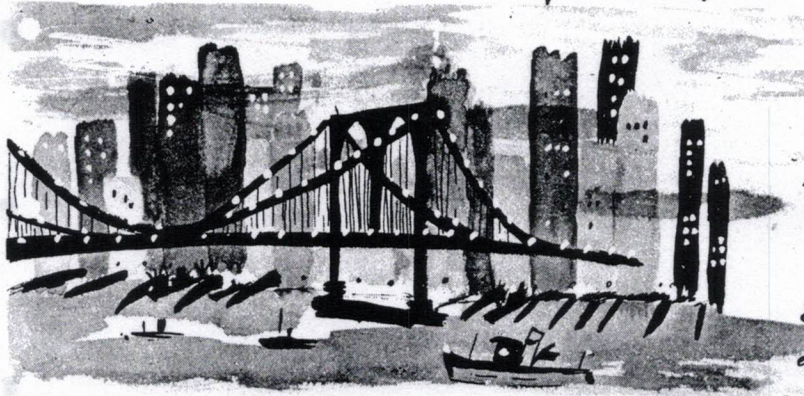


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January 1973



"Watchman, what of the night?"

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

WHAT ARE YOU?

An Activist? A Passivist? Or a Neutralist? In a time of crisis, in an hour of decision, every person relates himself to one of these three categories. How God estimates one's reaction in a time of religious crisis is well illustrated in the life time of Elijah the prophet. The very fact that God placed Elijah in a prophecy concerning these last days, plus the recorded mission assigned to Elijah with Moses at the transfiguration of Jesus as He pressed toward His own hour of trial in Jerusalem, indicates heaven's evaluation of a certain type of human involvement.¹

Elijah was an activist! He stands as a symbol of those who are to bear a special message to the Church, and the final appeal of God to the inhabitants of earth.² Malachi quotes the Lord of hosts as saying - "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."³ The role of Elijah for this hour has been assigned to a "little company" at the time when the danger and depression of the church are greatest.⁴ It becomes, therefore, eternally important for each to answer for himself the question - "What am I?"

What characteristics mark an activist for God? First, he is conscious of his relationship to God in contrast to a servile attitude to man. When Elijah first appeared before Ahab, he declared - "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, *before whom I stand.*"⁵ Some three years later, this same consciousness was expressed again to Obadiah - "As the Lord of hosts liveth, *before whom I stand.*"⁶ The line of communication was direct; not via man or a group of men. His orders came straight from the throne of the Eternal. Truly, they that know their God shall do exploits.⁷

Elijah spoke for God, not for man. To the widow of Zaraphath, he said - "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel."⁸ In his encounters with men, Elijah spoke forthrightly without fear nor favor. To the taunt of Ahab, that he was the troubler of Israel, Elijah responded without a moment's hesitation - "I have not troubled Israel, but thou, and thy father's house."⁹ How often, when earnest voices of deep concern are heard calling the church's attention to the betrayal of sacred trusts on the part of the hierarchy, those entrenched in the controls of the organization accuse these activists as being "accusers of the brethren" and "troublers of Israel." It is equally true today as in the days of Elijah, that the real troublers of Israel are those in the high places of the church, who have forsaken the Blue Print and the Truth that God has given to His people, and are following worldly policy in the administration of the Church, and teaching heresy in place of sound doctrine.

Elijah was not afraid to act. Following the confrontation on Mt. Carmel, Elijah commanded the people to "take the prophets of Baal; and let not one of them escape." This the people did. The record states: "Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there."¹⁰ There needs to be the removal of the prophets of Baal from the midst of Israel today, but until the people awake and take hold of them, they can never be brought to their "brook Kishon."

The life of Elijah was marked by strong faith. As he made his way from the mountains of Gilead to the court of Ahab, there was no evidence that the message he was about to deliver would be fulfilled. All appeared well. "It was only by the exercise of strong faith in the unfailing power of God's word that Elijah delivered his message. Had he not possessed implicit confidence in the One whom he served, he never would have appeared before Ahab."¹¹ Again following the ordeal on Carmel, when there was not a cloud in the sky, he told Ahab - "Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain."¹²

Because Elijah knew his God, he did not add verbage to verbalization in

talking to his God. His prayers were the epitome of simplicity. One of the simplest prayers recorded in the Bible is the prayer that brought the fire of heaven to consume the sacrifice. Read I Kings 17:36-38. Elijah bowed in the presence of his God. There was no need for shouting, nor for oratory. He merely outlined the need, and the reason for the Lord to act. And "the fire of the Lord fell."

In the life experiences of Elijah is found a person who exhibited the characteristics of a passivist. He was Obadiah, the governor of Ahab's house. The Bible records that Obadiah "feared the Lord greatly."¹³ His personal integrity was beyond question, and he was trusted by Ahab. When a search was made for grass for the king's stable, Obadiah covered one-half of the land while Ahab traversed the other half.¹⁴ He believed what the Lord could do, but he was *fearful* lest in carrying out the direction of Elijah to convey a message to Ahab, the Spirit of the Lord would snatch Elijah away to some secret spot.¹⁵ He had sought to provide for the servants of the Lord by hiding 100 of them, 50 in each cave-unit that he was able to establish, and there had fed them bread and water.¹⁶

The conversation that took place between Elijah and Obadiah reveals most clearly the characteristics of a passivist. When Obadiah met Elijah in the way, he saluted him as "*my lord, Elijah.*" Elijah was quick to respond - "Go tell *thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.*" This rankled in the heart of Obadiah, and twice in the conversation, he reminds Elijah that he had told him to go and "*tell thy lord*" [Ahab] that Elijah is here. He reminded Elijah of the merits he should have accrued by hiding the servants of God in cave-units he had organized.¹⁷

Obadiah's allegiance was to the establishment. He was loyal to Ahab, even though Ahab had permitted through an unholy fraternization that woman Jezebel to come into the midst of Israel "to teach and seduce" the servants of God to betray sacred trusts. These prophets of Baal which operated in the midst of Israel were fed from Jezebel's table.¹⁸ Obadiah was fearful for his life, and while he would

seek to create a place where the prophets of God might find bread and water, he would not speak out against the men who were indeed the troublers of Israel.

The prophets of Baal are not an ancient vintage who perished at the brook Kishon. They are very much alive today, and operate within the conferences of modern Israel. "Honesty and policy will not work together in the same mind. In time, either policy will be expelled and honesty reign supreme, or, if policy is cherished, honesty will be forgotten. They are never in agreement; they have nothing in common. *One is the prophet of Baal, the other is the true prophet of God.*"¹⁹ The passivist knows that all is not well in Israel, that policy - worldly policy - directs the movements of God's church. He knows that we have not been honest with the truth which has been committed to our trust. We have through an unholy fraternization with the Evangelicals altered our basic positions in several vital areas of doctrine. These Jezebels have lavished their fermented wine until many of God's professed servants are drunk with the new doctrines. Yet these modern Obadiahs join in search with Ahab to find grass to continue to sustain the stables of Ahab.

There is still another group brought to view in this moving drama in the life of Elijah. It is the Neutralist! On Mount Carmel at the direction of Elijah the hosts of Israel were gathered for a dramatic confrontation with Truth. Elijah's challenge is heard - "How long halt ye between two thoughts."²⁰ The Scripture records: - "And the people answered him not a word."²¹ They wanted to maintain their neutrality. "Not one in that vast assembly dared utter one word for God and show his loyalty to Jehovah." Instead an - - -

astonishing deception and fearful blindness had, like a dark cloud, covered Israel! This blindness and apostasy had not closed about them suddenly; it had come upon them gradually, as they had not heeded the word of reproof and warning which the Lord had sent to them because of their pride and their sins. And now, in this fearful crisis, in the presence of the idolatrous priests and apostate king, they remained neutral. If God abhors one sin above another, of which His

people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime, and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.²²

WHAT ARE YOU? - An ACTIVIST? A PASSIVIST? Or a NEUTRALIST?

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- ¹Luke 9:30-31
³Malachi 4:5
⁵I Kings 17:1
⁸I Kings 17:14
¹¹Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, p. 121
¹²I Kings 18:41
¹⁵I Kings 18:12
¹⁸I Kings 18:19
¹⁹Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 96
²⁰I Kings 18:21 margin
²²Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, pp. 280-281
- ²See T. M., pp. 475-76 & 4BC:1174
⁴See Testimonies V:209-210
⁶I Kings 18:15
⁹I Kings 18:18
¹³I Kings 18:3
¹⁶I Kings 18:13
- ⁷Daniel 11:32
¹⁰I Kings 18:40
¹⁴I Kings 18:5-6
¹⁷I Kings 18:7-15
- ²¹Ibid.

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For 1973, the thought papers will be issued in nine regular mailings dated monthly from January through May, and September through December. From one to three special issues are also projected depending upon the need. These would be mailed with the regular issue and dated as a special for that month. Such is the case for this first month - the regular issue, and a special issue, entitled, "A Cover Up?"

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Still available - AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION AS TAUGHT BY THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH. Price of manuscript - \$4.00. Send all orders to the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc. P. O. Box 237, Florence, Miss., 39073.

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The Board of Directors of the Foundation have asked Elder Grotheer to assume full time responsibility as Manager of Publications and Research. He will be available for lecture appointments as invitations and openings occur. This action is effective, January 1, 1973.

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These monthly thought papers are published by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., and are edited by Elder Wm. H. Grotheer. They are sent free to anyone upon request.

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