

WHEN GOD CHALLENGES

2/12/18

*Each day people face potentially thousands of religions, unlimited materialism and pointless ego pampering. Is it any wonder that the real God of the bible, needs to challenge hearts and minds with much more than naturally attractive or powerless beliefs? Today we will look at how the biblical God handles such matters and see how he works today. Firstly, let look at how God evaluates the 'atheist'... the complete unbeliever. **PSA 14:1** The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. God's criticism is strong because He has built spiritual awareness into every human on the planet... all have the ability to accept and prove God's existence.*

This world would have us believe that there are thousands of choices, but God reveals that there are only 2 options... God challenges the prophets of Baal (800+bc). **1KIN 18:21** And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions (crippled by uncertainty)? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. There have only ever been 2 choices... God is right and all else is wrong. **22** Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. **23** Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: **24** And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. Only God answered by fire... all else failed. If we consider that Satan is the true opposition of God, then we should note that he was utterly powerless.

The church challenges atheists and unbelievers, with God backed evidence. **ACT 2:1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. **2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. **3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire (God answers by fire once again, but this time it is spiritual fire), and it sat upon each of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. This is also a daily challenge to the church.

Offended by the truth... despite signs and wonders. **ISA 33:11** For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. **12** To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. It is interesting that this prophecy describing the rejection of God's signs in the New Testament period, also occurred about the same time Jezebel heard that her prophets had been destroyed by Elijah. She never once considered that God had acted; she rejected the evidence and challenged God and lost horribly. She could have humbled herself, but chose not to.

It is wise to act quickly when God pricks... unbelief or doubt can strike quickly. **MAT 13:19** When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not (fails to act), then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

***JAM 1:23** For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: **24** For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. When the Spirit moves on us, it may be the only chance in our life when a certain action can be accomplished. God's challenges can appear to vary from one person to another, but a quick response is vital.*

Challenges require responses... this is the biggest challenge in the bible. **2PET 3:10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Material possessions vanish... the body will vanish, all opposing thoughts about God will also vanish. The opportunity to save yourself and family will vanish. **11** Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, **12** Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. This is the greatest challenge the people of the earth will ever face.

The power of God is the real deal. Knowing what is right achieves nothing. Only actions allows God to build you up and bring blessing to you. **1THE 1:5** For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. The real challenge is to believe God, build a spiritual life and go and share this testimony with others.

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