

This is a Hebraic oriented analysis for the 1 Ki. 18:20-39 which can be used for a sermon or a Bible Study. The Sermon Connect section connects the analysis of the Scripture for a sermon. In addition, different Christian viewpoints are offered. 1 Ki. 18:20-39 is the Hebrew Scriptures passage in the Lectionary for Proper 4 Cycle C

1 Ki. 18:20-39

Michael Koplitz, D. Min. (rev: 05/26/2016)

Scripture Exegesis for the Sunday Sermon Outline

Rev. Dr. Michael H. Koplitz

Contents

The differences between the Greek method of teaching and Hebraic method..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Process of Discovery	13
Linguistics	15
Scripture in poetic form	15
Discussion – genre, context of passage	17
Questioning the narrative	17
Main/Center Point.....	19
Citations/Proof text - Verse Comparison included	19
Idioms.....	19
Metaphors.....	19
Symbols	19
Other linguistic forms	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Translation Inconsistencies	19
People’s names	19
Name of places.....	20
Word Study.....	20
Hebraic understanding word study	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Topics.....	21
Scripture cross references	21
Linguistic Echoes	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Rules of Hillel	21
Other observations.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Culture.....	22
Discussion	22
Questioning the narrative culturally	22
Cultural Echoes	23
Culture and Linguistics	23
Midrash	23
Zohar	23
Sermon Connect.....	23
Hebraic View	23

Ideas for the Sermon	24
Messianic View	24
Christian Theology	24
Pastoral View	25
Sermon Ideas.....	25
Wesleyan Perspective	26
Progressive Christian Perspective	26
Anglo-Catholic Perspective	26
Sermon Outline Plus Notes on John 2:1-12	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Works Cited.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

The main differences between the Greek method and Hebraic method of teaching

You can tell if you are in a class or reading a book whether the analysis and/or teaching method is either a Greek or Hebraic method. In the Greek method the instructor is always right. In the college situation it is because the professor has his/her Ph.D. in some area of study therefore, it is assumed, he/she knows everything. Rodney Dangerfield played the role of a middle-aged man going to college. His English midterm was to write about Kurt Vonnegut Jr. Since he didn't understand any of Vonnegut's books he hired Vonnegut to write the midterm. When it was returned to him the English Professor told Dangerfield whomever wrote the paper knew nothing about Vonnegut. This is an example of the Greek method of teaching. Did the Ph.D. English teacher actually proclaim that she knew more about Vonnegut's writings than Vonnegut did? ¹

In the Greek teaching method, the professor or the instructor claims to be the authority. If you are sitting in a Bible study class and the class leader says "I will teach you the only way to understand this biblical book" you may want to find a different teacher. It may be difficult since most Seminaries and Bible colleges teach a Greek method of learning the church has been utilizing for centuries.

Hebraic (rabbinical) teaching methods are different. The teacher wants the students to challenge what they hear. It is through questioning everything that a student can learn. In addition, the teacher wants his/her students to excel to a point where the student becomes the teacher. Having the same opinion about a passage of Scripture is nice but is far from absolute for the teacher using the Hebraic methodology.

It is said if two rabbis come together to discuss a passage of Scripture the result is at least ten different opinions. It is permissible and encouraged for students to have multiple opinions. Since God is infinite and as humans we cannot fully comprehend the vastness of God, and God's Word is the same, it is vast. The Word is infinite being filled with numerous messages and understandings. God wants us to find all of the messages placed in the Scriptures.

Seeking out the meaning of the Scriptures beyond the literal meaning is absolutely essential to fully understand God's Word.² The Greek method of learning the Scriptures has prevailed over the centuries. The problem is fully illustrated when we are reminded that Martin Luther made the

¹ *Back to School*. Performed by Rodney Dangerfield. Hollywood: CA: Paper Clip Productions, 1986. DVD.

² Davis, Anne Kimball. *The Synoptic Gospels*. MP3. Albuquerque: NM: BibleInteract, 2012.

proclamation that the literal interpretation of Scripture was the only interpretation of Scripture.³ The Fundamentalist movements of today are biblically based on the literal interpretation of the Scripture. Therefore, they do not believe God placed any deeper, hidden, or secret meanings in the Word. The student of the Scriptures with Hebraic training and understanding knows this to be false. The Hebrew language itself leads to different possible interpretations because of the construction of the language.

The Hebraic method of Bible study opens up avenues of thought about God's revelations in the Scripture you may have never thought. You may have a question about the Scripture you are studying for which your instructor may not have an immediate answer. If so, it is the group who must search to find the meaning. Also, remember multiple opinions about the meaning of Scripture are also acceptable.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed is to use First Century Scripture study methods integrated with the customs and culture of Yeshua's day to examine the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, thus gathering a deeper understanding by learning the Scriptures in the way the people of Yeshua's day did.

In typical rabbinic tradition I had two study partners. Each one served a different function by looking at the research as I put it together. Rev. Dr. Robert Cook, D. Min., an ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church, has been a study partner in different areas of theology and church leadership. He became interested in Hebraic studies when I started sharing Zohar and Midrash with him. He also completed the entire Disciple program as a student and teacher. My second study partner is my wife, Sandra Koplitz, MS. Sandy and I took the instruction class on teaching the Disciple Bible study program and she participates in the Zohar study group. Sandy is a licensed local pastor in the United Methodist Church.

³ IBID

I have titled the methodology of analyzing a passage of Scripture in a Hebraic manner the “Process of Discovery.” This methodology was developed by the author bringing together the various areas of linguistic and cultural understanding. There are several sections to the process and not all of the sections apply to every passage of Scripture. The overall result of developing this process is to give the reader a framework into the ideas being presented.

The “Process of Discovery” starts with a Scripture passage. If the passage is in a poetic form, it is identified. The possible poetic forms include: parallelism, chiasmic structures, and repetition. Formatting the passage in its poetic form allows the reader to be able to visualize what the first century CE listener was hearing. Any parallelism is indicated with colored text and the chiasms are labeled by their corresponding sections, for example: A, B, C, B’, A’. Not all passages of the Scriptures have a poetic form.

The next step is to “question the narrative,” which is accomplished by assuming the reader knows nothing about the passage. Therefore, the questions go from the simple to the complex. The next task is to identify any linguistic patterns. Linguistic patterns include, but are not limited to: irony, simile, metaphor, symbolism, idioms, hyperbole, figurative language, personification, and allegory.

Any translation inconsistencies discovered between the English NASB version and either the Hebrew or Greek versions are identified. There are times when a Hebrew or Greek word can be translated in more than one way. Inconsistencies also can be created by the translation committee, which may have decided to use traditional language instead of the actual translation. The decision of the translation committee can be generally found in the Preface or Introduction to the Bible.

Echoes of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Christian Scripture are identified. This occurs when a narrative from the Hebrew Scripture is used in the Christian Scripture or when a Mitzvot is

directly discussed in the Christian Scriptures.⁴ In addition, echoes can be found when Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy) passages are used in other Hebrew Bible books. In addition to echoes, cross references are listed. A cross reference is a reference to another verse in the Scripture which can assist the reader to understand the verse that is being read.

The names of persons mentioned in the passage are listed. Many of the Hebrew names have meaning and may be associated with places or actions. Jewish parents used to name their children based on what they felt God had in store for their child. An example of this is Abraham whose name means eternal father (in this case Abram's name was changed by God to Abraham indicating a function he was to perform). When the Hebrew Bible gives names, many of the occurrences will indicate something special to the reader/listener. The same importance can hold true for the names of places. The time it takes to travel between places can supply insight to the event.

Key words are identified in a verse when they are important to an understanding of that passage. There are no rules for selecting the key words. Searching for other occurrences of the keywords in Scripture in a concordance is necessary to understand how the word was being used; this must be done in either Hebrew or Greek, not in English. A classic Hebraic approach is to find the usage of a word in the Scripture by finding the verses that contain the word. In order to assure that the usage of the original language word is used the search must be done in its original language. The verses that contain the word being researched are identified and a pattern for the usage of the word is discerned. Each verse is examined to see what the usage of the word is which, may reveal a pattern for the word's usage. For Hebrew words the first usage of the word in the Scripture, especially if used in the Torah, is important. For the Greek words the Christian Scriptures are used to determine the word usage in the Scripture.

⁴ Mitzvot are the 613 commandments found in the Torah that please God. There are positive and negative commandments. The list was first development by Maimonides. The full list can be found at: <http://www.jewfaq.org/613.htm>.

The Rules of Hillel for Bible understanding can be used when applicable. Hillel was a Torah scholar of Yeshua's day. Hillel developed several rules for Torah students to interpret the Scriptures which are referred to as halachic midrash. In several cases these rules are helpful in the analysis of the Scripture.

After the linguistic analysis is complete an examination of the cultural implications will be examined. The culture is important because it is not specifically referenced in the biblical narratives as indicated earlier.

From the linguistic analysis and the cultural understanding it is possible to obtain a deeper meaning of the Scripture beyond the literal meaning of the narratives. That is what the listeners of Yeshua's time were doing. They put the linguistics and the culture together without even having to contemplate it. They simply did it.

This leads to a conclusion or a set of conclusions about what the passage is talking about. Most of the time the Hebraic analysis leads to the desire for a deeper analysis in order to fully understand what Yeshua was talking about or what was happening to Him. Whatever the result, a new deeper understanding of the Scripture will be obtained.

The components of the Process of Discovery are:

Linguistics Section

Scripture in poetic form

Discussion – genre, context of passage

Questioning the narrative

Main/Center Point

Verse Comparison on citations or proof text

Idioms

Metaphors

Symbols

Translation inconsistencies

People's names

Name of places

Word Study

Topics

Scripture cross references

Echoes

Rules of Hillel

Culture Section

Discussion

Questioning the narrative culturally

Culture and Linguistics Section

Discussion

The main differences between the Greek method of teaching and Hebraic method

You can tell if you are in a class or reading a book whether the analysis and/or teaching method is either in a Greek or Hebraic method. In the Greek method the instructor is always right. In the college situation it is because the professor has his/her Ph.D. in some area of study therefore, it is determined, he/she knows everything. Rodney Dangerfield played the role of a middle-aged man going to college. His English midterm was to write about Kurt Vonnegut Jr. Since he didn't understand any of Vonnegut's books he hired Vonnegut to write the midterm. When it was returned to him the English Professor told Dangerfield whomever wrote the paper knew nothing

about Vonnegut. This is an example of the Greek method of teaching. Did the Ph.D. English professor actually proclaim that she knew more about Vonnegut's writings than Vonnegut did? ⁵

In the Greek teaching method, the professor or the instructor claims to be the authority. If you are attending in a Bible study class and the class leader says "I will teach you the only way to understand this biblical book" you may want to find a different leader. It may be difficult since most Seminaries and Bible colleges teach a Greek method of learning and is the same method the church has been utilizing for centuries.

Hebraic (rabbinical) teaching methods are different. The teacher wants the students to challenge what they hear. It is through questioning everything that a student can learn. In addition, the teacher wants his/her students to excel to a point where the student becomes the teacher. Having the same opinion about a passage of Scripture is nice but is far from absolute for the teacher using the Hebraic methodology.

It is said if two rabbis come together to discuss a passage of Scripture the result is at least ten different opinions. It is permissible and encouraged for students to have multiple opinions. Since God is infinite and as humans we cannot fully comprehend the vastness of God, and God's Word is the same, it is vast. The Word is infinite being filled with numerous messages and understandings. God wants us to find all of the messages that are placed in the Scriptures.

Seeking out the meaning of the Scriptures beyond the literal meaning is absolutely essential to fully understand God's Word.⁶ The Greek method of learning the Scriptures has prevailed over the centuries. The problem is fully illustrated when we are reminded that Martin Luther made the proclamation that the literal interpretation of Scripture was the only interpretation of Scripture. ⁷ The Fundamentalist movements of today are biblically based on the literal interpretation of the

⁵ *Back to School*. Performed by Rodney Dangerfield. Hollywood: CA: Paper Clip Productions, 1986. DVD.

⁶ Davis, Anne Kimball. *The Synoptic Gospels*. MP3. Albuquerque: NM: BibleInteract, 2012.

⁷ IBID.

Scripture. Therefore, they do not believe that God placed any deeper, hidden, or secret meanings in the Word. The students of the Scriptures with Hebraic training and understanding knows this to be false. The Hebrew language itself leads to different possible interpretations because of the construction of the language.

The Hebraic method of Bible study opens up avenues of thought about God's revelations in the Scripture you may have never thought. A question maybe raised about the Scripture being studied for which you may not have an immediate answer. If so, it becomes the responsibility of the group to uncover the meaning. Also, remember multiple opinions about the meaning of Scripture are also acceptable.

New American Standard 1995	Hebrew	Septuagint
<p>²⁰ So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel, and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel.</p> <p>²¹ And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long <i>will</i> you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him a word.</p> <p>²² Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men.</p> <p>²³ "Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire <i>under it</i>; and I will prepare the other ox, and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire <i>under it</i>.</p> <p>²⁴ "Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God." And all the people answered and said, "That is a good idea."</p> <p>²⁵ So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire <i>under it</i>."</p> <p>²⁶ Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, "O Baal, answer us." But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made.</p>	<p>²⁰ וַיִּשְׁלַח אַחָאב בְּכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְבֹּץ אֶת־הַנְּבִיאִים אֶל־הָר הַכַּרְמֶל׃²¹ וַיֵּגֶשׁ אֵלָיו אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר עַד־מָתַי אַתֶּם פֹּסְחִים עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַסַּעֲפִים אִם־יְהוָה הָאֱלֹהִים לָכֵן אַחֲרָיו וְאִם־הַבַּעַל לָכֵן אַחֲרָיו וְלֹא־עָנּוּ הָעָם אֹתוֹ דָּבָר׃ ²² וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֶל־הָעָם אֲנִי נֹתַרְתִּי נָבִיא לַיהוָה לְבַדִּי וְנָבִיאֵי הַבַּעַל אַרְבַּע־מֵאוֹת וְחֻמְשִׁים אִישׁ׃ ²³ וַיִּתְּנוּ־לָנוּ שְׁנַיִם פָּרִים וַיִּבְחָרוּ לָהֶם הַפָּר הָאֶחָד וַיִּנְתְּחֻהוּ וַיִּשְׁלֹמוּ עַל־הָעֵצִים וְאֵשׁ לֹא יִשְׁלֹמוּ וְאֲנִי אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת־הַפָּר הָאֶחָד וְנִתַּתִּי עַל־ הָעֵצִים וְאֵשׁ לֹא אֶשִׂים׃ ²⁴ וַקְרָאתֶם בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְאֲנִי אֶקְרָא בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה וְהָיָה הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲנֶנּוּ בְּאֵשׁ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים וַיַּעַן כָּל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ טוֹב הַדָּבָר׃ ²⁵ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו לְנָבִיאֵי הַבַּעַל בַּחֲרוּ לָכֶם הַפָּר</p>	<p>⁰ And Achaab sent to all Israel, and gathered all the prophets to mount Carmel.</p> <p>²¹ And Eliu drew near to them all: and Eliu said to them, How long wilt ye halt on both feet? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him. And the people answered not a word.</p> <p>²² And Eliu said to the people, I am left, the only one prophet of the Lord; and the prophets of Baal <i>are</i> four hundred and fifty men, and the prophets of the groves four hundred.</p> <p>²³ Let them give us two oxen, and let them choose one for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire <i>on</i> the wood: and I will dress the other bullock, and put on no fire.</p> <p>²⁴ And do ye call loudly on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord my God, and it shall come to pass that the God who shall answer by fire, he <i>is</i> God. And all the people answered and said, The word which thou hast spoken <i>is</i> good.</p> <p>²⁵ And Eliu said to the prophets of shame, Choose to yourselves one calf, and dress it first, for ye <i>are</i> many; and call ye on the name of your god; but apply no fire.</p> <p>²⁶ And they took the calf and drest it, and called on the name of Baal from morning till noon, and said, hear us, O Baal, hear us. And there was no voice, neither was there hearing, and they ran up and down on the alter which they <i>had</i> made.</p> <p>²⁷ And it was noon, and Eliu the Thesbite mocked them, and said, Call with a loud voice, for he is a god; for he is meditating, or else perhaps he is engaged in business, or perhaps he is asleep, and is to be awaked.</p>

²⁷ And it came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened."

²⁸ So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them.

²⁹ And it came about when midday was past, that they raved until the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been torn down.

³¹ And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name."

³² So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed.

³³ Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid *it* on the wood. And he said, "Fill four pitchers with water and pour *it* on the burnt offering and on the wood."

³⁴ And he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time.

³⁵ And the water flowed around the altar, and he also filled the trench with water.

³⁶ Then it came about at the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, the God of

הָאֶחָד וַעֲשׂוּ רֹאשׁוֹנָה כִּי אַתֶּם
הָרַבִּים וְקִרְאוּ בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
וְאֵשׁ לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּ:

²⁶ וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־הַפָּר אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן

לָהֶם וַיַּעֲשׂוּ וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּשֵׁם־

הַבֶּעַל מִהִבָּקָר וְעַד־הַצִּהָרִים

לֵאמֹר הַבֶּעַל עֲנֵנוּ וְאִין קוֹל

וְאִין עֲנָה וַיִּפְסְחוּ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ

אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:

²⁷ וַיְהִי בַצִּהָרִים וַיִּהְיֶה בָהֶם

אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר קִרְאוּ בְּקוֹל־

גָּדוֹל כִּי־אֱלֹהִים הוּא כִּי שִׁיחַ

וְכִי־שָׁיג לוֹ וְכִי־דָרַךְ לוֹ אוֹלִי

יֵשֶׁן הוּא וַיִּקָּץ:

²⁸ וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּקוֹל גָּדוֹל וַיִּתְּגַדְּדוּ

כַּמִּשְׁפָּטִים בַּחֲרָבוֹת וּבִרְמָחִים

עַד־שִׁפְךָ־דָם עַל־הֶם:

²⁹ וַיְהִי כַעֲבַר הַצִּהָרִים

וַיִּתְּנֵבְאוּ עַד לַעֲלוֹת הַמִּנְחָה

וְאִין־קוֹל וְאִין־עֲנָה וְאִין קֹשֶׁב:

³⁰ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיהֶם לְכֹל־הָעָם

גָּשׁוּ אֵלַי וַיִּגָּשׁוּ כָל־הָעָם אֵלָיו

וַיִּרְפָּא אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה

הַהָרוּס:

³¹ וַיִּקַּח אֱלֹהֵיהֶם שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה

אֲבָנִים כַּמִּסְפָּר שְׁבַע־בְּגִי

יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה

אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהִיָּה

שְׁמִי:

²⁸ And they cried with a loud voice, and cut themselves according to their custom with knives and lancets until the blood gushed out upon them.

²⁹ And they prophesied until the evening came; and it came to pass as it was the time of the offering of the sacrifice, that Eliu the Thesbite spoke to the prophets of the abominations, saying, Stand by for the present, and I will offer my sacrifice. And they stood aside and departed.

³⁰ And Eliu said to the people, Come near to me. And all the people came near to him.

³¹ And Eliu took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, as the Lord spoke to him, saying, Israel shall be thy name.

³² And he built up the stones in the name of the Lord, and repaired the altar that had been broken down; and he made a trench that would hold two measures of seed round about the altar.

³³ And he piled the cleft wood on the altar which he *had* made, and divided the whole-burnt-offering, and laid *it* on the wood, and laid *it* in order on the altar, and said, Fetch me four pitchers of water, and pour *it* on the whole-burnt-offering, and on the wood. And they did so.

³⁴ And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

³⁵ And the water ran round about the altar, and they filled the trench with water.

<p>Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word.</p> <p>³⁷ "Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that Thou, O LORD, art God, and <i>that</i> Thou hast turned their heart back again."</p> <p>³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.</p> <p>³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God."</p>	<p>³² וַיִּבְנֶה אֶת־הָאֲבָנִים מִזְבֵּחַ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וַיַּעַשׂ תַּעֲלָה כְּבֵית סָאֲתִים זָרַע סָבִיב לַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיִּנְתַּח אֶת־הַפֶּה וַיִּשֶׂם עַל־הָעֵצִים: וַיֹּאמֶר מִלֹּא אֲרַבֶּעָה כַּדִּים מֵיִם וַיִּצְקוּ עַל־הָעֵלָה וְעַל־ הָעֵצִים וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁנֹו וַיִּשְׁנֹו וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלֹשׁוּ וַיִּשְׁלֹשׁוּ: וַיִּלְכוּ הַמֵּיִם סָבִיב לַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְגַם אֶת־הַתַּעֲלָה מִלֹּא־מִיִּם:</p>	
---	---	--

Process of Discovery

Linguistics Section

Scripture in poetic form

[Narrative introduction to the challenge of Elijah] ²⁰ So Ahab sent *a message* among all the sons of Israel, and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel. ²¹ And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long *will* you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him a word. ²² Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. ²³ "Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire *under it*; and I will prepare the other ox, and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire *under it*.

A ²⁴ "Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the **God who answers by fire**, He is God." And all the people answered and said, "That is a good idea."

[The Baal prophets call on Baal] ²⁵ So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*." ²⁶ Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, "O Baal, answer us." But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made. ²⁷ And it came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened." ²⁸ So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. ²⁹ And it came about when midday was past, that they raved until the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.

[Elijah calls upon Adonai] ³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been torn down. ³¹ And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." ³² So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed. ³³ Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid *it* on the wood. And he said, "Fill four pitchers with water and pour *it* on the burnt offering and on the wood."³⁴ And he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. ³⁵ And the water flowed around the altar, and he also filled the trench with water. ³⁶ Then it came about at the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. ³⁷ "Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that Thou, O LORD, art God, and *that* Thou hast turned their heart back again."

A' ³⁸ **Then the fire of the LORD fell**, and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God." (1 Ki. 18:20-39 NAS)

Discussion

The poetic structure of this story is not complex but at the same time it is a little different than the usually chiasm. The passage commences with a transition narrative. This narrative sets the scene for the reader. What was it that was about to happen? How important was it? The chiasm wrapping "A" is about the LORD who reigns with fire. The inside "B" sections are a description of what the Baal priests did which failed and what Elijah did and his success.

Questioning the narrative

1. When Ahab sent his message to all the sons of Israel would he have included the Southern Kingdom? (v. 20)

The Northern and Southern Kings had a continuing rivalry after the split of the kingdom. Each king felt they were king of all of Israel not just of their own territories. Therefore, Ahab says to all the sons of Israel, he believes the southern kingdom men will join him.

2. Is there a significance the number of Baal prophets, 450 men? (v. 22)

There is no direct significance to the number 450. However, 450 prophets of the Baal against 1 prophet of the LORD is significance. Elijah had demonstrated the true power of the LORD because the LORD only needed one prophet to prove that the LORD was indeed God of all.

3. What is the significance of Elijah saying that he faced them alone? (v. 22)

The same thinking applies here as it does in question #3.

4. Who gave them the two oxen? (v. 23)

It is not recorded in the Scripture who gave the oxen. Perhaps Ahab did, perhaps Elijah did.

5. Was fire a normal part of the Baal cult so that, Elijah told them not to put the sacrifice to fire? (v. 25)

The significance here is that Elijah did not want the Baal prophets to start the fire that would consume the oxen. Instead to prove that Baal was a false god and the LORD was the true God, Elijah challenged the Baal prophets to have Baal create the fire.

6. Why did Elijah mock the Baal prophets at noon? (v. 27)

Elijah gave the Baal prophets half of the day of day light to call upon Baal. The mocking was to get the peoples' attention that Baal was a false god, the Baal prophets were frauds and that the LORD was the only true God.

7. Is there a significance that Elijah waited until noon? (v. 27)

Elijah gave the Baal prophets half of the day's light.

8. Why was the Mount Carmel altar in need of repair? (v. 30)

"Malbim⁸ suggests that Elijah had built an altar in the morning, but the false prophets of the Baal had destroyed it claiming that it interfered with the Baal's ability to send a fire from heaven."⁹

⁸ Russian rabbi, preacher, and Hebraist; born at Volochisk, Volhynia, in 1809; died at Kiev Sept. 18, 1879. The name "Malbim" is derived from the initials of his name (מלבֿים), and became his family name by frequent usage. Malbim was educated in Hebrew and Talmud by his father and by his stepfather (R. Löb of Volochisk). He showed unusual talent from his early childhood, and his works indicate that he had a considerable knowledge of secular sciences. From 1838 to 1845 he was rabbi of Wreschen, district of Posen, and in the latter year was called to the rabbinate of Kempen, where he remained until 1860; he was thereafter known as "der Kempener." In 1860 Malbim became chief rabbi of Bucharest, Rumania. But he could not agree with the rich German Jews there; they wished to introduce the Reformed rite, and did not shrink even from violence in the pursuit of their aims. By intrigues they succeeded in throwing him into prison, and though he was liberated through the intervention of Sir Moses Montefiore, it was upon the condition that he leave Rumania. Source: Rosenthal, Herman, and M. Seligsohn. "JewishEncyclopedia.com." MALBIM, MEİR LÖB BEN JEHIEL MICHAEL -. Accessed May 25, 2016. (Rosenthal n.d.).

⁹ Scherman, Nosson, Meir Zlotowitz, Feivel Wahl, and Sheah Brander. "1 Kings Chapter 18." In = *The Prophets: The Early Prophets with a Commentary Anthologized from the Rabbinic Writings*. Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah, 2000.

9. Why did Elijah have a trench dug around the altar? (v. 32)

The trench was filled with water to further exemplify what the LORD was about to do.

10. Why did Elijah have water poured on the sacrifice? (v. 33)

Same answer as question #10.

Main/Center Point

Historically Elijah was attempting to save the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel who had been led astray because of King Ahab and his Queen Jezebel. The Baal worship and cult was instituted in the Northern Kingdom of Israel by Ahab. The LORD used Elijah to show a sign to the people that the LORD was God and Baal was not. This challenge on Mount Carmel proved this to be true. Unfortunately for the people, because of the sins of their leadership they would suffer at the hands of the Assyrians.

Citations/Proof text - Verse Comparison included

N/A

Idioms

N/A

Metaphors

N/A

Symbols

N/A

Translation Inconsistencies

N/A

People's names ¹⁰

1. <0256> אָחָב *Achab* (26c) **Meaning:** 'father's brother,' **a king of Israel**, also a false prophet

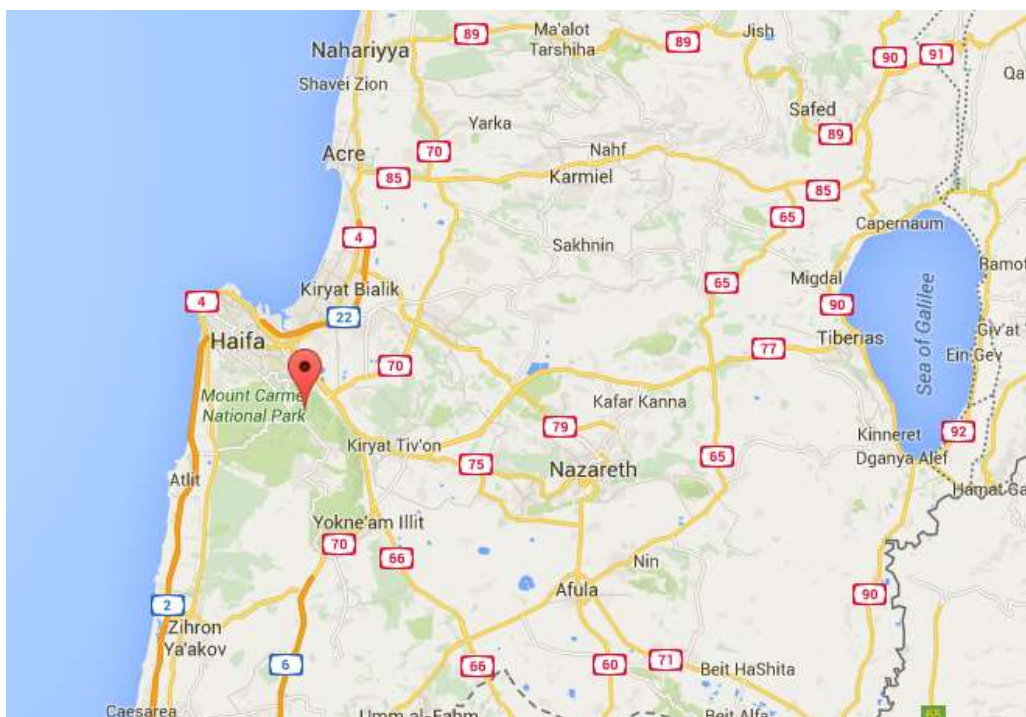
¹⁰ Strong, James. The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order ; Together with A Comparative Concordance of the Authorized and Revised Versions, including the American Variations ; Also Brief Dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words of the Original with References to the English Words. New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1923.

2. <0452> אֱלִיָּה *Eliyyah* (45b) **Meaning:** 'Yah is God,' a well-known prophet of Isr., also three other Isr.
3. <01168a> בַּעַל *Baal* (127c) **Meaning:** a heathen god

Name of places ¹¹

1. הַר הַכַּרְמֶל (1 Ki. 18:20 WTT)

What is the location of Mount Carmel? (v. 20)



Word Study

N/A

¹¹ IBID.

Topics

(Thompson Chain Reference Bible.)

1. [3931](#) Idolatry (4)

⁴ And he took *this* from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." (Exod. 32:4 NAS)

⁴ And he took *this* from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." (Lk. 2:40-42 NAS)

¹⁶ "When you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land which He has given you." (Jos. 23:16-24:1 NAS)

Conclusion: Our God is a jealous God and is not pleased when His people start following idols. When idolaters are told of this evil and do not repent the LORD tends to force them into repentance or death.

Scripture cross references

Verse 28	Lev 19:28; Deu 14:1
Verse 29	Exo 29:39, Exo 29:41
Verse 31	Gen 32:28; Gen 35:10;
Verse 33	Gen 22:9; Lev 1:7, Lev 1:8
Verse 36	Gen 28:13; Exo 3:6; Exo 4:5; Mat 22:32; Num 16:28-32
Verse 38	Gen 15:17; Lev 9:24; Lev 10:1, Lev 10:2; Jdg 6:21; 1Ch 21:26; 2Ch 7:1; Job 1:16

Rules of Hillel

N/A

Culture Section

Discussion

The Baal worship was a cult that existed in Canaan before the Israelites took possession of the land. Moses told the people in his final address that it was important to drive out all of the pagans. If any were left behind, then they would become a thorn in the side of Israel and could abolish the promises the LORD made to the people. As long as the people followed the Torah the LORD protected them. There are numerous occurrences in the Scripture where Israel lost their way. King Ahab married Jezebel and she brought the Baal worship into the Northern Kingdom. Ahab let her do it. This was an abomination to the LORD and the LORD worked to rid the Baal by sending his prophets. This battle between the 450 Baal prophets and Elijah would not fully fix the problem. God gave us free will and free choice. In this case the people decided to continue to follow Baal even when they saw the power of the LORD. The people in attendance of the event did turn to the LORD but it lasted a short amount of time.

Questioning the narrative culturally

1. What was the culture of the Baal cult that the prophets cut themselves? (v. 28)

²⁸ 'You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead, nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD. (Lev. 19:28 NAS)

This was the word from the Law about cutting your body. Since the story is about Elijah destroying the Baal prophets the author wanted the reader to understand that the Baal were not real prophets of the LORD.

2. What time of the day was the afternoon/evening sacrifice? (v. 36)

Approximately 3:00 PM.

3. Fire

“Lightning was called the fire of God. This was because lightning strikes from above caused fire and damage on earth. All other fires start from the ground up, but lightning comes from the sky.”¹²

Cultural Echoes

N/A

Culture and Linguistics Section

Discussion

Elijah wanted a full demonstration of the power of the LORD compared to the false God Baal. Calling for lightning from Heaven to create the fire which would consume the sacrifice makes sense. Elijah knew that the Baal did not exist and thus could not send lightning. However, the LORD could send fire from heaven and indeed did. This is a sign from the LORD that the LORD rules! Not only did the LORD accept an offering, it was a very wet offering which would hinder the fire. The LORD's power is beyond measure and a little thing as a moat around the sacrifice was not going to stop the LORD.

Midrash

N/A

Zohar

N/A

Sermon Connect

Hebraic View

Why do we turn to idolatry? One reason is because it is easier than worshiping the LORD. I say that because there are many sins that can be done in the Baal worship world, and are expected, then in the LORD's worship world. Just by using the word

¹² Scherman, Nosson, Meir Zlotowitz, Feivel Wahl, and Sheah Brander. "1 Kings Chapter 18." = *The Prophets: The Early Prophets with a Commentary Anthologized from the Rabbinic Writings*. Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah, 2000. N. pag. Print.

sin it should be clear why one would not want to become an idol worshiper. Today the idols are not the false gods of the past but the present false god of money, sports, and placing the LORD second to anything. Too many times I hear “I can’t come to church on Sunday because my son or daughter has soccer.” When the decision is made to go to the sporting event opposed to church a clear signal is sent to the LORD. The LORD is secondary, or worse, in your life. When church goers give \$5 for their tithe because they believe it is their money and God’s, then money becomes a form of idolatry. If you are reading these words and are getting angered by these statements, you are probably an idol worshiper. Those who remain as idol worshipers throughout their lives will find their eternity is not with the LORD. It is during our lifetime that we demonstrate to the LORD which types of worshiper or idolater we want to be. If you are counting on a deathbed conversion or confession you may not be pleased with the result. How can the LORD know your heart when you do not have the time to show the LORD that your words and actions match? It is not what we say but what we do that demonstrates to the LORD what our true feelings are. This is your eternal soul we are talking about. So, what is more important to you? Bill Gates of Microsoft once said that charity is for old people. Wow was he wrong!

Ideas for the Sermon

1. Idolatry Defined
2. What are the signs that God is with you?
3. What are the signs that God is in the world?

Messianic View

N/A

Christian Theology

Idolatry is relevant at any age of human history. This story is an interesting satire which dramatizes the uselessness of false religions and underscores the truth that Israel’s God alone can work wonders. False gods are always shown to be powerless except for the power their followers give. It also reminds us not to give up on God.

The people suffered from a drought of three years. Then comes Elijah telling the people that turning to the Baal cult will not make things better. To prove this he uses a lot of valuable water to show how the LORD is powerful and the Baal is not. We tend to cling to sources of security when we do not receive the answer we want from the LORD or we get tired of waiting. The moral of this story is that the LORD is powerful and certainly alive. One must stay with our God no matter what.

Pastoral View

Elijah seemed to be powerless against the false god Baal. Elijah worked hard to convince King Ahab that his Queen was corrupting him and the people of Israel. What was Ahab's response? Obviously at that point in time King Ahab was not going to back off, therefore Elijah sets up a confrontation between himself and the Baal prophets. Elijah wanted to save the people from their error. Ahab only cared about himself. The fire of the LORD cannot be stopped by idolatry. The LORD sees through the idolatry especially committed by His people. There are so many people in our communities and on our church membership roles who will profess Christ as Lord but never do anything to show Christ that they really are believers. To believe means to do. What are you doing to show Jesus that you really love Him and hold onto your salvation as something valuable. Jesus does not ask for much. But when a person is not even doing the minimum how can that person expect anything in return from Jesus.

A responsibility of the church is to help lost souls find their way back to communion with Jesus Christ. As individuals we also have that same responsibility. So, if you know someone

Sermon Ideas

1. Helping Christians to find their way back home
2. Why do people leave the church for idols?
3. What can the church do to re-attract the lost souls?
4. What is the churches' responsibility in this area?

Wesleyan Perspective

<http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/3880/sermon-options-may-29-2016>

Progressive Christian Perspective

http://www.ucc.org/worship_samuel_sermon_seeds_may_29_2016

Anglo-Catholic Perspective

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/?s=4>

Augustinian Perspective

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2884

Sermon Outline Plus

Abstract

This passage is almost always used as an example that God is always present and you should never doubt that God is with us. This passage can also be used as an example for the topic of signs. God signs, church signs, people signs and how do we communicate to the unbeliever? Yes, through signs! Signs come in different sizes, shapes and methods. By methods I mean each disciple of Jesus Christ is a sign for the unbelieving world. As a once non-believer I was always surprised by many of the words and actions of people who claimed to be followers of Christ. I thought disciples of Jesus Christ always acting out of love and caring.

It didn't take long to realize that was not true. I have several experiences of dealing with co-workers who expressed Christ's love during December, especially when they were collecting money for some noble cause. But as soon as January rolled around they resumed their nasty attitudes. What sign does that give to the non-believer? Christians are hypocrites! Jesus said the same thing to the Pharisees who spoke of love of God and neighbor then treated their neighbor poorly and shunned the poor. We really need to reverse this thinking. How, by answering the question: what sign are you for Jesus Christ?

Outline

1 Kings 18:20-39

1. Society signs
 - Information signs
 - Safety signs
 - Silly signs
 - Other signs
2. Church signs
 - Sign Boards
 - Announcement boards
 - Church events
3. God signs
 - Rainbows
 - Red Sea
 - 1969 Mets

- Elijah on Mount Carmel
4. God's people signs
 - Sunday Church (parking lot full)
 - Flag pole prayer
 - Random acts of kindness
 - Public Prayer
 - Sign of the Faith
 5. So, what is your sign of faith

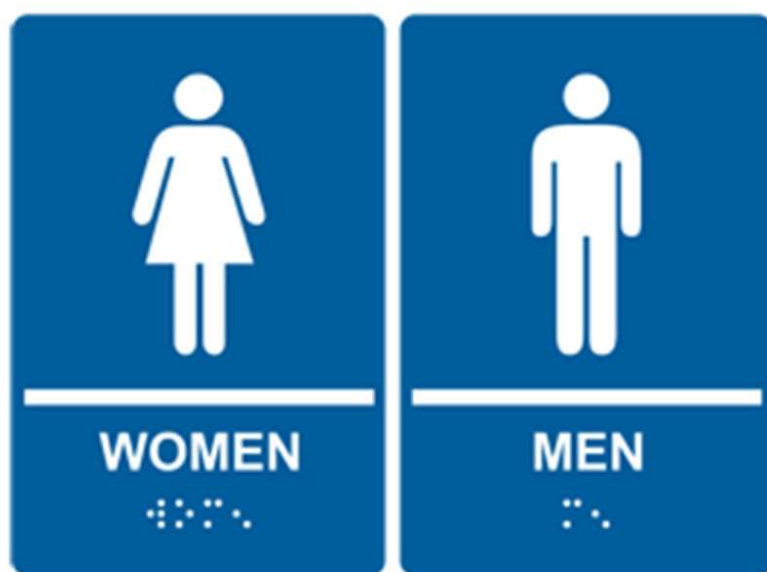
Slides

SIGNS

1 Kings 18:20-39



Information
Signs





Safety Signs



Silly Signs







Church signs



(Photo by Mel Silvers, attribution licence, Creative Commons)



God Signs



TM



God's
people
Signs







***So, what's your
Sign of your faith
In Jesus Christ?***

Works Cited

- n.d. *10.1. The Jewish Wedding Analogy*. Accessed 1 13, 2016.
<http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/revelation/related-topics/the-jewish-wedding-analogy.html>.
1986. *Back to School*. Directed by James Signorelli. Performed by Rodney Dangerfield.
- Davis, Anne Kimball. 2012. *The Synoptic Gospels*. Albuquerque.
- n.d. *Feasting on the Word*. Accessed 1 6, 2016. <http://www.feastingontheword.net>.
- Galilee. n.d. *Galilee*. Accessed 1 12, 2016. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galilee>. .
- Jacobs, Rabbi Louis. n.d. *Hand Washing*. Accessed 1 13, 2016.
<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/hand-washing/>.
- Manning, Brennan. 1990. *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Sisters: Multnomah Publishers.
- n.d. *Midrash Song of Sons*. Accessed 1 12, 2016. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/tmm/tmm13.htm>.
- Rosenthal, Herman, and M. Seligsohn. n.d. *Malbim*. Accessed May 25, 2016.
<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10325-malbim-meir-lob-ben-jehiel-michael>.
- Strong, James. 1923. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order ; Together with A Comparative Concordance of the Authorized and Revised Versio*. New York: Methodist Book Concern.
- n.d. "Zohar volume 7." *Google books*. Accessed 1 13, 2016.
https://books.google.com/books?id=wr67CgAAQBAJ&pg=PA84&lpg=PA84&dq=zohar+water+and+wine+jacob&source=bl&ots=oVD0sDj_VY&sig=2DIWixxbtHwq7liLr8wG8xVTKrc&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjka3k9abKAhUCPz4KHQccAK8Q6AEIHZA B#v=onepage&q=zohar%20water%20and%20wine%20jacob&.