

**1 Kings 19.1-21****Elijah: Where does a prophet go to resign?****Read 1 Kings 19.1-21****I / MAKING THE CONNECTION**

1. This story is the sequel and follow-up to our last lesson from **chapter 18: ‘Will the real God please ... answer by fire?’** Well, Yahweh is the real God – and He did answer by fire from Heaven [1] to show Himself to be God, [2] to evidence His Presence among them, [3] to authenticate and validate Elijah as His prophet – and most of all, [4] to give an irrefutable demonstration and display of His Glory!
2. Sadly, Elijah’s personal faith and confidence in Yahweh and his courage and boldness that he presented in the showdown on Mount Carmel is also going to crash and burn in the face of wicked Jezebel’s threats on his life. He’s going to turn tail, bolt in fear, and run for his life.
3. I’m not going to personally find fault with Elijah and criticize him. Yahweh will ... but I’m going to let Yahweh do that ... and we’re all going to learn from how Yahweh confronted Elijah, re-confirmed his faith, and re-called Elijah back into His service.
4. So much of this story reminds me of how Jesus confronted Peter on the shores of Galilee after Peter had denied that he even knew Jesus – how Jesus lovingly re-confirmed Peter’s faith in Him and re-called him back into His service / **see John 21**
5. Over the course of my 50 years of pastoral ministry, I, too, have often diverted my eyes of commitment to Christ and confidence in Him to my own personal interests and resources. I, too, at times have reverted to thinking that the ministry was about my personal agenda, my ambitions, my expectations, and my resources or even gifts. In those times, I have fallen into seasons [sometimes long, protracted seasons] of self-perceived failure, self-assumed uselessness, fear, anxiety, emotional meltdowns, despondency, and depression. I have tried to resign, and quit from pastoral ministry, and go off to do something else. But God has always come to me at my lowest ebbs, when I had given up on myself, flamed out ... and revealed His Glory to me again ... and call me to just trust and follow Him on to the next assignment He was pleased to give me to do.
6. **That is Elijah’s story here that we will unpack in this lesson...**

**II / vv 1-3 / “ELIJAH, JEZEBEL HAS PUT OUT A HIT ON YOU!”**

1. This was after Elijah had ordered the execution of Jezebel’s prophets of Baal / **see ch 18.40**.
  - a. BTW, Yahweh had also ordered the execution of false prophets who would Israel away from loving, serving, and worshiping Him only / **see Deuteronomy 13.1-5**. The same order would also have included Jezebel and everyone else who willingly followed those false prophets / **Deut 13.6-18**
  - b. Jezebel had also murdered Yahweh’s true prophets who were calling Israel back to Him / **see ch 18.4, 13**
2. **v 2** / Ahab had gone back to Jezebel and gave her a full report on everything Elijah had done at Carmel.
3. Jezebel was enraged...she sent a messenger to Elijah to threaten to kill him. And NOTE: she called on the same authority of her gods ... that Yahweh had so publicly humiliated that very day! **“So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them [her prophets] by this time tomorrow!”**
4. **v 3** / Elijah panicked. His boldness, courage, and confidence in Yahweh that he had earlier in the day suddenly caved, evaporated, crashed and burned in an instant. He immediately bolted and ran for his life to Beersheba [on the southern boundary of Judah – about 100 miles south from Jezreel].

5. I know that all of us can read **chapter 19** and scan back through **chapters 17-18** and say to Elijah: *“But Elijah, can’t you remember*
- how Yahweh has empowered you, protected you, and provided for you over the last 3 ½ years?*
  - How you prayed and called for this drought and Yahweh sent it?*
  - How Yahweh sent the ravens with food to feed you?*
  - How He sent you to the widow at Zarephath and worked miracles to provide oil and flour to feed her and her son and you during the drought?*
  - How Yahweh raised the widow’s son from death through your prayers?*
  - How Yahweh showed up at Carmel and sent fire from Heaven to devour His sacrifice – and that one was just earlier today?*
  - How you prayed again and Yahweh raised the small clouds from the Mediterranean as you watched and sent a deluge?*
  - How can you not trust Him now?”*
6. And yet, all of us have been caught in the moments of our lives when we, too, have forgotten where we have been and how the LORD has sustained and provided for us – and all we could see was the perceived danger of that moment of time where we were ... like the frame of that moment was frozen and paused and that frame was all the world and history there was. And we were all alone in that frame with the threats against us. God was not in the frame [in our thinking]. And we, too, panicked and ran.
7. We can joyfully sing: *“Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come...”* and then immediately panic and meltdown when the next one comes...

### III / vv 4-8 / WHERE DOES A PROPHET GO TO RESIGN?

- v 4** / This is what Elijah is trying to do: resign from being a prophet and quit – and even die! **“It is enough; now, O Yahweh, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers!”** In other words: *“I have had enough! I can’t take any more! Suicide is not an option – so, O Yahweh, I quit, I resign! Please kill me here on the spot!”*
- I think we can safely assume that Elijah is thinking thoughts like these:
  - I thought Baalism would be defeated on the spot today ...
  - I expected Yahweh to send an immediate revival of faith to Israel today ...
  - I thought that there would be an instantaneous rejection of Jezebel and a revolt against her and Ahab today ...
  - I thought that the influence of Jezebel in Israel would be overturned today and maybe she would resign and abdicate in defeat ... but none of this happened today!
  - I have failed – my whole ministry ended in failure today in spite of the awesome demonstration of Yahweh’s supremacy and sovereignty!
- That’s the ways our self-assumed expectations can often interpret the Providences of God! Maybe even in this sad resignation prayer Elijah is even blaming Yahweh for not faithfully following through. Maybe he is even thinking that Yahweh had failed him and was abandoning him...
- v 5** / What Yahweh knew he needed was a good, long nap. He needed to physically rest after the long, intense emotional expenditure of the day’s ministry.
- Yahweh sent an angel to rouse him up. Yahweh had miraculously [again] provided him from freshly-baked bread and a jar of water. He ate and drank – and went back to sleep.
- The second time – the angel woke him up, told him to eat and drink again. Yahweh was going to send him still further south about 250 more miles ... all the way to Horeb [Sinai] where Yahweh had appeared to Israel and Moses at the giving of the Law.

7. So Elijah obeyed – ate and drank what Yahweh had provided – and started the journey on down south to Horeb ... where Yahweh had planned another appearance to him.

#### IV / vv 9-18 / “WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ELIJAH?”

1. v 9 / When Elijah arrived at Horeb, he found a sizable cave [they are plentiful in that region] where he decided to camp a while and process everything that was going on in his soul [Also...he thought he was in a secluded and safe place to hide from Jezebel – however Yahweh knew where he was and was there with him...]
2. **“What are you doing here, Elijah?”** This is the question that Yahweh asked Elijah twice: vv 9 & 13. Make no mistake about it: Yahweh knew what Elijah was doing there & why. But He asked Elijah in order to give him the opportunity to tell Yahweh for himself. Yahweh wanted Elijah to have his say and hear himself say it so Yahweh could correct him and put everything into perspective with Yahweh’s purpose – why He was doing everything the ways He was.
3. v 10 / So, here is Elijah’s response and defense ... and again, he repeats this pitiful defense both times Yahweh asked him the question: **He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”**
4. Let’s interpret this defense:
  - a. **“the LORD, the God of hosts”** can be translated **“God of Armies”** which names Yahweh as the Sovereign God over all the ‘hosts’ of earthly kings, kingdoms, and their armies; as well as all the ‘hosts’ of false gods; as well as all the ‘hosts/armies’ of angelic beings – in other words: Yahweh is God over all the inhabitants of earth and Heaven, and He does with them all according to His sovereign purposes and pleasure – and He works His will among them all / **see Daniel 4.34-35**
  - b. *I have been very faithful to You in all You have called and sent me to do – I have been jealous and zealous to speak for You, represent You well, and deliver your prophetic messages...*
  - c. *I have been grieved and offended for Your sake when they forsook your covenant, when they tore down Your altars to erect those obscene images for Baal and Asherah...*
  - d. *I have grieved over Jezebel’s massacre of Your prophets – my fellow prophets of Yahweh...*
  - e. *I am the only one left ... just me ... and now Jezebel has put a hit out on me also...*
  - f. *And, maybe, for all I can see and tell, it appears that even You have abandoned me and are not coming to my defense ... I can’t do this alone, especially if You won’t act and take up for Yourself!*
5. v 11 / So Yahweh proceeds to show Elijah that He is, in truth, in charge of His own Kingdom...
  - a. Yahweh tells Elijah to go out and stand before Him at the mouth of this large cave: **And He said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by...** [much as He did when Moses needed affirmation that Yahweh was with them and prayed, **“Please show me Your Glory!”** / **see Exodus 33.12-23**]
  - b. *a great and strong wind [tornado/hurricane] passed by and tore up the rocks around Elijah – but Yahweh didn’t appear in the wind*
  - c. *an earthquake* shook and loosened the massive rocks around him – but Yahweh didn’t appear in the earthquake
  - d. *a conflagration [fierce, raging, devouring fire] burned up everything around Elijah – but Yahweh didn’t appear in the fire / **all of God’s works are not performed in the sensational, spectacular phenomenon that we often want and look for...***

- e. THEN, *Yahweh whispered* to Elijah and asked him the second time: **“What are you doing here, Elijah?”**
6. Elijah stubbornly, insistently offered the same pitiful, self-centered defense to Yahweh’s whispered interrogation...
7. Yahweh then re-commissioned Elijah to go back and proceed with His next steps to fulfilling the purposes He had planned – **“I am in charge here, I know what I want to do and will do, and you need to be willing to do what I give you to do ... and trust Me to work it out as I have planned – you have not failed, and I have not given up on you – Here’s what I want you to do...”**:
  - a. Go back by way of Damascus [Syria] and anoint Hazael to be king over Syria / see **2 Kings 8.7-14**
  - b. Anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi to be the next king over Israel / see **2 Kings 9 & 10**
  - c. Anoint Elisha to be My prophet in your place
8. Interestingly, the anointing of Elisha would be the only task that Elijah would personally perform ... Elisha would pick up Elijah’s prophetic mantle and continue on with Yahweh’s Kingdom mission / see references above for **Elisha’s ministry in the anointing of Hazael and Jehu. But, through the actions of these anointed prophet and kings of Syria and Israel, the worship of Baalism would be destroyed and eradicated from Israel!**
9. **v 18** / But Yahweh had one last word to give Elijah: Elijah was NOT the lone surviving follower and worshiper of Yahweh. In spite of Jezebel’s efforts to cancel Him and dethrone Him as the true God of Israel, **“Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him!”**
10. We may grieve over the apostacies and all the departures from God that we witness around us, not only in our social culture, but also in so many who at least confess to follow God in the religious cultures. But Jesus has promised the ultimate victory of His Kingdom and His churches: **“On this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!” / Matthew 16.18.** Visible evidences may fade and wane, but Jesus will win! Just be sure YOU remain faithful!

**V / vv 19-21 / “ELISHA, FOLLOW ME – AND CARRY ON!”**

1. **v 19** / To Elijah’s credit, he fixes his eyes of faith back on Yahweh, trusts Him, plucks up his courage, puts his running sandals back on, and heads back to Israel.
2. Elijah finds Elisha being faithful already in his farming responsibilities. He throws his prophetic mantle over him and calls him into the ministry.
3. **v 20** / Elisha asks for leave to at least wrap up things with his family at home. Elijah grants him permission with this charge: **“Don’t forget what I have just done to you!”** [**“Go back again – for what have I done to you?”**]
4. **v 21** / Elisha faithfully settles all of his affairs at home and with his family ... and commits himself to follow Elijah – and Yahweh – to carry on the mission of Yahweh’s Kingdom.

**Do not fear what you are about to suffer.**

**Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation.**

**Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. / Revelation 2.10**

**Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. / Revelation 3.4**