

Will the Fire of God Fall on America?

In 1 Kings 18, we have the story of Elijah challenging the prophets of Baal to a duel on Mt. Carmel. They would each offer a sacrifice to their god, and the god that answered by fire would be the God Israel would serve.

The prophets of Baal went first, but despite an entire day of fervent prayers, shouts, dancing and prophesying, no fire fell on their sacrifice. Outward religious hype is a poor substitute for the real presence and power of God.

When Elijah's time came to pray, there was no such hype. His first act was to repair the altar of the Lord that was broken down (1 Kings 18:30). It was broken down because the Israelites had compromised their faith. They had mixed the worship of Yahweh with the worship of Baal. They had become religious pluralists—multiculturalists.

An altar is a place of consecration—a place of sacrifice where one is given completely over to God. Consecration was absent in Israel. They had broken the First Commandment, wherein God had said, "You shall have no other gods before Me. ... You shall not bow down to them or serve them" (Exodus 20:3-5b).

In a similar way, the American altar is broken down and in desperate need of repair. Like ancient Israel, Christians in America have compromised their faith. They may not have bowed down before a pagan shrine, but they have bowed to the gods and goddesses of cultural approval, social acceptance and personal popularity.

In Elijah's situation, the fire did not fall until after the altar of the Lord was repaired. The fire of God is not going to fall on America until we repair the altar of the Lord that is broken down. The awakening we speak of is not going to

occur until we renew our absolute consecration to Him.

The first generation of immigrants to America were totally consecrated to God. Moved by their absolute commitment to Jesus, they left homes, family and friends to begin a new life in the New World. The Great Awakening that gave birth to this nation was led by people totally committed to God and His Word.

When, for example, George Whitefield, preached in Philadelphia, he purposely attacked deism, knowing that Benjamin Franklin and many others in that city had been influenced by that teaching. He was not there looking for acceptance. He was there to share the divine truths of God's Word.

Interestingly, he and Franklin became lifelong friends, and the fire of God fell on Philadelphia and colonial America. Years later, Franklin wrote in his *Autobiography*,

The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous, and it was a matter of speculation to me, who was one of the number, to observe the extraordinary influence of his oratory on his hearers. It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious so that one could not walk through the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street (Hyatt, Pilgrims and Patriots, 102).

"Repairing the altar of the Lord" must begin with the church—with God's people. We do this by allowing the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and show us where we have compromised His truth because we were afraid of offending some person or some group. Or, it may be that we have compromised by putting our own personal success and desires ahead of His will and way.

As we repent of our compromise with the world, we position ourselves to see the fire of God fall on America. When the fire of God fell on Mt. Carmel, the entire nation was turned back to God. It can happen again.

“If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

As part of our July Fourth celebrations, let's repair the altar of the Lord that is broken down in this nation.

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