baal.
- So much so that he did in this case what no other king had done before him. He reeled off unto Baal.
- And it was in consequence of this that the anger of the Lord burnt hotly against Israel.
- And even as we see the heinousness of the crime which has been committed in that wherein God has been set at naught.

[5 : 00] We find him rising as a star in the midst of the nation. Elijah. And he confronted Ahab and declared that when the displeasure of God was declared against them.

And he so said that there would be no rain for three years. And then we see Elijah going to the back places of the desert place.

We see him being sustained by God, provided for by God. We see God attending his footsteps. Directing his passage here and there as the divine wisdom saw fit.

We see Elijah so in attendance upon that wherein a dead child was raised alive. We find him realizing more and more the reality of that gift of prayer.

We see him coming into a closer contact with the reality of what God was and all his actions in his delayed purpose toward him.

[6 : 22] And Elijah was strengthened thereby. And Elijah was made thus to walk with a serenity and a peace and a rest that none other of that time endured.

And it is in that same reality of acquaintanceship which he had with his God that he hears the wise directing him so to go and to show him so unto Ahab.

Now what has been happening in the meantime? There is a family in the land of Samaria. And the people have become entirely apathetic and indifferent and indifferent relative to their faith.

They are in a warm state of mind and heart. It doesn't really seem to matter. Yes, and that which is relative unto the majority of them.

Do you rather understand those that are the least of the least of their flesh? Which was so set forth in the idolatry of the land?

[7 : 43] the pleasures the enticements all that they can find excitement yes their holiest words have merged under it and Elijah so command that the whole nation shall be gathered unto him at Mount Calum he appears before he brings them face to face with the reality of the senselessness of their state and of their position he shows them the very knowledge of the position which they are holding at the present moment how watching between the two opinions the very fact as it is recorded in the closure of this verse that the people answered him not a word emphasizes the fact of how they felt extremely foolish as the result of the question that he had put to them because they realized the nature they had before and the prophet of the law and in his presence there was the realization of how far they had departed from the living

God how far they had strayed and erred from his way even as nature had so informed Ahab when he confronted him he said I have not traveled Israel but thou and my father's house in which ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and thou hast followed Baile but let us for a moment just get the picture right as it is said before us in this chapter here is Israel gathered in before Elijah and on one side we found a range four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred of the prophets of the groves which sat at Jezebel's table and on the other side we see one individual standing alone in a grave minority in comparison with the numbers that so confronted him who represented

Baal and as he stands there he makes mention of the very fact he says I remain a prophet of the Lord but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men no wonder you have gone to the position that you are in no wonder that under their subtleties and their delusions ye have been brought into the solemn position which ye now hold yes a majority a grave majority how overwhelming it is and as we look at the people of Israel shall we not say that amongst their number are to be found some of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal and had not kissed him to whom the Lord referred but oh the majority of that company how they have been swayed in their minds how they have been led astray by the prophets of Baal and yet in down in their hearts they always have the recollection and the remembrance of the

God whom once they have served the God who had been so faithful and true in all his hearings concerning whom they never could forget that it was relative to the others that had been broken down the land still testified though in that broken condition unto a poor state no there was ever the accusing vice they could never get away from it and in that company are to be found some who were realizing the policy of all that related unto servitude to Baal and yet you know the way they just stood up there was the only one who was able so to speak the protest not one of them had ever come to the point where he was prepared to stand forth and to take up his position with the light they made these things in their minds but they hid they came to a stand still they never got beyond a sudden point and that point men the acknowledgement of the

Lord God of Israel it meant that they would have to comfort them be separated from the majority and that they would have to take their stand with those who were prepared to stand alone yes it is to say is it not in all that relates unto the lives of men there is no rest there is no peace unto the heart of man when he is found in the position of these people parting between two opinions for here is one who deep down within his heart knows the truth and yet never acts upon it here is one who knoweth that that which is relative unto the banks which he have heard have been indeed demonstrated unto his fathers and yet he himself has never been brought so to make mention of yes there is a stop a haunting place that which

[14 : 50] Saul declares the wailing state of a man's mind when he is in utter confusion and you know all that harts between two opinions are in a state of confusion they come into a place where they cannot and do not know where they actually stand they don't know what their position is in these fields they know that which is relative to Baal and all that fleshly worship and that so appeals unto their flesh and how their fallen nature responds unto the enticements of that I idolatry yes and yet they have deep down within their heart some realization that this is all around that this is a case of error that this is that wherein they are being laid around and all the dissatisfaction or the uneasiness that is found in the heart of the man who hearted between two opinions two thoughts you see erasure is bringing the people to a point about it that the case may be made exceedingly clear and to this end he calls poor decision he says if the

Lord be God follow him if Baal then follow him he also calls for distinction he speaks of a distinction which lies between the Lord and Baal and then he gives a directive that according to the knowledge and the understanding that you possess then you should so confess it in following you first then that which is relative unto a decision he is reminding them that it is an utter impossibility to take up a neutral position in these things that he cannot as it were sit on the fence that there's got to be made a decision sometime or other relative to the fact of their standing how foolish a man would be who never took stop of his own position standing in light he would realize the senselessness of such a procedure and yet when it comes to the things that matter the eternal things that so affect our soul's destiny how seldom are we found coming to any real decision as to where we stand in these things the things that are so vented for our soul's world the things that mean so much because eternity will surely manifest where we stand in these things if we never confess it down here yes we may remain in a state of confusion all our lives we may not be found back on the one hand or the other but be sure of this that that which is relative unto thy position will be made perfectly clear in the day of judgment and if

I am possessed with that solemn thought in my mind then I shall want to know where I stand in this time state in regard to the things of God love I am not content to leave it to the future that which is relative unto may destroy me that which so obsesses me at the present moment may be my downfall know I know where I stand in that which is relative unto him who alone is able to give to me the truth to give to me the reality of the things that actually matter because when I come to bear in these things then I realize that everything that pertains to him is but the outcome of the imagination of my own heart you know what is in the reckoning of

God's word it is that which comes between you and God that which puts God out as it were out of the horizon of a man's life that all his affections and all his thoughts are taken up of the idol of his choice and even as I may be found bowing and worshipping that which is but a delusion that which is simply the foolish of some imaginary thought of my own then oh what a terrible state I could come into yes there can be no neutrality in this matter it's going one way or the other and with that fact we are a remainder of our Lord when he showed rest to the people of old and said he cannot serve two masters that is an impossibility because she found to be a true servant to both know it is the one who engages your service and the one to whom you render the service of your life who is the master of your life my friend it all depends on where our affections are where our aspirations are what our missions are what the end in life is to us these are the things that will master us these are the things that will control us and bring us down into subservience for if these are the things that possess my heart then as a man who give in his heart so is he and if that which is a relative amount of the spirit of my heart is my heart then

I am found indeed engaged in the service of that idol but all of me if that which is a relative unto the Lord engages my heart then I shall be found in service unto him so you see there can't be any neutrality among it the issue is set clearly before and we have to base the fact that we are in the service of one or of the other it's any of the Lord or male and that brings us to this fact that there is only one God and that which is relative unto the very being of God the one who claims and requires the objects of his own creation to render unto him that acknowledgement which is his due the one who speaks through his word as he did unto

[23 : 20] Israel concerning all his commandments his precepts and so forth requires that in our acknowledgement of him we should so walk in accordance with those things and thus declare our faith yes and if we have not that declaration of faith within us then surely we come into another position namely this that that which is around until you run to the facts of the case are going to be proved and this is the position that Elijah took on he said now how long was he between two opinions if the Lord be God follow him if Baal follow him and were put it to the proof and you know how that proof was forthcoming we won't enter into all the details we just touch upon he has that which is a relative unto the prophets of

Baal and they are going to take the bullet and to cut it that they are to put it upon the wood of the altar that they are to put no fire under it what a splendid way the narrator has to bring cutting sarcasm into the language that he uses to them why does he make a point like it you see they had their brooks they had their places where their eyeballs were so erected oh yes they had their waters in those places and they were perfectly careful in the benetiousness of their minds of leading the people astray by their delusions in effect what the narrator is going to know he says don't you put any spark of fire in that oil you may do it but now you're in the position where you can't do it yes when you are there in your groves and so forth you can get up to all those tricks but now it's going to be made manifest in the strength of all his people as to where the truth dot lie they are brought with no fire on them said

Elijah now he says you call upon your God and we hear that when the crimes go forth unto Baal that he would hear them now remember the justice of the act in which Elijah is here bringing this people to judge because Baal was the son of God or the God of the son and therefore it is so feasible that he is the son of the God as they professed him to be that it was most likely that the fire would come that there would be the burning of the sacrily race and thus they prayed and you notice how the scripture puts it that they prayed until the noon when the sun at its height surely Baal was going to hope for now was the time now was the season when he could down straight his palms but there was no lust there was no why there was none but regarding ah we see the fanatical episodes we see that why they still cut themselves until their very life blood breaches them there is no pity no compassion from their

God no there is nothing forthcoming my friend if you follow Baal that is what you are at your end you may depend upon Baal you may look to him in your season of delusion you may hope and hope and hope that at the end you will find that everything will be alright but may be here put it to the proof put it to the proof come that which is the relative unto the things of this world and all the idols that they contain in your own experience can they afford unto you any help in the day of trouble can they bring any comfort to your heart can they show me a help and a strength to you in your time of dependence do they hear the voice of your prayer when you ask them to deliver you no you will find the same answer there is no response no regard then says

Elijah come near unto me now take the bullet put it upon the water dig a trench right around and saturate the hole so if there was any possibility of any spark of a flame being applied it would soon go out though I do everything that make impossible that there should be any burden of the sacrament where put every obstacle every hindrance as it were in the way and then he prayed let it be known that there is a God in Israel and the fire came dark and the fire consumed everything even to the very dust until there was some of the oil he has an altar that has been erected and it is entirely and completely consumed and we looked away and the altar is still there it still remains it still remains yes there is the footing to the proof that which is of myself remains that which is of

[30 : 16] God is it not it is consumed for the kitchen of the altar is there then it is there that the judgment comes upon all thy sins it is there that even as the water of my transgressions got so inserted the water so the fire coming down shall look upon everyone it is here alone that thou must find acceptance it is here alone that you can find rest and peace then how long hark ye between two opinions pro did you find that the world never brought into your heart any sense of a sweet comfort for a day now did you find that it ever communicated to you any rest and to your soul when it was intolerant did you find that it would ever reach you in the most alive no it had no answer to these things it had no regard for you you found that none care for your soul but you have known what it is that ye have proved to have received through the morning devotion of thy

God unto thy pride that wherein thy heart has been cheered that wherein you have been brought peace and rest yes ye have known what it is for the word of God to have been fulfilled in your own experience whereby you have been warned by the fire that has come from heaven you have proved it then how long are ye between two opinions the Lord may God follow him if they will follow him in other words Elijah says in the proof that there be the declaration they declare it the Lord he is the God in that wherein you have the demonstration in your own heart that wherein God does so with it and eat up all thy sins and all thy adulteries and removes them completely and utterly so do thou

God declare the truth concerning thy God and that brings us to the distinction which is brought before us in the text that there is no comparison between the Lord and Baal the Lord in the text it means Jehovah the great sufficiency of the Lord and that is in great contrast to the negative position that Baal has got nothing to offer nothing to give nothing to sustain but in the Lord we find everything that we need now that brings us then in the distinctiveness of the case unto the fact of the difference between truth and error in the

Lord we have the truth the truth of all things which he has spoken in times gone by unto this nation they had known of his appearing in the fire before time had it not appeared unto them in the ocean so what yes it was the same God again the truth has been made manifest unto them and that the contrast then all pertains unto the other side must be error that is the distinctiveness of the position we either possess truth or we possess error he is the true and the living God he has declared and even the demonstration which he gave unto them they have to acknowledge have you proved the word of your

God to be true and proved the veracity and invulability of that wherein he has spoken through the prophets have you so realized in your own heart that when the word which he has spoken has come to pass there has been fulfillment there has been manifestation there has been demonstration but my friend the Lord has promised you so much and you have never seen anything of it Baal who has so in all its attractiveness that the gold that may so possess its very image may hold out so much promise and yet that which is relatively one to it is so actually useless it obeys nothing oh here he laid the fact that they are tested in your own case here is the distinctiveness between life and death it is the living

[36 : 10] God who acts it is the living God whose soul declares himself it is the living God whose voice is heard through his wondrous works alone it is God but Baal all that is around it to him speaks of death that which is imminent that which is a life life my friend have you ever found the world ever be able to give as it were any help to your soul that which is relative to your spiritual life hasn't been able to assist you in any way whatsoever it can't because death is there it is only in the communication of life to your own heart by loving God that you know that we're in life consistent though this is life eternal that they might know be the only true

God whom Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent there is a distinctiveness between life and death prove it in your own case here is that which is reality and here is that which is delusion the fire came down and was a reality they saw it they saw the effect of it they saw the result of it it was real but here is the other on touch here is that which remains unto the very structure still remaining as it was yes nothing can remove that nothing can affect that because that which is relative to the removal of it can only be affected in that where in duplicity and trickery it would work all those prophets knew it well

I doubt not what it was with very very fast that they took off their work on medication in erecting that heart they knew that they had been found out they knew that that which was a relative to their deceit had been discovered their heart and our heart we come to the other side you see the reality of that which is done that which is fulfilled and accomplished according to the word of the Lord that is the distinctiveness probe it you see it in that which is genuine and that which is false yes we look at that which pertains unto the fire the cave down consume the altar and we see in the waking up of the water and the dust that wherein the genuineness of the whole manifestation is contained that there is not to remain.

It is all finished. And I turn to the other side and I see the frostness of all the assumptions that those prophets have been making.

I see that wherein my eyes have been blinded. And prove it. Yes, there is the right and the wrong in that which is set before us in the distinctiveness.

[39 : 57] Which is right and which is wrong. It is that wherein God hath made manifest His power in His relationship unto His people.

For He who sent the fire is the covenant God of His will. O Lord God, He said when He cried unto Him, Lord God of Abraham, I is it unto Israel, let it be known this day of the large God in Israel.

And the rightness of the case was evident. And the roundness of the prophets of Baal was evident. All the distinctiveness.

Have you come to the proof of it in your own experience? Have you known what it is just to have a long guard as it were? And you find that you can't walk with both.

You find that you can't as it were go hand in hand with God in heaven. There's got to be a decision. There's got to be a moral decision. You've got to be brought.

[41 : 06] I know one way or the other. And that brings us to the diarictive. If the Lord and God follow Him, if Baal follow Him, the diarictive is to have the acknowledgement of the truth in your own heart.

And in the acknowledgement of the truth, to be obedient unto that which is so declared and made plain unto you. And in that wherein you are made obedient, so to separate by soul from the way of effort.

The way of death. Yes. And to have that identification with Him who has made Himself known unto you.

Yes, it's for the truth's sake. It's for the salvation of thy own soul. How long hodge ye between two of you.

Yes. God forbid that we should be like the man who could come so far and never get any further.

[42 : 21] Who never faces up to the reality. Who never comes to a point of all different. Yes, what think of Christ is the best.

To try both your state and your speed. You cannot be right in the rest unless you think right near Him.

Some of you say, yes, I proved the palacy of Baal. I have proved the reality of God. Have you?

Have you? Have you? Then how long hodge between two opinions if the Lord be God follow me?

Amen. I'll see you in the next one. God bless. God bless you.

[43 : 46] Thank you.