

The Seven Thousand Club



David Wilkerson March 1, 1980

"I have left for me seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and whose mouths have not kissed him" (1 Kings 19:18).

I have wonderful news for every Christian who is discouraged by the apathy and godlessness in this nation. Let it be known that no matter how wicked and corrupt this society becomes; no matter how many Christians compromise; no matter how many fall into sin - God still has a mighty remnant who are holy, separated, and true to Himself.

It is so easy for Christians to be deceived into thinking that Satan is winning in this battle for the saints, and that the predicted last days "falling away" has touched all of God's people. The Bible does predict that in the last days many will be turned aside: that men will love pleasure more than God; that the love of many shall grow cold; that evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse; and that Satan will declare war on the saints of the Most High.

It is also true that Satan, as a roaring lion, is now going about with great wrath, seeking victims to devour. The enemies of God are going all out in an attempt to deceive and seduce every true follower of Christ. Hell has unleashed all its powers, hoping to wreck and destroy the faith of God's chosen.

But I believe the Holy Spirit has a glorious and encouraging word for His church. The truth is: Not all of God's people are falling away! Not at all! God is right now raising up a multitude of sanctified saints who are standing up against the idolatry of this age. They are so filled with love for Christ, they are ready and willing to be persecuted for their faith and devotion.

The 7,000 Club

Elijah had just fled from the threats of Jezebel, the wicked wife of King Ahab. God found him hiding in a cave on Mount Horeb. And God said, "Elijah, what are you doing here, hiding?"

Elijah, that great prophet of holiness and righteousness, so jealous for God's glory, had become totally disheartened by the moral landslide his nation was experiencing. With righteous indignation, Elijah replied, "God, I've been jealous for Your glory, but Your people have forsaken Your Word; Your altars have been broken down; Your ministers have been persecuted; and I'm the only one left. I and only I am left - and now they're out to get me, too..."

To all outward appearances, Elijah had a good argument. His society was nearing a collapse. The government was the most wicked and vile in all history. The Bible says, "Ahab made pagan shrines for pleasure, and did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel than all the kings that were before him" (1 Kings 16:33). The government was actually forcing the nation into idolatry. Jezebel was the most wicked queen to ever share the throne. She was a God-hating woman, bent on killing every follower of Jehovah. It was a horrible time of persecution, immorality, and madness. The prophets of God had to be hidden in caves and fed by sympathizers. Mobs of wicked men roamed the nation, tearing down the altars of God and killing His priests. All religious freedom was gone. Pagan shrines were catering to the adulterous lusts of a nation whose people had turned themselves over to iniquity. And now came the crowning insult toward God: Jezebel had decreed the murder of Israel's most famous preacher, the

Prophet Elijah.

Elijah was determined to "hold out to the end." If the whole nation forsook God, he would stay true! But God was not about to congratulate this hiding prophet, because at that very moment, the Holy Spirit was moving throughout the land. Young Elisha was feeling the first stirrings of God's hand upon him. Jehu, a powerful young revolutionary, was chomping at the bit, waiting anxiously to declare war on the corruption and godlessness in the land. A great moral awakening was about to happen, and God would soon throw Jezebel to the dogs and overthrow the wicked rulers.

But now comes the real shocker: Elijah was most emphatically informed by God, "I have me 7,000 who have not compromised; 7,000 who have not given in to the corruption around them. They have not been seduced. They are Mine!"

Not just three young men - Jehu, Hazael, and Elisha - not just a handful, one here and there - but thousands! God was trying to tell Elijah that He had His people stationed in key positions, all across the nation, believers standing tall and true, in spite of the corruption around them.

Until recently, I've been entertaining the same kind of thoughts that drove Elijah to despair. I see materialism eating away our spiritual life. I rise up in righteous indignation as homosexuals, pornographers, and the underworld flaunt their lawlessness. I see compromise, eroding standards, lukewarmness and backsliding, and double-minded Christians in league with evil men. The unions are filled with corruption; government is tainted with scandal; and church dignitaries mock the holy standards of our founding fathers. At times, it makes me want to stand up and scream, "Wake up, America! Judgment is coming. God is going to make us pay for our violence and wickedness." I see happening to our nation what Elijah saw happening to his. And some Christians are going into hiding, just as he did.

Lately, however, God has been encouraging me to open my eyes to the great calling out of saints that is now taking place in this, our own time. God said to Elijah, "Thousands have not bowed." To us, I believe He is saying, "Millions have not bowed!"

Glory be to God, we are not a tiny remnant! We are not a faithful few! We are an army; a blood washed multitude, in every walk of life, unbending and uncompromising in an age gone crazy. Satan would like God's people to think their numbers are dwindling fast; he wants true believers to think the majority have already defected to his camp, so that fear would drive them into hiding. Don't believe the lies of Satan! God is still at work, pouring out His Holy Spirit and drawing hungry hearts to Himself. With all the backsliding, materialism, love of ease, preoccupation with success and worldly gain - God is calling out a people who are pulling up their earthly roots and who are getting ready for the return of Christ as Lord!

History Repeats Itself

During its first three hundred years, the church passed through nine systematic persecutions. The first was under the emperor, Nero: then Domitian, Trajan, Marcus, Severus, Maximin, Decius, Valerian, and Aurelian.

In between these persecutions, the church had anywhere from ten to fifty years of rest. The church was always at her best under the fires of persecutions, and at her weakest when friendly with the world. A study of history shows that from 255 A.D. until the year 303 A.D., the church enjoyed almost fifty years of toleration and peace. During this period, Christians had attained an unparalleled degree of prosperity; while at the same time, there was a deep decline from the simplicity of the Gospel.

Beautiful church buildings had been erected all through the empire, with a great display of architectural splendor. Colorful vestments and sacred vessels of silver and gold were introduced into the worship services. It became the vogue of society to join the Christian churches; even the wife of Emperor Diocletian and his daughter were members. Christians moved into high positions, even in the imperial household. They held places of supreme authority in the provinces and in the armed forces.

But fifty years of prosperity and ease produced the usual consequences. Faith and love decayed; pride and ambition crept in; materialism became an obsession of both layman and bishop. The clergy became corrupted by pride, luxury, and a spirit of covetousness.

Cyprian, the godly bishop of Carthage, wrote: "...because the divinely prescribed regimen of life has been disturbed

in the long season of peace, a divine judgment was sent to re-establish our fallen, slumbering faith. Forgetting what believers did in the times of the apostles and what they should be doing, Christians labored with insatiable desire to increase their earthly possessions. Many of the bishops, who should have been examples, neglected their call to engage in the management of worldly concerns."

The sad effect of worldly ease and prosperity was a weakened, faithless church. Jealousies and dissension split the church, and heresies were introduced. So, once again, God had to bring persecution on His people to refine and purify them.

Almost like lightning, the Emperor Diocletian began to rage against Christianity. Once again persecution hit the church with a vengeance. It became the greatest persecution in church history, and it lasted a full ten years.

About the 24th of February, 303 A.D., an edict was issued that all Christian churches were to be destroyed; that all religious meetings must be discontinued; and that all Scriptures must be burned. Pagan shrines were erected, and all who refused to fall down and worship were killed. Christians who would not renounce their faith were imprisoned, their property confiscated, and all privileges revoked. Multitudes were tortured, and all bishops and priests were rounded up and jailed. The most devout Christians who survived were sent as slaves to the mines and treated like animals.

But it was the fire of this terrible persecution that awakened an army of slumbering saints. The cruel tyrant, with his bloody edicts, miscalculated. He thought that a church weakened by prosperity and ease would simply deny the faith, because of fear, and turn to idol worship. This emperor had been a sly tool of Satan. Before, he persecuted God's people, he first attempted to sap their spiritual strength by flattering them, bringing them into intercourse with his royal court, enriching them with beautiful buildings and prosperous times. And just when Satan thought he had addicted the church to ease and luxury; just when he thought he had corrupted the clergy; just when paganism and Christianity had made peace with each other - he brought down the evil scepter of violent persecution. This was now a battle between God and the devil. Satan was determined, in the year 303 A.D., to once and for all exterminate the Christian name. Instead, he awakened a sleeping giant. The spirit of martyrdom revived. Though some were too spiritually weak to survive, many Christians, who before had sat on beds of ease and luxury, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Young people, especially, became strong in the Lord and rejoiced in the midst of dire persecution. Ministers once again grew mighty in prayer and faith. The world lost all its attraction, and God's people were bound together in unity and love. In a short time, Christians boldly came forth and offered to die for Christ.

Are We Ready for the Impending Flood?

Once again the church has enjoyed forty years of prosperity, dating from the last worldwide depression of the thirties. Will Christians, who drive expensive cars and who live in gorgeous homes filled with luxuries, be able to suffer the loss of all things for the sake of Christ? Or, will our comfortable life-styles turn us into spiritual weaklings who will finally bow to modern idols? No doubt, many fun-loving, covetous Christians will fall away when things get critical.

But God has been encouraging my heart with the knowledge that right now the Holy Spirit is raising up the most dedicated, consecrated, holy people the church has ever known.

All across this nation, I talk to very godly young people who were raised in luxury and comfort, who care nothing at all about materialism. They are wanting to give their lives, body and soul, to the ministry of Christ. Christians everywhere, of all ages, seem to be getting weary of possessions and are, instead, seeking a deeper walk with the Lord. There is a deepening hunger for holiness. There are multitudes who are laying down their wine glasses, shunning ungodly enticements, and purging their lives of compromise.

Let me tell you what it's going to take to be an overcomer in the days to come!

1. A Circumcised Ear To Go With A Circumcised Heart!

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).

Stephen introduced this thought: You can call yourself a child of God, but you are resisting the Holy Ghost; you are stubborn if your heart and your ears are not sanctified. I see this resistance to the Holy Ghost everywhere I look: Ears that hold on stubbornly, unwilling to shut out the world. This generation is holding out their ears. They seem to

be saying, "I gave Jesus my heart: my ears are mine!"

They feed their souls on ungodly, pagan music. Even country-western music has become immoral, wicked, and filthy. God must show us that hearing it is as bad as seeing it. If faith comes by hearing, foolishness comes by hearing also. But we are so stubborn, so resistant to the Holy Spirit. Our reaction is, "What kind of holiness kick is this? Listening to rock or western lyrics doesn't hurt me a bit..."

God has been rebuking me, telling me I cannot anymore permit an uncircumcised ear to pollute my heart, then get up and talk about surrender to Jesus!

2. Go Sour on the World!

Paul, in speaking to the Hebrews, said, "Remember how you endured great afflictions? How you took joyfully the spoiling of your goods?"

In one way, that means their possessions were confiscated, but in a truer sense, those possessions became sour to them. They looked at all they had and said, "Those things are spoiled to me."

To spoil means also to rot, to decay. Thank God for what you have, but look at them as things that are rotting, decaying. All through the Old Testament, enemy armies who plundered the possessions of Israel were called "spoilers."

I want to be my own spoiler. I want everything I possess to go sour. I want ungodly music to sour, ungodly amusements to sour, ungodly friendships to sour! The more sour the world becomes, the sweeter Christ will become.

Do you remember the three men who made excuses? They couldn't attend the feast because: one bought land and had to close the deal: one bought oxen and had to test them; one married a wife and wanted to honeymoon. God is not against owning land or oxen or marriage. Their sin was in putting these things first.

You don't have to quit sports or sell your car or quit dating. But Jesus must come first! So much so that everything else is nothing in comparison!

3. Get Deadly Serious About The Things Of Jesus!

The call of Jesus is to sober up. The Bible has a lot to say about sober-mindedness. Paul told Titus: "Exhort young people to be sober minded" (Titus 2:6). He talked also about gravity, sincerity.

Peter warned the Christians:

"Get hold of your mind and be sober" (1 Peter 1:13).

"The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer... (1 Peter 4:7).

He is not talking about a long face or a lack of humor. He is talking about getting deadly serious! In other words, quit playing games. The end is near. Get to praying! Live like people who are leaving this earth!

God is calling to all Christians: Clean up your act; clean up your conversation; circumcise your ears; get down to end-of-the-world business! Get into the Word! Get back to the secret closet!

I see coming a new kind of Christian, one more holy, more dedicated, and stronger in the Lord, than in all of history! Who is the last day saint? He came out of great tribulation; he shook off the bondage of possessions. He is sober in an age of frivolity and madness, hungry and thirsty for God, totally rejecting the pleasures of this world, and willing to suffer for Christ.

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