

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

1 KINGS 17-19

People involved in the occult, talk about “[entry points](#)” or “[gateways](#)”.

Like a Ouija board, or a gothic video game, or a child’s book full of fairies and spiritism – what appears to be a harmless, innocuous fascination – can actually hook an innocent person, and lead them into further, more sinister stimulation.

This was the effect the sin of Jeroboam had on folks in the northern kingdom. *Jeroboam’s golden cows* conditioned Israel to accept *Ahab’s blasphemous bull*.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us it was Ahab’s wife, Jezebel that taught Baal worship to Israel. It turns out that Ahab had married the wicked witch.

Jezebel was a Phoenician princess. Her goal was to spread the religion of the Phoenicians in Israel. She wanted Baal-worship to be the accepted state religion.

You might say “[a Phoenician blinds Ahab, and it means curtains for Israel.](#)”

Yet in Israel’s darkest hour, God sends one of His brightest lights. He raises up a miracle working prophet. Verse 1 “**And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."** Notice, Elijah springs onto the scene. Without introduction, he *appears out the biblical blue*.

All we’re told of his pedigree or background is he was a

“Tishbite” - from Gilead, east of the Jordan. “Tishbite” could refer to family, or hometown - we’re not sure.

“Elijah” means “Yahweh is my God.” Here was a man jealous for the true God.

Elijah appears already at work, confronting King Ahab. And notice, Elijah sees himself standing, not before Ahab, but before the LORD. He says in verse 1, “the LORD God of Israel... before whom I stand...” Ahab possessed a wild, violent temper. He could order your execution as easily as a pizza from Dominos.

This is why it took nerves of steel to confront this wicked king. It’s been said, “Elijah saw only God, feared only God, and spoke only the words of God.”

In fact, Elijah received God’s power the same way you and I do. As James 5:17 puts it, “he prayed earnestly...” Elijah was *fearless before men*, because he *spent time before God*. Elijah was a man of prayer. James says, “he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for 3 years and 6 months.”

In Noah’s day, God judged the world by flooding the earth over 40 days. Elijah tells Ahab, God will judge Israel by drying her up over 40 months. And note, Elijah tells the king there’ll be no shortcuts out of his dilemma. The road to repentance will pass through Elijah. The prophet tells him, it won’t rain again, “except at My word...” Elijah was big and bold - one of the Bible’s mightiest men of God.

Verse 2 “Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

"Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan." God gave Elijah the *hit-and-run* sign. The prophet pronounces God's judgment - then splits for safety's sake. A hideout is prepared for Elijah.

And I'm sure his seclusion was not just for *protection*, but for *preparation*. While alone, Elijah could listen to God. By the brook he quieted his heart. He also had to learn to trust God. Two square meals each day were provided supernaturally...

Verse 4 "It will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.

The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook." God directed Elijah to camp out by a tiny tributary of the Jordan. The Brook Cherith supplied him water, and Elijah's meals were supernaturally catered. His food was flown in, literally...

He ate bread and meat twice a day. Ravens made the deliverers.

The other night on a nature show I saw a bird pluck a fish out the water, and fly off with the fish in his talons. Since God was providing, I have no doubt Elijah was eating rainbow trout - or char grilled salmon. Elijah was *rave'n* over the menu.

"And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land." The drought had finally taken its toll on Elijah's water supply.

"Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I

have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

Zarephath was a small town in the land of Sidon.

Luke 4 gives us a fascinating insight into this story. Jesus tells us why God sent Elijah to Gentile country. The drought had created a severe famine. God couldn't stand to see folks suffer, and He longed to work a miracle. God wanted to bless somebody – but there was no one in Israel with enough faith to ask for His help.

This is a problem God often faces... God gets antsy. He loves to pour out His provision, and lavish His blessings on people who are humble enough to ask. But he looks around at our proud, self-sufficient faces, and grows discouraged.

"There's nobody here I can bless. I'll have to move on somewhere else."

Hey, God is here tonight to heal, forgive, bless... but if we're all too proud to ask for His blessing - God will move on to the Baptist, or Methodist church.

That's what happened here. Israel lacked faith, so God sent the prophet to the Gentile city of Zarephath to a weak widow who was willing to trust God's promise.

"And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." He wants something to eat and drink.

So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar;

and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

This widow woman has been gathering sticks for her last meal. Her pantry is almost depleted. She's down to a handful of flour, and a few drops of oil.

"And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'" If she puts another person's need ahead of her own a miracle will occur.

Bake Elijah "a small cake" with the little she has left - and a large bounty will result. God will see to it that her needs are met for the remainder of the famine.

And that's what happens, "So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah." She never replenishes her bin or jar, yet they never empty. Like with Jesus' five loaves and two fish God worked a miracle of multiplication.

And there's an important lesson here for us. God's miracles don't happen for selfish people. A never ending supply exists for people who share - not hoard!

How many of you want to see a miracle? (Raise your hand!)
Here's what you do... go home - get your flour and oil - and start giving it away as the Lord directs.

Try to give it all away! I'll bet you can't. I'll bet God will replenish what you give. Jesus said in Luke 6:38, "Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom."

Verse 17 "Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him." *Her son died.* "So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?" She assumes the boy's death was the result of Elijah's judgment.

Elijah gets a little peeved. What does God have to do to prove His intentions are merciful, not judgmental? I think God has the same issues with us. We're so guilt-ridden we keep thinking God wants to judge us, when He's come to bless.

"And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.

Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him."

You got to admit this pretty weird. What if you walked into the funeral parlor, and saw a pastor inside the casket, stretched out on top of the corpse?

Call for a straightjackets. The guy flipped. He's cracking up under the strain. That's probably why Elijah took the body to his room, so no one would see him.

I never forget the night I went to the funeral home to pay my last respects to a friend. When I arrived no one else was in the room. It was just me and the corpse.

Don't worry, I didn't spread out on top of him, but I did lay hands on him, and I prayed that God would raise him up. I know my friend was already embalmed, but I believe if God had desired it, God could've raised him up right then... so *I asked*.

Either my faith was not strong enough, or it was not God's will.

But I really believe, if God called the worlds into existence out of nothing – *and He did* - then he can raise a body from the dead. Nothing is impossible for God.

Verse 22 agrees “Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother.

And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth."

Chapter 18 “And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the

earth." So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria. And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken 100 prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.)

Evidently, while God had Elijah hiding from Ahab - God had Obadiah working for Ahab. Verse 3 tells us Obadiah was "in charge of (Ahab's) house". He had a high level post in the royal court. We're also told he "feared the LORD greatly..."

It's interesting, both Elijah and Obadiah lived in an evil, apostate time. They both were faced with an ungodly culture, but their witness took different forms...

Elijah stood on the **outside of the culture** – he hid by the brook - then lived in exile in Sidon. Finally, God uses him to prophesy against the ungodliness.

Whereas, Obadiah works from **within the culture** - he serves God in the king's court. When Jezebel orders the execution of God's spokesmen, Obadiah comes to the rescue of 100 prophets. He hides them, feeds them, and protects them.

Here's a model for believers today... God calls some believers to a ministry of confrontation. They engage in supernatural showdowns. They point out the ungodliness of the culture, and call people to repent... While other believers work behind the scenes – permeating the ungodly culture with godly influence.

They shine their light, and do what they can for God within the system.

God used Elijah *and* Obadiah. He uses both *confrontation* and *infiltration*.

Verse 5 “And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock.

So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is that you, my lord Elijah?" And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.' " So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me?

As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you.

And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here" '!

“And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel

killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid 100 men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water?" Obadiah is on Elijah's side. He's not afraid of taking a stand, but he doesn't want to draw Ahab's anger unnecessarily. He'll be dead.

And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here." ' He will kill me!"

Then Elijah said, "As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today." In other words, I'll be here when you bring Ahab. "So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah."

Verse 17 "Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" Ahab wants to blame the drought on the prophet.

But Elijah "answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and you have followed the Baals." Ahab's idolatry had brought on the nation's hardships.

What happens next is one of the most famous events in the Bible, and the one for which Elijah is most remembered. Elijah calls out the prophets of Baal...

Verse 19 "Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the 450 prophets of Baal, and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." Asherah was Baal's female counterpart. She was an evil fertility goddess.

Notice too, the 950 priests of this idolatrous cult eat at Jezebel's table. In other words, Baal worship is receiving official financial backing from the state of Israel.

“So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.” Ahab accepts the challenge of Elijah, and arranges a spiritual showdown on the slopes of Mount Carmel. He calls all Israel to be witnesses.

Mount Carmel borders the Valley of Jezreel - plenty of room for lots of people.

“And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.” The word translated, “*falter*” means “*limp*”.

Israel was a wet noodle with no backbone. Their loyalties were based on *convenience* rather than *commitment*. It's time to decide. Elijah is drawing a line in the sand. And notice in response, “But the people answered him not a word.”

Dante wrote, “The hottest place in hell is reserved for those who, in times of crises, preserved their neutrality.” Spiritually, you can't ride the fence forever.

Remember “the only things in the middle of the road are yellow streaks and dead skunks.” There's a time for each one of us to choose whom we will serve!

“Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are 450 men. Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the

God who answers by fire, He is God." Baal was god of the sky.

The Phoenicians believed it was Baal who sent fire – the lightning. Surely if Baal was real he could *flick his Bic* and light up a sacrifice. **"So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."** What an event! This is high drama!

Here's a showdown – a sudden death shoot-out - *between Yahweh and Baal... Elijah and the pagan prophets... The Law of Moses and the religion of Jezebel...*

On the surface, you'd think Elijah was outnumbered – 850 to 1 - *but you'd have thought wrong*. The God of Elijah more than makes up for the numerical deficit.

Verse 25 **"Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves..."** Elijah gives them their pick. **"And prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it."** So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" **But there was no voice; no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they had made."**

The prophets of Baal get first crack. They cry out from morning until noon, but no fire. They're dancing about, chanting and wailing, trying to get Baal's attention.

Of course this summed up their results for the past three years. Baal was lord of the weather. They'd been crying out to him to end the drought, but to no avail.

Verse 27 tells us, **"And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is medi-**

tating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened."

Here's the Living Bible's paraphrase of verse 27, "Elijah began mocking them. 'You'll have to shout louder than that,' he scoffed, "to catch the attention of your god! Perhaps he is talking to someone, or is out sitting on the toilet, or maybe he is away on a trip, or is asleep and needs to be wakened." In contrast to Baal we read in Psalm 121:4 of the one, true God, "He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber or sleep." Yahweh, the true God, is always attentive to our prayers.

After Elijah mocks them, the prophets of Baal get desperate... "So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them." Baal worship involved masochism and self-mutilation.

"And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention." The prophets of Baal keep there antics all day - until 3:00 pm.

They'd been at it for 9 hours, *and not a spark - a flicker - a warm coal.*

Now it's Elijah's turn. "Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him." Elijah wanted Israel to see God's power up-close.

"And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name."

Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed.” or $\frac{3}{4}$ of a bushel.

“And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, “Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.” The waterpots in Jesus’ day held 20-30 gallons of water.

“Then 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.” By now the meat and wood have been saturated with close to 300 gallons of water. When a football team wins a big game they dump Gatorade on the coach from a 10 gallon bucket.

Elijah soaks the sacrifice to Yahweh with 30 Gatorade showers. Verse 35 says, “So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.”

“And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.” God is about to light a barbecue. Elijah makes sure there is no doubt as to the source of the miracle. He prays a simple prayer.

There’s no dancing - no chanting - no slashing – just a simple request.

And we're told in verse 38, "Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!"

There was no denying the source of the miracle. The moment Elijah addresses the God of Israel – fire falls. The fire ignites the wet wood - burns up the soaked meat – and even vaporizes the water in the trench. Everything is consumed.

And please take note of the imagery... God can ignite a watered-down, water-logged, all washed up, soggy sacrifice if you'll just ask him. That's how I feel at times. I feel like a baseball that's been sitting in a mud-puddle for a week. I'm about twice as heavy, and burdened down, as I ought to be.

Yet if I acknowledge that I want my life to be a sacrifice for God – then ask Him to send a fire of enthusiasm and joy from heaven - He'll set my heart ablaze.

"And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there." Elijah immediately seizes the 850 prophets of *Baal*. And none of them could *make bail*... so they were executed.

Under the Law of Moses the death penalty was prescribed for a false prophet.

"Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is

the sound of abundance of rain." Remember, it hasn't rained for 3½ years. And this day is no different than any other day. Elijah hears rain, but there's not a cloud in the sky.

"So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees..." Note Elijah's posture. This is the only time in the Bible when a person curls up in a ball to pray. Elijah "said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." Carmel is by the coast. From the top of the mount you can look westward to the Mediterranean.

"So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again." Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" That's all it took. Elijah knew God had answered. From that small cloud rain was about to fall on Israel.

"So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'" Elijah tells the king, "Hurry home, we're about to have a gully-washer." Or as they'd say down in Texas "a toad-strangling." Rain is on its way.

"Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain." In James 5 the apostle is teaching the Church on the power of prayer. He reaches into the Old Testament for an illustration, *and guess who he pulls out?* "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain... He prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit." Understand, the sole difference between *drought* and *deluge* is one man's passionate prayer.

And James concludes, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” Believe what you want about the predetermined will of God, but our text is clear that God stopped the rain, and sent the rain, because of one man’s prayer.

Here’s the moral of the story, if you’re experiencing a spiritual or financial or relational drought, and your life lacks showers of blessing... and you have not fervently requested them... then you have nobody to blame but yourself!

Verse 45 tells us, “So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins (he pulled up his robe so he could run) and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.”

Though Ahab may’ve been slowed by the rain this appears to be a miracle of supernatural speed. “The hand of the LORD came upon Elijah.” We don’t know if Ahab rode in a chariot or on horseback, but *Ahab rode* whereas *Elijah ran*. And Elijah covered the 14 mile trip first. Why this was so important we’re not told...

Chapter 19... It’s been said, “God knows the best of men are but men at best.”

In 1 Kings 19 Elijah proves he has clay feet like the rest of us. He was a mighty man of God, but he was just that “a man”... He put on his britches like the rest of us. James 5:17 tells us, “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours...” Elijah was vulnerable to the same discouragement and weakness that drag us down.

In fact, you can hardly believe the turnaround that occurs in

chapter 19...

Verse 1 “And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." When Queen Jezebel hears of Elijah's victory, Ahab's *darling* starts *snarling*. Jezebel promises that within 24 hours she'll have Elijah's head. He's killed state officials. She'll kill him.

Verse 3 “And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.” This is amazing!

The prophet Elijah just faced off with 850 false prophets - and remember, they all had knives, they were cutting and slashing themselves. Now he's threatened by one vile and vicious woman - and he bolts. He runs for his life... He flees 80 miles from Jezreel to Beersheba (the southernmost site in the territory of Judah).

He's still not done. “But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness...”

Elijah leaves his servant and goes another day's journey into the wilderness. Now he's hidden from everyone. Nobody but God knows his whereabouts.

Finally, alone in the desert, Elijah plops himself down “under a broom tree.” It was more a bush than a tree. A broom tree was a desert shrub.

“And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough!

Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

Elijah prayed a bold and daring prayer for God to open the heavens and end a 3½ year drought. Now he prays a foolish prayer, bathed in self-pity, poured out in fear... he asks God if he can die.

Amazing, in a matter of hours, Elijah has gone from *fearless* to *fearful*.

Evidently, Elijah expected his victory at Mount Carmel to solve the problem permanently. He wasn't ready for just how entrenched Jezebel's resistance would be. On the heels of an enormous victory, he sinks into a deep and dark despair.

It reminds me of a quote from CS Lewis' *"The Screwtape Letters"*. A senior demon gives advice to an apprentice demon on how to defeat a Christian...

"Keep the subject, thinking his trials will be over, so when they're not he'll be continually disappointed. It's okay if he learns a lesson or two through his trials, just as long as you keep him thinking that one day all his trials will be gone.

Whatever you do never allow him to accept his trials as a permanent part of discipleship, and something he must learn to endure."

Elijah thought the battle was over at Mount Carmel - and when Jezebel refused to admit defeat, and raise her white flag - it caught Elijah off-guard. He retreated.

Elijah had grown weary in well doing - tired of the fight. He wanted the battle to be over. He was hoping Mount Carmel would've been the battle to end all battles.

It's ironic, but at the base of Carmel is a huge valley called *Armageddon*. We're taught in Scripture that in the last days the nations will gather in this valley to fight against Jesus when He returns. *This is the battle that will end all battles...*

In the meantime life is full of skirmishes between good and evil. This side of heaven our struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil is never over.

Verse 5 **"Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat."** Elijah's depression and general dumpiness may've been triggered by exhaustion and malnutrition. In the midst of the conflict with the prophets of Baal he may not have slept or eaten.

Whenever one of my boys acts grumpy their mother's first reaction is to ask, **"Have you had anything to eat?"** And nine times out of ten the answer is **"No"**.

God realizes this is one of the reasons for Elijah's moodiness so He provides him food. **"Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again."** God even lets him sleep.

At times the most spiritual thing I can do is eat a burger and take a nap.

"And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you."

So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food 40 days and 40 nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God." And what he ate - I wish we knew. *Here's the ul-*

imate power bar and energy drink! On a single serving Elijah travels 40 days and nights across dangerous desert terrain.

And he ends up at Mount Horeb, or Sinai, where Moses met with God. The burning bush - and the glory of God - were seen by Moses on Mount Horeb.

It's been said, "Elijah's outlook had become negative because his uplook had become nil." Elijah needs food and rest, but he also needs a fresh vision of God. And there was no better place for that than Horeb, "the mountain of God."

"And there he went into a cave..." Could it have been the cave where God hid Moses as His glory passed by? Exodus 33:22 says God told Moses "I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand..." Moses was shielded from God's face, but God removed His hand to let Moses see His backside.

Well, Elijah "spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" In other words, *Elijah you are a warrior, why aren't you in the midst of the battle?*

"So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

In verse 11 God gives instructions to a weary servant. "Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces 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; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.”

Elijah was accustomed to God revealing Himself in spectacular, star-spangled, attention-grabbing ways. But “*fire from heaven*” is the exception rather than the rule. The rushing mighty wind - and tongues of fire - happened just once in the book of Acts. The earthquake that rocked the upper room was a rare event.

If we look for God only in the wind, and earthquake, and lightning we’ll live most of our lives without hearing from Him. More often than not, God speaks to us just as he did to Elijah... **through a still small voice.** God communicates through *inner breathings – soul whispers*. He impresses our desires and instincts.

This is why you have to quiet your life, and slow down your pace, to hear from God. So often, Jesus went on top of the mountain by Himself to spend time with God. It was for this very reason. Jesus was listening for God’s still small voice.

The devil has filled our world with distractions. We’re bombarded with different voices all day long – every car has a radio - we keep a telephone strapped to our belt - most homes have a television in every room - our computer is hooked to the internet and an endless stream of information, a million opinions from a million sources. *With so many voices the one voice that matters gets drowned out.*

Years ago a tragic accident occurred near the Georgia-Tennessee border.

A school bus was hit by a train killing 3 of the kids onboard. An investigation concluded the train had sounded its whistle, but the bus driver didn't hear it because of the noises on the bus. Various noises drowned out the whistle.

And the same scenario can put us in danger. When the noises of life become so loud they drown out the still small voice of God we're also headed for a wreck.

If you and I are serious about walking with God, and knowing His will, we need to find a Mount Horeb where we can slow down, and listen... really listen...

“So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave.” Elijah had heard God speak. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

Again Elijah complains that he's been carrying God's torch all by himself.

Hey, there is nothing more discouraging than loneliness. Even, if it's just the feeling of being alone – the perception - not than the reality. *It can get to you.*

And God has a remedy, “Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as

prophet in your place.

It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.” God recruits new soldiers for the battle - a righteous king and a trusted assistant.

This is interesting, God’s cure for Elijah’s loneliness is not someone to mentor him - but for him to mentor someone else. He provides a *pupil* instead of a *peer*. The teacher who gives is always blessed more than the student who receives.

“Yet I have reserved 7000 in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.” God provides Elijah some help, but He wants his prophet to know he’s wrong about accusing God of leaving him alone. God had 7000 prophets in Israel who had refused to bow their knee to Baal.

Sometimes we get discouraged. We assume we must be the only Christian in the High School... or company... or neighborhood... but not so. There’s almost always a believing remnant. God has His people stationed in every corner. Ask God to provide you fellowship, and He’ll open your eyes to a fellow believer.

Verse 19 “So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with 12 yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth.”

Hey, a plough pulled by 12 oxen implies Elisha was very wealthy farmer.

“Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him.”

This was a call to discipleship – an offer of apprenticeship – an invitation to be his follower...

The mantle was the prophet’s uniform. It was probably an animal skin – a fur. When you received it you were saying there’s no limit to how *fur I’ll go with God*.

“And (Elisha) left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" This isn’t my call to ministry. It’s God’s call.

“So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.”

I love how Elisha accepts his call to the ministry. He slaughters his oxen - cooks them on a fire he starts with their wooden yokes - then he feeds the meat to the people. In other words, he’s burning his bridges - liquidating his assets.

He has no intention of keeping his options open. His is a total commitment.

Too many folks set out to serve the Lord with reservations. They’ll *step out*, but only as long as they can *step back* if it doesn’t work out. But if you’re sure of God’s calling why not go for it? **“Faith is willing to venture beyond the point of no return!”**