

Practice what you profess

Because of their persecution and trials the scattered Jewish believers seem to be reluctant to bring their current problems to God...or else why James need to remind believers to pray when suffering, till sing to God.... And do not forget to take to God and the church leaders those who are ill... Which means they have kind of stepped back from doing this...probably because of their long trial and disappointment while believing in Jesus... so they have kind of let that slide.....**Why is he writing this to them ?...because it is our naturally tendency to back somewhat away from asking God for help...**when he does not seem to answer...we tend to step back from God when he continues to let us suffer when we plead for relief...

Listen to what James writes

*James 5:*<sup>13</sup> *Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.* <sup>14</sup> *Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.* <sup>15</sup> *And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.* <sup>16</sup> *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

Except when He doesn't...or how about when Jesus said to his disciples

*Matt 6:31* *So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'* **32** *For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.* **33** *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.* **34** *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Except when all these things are not added to us... We've all anointed and prayed for someone who didn't recover.

- We all know people who are struggling to keep the lights on and who dread checking the mail or answering the phone because they simply don't have the provision needed.
- We know from experience that these "promises" of help are anything but sure in this life.
- We massage that reality with sundry theological explanations to allow us to hold on to some semblance of faith.
- We deal with our disappointment and discouragement with thoughts about

God's will, God's sovereignty, a fallen world, or our own sin.

- Honestly, those no longer do much for me.
- Between the afflictions I own and the afflictions I see, such answers are like cheap band-aids that don't stick properly, but hurt when you pull them off.
- **This is the deal...you will experience and deal with the times you live in...you are not exempt nor excluded from the positives and also the negatives...the joys and sorrows...highs and lows...and because we belong to Jesus there is another type of experience we will have...it is called suffering for the kingdom!**

It's one sure promise of scripture

*Phil 1:29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.*

- Suffering is promised as surely as salvation in the book. It is spoken of as being given as an honor. It is said to be necessary for us to be able to endure to the end.
- **It is said that we share in the sufferings of Christ and that by doing so we play a part in the story of redemption.** There is suffering involved in helping others...So there is the normal suffering of life...and good parts and there is the normal suffering of following Jesus, and also the glorious parts..
- **Despite all this, we do all we can to avoid suffering or to lessen it any way we can.**

Yet, There are days when it makes us doubt our faith and the goodness of God. We're supposed to count it as joy, but I am not really good at that kind of math...

- **If you don't have days like that, I salute your holiness, but lately I have more days like that then I care to admit.** I survive not with carefully selected scripture verses, but by looking at Jesus.
- Jesus came to save and that included suffering....Jesus asked His Father for another way because the suffering was so intense.
- When there was no other way, He took the suffering. He promises there will be a day when all the suffering ends.....It won't be today.
- **The God who suffered is a God I can follow.** Still...today we will keep

anointing, keep praying, keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking.

- Sometimes the answer is yes. But whether it is yes or no... at some point we will all pass through the portal of death...but we will come through it unharmed...we do win!!
- When it's not, we will still see Jesus, and Jesus knows our sorrow. Keep following Him. There's no other place to go...

**\*\*\*\*\*That is the big lesson for today you have to Practice what you Profess.... what you stand up for you will stand in!**

**If you stand up for Jesus ...then whatever you are standing in...Stand up for him!!in other words hold your faith above and in it**

As exemplified by James next statement

*JAS 5: 17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.....*

- Elijah an amazing and powerful prophet...at his core was just like you and me.... He Was A Normal Human ...he knew victory and loss, He knew hunger, weariness, burnout, fear, and victory, he had incredible highs and devastating losses just like any other and he served God in His generation.... And was one of the greats ....
- It is good and quite comforting to remember that someone has already lived a life that is quite similar to the one you are living now.
- Many have journeyed before you. So when toils and troubles become overwhelming, They have been gone through before by others...they not only survived...but became people who were better, stronger, healthier...they became overcomers...they persevered, and conquered...
- He or she who carry the burden are usually involved in the providing the solution...

*IKI 17:1 Now **Elijah** the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."*

- So what appears out of the blue...was actually the result of a man burdened who was helpless in himself so he prayed...
- Probably along the lines of scripture which he knew..
- Apparently God gave him the ok...to speak these words to King Ahab...the worst King...when the country is at its worst...

somehow He gets an audience...probably because he was seen as someone who looked like a prophet...Hair matted, camel hair outfit with a belt holding it together..etc.

- this King and his wife had put many prophets and priests of Yahweh already to death...
- But this man gains access...says unbelievable things to them defying their god's...
- And it appears everyone is in stunned silence...and he walks out...and continues to the edge of town...

**This is a ministry highlight for anyone...God choosing a nobody and making him a somebody...wow**

- But in typical God fashion...Elijah does not know what to do when he leaves....
- God never seems to give the big picture...

He knew what to do...but he did not know what to do after that!! Get used to it...

**You have to practice what you profess....**the drought will effect him too!

From confronting the king and queen ...what happens to your country happens to you!! So God's provision is to send him to the back end of the desert....Impressive

*1KI 17:2 Then the word of the LORD came to **Elijah**: <sup>3</sup> "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in ravens to feed you there."*

- He tells him to go East and hide...
- **Kerith means drought**...to a brook...that is a horrible place to get water...it is not a stream or a river...it is like a dribbling hose...hardly adequate
- even a prophet as great as Elijah is not exempt from the troubles of the day...
- He is being shaped on the divine potters wheel..

○ **Believer's have to learn to live their beliefs...How?**

○ **Elijah has to live with the implications of his own message...**

- He spoke the word...drought ...now he must also live the word drought...
- Elijah had one, one sentence message...he delivered it...he must live in it...

*JAS 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

- **WE ARE NOT EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE...AS A MATTER OF FACT WE ARE CALLED TO BE EXAMPLES FOLLOWING THE RULES....**
- **IF THE RULE IS DROUGHT WE MUST BE EXAMPLES IN THE DROUGHT!**
- We are called to serve God in the sphere of His choosing...

- **So practice patience the lord will come, He will come to help them, He will come to rescue them, they need to continue to exercise patience... until he does**

*James 5:7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. <sup>9</sup> Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! <sup>10</sup> Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the **prophets** who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. **You have heard of Job's perseverance** and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

**Job after what he considered long time of everything going wrong...he made this statement**

**Job 13:15** *Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.*

- **And it continued to stay messed up**
- **And he continued to plead with God ...why? Should this happen to me ...I am a good man...**
- **Finally as we would say...or God would say at the perfect time!!**

*Job 40 The Lord said to Job: <sup>2</sup> "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> Let him who accuses God answer him!" <sup>3</sup> Then Job answered the Lord: <sup>4</sup> "I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> I put my hand over my mouth. <sup>5</sup> I spoke once, but I have no answer—<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> twice, but I will say no more."*

*<sup>6</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm: <sup>7</sup> "Brace yourself like a man,<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> I will question you,<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> and you shall answer me. <sup>8</sup> "Would you discredit my justice?<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> Would you condemn me to justify yourself? <sup>9</sup> Do you have an arm like God's,<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> and can your voice thunder like his? <sup>10</sup> Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor,<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> and clothe yourself in honor and majesty. <sup>11</sup> Unleash the fury of your wrath,<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> look at all who are proud and bring them low, <sup>12</sup> look at all who are proud and humble them,<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> crush the wicked where they stand. <sup>13</sup> Bury them all in the dust together,<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> shroud their faces in the grave. <sup>14</sup> Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you.*

- **Bottom line job...if you know better than me and can really save...heal...change everything to meet a greater ending than I can...well by all means go for it!**

42 Then Job replied to the Lord: 2 “I know that you can do all things, <sup>[SEP]</sup> no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

- So Job admitted God has all power and no one can stop his plans...
- Then God says to him then why do you Job, try to tell me what to do and how to do it and when to do it ...because the lord asked him...who do you think you are?

3 You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge? <sup>[SEP]</sup> Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, <sup>[SEP]</sup> things too wonderful for me to know. 4 “You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak, <sup>[SEP]</sup> I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ 5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

6 Therefore I despise myself <sup>[SEP]</sup> and repent in dust and ashes.”

- Job says... I thought I knew you...but id did not know anything ...really about you
- I despise myself... loathe am disgusted with myself for thinking I knew so much...when in reality I knew so little ...
- I repent of that in dust and ashes...I am of the earth...our pride obscures us...
- So the lord blessed him...because he is full of mercy...job was allowed to go through this for his sake...and ours

42:12 The Lord blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. 13 And he also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. 15 Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job’s daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.

16 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. 17 And so Job died, an old man and full of years.

- You know what is crazy...when James speaks of job he does not even mention his pride and arrogance but praises his perseverance..

James5:<sup>12</sup> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.” Otherwise you will be condemned.

- So if you say you follow Jesus follow him! Or else it will come back to bite you! When he does appear ...just like it did job...

- **So...be like the farmer wait for the harvest ... as job waited for vindication and saw how far off his perception was.... continue in your faith...the word is as good then as it is now...**

*James 5:11 As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

- **When it is over...whenever that is you will say...I see the lord is full of compassion and mercy!**
- **So what are we to do...**

*James 5:7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. <sup>9</sup> Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!*

## Sum up James with Elijah a man like us...Patience in Suffering

James 5:7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. <sup>9</sup> Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

<sup>10</sup> Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

<sup>12</sup> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned.

## The Prayer of Faith

<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

<sup>17</sup> Elijah was a human being, even as we are.

James the brother of the Lord referred to him as a man like us...in the beginning of verse 15 as a man like us....

JAS 5:17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. **Elijah Was A Normal Human ...**, he knew victory and loss, He knew hunger, weariness, burnout, fear, and victory, he had incredible highs and devastating losses just like any other and he served God in His generation.... And was one of the greats .... It is good and quite comforting to remember that someone has already lived a life that is quite similar to the one you are living now.

## Let's look at the environment in which this man Elijah lived so that we have a context to examine his life from...

We start just one generation after David and the rot of the culture starts to set in. David had his failure with Bathsheba and his failure with Absalom, but it seemed that with Solomon the gold standard had been struck and there would be as God promised always a man of David's descendants on the throne of Israel.

We saw that Solomon was humble in asking for just wisdom in the first appearance of the Lord to Solomon in I Kings 3:5 – 14.



The Lord promised Solomon that He would give him a kingdom that would surpass David's and would give him heavenly wisdom, massive wealth and a long life. As Solomon began to build the Temple the Lord appeared to him again and said:

*1KI 6:11 The word of the LORD came to Solomon: <sup>12</sup> "As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. <sup>13</sup> And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel."*

*1KI 6:14 So Solomon built the temple and completed it.*

- **See the power that God places in leaders hands, His faithfulness to the nation rested much in the righteousness of the leader.**
- **That is a truth demonstrated all through history and even in our times.**

**For all the wisdom of Solomon the sin of the flesh is what drew him away from God. His foreign wives lead him away to the detestable gods of the people around Israel.**

- **The religious practices of the followers of these gods are why God wanted these people driven out in the beginning and Israel had trouble with these sensuous practices for hundreds of years and Solomon was no different. His failure stands out as a major fall that lead to much misery and eventual deportment of God's people to Assyria and Babylon .**
- **All the bright promise of God's rich promises were permanently tarnished by his utter failure. But the scripture actually treats Solomon rather kind.**
- **God even said that He would not rip the kingdom away from Solomon until after his death for the sake of David and the sake of Jerusalem.**

**We meet Jeroboam son of Nebat the next King of Israel during the final days of apostasy of Solomon.**

*1KI 11: <sup>28</sup> Now Jeroboam was a man of standing, and when Solomon saw how well the young man did his work, he put him in charge of the whole labor force of the house of Joseph.*

*1KI 11: <sup>29</sup> About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country, <sup>30</sup> and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. <sup>31</sup> Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: `See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. <sup>32</sup> But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. <sup>33</sup> I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the*

*Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.*

*1KI 11:34 " `But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon's hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who observed my commands and statutes. <sup>35</sup> I will take the kingdom from his son's hands and give you ten tribes. <sup>36</sup> I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name. <sup>37</sup> However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. <sup>38</sup> If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. <sup>39</sup> I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever.' "*

*1KI 11:40 Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon's death.*

- **Now Jeroboam looks very promising here. He is a valiant warrior and he was very hard working and industrious. He could get things done and people listened to him. He caught Solomon's eye and he was placed over the forced labor of the tribe of Joseph. This was an important position of power and authority in Solomon's kingdom. Jeroboam was the man of the hour.**
- **But God is now stepping in against the failure of Solomon and Ahijah the prophet has something to say. The name Jeroboam means " may the people grow numerous."**
- **Ten of the tribes went North as the Kingdom of Israel, and two of the tribes, Judah and Benjamin, went South as the Kingdom of Judah.**

**So Jeroboam 1 was the son of Nebat. He became the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel, after Israel had split away from Judah, which included the city of Jerusalem and the Temple..**

**Jeroboam drove his people away from the LORD and into sin. In light of this act, 19 times scripture calls Jeroboam the man "who caused Israel to sin."<sup>1</sup> He became the prototype of an evil king; 15 later kings were described as being evil "like Jeroboam".**

**numerous kings later we get Ahab...  
Ahab followed Omri**

<sup>1KI 16:29</sup> In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. <sup>30</sup> Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. <sup>31</sup> He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. <sup>32</sup> He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. <sup>33</sup> Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.

- The Northern Kingdom of Israel was deeply imbedded in sin. Its king, Ahab, had the distinction of being the most wicked man who had ever sat on the throne of Israel
- The capstone on his life of sin was his marriage to Jezebel, the daughter of the King of Sidon. Jezebel means where is Baal
- Because of Jezebel, the worship of Baal had become the dominant religion of Israel. In keeping with the warnings God had given Israel in the Law of Moses, God brought a drought upon the land.
- The word **Baalim** is the Hebrew plural for **BAAL**, the pagan god of nature and fertility. I quote from the Westminster Dictionary of the Bible article 'BAAL' (emphasis mine)

"... Baal worship apparently had its origin in the belief that every tract of ground owed its productivity to a supernatural being, or baal, that dwelt there. The farmers probably thought that from the Baalim, or fertility gods, of various regions came the increase of crops, fruit and cattle ... The worship of Baal was accompanied with lascivious rites (1 Kings 14:24), the sacrifice of children in the fire by parents (Jer.19:5), and kissing the image (1 Kings 19:18; Hos 13:2). Baal was often associated with the goddess Astoreth (Judg.2:13), and in the vicinity of his altar there was often an Asherah. (Judg.6:30; 1 Kings 16:32-33,R.V.)"

Of the goddess ASTORETH the same dictionary says:

"... She was the goddess of sexual love, maternity and fertility. Prostitution as a religious rite in the service of this goddess under various names is widely attested. The identification of 'Ashtart with Aphrodite is evidence of her sexual character."

"Ashtaroth (plural of Astoreth).

In connection with the plural of Baal, a general designation for the female divinities of the Canaanites ..."

"Asherah refers to a wooden pole or mast which stood at Canaanite places of worship (Exo.34:13); originally it was, perhaps, the trunk of a tree with branches chopped off, and was regarded as the wooden symbol of the goddess

**Asherah, who like Ashtoreth, was a type of fertility ... It was erected beside the altar of Baal. (Judg 6:25, 28)"**

**\*\*\*Elijah comes onto the scene of a nation spiritually bankrupt...heavily involved in the occult...on a hundred year downward spiral....and it deeply troubled a man named Elijah whose name means "The Lord Is My God"... similar to our time...**

*IKI 17:1 Now **Elijah** the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."*

- **Out of the blue...a prophet appears...and stops the rain...a direct attack on the gods Ahab and Jezebel serve...**
- **But this is no out of the blue situation...going back to James 5:17....He was a man growing up in a country deeply corrupted and immersed in sin...and idol worship and depravity...they had turned from God ...**
- **He was burdened and prayed and pray and pray...for his land and his people to return to God...**

**As James tells us...**

*JAS 5:17 Elijah was a man just like us.... He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. <sup>18</sup> Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*

- **So what appears out of the blue...was actually the result of a man burdened who was helpless in himself so he prayed...**
- **Probably along the lines of scripture which he knew..**

*DT 11:13 So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today--to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul-- <sup>14</sup> then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. <sup>15</sup> I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.*

*DT 11:16 Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. <sup>17</sup> Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you.*

- **Apparently God gave him the ok...to speak these words to King Ahab...the worst King...when the country is at its worst...**

- He or she who carry the burden are usually involved in the providing the solution...

*1KI 17:1 Now **Elijah** the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."*

- Now get the picture...this apparent onbody...somehow gets an audience...probably because he was seen as someone who looked like a prophet...
- Hair matted, camel hair outfit with a belt holding it together..etc.
- But mostly he had the power of God...this King and his wife had put many prophets and priests of Yahweh already to death...
- But this man gains access...says unbelievable things to them defying their god's...
- And it appears everyone is in stunned silence...and he walks out...and continues to the edge of town...
- This is a ministry highlight for anyone...
- God choosing a nobody and making him a somebody...wow

**But in typical God fashion...Elijah does not know what to do when he leaves....God never seems to give the big picture...**

**He knew what to do...but he did not know what to do after that!! Get used to it...**

**Lesson one...you have to practice what you preach....because God is not into hypocrites...what you stand up for you will stand in!**

*1KI 17:2 Then the word of the LORD came to **Elijah**: <sup>3</sup> "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. <sup>4</sup> You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there."*

- He tells him to go East and hide...a no body...becomes a somebody ...then back to a nobody...
- Told to go to the Kerith Ravine...Kerith means drought...to a brook...that is a horrible place to get water...it is not a stream or a river...it is like a dribbling hose...hardly adequate
- even a prophet as great as Elijah is not exempt from the troubles of the day...
- he suffered like everyone else, but God supernaturally provided for him....

*1KI 17:5 So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. <sup>6</sup> The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.*

- And what about the food?

- what kind of meat did they bring him? half eaten mice? Rats? Gopher...
- I don't think it was take out from the Olive Garden...
- And of course it will get worse...
- **Why? God is in the business of building character....the character of trust in God...Faithfulness...perserverance....prayer...is learned in the struggle not in the victory...**

And when school is in session...sometimes it gets worse...

*1KI 17:7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. <sup>8</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to him: <sup>9</sup> "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food."*

- the way scripture sometimes records time kills me...some time later was probably over a year...
- He goes to Sidon...in the Heart of the Sidonian people of whom Jezebel was the daughter of the King....
- little did he know ...he was on the most wanted list during this time....immediately for this curse on the land..as Obadiah will tell him three and a half years later...

*1KI 18:10 As surely as the LORD your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you.*

- **Knowing what is going on is hard enough...I think it was a blessing it did not know how bad it really was....**
- **it is kind of a joke by God on them...he was hidden in plain sight....**
- **back to the story...**

*1KI 17:10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" <sup>11</sup> As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."*

*1KI 17:12 "As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread--only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it--and die."*

- apparently the Lord had commanded her and she knew nothing of it....
- if God does not want you found...all the forces of evil cannot find you...if God wants you to do something...he does not even have to inform you, but you will do it...



- in fact she totally misread the situation...she thought it was the end...death was at the doorstep....instead she will be hosting a prophet for the next couple of years...
- she could tell by the way he was dressed he was a prophet...like John the Baptist

*1KI 17:13 **Elijah** said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup> For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.' "*

- in complete ignorance of what God had already done....was doing...and was going to do ...she was asked to act in faith on what Elijah said...
- to feed him first as an act of faith in what he said...and she would have enough food for herself and her son until the Lord gives rain....
- to give out of your need...and your need will be supplied..

**BIG LESSON HERE....WHAT IS IT YOU NEED THEN GIVE IT FIRST...**

- **YOU NEED A FRIEND BE A FRIEND**
- **YOU NEED MORE SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE**
- **YOU NEED HELP OFFER HELP**
- **YOU NEED A BLESSING BE A BLESSING...**
- **LITTLE IS MUCH IN THE HANDS OF GOD...**

*1KI 17:15 She went away and did as **Elijah** had told her. So there was food every day for **Elijah** and for the woman and her family. <sup>16</sup> For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by **Elijah**.*

- **The nobody who became somebody who went back to nobody...is now somebody again...**
- **what a nice profitable ministry...Great time to be a prophet...**
- **miracles are happening sure there is discomfort ...but all in all ministry is good...**
- **he had a roof over his head, food, a host and a cleaning lady and a family to hang out with ...as they weathered God's dealing with the hearts of the people...**

He is a man like us...may we be a man like him...

end

@@@@

I want to spend a few weeks studying the Life of one of the greats in Scripture....Elijah....i want to do this because it is important for as we go through life, the high times and the low times, the boring times, the challenging times to have examples to learn from of who have also tread the trail of following God.....

I chose Elijah because James the brother of the Lord referred to him as a man like us...in the beginning of verse 15 as a man like us....

*JAS 5:17* *Elijah was a man just like us....* **Elijah Was A Normal Human** ..., he knew victory and loss, He knew hunger, weariness, burnout, fear, and victory, he had incredible highs and devastating losses just like any other and he served God in His generation.... And was one of the greats .... It is good and quite comforting to remember that someone has already lived a life that is quite similar to the one you are living now.

**Many have journeyed before you. So when toils and troubles become overwhelming, They have been gone through before by others...they not only survived...but became people who were better, stronger, healthier...they became overcomers...they persevered, and conquered...**

- **He or she who carry the burden are usually involved in the providing the solution...**

*IKI 17:1* Now **Elijah** the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

- **So what appears out of the blue...was actually the result of a man burdened who was helpless in himself so he prayed...**
- **Probably along the lines of scripture which he knew..**

As James tells us... *JAS 5:17* *Elijah was a man just like us.... He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. <sup>18</sup> Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*

- Apparently God gave him the ok...to speak these words to King Ahab...the worst King...when the country is at its worst...
- somehow gets an audience...probably because he was seen as someone who looked like a prophet...Hair matted, camel hair outfit with a belt holding it together..etc.
- this King and his wife had put many prophets and priests of Yahweh already to death...
- But this man gains access...says unbelievable things to them defying their god's...
- And it appears everyone is in stunned silence...and he walks out...and continues to the edge of town...
- **This is a ministry highlight for anyone...God choosing a nobody and making him a somebody...wow**



- But in typical God fashion...Elijah does not know what to do when he leaves....God never seems to give the big picture...

He knew what to do...but he did not know what to do after that!! Get used to it...

**Lesson one...you have to practice what you preach....because God is not into hypocrites...what you stand up for you will stand in!**

From confronting the king and queen to holed up in the back end of the desert....Impressive

*1KI 17:2 Then the word of the LORD came to **Elijah**: <sup>3</sup> "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in ravens to feed you there."*

- He tells him to go East and hide...a no body...becomes a somebody ...then back to a nobody...
- **Kerith means drought**...to a brook...that is a horrible place to get water...it is not a stream or a river...it is like a dribbling hose...hardly adequate
- even a prophet as great as Elijah is not exempt from the troubles of the day...
- He is being shaped on the divine potters wheel..
  - believers have to learn to live their beliefs...How?
  - Elijah has to live with the implications of his own message...
- He spoke the word...drought ...now he must also live the word drought...
- **Elijah had one, one sentence message...he delivered it...he must live in it...**

*JAS 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

- **WE ARE NOT EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE...AS A MATTER OF FACT WE ARE CALLED TO BE EXAMPLES FOLLOWING THE RULES....**
- **IF THE RULE IS DROUGHT WE MUST BE EXAMPLES IN THE DROUGHT!** We are called to serve God in the sphere of His choosing...
- 

*1KI 17:5 So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. <sup>1KI 17: 6</sup> The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.*

- We serve a God who is full of surprises....ravens...crows..who would look to birds to find a fugitive...no one and apparently neither did Satan...
- And what about the food?
- **Faithfulness...perserverance.... ...is learned in the struggle not in the victory...over a year in the ravine**

**\*\*\*\*I wonder if he was biting at the bit ...thinking about how the drought is effecting the people ...are they getting to the point of repenting and turning back to the Lord?**

**part of walking with God is learning to sit still with God....shelf life is important ...as god works out his purposes without our interference...**

**\*\*\*\*Next lesson be flexible....he sat in one location for about 12 months until the brook dried up...Then God speaks to him...\*\*\***

*1KI 17:7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. <sup>8</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to him: <sup>9</sup> "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food."*

- Some time later was probably over a year...nothing and then go immediately...
- so after 730 plus meals provided by crows, he is going to get food prepared by human hands...things are looking up!! or so he thought...
- but not exactly...two problems...
  - he is told to go to Sidon...in the Heart of the Sidonian people of whom Jezebel was the daughter of the King....the Home of Baal worship...
- and told to go to **Zeraphath which means smelting furnace...** a few miles outside of Sidon.....to a widow
- **Probably the worst place to go and hide...makes absolutely no sense...except to God...**
- **it is kind of a joke by God on the demons and Baal false religion.....he was hidden in plain sight....**
- little did he know ...he was on the most wanted list during this time....immediately for this curse on the land..as Obadiah will tell him three and a half years later...
- **If God does not want you found...all the forces of evil cannot find you... And two...a widow....usually not someone with means...but perhaps he will get lucky...**

*1KI 17:9 "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food."*

- if God wants you to do something as this widow was commanded...he does not even have to inform you, but you will do it...
- as she apparently did not know anything about the command.....

*1KI 17:10* So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" <sup>11</sup> As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."

*1KI 17:12* "As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread--only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it--and die."

- **He goes from a year of isolation and solitude ...to a family...not just any family ....a starving family....she is apparently dying of starvation and so is her son....**
- the Lord had commanded her and she knew nothing of it....
- in fact she totally misread the situation...she thought it was the end...death was at the doorstep....
- instead she will be hosting a prophet for the next couple of years...
- she could tell by the way he was dressed he was a prophet...like John the Baptist
- she has no bread that is why she is gathering sticks...to bake last of their food ...with absolutely no means to obtain more...

**\*\*\* REMEMBER COMPASSION IS AT THE HEART OF EVERY MIRACLE\*\*\***

**Elijah's response...**

*1KI 17:13* **Elijah** said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup> For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.' "

- She was in complete ignorance of what God had already done....was doing...and was going to do ... Elijah called on her to act in faith on what Elijah said...
- To feed him first as an act of faith in what he said...and she would have enough food for herself and her son until the Lord gives rain....
- To give out of your need...and your need will be supplied..

**BIG LESSON HERE....WHAT IS IT YOU NEED THEN GIVE IT FIRST...**

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*1KI 17:15* She went away and did as **Elijah** had told her. So there was food every day for **Elijah** and for the woman and her family. <sup>16</sup> For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by **Elijah**.

- **The nobody who became somebody who went back to nobody...is now somebody again...he has a family to live with...in the heart of the drought...**
- **he had a roof over his head, food, a host and a cleaning lady and a family to hang out with ...as they weathered together God's dealing with the hearts of the people...**
- **all in all ministry is good...**

***But alas...***

*1KI 17:17* Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. <sup>18</sup> She said to **Elijah**, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

- in a weird way he is partly to blame for their situation...if he had not met them they would not have lived...they meet him...and get to live two more years in poverty and drought...
- what is so good about that...they have not really gained anything...and now the boy is dead...did he have something against her...messing with her...

***So what is going on?***

- 1. there is more than earthly life God is concerned with....he picked the lowliest woman and son to show his mercy....he was concerned with their eternity...as she was not yet a believer in the God of Elijah...**
- 2. she says... *Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?***
  - a. apparently she had deep guilt over something or some things in her past...**
  - b. and felt this could be a punishment for them...karma came back on her?**
  - c. how often do we think we or others get punished when things go bad? it is a common and normal thought...**
  - d. HE DID NOT HAVE TIME TO DEBATE HER BAD THEOLOGY...and her false accusations...**

*1KI 17:19* "Give me your son," **Elijah** replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. <sup>20</sup> Then he cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" <sup>21</sup> Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

- **HE PRAYED FOR A NATION TO TURN...HE PRAYED FOR JUDGMENT ON EVIL...**
- **Now he prays because he cared for and loved this boy...this individual...**

- **You cannot serve the greater good if you care not for the individual...**
- **The amazing thing was this was a Jew and a prophet...he knew the Law...and the religious law was empathic that one not touch a dead person...unclean for 7 days**
- **But like Jesus, Elijah was not bound by the law but was bound by love...**
- **So he was willing to make himself ritually unclean if it meant helping someone...**

**MIRACLES HAPPEN THROUGH GRACE AND MERCY AND LOVE... the God who cares about the world also cares about the least in it!**

■  
*1KI 17:22 The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. <sup>23</sup> **Elijah** picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"*

- **LOOK HE SAYS YOR SON IS ALIVE...NO MENTION OR HINT OF SELF PRAISE...**

*1KI 17:24 Then the woman said to **Elijah**, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth."*

- **We are to be good news not only share the good news....to live with Elijah was to discover that God lived with him also....**
- His two years of compassion and God's mercy in her time of need...made her a believer...SHE SAW THE TRUTH IN THE MAN OF God...
- **You rub shoulders with the children of God long enough ...God gets on you....**
- How much God cares for them he cares for you...he was patient...over two years he cared for them in action with his servant...until she would believe...
- **Her secret sin must have been so shameful...she considered herself cursed and the illness and death of her son as punishment...**
- But God showed her love...it was her love that caused repentance in her...a change of belief which will cause her life to change...

**\*\*\*OVERCOMING THE WALLS OF DISBELIEF HOWEVER THEY ARE BUILT IS I BELIEVE THE BIGGEST MIRACLES GOD DOES...AND HIS WAY OF OVERCOMING THEM VARIES INDIVIDUAL BY INDIVIDUAL..\*\*\* SO HE USES DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS TO REACH THEM**

## **ELIJAH WAS CALLED TO DO GREAT THINGS...AND NO THINGS...AND LITTLE THINGS...AND TO DO ALL OF THEM WELL...**

**Paul Borthwick tells the story of missionary Gordon Maxwell...**

**He went to India as a missionary, and his Christian conduct and commitment were evident to all. On one occasion, he asked a Hindu man to teach him the local language. The Hindu man replied, "No Sahib, for you will convert me to Christianity."**

**Maxwell tried to clarify: "You don't understand, all I want you to do is teach me the language." But the Hindu replied, "I will not, for no one can live with you and not become a Christian."**

- **We are called to be good news not just share it!!**
- **You will influence everyone around you ...positively or negatively**

*MT 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

- **It may well be said that this is the greatest compliment the Lord could pay anyone...for in it Jesus commands the Christian to be what he claimed himself to be...**

*JN 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

When Jesus stated that his followers were lights to the world he said they were to be like him to the world Jesus goes on to explain some things about light...

1. **One ...the lamp is lit by someone else...the lamp is lit by a light...Jesus the lighter...we are the lamp...the lamp does not light itself it is lit by another**
2. **Two it is not lit to be hid...but to be visible..**

**Explain light in a roman/Jewish household...Oil fired lamps are critical in a land without electricity...in America we do not appreciate this fact ...but much of the world would.**

- **Lit once and then stayed on all the time or transferred the light while the oil was refilled...when they left the house the lamp was placed under an earthen shelter..kept lit...but used to avoid accidental fire...**

**The world is still in great need of light...So Jesus is saying that we are light to this world we are meant to be visible...interesting because sometimes we try to be invisible...**



- We are meant to be seen...I think the reason often times we want to be invisible is because we do not measure up to what we think the light in us should...
- But don't you see...that is part of what God wants the world to see...authentic light
- when we try to act like were all together...it is a fake light...it's light by mirrors

*.<sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

- Our tendency is to blows ourselves out...so as not to offend, people please, fear of what they will think of us...
- But if we stay lit...we will in time begin to draw people to it...they will get curious
- There are a number of aspects to good deeds
- One of the good deeds we being a real Christian in our world...
- not perfect but growing ...when wrong admitting it
- not judging but loving...basically living life in the open... we are meant to be seen...

**Secondly light is used to guide...light reveals and is not deceiving..light guides**

- because there are thing in me it is better for you not to follow...I won't brag about my failings and neither will I act like I have none

The world, our country, our cities, our neighbors lives of insecurity and fear about the future.... We cannot conform or isolate from it...but as Jesus says we must be a light...

*MT 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

- Can we truly say we love God, when so much of the World is in turmoil and need and not do anything about it?

**If we conform to it or isolate from it? No... the call and will of God to being a good neighbor as Jesus asked the religious man to be...**

*LK 10:36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" LK 10:37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*

- To demonstrate mercy by active participation in meeting the needs of this world in the name of Jesus...
- Which like the good Samaritan costs energy time and resources...money
- And Light... I want to talk a little about light...
- for a little light will draw attention in a larger dark room....
- We do not have to be a huge beam give light...we just have to be light...

- And a light first causes a shrinking back when it is lit in a dark place...
- We are not the source of the light...we are the candles...we hold the light...
- That is our mission... end

end

end

@@@@

112711 Elijah a Man like Us part 3 Obey and leave the results to God

**The Northern Kingdom of Israel was deeply imbedded in sin. Its king, Ahab, had the distinction of being the most wicked man who had ever sat on the throne of Israel. The capstone on his life of sin was his marriage to Jezebel, the daughter of the King of Sidon. Because of Jezebel, the worship of Baal had become the dominant religion of Israel. In keeping with the warnings God had given Israel in the Law of Moses, God brought a drought upon the land. This was announced by Elijah, who was then divinely instructed to hide out by the brook Kerith. For some time, he drank from the waters of this brook and was fed bread and meat brought by the ravens morning and evening. When the brook dried up, God instructed Elijah to relocate to Zarephath, where he stayed with a widow and her son**

After three-and-a-half years, God instructed Elijah to present himself before Ahab so that He might bring the people to repentance and thus send the rains upon this drought-parched land. Elijah first met Obadiah, who was both a believer in God and a faithful servant of Ahab.

*1KI 18:1 After a long time, in the third year, the word of the LORD came to Elijah: "Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land." <sup>2</sup> So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria, <sup>3</sup> and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, who was in charge of his palace. (Obadiah was a devout believer in the LORD. <sup>4</sup> While Jezebel was killing off the LORD's prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.) <sup>5</sup> Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go through the land to all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find some grass to keep the horses and mules alive so we will not have to kill any of our animals." <sup>6</sup> So they divided the land they were to cover, Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another.*

The scene...

- three and a half years into the drought God speaks to Elijah to travel back to Samaria to confront Ahab and end the drought....so he she sets out...
- meanwhile the King living in the splendor of the Samaritan palace....while people were in desperate condition..is not moved at all by their plight...



- they are the little people the expendables...he had heard about the scorched farms brown and barren....but it did not effect him...
- until the drought hits home to his royal stables....no grass can be found anymore to feed the horses...and they are starving
- **Obadiah another prophet comes on the scene...** one who is wise and has been a follower of Yahweh all his life... he has hidden 100 prophets in two caves...to protect them...
  - probably as a ploy to avoid their capture by separating them...if one group found another was safe...
  - he must have been stealthy and wealthy to be able to feed and hide such a large group of people...
  - he was incredibly, courageous to protect these prophets as the King and queen were hunting down and killing their comrades..
  - yet doing this while all the time serving the King as his trusted right hand man...

**\*\*\*There is a lesson here...sometimes God will strategically place you in the midst of evil to be God's inside man in protecting his interest and people, while serving faithfully...the enemies of God...**

- our tendency is to pull away from what we consider corrupt people...but that can be exactly where God wants us...he was in the position to keep 100 prophets alive with his salary...
- God provided flour and oil for Elijah ..Obadiah works ...two different mission...

**So Ahab sends Obadiah one way and he and his entourage the other way to search the land for grass...**

A divine appointment ....

*1KI 18:7 As Obadiah was walking along, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized him, bowed down to the ground, and said, "Is it really you, my lord Elijah?" 1KI 18:8 "Yes," he replied. "Go tell your master, 'Elijah is here.' "*

*1KI 18:9 "What have I done wrong," asked Obadiah, "that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to be put to death? 10 As surely as the LORD your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you. 11 But now you tell me to go to my master and say, 'Elijah is here.' 12 I don't know where the Spirit of the LORD may carry you when I leave you. If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn't find you, he will kill me. Yet I your servant have worshiped the LORD since my youth. 13 Haven't you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the LORD? I hid a hundred of the LORD's prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water. 14 And now you tell me to go to my master and say, 'Elijah is here.' He will kill me!"*

*1KI 18:15* *Elijah said, "As the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today."*

- Obadiah is searching for anywhere there might be water which would sustain living grass...and he runs right into Elijah
- once he is over his shock...Elijah tells him to go get Ahab the king of Israel to meet him there...
- This is extremely bold...you don't tell the King what to do or where to go...that could easily cost you your head...
- and Obadiah was well aware of this so he balked...and he informs Elijah ..he has been the number fugitive on Ahab's list of most wanted...
- **Ahab and Jezebel have been torturing and killing other prophets trying to get information on Elijah...**
- and if Obadiah tells him he knows where he is at ...he tells the king and Elijah is not there...he is a dead man for letting this fugitive go...As Elijah has a way of disappearing...
- **this is a smart statement by Obadiah....one who follows the Lord must be wise enough to not put himself unnecessarily in Harms way...he has been responsible to keep one hundred prophets alive...to go to Ahab and be mistaken about Elijah being where he said he would is a suicide mission and irresponsible to the people he is helping...**

**for even Jesus kept in mind the bigger mission...**

*JN 7:1* *After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life.*

- the lesson here is when you have a mission do not let others throw you off by their mission...
- but Elijah gives him his word and tells him he will be there...so Obadiah goes

*1KI 18:16* *So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. <sup>17</sup> When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"*

- the time frame could have been a day or two later...
- Ahab goes to Elijah... is in such denial he calls Elijah the troubler...which literally means **destroyer of Israel...**
- when in reality he is the one who has brought the nation down to destruction...
- So Elijah corrects him..

*1KI 18:18* *"I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands and have followed the Baals. <sup>19</sup> Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the*

*four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."*

- Elijah tells him you have made the trouble and I am going to fix it...
- bring the 450 prophets of the false God Baal to mount Carmel
- and the 400 prophets of Asherah that Jezebel lives with and feeds in Jezreel
- **this is the second time Elijah** tells the King what to do and he does it...this is incredible...reminds me of what Jesus said to his disciples..

*LK 12:11 "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, <sup>12</sup> for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."*

- so King Ahab obediently and meekly obeys...

*1KI 18:20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel.*

- a little on Mount Carmel... **Mount Carmel** is a coastal [mountain range](#) in northern [Israel](#) stretching from the [Mediterranean Sea](#) on the west... towards the southeast. The range is approximately 4 to 5 miles wide, sloping gradually towards the southwest, but forming a steep ridge on the northeastern face, with a maximum height (1,810 ft).
- The [Jezreel Valley](#) lies to the immediate northeast. The mountain formation is an admixture of [limestone](#) and [flint](#), containing many caves, and covered in several volcanic rocks.<sup>[1][2]</sup> The sloped side of the mountain is covered with luxuriant vegetation, including [oak](#), [pine](#), [olive](#), and [laurel](#) trees
- there were many *high places* which were considered to be sacred, and Mount Carmel appears to have been a chief worship center for Baal worship. also there were many Astoreh sites...there was an altar to God on the mountain, which had fallen into ruin by the time of [Ahab](#), but [Elijah](#) built a new one.
- Biblically, Mt. Carmel is referenced most often as a symbol of beauty and fertility. To be given the "splendor of Carmel" was to be blessed indeed (Isa 35:2). Solomon praised his beloved: "your head crowns you like Mount Carmel" (Song 7:5). But for Carmel to wither was a sign of devastating judgment (Nahum 1:4).
- at the foot of the mountains lay the Kishon river...which was a mere stream at this time...
- it is to be the site of the battle of who really is God...
- The king returns to Samaria his Palace and sends out a decree...this could have easily taken up to a week or more...for all the people or many of the people to respond and make the trek to Mount Carmel...
- But not Jezebel....she is no weak willed woman like her husband...she refuses to send the 400 false prophets from Jezreel...about 15 miles away in the valley.
- this prophet will not tell her what to do...

So when the gathering is in place Elijah on the appointed day speaks to the people...

*1KI 18:21* *Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."*

*But the people said nothing.*

- Elijah throws down the challenge...whoever is the true God follow him...
- a comparison to John the Baptist

*Luke 1:16* *Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

- Elijah says you cannot worship them both....to try and do so is to leave you wavering!!!
- the word wavering is not quite accurate...it should be limping or staggering...like someone on crutches...you are handicapped...
- when you have not made up your mind...
- just like when someone says they follow Jesus and yet live quite differently...they stagger or limp in their life...
- you cannot walk with your legs going in two different directions
- **so choose...and they say nothing...but he is looking for a new pledge of allegiance to God...and they have the right to make that choice...**

**But our God respects the sovereignty of man...he will not force him to pledge...**

Then he looks around and says...

*1KI 18:22* *Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the LORD's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets.*

- There is no one else but him alone with the other 450 Baal prophets...they probably felt pretty good...numbers always tend to build morale!
- where are the 100 prophets who have been hiding....still hiding?
- but one with God is more than enough!!
- This is where another comparison to John the Baptist takes place...a single one calling out..

*MT 3:1* *In those days **John** the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea <sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." <sup>3</sup> This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "**A voice of one calling** in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.' "*

- back to Elijah ...so he sets the test...

*1KI 18:32* Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. <sup>24</sup> Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire--he is God."

Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

- everyone agrees to the terms....also it is a play against the god Baal as he was supposed to be the god of fire

*1KI 18:25* Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." <sup>26</sup> So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

- four hours or so nothing....at noon Elijah begins to talk smack...

*1KI 18:27* At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened."

- Baal is also believed to be the God of farming...so he must be awaked every spring from his winter hibernation....
- to their screams and pleading and chants don't work...
- so now they take it to the next level..

verse <sup>28</sup> So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed.

- their belief was that Baal would have mercy on them and answer when he saw how devoted they were by shedding blood...surely he would be moved to answer...

verse <sup>29</sup> Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

- it is now nearing 3 o'clock...nothing
- it is also the time for the evening sacrifice for the Jews...so Elijah steps in...

*1KI 18:30* Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which was in ruins. <sup>31</sup> Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel."

- he calls the people over...noting to see over there...
- there once was an altar to God there...but the stones had been scattered...
- so he gathers the 12 largest and arranges them like a table...

- representing the 12 tribes...now Israel was a divided nation at the time...the 10 northern called Israel against the two southern called Judah
- but God is not a divided God ...they were all his children

*1KI 18:32 With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. <sup>33</sup> He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."*

- after he built arranged the stones , he built a trench around the stone altar..
- this must have took some time as the ground would be roock hard because of the drought.....enoght to hold two seahs of seed or about three gallons of water...a little moat...he arranged the wood and butchered the bull....
- then he aggranged for four gallons or so of water poured over the wood and bull...
- but that is not the end of it...

*1KI 18:34 "Do it again," he said, and they did it again. "Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. <sup>35</sup> The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.*

- he has them do it twice more....show off
- then he prayed and made sure they knew who he was praying too...
- and that he did exactly as he was told...he did not make up this test...

*1KI 18:36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and **have done all these things at your command.** <sup>37</sup> Answer me, O LORD, answer me, **so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.**"*

- the goal of the whole exercise to turn the people back to the Lord...

*1KI 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. <sup>1KI 18:39</sup> When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD--he is God! The LORD--he is God!"*

- the fire consumed everything....evaporating the water also...
- the people started slowly to chant then it grew louder and louder ...and soon it was a roar...The Lord ...his is God...The Lord He is God...

**lets stop a moment tow things to know...**

- 1. they did not say the Lorde he is our God...or my God...they acknowledged him only...this is important**
- 2. Elijah ordered a bull to be sacrificed not a lamb or doves..or any sin offering for the people why?**



LEV 16:6 "Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household

- The priest is to make atonement for himself with the bull not the people...Elijah wanted to be clean before the Lord...
- The people had yet not repented of anything....just acknowledged...

Now let's get the picture...

- for years and years these prophets and these religions required families burning their children in sacrifice to these and other gods...destroying families, breaking the hearts of parents...and mothers''
- Young men and young women forced into prostitution in the temples and shrines to appease the asking the god's to provide...
- Lives ruined families shamed ..Mourning and death...
- And all for nothing...they were no god's...they had no power...they have been lied to and deceived and killed and robbed of their produce and children...

They had to repent ...they should have destroyed the idolatry long ago when Moses and Joshua told them too.....so Elijah tells them too

1KI 18:40 Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

- justice was carried out ...they take them down to the valley by the Kishon creek and the death sentence is carried out...
- then Elijah turns to King Ahab....and gives him another order...

1KI 18:41 And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." <sup>42</sup> So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

- there was no audible sound....he must have heard it in his spirit...
- and he climbs back to the top of Mount Carmel where the Mediterranean is seen...
- and prays....

1KI 18:43 "Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there," he said. Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."

1KI 18:44 The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'" <sup>1KI 18:45</sup> Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel.

- who is his servant? legend tell us it is the widow's son he raised from the dead..
- the seventh time ...the servant says I see a cloud over the Mediterranean..
- he tells Ahab go to your wife in Jezreel before the down pour bogs your chariots down...he wanted him to get there quick...

- fourth time he tells Ahab the King what to do...
- he was given a mission...which he did not choose which lasted three and a half years..
- and the time frame he did not choose
- God chose it for him...and it is not finished yet as we will see...
- because his mission was to turn people back to God...
- the means may vary but the principle does not...
- he is a man like us because we also are on a mission...not even of our own choosing but of God's
- you never know how you will be used to serve God but know you will...

All this to turn some sinners back to the Lord...

Elijah thought he was turning the nation....and had won over Ahab...

As Ahab heads to Jezreel

### **The Lesson...we are to obey...the results belong to the Lord!!**

*1KI 18:46 The power of the LORD came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.*

- Full of the power of the Holy Spirit he runs ahead of Ahab's chariots and gets to Jezreel first...

*1KI 19:1 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup> So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."*

- Ahab changed not one bit...Jezebel ran the show...even in the midst of a downpour...
- There were still 400 false prophets...
- Elijah accomplished a little national cleansing and turned some souls toward God...
- The nation continues on its collision course to the Babylonian captivity ....
- And this is the highlight of Elijah's ministry...truly a voice in the wilderness of souls...
- Instead of repenting she threatens to kill Elijah by the next day

### **Why did Jezebel not just send an assassin? Instead just threaten...**

- She had already seen the power of God...she probably thought she would be tempting fate to do such a bold move...
- But she could ruin him through disappointment which would lead to fear...
- A successful tactic of the enemy...

*1KI 19:3 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, <sup>4</sup> while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die.*



He fell into the trap we sometimes do...he thought he knew the outcome of his obedience... *obey and leave the results to God!!!!* end

■

■ He did not...

*obey and leave the results to God!!!!*

end

@@@@

He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. <sup>18</sup> Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

<sup>19</sup> My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, <sup>20</sup> remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

@@@@

120711 Elijah a man like us ...God's plan is far more extensive than ours...

- he had accomplished some very difficult things for God...confronted a Wicked King and Queen...calling a drought which lasted 3.5 years
- living in a ravine for 1 year being fed by crow while hunted by man
- living 2.5 years in Zaephath with a widow...eating miraculously provided flour and oil
- eventually raises her son
- call a face off on Mt Carmel....with 450 prophets...400 more don't show...hw wins
- prays for rain to end the drought... and thinks he knows the end of the story...
- He expects a national revival with all returning to the Lord and live happily ever after....
- After all this appears to be the next logical step...

- ...so we pick up the story... after the battle of who is God on Mount Carmel...

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- Full of the power of the Holy Spirit he runs ahead of Ahab's chariots and gets to Jezreel first...
- The town would be mostly be desolate as most would be making slogging their way back from mount Carmel...

*1KI 19:1 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.*

- He would have found a place to rest...and await the hoped for outcome
- Justice would prevail against Jezebel and the prophets of Astoreh sent away ...the nation returned to God...

- he probably imagined the bright and glorious days ahead...
- not so...Jezebel apparently flew into a rage....this time Elijah went to far..

<sup>2</sup> So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

- Ahab changed not one bit...Jezebel ran the show...even in the midst of a downpour...There were still 400 false prophets...
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- But she could ruin him through disappointment which would lead to fear...
- A successful tactic of the enemy...

The man who had stood strong in his God on Mt. Carmel tumbled down into a spiritual and psychological pit...and it seemed bottomless and dark.

- Hope vision and God himself snuffed out...disappointment and depression give way to fear...
- He fell into the trap we sometimes do...he thought he knew the outcome of his obedience... **obey and leave the results to God!!!!**
- He could have stood his ground...**but fueled by illogical panic he ran!!!**

*1KI 19:3* Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there,

- He runs south to Judah...many miles ..and is actually a safe place from the reach of Jezebel...as it is in Judah under a different King...
- He leaves his only companion and sets out into the scorching desert...

*1KI 19:4* while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

- He was suicidal...just when you need friends he left them....

- He thought he was better than his ancestors...of whom scripture makes no mention...

*1KI 19: 5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." <sup>6</sup> He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.*

- He was exhausted spiritually, emotionally, physically...they all get affected by loss and depression...
- God provided an angel to comfort him and cook for him and feed him...God had greatly disappointed him...and he was angry..
- But God rejected him not...

*1KI 19:7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." <sup>8</sup> So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>9</sup> There he went into a cave and spent the night.*

*And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"*

- he has enough food and water to travel 40days into the desert until he reaches the mountain where God gave the ten commandments...did he go because he needed to reconnect to the beginning of God's work in the nation...
- or go to remind himself that who he was following was truly God...
- God meets in a cave....
- What are you doing here? Who said to come here...

Earlier a month and a half ago...Elijah was at the pinnacle of his ministry...about to call fire down on the sacrifice of Mt Carmel...and he say this...

*1KI 18:36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and **have done all these things at your command.** <sup>37</sup> Answer me, O LORD, answer me, **so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."***

- He was strong because he was operating in obedience to what God had instructed...
- Now he was operating out of his own dream shattering disappointment... the result wandering around in the desert...
- He had moved from God is doing to placing this humanly impossible burden on himself...to save Israel...
- He answers ...

*1KI 19:10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."*

- He gives his own observations with knowledge and then renders a false conclusion.... It has fallen on me to fulfill ...I am the only one left and they are trying to kill me...
- First of all there is no they it is Jezebel... and she will not kill him as he will stand before her again...
- Secondly he is calling God powerless ...for there is a long history of abuse happening... which really means God is so inept that he has only one person following him after all that is taken place.....
- God does for him what he did for Moses... Exodus 33:19-22

*1KI 19:11 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup> After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. <sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.*

*Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"*

- He heard and saw the power of God in nature...but God was not in it...he controlled it...
- **But Elijah had to obey the voice of God to get more from God...he had to come out of the cave...**
- Then a gentle voice a comforting voice, a reassuring voice...why are you here?
- That is awesome to me...why?
  - Elijah has been called on to do very difficult thing in his life for the Lord...and we have no record of his complaining...until now...
  - God does not forget the good one has done in the time of dream shattering disappointment...He loves Elijah...
  - He helps the one stuck in a cave
- He gives the same answer...he believes is the correct insight...
- He has lost all perspective...

*1KI 19:14 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."*

- But he still holds what he considers his justified position...

- Then the Lord gives him direction again...and corrects his wrong perspective...He gives Elijah an opportunity to get back in the game...

Elijah thought the plan was for Ahab and Jezebel to repent and the nation would follow... from God's point of view Ahab and Jezebel just cooked their goose...they are done with as far as God is concerned....

God reveals to him part "B" of the plan...quite a bit more extensive...

*1KI 19:15 The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram.*

- He was to go to Aram and anoint Hazael over them...
- The Arameans would be the ones to exact God's judgment on Ahab and Jezebel... through war with Israel they would kill him... and also punish the nation for rejecting God...

*<sup>16</sup> Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. <sup>17</sup> Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu*

- He is to anoint the next King of Israel...this would more than infuriate Jezebel...
- He did not know that Jehu was a man who had a heart for renewal and revival
- He did not know that Jehu would give the order to have Jezebel thrown out a high window...to her death
- He did not know that Jehu would kill everyone of Ahab's male descendents...putting an end to reign and lineage once and for all of the most wicked King in Israel's history.
- Though he would later compromise himself...Jehu was the instrument used by God to bring massive reform to the nation.

### Elisha

- **Would also be anointed by Elijah and he will perform mop up operations that Jehu leaves**
- **And he will fill the shoes of Elijah as the next prophet...**
- **And not only that Elijah...I have 7000 more people at my disposal....**

*<sup>18</sup> Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel--all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."*

- All of this requires Elijah to act in faith...

*1KI 19:19 So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. <sup>20</sup> Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother good-bye," he said, "and then I will come with you." "Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"*

*1KI 19:21 So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant.*

- What did we learn here?
- Elijah has stood firmly but he is not the only one God has in mind to use...
- Elijah lost faith and operated in fear when he thought he was the only one...and his assumptions of how God was going to work and when he was shattered...spiritually physically emotionally...
- He had to step out in obedience...and then act in faith to be restored
- God restores his servants gently when they err...
- We get discouraged when we think we are alone...we are encouraged knowing there are others who are on the mission...
- God's plan is far more extensive and comprehensive than you think....