

Prayer List

Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Arley

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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IS YOUR GOD SLEEPING?

There is a very amusing statement, which the Holy Spirit has preserved for us, made by the prophet Elijah in his contest with the prophets of Baal. The scene was Mount Carmel. Elijah had assembled all of Israel to this mountain near the Mediterranean coast to witness a test between Baal (the false Canaanite god) and Jehovah (the One True God). By himself, Elijah would stand against four hundred prophets of Baal. The test was this: each side took one bull to offer as a sacrifice. Whichever god responded to the sacrifices with fire would demonstrate himself to be the true God, and the people would be obligated to worship him.

Being the fair competitor that he was, Elijah let the prophets of Baal go first. They prepared their altar and began to cry: "O Baal, hear us!" (1 Kgs. 18:26). According to Scripture this crying out to their god went on from morning until noon. Now, here is the amusing part. Scripture says: "And so it was at noon that Elijah mocked them and said: 'Cry aloud for he is a god; either he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened'" (1 Kgs. 18:17 NKJV).

Clearly, Elijah was ridiculing these false prophets, but there was more in his words than simply sarcasm. You see, the

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This Week's Question:

What king fasted all day and night while unsuccessfully inquiring of the Lord?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Jehoram - 2 Chronicles 21:12

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questions that he asked were very important because they demanded that the prophets consider the very nature of the god they so foolishly worshiped. If any god is the True God, there are some facts about his nature that must be inescapable.

1. His power must transcend the physical powers which limit the material world. Unless we are prepared to believe that everything has always existed then we have to concede that there is a power which exists which is greater than the forces of this present world. Only such a power could form both the world and the physical laws which regulate it.

2. This means that such a god would not be subject to weakness, decay, or other infirmities which govern the universe which he has created. Since it is he who imposed the laws that regulate the universe it would be ridiculous to think that they controlled Him as well.

To the pagan mind such a concept of a transcendent God was foreign in the myths and tales of their gods we find a much different picture of deity. Their gods (though believed to have some control over nature) were themselves subject to its limitations. Their gods grew old and died. they ate, drank, caroused and fought each other like the humans that so blindly paid them reverence. So, while Elijah mocks them, he also suggest to them the nature of the one true God whose power they would soon witness. The true God would not fail to hear the prayer of the servants because He was: "meditating" or "busy." The true God fills the whole earth (Jer. 23:24). Though Jehovah may be described as "resting" (Gen. 2:2,3) this describes the cessation of work, not the need for recuperation. Thus, Jehovah would not need to be "awakened" in order to hear the cries of His people.

In the Biblical account, the Scripture tells us that the prophets of Baal did not heed Elijah's ridicule but continued to cry out; leaping about the altar and cutting themselves with knives and lances. When evening finally came Elijah took his turn. just to make it clear no trickery as involved Elijah wet the

sacrifice and filled a trench with water all around the base of the altar. Then he prayed to God. The Scripture tells us: "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench" (1 Kgs. 18:38). There could be no doubt, this was the true God! A God not limited by nature but clearly in dominion over it. In our time few people give homage to deities like Baal. Even so, men and women worship many gods even less powerful. Grown adults "leap about" and give their all to the god of materialism. A god so feeble he can be tossed to and fro by the ebb and flow of international economics. We "cut ourselves" in worship of the gods of sensualism. People sacrifice their bodies, minds, families and health to drugs, sex and alcohol. And finally, our "advanced society "cries out" to gods of atheism, secular humanism, relative morality and evolutionary science. All the while praying that in service to these deities we can escape the inevitable reality of death, pain and the corruption of the flesh that enslaves us.

The question is what is the nature of your god? Is he one who is tossed to and fro by the powers of nature? Does your hope rest upon what condition he creates within your life? Does your god sleep when you cry out to him? Or is he away on a journey when you need his care? If so, it is time of change gods. The One True God Who made the worlds and all things in them is greater than any other force which exists. He has a love for mankind so great that He sent His Own Son, Jesus Christ, to die that mankind might live with Him. Anyone who is willing to submit themselves to Him in full faith and obedience can have the hope of living eternally with Him when this world comes to an end. Yet, anyone who rejects His offer of grace will one day realize, not simply that He is the True and Living God, but that He has not been sleeping. -----
Kyle Pope in The Gospel Power, Vol 19, No. 3, March, 2012.