

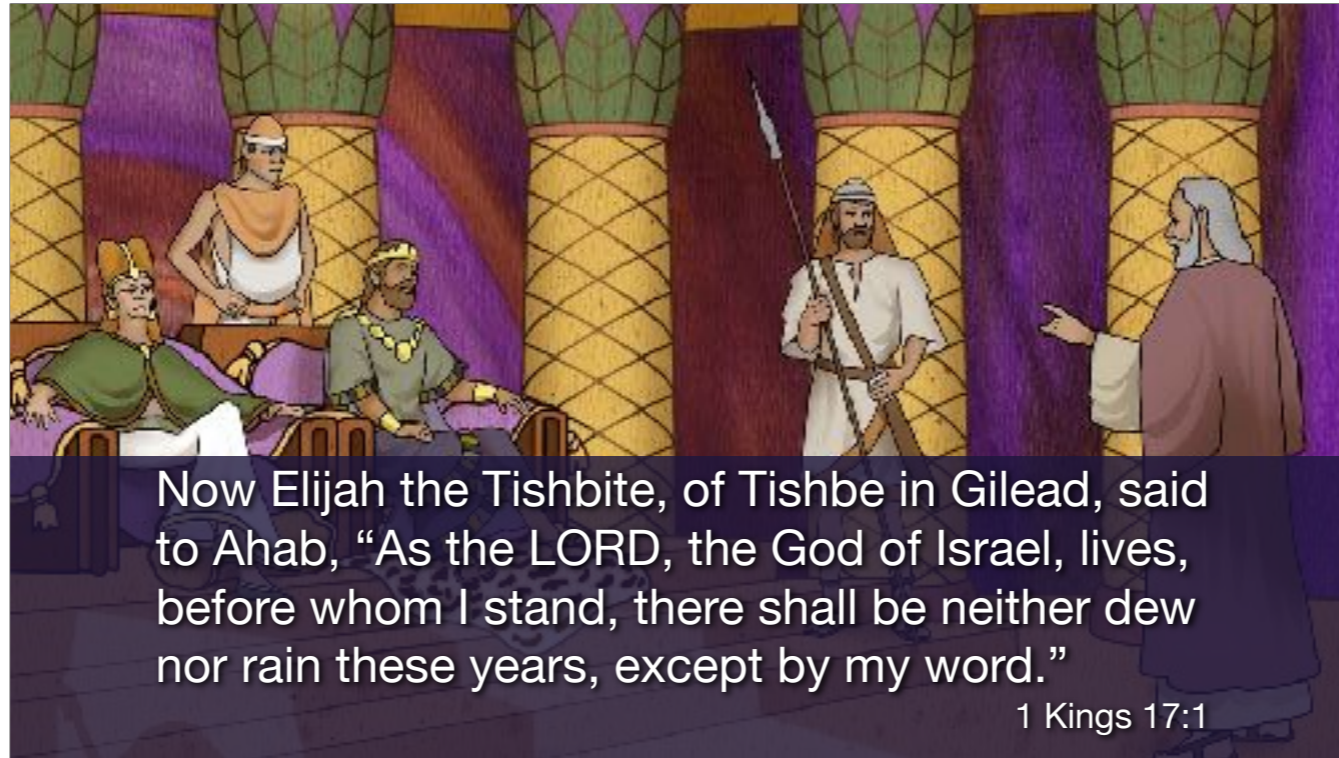


- My heart belongs to Connie.
 - Made a choice 36 years ago.
 - Those who know me, know this.

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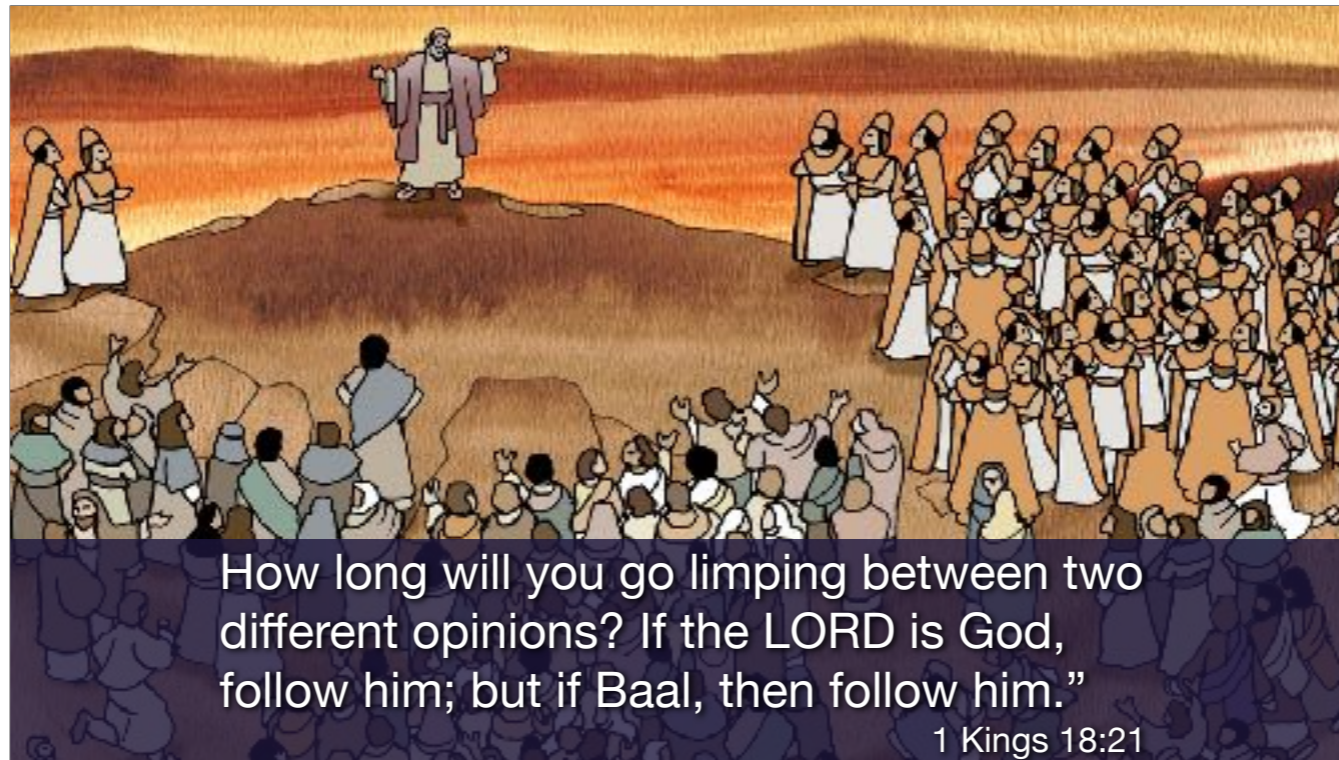
- The Northern ten tribes, under Jeroboam, began to worship “Jehovah” in Bethel and Dan, using two golden calves. (for political reasons)
- At least, in some sense, they were worshiping Jehovah, but as Idols
- By the time of Ahab and Jezebel, and mainly through Jezebel’s influence, the people of Samaria also were worshiping Baal: a false God and were involved in idolatry



Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”

1 Kings 17:1

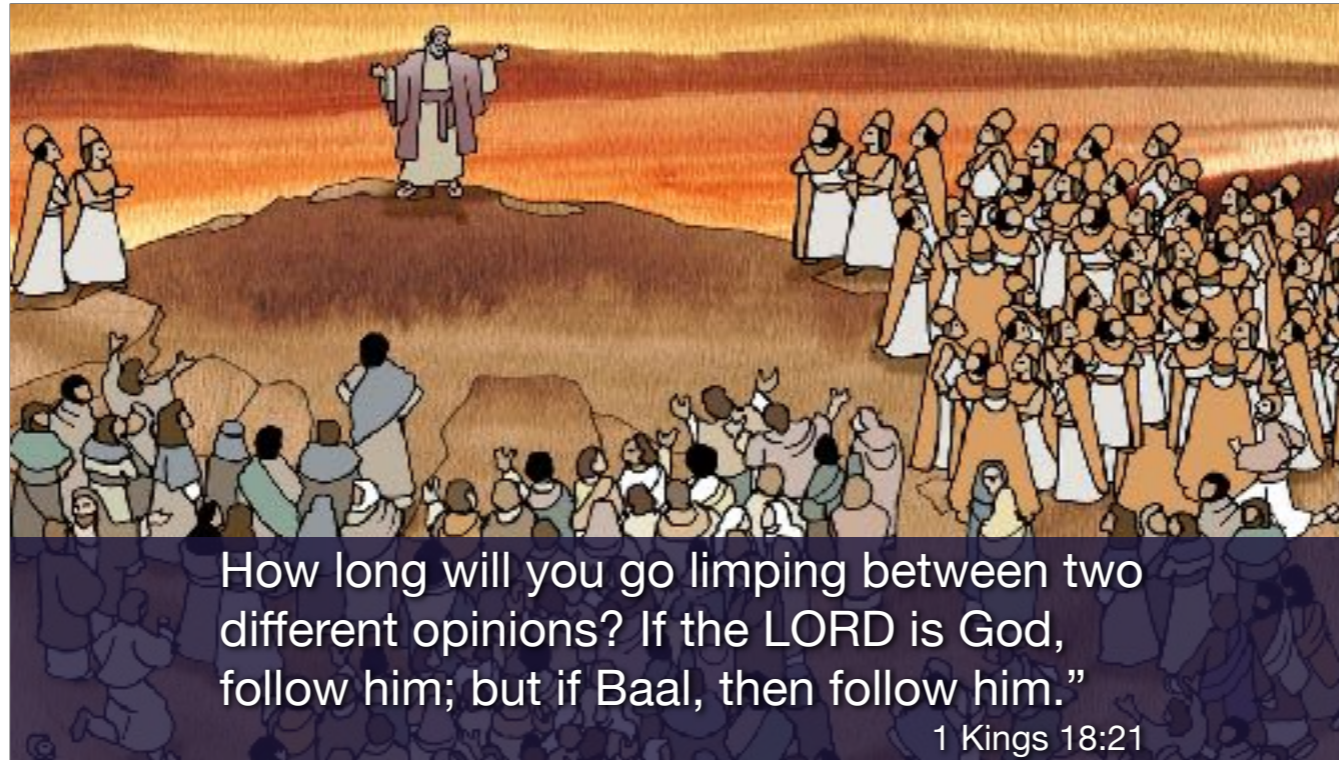
- 1 Kings 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”
- Elijah bursts on the scene with a pronouncement that is intended to provoke a situation
- Baal was a rain god!
- Turn the people completely to Jehovah: know that he is the one true God
- This is not a contest between two gods: Baal was a false god, an idol: powerless
- It is a contest for the hearts of the people of Israel!
- Mt. Carmel, three and a half years later



How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.”

1 Kings 18:21

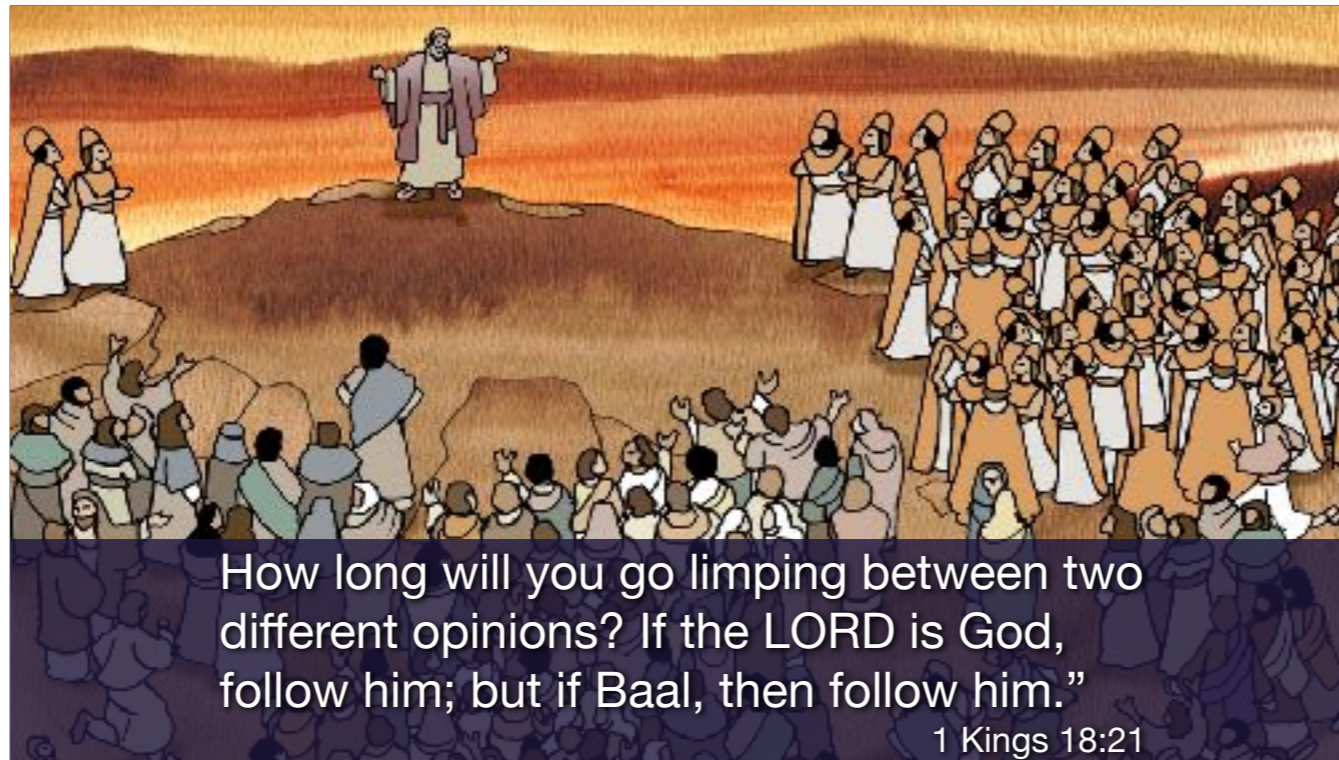
- 1 Kings 18:21 And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word.
 - NIV: “How long will you waver between two opinions?”
 - NET: “How long are you going to be paralyzed by indecision?”



How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.”

1 Kings 18:21

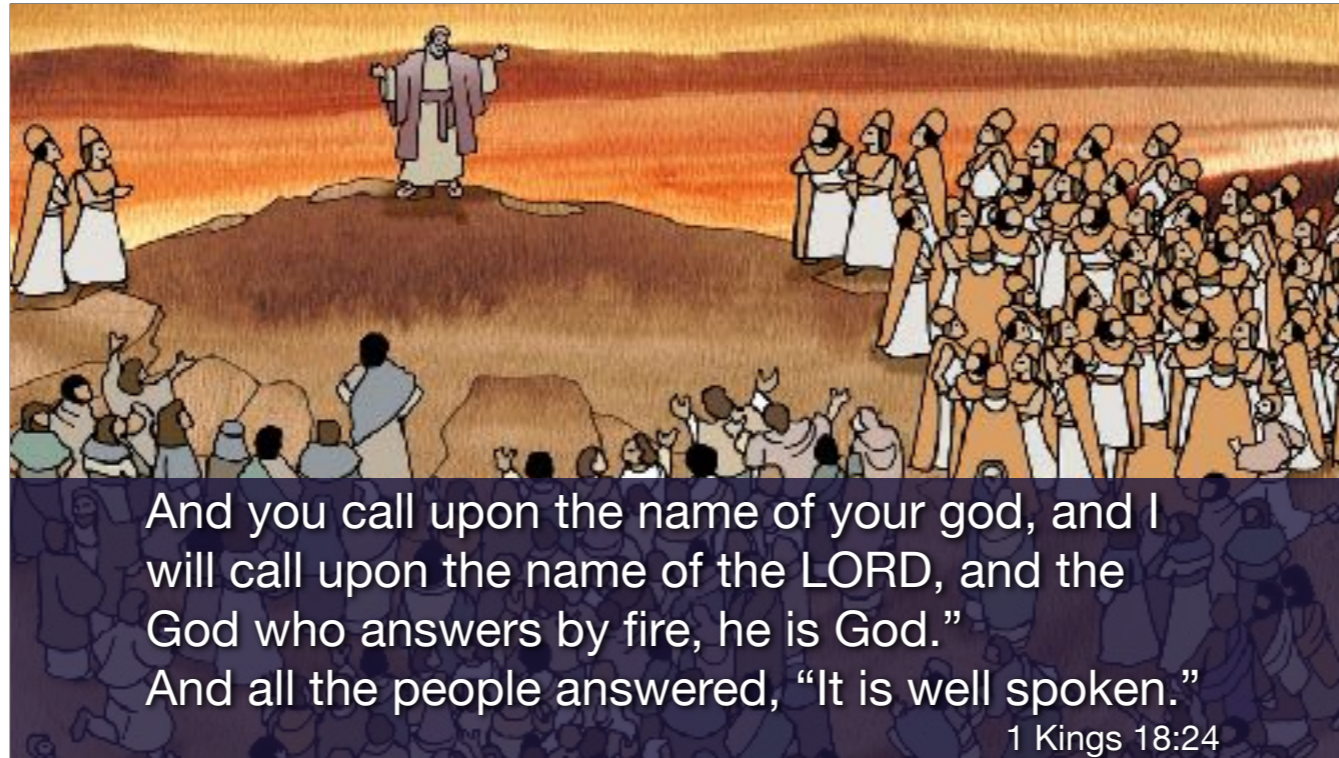
- How do we choose who we give our hearts to?
 - Is it about who has the most to offer us?
 - Who is the most powerful?
 - Who loves us most?
 - Who we fear the most?



How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.”

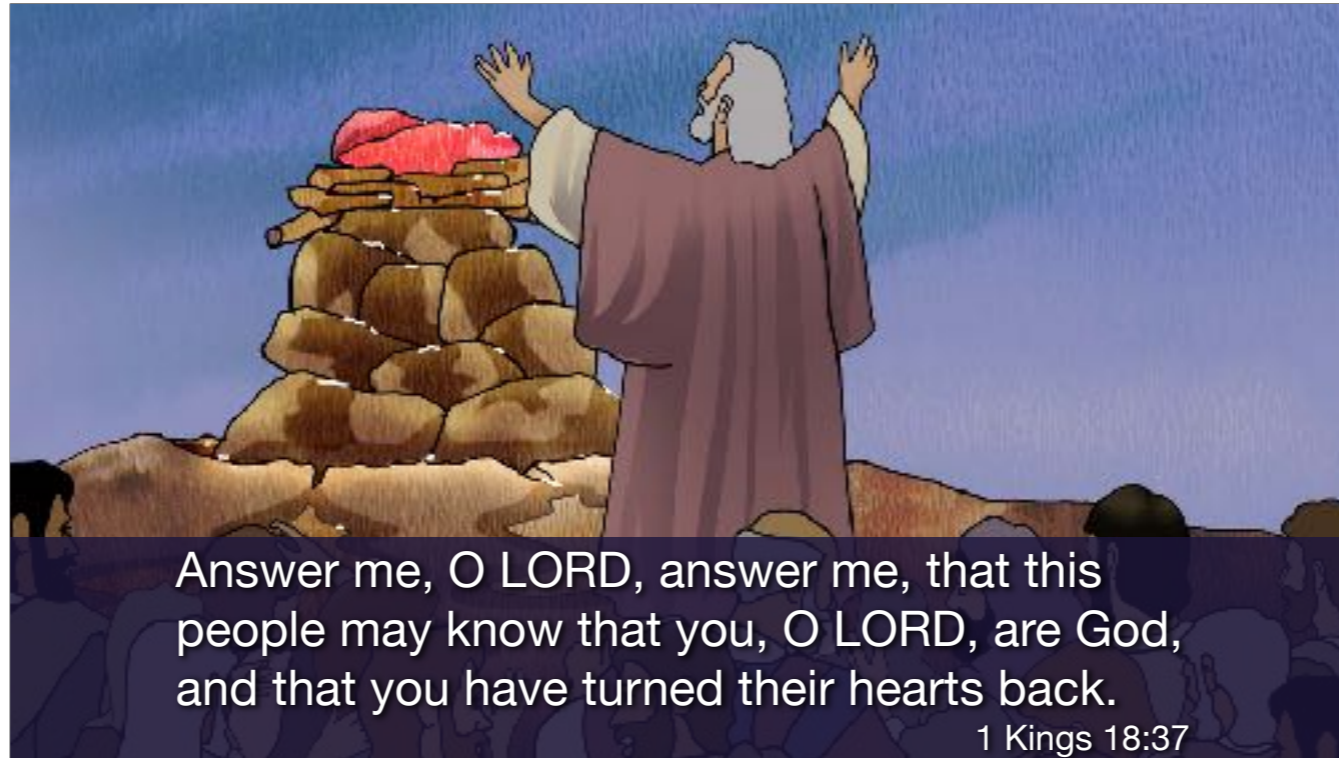
1 Kings 18:21

- There's a part of us that thinks this is an easy decision ... Baal is a false God, an idol, not real.
 - But it wasn't that simple for the people.
 - “They answered not a word”
- It's really not that easy for us either, and we shouldn't pretend that it is
 - Nor should we deride those who struggle with making the choice.



And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.”
And all the people answered, “It is well spoken.”
1 Kings 18:24

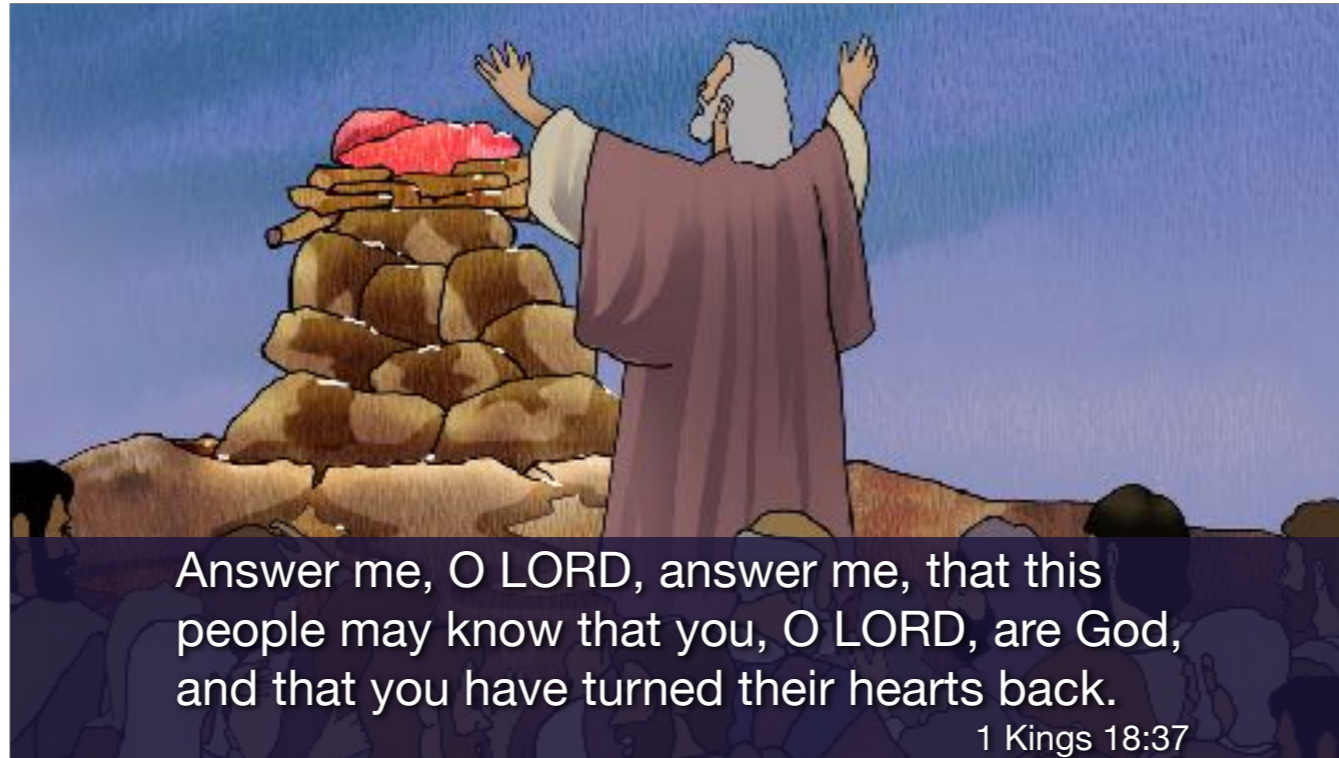
- 1 Kings 18:24 And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.” And all the people answered, “It is well spoken.”
- The God who answers
 - The God must be able to hear our prayers.
 - The God must be able to answer our prayers.
 - The God must care enough to do what is best.



Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.

1 Kings 18:37

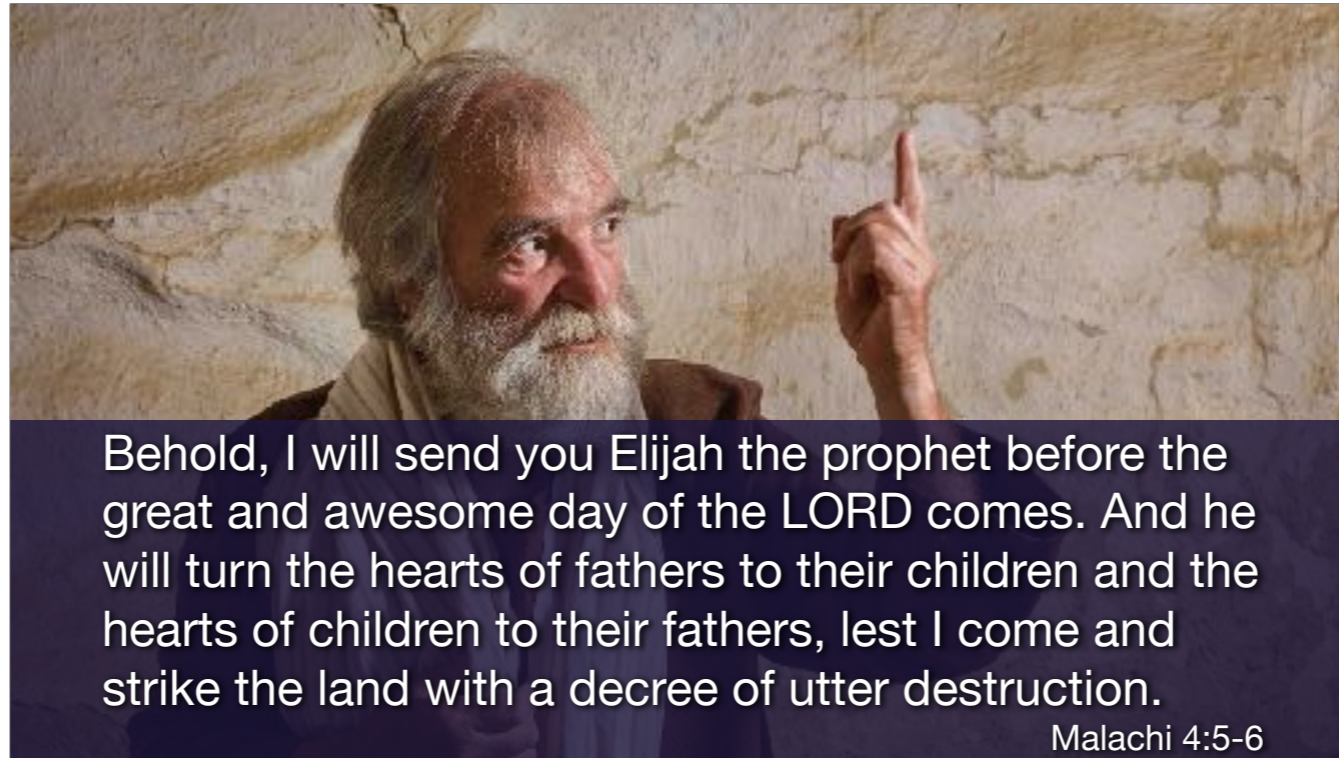
- 1 Kings 18:36-37 (ESV) 36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.”



Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.

1 Kings 18:37

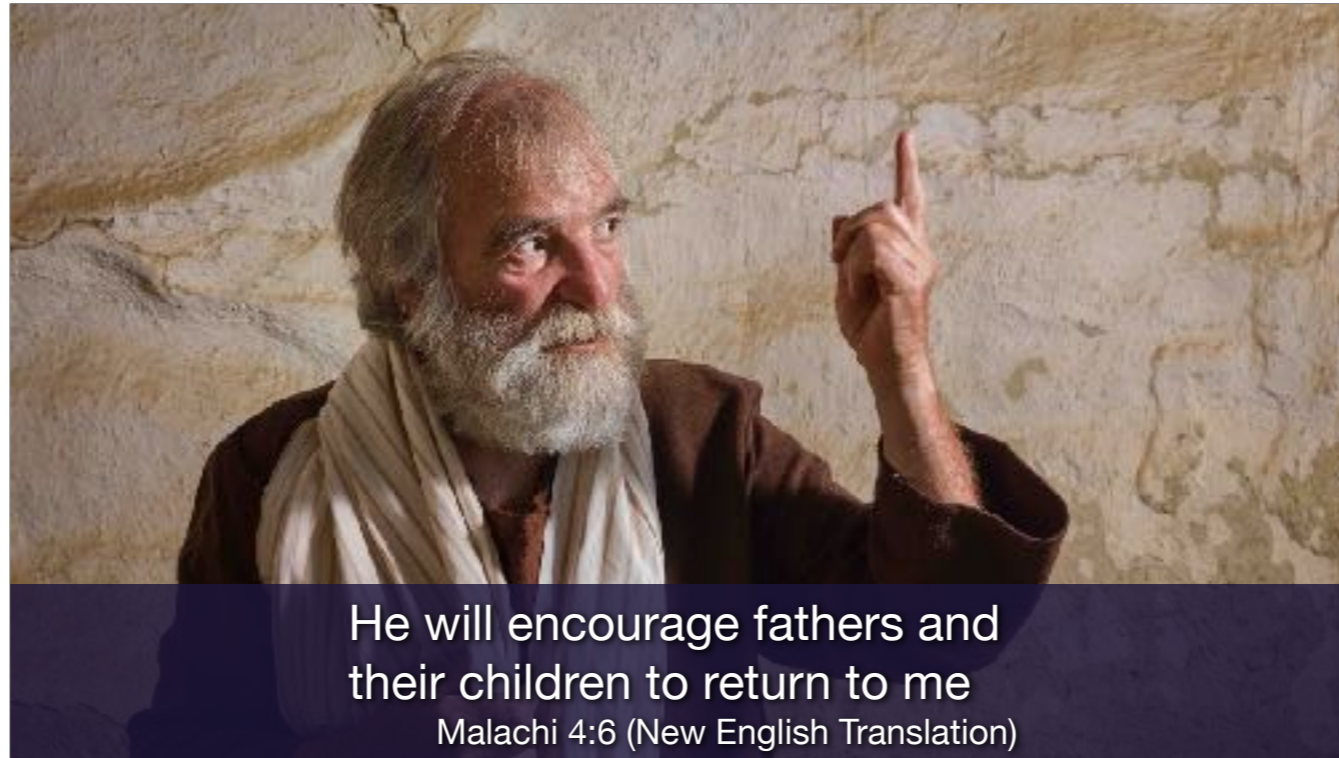
- Turned their hearts back
 - When we see that God answers, powerfully, it should provoke a response in our hearts.
 - When God shows that he hears, is able to answer, and cares
 - will we choose to accept him?
- Unfortunately it's not that simple:
 - they were only amazed for the moment, despite the fire and the rain.
 - Despite the proof of Jehovah's power.



Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.

Malachi 4:5-6

- Malachi 3:1 “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.
- Malachi 4:5-6 (ESV) 5 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”



He will encourage fathers and
their children to return to me
Malachi 4:6 (New English Translation)

- Malachi 4:6 (NET) 6 He will encourage fathers and their children to return to me, so that I will not come and strike the earth with judgment.”



And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

Luke 1:16-17

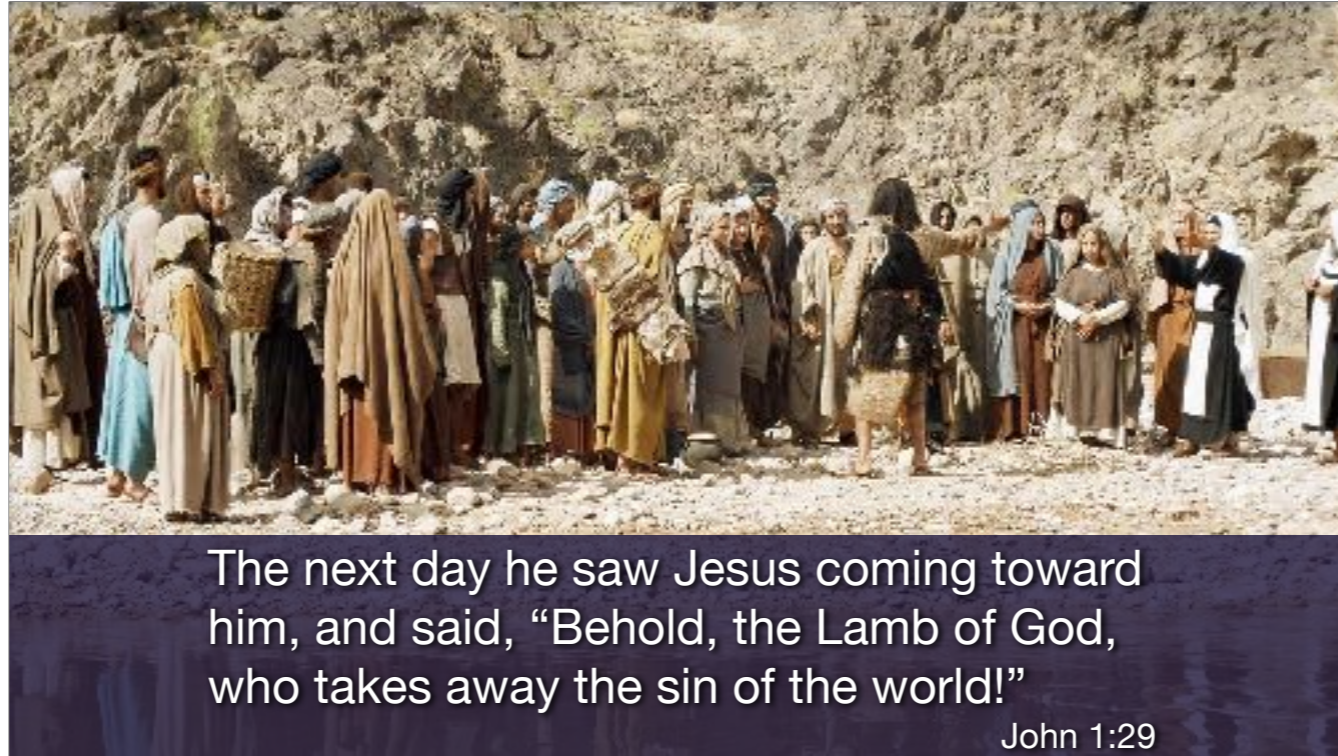
- Luke 1:16-17 (ESV) 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”



- Matthew 3:2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- Repent: "change of mind"
 - Our tendency is to focus on the aspect of repentance that sorrows for our sins and determines to do better.
 - But there is another aspect of repentance that is vital to understand.
 - Changing our allegiance back to God.



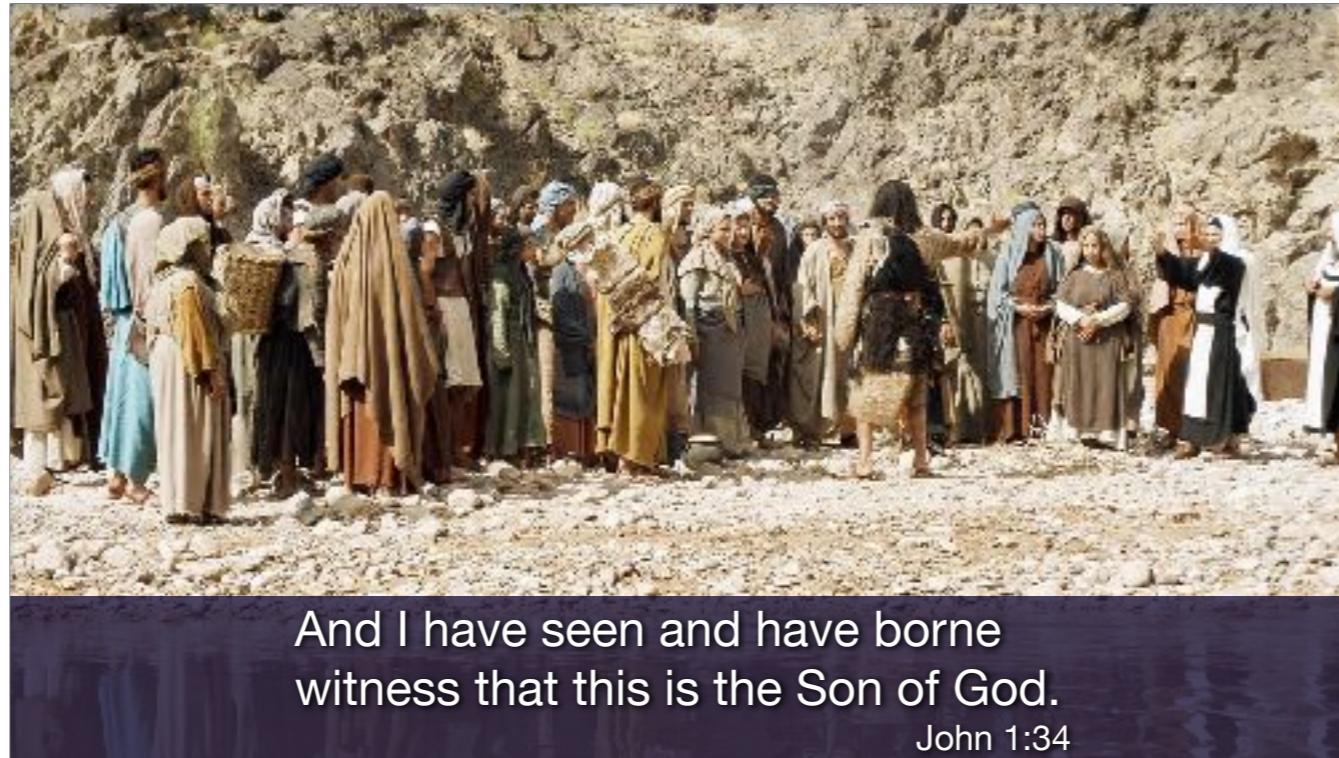
- Acts 14:15 "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.
- Why change their minds? Why should I choose Jesus?



The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

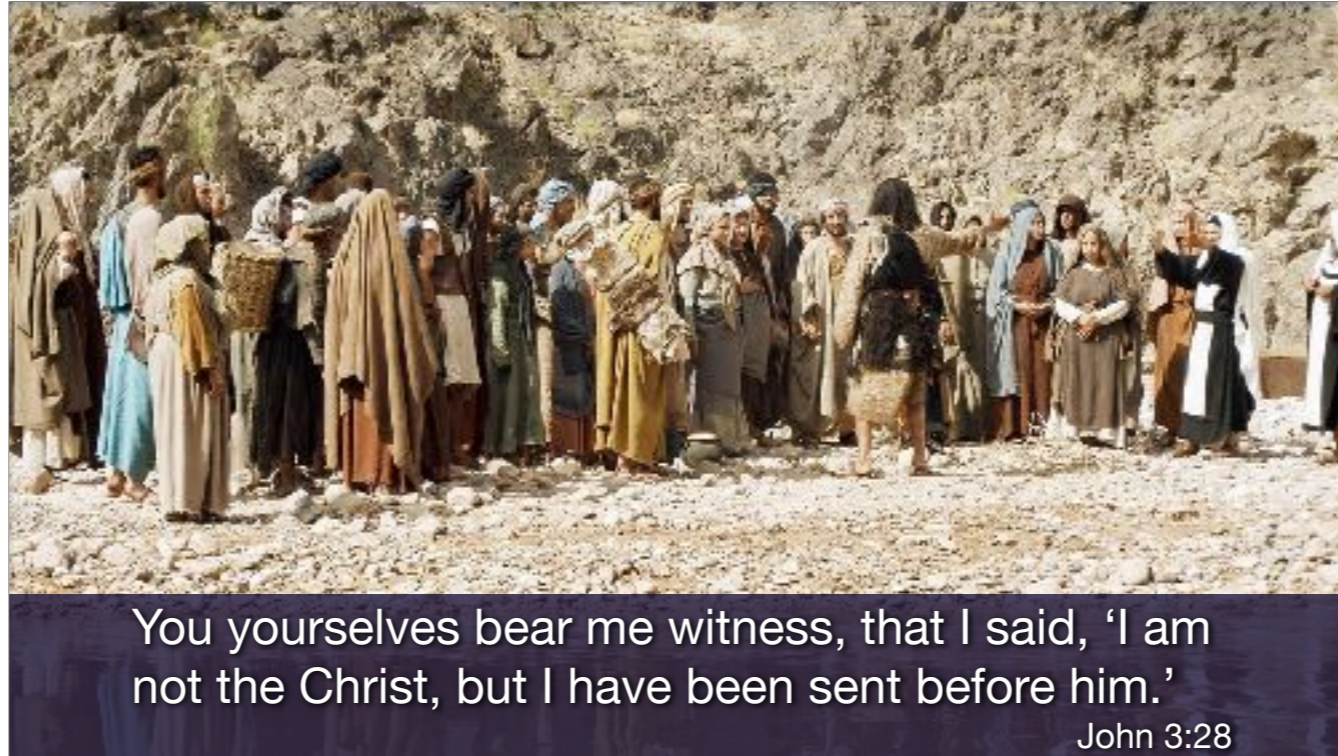
John 1:29

- John 1:29-31 (ESV) 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ 31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”

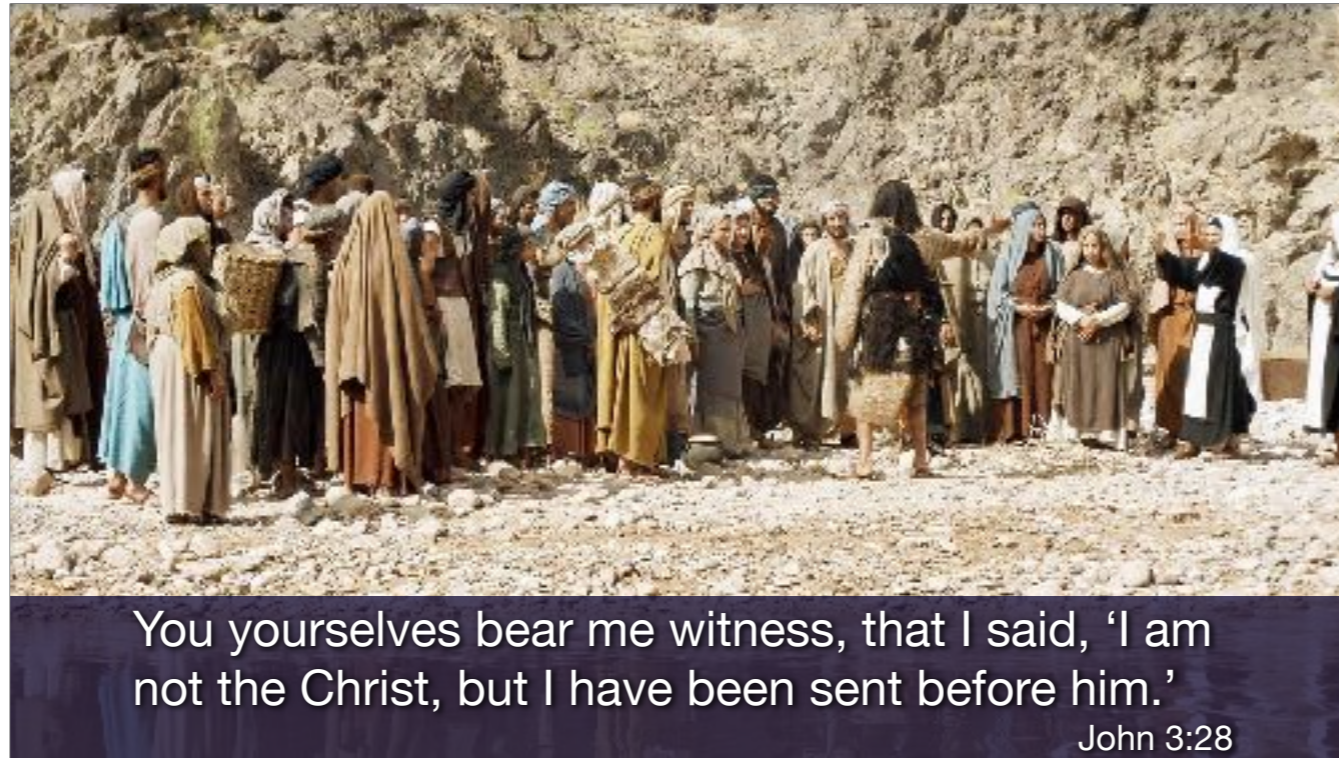


And I have seen and have borne
witness that this is the Son of God.
John 1:34

- John 1:34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.
- Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?



- John 3:28 (ESV) 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.'
- John 3:31 He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all.
- John 3:33 Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true.



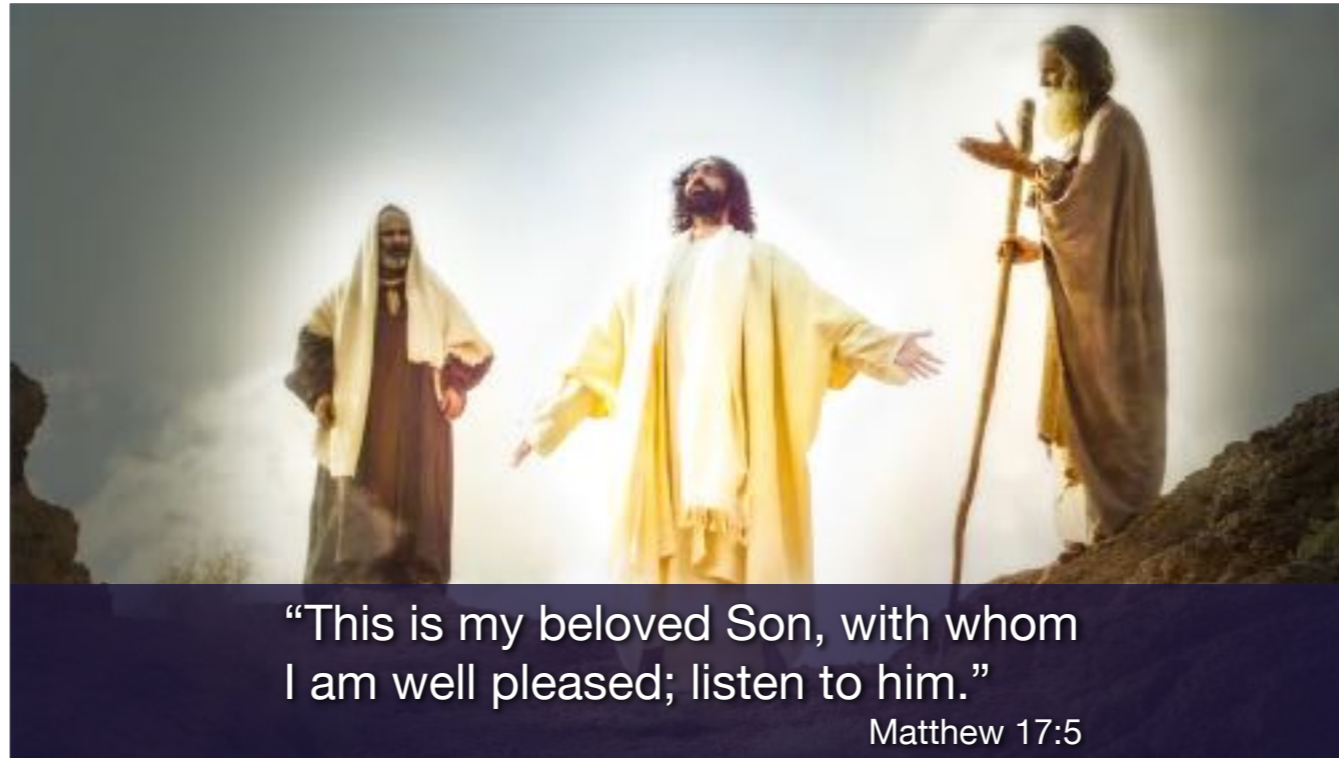
You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.'

John 3:28

- John 3:34 For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.
- John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.



- Matthew 17:2-5 (ESV) 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”



- Matthew 17:9 And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”



- The Lamb of God, the Son of God, and the Christ
- Takes away sin, above all, true, eternal life
- Listen to him.
- Who will you choose?
- Turn your heart to Jesus!

We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

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Turning Hearts

Malachi 4:5-6

Synopsis: Elijah came to turn the hearts of God's people back to him. John the baptizer came in the likeness of Elijah and reminds us of why we should choose to follow Jesus.

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“Let all that you do be done with love.”