

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 1 Kings 19

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through 1 Kings

And we are currently looking at the portion of 1 Kings where we find the life of Elijah and how the Lord exercised his faith – and after each episode in his life that he responded with obedience, God stretched it a little bit more and then a little bit more –

And we saw the result of this stretching of faith in our study two weeks ago – as Elijah had called for a showdown between Baal and Yahweh on Mt Carmel.

In front of the entire nation

And we saw that it wasn't much of a showdown because Baal didn't show up.

The prophets of Baal danced and screamed and cut themselves – and nothing happened.

And finally, Elijah says – “it's my turn”

And he orders the people to drench his sacrifice with water – he doesn't want to leave any doubt that only God can do what was about to happen.

And when Elijah calls upon God - God sent fire to consume Elijah's sacrifice and the altar that it was on.

The people saw with their own eyes who is really God

And Elijah ordered the people to gather the 450 prophets of Baal and they executed them – that was the law.

Elijah then prays for rain – and a huge rainstorm broke out.

So – we saw a tremendous spiritual moment in the life of Elijah.

This was his mountain top moment.

Let's pray...

[1Ki 19:1-18 NKJV] 1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword.

Jezebel was not on Mt Carmel to witness the showdown.

Remember that Elijah tells King Ahab – you better hurry up, grab a bite to eat and go home – because it is going to start raining soon.

And it did – Eijah makes it back into town before Ahab gets there.

So – Ahab now tells Jezebel everything that happened on top of Mt Carmel.

He tells her all that Elijah had done – and that must have been a disturbing report for Queen Jezebel –

Because Elijah had just unraveled her entire system of false worship.

But I want you to notice how it seems like Ahab still doesn't get it – even though he was there to witness the entire thing –

He doesn't yield to God.

He doesn't surrender to God.

He doesn't repent to God.

And this is what pride will do – it will harden the heart.

It will push a person away from God

And instead of accepting that Yahweh is the One True God – they continued to walk in disobedience.

Notice that he gives credit to Elijah – it was what Elijah had done and not what God had done.

He is not declaring what the Lord has done – he is declaring what Elijah had done.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do [to me], and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

Jezebel sends a messenger to Elijah with a warning –

Elijah – in less than 24 hours – you are dead.

Now, keep in mind that Elijah just stood in front of 450 of Baal's prophets

He ordered the Israelites to kill them.

We expect his response to be – "Bring it Jezebel – I stand for the Lord – come and get me"

That is what we expect of Elijah –

But we have to remember that Elijah is human just like we are – he is not a superhero.

He has a nature like ours.

Instead of standing strong –

As we will see, Elijah responded to his own fear.

And I think this is the reason that Jezebel sends the messenger –

If she wanted to kill him – why warn him – just get someone to kill him

But she wanted him to run away – she wanted something so she could go back to the people and say – Where is Elijah now???

Now – turn to Acts 21

Because I want to show you the contrast between Elijah's response and the Apostle Paul.

[Act 21:7-14 NKJV] 7 And when we had finished [our] voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. 8 On the next [day] we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was [one] of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. 10 And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his [own] hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver [him] into the hands of the Gentiles.' " 12 Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Now – this is the natural human response – don't do it Paul.

13 Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of

the Lord Jesus." 14 So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

Was there fear in Paul when he was seeing this prophetic illustration of what was going to happen to him as he got to Jerusalem? I am pretty sure there was fear.

But Paul responds by keeping his fear in check because there was more important things he needed to keep his focus on.

He understood it was God's will for him to go to Jerusalem.

Elijah doesn't even wait to see what God's will is for him – he just takes off.

Wouldn't it had been better if Elijah would have sought the Lord when the messenger showed up to see what was the next step?

Remember what we studied over the last couple of weeks in the life of Elijah – whenever Elijah was in the place that God put him in.

God provided all his needs.

Our tendency is usually to run away – just like Elijah.

Elijah had big victories but also notice that it was something small that revealed the need for the Lord in His life – and again, we can learn a lot from Elijah.

Look at verse 3

3 And when he saw [that], he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which [belongs] to Judah, and left his servant there.

So here we see how much fear Elijah had.

Remember, God sent him to the Kingdom of Israel – Show map

He runs from Jezreel to Beersheba which is about 80 miles.

Beersheba is in the southern portion of Judah.

And he still is not done running.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I [am] no better than my fathers!"

Elijah runs another 20-30 miles and comes to rest under a broom tree.

And he begins to sulk

He begins to feel sorry for himself.

God take my life –

I am a failure.

That is what he is saying here –

for I [am] no better than my fathers!"

He is criticizing the ministry that God has called him to.

“I haven’t produced anything more than my father’s produced. So kill me.”

Question – what is he basing this on?

The threat by Jezebel

You see church,

Here is the thing, Elijah thought that after Mt Carmel – Ahab and Jezebel were going to repent and the entire Kingdom of Israel was going to repent and turn back to the Lord.

He is critical – because right now, his focus is on the outcome of his work and not on what the Lord has done and not on what the Lord is doing.

You see loved ones, when our eyes are not fixed on the Lord, we are going to lose sight of what the Lord has done or what He is currently doing.

Our focus will always be on self.

And when our focus is on self – it is always going to seem, far shorter of where it needs to be.

But it is intended to be that way –

So that we will have no confidence in the flesh –

But instead – we would depend solely upon what God is doing – on the work that He is doing in and around us.

We can focus on our inadequacies, or we can focus on Jesus and the work that He is doing in our lives.

Elijah had a misdirected focus.

A self-focus instead of a God focus.

Days earlier he was standing in boldness in front of the 450 prophets of Baal

And now, he is crying out to God – to kill him because his ministry has failed.

He prayed that it might stop raining and that the rain would restart

And now he prays that he might die.

Mountaintop victory followed by spiritual defeat.

And we see this throughout the scriptures.

Jesus' disciples – they were on the mountaintop when they saw Jesus at the Mt of Transfiguration – and they come right down the mountain and come across the demon possessed boy that they can't even cast out.

Failure, spiritual oppression, defeat often follow great spiritual victories.

5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise [and] eat." 6 Then he looked, and there by his head [was] a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again.

It seems like as we read the story of Elijah

God is always providing for him.

God sent ravens to feed him by the brook

God used the widow to provide him with food and water

And here God sends an Angel to Provide him with a cake

But even before the Angel shows up – God had already provided a broom tree for Elijah to rest under.

And many times – we miss out on the broom trees that He has provided for us to rest – as we are busy being critical of the circumstances in our lives or complaining that God is not active in our lives.

Because that is what Elijah is doing – complaining – not noticing the broom tree that God has provided.

And so we see that as Elijah rested – that God sent provisions for him.

Note that when God sets out to deliver Elijah from depression, He

doesn't slap him upside the head.

There's no rebuke here.

Elijah is physically and emotionally exhausted

So God allows him to rest.

7 And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise [and] eat, because the journey [is] too great for you." 8 So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

Think about this – just by the simple act of obedience –

Elijah arose, he ate and he went –

And he was able to travel 40 days on this cake.

It is a reminder of the manna –

Remember, God provided manna for the Children of Israel every day

And what was in the manna was enough to sustain the Children of Israel during their time in the wilderness

And of course, the manna points to Jesus – where He spoke about being the manna.

And He is our sufficiency

So – if we add the 40 days to the time that Elijah is on the run – he is in this state of depression for about 7 weeks already – until he gets to Horeb (Mt Sinai)

9 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD [came] to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

God asks Elijah one question – I had you make a note of it.

What are you doing here?

But notice Elijah doesn't answer God's question.

God didn't ask, "Why are you here?"

He asked, "What are you doing here?"

You see, in 1 Kings 17,18 – Elijah walked in obedience to where God called him to go.

God is telling Elijah here – "I didn't tell you to come here" What are you doing here?

In other words, this is not the place I called you to be.

We find something similar in the Garden of Eden –

God calls out to Adam “Where are you?” Genesis 3:9

Did God not know where Adam was? Of course He did – but the question was directed at Adam “What have you done Adam, come clean Adam”

Elijah’s response, “I am here to feel sorry for myself – nobody cares anymore. I am the only good guy left”

11 Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces 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.

Elijah was accustomed to seeing God work in dramatic ways.

The drought,

being fed by ravens,

the miraculous supply of flour and oil,

raising the widow’s son from the dead, calling down fire and rain from the skies

All these things have tuned Elijah to expect this kind of thing as God’s normal way of revealing Himself.

Elijah equated the dramatic with the manifestations of God.

So God brought Elijah some drama devoid of His presence.

A fierce storm that tore the rocks apart hit Sinai. God didn't speak to Elijah through the storm

An earthquake rocked its foundations. God didn't speak to Elijah through the earthquake

A firestorm raked the side of the mountain. God didn't speak to Elijah through the firestorm

God didn't utter a word to Elijah through any of these mediums.

It was in the silence following those things that Elijah hears a whisper.

A voice, small and calm, speaks to his heart.

You see, when Jezebel threatened Elijah –

Elijah expected God to answer in the same way He did on Mt Carmel

He expected Jezebel to be burned to a crisp

And when that didn't happen – he took off thinking that God had forsaken him.

Elijah had to come to grips with the fact that God is still God

And that God is still at work, whether we see it or not.

Elijah needed to learn this lesson.

You see, sometimes we have preconceived notions of how we tend to believe God reveals Himself and responds.

And that is what God is trying to teach Elijah and us –

To cast aside these preconceived notions

Because He knows that our preconceived notions hinder our trust in Him when He doesn't meet our expectations.

And we begin to come to God with the question -

Where were you God when I needed you the most?

On more than one occasion, I had people come up to me and say, "I don't feel God working in my life"

Just because we don't feel God – doesn't mean that God isn't working in our lives –

God is beyond feelings and emotions.

Elijah needed a fresh revelation of God to overcome his despair.

That is what God gave him

Did he learn?

Let's see -

13 So it was, when Elijah heard [it], that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice [came] to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

When we look at the text carefully – between verse 12 and 13 –

It is important to note that some time passed between these two verses.

In the previous verse, Elijah was already outside the cave when he felt the wind and the earthquake and the fire.

Elijah goes back in –

Time passes by

He hears it again

And the Lord asks him the same question as before – What are you doing here??

And Elijah responds the same way.

Elijah has not learned the lesson – he is still discouraged.

But here is grace -

15 Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael [as] king over Syria. 16 "Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi [as] king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint [as] prophet in your place. 17 "It shall be [that] whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. 18 "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

So God in effect says,

"Okay, you're not getting what I'm trying to teach you; but that doesn't change the fact there's important work to be done and you're the man to do it.

So get out of this cave, and get back to work."

Elijah is still discouraged, he is still depressed –

But God now goes after Elijah's will.

God reveals to Elijah that his work as a prophet had indeed been fruitful.

God had been at work all the time and there were others in Israel who had responded to His still small voice and some of them had responded to the work that the Lord was doing in the life of Elijah.

I just love how the Lord met Elijah where he was at – and eventhough Elijah didn't grasp it initially – the Lord didn't give up on him and He doesn't give up on us.

He extends the same grace to you and me.

Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,



SANTA CRUZ
Santa Cruz

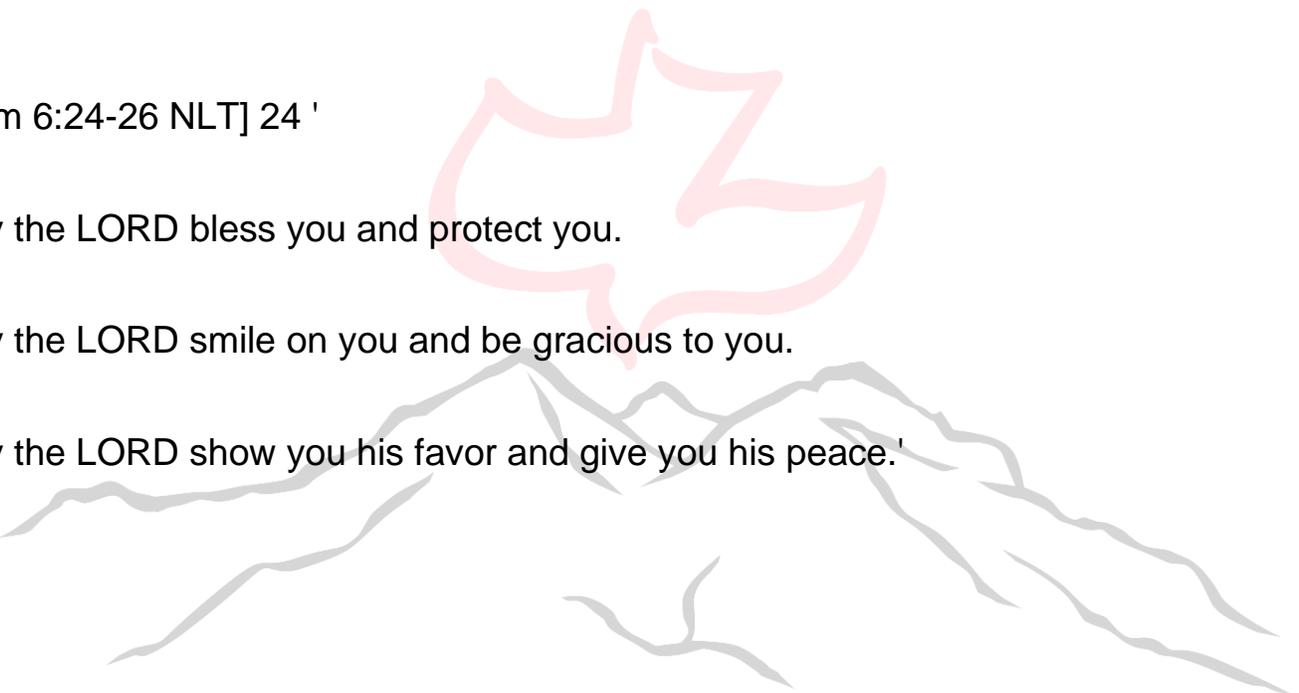
I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.!



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