

Elijah and Stillness

1 Kings 19

Wayne Braudrick

December 21, 2025

Life Change: We encounter God in His word

Life gets really hard when you feel empty

Elijah is empty

1-5a

Elijah got lost in self-pity. Self-pity is a pathetic emotion. It will lie to you. It will exaggerate. It will drive you to tears. It will cultivate a victim mentality in your head. And, in the worst-case scenario, it can bring you to the point of wishing to die, which is exactly where Elijah was. – Charles Swindoll, *Elijah*

Practice: Look beyond despair to God's will

God provides for and guides Elijah

5-9a

Practice: Accept God's provision

Elijah encounters God

9-13a

Practice: Encounter God in His word

God recommissions Elijah

13-18

Practice: Don't give up...Engage

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ADVENT THROUGH ELIJAH'S EYES

PLEASE SILENCE YOUR PHONE

I quietly stared at the empty, stained coffee cup in my hands, realizing my soul had become like that cup. [I was] busy with good things that brought me praise rather than things that brought God glory. I had been using vast amounts of time doing what God had never called me to do.

– Janet Denison, *Content to Be Good, Called to Be Godly*





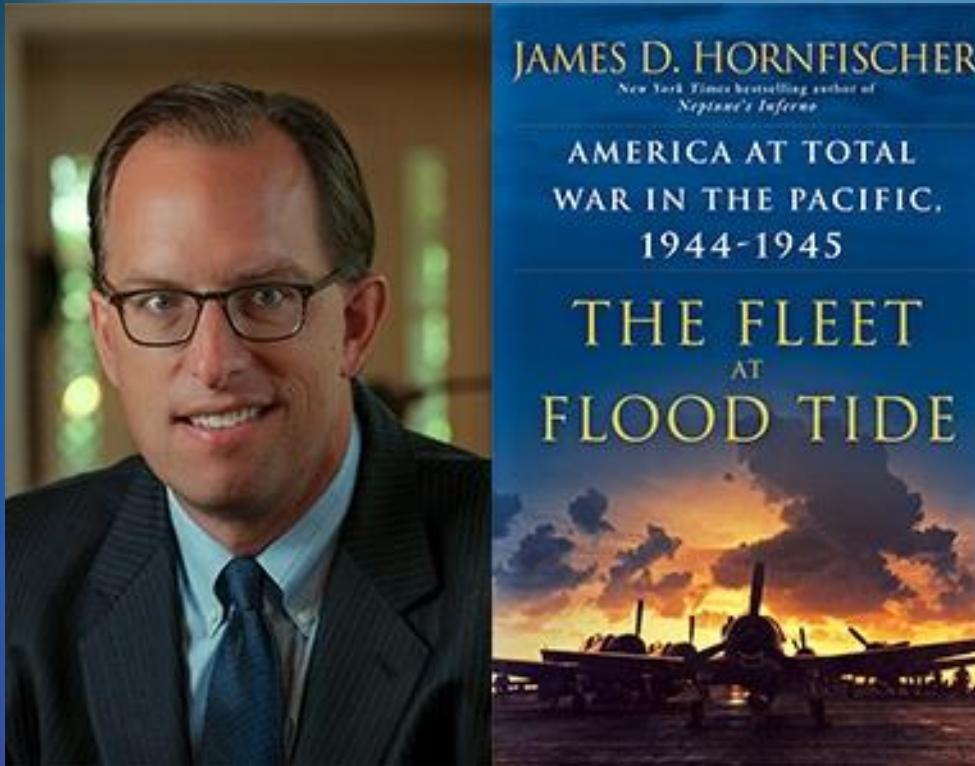
courtesy istock



You wanted to be the great giver; glorifying the *true* Giver had nothing to do with it.



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Fatigue is a peculiar thing. There are very few people who suffer from combat fatigue who realize its importance. They will try harder, try to do more, and the harder they work, the more tired they get and the less they can do.

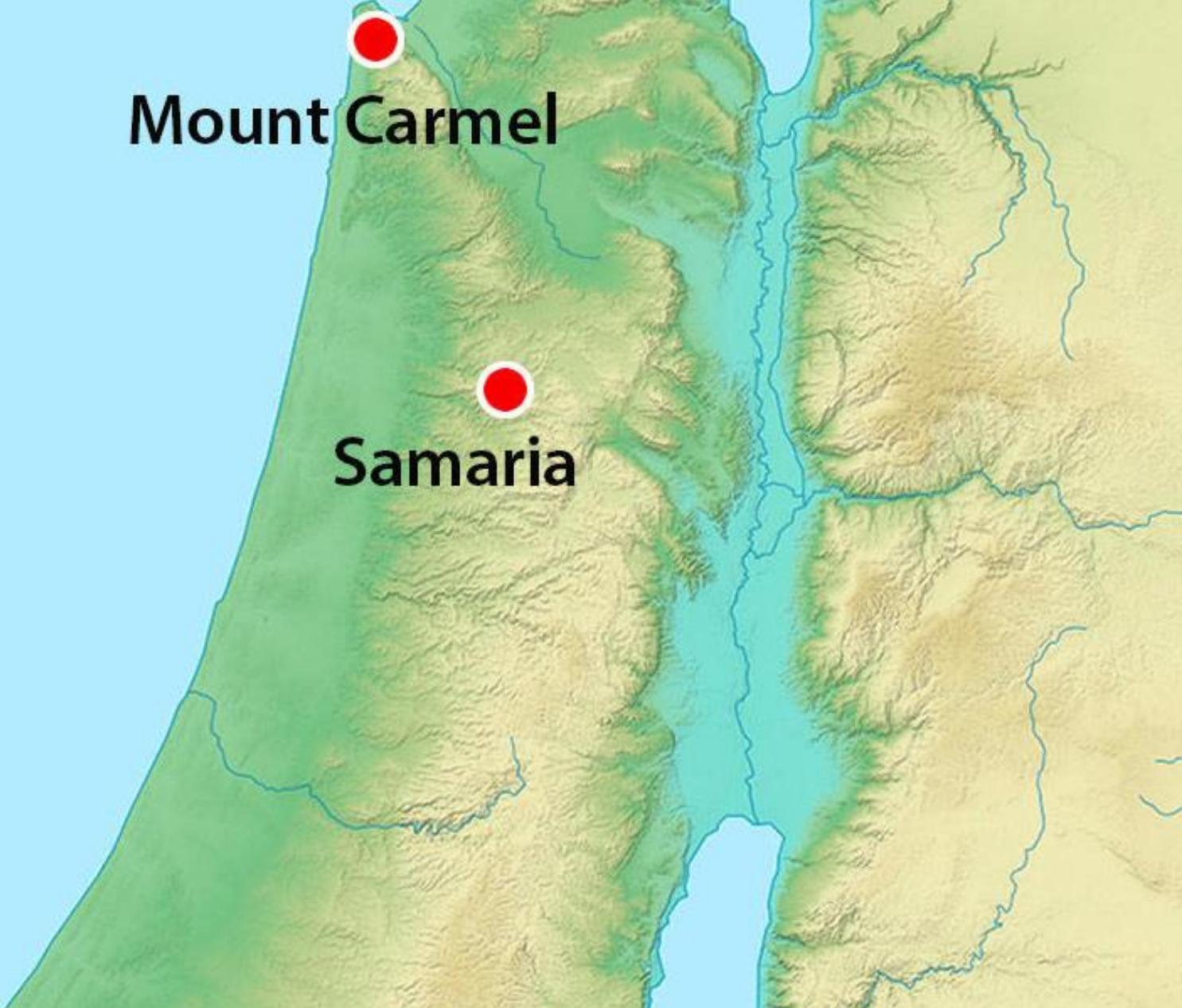
– James D. Hornfischer, *The Fleet at Flood Tide: America at Total War in the Pacific, 1944–1945*



- **We are exhausted.**
- **We are focused on self instead of God's will.**

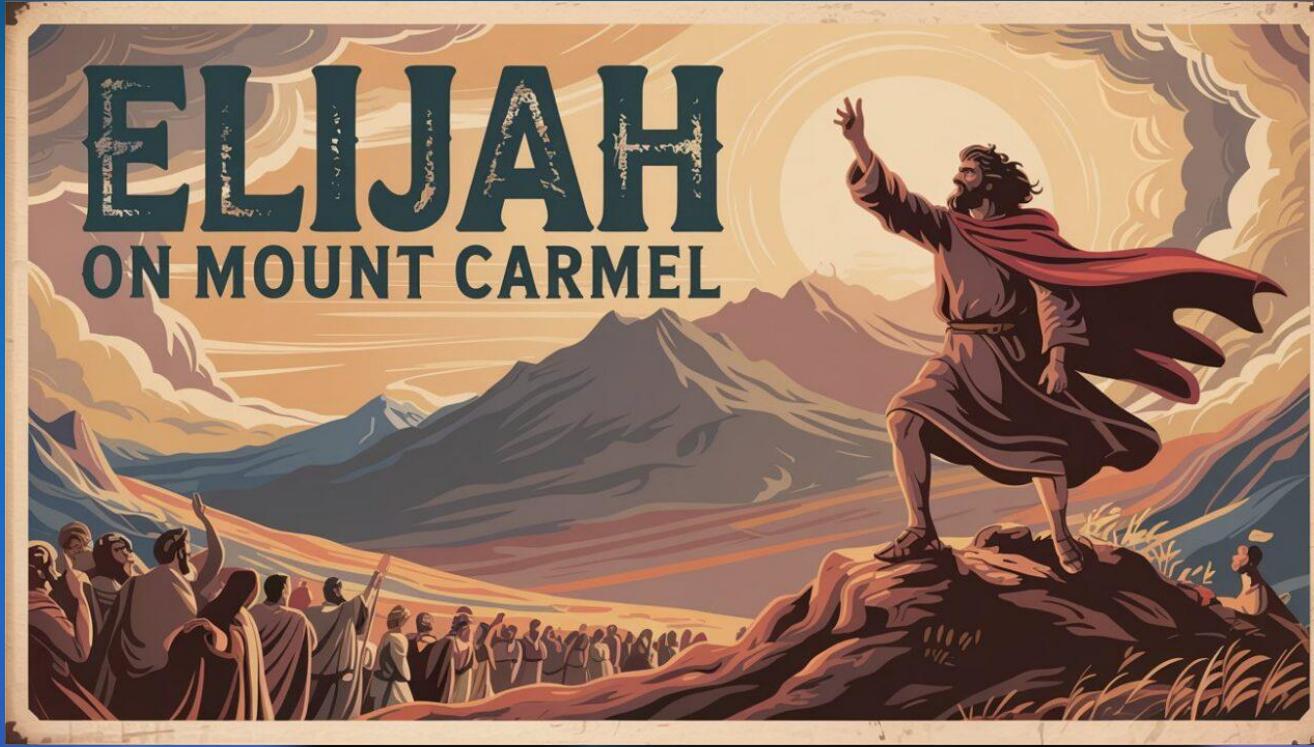
¹ Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don’t make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!”

³ Then Elijah became afraid and immediately ran for his life. When he came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ but he went on a day’s journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. He said, “I have had enough! Lord, take my life, for I’m no better than my ancestors.” ⁵ Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree.



Mount Carmel

Samaria



- Her 850 priests of Baal & Asherah had failed utterly in the contest Elijah set up on Mt. Carmel.
- The people rebelled against Baal & Asherah worship. In fact, they killed Jezebel's priests.
- The devastating 3-year drought was finally over.

² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don’t make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!”

1 Kings 19 CSB

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1 Kings 19 CSB



אָמַר in verse 3 is probably better translated as “saw” instead of “became afraid.” Elijah was broken, but he was not afraid. – Ronald Allen, “Elijah the Broken Prophet”



4 but he went on a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. He said, "I have had enough! Lord, take my life, for I'm no better than my ancestors."

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Retama raetam
“broom plant”



courtesy Peter Coxhead



- We are exhausted.
- We are focused on self instead of God's will.

When at last a long-cherished desire is fulfilled, when God has been glorified greatly by our means, and a great triumph achieved, then we are apt to faint...While the trial lasts, the strength is equal to the emergency; but when it is over, natural weakness claims the right to show itself. – Charles Spurgeon, *Letters to My Students*,



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Elijah got lost in self-pity. Self-pity is a pathetic emotion. It will lie to you. It will exaggerate. It will drive you to tears. It will cultivate a victim mentality in your head. And, in the worst-case scenario, it can bring you to the point of wishing to die, which is exactly where Elijah was. – Charles Swindoll, *Elijah*

10 He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life.”

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courtesy Bethesda



courtesy Warner Bros

Then Elijah became afraid [saw] and immediately ran for his life...⁴ He said, “I have had enough!”



Elijah under the broom
Chris Ew Green, 2018

Father, not my will, but yours be done.



Agony in the Garden
Eugene Delacroix, 1851



Elijah is at his wit's end because he sees the impossible odds against true revival in Israel. Jesus saw even more clearly than Elijah. In Gethsemane, Jesus sweated drops of blood in His battle against impossible odds, yet He saw the joy set before Him and endured the cross. This candle is lit to celebrate Jesus' vision.

⁵ Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. Suddenly, an angel touched him. The angel told him, “Get up and eat.” ⁶ Then he looked, and there at his head was a loaf of bread baked over hot stones, and a jug of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ Then the angel of the Lord returned for a second time and touched him. He said, “Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you.” ⁸ So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ He entered a cave there and spent the night.

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⁶ So he ate and drank and lay down again.

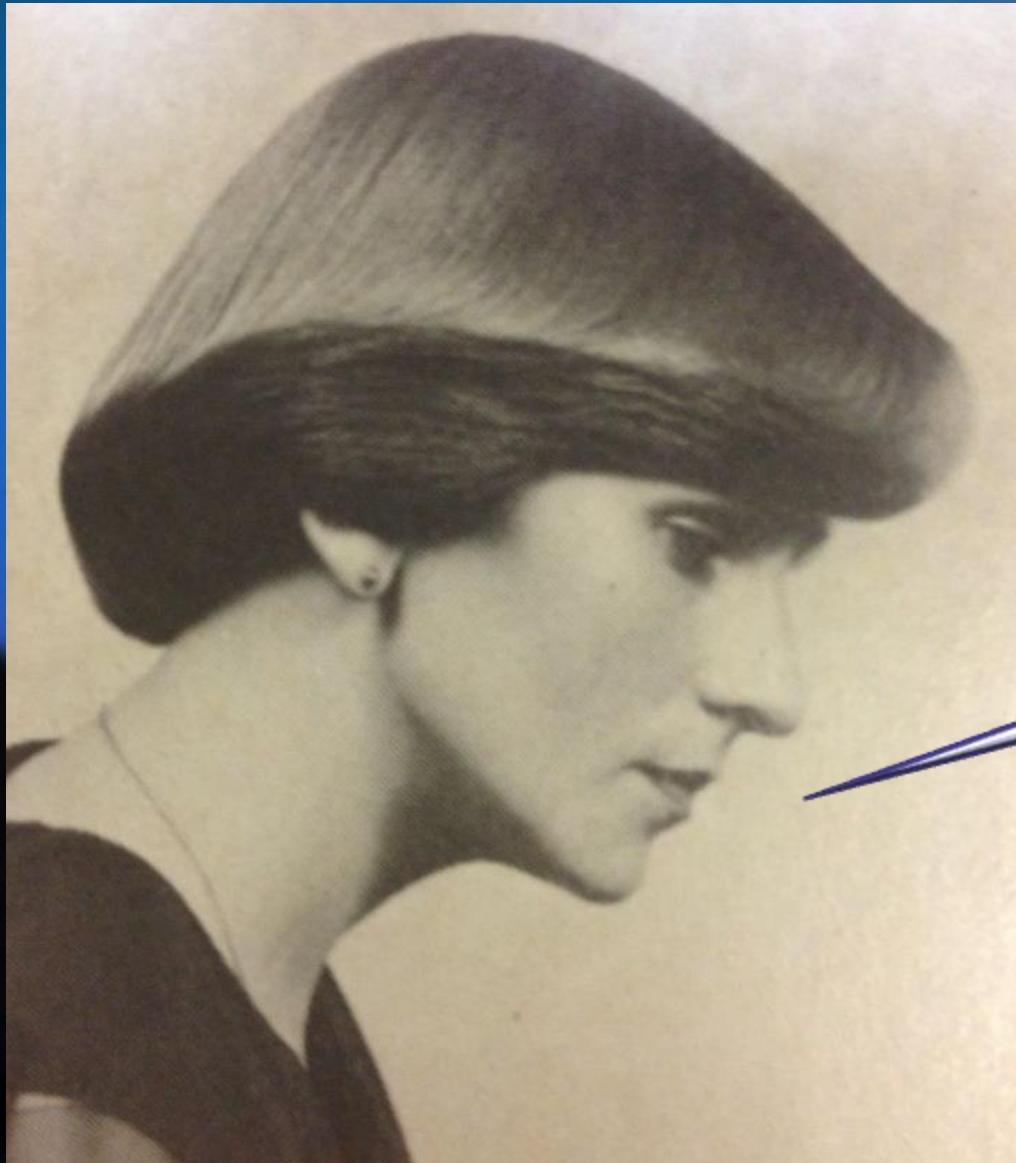
⁸ So he got up, ate, and drank.



courtesy Dongwon Industries

**¹⁶ Rejoice always,
¹⁷ pray constantly,
¹⁸ give thanks in everything;
for this is God's will for you
in Christ Jesus.**

1 Thessalonians 5 CSB



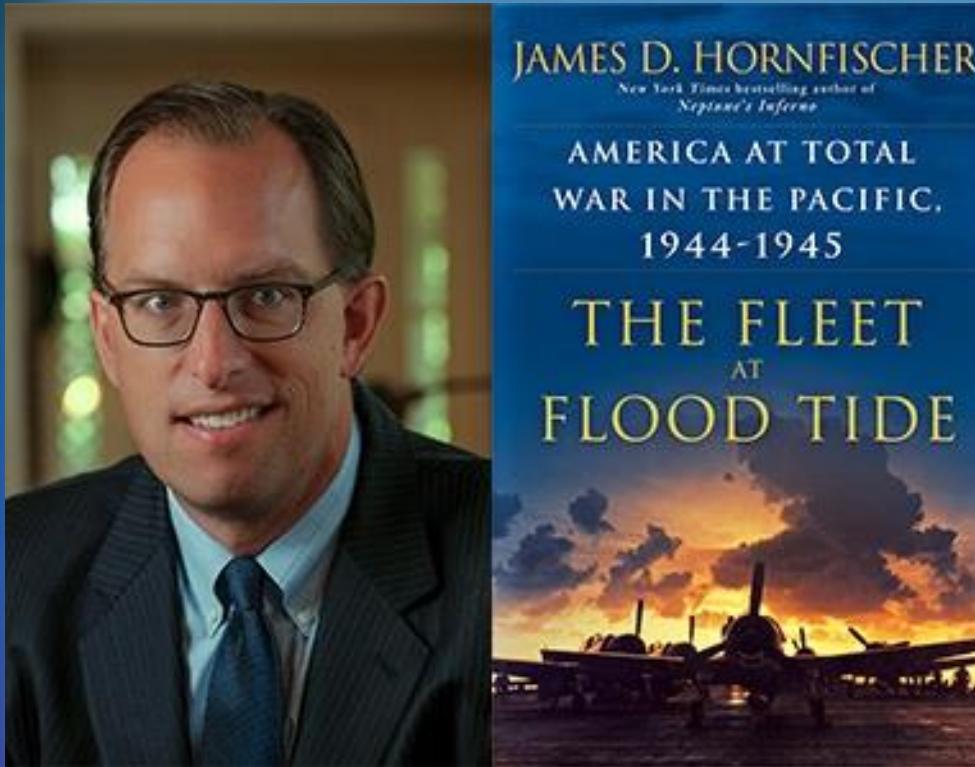
**“Don’t waste a
good illness.”**



courtesy David Willis

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– James D. Hornfischer, *The Fleet at Flood Tide: America at Total War in the Pacific, 1944–1945*

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8 So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.
9 He entered a cave there and spent the night.

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The Transfiguration
Raphael
1516-20

⁹ He entered a cave there and spent the night. Suddenly, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁰ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life.”

11 Then he said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the Lord’s presence.”

At that moment, the Lord passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

12 After the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper.

13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

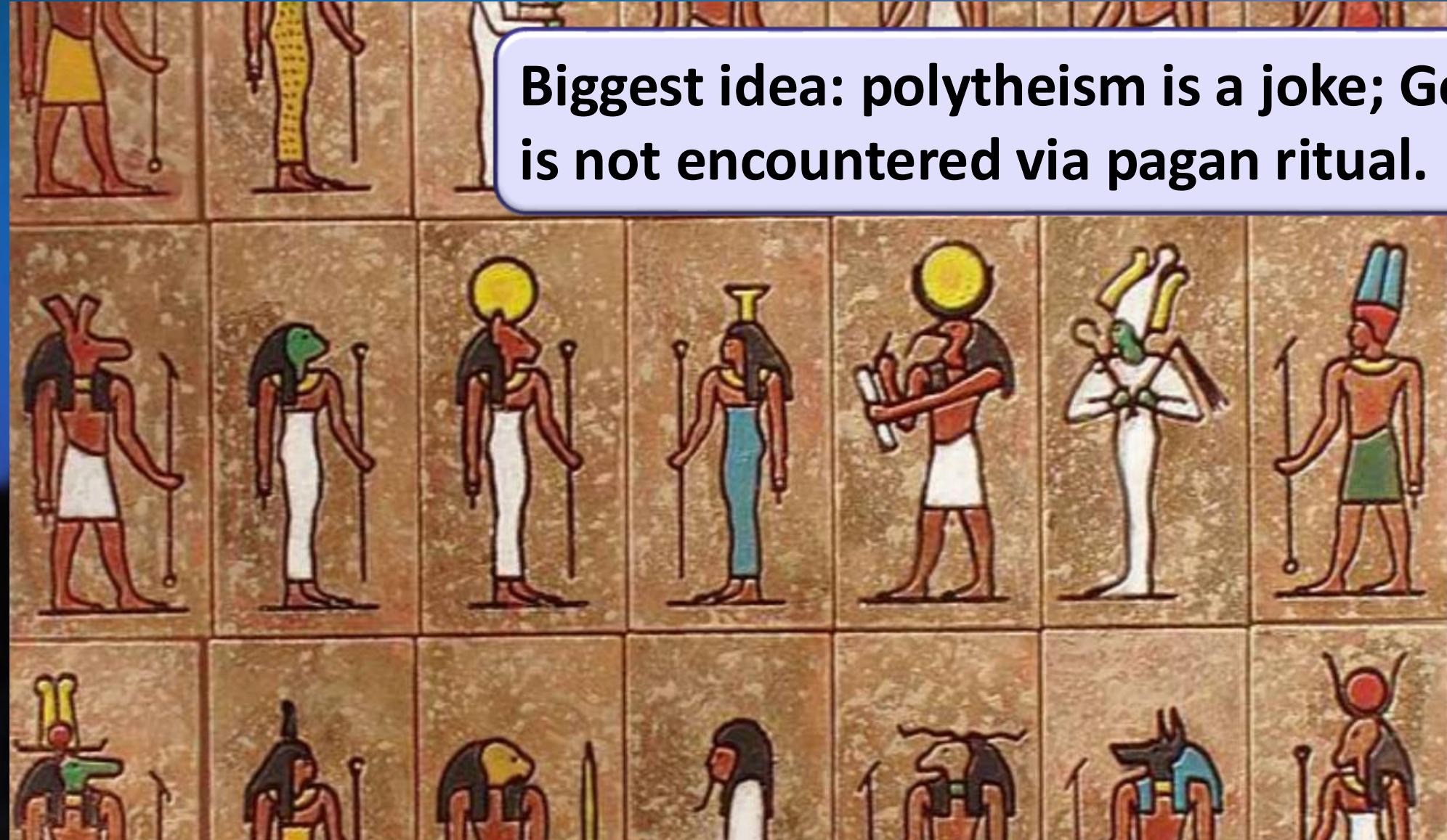
1 Kings 19 CSB

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At that moment, the Lord passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper.



Polytheism



Biggest idea: polytheism is a joke; God is not encountered via pagan ritual.

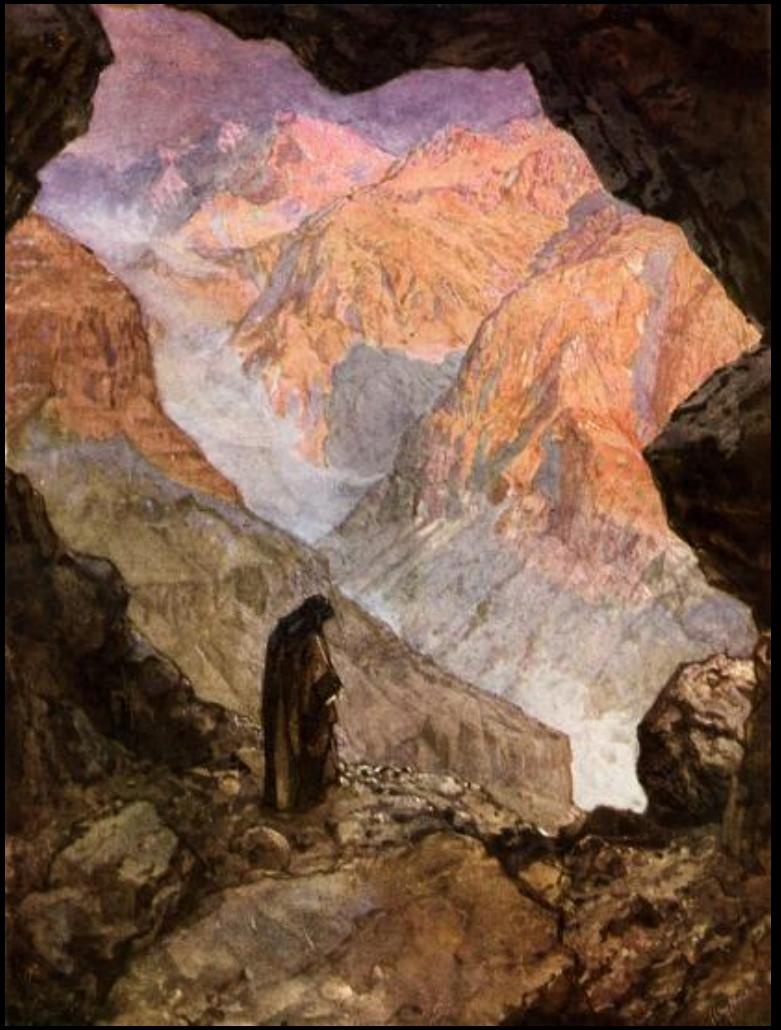
Pantheism

Biggest idea: pantheism is absurd; God is not encountered via a force.



^{12b}And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Elijah on Horeb
William Hole
1902



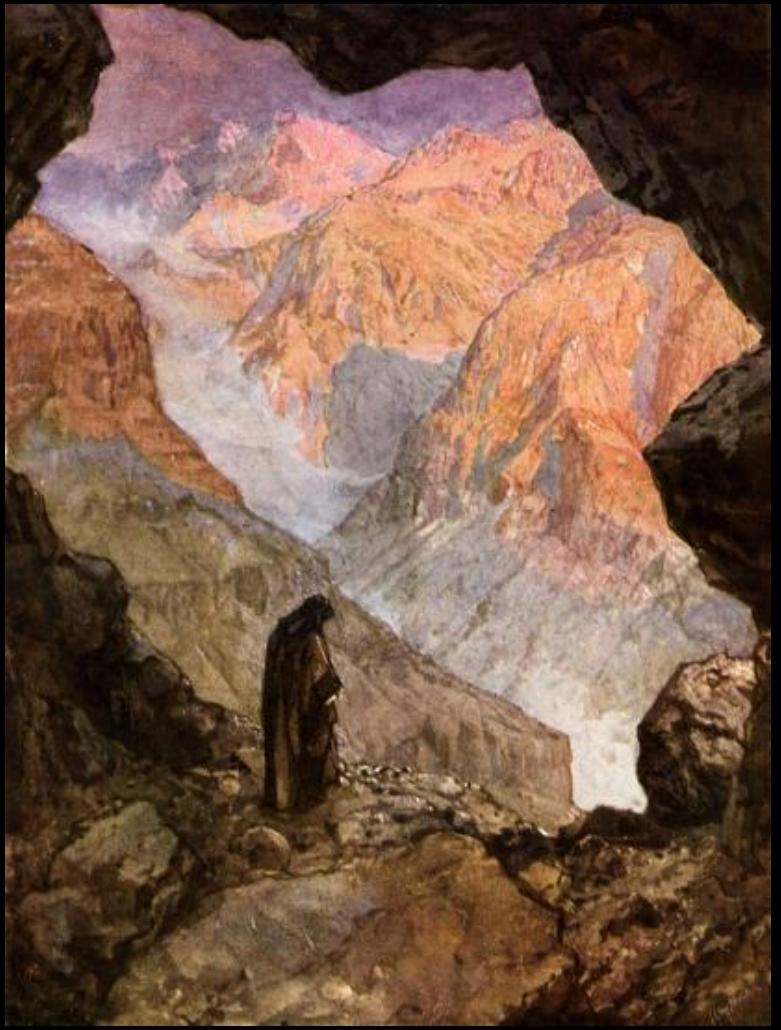
Elijah on Horeb
William Hole
1902



Moses receives the Law
Duane Horst
2025



Concentration on experience has misled churches.



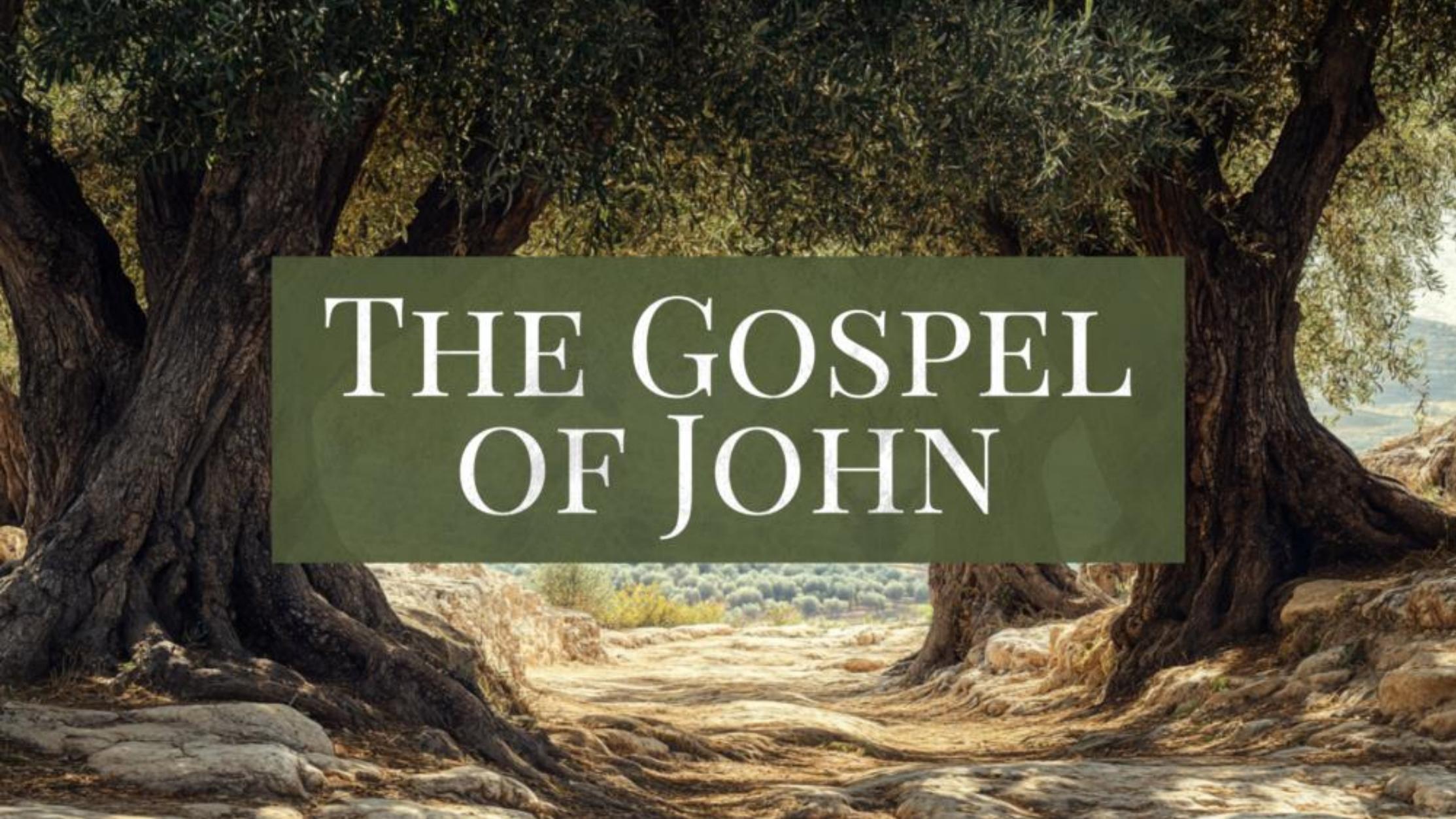
Elijah on Horeb
William Hole
1902



Moses receives the Law
Duane Horst
2025



courtesy bijbel; Notice – the cup is now full!



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

courtesy hblynch

13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Suddenly, a voice came to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

14 “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies,” he replied, “but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they’re looking for me to take my life.”

15 Then the Lord said to him, “Go and return by the way you

came to the Wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you are to anoint Hazael as king over Aram.¹⁶ You are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.¹⁷ Then Jehu will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Jehu.¹⁸ But I will leave seven thousand in Israel—every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

1 Kings 19 CSB

² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Or don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he pleads with God against Israel? ³ Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars. I am the only one left, and they are trying to take my life! ⁴ But what was God's answer to him? I have left seven thousand for myself who have not bowed down to Baal. ⁵ In the same way, then, there is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace.

Romans 11 CSB

18 But I will leave seven thousand in Israel—every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

1 Kings 19 CSB

18 But I will leave seven thousand in Israel—every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

1 Kings 19 CSB

“7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal” is a tiny minority of the population given modern scholarly estimates of 200 to 400 thousand people in Israel at that time.

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Why do so many young people have mental-health problems? The growing focus on students' anxiety and depression, while well-intentioned, may be making psychological distress seem inevitable. Instead of fostering a supportive community for adolescent and young-adult students with mental-health concerns, we may be reinforcing a false and destructive belief that misery is universal.



Focusing only on students' psychological distress ignores the complexity of human emotions...Emotions are contagious...By focusing so heavily on psychological suffering and too little on how normative resilience is, it's as if we've are playing R.E.M.'s "Everybody Hurts" on repeat and then are surprised when students don't notice the next, crucial word in the lyrics: "sometimes." We can support students' mental health needs while normalizing resilience, emphasizing that a defining mark of being human is our ability to grow and adapt under pressure.

**– Vijay Mittal and Renee Engeln,
"How Young People Learn to Be Unhappy"**



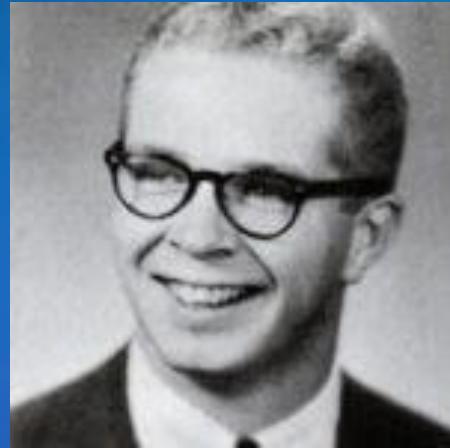


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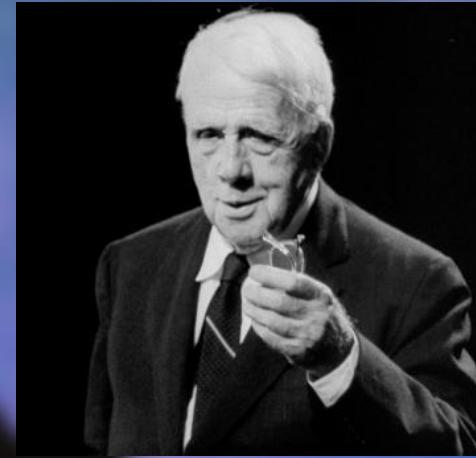
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The great [poet Robert] Frost came to Amherst College in 1951 to speak about poetry. Jack Hagstrom was then just a kid, really — a freshman, 18 years old. But somebody got the idea to invite him to a reception at the president's house after the lecture, and somebody else got the idea to have Jack walk the old man back to his room afterwards.



Jack Hagstrom



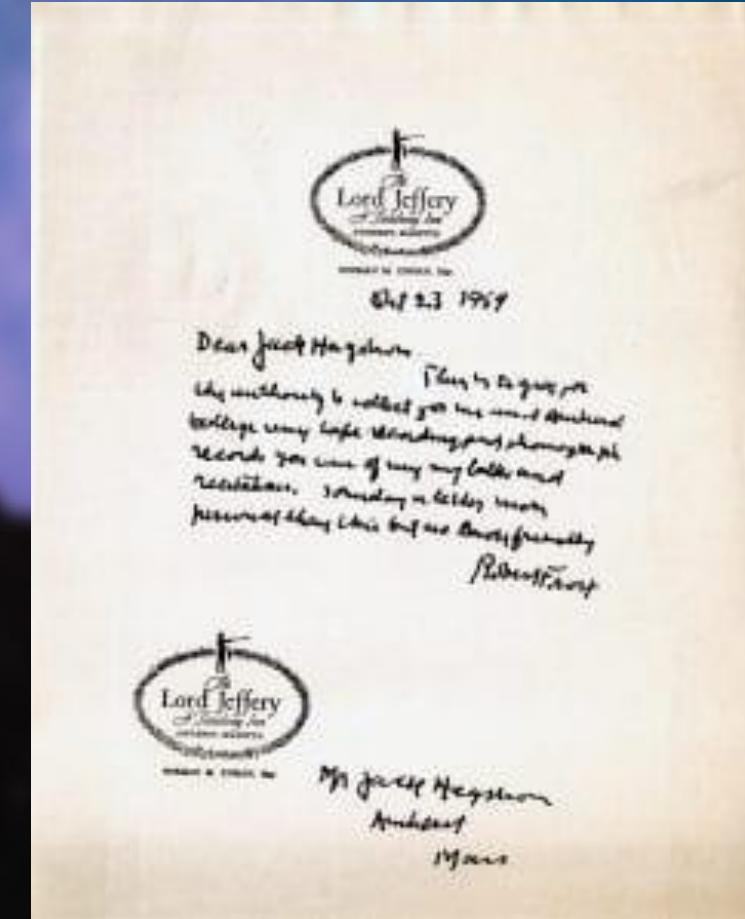
Robert Frost

Well, old man and boy ended up strolling about Amherst till 2:00 in the morning, and they became good friends. The friendship endured till Frost's death in 1963.

– Anthony Esolen, 2025

Without Jack Hagstrom and his devotion to the poetry of Robert Frost, we would not have the world-class collection we hold today. We are all richer thanks to Jack's efforts...Jack is chiefly responsible for the outstanding collection of audio tapes of Frost's readings. In 1959 Robert Frost sent Jack a letter empowering him to gather copies of as many recordings of Frost's "talks and recitations" as could be had.

– “The Frost Collection” at Amherst College



A BOY'S WILL

BY
ROBERT FROST

AUTHOR OF "NORTH OF BOSTON"

*To Jack Hagstrom
from Robert Frost,*

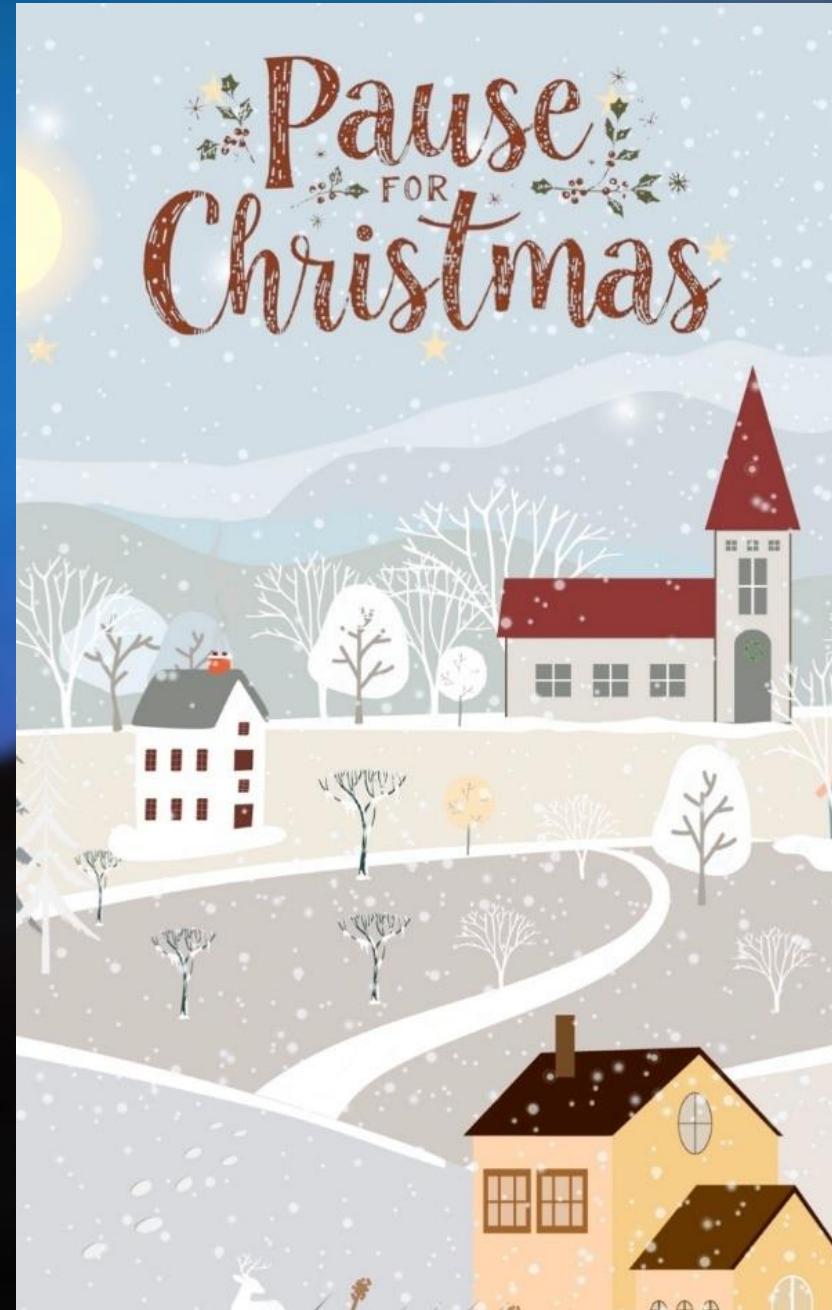


Amherst 1954

NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1915

God provides for Elijah through:

- **Rest**
- **Food & water**
- **His guidance and presence in His word.**
- **Engagement with the world.**
- **Sharing the burden with Elisha.**



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**Look beyond despair to God's will.
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