

# NOON BIBLE STUDY: 1 KINGS 19

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## 1 KINGS 19:1-4 - A LOT CHANGES IN A DAY

V. 2 - JEZEBEL THREATENS TO KILL ELIJAH. THIS WAS NOT AN EMPTY THREAT AS SHE HAS PROVEN TO DO SIMILAR THINGS IN THE PAST (18:4). SHE HAS THE POWER AND INFLUENCE AS QUEEN AND SHE IS DRIVEN BY EMBARRASSMENT AND RAGE FOLLOWING THE DEFEAT AND EXECUTION OF HER LEADING ROYAL PRIESTS AND PROPHETS.

V. 3-4 - ELIJAH IS AFRAID AND RAN FOR HIS LIFE. HE FLEES WITH HIS SERVANT TO JUDAH AND PROCEEDS TO THE WILDERNESS.

"(ELIJAH) FLEES FROM JEZREEL IN THE NORTH TO BEERSHEBA IN THE FAR SOUTH OF THE PROMISED LAND—AS FAR AWAY FROM JEZEBEL AS HE CAN GET. THE DISTANCE FROM THE TOP OF MOUNT CARMEL TO BEERSHEBA WAS ABOUT 120 MILES, WHICH WOULD HAVE TAKEN AN ORDINARY SINGLE TRAVELER AROUND SIX DAYS, BUT LESS IF HE RAN PART OF THE WAY." (ESV STUDY BIBLE, ON 1 KINGS 19:3)

ONCE THERE HE WISHES THAT HE WOULD JUST DIE.

NLT - THEN HE WENT ON ALONE INTO THE WILDERNESS, TRAVELING ALL DAY. HE SAT DOWN UNDER A SOLITARY BROOM TREE AND PRAYED THAT HE MIGHT DIE. "I HAVE HAD ENOUGH, LORD," HE SAID. "TAKE MY LIFE, FOR I AM NO BETTER THAN MY ANCESTORS WHO HAVE ALREADY DIED."

THESE ACTIONS AND WORDS SPEAK OF A MAN WHO IS DEPRESSED, ANXIOUS AND AFRAID. HE'S HAD "ENOUGH" (NLT). LET'S REVIEW WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ELIJAH'S LIFE. FIRST, HE COMES ON THE SCENE DECLARING TO KING AHAB THAT THERE WILL BE NO RAIN. HE IS THEN SUSTAINED BY A BROOK AND FED BY RAVENS DURING THIS DROUGHT. HE IS THEN FORCED TO MOVED TO ANOTHER COUNTRY (SIDON) BUT IS MIRACULOUSLY CARED FOR BY A WIDOW AND THE HAND OF GOD. WHILE LIVING WITH THIS WIDOW, GOD USES ELIJAH TO RAISE HER SON FROM THE DEAD. AND THEN HE RETURNS TO ISRAEL AFTER THREE YEARS TO CHALLENGE THE NATION, THE KING AND THEIR FALSE GODS TO AN EPIC "GOD CONTEST" WHICH ELIJAH WINS WHEN YAHWEH SENDS FIRE DOWN FROM THE SKY TO CONSUME HIS WATER DRENCHED OFFERING. THE ENTIRE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL SHOUTS THAT "THE LORD IS GOD!", ELIJAH IS THE TRUE PROPHET AND DISPOSES OF THOSE WHO HAVE CHALLENGED THE LORD. AND THEN HE PRAYS, AND THE RAIN FALLS ONCE AGAIN FROM THE SKY. WHAT AN INCREDIBLE 3 YEAR SPAN OF THE POWER AND PURPOSES OF GOD LIVED OUT IN AND THROUGH AND BEFORE ELIJAH! NO WONDER WE REMEMBER ELIJAH AS THE GREATEST PROPHET IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES!

THAT'S AT LEAST HOW WE SEE IT. CONSIDER THOSE SAME CIRCUMSTANCES FROM ELIJAH'S PERSPECTIVE. IT IS TRUE THAT GOD WORKED GREAT MIRACLES AND WONDERS THROUGH HIS HAND...BUT ELIJAH LIVES FOR MONTHS ALONE BY A CREEK WITH RAVENS SHOWING UP AT MEAL TIMES. THAT'S COOL, BUT RAVENS AREN'T GOOD COMPANY. THEN IN SIDON, HE LIVES AMONGST PEOPLE WITH LIKELY A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE, ROUTINE, AND WORLD-VIEW. NO FAMILY, NO FELLOW PROPHETS OR TRUE WORSHIPPERS. THIS ALL LASTS FOR 3 YEARS. THAT'S NEARLY 1100 DAYS IN A ROW. IF AND WHEN HE RECEIVES NEWS FROM HIS HOMELANDS IT SURELY WAS ABOUT THE EVIL REIGN OF AHAB AND JEZEBEL AND PERHAPS EVEN REPORTS OF HIS FELLOW PROPHETS AND BROTHERS BEING KILLED. HOW DOES ONE SLEEP WELL DURING THAT SEASON?

SURE, ELIJAH RETURNS AND SEES LITERAL FIRE FALL FROM THE SKY. BUT THEN AFTER WHAT IS ONE OF THE GREATEST DAYS IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY, THE POWERFUL QUEEN SWEARS AN OATH TO KILL YOU. I KNOW WE'RE SUPPOSED TO FIND AN ELIJAH WHO SHRUGS IT OFF AND RUNS RIGHT TO THE

PALACE AND DENOUNCES JEZEBEL...BUT PERHAPS IT IS IN A MOMENT LIKE THIS THAT WE SEE THE BIBLE, AND IT'S CHARACTERS ARE MUCH TRUER TO LIFE THAN OUR SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND "BIBLE STORIES" HAVE LED US TO BELIEVE.

ELIJAH'S "SUPPOSED" TO BE FILLED WITH FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD BECAUSE OF HOW GOD HAS PROVEN HIMSELF IN THE PAST. BUT INSTEAD, WHEN IS FACES HIS LATEST CHALLENGE, HE'S AFRAID, ON THE RUN, AND WONDERS IF IT WOULD BE BETTER TO JUST BE DONE WITH THE WHOLE THING. HE WONDERS WHY AFTER GOD HAS SHOWN HIS STRENGTH AND POWER, THERE STILL REMAINS CHALLENGES HE HAS TO DEAL WITH, AND SO SOON. SOUNDS LIKE JAMES 5:17A WAS RIGHT WHEN IT SAYS "ELIJAH WAS A MAN JUST LIKE US" (NIV).

### 1 KINGS 19:5-8 - ELIJAH FED BY AN ANGEL, BEGINS A JOURNEY

ELIJAH, LIKELY TIRED FROM HIS JOURNEY AS WELL AS HIS SORROW, LAYS DOWN AND SLEEPS. HE IS AWOKEN BY AN ANGEL TWICE, WITH A DIVINE MEAL PREPARED FOR HIM. THE ANGEL ENCOURAGES ELIJAH TO EAT BECAUSE HE WILL NEED HIS STRENGTH FOR A NEW JOURNEY, THIS TIME TO MOUNT HOREB/SINAI

V. 8 - "HIS JOURNEY FROM NEAR BEERSHEBA TO MOUNT HOREB WAS ABOUT 250 MILES (400 KM), UNLESS ELIJAH WENT BY A MORE (WINDING) ROUTE. THE LAST PART OF THE JOURNEY WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH LONGER THAN THE AIR DISTANCE BECAUSE OF RUGGED TERRAIN." (ESV STUDY BIBLE ON 1 KINGS 19:8)

MOUNT HOREB (AKA MOUNT SINAI) IS THE MOUNTAIN WHERE GOD APPEARED TO MOSES VIA THE BURNING BUSH (EXODUS 3:1-2). IT IS WHERE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL CAMPED AFTER BEING FREED FROM EGYPT. IT IS HERE THAT GOD APPEARED TO MOSES AND THAT ISRAELITES AUDIBLY SPOKE THE FIRST 10 COMMANDMENTS (EXODUS 19-20). IT IS WHERE MOSES COMMUNED WITH GOD FOR 40 DAYS TO RECEIVE THE GREAT COVENANT AND LAW OF ISRAEL (EXODUS 24:12-18). IT WAS WHERE THE LORD PASSED BY MOSES AND REVEALED TO HIM HIS GLORY (EXODUS 34). IF ANY PLACE ON THE PLANET IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WORDS AND PRESENCE OF GOD, OTHER THAN JERUSALEM, IT IS MOUNT HOREB. GOD HAS A LONG STANDING TRADITION OF APPEARING AND SPEAKING TO HIS PEOPLE AND PROPHET POWERFULLY AND DRAMATICALLY FROM THIS VERY PLACE.

### 1 KINGS 19:9-10 - ELIJAH'S "COMPLAINT"

V. 10 - ELIJAH SPEAKS TRUTH AND FACTS. HE'S BEEN ZEALOUS FOR THE LORD, NO ONE ELSE HAS BEEN. HE FEELS AS IF HE'S THE LONE SURVIVING BELIEVER AND NOW HIS LIFE IS AT RISK.

### 1 KINGS 19:11-14 - THE LORD APPEARS TO ELIJAH

THE FIRST THREE EXPERIENCES OF POWER, A GREAT AND STRONG WIND, AN EARTHQUAKE, AND FIRE WOULD HAVE TYPICALLY BEEN HOW THE LORD APPEARED ON HOREB. BUT IN THIS SPECIAL CASE, THE LORD WAS NOT FOUND IN EITHER OF THESE THREE WONDERS. THE LORD WAS IN THE FORTH WONDER - "A SOUND OF A GENTLE BLOWING" (ESV: "SOUND OF A LOW WHISPER", KJV: "STILL, SMALL VOICE").

THE LORD HAD SENT FIRE DOWN FROM HEAVEN IN 1 KINGS 18. HE PROVIDED MIRACLE FOOD AND RAISED THE DEAD IN 1 KINGS 17. BUT IN 1 KINGS 19 THE LORD APPEARS IN A GENTLE BLOWING. ELIJAH HAS SEEN THE LORD'S POWER AND MIGHT. BUT IN THE LOW PLACE HE HAS GONE, IT IS NOT THE POWER OF GOD ELIJAH NEEDS TO BE REMINDED OF, IT IS THE TENDER PRESENCE OF GOD THAT ELIJAH NEEDS.

THIS GENTLE BLOWING CAUSES ELIJAH TO LEAVE THE CAVE, WRAPPED IN HIS MANTLE (OR ROBE). THE VOICE ASKS HIM A SECOND TIME "WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ELIJAH". ELIJAH REPEATS THE ANSWER HE GAVE BEFORE (V. 10, 14).

## 1 KINGS 19:15-18 - THE LORD'S ANSWER TO ELIJAH: "I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU YET..."

NOTICE HOW THE LORD DOES NOT ANSWER ELIJAH DIRECTLY. INSTEAD OF THE LORD SAYING "DON'T WORRY ELIJAH, I'LL BE WITH YOU! JEZEBEL WON'T HURT YOU BECAUSE I WILL FIGHT THE BATTLE FOR YOU! FEAR NOT! DON'T BE DEPRESSED - I WILL FILL YOU WITH MY SPIRIT AND JOY!" - HE SAYS, "I'VE GOT WORK FOR YOU..."

SPECIFICALLY THE LORD SAYS THREE THINGS HE NEEDS ELIJAH TO DO:

- 1 - ANOINT HAZAEL AS KING OVER ARAM
- 2 - ANOINT JEHU KING OVER ISRAEL
- 3 - ANOINT ELISHA AS YOUR PROPHETIC SUCCESSOR

ELIJAH MIGHT HAVE HAD LEGITIMATE REASON TO BE AFRAID. BUT HE HAD EVEN MORE LEGITIMATE REASON TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD. JEZEBEL WAS INTENSE, BUT THE LORD WAS WITH ELIJAH. RATHER THAN GOD KEEPING ELIJAH IN HIS SORROW AND SADNESS, GOD COMMISSIONED ELIJAH TO GET BACK TO WORK. IT WAS IN HIS RETURN TO SERVING THE LORD THAT ELIJAH WOULD GET THE FOCUS OFF HIMSELF, OFF OF JEZEBEL AND BACK ON THE CALLING THAT THE LORD HAD UPON HIS LIFE.

SO WHAT IF ELIJAH THOUGHT HE WAS THE FINAL PROPHET, THE LAST MAN STANDING FOR THE TRUE GOD. IF THAT WAS TRUE (WHICH IS WASN'T, V. 18) THEN HOW IMPORTANT WAS IT FOR THAT ONE MAN TO REMAIN DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE AND WORK OF THAT GOD! THE VICTORY OF YAHWEH AND THE DEFEAT OF BAAL WAS GOING TO OUTLIVE ELIJAH, AND IT WAS TIME FOR HIM TO ENSURE THAT THE NEW CHARACTERS WERE READY TO TAKE HIS PROPHETIC BATON.

## 1 KINGS 19:19-21 - ELIJAH ENLISTS ELISHA

V. 20-21 - ELISHA IS ENTHUSIASTIC TO FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEP OF ELIJAH. IN FACT IT APPEARS THAT HE IS MORE ENTHUSIASTIC TO BE ELIJAH'S DISCIPLE THAN ELIJAH IS ABOUT GETTING BACK TO WORK! LOOK AT HOW THE NLT TRANSLATES THIS INCIDENT:

1 KINGS 19:19-21 (NLT) - SO ELIJAH WENT AND FOUND ELISHA SON OF SHAPHAT PLOWING A FIELD. THERE WERE TWELVE TEAMS OF OXEN IN THE FIELD, AND ELISHA WAS PLOWING WITH THE TWELFTH TEAM. ELIJAH WENT OVER TO HIM AND THREW HIS CLOAK ACROSS HIS SHOULDERS AND THEN WALKED AWAY. 20 ELISHA LEFT THE OXEN STANDING THERE, RAN AFTER ELIJAH, AND SAID TO HIM, "FIRST LET ME GO AND KISS MY FATHER AND MOTHER GOOD-BYE, AND THEN I WILL GO WITH YOU!" ELIJAH REPLIED, "GO ON BACK, BUT THINK ABOUT WHAT I HAVE DONE TO YOU." 21 SO ELISHA RETURNED TO HIS OXEN AND SLAUGHTERED THEM. HE USED THE WOOD FROM THE PLOW TO BUILD A FIRE TO ROAST THEIR FLESH. HE PASSED AROUND THE MEAT TO THE TOWNSPEOPLE, AND THEY ALL ATE. THEN HE WENT WITH ELIJAH AS HIS ASSISTANT.

WE SHOULD NOT LOOK AT ELISHA'S RETURN HOME TO SAY GOODBYE TO MOM AND DAD IN LIGHT OF JESUS' PARABLE ON THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP (LUKE 9:61-62). DALE RALPH DAVIS OBSERVES THE FOLLOWING:

"IN LUKE 9 SAYING GOOD-BYE IS AN OBSTACLE TO KINGDOM COMMITMENT, WHEREAS IN 1 KINGS 19 IT FUNCTIONS AS ENTRY INTO KINGDOM SERVICE. ELISHA GOES TO ~~SEVER~~ HIS CONNECTIONS, NOT TO DELAY HIS COMMITMENT. HE DOES NOT RETURN TO HOLD BACK, BUT TO CUT LOOSE." ("FOCUS ON THE BIBLE: 1 KINGS", PAGE 274-275)

ELIJAH'S NAME MEAN "THE LORD (YAHWEH) IS GOD" WHICH WAS THE REFRAIN WHICH ECHOED FROM MT. CARMEL. NOW GOD RAISES UP, ELISHA, WHOSE NAME MEANS "GOD SAVES". THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF ELISHA, THE LORD WHO HAS BEEN DECLARED THE TRUE GOD WILL SAVE THOSE WHO ARE HIS.

**FINAL THOUGHTS:** THERE ARE SO MANY LESSONS FOR US TO GLEAN FROM THIS CHAPTER. BOTH ON IT'S OWN AND IN LIGHT OF CHAPTER 18. WE LEARN ABOUT THE FRAGILE MAKEUP OF THE GREAT PROPHET AND WE SEE OURSELVES IN HIS STRUGGLE AND FEAR. WE LEARN THAT SOMETIMES SEEING THE POWERFUL HAND OF GOD IN THE PAST, IS NOT ENOUGH TO FUEL OUR LIVES FOR HIM IN THE PRESENT. SOMETIMES WE NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT THE LORD, THE EVERLASTING GOD, IS THE GOD OF THE HERE AND NOW. THE VERY NAME YAHWEH IS BUILT UPON THE HEBREW WORDS "TO BE", MEANING HE IS THE EXISTING AND PRESENT ONE. WE ARE REMINDED THAT YAHWEH IS NOT JUST THE GOD OF POWER AND MIGHT, HE IS ALSO THE GOD OF STILLNESS AND LOVE. AND WE LEARN THAT SOMETIMES THE LORD IN HIS LOVE FOR US KNOWS THAT THE BEST WAY TO GET OUT OF OUR WORRIES AND FEARS AND DEPRESSIONS IS TO GET BACK ON THE JOB FOR HIM.