

1 Kings 19 - Elijah Flees from Jezebel; Elijah Fed by God in Wilderness; God Informs Elijah on the Remnant; Elijah Casts Mantel on Elisha

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1 Kings 19

(B) The Lord reconfirms Elijah (19:1-21)

(a) Need for reconfirmation: Elijah's depression after fleeing from Jezebel to Horeb (19:1-5)

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1 Ahab complained to Jezebel about everything that Elijah had done, especially the part about him killing all the prophets of Baal with a sword.

1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more so, if *by* about this time tomorrow I do not make your life like the life of one of them."

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."

2 Jezebel sent a messenger to tell Elijah, "May the gods do the same to me and even more if tomorrow about this time I haven't made you like one of those prophets you had killed."

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

- Infuriated by Elijah's treatment of her prophets, she sent a message to him that she planned to take his life within 24 hours in retaliation for the 450 Baal prophets

— Here is a woman who still swears by her gods, even after all that had happened—a believer in idols who is impervious to evidence

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

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.

3 Elijah was terrified, so he got up and ran for his life to Beer-sheba, which is part of Judah, and left his servant there

3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

- Elijah retreated from a defeated enemy...apparently Elijah was surprised and terrified that the revival that he had just witnessed was not more effective in eliminating Baal worship

— Like Simon Peter when he took his eyes off the Lord, looked at those waves, and began to sink, Elijah lost his courage

— Probably Elijah had played into Jezebel's hand. Had she really wanted Elijah dead, she surely would have seized him without warning and slain him.

— What she really desired was that Elijah and his God be discredited before the new converts who had aided Elijah by executing the prophets of Baal

— Without a leader, revolutionary movements usually stumble and fall away. Just when God needed him the most, the divinely trained prophet was to prove a notable failure.

— Jezebel's threat drove the lessons of God's power and provision that he had learned at Cherith, Zarephath, and Carmel out of his memory

- "...Beersheba" - the southernmost sizable town in the Southern Kingdom

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree; and he asked for himself to die, and said, "Enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for **I am no better than my fathers.**"

4 But he 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, O

LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

4 and ran for a day's journey deep into the wilderness. He found a juniper tree, sat down under it, and prayed that he could die. He asked God, "Enough! LORD! Take my life, because I'm not better than my ancestors!"

4 But he 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, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

- The fact that Elijah dismissed his servant, then went farther by himself indicates that he was giving up his ministry

— Elijah proceeded farther south into the wilderness, where the Israelites had wandered for 40 years because of their unbelief

— It is remarkable that Jezebel's threat terrified Elijah as it did. Ironically by contrast he had told the widow in Zarephath not to be afraid (17:13). Evidently Elijah's fear sprang from the power Jezebel possessed.

— He had just demonstrated that the gods to whom she now appealed in her curse had no power at all

— Rather than resting in God for His protection as he had for the past three-and-a-half years, Elijah ran for his life. He ran all the way through the kingdom of Judah to the southernmost town in the land, Beersheba.

- "...I am no better than my fathers" - Elijah said he was no better than his predecessors in purging Israel from idolatry, implying that he had expected to see a complete revival

— His eyes were on his circumstances rather than on the LORD

5 Then he lay down and fell asleep under a broom tree; but behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, "Arise, eat!"

5 He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, "Arise, eat."

5 Then he lay down and went to sleep under the juniper tree. All of a sudden, there was an angel, who kept grabbing him and telling him, "Get up! Eat!"

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

- Exhausted and discouraged, Elijah laid down and fell asleep

(b) Reconfirmation (19:6-21)

(i) The Lord's personal ministry to Elijah (19:6-14)

6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a round loaf of bread *baked on* hot coals, and a pitcher of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again.

6 Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake *baked on* hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again.

6 So he looked around, and there near his head was a muffin sitting on top of some heated stones, along with a jar of water. Elijah ate and drank and then lay down again.

6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

- Elijah woke at the touch of a divinely sent messenger. This angel had prepared freshly baked bread, still warm, and plenty of water, which he invited Elijah to consume. The prophet did so and then returned to his rest.

— The angel probably appeared as a human being, as was common in the OT

7 But the **angel of the LORD** came back a second time and touched him, and said, "Arise, eat; because the journey is too long for you."

7 The angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you."

7 Later, the angel of the LORD came a second time, grabbed him, and said "Get up! Eat! The journey ahead is too difficult for you!"

7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

- Again the angel woke Elijah, perhaps after he had slept for some time, and urged him to eat more food since the journey before him would require much energy

- "...angel of the LORD" - usually refers to God Himself in the OT (Cf. Ex 3:2-6), here it likely refers to a human messenger

8 So he arose and ate and drank, and he journeyed in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to **Horeb, the mountain of God**.

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

8 So Elijah got up, ate and drank, and survived on that one meal for 40 days and nights as he set out on his journey to Horeb, God's mountain.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

- "...Horeb, the mountain of God" - the ancient name for Mount Sinai (Cf. Ex 3:1; 17:6; 33:6; Deut 5:2; 1 Kings 8:9; Ps 106:19; Mal 4:4)

- Moses and the Israelites had traveled in that wilderness for 40 years, sustained by the manna God had provided for them and learned lessons of His faithful care and provision

— Now Elijah would traverse the same desert for 40 days and nights, sustained by the bread God provided and would learn the same lessons

— God was reminding him and teaching him during those 40 days and nights. Finally He went to the mountain of God, the very place where God had revealed Himself to Moses and the Israelites and where He had entered into a covenant with His Chosen People.

— A direct trip from Beersheba to Mount Horeb would have taken Elijah only about 7-10 days on foot (a distance of approximately 140 miles)

9 Then he came there to **a cave** and spent the night there; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, "**What are you doing here, Elijah?**"

9 Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

9 Elijah arrived at a cave and stayed there. All of a sudden this message came from the LORD: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

- "...a cave" - the Hebrew text says "the" cave, suggesting this may have been the same spot where God had placed Moses before He caused His glory to pass before Him (Cf. Ex 33:21-23)

- "...What are you doing here, Elijah?" - God asked him what he was going in Horeb because God didn't send him there like He had sent him to Cherith, Zarephath and Samaria (Cf. 17:3,9; 18:1)

— Elijah had fled to Horeb out of fear and frustration, and a lack of faith

10 And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of armies; for the sons of Israel have abandoned Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. And **I alone am left**; and they have sought to take my life."

10 He said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, 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."

10 "I've been very zealous for the LORD God of the Heavenly Armies," he replied. "The Israelis have abandoned your covenant, demolished your altars, executed your prophets with swords, and I—that's right, just me!—am the only one left. Now they're seeking my life, to get rid of me!"

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

- This is a severe indictment against Israel by a prophet who suffered and struggled to bring the nation to repentance, to no avail

— This type of indictment, if true, required God's discipline. God's response and action are spelled out in v11-13a.

- "...I alone am left" - Elijah's response revealed that he felt he was standing completely alone and defenseless against the ungodly forces that threatened to overpower him (Cf. v14)

— Of course he knew that he was not the only one left of all the faithful remnant (Cf. 18:13), but he *felt* all alone. In solitude and loneliness he bewailed his fate before the Lord.

— Had these words not been uttered in a state of emotional distress, they would have been inexcusable. But God deals tenderly with his overwrought children. The prophet's words taken at face value—which indeed they cannot be—practically accuse God of infidelity. I, even I only, am left.

— See Paul's comment on this experience (Rom 11:2-4)

- Interestingly Elijah spoke only of the Lord's prophets being killed (Cf. 18:13a); he made no mention of Baal's 450 prophets who were killed

— Fear and discouragement caused him to see only the dark side. He sensed failure in spite of him being zealous.

— Mercifully God did not lecture Elijah or chasten His chafed prophet. God simply gave him a demonstration of His ways.

11 So He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and powerful wind was tearing out the mountains and breaking the rocks in pieces before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind. And after the wind *there was* an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake.

11 So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks 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.

11 "Go out," he responded, "and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD." And there was the LORD, passing by! A tremendous, mighty windstorm was tearing at the mountains and breaking the rocks in pieces in the presence of the LORD, but the LORD was not in the windstorm. After the wind there came an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks 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 sound of a gentle blowing.

12 After the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing.

12 After the earthquake there came fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire, there was the sound of a gentle whisper.

12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

- Standing on the mountainside outside his cave, Elijah witnessed what Moses had seen at this very mountain centuries before (Ex 19:16-18), and what he himself had seen on Mount Carmel only a few days earlier (1 Kings 18:38,45): a spectacular demonstration of the power of God, this time in wind, an earthquake, and in fire.

- "...the LORD was not in" [3x in v11-12] - God sent three noisy things but the LORD was not in any of these, that is, they were not His instruments of self-revelation on this occasion

- Evidently some time later, when Elijah was back in his cave (v13), he heard the sound of a gentle whisper

— Recognizing this as a revelation of God, he pulled his cloak over part of his face, walked out to the mouth of the cave, and stood there waiting for God to act

— Elijah was to learn that, whereas God had revealed Himself in dramatic ways in the past, He would now work in quieter ways

— Instead of Elijah continuing to stand alone for God, God would now put him into the background while He used other people

— Elijah evidently got the message, but he still felt depressed (v14). God was dealing with him gently too.

13 When Elijah heard *it*, he **wrapped his face in his cloak** and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice *came* to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

13 When Elijah heard *it*, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice *came* to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

13 As soon as Elijah heard it, he covered his face in his mantle, went outside, and stood at the entrance to the cave. And there a voice spoke to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

- "...wrapped his face in his cloak" - a common Jewish reaction whenever one thought he might be in the presence of God

— Elijah covered his face because he realized that He could not look at God and live, as Moses also realized (Ex 33:20-22; Cf. Gen 32:30)

— God asked the same question He asked him earlier (Cf. v9): What are you doing here, Elijah?

Elijah's God-given successes had fostered an inordinate pride (Cf. 4,10,14) that had made him take his own importance too seriously. Moreover, Elijah had come to bask in the glow of the spectacular. He may have fully expected that because of what had been accomplished at Mount Carmel, Jezebel would capitulate and pagan worship would come to an end in Israel—all through his influence!

The Remnant [Remnant of Israel: Past, Present, Future](#) [Replacement Theology & the Epistle of 1 Peter](#)

In response to Elijah's indictment against Israel, God sent three noisy things against Israel; while He sends all three things, God's presence is not in them. The first is Hazael, the king of Syria. Hazael corresponds to the wind. Just as the wind beat against the mountain, Hazael will beat against Israel (2 Kings 8:7-15; 10:32-33; 13:3,22-25) until he reduced Israel's holdings considerably.

Jehu corresponds to the earthquake; as the earthquake split the mountain, Jehu caused a civil war which totally destroyed the Dynasty and House of Ahab, as well as royal members of the House of Judah (2 Kings 9:1—10:36).

Elisha corresponds to the fire. Just as the fire burned against the mountain, Elisha burned against Israel and often where Elisha went, death followed (2 Kings 2:23-24). God did send all three noisy things, but God's presence was not in them. God then tells Elijah that he was not the only one left who was faithful, for God had 7,000 others (v18). These 7,000 were the Remnant of that day, quite small compared to the nation as a whole. The Remnant corresponds to the still small voice. The Remnant in contrast to Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, is the quiet thing; so quiet, that Elijah did not know they even existed since twice he stated that he was the only one left. God's presence was in this Remnant.

14 Then he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of armies; for the sons of Israel have abandoned Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they have sought to take my life."

14 Then he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, 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."

14 "I've been very zealous for the LORD God of the Heavenly Armies," he replied. "The Israelis have abandoned your covenant, demolished your altars, executed your prophets with swords, and I—that's right, just me!—am the only one left. Now they're seeking my life, to get rid of me!"

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

- The prophet's response was identical to his first reply (Cf. v10), suggesting that even though he may have understood the point of God's display of natural forces for his benefit, he still felt the same way about himself

— The message God seems to have intended for Elijah is that whereas He had revealed Himself in spectacular demonstrations of His power in the past at Cherith, Zarephath, and Carmel, He would now use Elijah in gentler, less dramatic ways.

— These ways God proceeded to explain to His servant (v15-18). God would deal with Elijah's personal feelings about himself later in a gentle way too.

(ii) The Lord commissions Elijah (19:15-21)

(a) Anoint Hazael over Damascus (19:15)

15 The LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram.

15 The LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram;

15 The LORD replied to him, "Go! Return to Damascus, and when you get there, anoint Hazael as king over Aram,

15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:

(b) Anoint Jehu over Israel (19:16a)

(c) Anoint Elisha as prophetic successor (19:16b-21)

16 You shall also anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.

16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.

16 anoint Nimshi's son Jehu as king over Israel, and anoint Shaphat's son Elisha from Abel-meholah as a prophet to replace you.

16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

17 And it shall come about that 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 shall put to death.

17 It shall 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 shall put to death.

17 Whoever escapes from Hazael's sword Jehu will execute, and whoever escapes from Jehu's sword Elisha will put to death.

17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

- The LORD told Elijah to leave there, to go back the way he came (i.e., through Israel) to Damascus. (Cf. God's commands to Elijah to "leave" and "go" in 17:3,9; 18:1; 21:18; 2 Kings 1:3,15)

— The Lord then gave him three assignments:

(1) To anoint Hazael king of the Arameans in Damascus (2 Kings 8:7-14)

(2) To anoint Jehu king of Israel (2 Kings 9:1-3)

(3) To anoint Elisha from Abel Meholah (Cf. Judges 7:22) as his own successor (v19-21)

— These three individuals, though differing in vocation and character, would yet be united in the humbling and desecrating of the house of Ahab and complete the purge of Baal worship that Elijah had begun and bring judgment to the hard-hearted Israelites

- Elijah did only the last of these three directly, but he did the other two indirectly through Elisha, his protegee

— Elisha was involved, though strangely, in Hazael's becoming Aram's king (2 Kings 8:7-14) and one of Elisha's associates anointed Jehu (2 Kings 9:1-3)

18 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."

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."

18 Nevertheless, I've reserved 7,000 in Israel who have neither bowed their knees to Baal nor kissed him."

18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

- "...seven thousand in Israel" - God then revealed to Elijah that He had preserved 7,000 faithful followers in Israel who had not bowed before or kissed the emblems of idolatry in worship, through whom He could work

— Such news undoubtedly cheered Elijah. Were it not for the insight into his feelings of fear and discouragement given in this chapter, one might not believe that Elijah was indeed "a man just like us" (James 5:17).

This word from the LORD marks a great crisis in Israel. God now turned from the northern tribes as a whole to deal with a faithful remnant within that nation. Evidence of this is the

fact that the stories of Elisha that follow deal mainly with the remnant rather than with the whole nation, in contrast to the record of Elijah's ministry.

19 So he departed from there and found **Elisha** the son of Shaphat while he was plowing, with twelve yoke *of oxen* in front of him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah came over to him and **threw his cloak on him**.

19 So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs *of oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him.

19 Elijah left there and located Shaphat's son Elisha, who was plowing, along with a total of twelve pairs of oxen. (He was plowing with the twelfth pair.) As Elijah passed by, he tossed his cloak at Elisha.

19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

- "...Elisha" - means "My God is salvation"

- Elijah returned from Mount Sinai to find Elisha near his hometown of Abel Meholah (v16) in the Jordan Valley about halfway between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Kinnereth in the Northern Kingdom of Israel

— Elisha evidently came from a family that owned a lot of land (as implied by the 12 yoke of oxen)

- "...threw his cloak on him" - throwing a prophet's cloak around a person symbolized the passing of the power and authority of the office to that individual

20 Then he left the oxen behind 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, **for what have I done to you?**"

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?"

20 He abandoned the oxen, ran off to follow Elijah, and asked him, "Please, let me kiss my mother and father good-bye, and then I'll come after you."

"Go back again," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"

20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

- "...for what have I done to you" - a Hebrew idiom that means "do as you please"

— Elisha terminated his former occupation on the spot and from then on served as a prophet (Cf. Amos 7:14-15; Luke 9:62)

21 So he returned from following him, and took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them, and cooked their meat with the implements of the oxen, and gave *it* to the people and they ate. Then he got up and followed Elijah and served him.

21 So he returned from following him, and took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them and 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 ministered to him.

21 So Elisha turned back, took the pair of oxen, sacrificed them, boiled their flesh using the farm implements for fuel, and gave the food to the people with him. Then he got up, followed Elijah, and became his servant.

21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

- Elisha sealed his decision by slaughtering his yoke of oxen and burning his plowing implements, indicating total personal commitment to God

— Elijah recruited his attendant and successor at the workplace, as Jesus did with many of His followers

— He evidently hosted a farewell banquet, serving his sacrificed animals to his guests for supper

— Then he set out to accompany Elijah as his attendant

— The Book of 2 Kings will focus on the remarkable exploits of Elijah's successor