

# Elijah

## General Information

Elijah - his name means My God is Jehovah

Native of Tishbe in the territory of Naphtali

**1 Kings 17:1** 17 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."

## Live in a Time of Evil Kings in Israel

Israel went from bad to worse and then further worsened. It started when Solomon allowed himself to be influenced by his foreign wives, but notice the progression:

## Solomon

**1 Kings 11:4-7** 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David. 7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon.

Solomon did evil and did not fully follow the Lord. When we hear the phrase "did not fully follow the Lord", it doesn't sound that serious. But it was serious for Solomon and notice how it progressed for those after him.

## Jeroboam I

**1 Kings 13:33,34** 33 After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. 34 And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth.

**1 Kings 14:7-9** 7 Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: "Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, 8 and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My

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commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes; 9 but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back

Jeroboam consecrated whoever wished. He ignored God's standards and followed his own ideas. He did more evil than all who were before him.

## Nadab

**1 Kings 15:25,26** 25 Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. 26 And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin.

Nadab walked in the way of his evil father. But notice the further progression, "he had made Israel sin". Now, sin had grown to affect others and the nation.

## Baasha

**1 Kings 15:27-29** 27 Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. 29 And it was so, when he became king, that he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the Lord which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite,

Next came Baash who killed not only Nadab, but all the house of Jeroboam. The evil has grown to murdering not only the king, but the whole house of Jeroboam.

## Elah

**1 Kings 16:8-9** 8 In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, and reigned two years in Tirzah. 9 Now his servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah. 10 And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place.

Baasha's son Elah becomes king. It doesn't seem he was very focused on his responsibility. He was drinking himself drunk in Tirzah and was killed by Zimri

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## Zimri

**1 Kings 16:10-11** 10 And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. 11 Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends.

Zimri, another evil king, killed the entire household of Baasha. Notice how thoroughly he approached the murders, leaving not one male relative nor friend.

## Omri

**1 Kings 16:25-26** 25 Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all who were before him. 26 For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their idols.

Next on the scene comes Omri. Considering how evil the progression has been with mass murder, he must have been truly evil to be described as “worse than all who were before him.”

## Ahab

**1 Kings 16:30-31** 30 Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. 31 And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.

Then finally comes his son Ahab. If we have trouble imagining how evil Omri was, Ahab took it further. He did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him.

This is the situation Elijah lived in. A king unimaginably evil, worse than those who came before him. We are troubled by the evil that goes on in our time, just imagine what it must have been like for Elijah.

- What kind of times did Elijah live in?
- Without correction do bad things tend to get worse?
- How did Ahab compare to the other kings?
- Where was Jezebel from?

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## Nature Like Ours

**James 5:17** 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

We are tempted to imagine Elijah as some type of superhero. But the Bible is careful to remind us that he was a real man with a nature like ours. He would have faced feelings and temptations just like us. Thinking of ourselves, we realize how strong the temptation to just give up must have been.

**2 Kings 1:8** 8 So they answered him, “A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist.” And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”

In appearance also a normal, but hairy man. No superhero cape, but a leather belt around his waist.

- Did Elijah have some special advantage over us?
- Do we leave things undone, expecting there will be someone better able to do it?

## Type of John the Baptist

But as a man, he made a difference. His example is so strong that God described John the Baptist as being a type of Elijah

**Malachi 4:5** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

**Luke 1:16-17** 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

**Matthew 11:11-15** 11 “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Elijah was one who could turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make people ready. An ordinary man who showed extraordinary courage in standing up for God and through this courage influenced the people around him.

- Why would people compare John the Baptist to Elijah?
- Was John the Baptist considered great?

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## Appeared at Transfiguration

Another example of his impact is that he was chosen to appear at the transfiguration.

**Matthew 17:1-8** Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. 7 But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." 8 When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Generally I hear this described as a scene where Moses represented the Law and Elijah represented the prophets.

- Why do you think Elijah and John the Baptist were chosen for the transfiguration?

## Left an Impression

**Matthew 16:13-16** 13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" 14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Even during the time of Jesus, when people saw someone standing up for the truth, one name that came to mind was Elijah.

Now we look at several incidents in the life of Elijah

- Why did the people think Jesus was Elijah?

## Prophesied a Drought

**1 Kings 17:1** 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."

We have looked at the progression of evil and know what kind of man Ahab was. We remember that kings had power to execute whom they pleased. See the boldness of Elijah who delivers this

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unwanted message that there is going to be a terrible consequence of Israel's sinful state. Even in small matters in our own time, we know that bad news is rarely received well. But Elijah's message wasn't his idea, it was based on God's message.

**Deut 11:16-17** 16 Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, 17 lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.

When God's anger was aroused against them because of their sin, God had much earlier warned them that he would withhold the rain and the consequences that would result.

This was no short drought, from the verse in James 5 we already read the drought lasted 3 and ½ years.

- Did Elijah come up with the idea of withholding rain on his own?
- What were the risks in approaching a king in those days?
- How do people usually react when told bad news?
- How do you imagine Elijah felt after finishing delivering his message?

## Out of the Limelight at Cherith

Standing before the king and delivering God's message must have been one of the peak times for Elijah. But it appears God had more than mountain-top like experiences that Elijah needed to learn.

**1 Kings 17:2-6** 2 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 3 "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 4 And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." 5 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. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.

From standing before the king to living all alone. He didn't even get to provide his own food but instead God fed him using ravens. Sometimes we ignore the lessons that must be learned in the non mountain-top times. The lesson seems obvious that God was showing Elijah that he needed to humbly rely on God. Would this have been difficult for Elijah after his faceoff with the King? What kinds of difficulties do we face in the more normal times?

- Can we feel let down after something great is over?
- Did this experience help prepare Elijah?
- How does society and even us look at someone who can't even take care of themselves?

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## Sent to a Widow in Sidon

**1 Kings 17:7-10a** 7 And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.” 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath.

He was sent to Sidon. But wait, what do we know about Sidon?

**1 Kings 16:31** 31 And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.

This was Jezebel’s home territory, her father was king of the Sidonians.

Elijah shows his absolute trust in God against all human wisdom. He was being sent to a widow to care for him. Widows, especially in that time, generally needed cared for, they weren’t the ones to care for others. Then it wasn’t a widow in some nice safe location. He was being sent to Sidon, a nation of Baal worshipers. From a human standpoint this must have made no sense at all. But Elijah didn’t rely on what made sense to him, he relied on God. Think about situations in your life, are there times when you need to just trust God, do what he says, and not rely on figuring everything out yourself.

- Where was Elijah sent?
- What was the status of widows at that time?
- Why might Elijah have feared going to Sidon?

## Last of the Flour and Oil

**1 Kings 17:10b-16** 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.” 11 And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” 12 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.” 13 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. 14 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.’ ” 15 So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 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.

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Sometimes it seems even more difficult to do something that involves risks to others that it does to assume risk ourselves. The widow was down to her last meal and Elijah had to ask her to feed him first. Remember this request was to a Sidonian widow not a devout Jew. Elijah again shows his faith in asking her and stating confidently that God would take care of her. His faith must have been obvious, she did just as he requested. Do we shy away from being clear with what God wants in what we say?

- Why might it have been difficult for Elijah to ask the widow to feed him first?
- Why did she accept Elijah's instruction and obey?
- How confident was Elijah of the outcome?

## Raises Widow's Son

Then tragedy strikes:

**1 Kings 17:17-24** 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. 18 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?" 19 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. 20 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?" 21 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." 22 Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. 23 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!" 24 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."

Her son dies and who does she blame? Elijah. This won't be the last time Elijah is blamed for something that isn't his fault. He shows his steadfast faith that God can handle even this situation, a dead son. He didn't argue, he didn't run away, he just trusted God.

What situations do we face in our lives where the righteous are blamed without reason? How do we handle these situations?

- How do we feel and react when we are unfairly blamed?
- How confident was Elijah?
- How did the widow react to this miracle?



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## Obadiah's Fear

His next recorded task was to send Obadiah with a message.

**1 Kings 18:7-14** 7 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?" 8 And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.' " 9 So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? 10 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. 11 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here" '! 12 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. 13 Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, how I hid one hundred men of the Lord's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? 14 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here." ' He will kill me!"

How discouraging this must have been for Elijah. Obadiah was a servant who feared the Lord from his youth. He realized that the Spirit of the Lord was powerful enough to carry Elijah away. His response was still to refuse the task out of fear. Can we get discouraged by the actions of people around us?

- Why did Obadiah refuse Elijah's instruction?
- Was Obadiah aware of God's power?
- How are we affected by others' lack of faith?
- How did Elijah react?

## Troubler of Israel?

So Elijah appears before Ahab

**1 Kings 18:17-18** 17 Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" 18 And he 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 have followed the Baals.

Ahab's immediate response is to call Elijah the troubler of Israel. Again Elijah faces an unjust accusation. Notice how calmly Elijah responds. He simply states the truth that Ahab and his fathers have caused the trouble. He doesn't leave it as a generic statement, but tells Ahab directly what he has been doing wrong, what he needs to change. Some calm assurance of faith. Remember he's speaking to a very powerful, very evil king, worse than those who came before him.

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- How did Ahab react to Elijah standing before him?
- How did Elijah react to Ahab's insult?
- Did Elijah make the truth clearly known?

## Mount Carmel - the Challenge

**1 Kings 18:19-24** 19 Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." 20 So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21 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. 22 Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. 23 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. 24 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." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

Seriously outnumbered, Elijah is bold. He knows that God controls the outcome. It doesn't depend on numbers or a majority. He puts himself on the line, what would happen if God didn't come through?

- Seriously outnumbered, how confident was Elijah?
- How did Elijah remind the people of the choice they needed to make?

## Boldly Teases the Prophets of Baal

**1 Kings 18:25-29** 25 Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it." 26 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. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. 27 And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." 28 So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. 29 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 begin their task and become ever more frantic as nothing happens. Elijah's message isn't just for them, they were largely unreachable, but for the people of Israel that were

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listening. They needed to see this in its obvious simplicity and remember it later. Relying on Baal was worthless, he could do nothing.

- Why did the prophets of Baal become frantic?
- How did Elijah respond?
- Who does it seem he was trying to instruct?

## Calmly Trusts in God

**1 Kings 18:30-39** 30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. 31 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." 32 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. 33 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." 34 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. 35 So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. 36 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. 37 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." 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. 39 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!"

Notice how calmly, purposely Elijah does his task. He calls the people near, this is something they need to see and understand. He repairs the altar that was broken down. The people needed to realize their part in the fact it was broken down. He gathered 12 stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel. The people would remember their past that God had been with them. He has the sacrifice drenched with water so that it even filled the trench. He calmly prays to God, again convicting the people of their failure. God answers dramatically and the fickle people finally are ready to say that the Lord is God.

- In what state was the altar?
- Why would the altar have been this way?
- Why did Elijah take 12 stones?
- Why was the sacrifice covered in water?
- From verse 37 what was the purpose of the demonstration?

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## Acts upon the Peoples' Sudden Faith

**1 Kings 18:40** 40 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.

We might have reason to doubt the sincerity, the endurance of the people's conversion. Elijah instead immediately puts it to the test and to work. "Seize the prophets of Baal". They seized them and then Elijah brought them to Kishon and executed them.

- Was this a time the people were receptive?
- How did Elijah use this new attitude of the people?
- How thoroughly did Elijah remove the temptation?

## Announces Rain and Outruns Ahab's chariot

**1 Kings 18:41-45** 41 Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." 42 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, 43 and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again." 44 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!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'" 45 Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. 46 Then the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

Elijah again approaches Ahab and tells him to eat and drink for there is the sound of rain. Literally the sound hadn't happened yet, there was nothing yet to see and even after that only a distant cloud the size of a man's fist. But Elijah's trust in God allows him to count it as accomplished.

At the report of the small distant cloud, Elijah warns Ahab, leave now before the rain stops you. Then there was wind and heavy rain. Ahab went to Jezreel. Mount Carmel to Jezreel is a distance of around 15 miles. God is with Elijah. Through this wind and heavy rain, he outran Ahab's chariot the 15 miles to Jezreel.

- No clouds yet, but how confident was Elijah (v41)?
- Would we have been tempted to hope that Ahab did get stuck in the mud?
- At what point did Elijah repeat the message (v44)?
- Did Ahab believe him (v45)
- How did Elijah get to Jezreel (v46)?

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## Angers Jezebel

**1 Kings 19:1-2** And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. 2 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.”

With these decisive demonstrations, we’d think that Elijah’s troubles were over. Sometimes we imagine our troubles are over before they really are. We can even imagine Ahab retelling the story of what happened to Jezebel. But her reaction must have been a shock. Instead of being convinced by all of this, she vows to kill Elijah.

- How did Jezebel react to her husbands account of all these events?
- What threat did she make (v2)?

## Elijah Runs and Despairs of Life

**1 Kings 19:3-4** 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. 4 But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. 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!”

After seeing all that happened, what is Elijah’s response to this threat? He ran for his life to Beersheba. This wasn’t some small running, Jezreel to Beersheba is about 95 miles. If that wasn’t enough, he then went a day’s journey into the wilderness. What comes next doesn’t make sense. He fled for his life, but then prays to die. But fear often isn’t rational.

- After seeing what God had done, how did Elijah react to the threat?
- Why did he want to die?

## Got Prepares Elijah for a Journey

**1 Kings 19:5-8** 5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, “Arise and eat.” 6 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. 7 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.” 8 So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

God remains in control. God shows compassion on Elijah. An angel has him eat a cake and drink water, and then has him do it again. After all he has journeyed so far, he must now journey to Mount

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Horeb. Beersheeba to Mount Horeb is perhaps around 200 miles. That journey of 200 miles took 40 days. What must Elijah have thought about during those 40 days.

- How did God have the angel prepare Elijah?
- How long did Elijah's journey take?

## God Questions Elijah

**1 Kings 19:9-15** 9 And there he went into a cave, and 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?" 10 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." 11 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; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. 13 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. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 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." 15 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. 16 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.

We see that Elijah was a human like us. Even after all that had happened to him, he could still face discouragement. God questions what Elijah was doing? He recounts what he's done, the errors of the people, and then reveals that he feels that he is the only one left doing right. God shows him a lesson. God wasn't in the strong wind, he wasn't in the earthquake, he wasn't in the fire. Sometimes we imagine God only makes big dramatic appearances, like when fire consumed the sacrifice. But after these powerful things, comes a still small voice, repeating the question. God is here just as much in the quiet times as he is in the bold times, we just don't notice it. God then gives Elijah some tasks. Sometimes we need to stop focusing on what we're feeling and get about doing what God wants us to do.

**1 Kings 19:17-18** 17 It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. 18 Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

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He reminds Elijah that God remains in control. He has power over kings (Jehu), prophets (Elisha) and other people (reserved 7,000).

- What question did God ask Elijah?
- How did God show himself? Why?
- What was God's response to Elijah's problem (v15)?
- Do we sometime need to consider that same type of answer?

## Finds Elisha

God does understand that humans have limitations (often called but flesh or dust). Here it appears God is recognizing that Elijah is nearing his end. But nearing the end, doesn't mean stopping. God has him encourage and prepare Elisha, the one after him.

**1 Kings 19:19-21** 19 So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. 20 And he 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?" 21 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.

Even when we can no longer do some of what we did in the past, our job isn't finished. We may still need to help prepare those who will come after us.

- What task was Elisha chosen for?
- What work did he start as (v21)?

## Boldly confronts Ahab

**1 Kings 21:15-26** 15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." 16 So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. 17 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who lives in Samaria. There he is, in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. 19 You shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "Have you murdered and also taken possession?" ' And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours." ' " 20 So Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" And he answered, "I have found

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you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord: 21 'Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. 22 I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israel sin.' 23 And concerning Jezebel the Lord also spoke, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' 24 The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field." 25 But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up. 26 And he behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.

- What had Ahab done?
- What message did Elijah deliver to Ahab?
- Could we be tempted to gloat just a bit in such a situation?

Elijah must once again confront Ahab and deliver God's message. How would Elijah feel? The one who so often sought to kill him, was going to get what was coming to him. But then...

**1 Kings 21:27-29** 27 So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning. 28 And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 "See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house."

Ahab repents and God let's Elijah know that he will not bring calamity in Ahab's days, but there still will be consequences.

- How did Ahab react to the message (v27)?
- What new message was Elijah given (v28-29)?

## Elijah, Ahaziah and the Mountain Top

Ahab dies and Ahaziah his son reigns in his place. He tries to inquire of false prophets about the outcome of his injury in a fall.

**2 Kings 1:2-8** 2 Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury." 3 But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' 4 Now therefore, thus says the Lord: 'You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" So



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Elijah departed. 5 And when the messengers returned to him, he said to them, "Why have you come back?" 6 So they said to him, "A man came up to meet us, and said to us, 'Go, return to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Thus says the Lord: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.' " ' " 7 Then he said to them, "What kind of man was it who came up to meet you and told you these words?" 8 So they answered him, "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."

Elijah intercepts them and once again delivers God's message. Ahaziah must have heard of Elijah's encounters with his father Ahab. Someone interrupted the king's messengers on their task and he asked what this person looked like. Ahaziah's immediate response, it is Elijah.

**2 Kings 1:9** 9 Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!' "

He sends a company of 50 men with their captain to bring back this one, now older man. He must have thought that he was taking no chances. We see the arrogance of the captain, who even though he calls him Man of God, still orders him to come down. Why not be arrogant it is 50 trained soldiers against one old man.

**2 Kings 1:10** 10 So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

This may seem severe to us, but this was an affront not to Elijah, but to God who had sent him with the messages. How does Ahaziah react?

**2 Kings 1:11-12** 11 Then he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men. And he answered and said to him: "Man of God, thus has the king said, 'Come down quickly!' " 12 So Elijah answered and said to them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

We don't know how much this captain knew about the first, but we definitely see his attitude. He is more arrogant yet, "man of God come down quickly". Elijah trusts in God and the answer is the same. The captain and his 50 are destroyed. Ok, what will Ahaziah do next?

**2 Kings 1:13-15** 13 Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: "Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. 14 Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their

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fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight.” 15 And the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So he arose and went down with him to the king.

This captain at least understands somewhat that God must be respected. He fell on his knees before Elijah and pleaded with him. He had definitely heard what had happened to his predecessors. Done the right way, the angel has Elijah go with him.

- How seriously does God take being respected?
- How did the first two captains approach Elijah?
- How did the third captain with his fifty approach Elijah?
- What was God’s answer to this third request?

## Elijah and the Whirlwind

**2 Kings 2:1** And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

**2 Kings 2:10-13** 10 So he said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.” 11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. 13 He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan.

A chariot separates Elijah from Elisha and then a whirlwind takes Elijah into heaven. We see his grief in the tearing of his clothes, but the acceptance of his responsibilities in taking up the mantle.

- What was the task of the chariot (v11)?
- What took Elijah up to heaven (v11)?
- What did Elisha’s tearing of his clothes represent (v12)?
- What did it mean for Elisha to take up Elijah’s mantle?

## Letter to Johoram

**2 Chronicles 21:12-16** 12 And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus says the Lord God of your father David: Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13 but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot like the harlotry of the house of Ahab, and also have killed your brothers, those of your father’s household, who were better than yourself,

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14 behold, the Lord will strike your people with a serious affliction—your children, your wives, and all your possessions; 15 and you will become very sick with a disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day. 16 Moreover the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who were near the Ethiopians.

Even after he was gone Elijah still had influence. We don't know the circumstances of this letter, had Elijah known and left it for Elisha to send at the proper time. We don't know. In any case, he again made sure God's message was heard.

- What was Elijah's message to Johorom?