

Warring Wisdoms
06-14-20

In 1 Kings 18:19-40 there is the story of one of the most powerful battles in history. It is a war of ideas; the false god Baal verses the God of Truth Jehovah. It was waged by their generals, Elijah for Jehovah and 850 prophets and priests of Baal and Ashtoreth. It was waged on Mount Carmel, and the prize was the hearts and souls of the Kingdom of Israel.

This was a battle of ideology. The false priests and prophets claimed that their knowledge of their gods could answer the questions of life; their gods could explain weather, harvests, and the very universe itself. Jehovah too could explain these things; but Jehovah also expected the people to consider the nature of being God denied the existence of idols as actual representations of an all powerful God.

When the dust cleared, the priests and prophets of Baal were dead. Jehovah utterly decimated the absent false gods, and it should have been clear to all that there is only One God. Yet in the very next chapter we see that the prophet Elijah is all alone, running for his life. His incredible victory was in some ways empty, as only a small remnant of people choose to walk with Jehovah.

This battle occurred again on another hill eight hundred years later. Paul faced off against the philosophers of the age on Mars Hill in Acts 17. There they waged a battle of ideology with words, and Paul declared the nature of God and the power of God. Yet at the end of that battle some scoffed, and only a few believed. Was this a victory?

These two great battles represent an important idea in the Way of Christ. The Way of Christ is a pattern of knowledge and thinking. It demands that we accept that there is only one Truth, as seen in John 17:17. All other things are derivative or false. It has always been the case that the Way of Christ battles human ideologies. Those ideologies included false god cosmologies, human philosophers, and today is a battle against the ideology of the western world: materialism. Materialism is the foundational idea that all things can only be understood by what is present. It is so deeply ingrained in all of us that we are almost blind to it as an ideology, and see it as simply the only way to think.

Yet the great battle of ideology today is that materialism allows no place for an unseen God. It refuses to concede that Truth is unique to the revelation of God. It wars against faith, and utterly denies the resurrection. The concession most of us make is that we embrace materialism only up until it crosses the bible, and yet still we are unaware that it robs us of hope that an unseen God will act in our lives.

In 1 Corinthians 1:17-27 Paul declares that the knowledge of God is at war with every type of human reasoning. He contrasts it with the traditions of Judaism and the philosophy of the Greeks, and declares that the Truth has made both foolish. We might consider that God does act in the world to render human reasoning foolish. Even now, while in the midst of the chaos of pandemic and civil disturbance in 2020, we see that human ideology fails to bring answers and peace to men. We might consider that God permits the shattering of these delusions in order to bring us to the Truth.

There have always been two choices in the matter of human reasoning; the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. James made this clear in James 3:13-18 when he declared that the wisdom from above has good consequences, while the wisdom of the natural world did not. Your ideology is a choice; which one will you choose?