

The Days of Elijah

By Ronald L. Dart

If you happen to enjoy contemporary praise music, you more than likely have heard *These Are the Days of Elijah*. It is one of my favorites, very singable, and I can really get into it. I happened onto a video of a performance of the song, done before a large, enthusiastic group, who also were really getting into it. It was an elaborate production, with a procession carrying large banners, and people dancing in the aisles.

But as I watched, I wondered a little how it might differ from a pep rally during football season at a major university. The words were different, of course, but for a person who spoke no English, it would have merely been a show. The intent of the people there was worship, I am sure, but I couldn't help wondering how much God was on their mind, and how much was the performance.

God forbid that I should criticize that sort of display, but I recalled something C.S. Lewis once said about what he called "The Liturgical Fidget." When he went to church, he wanted to have his mind on God, not on the latest innovation in service or performance. All this conspired to call to

memory the words of the song *These Are the Days of Elijah* and I wondered how many of the performers knew what that was all about. What, exactly, are the "days of Elijah," and why are we singing about them?

Elijah, for those who don't know, was the archetype of all prophets. He wasn't the first and he wasn't the only, but he was *major*. The song begins:
These are the days of Elijah,
Declaring the word of the Lord:
And these are the days of Your servant Moses,
Righteousness being restored.
And though these are days of great trial,

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How Your Gifts Help. . .

A listener wrote: "God has shaken up my world of beliefs, my family also. Somehow my sister was introduced to your book *The Thread*, and found your website. I have been listening and reading your sermons. I want to thank you for your website. God has gifted you with such views of the Bible, none that I have ever learned. It really is the truth. I can now see how the blindness that has caused some Christians when the separation took place (325a.d.) of the Jews and Gentile Believers. You bring us both together in your views, which are truth. I am learning and growing immensely, from your teachings" O. Would you like to help others? You can.

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Of famine and darkness and
sword,
Still, we are the voice in the
desert crying
“Prepare ye the way of the
Lord!”

What does all this mean? Why Elijah, why Moses? It is clear to me that the composer of this song was driving at something important, but what, exactly? The place to start is, naturally, the *Days of Elijah*. He may be not only the archetype of all prophets, he may also be the most blunt. He is described as a hairy man, and wearing leather. If he was to come to your town today, he might come in riding a Harley. He was a man of few words. In fact, his first message to King Ahab amounted to a mere 25 words: “As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.”

That was the last anyone in Israel heard of the man for three and a half years. And there was neither dew nor rain the whole time. But where did this come from? Why such a dire prophecy? It had to do with the government. Ahab was king and, for anyone who knows the history of the house of Israel, that says it all. Ahab, according the author of the Book of Kings, “did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him” (1 Kings 16:30).

What made things so bad was that Baal worship, introduced by his wife Jezebel, involved child prostitution and even child sacrifice. This was part and parcel

of the worship invented by humans in the first civilizations in Mesopotamia. It died hard. King Ahab married into that and became wholly absorbed in it. He was a weak man, and Jezebel was the wrong woman.

There came a time when God had enough of this louse and his wife, so he sent Elijah. Now if these are indeed the days of Elijah, then what should we expect to see in society at large? Moral corruption. Child abuse and even child sacrifice on an appalling scale, for that was rampant in Israel. Elijah didn’t address the sins of the nation directly. He merely said that the coming disaster was from God. Are these, then, the days of Elijah? If so, then the song goes on:

These are the days of the
harvest,
The fields are as white in Your
world,
And we are the labourers in Your
vineyard,
Declaring the word of the Lord!

If, indeed, we are the ones declaring the Word of the Lord, what does the Lord have to say to a society like ours? The story of Elijah is an important part of history and, as history is so often repeated, we are likely to see parts of this again, albeit in modern garb. One of the things that characterized this age was the suppression of the worship of Yahweh. Jezebel, we are told, “cut off the prophets of the Lord.” A good man named Obadiah hid a hundred of them in a cave and fed them.

That reference to cutting off the prophets of Jehovah is chilling. People in power don’t cotton to being criticized. Jezebel was

apparently not above killing a few of her critics. The parallel to what happened to John the Baptist cannot be overlooked.

The time came for all this to come to a climax, and Elijah returned, much to the consternation of all concerned. Ahab was apparently intimidated by Elijah, because he didn’t kill him on sight. Then followed the famous confrontation on Mount Carmel—850 of Jezebel’s priests and prophets to one prophet of God. Elijah seems to have thought that was about fair.

I’ll let you read the story again for yourself in 1 Kings 18 and the following chapter. Elijah called down fire from heaven, which led the people to declare with one voice, “Yahweh is God!” They took the prophets of Baal down the hill and slew the lot of them. Now, these are the days of Elijah. What do you think about them? And why do we sing saying that ours are the days of Elijah? Are we anticipating a great revival? A whole people turning to God? How did it all turn out in the original days of Elijah? In a very short time, Elijah was fleeing from Jezebel for his life. He prayed the prayer that makes a wonderful air in Mendelshohn’s *Elijah*: “It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers” (1 Kings 19:4).

In the days of Elijah, it was rough going. He thought surely he was the only one left and they were trying to kill him. But God said, “No, I have reserved for myself 7,000 men in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” The composer of the song seems to

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2008 Feast of Tabernacles

Speaking Schedule

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Monday, October 13 | 7:30 p.. m. | Ronald L. Dart |
| Tuesday, October 14 | 11:00 a.m. | Ronald L. Dart |
| Wednesday, October 15 | 11:00 a..m. | John Reedy |
| Wednesday, October 15 | 7:00 p.m. | Brent Kern |
| Thursday, October 16 | 11:00 a.m. | Larry Watkins |
| Friday, October 17 | 11:00 p.m. | Lenny Cacchio |
| Saturday, October 18 | 11:00 a.m. | Ronald L. Dart |
| Sunday, October 19 | 11:00 a.m. | Jim O'Brien |
| Monday, October 20 | 11:00 a.m. | Youth Day |
| Tuesday, October 21 | 11:00 a.m. | Ronald L. Dart |

Seminar Schedule

Visit the Seminar Information Table at the Conference Center for a brochure and more details.

Tuesday, October 14, 3:00 p.m.

Pam Dewey: *Bringing in the Sheaves of Your Year*—Come explore some of the themes and spiritual lessons of the Fall Feast which apply to the life of the individual Christian.

Rick Hoot: *The Armor of God*—The spiritual significance of the pieces of armor in Ephesians.

George and Beatrix Tanakis: *Prayer Circle*—Come extend and enrich your worship to God with prayer and supplication during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Wednesday, October 15, 9:30 a.m.

Ken Swiger: *Why We Sing*—Why do we sing? Join us as we examine the tremendous influence of music in our worship services.

Rick Hoot: *Spiritual Warfare*—This seminar examines the spiritual ammunition that Satan tries to use against us and the countermeasures we should employ in dealing with our foe.

Elizabeth Erin Puckett: *An Exercise in Unity*—Join us as we flex our relational muscles in planning and exercises to rebuild our hope and faith in one Spirit, one God, and one Body.

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Wednesday and Thursday, October 15 & 16, 30 minutes after services

Two Special Sessions: *Focus Group: Small Congregations & Fellowships*—What does God expect from our congregation? See the seminar brochure for details.

Thursday, October 16, 9:30 a.m.

Pam Dewey: *Wild Ride*—Learn about the spiraling downward trends in world conditions that create stress and confusion which make you want to scream, “Stop the world! I want to get off!”

Skip Martin: *A Home Fellowship that Works*—Powerpoint slides, music MP3s, *Born to Win* programs, GodTube and YouTube videos create a multimedia fellowship/church for all ages.

Scarlett Stough and Nancy Vandemark: *Woman to Woman: Applying Scripture in Your Life*—Learn a method of studying any Bible passage by using standard questions.

Friday, October 17, 9:30 a.m.

Larry Watkins: *Teens, Parents, and Freedom*—Learn what kids are thinking, what drives them to seemingly illogical decisions, and what they would tell you if you really listened.

John Norte: *God’s Divine Deliverance*—Learn of God’s divine deliverance from a life of addictions to learning to fight the good fight of faith with the Armor of God.

Scarlett Stough: *Christian Book Discussion*—Come prepared to give a brief description of one or two books that have inspired you or helped you in some way.

Friday, October 17, 3:00 p.m.

A sampling of seminars determined by a sign-up sheet at the seminar table for those who were unable to attend a particular seminar, or want a seminar repeated. Put in your request at the seminar table.

Saturday, October 18, 3:00 p.m.

Pam Dewey: *A Closer Look at Hell*—Learn from this seminar why the horrifying doctrine of an ever-burning hell has had such a grip on the minds of billions throughout the past 2000 years.

Sunday, October 19, 9:30 a.m.

Brian and Stephanie Smith: *Mission India 2008 and Beyond*—the Mission India 2008 Team will share their experiences of traveling to India to serve widows and orphans.

Beatrice Norte: *Matriarch’s Message*—Learn how key biblical matriarchs represented types of the Churches of God, lessons we can learn from their example, and prophetic implications.

Nancy Vandemark: *How Can You Be a Christian If You Don’t Go To Church?*—An interactive discussion for people who don’t have a congregation, or have a church of five or less adults.

Monday, October 20, 9:30 a.m.

Ryan and Ashley Berlin: *The Optimistic Christian*—Discussion of how to consciously work within God’s systems to make life work.

Matt and Tami Hees: *Celebrate Recovery*—Learn 12 steps to overcome your hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

Brenda Howard: *Leading a Bible Study. . . Who, Me?*—Learn how to improve your own Bible study, as well as facilitating a study for your neighbors, friends, or family.

Connect Kids and Teens to Christ in *YEA Feast Classes*

Excited kids three to 20 will learn the Bible in fun, action-packed classes as they are anchored to Christ and bonded to old and new friends. Kids and/or parents should register Monday night, October 13th beginning at 6:30 p.m., or Tuesday morning between 10 and 11 a.m. *FREE* YEA books will be provided to each student. YEA classes will be held Wednesday, October 15th through Friday the 17th, Sunday the 19th, and Monday the 20th from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Themes and lesson titles are listed below.

Beginners (3-5) - All Aboard

Lesson 1: All Aboard for the Feast!
Lesson 2: Follow the Leader
Lesson 3: It Costs Money
Lesson 4: God Loves Sharing!
Lesson 5: The Final Stop

Primaries (6-8) - Ready for Takeoff!

Lesson 1: A Joyful Trip
Lesson 2: Safety First
Lesson 3: The Pilot's Orders
Lesson 4: Got Troubles?
Lesson 5: Final Destination

Juniors (9-11) - Be A Winner!

Lesson 1: The Assembly
Lesson 2: Team Spirit
Lesson 3: Banner of Truth
Lesson 4: Keep Your Focus
Lesson 5: Closing Ceremony

Intermediates (12-15) - Online 2008

Lesson 1: Click On Celebrate
Lesson 2: Click On Smart Love
Lesson 3: Click On "Just Say No!"
Lesson 4: Click On Caught in the Act
Lesson 5: Click On Super Hero

Senior Teens Seminars - You've Got Mail 2008

Seminar 1: Your Awesome Future
Seminar 2: Cliques or Friendships?
Seminar 3: Join the Leaders
Seminar 4: Peer Power!
Seminar 5: Win Your Crown!

Youth Day 2008

This year's Youth Day theme is *Amazing Love*. The service will tell the story of the amazing love of Jesus Christ, culminating in his great sacrifice for our sins. Our young adults, teens, and children will share the Gospel story through their music, songs, testimonials, skits, narratives, and messages.

Come join us on Youth Day (October 20th) as we celebrate this *Amazing Love!*

Activities for Everyone

Please check the Activity Table or monitors for complete details of every activity and join in on the fun.

| Date/Time | Event |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tues. Oct. 14 | |
| 1:00 p.m. | YEA Orientation - for all teaching staff in the Caribou Room, with lunch |
| 7:00 p.m. | Girl's Night - for young women to build relationships and bond |
| 7:30 p.m. | Pie & Ice Cream Social - at the Panama City Beach Senior Center |
| Wed. Oct. 15 | |
| 2:00 p.m. | Pirate Cruise - 90 minutes on pirate ship, \$15 per person, great for kids |
| 7:00 p.m. | Evening Worship - with contemporary music and sermon by Brent Kern |
| Thurs. Oct. 16 | |
| 2:00 p.m. | Family Picnic - St. Andrews Park, games, food provided by CEM |
| 7:00 p.m. | Open House - young adults, 18-30, married & single, at Frazee's condo |
| 7:00 p.m. | Teen Bowling - at Rock It Lanes |
| Fri. Oct. 17 | |
| 1:00 p.m. | Senior Luncheon - limited to 55 people, in Caribou Room, registration required |
| 6:00 p.m. | Puppet Show - <i>The Narrow Gate</i> , former gang members find salvation |
| 7:00 p.m. | Youth Rally - provided by young adults and teens for all ages |
| Sat. Oct. 18 | |
| 6:00 p.m. | Puppet Show - <i>The Narrow Gate</i> , former gang members find salvation |
| 7:00 p.m. | Young at Heart Dance - music for younger ears, in Oatfield Building |
| 7:00 p.m. | Family Dance - music for all ages at the PCB Senior Center |
| Sun. Oct. 19 | |
| 12:45 p.m. | Youth Day Rehearsal - in Ballrooms A and B, lunch provided for participants |
| 1:00 p.m. | Golf Scramble - four male or female scramble at Signal Hill Golf Club |
| 3:30 p.m. | Variety Show Practice - in Ballrooms A and B |
| 7:00 p.m. | Variety Show - an evening of fun and talent in Ballrooms A and B |
| Monday, Oct. 20 | |
| 12:45 p.m. | Festival Association Meeting - Members and future members invited, snacks and drinks provided |

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have grasped what perilous times the days of Elijah were and are, for the first verse concludes:

And though these are days of
great trial,
Of famine and darkness and
sword,
Still, we are the voice in the
desert crying
“Prepare ye the way of the
Lord!”

Do you ever feel a little lonely in the world? Maybe as a persecuted minority? Well, the days of Elijah were like that for the people of God. The voice crying in the desert is a necessary part of the story. But where do we get off thinking that these are the days of Elijah? Well, there is a funny thing about that.

The last prophet in the Old Testament brought Elijah back into the story: “See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:5-6 NIV).

So, I have to assume the composer of the song knew that God would send Elijah again. What Malachi could not have seen was that Elijah would be sent twice more. Twice? Yes. The first time he was sent in the person of John the Baptist. John said he wasn’t Elijah. Jesus said he was. But then on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus appeared glorified before his disciples, talking with Elijah and Moses. How are these two to play

out in the last days? Remember how the song begins?

These are the days of Elijah,
Declaring the word of the Lord:
And these are the days of Your
servant Moses,
Righteousness being restored.

Not much righteousness was restored in the days of Elijah, nor in the days of Moses, for that matter. But when Elijah shows up the next time, Moses will be there again, and they will be on the cusp of a new world. Are these the days of Elijah indeed? Here is how the song ends:

These are the days of the
harvest,
The fields are as white in Your
world,
And we are the labourers in Your
vineyard,
Declaring the word of the Lord!

Okay, I guess that is the job. If these are the days of Elijah, then we had best be about it. Space does not allow me to give you all the information you need to know about the days of Elijah. If you would like a *FREE* CD of this most relevant message, *The Days of Elijah*, fill in the enclosed card, return it to us, and we’ll rush it to you.

Feast Ushers Needed

Warm, friendly faces are needed to greet people and help them find their seats for the worship services. Young adults would make a great addition to this team. If you are interested in serving, contact Jenee Zaydon at feast08@zantedesign.com.

Knowing God *SPECIAL CD OFFER*

If you were confronted with a person who knew nothing about God, and only had a very short time to tell him about the Almighty One, what would you say? Sticking with the basics would be imperative. What is known about God—His character and plan have stared us in the face since creation. Enrich your Christian life by coming to know God more intimately. Four CDs packaged in a beautiful album cover, regularly priced at \$11.95, have been discounted for you to \$9.95.

Have You Heard This?

THE SCORNER INSIDE

This *FREE* soul-searching CD by Ronald L. Dart is about you—how to live *your* life. If you’re to grow spiritually, you will have to face up to a common flaw in human nature—sitting in the seat of the scorners. This insightful message will help you determine if you are occupying the scorners’ seat and what that means. You’ll discover a treasure-trove of life-changing spiritual principles you may not have considered. Hearing this sermon affords the opportunity to take your walk with Christ to a higher level. To get this *FREE* CD, you must call CEM at 1-888-BIBLE-44 or write us. It is not included on the enclosed card.

Where Your Talents Are Not

By Lenny Cacchio

One time Jesus told a story about a businessman who gave differing amounts of capital to different people, telling them to do something productive with it. He would settle the books with each when he was back in town.

When the rendering was made, some of the men did well while others did not. But the interesting thing about the story is that no one was expected to do more than his allotment of talents allowed. The guy who started with five and made five was rewarded no differently than the fellow who started with two and from that made only two.

The businessman didn't expect the one with two to have the same impact as the fellow with five. He expected results based on what they had, not what they had not.

I take great comfort from this parable. To be sure, our English word "talent" bears a different meaning than the word had in Jesus day (a unit of measure as opposed to natural abilities). Nevertheless I like the expectations it engenders. It is liberating to know where your talents are not.

The stress of trying to be something that I am not melted away once I realized that sales is a good profession for someone else and entrepreneurs need people who are not entrepreneurs to help them. There is no shame in knowing where your strengths lie, hence the liberty in knowing where your strengths lie not.

A man once said that everyone needs to be an evangelist. Maybe so, given the command to preach the Gospel to all nations. But your talent may not be standing on the street corner handing out literature or traveling to Africa to spread the Word. Your talent might be taking care of family and friends in need, or offering hospitality to a lonely acquaintance, or writing a letter to the editor, or volunteering at the school.

You might be as a fix-it guy for a widow with a leaky faucet, or a friendly ear to a distraught soul, or a visitor to a nursing home, or a letter writer to a prisoner. Maybe your talent is to tutor a struggling student, coach a

Little League team, sweep the snow from a neighbor's driveway. Whatever talent you have, that's what you need to invest. You cannot invest another's talent, only your own. Living the Gospel is as noble as preaching it, and it's just as effective.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 30, 2008, Feast of Trumpets - Check our website www.borntowin.net or call 1-888-BIBLE-44 for the time and place for the Feast of Trumpets service in the Tyler/Dallas area where Ronald L. Dart will speak.

October 9, 2008, Day of Atonement Service - Check www.borntowin.net or call 1-888-BIBLE-44 for the Day of Atonement service in Panama City Beach where Ronald L. Dart will speak.

October 13 through 21, 2008, Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day Services - Join us in celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles! No prior registration is required. It will be held at the Boardwalk Beach Resort in Panama City Beach, Florida with the opening night's service beginning at 7:30 p.m., Monday, October 13, 2008. Check out the insert in this *Living to Win* newsletter. A full schedule of events for you to enjoy and grow spiritually are listed for your convenience. For more information, please visit the website at <http://www.borntowin.net/2008tabernacles.aspx>.

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*That the man of God may be proficient
and equipped for every good work.*