

## *1 KINGS 19 | Elijah Reassured and Recommissioned*

### *Elijah's Running*

1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying:

So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.

3 And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

### *Elijah's Resting*

4 But [Elijah] himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a juniper tree. And he requested for himself that he might die and said:

It is enough. Now, Yahweh, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers.

5 He lay down and slept under a juniper tree. And look, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him:

Arise, eat.

6 Then he looked and look, there was at his head a bread cake on hot stones and a jar of water. So he ate, drank, and lay down again. 7 The angel of Yahweh came again a second time and touched him and said:

Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you.

8 So he arose, ate, drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb [Sinai], the mountain of God.

### *Elijah Reassured and Recommissioned*

9 Then he came there to a cave and lodged there. And look, the word of Yahweh came to him, and he said to him:

What are you doing here, Elijah?

10 He said:

I have been very zealous for Yahweh, the God of hosts. For the sons of Israel have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 So he said,

Go forth and stand on the mountain before Yahweh.

And look, Yahweh was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before Yahweh, but Yahweh was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but Yahweh was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake a fire, but Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And look, a voice came to him and said:

What are you doing here, Elijah?

14 Then he said,

I have been very zealous for Yahweh, the God of hosts. For the sons of Israel have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left. And they seek my life, to take it away.

15 Yahweh said to him,

Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you have arrived, you will anoint Hazael king over Aram, 16 Jehu the son of Nimshi you will anoint king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you will anoint as prophet in your place. 17 It will come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha will put to death. 18 Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.

### *Elisha's Readiness*

19 So he departed from there [Mount Horeb] and found Elisha the son of Shaphat while he was plowing with twelve pairs before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his cloak on him. 20 He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said:

Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you.

And he said to him:

Go back again, for what have I done to you?

21 So he returned from following him, took the pair of oxen, sacrificed them, boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and served/assisted/attended (שרת) to him.

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### **1. Introduction.**

- a. Need.
  - (1) We've been praying for revival for many years. Where is it?
  - (2) What happens when our expectations fail?

### **2. Elijah's Running (1 Ki 19:1-3).**

- a. **1 Ki 19:1-3** 1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying: So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time. 3 And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.
- b. Here is another titanic battle between God and the gods (v. 2).
- c. Who was Elijah's servant (v. 3)? Did Elisha replace him (v. 21)?
- d. A great spiritual victory is often followed great spiritual disappointment and temptation. We are very vulnerable after a great victory. After a great victory:
  - (1) We are to expect a spiritual counterattack from the enemy.
  - (2) Disappointments and frustrations are to be expected.
  - (3) We may be tempted to lose faith and take our eyes off God.
  - (4) Danger zones include:
    - (a) Physical exhaustion.
    - (b) Emotional burnout.
    - (c) Temptation to pride or self-pity.
- e. Even spiritually mature believers struggle and have bad days.

### **3. Elijah's Resting (1 Ki 19:4-8).**

- a. **1 Ki 19:4-8** 4 But [Elijah] himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a juniper tree. And he requested for himself that he might die and said: It is enough. Now, Yahweh, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers. 5 He lay down and slept under a juniper tree. And look, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him: Arise, eat. 6 Then he looked and look, there was at his head a bread cake on hot stones and a jar of water. So he ate, drank, and lay down again. 7 The angel of Yahweh came again a second time and touched him and said: Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you. 8 So he arose, ate, drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb [Sinai], the mountain of God.
- b. Elijah is depressed (v 4).
- c. Elijah needs Jesus' touch, and he gets it (v. 5).
- d. Jesus sustains him with bread cake, water, and sleep (vv. 6-7).
- e. Elijah needs Jesus' touch a second time, and he gets it (v. 7). The journey is too great for Elijah on his own (v. 7).
- f. Jesus sustains Elijah for the journey ahead of him (v. 7-8).
- g. The food Jesus gave Elijah was supernatural food (v. 8).

### **4. Elijah's Reassurance and Recommissioning (1 Ki 19:9-18).**

- a. Elijah's Complaint and God's Approach (vv. 9-13).
- (1) **1 Ki 19:9-13** 9 Then he came there to a cave and lodged there. And look, the word of Yahweh came to him, and he said to him: What are you doing here, Elijah? 10 He said: I have been very zealous for Yahweh, the God of hosts. For the sons of Israel have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left, and they seek my life, to take it away. 11 So he said, Go forth and stand on the mountain before Yahweh. And look, Yahweh was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before Yahweh, but Yahweh was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but Yahweh was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake a fire, but Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak (תַּרְטָא) and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave.
  - (2) The cave (vv. 9, 13) is likely the same cave from which Moses viewed God. God appeared to Moses in a similar way, at the same spot, when Moses was deeply discouraged, as Elijah now is.
    - (a) **Ex 33:21-22** 21 ... Yahweh said, Behold, there is a place by me where you [Moses] shall stand on the rock. 22 And while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.
  - (3) God may approach us in any number of ways. But when we need encouragement, he chooses to approach us gently (v. 12).
    - (a) **Jn 10:27** 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.
  - (4) The cloak (v. 13) is the same cloak that will be passed to Elisha.
- b. Elijah's Complaint and God's Instructions and Reassurance (vv. 13-18).
- (1) **1 Ki 19:13-18** 13 And look, a voice came to him and said: What are you doing here, Elijah? 14 Then he said, I have been very zealous for Yahweh, the God of hosts. For the sons of Israel have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left. And they seek my life, to take it away. 15 Yahweh said to him, Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you have arrived, you will anoint Hazael king over Aram, 16 Jehu the son of Nimshi you will anoint king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you will anoint as prophet in your place. 17 It will come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha will put to death. 18 Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.
  - (2) God sends Elijah back to work (vv. 15-17) with a reassurance he is not alone (v. 18).
  - (3) God reassures Elijah that he is in charge. Ahab, Jezebel, the prophets of Baal, and all who follow them will face his justice. God will use Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha for this purpose (vv. 15-17). Ahab's dynasty will not continue (v. 16).
  - (4) God wants Elijah to know Elisha will eventually take Elijah's place as the leader of the son of prophets (v. 16).
  - (5) Finally, Elijah is to know there is a Jewish remnant of 7,000 in Israel who are loyal to him (v. 18).

- (a) There is always a Jewish remnant, chosen by grace (Ro 11:2-5).
- (b) “God’s work was 7,000 times bigger than Elijah thought it was.”

## 5. Elisha’s Readiness (1 Ki 19:19-21).

- a. **1 Ki 19:19-21** 19 So [Elijah] departed from there [Mount Horeb] and found Elisha the son of Shaphat while he was plowing with twelve pairs before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him. 20 He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said: Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you. And he said to him: Go back again, for what have I done to you? 21 So he returned from following him, took the pair of oxen, sacrificed them, boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and assisted/attended/served (שרת) to him.
- b. Elijah obeys God, heads toward Damascus, and finds Elisha at his home, busily working (v. 19). Elisha lives in Abel-meholah (v. 16), just east of the Jordan River.
  - (1) Elisha was a normal person called from his normal activities to serve God full time (v. 19). This follows a biblical pattern:
    - (a) Peter, Andrew, James, and John were called from fishing (Mt 4:18-22).
    - (b) Matthew was called from tax collecting (Lk 5:27-28).
    - (c) Timothy was called from his normal activities (Ac 16:1-3).
- c. Elijah throws his cloak on Elisha, a sign his prophetic authority will one day pass to Elisha (v. 19). It is the same cloak:
  - (1) We see in v. 13.
  - (2) With which Elijah parts the Jordan River (2 Ki 2:8).
  - (3) That falls from Elijah when he is taken up in a whirlwind (2 Ki 2:13).
  - (4) With which Elisha parts the Jordan River (2 Ki 2:14).
- d. Elisha is a FAT (faithful, available, and teachable) disciple.
  - (1) He prepares a sacrificial meal for his family and neighbours (v. 21) as a way of showing his commitment to Elijah. He will never farm again. He is now a full time disciple-in-training under Elijah. In a similar way:
    - (a) Joshua committed to Moses.
    - (b) The disciples committed to Jesus.
    - (c) Timothy and others committed to Paul.
- e. Elisha begins to assist/attend/serve Elijah as his disciple (v. 21).
  - (1) The MAWL (model, assist, watch, leave) process began. Elisha received on the job training from Elijah. He watched Elijah as he encountered various challenges as prophet and leader.
  - (2) Elisha isn’t mentioned by name again until 2 Ki 2:1. But he personally serves Elijah for at least three years (1 Ki 22:1), probably longer (consider 1 Ki 20-2 Ki 1).
    - (a) “The chronology of the stories of Elijah is extremely difficult to reconstruct, but the reference to Jehu and Hazael suggests that they were persons already known to Elijah. Jehu did not become king until 841, twelve years after Ahab’s death, and he reigned for twenty-eight years. It seems, then, that Elijah’s commission came late in Ahab’s life. We know also that it came at least four years before the king’s death. The basis for this assertion is that the commission was given before Ben-Hadad’s siege of Samaria, which in turn

was four years before Ahab was slain in the Ramoth Gilead campaign of 853 (20:1, 26; 22:1)” (Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 362).

(b) Elisha was publicly known as the one who “poured water on the hands of Elijah” (2 Ki 3:11). He was Elijah’s right hand man.

## 6. An Interesting Pattern:

	Great Victory	Great Disappointment	God’s Reassurance	Focus on a Few	Passing the Torch	Great Victories
<b>Moses</b>	Exodus Red Sea	Golden calf Dying in the wilderness	Sinai	Joshua	Crossing the Jordan	Conquest of Canaan
<b>Elijah</b>	Mount Carmel	Baal worship Jezebel’s plot	Horeb	Elisha	Cloak and Spirit pass to Elisha	Miracles
<b>Jesus</b>	Miracles	Rejection of Israel	Transfiguration	Disciples	Pentecost	Acts
<b>Paul</b>	Missionary journeys	Jews’ rejection of the gospel Imprisonment Defections	Third heaven	Timothy, Titus, Luke, John Mark	Pauline epistles	Worldwide spread of the gospel