

A Well-Informed God

When the battle intensified against Saul, the archers found him and severely wounded him. Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through with it, or these uncircumcised men will come and torture me!" But his armor-bearer wouldn't do it because he was terrified. Then Saul took his sword and fell on it. When his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his own sword and died. So Saul and his three sons died--his whole house died together. When all the men of Israel in the valley saw that the army had run away and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities and fled. So the Philistines came and settled in them. The next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his sons dead on Mount Gilboa. They stripped Saul, cut off his head, took his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to spread the good news to their idols and their people. Then they put his armor in the temple of their gods and hung his skull in the temple of Dagon. – 1 Chronicles 10:3-10 HCSB

As gruesome as this particular story is, a strange note of humor can be found in the midst of it. The Philistines found it necessary to inform their idols that King Saul and his sons were dead! How hilarious! No wonder Isaiah derisively castigates those who worship idols. Idols are something a smelter casts; something a metal worker plates with gold and makes silver welds for it. One shapes a pedestal for it, choosing wood that won't rot, and a skilled craftsman so the idol won't fall over.¹ The tree chosen for the idol's wood is partially used for fuel. It's used to bake bread while another section of the same branch is used to build a "god."²

These man-made "gods" are blind, deaf and mute.³ They have mouths, but cannot speak; eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear; noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel; feet, but cannot walk. They cannot make a sound with their throats. Those who make them are just like them.⁴

Not so with Yahweh. Who will you compare God with? What likeness will you compare Him to? God is enthroned above the circle of the earth and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers to Him. He stretches out the heavens like thin cloth and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He fills the heavens. He knows all things.⁵

When we come to Him in prayer, we are not informing Him of anything He does not already know. We should come humbly seeking His face, His mind, His will. Prayer is about conforming, not informing.

The world's idols are mute. God is in His Holy Temple – let all the earth remain silent before Him.⁶

¹ Isaiah 40:18-20

² Isaiah 44:9-15

³ 1 Kings 18:25-29; Habakkuk 2:18-19

⁴ Psalm 115:4-8

⁵ 1 Samuel 2:3; Job 12:13, 22; 21:22; 22:13; 28:24

⁶ Habakkuk 2:20