

## 1<sup>st</sup> Kings Chapter 19

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- In the previous chapter we had this incredible display of God's power. The prophets of Baal bet their lives on a false god, an un-responsive, powerless god of their own making.
- But in an incredible contrast, as Elijah the prophet of the True and Living God speaks to God, God responds with fire. Fire falls from Heaven and consumes the sacrifice upon the altar, the stones of the altar, the trench of water, and the dust around it.
- Elijah then commands that the 450 false prophets of Baal be destroyed.
- Elijah then tells Ahab that now it will rain, because the God of Israel wills it - and it begins to pour.

**1 Kings 18:46** "And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."

- Elijah running on foot in the pouring rain beats Ahab in his chariot to the gates of Jezreel, which is where we pick up our story.
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V: 1 Ahab tells Jezebel all that Elijah had done - what he should have told her was all that Jehovah had done!

- From a "believer's" perspective the only thing that Elijah had done was to be obedient and show up, following God's instructions - God did all the work.

**Luke 17:10** "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

- God did use Elijah to slay the false prophets, and it was done according to the Law.

**Deuteronomy 18:20** "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die."

- Imagine if we were doing this today - there would be a lot less false teaching going around.
- Jezebel is really a very wicked influence in the kingdom. She was the daughter of a pagan king. She had grown up with the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. She was the one who brought the worship of these pagan gods to Israel. It was through her influence that the prophets of God were killed.

- In the New Testament she is used as a symbol for evil; as God addresses the church at Thyatira:

**Revelation 2:20** “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols...”

V: 2 Upon hearing the news, Jezebel responds that she’s going to kill Elijah and the funny part is that she swears this oath by the “gods” that she worships, the same “gods” that could not respond to the cries of the false prophets, the same so called gods that were in every way powerless - she swears by them!

- Jezebel is simply being true to her character, the fruit of her life.

**Galatians 5:19-21** “<sup>19</sup>Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, witchcrafts, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, <sup>21</sup>envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

V: 3 Elijah hears of this and “*went for his life...*”

- We shouldn’t judge Elijah too harshly, because we’re not so unlike him at times.

**James 5:17** “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are...”

- Elijah was just a man, subject to the same human frailties that we are at times.
- God’s hand was upon him, now he goes in the opposite direction that God had taken him, and he flees towards Beersheba, which is in Judah, the southern part of Israel.
- (Map) Elijah had a servant whom he left in Beersheba. Beersheba is a long way away from Jezreel, 95 miles away as the crow flies.
- The question is: Why did Elijah take heed to her threats? God has shown himself powerful and able. Why this sudden change in heart? Un-met expectations? Things didn’t work out the way he thought they should have?

V: 4 Elijah goes another days journey into the wilderness, about another 20 miles and he crashes under a Juniper tree.

- Scared, tired, and hungry - he prays to God and asks to die.

- As the story progresses, God answers his prayer (six years later) in **2 Kings Ch. 2** - Elijah is carried away to heaven in a chariot of fire, he doesn't get to die.

**Luke 4:1-3** “<sup>1</sup>And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, <sup>2</sup>being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. <sup>3</sup>And the Devil said unto Him...”

- When are we most susceptible to the attacks of the enemy? Usually when we're tired and hungry.

V: 5-6 In his weariness Elijah had drifted off to sleep only to be awakened by an angel sent by God to minister to him.

- He's told to get up and eat, then he sees the freshly baked bread, and the cruse of water - the obvious implication in this is that Elijah had run out to this desert place without food or water after a difficult trip - and that his situation was hopeless.
- Elijah is offered bread, bread that came from heaven.
- When we're weary, weak, tired, and hungry - this is just what we need as well - the bread from heaven.

**John 6:48-51** “<sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

- Elijah is also offered water that came from heaven, in an earthen vessel...

**John 7:37-38** “<sup>37</sup>... if any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. <sup>38</sup>He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

- As Elijah receives the bread and water from heaven, he laid down to rest, he received rest for his weary soul.
- Isn't that just what Jesus promised?

**Matthew 11:28-30** “<sup>28</sup>Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. <sup>30</sup>For My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

- It is a small thing; but notice how the Lord provides for Elijah in different ways. 1st he's fed by ravens at the brook Cherith, then God uses the widow in Zarephath with the barrel and cruse that never fail, now God sends an angel from Heaven.
- One of the problems with denominationalism is that the various denominations usually say "this is the way that God works" and they put God in a box or reduce Him to a formula - but God won't be limited that way.

**Isaiah 55:8-9**      *"<sup>8</sup>For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways saith the Lord. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."*

V: 7-8      After a period of rest the angel again awakens Elijah and instructs him to eat, because the journey is too much for him.

*Partaking of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.*

**Matthew 4:4**      *"... man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*

- The journey is too much for us as well, we won't make it unless the Lord sustains us.
- We need the empowering of the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life that God has called each one of us to.
- When the angel said that the journey was too much for him, it was amongst other things an indication that the angel knew Elijah's final destination.

**Jeremiah 29:11**      *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."*

- I don't know that Elijah is actually where he's supposed to be, God's hand was on him to bring him to Jezreel to do something beside chicken out in front of Jezebel.
- Even though I think that's the case, God will still use this situation and use Elijah for His divine purposes - Elijah may think he's done, but God is not done with Elijah.

**Romans 8:28**      *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

- We need to get the recipe for this bread. This bread and the water was obviously from heaven because it miraculously sustained Elijah for 40 days and 40 nights to and upon Mt. Horeb / Sinai. (200 miles from Beersheba)

V: 9-10 Elijah has gone from the mountain top of victory, through the valley, or literally valley's now to a cave, yet the Lord meets him where he's at.

**Psalm 139:7-10** “<sup>7</sup>Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? <sup>8</sup>If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. <sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; <sup>10</sup>Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

- God asks Elijah - “what are you doing here?”
- Elijah responds that he's been faithful and zealous for the Lord, but that no body else seems to be, in fact all the rest have abandoned the faith.
- The world is against me and now they're trying to kill me. Woe is me...

V: 11-14 The Lord tells Elijah to come out of the cave and to stand upon the mountain - get out to where you can see clearly.

- The Lord passed by, but he wasn't in the *strong wind, the earthquake, or the fire.*
- After these impressive displays of power there was a still small voice, a gentle voice.
- God is able to thunder and pour out fire, but here He speaks gently with his servant, “what are you doing here?” God doesn't scream or yell - He speaks softly.

**Isaiah 30:21** “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

Our God is the ultimate gentle shepherd:

**Isaiah 40:11** “He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

- Sometimes God is in the strong wind, the earthquake, and the fire - but we need to beware as the strong winds of doctrine change, or as things get shaky in the rumblings of emotion, or even in the misdirected fires, the flaming passions - God may not be in them - they need to be compared to the Word of God.
- More often than not, God will speak to us through that still small voice, through His word.
- It is that still small voice that once again speaks to Elijah: *What are you doing here?* (2<sup>nd</sup> time) God is asking “what”, Elijah is saying “why”.

- Elijah gives the same response as before: I've been faithful, zealous, and obedient - but no one else is, and they want to kill me.

V: 15-18 The Lord basically tells Elijah that it's time to get going, there is still work to be done - and I'm not done with you yet, Elijah is sent back out. (Work therapy)

- He sent out though, rested, fed, and with a renewed vision of God's power.

**Isaiah 41:10** "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

1. Go anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. Ben-hadad the current king of Syria probably won't like that too much - dangerous mission.
  2. Go anoint Jehu to be king over Israel. Ahab and his evil wife Jezebel won't like that much either - another dangerous mission.
  3. Anoint Elisha to take your place, indicating that he's not irreplaceable and that his days are numbered (6 years) - pleasant thoughts indeed.
- This looks a little bit like out of the frying pan and into the fire, but the reality is that God is directing Elijah to forget about the past, not to dwell on the present, but look to the future.
  - God tells Elijah, God confides in Elijah what will happen with these men, He's preparing the next generation.

**James 2:23** "... Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God"

**Genesis 18:17-18** "<sup>17</sup>And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; <sup>18</sup>seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

Jesus told His disciples:

**John 15:15** "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

- This is a picture of God's grace and His mercy, not only was Elijah refreshed and sustained, but he's encouraged, and restored as well - God isn't done with him yet.

**Psalms 103:13-14** "<sup>13</sup>Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. <sup>14</sup>For He knoweth our fame; he remembereth that we are dust."

- God also corrects and encourages Elijah; he's not the only servant of God left, Elijah you're not alone.
- There are yet 7,000 that have not bowed to Baal, or kissed him.
- Bowing the knee is easy to understand, but the kissing part: in the Eastern culture people would greet their friends with a kiss, welcoming them into their homes and their hearts - which apparently many had done with the Baal's being welcomed as a friend into their homes and hearts.
- God seems to always preserve a faithful remnant: We live in a time of general apostasy, a falling away from the faith - I pray that we would be part of that faithful remnant that haven't bowed to Baal, or Ashtoreth, or to Molech, or to Mammon, to the gods of power, prosperity, pleasure, or intellect.
- I pray that God would keep us on the straight path - *"I have decided to follow Jesus, though none go with me still I will follow - the cross before me, the world behind me..."*

V: 19-21      Once again Elijah proves that he is a true servant of the most high God, because he is obedient to the Word of God.

**Psalm 25:10**      "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."

- Initially when Elijah fled from Jezreel to Sinai he was headed one way, now he's headed in the other direction - he's changed direction and moving according to God's will - this is a picture of repentance.

(Map) Elijah is traveling from Horeb / Mt. Sinai towards Damascus, Elisha was located in Abel-meholah which is on the way.

- Elijah passes by Elisha while he's working in the field, plowing, and Elijah lays his mantle upon Elisha. Elisha recognized this laying on of the mantle as a call of God upon his life.
- Elisha wants to kiss his father and mother goodbye, this isn't the same as wanted to bury his parents - waiting until they are dead.
- Elisha sacrifices a yoke of oxen, giving the meat to the people, and follows after Elijah becoming his servant, his apprentice or disciple.

**Luke 9:62**      "And Jesus said unto him, no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

- Elisha burned the oxen and their yokes (Cortez burning his ships)- symbolizing that he's all done with that, he gave to the people and followed Elijah, and didn't look back.