

FIRE FALL

Day Three: Outnumbered

Then said Elijah unto the people, "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men"... 1 Kings 18:22

When the people of God give in to "living on the fence," it doesn't help the cause of Christ. Instead it creates an atmosphere in which wickedness is allowed to prevail. As blatant sin moves to the forefront of culture, the gap between God's design and carnal desire only widens. Finally, society turns against all those who speak the truth while actively seeking to silence them.

In times when darkness is predominant, we often feel as though the magnitude of the enemy's influence is greater than our own. Too quickly forget that even in the darkest of places one single small flicker can bring the greatest of illumination by simple contrast. As St. John wrote in his Gospel, "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it." (John 1:5)

We must remember that God's strength is made perfect in our perceived weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Though we may feel outnumbered at times, we truly never are. Jesus taught us that one Kingdom seed will bring great harvest and a little bit of Kingdom leaven causes the whole loaf to rise. One spark starts a fire! One reformer starts a reformation! Don't be afraid of numbers! As Jonathan and his armor bearer realized, "Nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few." (1 Samuel 14:6)

Elijah's statement was intended to display contrast. 450 to 1 are not the best of odds...in fact they are anything but. However, Elijah knew his God personally while the 450 had never seen their god perform anything outside of the abilities of man. Elijah had heard his God's voice, but Baal's prophets had never heard one word from Baal. This shifted the odds entirely into Elijah's favor...knowing God always changes things!

Still, there another aspect we need to address in Elijah's statement. Elijah actually believed he was the only remaining prophet of the LORD. It is one thing to be outnumbered, but it is another thing to be alone. We need to be able to look beyond the momentary emotion, while trusting God to have a remnant reserved. When the tide changes, the remnant always comes out of hiding!

When God won the victory through Jonathan, the remnant returned to the battle! (1 Sam. 14:21-22) In like manner, God corrected Elijah days later...God had reserved 7,000 worshippers in Israel, at least 100 of which were prophets protected by Obadiah! (18:3-4; 19:18) One understanding of the correction of Elijah is that all 7,000 were prophets whom God had protected...7,000 times better than what Elijah believed! In other words, while the odds on the mountain were 450 to 1 against Elijah, the odds in the nation were actually almost 16 to 1 in Elijah's favor! Better than that, in God's economy the odds were infinitely in Elijah's favor because he chose the side of Jehovah!

And so, we pray:

Father in Heaven...You always have been and will always be greater in us than those in the world! Help us not to shy away from shining in dark places! Help us not to back down in the face of popular opinion! Grace us with the knowledge of Your presence, even before we see the manifestation of Your glory!

We choose to rely on You! Remind us always that since You stand by our side, You always guarantee there are more with us than those who rise against us! Let us never forget, this encounter belongs to You and You will receive the glory!

In the name of Your precious Son Jesus we pray! AMEN