

SPIRITUAL WARRIORS

by

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at

Home Missionary Baptist Church

Spiritual Warriors

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**Dan Gordon
and
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INTRODUCTION

As the kings of Israel became more evil, the people of the northern kingdom became more and more detached and distant from God and His ways. They became more brazen in their sin. By the time of Ahab, the seventh king, the nation had plummeted to the depths of spiritual degradation of Baal worship. Baal worship had replaced their worship of God and it became the national religion of Israel.

Baal worship had resulted in Israel having problems they had never had before. They became so entangled with Baal worship, they did not know what to do or how to solve their troubles.

Then Elijah, as he is on his way to confront Ahab, declares, “Elijah is here.” Elijah means “My God is the Lord.” Elijah makes a declaration that we, as God’s “spiritual warriors,” need to make. Confronted by modern day Baal worship, we need to declare, “Elijah is here!”

1st Kings 18:1-16 says, "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, [that is the 3rd year of the famine] saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria. And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: [Elijah is on his way to see Ahab] and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me. And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day. So Obadiah

went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah."

Coming to this chapter, it's been nearly three and one half years since Elijah first went to Ahab in chapter 17:1 and declared, "*As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years ...*" Since that time, Ahab sought the life of Elijah. That's made clear in the verses we just read. But God miraculously sustained him. In our text God instructs Elijah, "*.... go show thyself unto Ahab.*"

We see from verse 2, that by this time, the famine was sore in the land. And as Elijah is on his way to Ahab, Ahab says to his governor Obadiah, "We have to find some water. We've already lost some beasts. We can not lose our horses and mules. We have to find water. We have to find grass. You go one way, I'll go the other in search of water and grass."

As they do so, Elijah meets Obadiah. We see that in verse 7. Obadiah falls on his face and he asked a question, "*Art thou that my lord Elijah?*" Aren't you Elijah? And In verse 8, Elijah answers Obadiah, "*I am.*" And then he says, "*... go, tell thy lord behold, Elijah is here.*" Obadiah was very reluctant to do so. Out of concern for his own life and he presents that in verses 9 and 10.

"Go tell thy lord, go tell Ahab, Elijah is here." In the declaration, we see a man of great courage, a man of steadfastness. He stands firm and unashamed. He says, "Go tell Ahab, Elijah is here." It is from that statement, that we want to take the main thought of the message. When he said, "Go tell Ahab that Elijah is here," I picture him as a spiritual warrior. That's our subject, "**Spiritual Warriors.**" I want to consider, first of all, this action of Elijah. Then we want to make application.

First of all, we need to consider the background leading up to this event. Ahab was, of course, the son of Omri. Omri was a wicked king. He assassinated Zimri his predecessor. Omri was, again, a very wicked ruler. He

passed on his wicked ways to his son Ahab. So much so that the name Ahab means, brother or friend of his father. The six kings prior to Ahab were all ungodly kings. They were all evil men. We read in 1st Kings 16:30 "*Ahab ... did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.*" So Ahab was worse. Then in verse 33, "... *Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.*"

As the kings became more evil, the people of the northern kingdom became more and more detached and distant from God and His ways. They became more brazen in their sin. By the time you get to Ahab, the seventh king, the nation has plummeted to the depths of spiritual degradation. Ahab would marry Jezebel, who was a princess of Zidon, who were the descendants of the Canaanites, worshipers of the false god Baal. In verse 31 of chapter 16, "... *[he] went and served Baal, and worshipped him.*" He would also build a temple in the capital city of Samaria. We see that in verse 32, "*And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.*" There's an altar in the house of Baal. He has built a temple for Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

Baal worship was satanic in origin. It was very anti-God. It was a form of rejection of God. It was imported from the pagan Canaanites. And now, we see it is adopted as the national religion. The people, for many years had been conditioned to accept it, Baal and Baal worship. Israel is now practicing the very thing that they were to drive out. They're now practicing it. It's become their national religion.

Ahab's wife, Jezebel, who was steeped in Baal worship, was intolerant of any recognition or any worship of God. And Ahab, not having any backbone, allowed her to kill the priests of the Lord.

Baal was thought to be the god of fertility, the god of agriculture. He was believed to be the giver of life. In Baal worship, people would gather around the altars of Baal. They would often cut themselves with knives. So, it was a

religion in which the human body was disrespected and desecrated.

Also, an integral part to Baal worship was sexual deviation, immorality, immodesty, nakedness, lewdness. People would gather around the altars of Baal, and there would be sexual orgies, both heterosexual and homosexual. The worshipers of Baal would communicate with Baal by ritual sexual actions. By these sexual actions that they were portraying what they wanted from Baal, fertility. It was a very abominable system of worship. They wanted Baal to bring rain to make fertile mother earth, as they would have called it. The people would gather on high hills, almost like a theater or a stadium. There they would observe public sex. Sounds pretty familiar. People do the same thing today. It's called concerts and many other things.

It was a religion rooted in sensuality and that was licentious and even involved prostitution in the temples of Baal. It was a religion of sexual abandon. It was rooted in pleasure. It was rooted in festivity, and self indulgence. Again. sounds very familiar. The people liked Baal worship because it was exciting. It was exciting to their flesh. They liked the liberty that it gave them to do what they pleased. Also, they no doubt liked the business that was facilitated through Baal worship. Baal worship in reality corresponds to the activities that people participate in today. Very much so. Also integral to Baal worship was the sacrifice of infants. Sounds very familiar, also. Also integral to Baal worship was pantheism, the worship of earth. Their worship was very popular because personal success, personal networking, was dependent upon attending Baal worship.

It had been infiltrated into Jewish life during the time of the judges. Read Judges 2:12 -13. In Judges 2:14, we see the effects of Baal worship, the effects that Baal worship had upon the nation. *"And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, [there was a loss of income, there was a loss of property] and he sold them into the hands of*

their enemies round about, [there was a loss of status, all as the effect of Baal worship] so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies." This all sounds so familiar. All the results of Baal worship.

In Judges 2:15, "... and they were greatly distressed." That is, this infiltration of Baal worship brought them much anguish and misery and despair. It put them in dire straits. Baal worship had brought economic, political, and social ill. That was the result of the infiltration, the beginning of Baal worship. But by the time you get to Ahab, Baal worship is widespread. It's prevalent. The altars of Baal are everywhere. Temples have been built for Baal and the altars of God have been cast down. Everywhere you looked was the heresy of Baal. Everywhere you looked were the ways, and the philosophies, and the pursuits of Baal worshipers. There was open antagonism toward God and toward the people of God.

The northern kingdom of Israel had become a godless society. Almost everything about their daily life was now associated and connected, in some way, to Baal worship. Associated and connected in some way to the philosophies and the doctrines and the ways of Baal. The northern kingdom of Israel is now engulfed and submerged in the filth, vileness, wickedness, and ungodliness of Baal worship. The perversion and the heresy of Baal worship was everywhere. They are under the influence and sway of Baal worship. Under the influence and sway of that which is repulsive, loathsome, and shameful. That was the condition of the nation, or the kingdom. They were in a cycle of doom.

There's Elijah. He's on his way to face Ahab, the very embodiment of evil. He's on his way to Ahab with a message from the Lord. He is God's representative. He meets Obadiah. Obadiah is diligently looking for food, for water, and for grass. Why is Obadiah looking for water and grass? Because of a drought and famine. Why was it a time of drought and famine? Because of Baal worship.

Because of Baal worship, you can see they had problems. They now have to find solutions to problems that they created. That is our society today. We have problems we would never have if it were not for Baal worship. How does our government and how does our society seek to solve all these problems? More Baal worship. That is the cycle that they were in. It's the cycle we are in. The root of the problem went back to a departure from God and His ways and the adoption of Baal worship. So it is today. Their life was now dictated by problems that were the result of sin. So it is today. People don't even know what bathroom to go to because of sin. You wouldn't have that problem if it weren't for sin.

It was a time of barrenness. It was a time of loss. It was a time of emptiness and ruin. All as a result of a departure from God and His ways and the adoption of Baal worship. It was also a time of persecution against the people of God. There was widespread apostasy, widespread idolatry, indifference, coldness, and unconcern among even the people of the Lord. It was in these circumstances that we see Elijah, and he declares, "Go tell Ahab that Elijah is here."

I see Elijah, in the eyes of society, as an individual who is standing on the wrong side of public opinion in his day. Yet he says without any fear, with no sign of wavering in his voice, "Elijah is here!" He's in the midst of hatred, in the midst of opposition against God, in the midst of a society that has fallen in line with the programs and agenda of Satan. He's living in a society that was offensive and repulsive to God. There he stands, with great courage, fearlessness, and he boldly declares, "Go tell Ahab, the very embodiment of evil and wickedness, behold Elijah is here."

The name Elijah means "My God is the Lord". When he says, "Elijah is here," he is making a statement and the statement is that he stood clearly for God. Elijah is here. Now let's make application to you and I.

We need to be like Elijah. We need to make it very

clear to even the embodiment of evil, we need to make it very clear we are here and we stand for God. That's who we stand for. That's what Elijah was saying. Behold Elijah is here! Elijah had no connection whatsoever with Baal worship. We must make sure that's true of us as well. Elijah stood apart from it, and he declared, Elijah is here! Now someone may think, "Well, we don't have Baal worship today. We don't have that problem today." Such a thought would be entirely erroneous.

Baal worship, though it's not called Baal worship today, is still very relevant and very prevalent in twenty first century America. It's everywhere. The pillars, the core tenants of Baal worship, are disrespect and desecration of the human body. That's everywhere. It's not called Baal worship, but it's still the same thing. Nakedness, immodesty, sexual perversion, child sacrifice, pantheism; those are all the tenants of Baal worship. They're everywhere today. They're widespread, promoted, encouraged, accepted, and applauded. They're celebrated today, though Satan has given them a different mask. Today the core tenants are masked under meaningful relationships, affairs, freedom of expression. These are all masks for Baal worship. Adult entertainment, alternative lifestyles, freedom of choice, environmentalism, global warming, etc. These are all some of the masks that Baal worshipers wear today.

Modern liberalism deviates little from its ancient predecessor, Baal worship. There's no difference. Modern day liberals call themselves progressives. We'll just call them humanists. That's what they are whether they realize it or not. They labor under the misconception and deceit that there is anything progressive about their fundamental tenants and blind secular humanist faith. There is nothing progressive about it. It's a mask.

Today, the so-called progressive movement, really is just a retread of pagan Baal worship. That's what it is. It's promoted by politicians, academia, and the media. These folks are the priests of Baal worship. It's not just self styled

progressives or secular humanists who have adopted the fundamental pillars of Baalism. We live, of course, in postmodern, post-christian times and there is something called today *emergent Christianity*. It is new age Christianity, which is simply *quasi Christianity*. In other words it's not Christianity at all. It's simply liberalism stamped with the word Christian. It doesn't change Baal worship and people get deceived.

Under this guise of adherence to social justice, this emergent Christianity, often supports or at least rationalizes abortion and the homosexual agenda of so called, and I say so called, progressives. When a child of God can say, "Well, I don't really see anything wrong with two men getting married or two women," you have quasi Christianity. That is, it doesn't amount to a hill of beans. It's not Christian at all. You have adopted a philosophy of Baal worship.

This is where we are in our country. Make no mistake about it, Baal worship is still very, very prevalent today. It happens all the time in many, many different cultural variations. Hollywood, pop culture, entertainment, on and on we can go. It's not much different than the Baal worship that takes place in the Old Testament. The masses today revel in, glamorize, and celebrate what God calls wicked.

Here we are. We are a very individualistic, self indulgent society that is oblivious to God. A very atheistic society, that has fallen prey to godless philosophies, godless reasonings, viewpoints, goals, and pursuits of a world that is steeped in Baal worship. It has been for a long, long, long time.

Here we are in a time of intensifying, open and blatant hatred, denial, and disregard of God. A time of open, blatant hostility, and defiance towards God and the word of God. A society that mocks, a society that ridicules, and renounces the word of God. We are surrounded by the enemies, the haters, and the deniers of God. They are annoyed, they are irritated by any mention of the name of

God. They are out to tear down every altar of God and put in its place the altars of Baal.

As a result of all of this we are a society drowning in confusion. People don't know what to do. They have problems they never had before and they're not even smart enough to say, "You know why we have these problems? Because we departed from God and we put in its place Baal worship." They're not smart enough to figure that out. What do they do? They pass new laws. They get more and more steeped in the very thing that's brought on all their problems. There's no solution in sight. But God's people, like Elijah, we are to stand in the midst of it all, we are to stand with courage, fearlessness, and conviction of soul, and boldly and steadfastly declare, "***We're for God! I'm here and I stand for God!***" We must be more bold than we've ever been to declare that today. We must be more willing to declare that than we've ever been. *I'm for God*, in the right places, in the schools. "But it's against the law." No it's not. You stand and you say, "I'm for God. Come what may, I'm for the Lord."

We need some Elijahs, who in their little corner of the world, will have some courage, have some conviction, in a God defying society, a society that is blindly and willfully ignorant of God. We need to stand and say, *God is supreme. God is absolute. God is infinite. God is almighty*. We need some Elijahs, who in their corner of the world, will declare with boldness and conviction Jesus Christ. Some Elijahs who will declare, in an antiChrist world, that there is the righteousness, the acceptance, the redemption, the forgiveness, the reconciliation, and the peace that you need in Jesus Christ. *Elijah is here!* Oh, we need to stand and say I believe that all fullness is in Jesus Christ.

Oh, for some Elijahs to stand in the midst of the debauchery, perversion, lewdness, infidelity, deviation, nakedness, immorality, and sensuality. Stand in the midst of all the anti God philosophies and declare holiness of life. Declare, to a world that does not believe it, that all sexual

expression, desires, and acts are between husband and wife. By husband and wife, we mean male and female, not male and male and not female and female. We need some Elijahs to stand up and say, "*Elijah is here and we're here to declare to you today that all sexual expressions are between a man and a woman in a union of marriage.*" It needs to be boldly declared. In all of them; male and male, and female and female; they are abominable unions. They are demonic unions. Elijah is here.

Oh, for some Elijahs to step forth in the midst of all the confusion, in the midst of all the disorder, in the midst of all the chaos and the turmoil, in all the upheaval, in all the dysfunction, and declare with boldness and conviction of soul, that God has left us his word! In a society that despises, and mocks, and ridicules, and renounces the BIBLE, a society that thinks that they are smarter than God, OH, for some Elijahs to stand and say, "*This BIBLE is the eternal, infinite, inerrant, immortal, word of God! Thus saith the Lord!*" The world needs to hear that today. They need to hear that the message of the BIBLE is absolute, it is fixed, immovable, unchangeable, unaffected by the times and it is inflexible. It does not bend.

Sinners need to be told, they can regulate their life by this book. They can build their life upon this book. They can regulate and build their marriage upon this book. They can regulate and build their home upon this book. It doesn't have to be the way it is today. Realize the problem, realize the root of the matter is Baal worship, and get back to God. *Elijah is here!* You can build your life, your home, your marriage, and all your relationships on, "Thus saith the Lord." How we need some Elijahs.

There is a famine in this day when the government, the so-called judicial system, schools, families, marriages, and homes have been stripped of respect, faith in God, and dependence upon God. They have been stripped of Godly values, morality, and integrity. Stripped of that which is good, decent, and beneficial to society. Stripped of sanity.

We need some Elijahs that will stand with courage, fearlessness, without any wavering, and boldly declare, "My God is the Lord! The Lord of heaven. My God is the Lord who wrote the BIBLE. It is His word. My God is the Lord. I'm here today to live for Him. I'm here today as His representative."

The world thinks we've lost our minds. But you know what, my life's pretty good. The world thinks I'm crazy, that you're crazy. My home's not torn upside down. I haven't lost sanity. I know you might think I have, but I haven't. I'm not living in dysfunction. My God is the Lord, even if the world thinks we've lost our mind and that living for God will never work. It does work. If they would just open their eyes, which they're incapable of doing, and look around. If they had a brain cell functioning, they would say, "You know what, this isn't working." They're so deceived. They look around and in the midst of all the dysfunction, "Oh isn't this great! Life has never been this good." How sad.

Elijah is here. What wonderful words. Oh that we would boldly declare that today, "I'm here." Whether it be in the workplace, school, wherever, neighborhood, family, "I'm here and I stand for God, and what you're doing is wrong. If you don't want me back in any of the family reunions, fine. That's fine, but let it be known I stand for God." That needs to be our attitude and that we go forth with that. Elijah is here. Thank God for Elijahs. There's still Elijahs. We've got Elijahs here.