

Seasons of the Church

Text I Kings 19:9-18 ⁹ And he (**ELIJAH**) came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, **What doest thou here, Elijah?** ¹⁰ And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; **and I, even I only, am left;** and they seek my life, to take it away. ¹¹ And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and *strong wind* rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an *earthquake*; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: ¹² And after the earthquake a *fire*; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire *a still small voice*. ¹³ And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, **What doest thou here, Elijah?** ¹⁴ And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; **and I, even I only, am left;** and they seek my life, to take it away. ¹⁵ And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: ¹⁶ And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. ¹⁷ And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. ¹⁸ *Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.*

Introduction: Seasons Come and Go, NATIONS, DYNASTIES, AND EMPIRES—EVEN IN THE WORK OF GOD

I. Elijah's SEASON--Wintertime---How Did God Handle Elijah's Hour of Desperation?

- **Comforted His Shaken Soldier**
- **Renewed and Strengthened Elijah's Faith**
- **Promised a Changing Season Soon to Come**
- **Chose New Leaders to Accomplish God's Seasonal Change**
- **Prepared Elijah for his Soon Promotion!!!**
- **GOD'S REMNANT--- THE UNCOMPROMISED—the 7,000—the OLD GUARD**

II. Ezekiel's SEASON--Ezekiel 44:6-16--The Tragedy of Compromising to Fit the Season

a) The Tragedy of Compromising Children-- Ezekiel 44:6-9 ⁶ And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, ⁷ In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations. ⁸ And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. ⁹ Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.

b) The Tragedy of Compromising Leaders -- Ezekiel 44:10-13 ¹⁰ And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity. ¹¹ Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. ¹² Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity. ¹³ And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their

shame, and their abominations which they have committed. ¹⁴ But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

c) The Blessing of the Faithful and Uncompromising-- Ezekiel 44:15-16¹⁵ But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD: ¹⁶ They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.

III . TODAY-- IN THE CHURCH- What Season are we in--Wintertime?

- a) It is a cold harsh environment—all appears dead
- b) Much work goes on even in the winter-normal secular jobs continues-children go to school, animals must be fed, groceries bought, leaves raked, trees pruned, homes winterized, snow removed, etc.
- c) There is unseen growth- growth beneath the surface—GOD IS STILL WORKING
- d) Families spend more time together— outside activities are held to a minimum, no baseball games,

******READ CHURCH YOUTH APOSTACY SURVEY**

Today: COVID is over—Where are those who stayed home????

These couldn't survive the temporary closure of the Church

The Tragedy of Spiritual COVID Casualties—More dangerous than human COVID because eternal souls are far more valuable than worldly bodies!!!!

II Timothy 4:1-2 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ² Preach the word; **be instant in season, out of season;** reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

IV. Points from Biblical History:

a) It's not going to End Well for our Backslidden Nation

Matthew 10:14-15 ¹⁴ And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. ¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Matthew 11:24 ²³ And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.²⁴ But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

b) It will not End Well for the Compromising and the Unfaithful

c) It will End Well for the Faithful and Uncompromising Followers of Christ

CLOSING- THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITHFULNESS, ESPECIALLY TODAY!!!!

Proverbs 20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

II Corinthians 4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

I Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Hebrews 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) ²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Youth Falling Away---Www.gotquestions.org

Not every child who starts out in church stays in church; in fact, many young people are falling away from the faith and walking away from the church as they grow older. A recent survey conducted by the **Barna Group**, a leading research organization whose focus is on the relationship of faith and culture, found that *less than 1 percent of the young adult population in the United States has a [biblical worldview](#). Even more startling, the data shows that less than one half of one percent of Christians between the ages of 18 and 23 has a biblical worldview.*

The Barna Group defined a biblical worldview as belief in the following:

- absolute moral truth exists
- the Bible is completely inerrant
- Satan is a real being, not symbolic
- a person cannot earn his way into the kingdom of God though good works
- Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth
- God is the supreme Creator of the heavens and the earth and reigns over the whole universe today

Another study by Fuller Seminary also looked at why young people are falling away from the faith. The Fuller study determined that the most important factor in whether young people leave the church or remain steadfast in their faith is whether they have a safe haven to express their doubts and concerns regarding their faith before leaving home. Such a refuge is found in two places: their home and their church [youth ministry](#).

The Fuller study also found that most church youth programs tend to focus on providing entertainment and pizza rather than building up young people in their faith. As a result, teens are ill-equipped to face the challenges they will encounter upon leaving home. It's no wonder that some young people fall away from the faith, if they were never grounded in the faith to begin with.

Two studies conducted by both the Barna Group and USA Today found that nearly 75 percent of Christian young people fall away from the faith and leave the church after high school. One of the key reasons they do so is intellectual skepticism. But how many of these youth were actually taught the Bible in their homes or in church? *Statistics show that children today spend an average of 30 hours per week in school where they are often taught ideas that are diametrically opposed to biblical truths, e.g., evolution, the acceptance of homosexuality, etc. Then they come home to another 30 hours per week spent in front of a television set bombarded by commercials and sitcoms, playing video games, or connecting on social media. This is in contrast to the time spent weekly in the church classroom: 45 minutes. Given the amount of exposure to worldly influences versus Bible training, it's understandable why young people leave the home without a Christian worldview and why many are falling away from the faith. Not only are most youth not being well-grounded in the faith, but they're also not being taught to intelligently examine the views of skeptics who will inevitably challenge their faith. Most of these students are not prepared to enter the college classroom where more than half of all college professors view Christians with hostility and take every opportunity to belittle them and their faith.*

A key factor in [keeping young people from falling](#) away from their faith is the influence of their parents. It's as the Proverb says, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" ([Proverbs 22:6](#)). **One particular study found that when both parents were faithful and active in the church, 93 percent of their children remained faithful. When just one parent was faithful, 73 percent of their children remained faithful. When neither parent was particularly active in church, only**

53 percent of their children stayed faithful. In those instances where neither parent was active at all and only attended church now and then, the percentage dropped to a mere 6 percent.

The fact that so many young people are falling away from their faith should concern every Christian family and every church. It's not enough to blame the secularization of society or the increased biblical illiteracy of the world in general. If the world is biblically illiterate, then the church is partly to blame, since the church is to be "declar[ing] the praises of him who called [us] out of darkness into his wonderful light" ([1 Peter 2:9](#)). Churches need to take a hard look their youth programs. Instead of entertaining youth with skits, bands, and movies, we need to teach them Scripture with logic, truth, and a Christian worldview. **Frank Turek, a Christian author and lecturer on apologetics, addresses the problem of youth falling away from the faith this way: "What we win them with we win them to. If we win them with entertainment and low commitment, we win them to entertainment and low commitment. Charles Spurgeon was way ahead of his time when he implored the church to start 'feeding the sheep rather than amusing the goats'"**