

GOD IN HEAVEN HAS FRIENDS & ENEMIES ON EARTH

Part 3 of New Days, Old Gods. 1 Kings 18:1-19.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. July 14, 2024.

IT'S TIME TO CHOOSE SIDES

We are living in interesting times.

Psalms 11:3 (NLT) The foundations of law and order have collapsed. What can the righteous do?

- Following Jesus is no longer a respectable or easy choice.

Psalms 10:1 (CSB) LORD, why do you stand so far away? Why do you hide in times of trouble?

- Our loyalty to Jesus is being tested, and only courageous faith will survive.

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The context of 1 Kings 18.

- Led by King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, the nation of Israel turned from the true God to worship Baal, the demon god of Canaan.
- God responded by withholding rain and removing his prophet Elijah from the Land. There was a famine of water and the Word.
- The message of 1 Kings 18 is clear and relevant today: God calls His people to stand firm in faith even in the face of opposition and compromise.
- Take note of what the chapter tells us about: 1) Elijah and Obadiah, who are God's friends, and 2) Ahab and Jezebel, who are God's enemies.
- Read 1 Kings 18:1-19.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN GOD'S FRIENDS & ENEMIES

1. OBEDIENCE VS. DISOBEDIENCE

God's friends are obedient - verses 1-3.

- Elijah did exactly what the Lord asked him to do.
- Jesus said, "I do as the Father commanded me" (John 14:31, CSB).
- Jesus was obedient to death on the cross (Philippians 2:8), and thus became the Savior we all need.

God's enemies are disobedient - verse 18.

- Ahab "abandoned the Lord's commands and followed the Baals."
- I face temptations to soften or edit the Bible to avoid controversy,

Acts 20:29-30 (CSB) I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Men will rise up even from your own number and distort the truth to lure the disciples into following them.

- We all have access to the Bible, but how much access does the Bible have to us?
- Jesus modeled obedience: "... not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

2. TRUTH VS. LIES

God's friends love the truth - verses 3-4.

- Obadiah hid God's prophets to preserve God's Word in Israel.

Psalms 119:103 (CSB) How sweet your word is to my taste — sweeter than honey in my mouth.

- The devil deceives us, but the Lord frees us. By the truth.

Psalms 1:1-3 (CSB) How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! 2 Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

- Happiness, flourishing, health, and resilience come from loving the truth.

God's enemies hate the truth - verse 13.

- Jezebel slaughtered the prophets to silence God's Word.
- She supported the prophets of Baal and Asherah to blind Israel to the truth and bind them in demonic deceptions.
- We have compassion but we don't compromise.

Psalms 119:115 (CSB) Depart from me, you evil ones, so that I may obey my God's commands.

- No one ever loved people more than Jesus. But not once did he edit the truth to fit their sinful choices. He embodies the Truth.

GOD USES ALL SORTS

Elijah and Obadiah were very different from each other.

- But both were God's friends.
- Both were models of courage in the face of deadly persecution.
- Elijah was bold and confrontational.
- Obadiah was quiet and cautious.
- The Lord used both men.

It takes all kinds to advance God's mission in the world.

- One is not better than the other.

- Sometimes the situation calls for caution; other times, it calls for boldness.
- Sometimes, God's people must withdraw to preserve the church; other times, God's people must actively engage the culture.

PRAY FOR COURAGE TO OBEY GOD AND LOVE THE TRUTH

Pray for ...

- Courage, conviction, boldness.
- Wisdom, insight.
- Cultural engagement, Gospel advance.

Pray against ...

- Temptations of comfort, cowardice, and compromise.

The good news is ...

- When we falter or fail, Jesus is a gracious and merciful Savior.
- He obeyed in our place. We are clothed in his perfect righteousness.
- His Gospel is powerful to save those we share it with.
- God is more willing to save than we are to share.

THE BENEDICT OPTION

Perplexity.ai summarized both of the following options for cultural engagement.

The Benedict Option is a strategy conservative writer Rod Dreher proposed for Christians to navigate an increasingly secular Western culture.

Origin and inspiration: St. Benedict of Nursia, a 6th-century monk who founded monastic communities, inspired the concept. It also draws on the philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre, particularly his book “After Virtue.”

Core idea: Dreher argues for forming virtuous Christian communities and a strategic withdrawal to build a resilient counterculture.

Key elements: 1) Strengthen Christian institutions like churches, schools, etc., 2) Focus on local engagement and communal living, 3) Preserve traditional Christian values and practices, and 4) Embrace a form of cultural exile while constructing alternative social structures.

THE FRANCIS OPTION

The Francis Option is a proposed Christian approach to engaging with contemporary secular culture inspired by the life and teachings of St. Francis of Assisi.

It encourages active engagement with the world while renouncing power, wealth, and influence for the gospel’s sake. Key aspects:

- Step outside ideological struggles.
- Focus on living out the gospel message.
- Renounce worldly power structures.
- Embrace poverty for the sake of others.
- Move into “unmapped spaces of secular culture”.
- Recognize God’s presence in creation. Look for God’s love and grace.
- Bridge divides. Reach out to those who have lost the most.
- Focus on mercy and conversion instead of condemning or dividing people.

The Francis Option emphasizes humility, active participation, and recognizing God’s presence in the material world.