

RAISING UP ELIJAHS

Series: "The Elijah Series" July 2, 2017 –I Kings 18: 17-21 & 18: 36-39 –Communion
The Church of the Covenant

Arrayed on one side are 450 prophets of Baal, an idolatrous god promising success and rain. Arrayed on the other side is but one prophet, Elijah, representing the One, True and Living God of Israel, whom the people have forgotten in order to run after other gods. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel are breathing threats of death to the prophet. The people are in the middle and all the nation hangs in the balance. What will happen? God intervenes and the fire falls. Revival comes. The prophets of Baal are defeated. The odds are against Elijah. But the mathematics where God is concerned is this –One God, plus one prophet equals victory –no matter how many people are on the other side. God wins.

On this Fourth of July Sunday it is my contention that we need to raise up more Elijahs. We need more people who have a strong sense of what is wrong and what is right. We need people who will take stands for the Lord. We need the nation to have fire fall and revival come. We need the Spirit of the Lord to be poured out. Regardless of what the majority might say, regardless that truth might be a lonely place to be, regardless of whether the odds are 450 to one...we need men and women of character, who have a moral center, who know what is wrong and what is right. **Raising up Elijahs.**

Awhile back I was sent an email that said that we should wish one another "Happy Holidays" rather than Merry Christmas. It noted that there were more than 32 major holidays celebrated by the world's 7 major religions. So December 25th isn't just about the birth of Jesus anymore. I started to think about and count the "major religions" and I counted Christianity, and Islam, and Judaism, and Buddhism, and Hinduism and Shintoism and then I ran out of "major religions". So I looked at the email more carefully. And there were the symbols of the seven major religion, including an upside down star surrounded by a circle, a pentagram. A pentagram is a sign of devil worship, of satanism, of conjuring demons, of sacrificing small animals to invoke demonic curses on people. Really? You mean to suggest that this "religion" is the same as Christianity? You mean to say the conjuring of the demonic is in any way equivalent with the birth of the Son of God in a manger in Bethlehem? No. That's wrong; its completely wrong; there is nothing good or right with it. The logic of the fallen, secular world is now demanding that the worship of demons on the winter solstice is equal to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Now I'm very certain the person who forwarded it to me had no idea what they were forwarding to their pastor.

Or you see the bumper stickers now that say "COEXIST" on them. Nothing wrong with religions getting along with one another. Unless you then want to force Christianity to stop preaching some of its basic truths. Ten years ago the Coalition for Christian Outreach staff member at Carnegie Mellon University said the school had given them a listing of Bible verses they couldn't use on campus. Because quoting Jesus saying: "I am the way, the truth and the life." is considered "hate speech". Did you know that? Jesus saying He is the LIFE is now hate speech. By the way, in some iterations of the bumper sticker that says "COEXIST", not on all of them but on some of them, the dot of the "I" in the word Coexist is an upside down star surrounded by a circle, a pentagram, a sign and a symbol of invoking demons. The "t" in coexist is Jesus' cross. So the pentagram and the cross are on the same bumper sticker. Really? The secular logic of our age equates the demonic with the cross of Jesus Christ? That's wrong. That's WAY wrong. When are people going to stand up and say that's wrong? Where is Elijah?

I have a fish symbol on my car, a sign of being a Christian. It is there to remind me that I need to DRIVE like a Christian, not too fast, not cutting other people off, not weaving in and out of traffic. Our Confirmation Class just used the sign of the fish because it is a representation of Christianity. In the Greek it is ICTHUS, standing for

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. But have you also seen the bumper stickers that have fish with legs on it and it says "Darwin" on the inside of it? Making fun of the fish symbol. Another version has the Darwin fish swallowing the Christian fish. Now quite apart from the complete inaccuracy of suggesting that Christianity is somehow at odds with science, which it is not, what does the visual representation mean of a secular image consuming an image of Jesus? And would we have ever seen such a thing even 25 years ago? And do we completely understand how far our culture has changed? Do we understand that secularism is now becoming virulently ANTI-Christian. That in our history as a nation we have moved from first being a Protestant nation, to then being a Christian nation, to then being a Judeo-Christian nation, and now we are becoming a nation that less and less is tolerating Christianity, and is moving to be outwardly contemptuous of it. That's wrong. That's completely wrong. Where are people willing to speak out? Where is Elijah?

And what if all of our blessings as a nation came from our love and honoring of the Lord God? What if everything we hold dear as a people, our freedoms and our prosperity and our peace, what if all of this comes only from the blessing of God, who now we have come to reject and mock, exclude and suggest His Word is "hate speech"? What if the source of all our blessings withdrew His hand of protection and blessing and favor on us as a nation? What if the Lord said, "Well, you have turned your back on me, so I shall turn my back on you."? Might we have fractious political system because we are no longer "One nation under God" so we cannot be ONE NATION anymore? Would we have streets filled with cheap Mexican heroin killing our young people? Will we have the disintegration of the fabric of our society as the family continues to break down and crumble? Will there be chaos and discord and rebellion and a disintegration of the social fabric? Of course there will be, and that is what we are seeing take place before our eyes, accelerating at a mind-numbing pace, day by day. Wake up, please, wake up.

I recently attended something where a young woman sat across from me. She was in her twenties. It emerged that she had multiple addictions, including crack cocaine and heroin. My heart went out to her. She was depressed and had considered taking her own life. Her affect was down, not a smile, and there was no joy in her. At the time of her life when she should have had the most joy, instead she had none. Her hair was died deep magenta. She had a T-shirt on that's image was a skull of death. On her finger was a ring on which was an upside down star surrounded by a circle, a pentagram, a sign of the demonic. I wanted to speak with her and share with her, not in a condemning way, not in a judgmental way, not in a negative way. Don't you realize young woman that your rejection of God is the cause of every other ill in your life? You will not be happy until Jesus is your way, your truth and your life. You are choosing DEATH over life, don't you understand this? Don't we understand this? But I didn't say anything, because I was afraid. I'm not Elijah. I'm not standing up against the 450 prophets of anti-Christian secularism in our nation. I'm just a pastor and I'm no prophet. I'm sad I didn't have the courage of my convictions. Because that young woman's name I may read some day in the obituaries.

So the soul of the nation is at stake. We are like Israel set between Elijah on one side and the 450 prophets of secularism on the other side. The prophets of Baal and the Ahabs and Jezebels are seeking our demise. They have moved from disdain to open contempt. Elijah came to the people of Israel and asked them, "*How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow HIM, but if Baal, then follow him.*" (1 Kings 18: 21) You can't have it both ways, America. O, where is Elijah? Where is Elijah? Where are those people who will bring us back to truth once again? Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, Pennsylvania
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*