

The Physical and Emotional journey of Elijah in 1 Kings 17-19



- Samaria: Elijah prophecies to King Ahab - three year drought.
- East of Jordan. Hiding, fed by ravens.
- Zarephath: Raises a widow's dead son.
- Jezreel: Confronts Ahab, challenges the prophets of Baal to a duel to the death. Who is the true God?
- Mt. Carmel: wins the duel, fire from heaven and kills all the prophets of Baal. The people say, "The LORD, he is God."
- To Jezreel: Races with Ahab miles back to Jezreel as the rain begins to pour.
- Beersheba: Jezebel promises revenge, Elijah fearfully runs south and further.
- South of Beersheba, Elijah asks to die, then goes to sleep. Fed by an Angel of the LORD. Then instructed to journey 120 miles south to Mount Sinai.

• Mount Sinai (Horeb): The LORD passes by Elijah [Wind, Earthquake and Fire] but the LORD was not in these. Then the LORD asked in a low whisper (still small voice) "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 1Kings 19:13. The LORD instructs Elijah to return to the north and do His work with the knowledge that there are 7000 in Israel who have not bowed to Baal.

2. What if a prophet from God were to confront you...

"How long will you go limping between two different opinions?

*If the LORD is God, follow him;
but if Baal, then follow him."*

great answer: *"The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God."*

3. What if the LORD were to ask you...in a whisper...

"What are you doing here?"



1 Kings 18:17- 19:5

When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?"¹⁸ And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals.¹⁹ Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

²⁰So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel.²¹ And Elijah came near to all the people and said,

"How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

And the people did not answer him a word.²² Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men.²³ Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces

troubler of Israel: From Ahab's perspective Elijah has caused chaos in Israel by cursing it with a drought that no one could overcome. But Elijah tells Ahab the reason for the drought: Ahab's abandonment of the LORD and his attachment to idols of Baal and Asherah is the cause of Israel's trouble.

gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel: Elijah asks Ahab to set up a showdown (to the death) between prophets of Baal and himself, 1 prophet versus 850.

Jezebel's table: Ahab, the King of the northern kingdom of Israel, marries a Syrian princess from Tyre; this union was probably an alliance between the two countries. Jezebel was passionately loyal to her gods and brought with her and sponsored many priests of Baal and Asherah. She had the prophets of Yahweh killed and the worship of Him curtailed. She has great influence over Ahab.

limping between two different opinions?: Linguists have determined the word "limping" is a peculiar style of worship dance. In verse 16 the prophets of Baal "limp" around the altar, calling for fire. Elijah is condemning the synergistic worship of the people of Israel; they add other "gods" into their worship of Yahweh. But Yahweh does not allow this untruth.

and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. ²⁴

And

you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God."

And all the people answered, "It is well spoken." ²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it." ²⁶ And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. ²⁷ And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." ²⁸ And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. ²⁹ And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down. ³¹ Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, "Israel shall be your name," ³² and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. ³³ And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." ³⁴ And he said, "Do it a second time." And they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time." And they did it a third time. ³⁵ And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water.

³⁶ And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that

the God who answers by fire, he is God: This is contest that everyone agrees to. The god that can produce fire from heaven on an altar is the true God. And the god that does not respond is therefore false and that religion's influence should end. The people gathered say: "It is well spoken"; liking the contest as a way to have visible evidence.

"O Baal, answer us!": The prayer of these priests gets more and more intense over the day. They believe in this false god, and think that the right approach will gain action on their behalf.

Elijah mocked them: This mockery seems to get the prophets of Baal even more energized. They cut themselves and rave all day long. Yet "No one answered; no one paid attention."

Elijah said to all the people, "Come near...": It's Elijah's turn after the failure of the prophets of Baal. He wants the people who have watched the powerlessness of false gods all day to now see his approach. He sets up the twelve-stone altar that had previously been thrown down. He orders water poured multiple time over the sacrifice, saturating the wood and altar. Then Elijah prays and fire of the LORD fell.

you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. ³⁷ **Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back."** ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "**The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.**" ⁴⁰ And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.

⁴¹ And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain." ⁴² So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. ⁴³ And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again," seven times. ⁴⁴ And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'" ⁴⁵ And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

1 Kings 19:1-5

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 more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.**"

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

⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying,

"It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

⁵ And he lay down and slept under a broom tree.

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done: This is a critical spot in this narrative. Has Ahab been overwhelmed by the power of Yahweh in the fire falling and in the rain arriving through Elijah that he has "turned his heart back" to whole hearted devotion to the LORD. Does he believe that the LORD, he is God! The record shows that Ahab does not turn. We see that Jezebel's influence continues and she threatens Elijah with death in 24 hours.

he was afraid, and he rose and ran for his life: Elijah believes the threat of Jezebel and he goes far to the south of Judah. Sitting under a tree, alone, depressed, disappointed, feeling like a failure, Elijah asks the LORD to "take away my life."