

Seven Thousand

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Study by W.D. Frazee—March 26,

Elijah was so burdened over the matter of apostasy that he prayed to the Lord to withhold the rain. God had promised that very thing, and Elijah claimed the promise. God heard his prayers and for three and a half years there wasn't any rain. Baal was supposed to be the god who would send rain, but he didn't send any.

God knew that the time had come for a change. He told Elijah to show himself to Ahab, and call all Israel to Mount Carmel. They came, and there was that wonderful demonstration of the failure on the part of the prophets of Baal and complete victory on the part of Elijah and his God.

Elijah was discouraged because Jezebel threatened his life and he ran and ran. Finally at Mount Horeb God met him. He asked Elijah, What are you doing here way off here in the desert? I sent you to Ahab with the message. I sent you to the brook and took care of you. I sent you over to Zarephath and the widow took care of you. I sent you to Carmel and stood by you. But who sent you here?

Elijah in answer said:

“I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away” 1 Kings 19:10.

The first word of God to Elijah was:

“Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou come, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shall thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shall thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapes the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him” 1 Kings 19:15-18.

Who were the seven thousand people in Israel who hadn't bowed the knee to Baal? They were Israelites who were true to God in a time of almost universal apostasy. It is interesting why God told Elijah this. Elijah told God he was the only

one true to Him. He is explaining why he has to be where he is. He thinks he is the only one. God says, Elijah, things may be bad, but they are not that bad. Things may be dark, but they are not that dark. I have 7,000 that have not bowed the knee to Baal.

Let's remember that seven thousand were not very many in the whole nation of Israel. Why are we studying this? Because it applies today. We are studying it because if you and I are faithful we must be among the 7,000. We are studying it because it is a time of almost universal apostasy. We are studying it because the religion of Baal and the religion of Jehovah were mixed back there and is mixed today. God deliver us.

So our study of this is not merely historical, it is practical. We are not going through some historical museum. We are going through some tremendous object lessons. And what God did back there through those seven thousand He is longing to do through the remnant today.

“Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace” Romans 11:3-5.

Our courage must not fail as Elijah's courage failed. Elijah wouldn't have failed if he had been looking at God instead of himself and the people. We will never get courage if we look at ourselves or the people around us. We must maintain our faith in God and His promises. God said, I have reserved to Myself 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. And there is also a remnant according to the election of grace.

So with this clear statement from the New Testament to the experience of Elijah we turn to its application to the present time.

“The apostasy prevailing today is similar to that which in the prophet's day overspread Israel. In the exaltation of the human above the divine, in the praise of popular leaders, in the worship of mammon, and in the placing of the teachings of science above the truths of revelation, multitudes today are following after Baal. Doubt and unbelief are exercising their baleful influence over mind and heart, and many are substituting for the oracles of God the theories of men. . . . “Yet this apostasy, widespread as it has come to be, is not universal. Not all in the world are lawless and sinful; not all have taken sides with the enemy. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal” *Prophets and Kings*, pages 170-171.

Let's deal with a very practical problem. Suppose someone says to us, You think you are pretty good. You think you are part of the 7,000.

Brothers and sisters I would hate to admit to being anything different from the seven thousand. It is my purpose and desire. I know I am lost unless I am part of that seven thousand. That is not boasting. That is my only hope. I must be part of the remnant who keep the commandments of God and have and won't let go the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy.

In the days of Elijah and Elisha some of the signs marked the 7,000.

God told Elijah there were 7,000. He told him where to go to find a man.

“So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him” 1 Kings 19:19.

Casting his mantle on Elisha meant that Elisha was to come and be his helper and eventually fill his place. We have a statement about Elisha's father, Shaphat:

“Elisha's father was a wealthy farmer, a man whose household were among the number that in the time of almost universal apostasy had not bowed the knee to Baal. Theirs was a home where God was honored and where allegiance to the faith of ancient Israel was the rule of daily life” *Prophets and Kings*, page 217.

We should work for all classes of people. We should work for people who have been deep in the mire and filth and everything that is bad. But when God is looking for a prophet to take a prophet's place, He is looking for those who come with a background with long experience in the spiritual things of God. He is looking for one who has had an experience in discipline of useful work, one who has learned to be steady, sober, and dependable. One of the greatest lessons you can learn is to settle down and get steady. Get as rapidly as you can what Elisha got in the home of his father, Shaphat.

“In such surroundings the early years of Elisha were passed. In the quietude of country life, under the teaching of God and nature and the discipline of useful work, he received the training in habits of simplicity and of obedience to his parents and to God that helped to fit him for the high position he was afterward to occupy” *Ibid*.

When you plant seeds, what you plant depends to some extent on what you want to get. The type of character to receive the seal of God and give the loud cry message is something that is very difficult for those who have not learned the responsibility of how to work. Dependability leads them to stick with something until it gets done. They are not driven away by problems and trials.

Shaphat was a wealthy farmer. He was successful. He wasn't dilatory and lazy and stupid in his work. Neither were his children that way. I pray that the spirit of Shaphat and Elisha will come upon us and lead us to realize that we can't get young people to succeed in getting ready for the latter rain and the loud cry merely by teaching them a few doctrines different from what they knew before. The whole foundation must be built.

Dear young friends, I beseech you to let it be your ambition to be among the 7,000. The grace of God is wonderful. Oh, what He can do with any kind of material that will yield to Him and be submissive to the discipline of useful work.

Elijah found Elisha not sitting under a tree meditating. He found Elisha on the job. Elisha was plowing with the twelfth yoke of oxen. He was in charge of that whole operation. He had worked up in responsibility until he could handle that whole farm. It had taken years of training and hard work.

Shaphat was one of the seven thousand. Every morning they had family worship. Every evening they had family worship. In between they worked and worked hard. It built something into their character, and they didn't bow the knee to Baal.

Baal was the popular kind of worship when Elisha was growing up. The end thing was to kneel before Baal. The end thing was to kiss Baal. If you wanted to be popular with your peers you went along with that. And in many cases the religion of Baal and the religion of Jehovah was all mixed up together. The music of Baal was being played in psalm. The parties of Baal were going on. If you wanted to be popular with the young people, go to a Baal party. Did Elisha go? No. He was different. He was peculiar. Why? Because in his home they believed in the Spirit of prophecy. The mark of the seven thousand was implicit faith in the Spirit of prophecy.

There was a young woman who was one of the seven thousand. I know the home she came from was one of the seven thousand. No question about it. This is the little maid who was carried captive to Syria and waited on Naaman's wife. Naaman was the captain of Syria's army. This is the most interesting account. Notice how God takes a tiny little thing and uses it to accomplish tremendous results.

The story opens in the city of Damascus. Naaman had leprosy. One of his bands of soldiers went down into Israel and carried captives. I don't know how old this little maid was, but she was old enough to wait on the wife of Naaman. She could work. It must have been good work. She had influence. She did her job and watched for service. As she ministered from day to day, instead of hating the people who had captured her she loved them. One day, when she had won their confidence by her faithful, calm, loving spirit, the Holy Spirit impressed that girl to say to the idol worshipers, Oh, I wish my master could be in the land of Israel where the prophet is, because the prophet would recover him of his leprosy.

The cure for leprosy isn't common. Yet here was a young woman whose faith in the Spirit of prophecy had reached the point where the Holy Spirit could impress her to say this to her master. Where did she learn it? In her home.

The idea that people have got to wait until they grow up and get old before they can have much interest in religion is of the Devil. Seven thousand believed that the way to train children was to train them in the things of God from infancy. That's why Elisha became Elijah's helper, and that is why this girl became a missionary in the land of Syria.

“The parents of that Hebrew maid, as they taught her of God, did not know the destiny that would be hers. But they were faithful to their trust; and in the home of the captain of the Syrian host, their child bore witness to the God whom she had learned to honor. *Prophets and Kings*, page 246.

“A slave, far from her home, this little maid was nevertheless one of God's witnesses, unconsciously fulfilling the purpose for which God had chosen Israel as His people...

“The conduct of the captive maid, the way that she bore herself in that heathen home, is a strong witness to the power of early home training” *Ibid*, pages 244-245.

If you couldn't get it in the home you are born in, thank God, you can get it in a school, if you get into the right school. Someway God has an opportunity to get this kind of training that exalts the spiritual value of useful work and faithful service. And it teaches children and young people that the time to know God is when they are young. If that young woman had not learned that, she would have missed her destiny.

God used that witness to impress the wife of Naaman. Naaman's wife told him. He told the king. So here Naaman goes in a chariot down to the king of Israel. The king of Israel was worshipping a false god. He was so steeped in a lack of confidence in God's chosen channel of guidance that he didn't know what to do with that man from the king of Syria. All he saw was that the king of Syria was having a quarrel. But Elisha said:

“Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel” 2 Kings 5:8.

The man came to the home of the prophet, and was soon on his way to the River Jordan. He went down into the water and got well, and went back to Syria worshipping the true God.

It is a sample and illustration of the power of God in developing seven thousand young people, and older one, who would not bow the knee to Baal. They were strong, vibrant, happy, successful Jehovah's worshipers.

You can be in any religion as long as those around you are following the same thing you believe in, and it doesn't make any difference. But if you are going to

be on of the seven thousand you must learn to be different and not worry about it. You must learn to be peculiar and not let it cause you to wilt. You must be willing to be persecuted and not allow it to lead you to turn from loyalty to God and His truth.

I have been meditating on what it is that helped the seven thousand three thousand years ago, and will help the remnant today to get that experience. It is to know that you have found something that is worth more than anything else in this world.

I will illustrate it. Years ago I was in one of the great ports of America holding meetings. I went down town one day and saw in one of the big stores tubs of oysters. I saw a man step up to the counter and he said, "Give me half a dozen on a half shell." The man who was in charge took those live oysters and broke them open. The man put pepper and other things on those oysters and ate them just like that.

It didn't make my mouth water, neither did I feel deprived or underprivileged or held in or restricted. I didn't feel in bondage.

If all the worshippers of Baal were eating oysters on the half shell, it doesn't need to bother us in the least. The man or the woman, the boy or the girl, who begins to feel sorry for themselves are already on the way out. The only way to be among the seven thousand and stay there is to know that you have found something so infinitely better than Baal worship. It is not going to affect you, but you have to be willing to be different.

I feel so sorry when I see Seventh-day Adventist parents who are concerned to have every thing in place just the way they think it ought to be so their children won't have to be odd and peculiar in order to do what they think is the right thing.

How do you train a Daniel? How do you train a little maid to go to Syria? These seven thousand were not in a colony. If they had been, Elijah would have know about them. There was one here and one there, and each one stood out like a sore thumb.

There are going to be some people today who are going to be translated like Elijah was. They will be part of the remnant. They love the Word of God. They love the testimony of Jesus. They are happy in doing what God says.

I am very much impressed that we need to put away the idea entirely that we have got to have everything just so for our boys and girls, and that they must never have the opportunity to be different. Everything must be fixed so their peers are always encouraging them. If you are on the way to the kingdom of God you will have an experience where you will have to stand out and be different.

Daniel was. How many people stood with Daniel down in Babylon? Three others. We are told that if Daniel hadn't stood, they wouldn't have stood either. Daniel was true in Babylon because he had been true in Jerusalem. He was willing to be different in a heathen country because he had learned to be different among the professed people of God.

I come to the emphasis of the joy of God's way. The Devil's game today is just what it was 6,000 years ago. He came to Eve in Eden and said, "You can't eat of everything here, can you?" Was it true? Could she eat of everything? Did she prove it? Oh, if she could have held on to what she had she would have been glad through eternal ages that she had missed what was offered to her. But it was true that God had restricted them.

So today God has restricted us for our own benefit, and for the development of our characters. Happy are those who learn early in life that everything God says is for our happiness. And if we will try it, eventually we will find it so.

I was looking at the expression of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal and had not kissed him. What did that kiss mean? A kiss is a token of affection. A kiss is a token of devotion. A kiss is a token of allegiance. A kiss is a token of belonging. And I don't want anything to do with kissing Baal or anything related to him.

Kisses belong to God. Every love of your soul belongs to Jesus. Every devotion of your heart belongs to Jesus. Every allegiance of your spirit belongs to Jesus. Let's not have any kissing of Baal.

But when people can sit hour after hour viewing the sports of this world on TV and getting involved in it, whether they have heard these words or not, they are kissing Baal. When they become intoxicated with foolish and fictitious drama on the screen or in a book, all of that is kissing the image of Baal.

But the answer is not to break the image of Baal for Baal worshipers. The answer is something better. What kept the seven thousand was not that someone came around and crushed all the images of Baal so there was none to bow down before. They had an experience in something so infinitely better that they didn't want to go after the end thing. Truth is better than fiction. Reality is better than pretence. Helping others is more encouraging and cheering than beating them and hurting them. Love is better than rivalry. Truth is better than falsehood. The hope of eternal life is worth more than the fleeting things of this world.

This is something that no one can give another. The Christian home and school can provide the environment, but every young person and older ones must choose for himself. You will eventually love what you choose to love. You can become so enamored with Baal that you actually enjoy his parties and think that life wouldn't be worth living unless you could get high on this or that or the other thing.

Thank God for a message of something better and a demonstration of something better. I pray that God may impress us with how valuable what He has offered us is. We ought to be the happiest people in this world. That isn't to lead us off into Elijah's cave. Get back to where the people are and get to work.

Our Father in heaven, we thank Thee with all our hearts that what things were written afore times were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. And hope we have as we see what that

young man learned in the home of Shaphat, as we think of what that young woman learned in the home that prepared her to go to Syria as a student missionary. Lord, help us to develop some young people, and older ones, who will follow in their footsteps; who will rejoice not to be different for the sake of being different, but for the sake of being right; who will enjoy the things of God not in a selfish way but to share them with others.

Make us not content to be down in a cave with Elijah in isolation. Get us going on the way to spread the good news that Baal is dead and God is alive, and the fountains of God are flowing free with happiness. Let us demonstrate in our lives that joy that comes from the knowledge of sins forgiven because we have met our Lord at Calvary.

Kneeling at Thy cross we ask Thee to forgive us every time we have felt sorry for ourselves because we had to be different to be right. God help us to glory in the cross of Christ, to be happy for every opportunity to stand up for Jesus.

Bless these boys and girls, these young men and women, parents and teachers, and all of us who are older. Make us glad because Thou art our Savior. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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