



BIBLE STUDY

# ELIJAH

THE PROPHET

'And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.' 1 Kings 17:1

We are introduced to Elijah when he made a bold proclamation before Ahab, the king and God honoured his declaration. A bold and zealous prophet, his ministry also had some dramatic highs and lows.

Over the next few days we will look study Elijah the prophet, his ministry and walk with God.

I pray this study blesses you and renews your zeal in your walk with God and every aspect of your life.

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## Day 1 Relationship

'And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.' 1 Kings 17:1

We are introduced to Elijah in what was a very dark period in Israel. At this point Ahab the king provoked God to anger more than his predecessors (1 Kings 16:33). Ahab had married the daughter of the king of the Zidonians and not only served Baal but set up altar for this idol worship and with this support from the king and queen, Baal worship was rampant in Israel.

It's in the light of this that Elijah makes this declaration which is based on some pillars we should delve into. First is that Elijah used the name 'Yahweh' signifying that the Lord he was referring to alone is the God of Israel, essentially saying he didn't recognize Baal as an object of worship.

Second is that Elijah made it clear the Lord he was referring to is alive – not an idol carved out of some form of material, but a powerful, living being.

Third is that Elijah also made it clear that he didn't have a casual relationship with God. Rather his statement, 'before whom I stand' indicates that he was in a close, committed relationship with God and therefore Elijah was confident of God backing his declaration.

By making this declaration before Ahab who was an idol worshiper, Elijah threw down a challenge to Ahab and his idol to counter what was backed by the God of Israel.

**Reflect:** Elijah was certainly zealous and audacious, however we see that his boldness didn't come from a place of self-reliance but from an understanding born from his committed relationship to God. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to draw us into a closer relationship with Him so He can reveal to us who God is. That's where boldness to defend our faith will come from.

## Day 2

### Timing

'Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.' I Kings 17:2-3

After making a bold declaration before Ahab, one may have expected Elijah to begin an all out confrontation with Ahab and the priests of Baal, but God had a different strategy. Rather, He had Elijah go into hiding. We don't know why this was necessary, but God in His wisdom knew the best thing for Elijah to do at this point was to go into hiding. We see another example of this in the Bible after the wise men had visited Joseph, Mary and the new-born Jesus:

'Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.'" Matthew 2:13

It would have been understandable if Joseph or Mary had said, 'we're not going anywhere, after all isn't this child the messiah?' But God sees the end from the beginning, we don't. He not only knows where He's taking us, but also our state of readiness and what is required to prepare us to fully receive all He has concerning us.

The Bible doesn't go into detail regarding what Elijah did while in hiding, but perhaps he spent the time in isolation with God, possibly in prayer and fellowship and certainly trusting Him as no one else was making provision for his sustenance.

'To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:' Ecclesiastes 3:1

There may be many things God has said or maybe even shown you concerning your life. However, it's important to understand that it's not just the assignment that matters, the timing for carrying it out is just as important.

**Reflect:** Trust God's timing and strategy for your life. He knows where He's taking you and how to avoid all the potential pitfalls along the way. Confrontation isn't always the best response to a situation.

### Day 3 Obedience

'And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.'" I Kings 17:4

When we read the verses above, it's interesting to note that Elijah didn't ask God questions about how the ravens would feed him or what with. Elijah had reached a level of relationship with God where He knew that God could be trusted, so Elijah's responsibility was just to obey. And true to His character, God was faithful and ravens brought Elijah bread and meat twice a day daily.

However, at a point the brook dried up. Considering God had used supernatural means to feed Elijah, He could also have kept the brook flowing with water. However, God was signalling the end of a season, as it was time for Elijah to move on to another assignment.

'Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.'" I Kings 17:8-9

Note that with the new assignment also came supernatural provision – God didn't ask Elijah to go to a rich person's house, but to that of a widow who was barely able to sustain herself. Once again God was making clear that indeed He alone was the source of all Elijah's provision. God hasn't changed, He is the same yesterday, today and forever. As with Elijah, he also expects us to look to Him for direction and provision.

Had Elijah remained at Cherith, it would have been his responsibility to take care of himself. Similarly, if he had gone to Zarephath, decided that the widow was too poor to take care of him and made alternative arrangements, even though it may have appeared logical, he would have been out of alignment with God's plan.

**Reflect:** When God gives an assignment, He provides all that's required concerning its successful execution – the wisdom, understanding, alliances, He takes care of everything. His expectation is that we obey and keep in step with Him in faith, trusting that He will do what He has said He will do. Don't try and reason out how God will execute His strategies, it's beyond what you can fathom on your own.

## Day 4

### The Word

“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.”” I Kings 17:12

As far as the widow of Zarephath knew at the time she came into contact with Elijah there was nothing to look forward to and the end was near. In the midst of this dire situation, someone she had never met before was asking her to give out of the little she had.

““Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”” I Kings 17:9

“It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.” Isaiah 55:11

When God wants to achieve an outcome, He does not look at our present circumstances, because He has the capacity to change things to suit His purpose. Once He sends a word, everything will bow to meet the fulfilment of His word. When God issued the command to Elijah to go Zarephath, He had also issued a command concerning the widow providing for Elijah. Consequently circumstances surrounding her had no choice but to respond in obedience to God’s command.

“So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.” I Kings 17:15-16

When Elijah requested for food from the widow, he wasn’t being wishful or unreasonable. Rather he was placing a demand for the performance of God’s word to Him and as always God honoured His word.

**Reflect:** Have you taken time to search the Bible to see what God’s word says concerning you, your family or situation? Remember it’s not about you but about God.

## Day 5 Tough Times

“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.” I Kings 17:17

There may be times when the unthinkable happens and we suffer a loss that really hurts. It could be the loss of a loved one, dream or hope. This is the situation the widow of Zarephath faced when her son became ill and died. But Elijah sought God’s face and cried out to God.

“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.” Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.” I Kings 17:21-22

There could be times when we witness a miracle of the resurrection of that which was lost. Other times the miracle we witness is the emergence of a new version of ourselves in spite of the loss. So even if the loved one that has passed away does not return, or the business isn’t revived or the relationship restored, we are able to carry on stronger than before.

'And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.' Daniel 3:27

'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.' Isaiah 43:2

Sometimes like the Hebrew boys in the book of Daniel we may pass through a raging fire, but because of God’s sustaining power not only are we not burnt, we don’t look like what we’ve been through and even the smell of fire isn’t on us.

**Reflect:** Tough times may come – we weren’t promised a life free from challenges – but God has promised to be with us through it all and we are guaranteed victory in the end.



## Day 6 Preparation

'And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.'" I Kings 18:1

Elijah had been out of public view for 3 years after proclaiming that rain would not fall in Israel and all the time Ahab king of Israel had been searching for him. It clearly never occurred to Ahab to look for the prophet in the house of a widow in Zarephath.

What was Elijah doing for those 3 years? We aren't told specifically but looking at the patterns in the Bible we see that God has a way of preparing people in private before giving them a public victory.

'Moreover David said, "The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!"' I Samuel 17:37

David had been in the wilderness caring for his father's sheep, quietly growing his faith in God as the Lord helped him kill bears and lions before he confronted Goliath (1 Samuel 17:34-51).

'nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.' Galatians 1:17-18

Paul was in 'under cover' for 3 years before he began his ministry which led to Gentiles receiving Jesus and also his writing almost half of the New testament.

God's preparation is often quiet and personal as the work He does is on our heart and character to ensure we are ready for the assignment He has for us.

**Reflect:** God is more concerned about the state of your heart than anything else. It's important to understand this as we approach Him for breakthroughs, etc. Whatever you're seeking God for, you should also be ready to have God prepare you for it His way.





## Day 7

### Trust

'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.'" I Kings 18:19

When Elijah presented himself to Ahab, he did so with the full intention of having a very public confrontation. Elijah always stood firm in the belief that there is only one God and that He alone should be worshipped, and he wanted to demonstrate the reason for his faith.

'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.' I Kings 18:21

Sometimes we also act like the children of Israel in that we seem to falter between two opinions – we say we have put something in God's hands and that Jesus is Lord of our life. In practice though we act as though either we or other factors are in charge. However, the Bible provides clear guidance on how we are to address the issues we face in life.

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.' Proverbs 3:5-7

**Reflect:** Elijah's belief in God wasn't from a place of wishful thinking. He knew the God he followed and why. Do you really trust God and are you really willing to put everything in His hands? Be honest. If the answer is no, ask the Holy Spirit to help you have a personal encounter with God – you can't trust someone you don't know.

## Day 8

### The Altar

'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.' I Kings 18:30

Elijah had challenged the prophets of Baal openly to have Baal consume their offering with fire. Throughout the day the prophets of Baal had cried out to their god but nothing happened. To the point that Elijah mocked them: '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.'" I Kings 18:27

By evening there was still no response from their god and it was now time for Elijah to prepare his own offering. It's important we note the first step Elijah took:

'And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord...' I Kings 18:31-32a

Elijah understood his limitations as a man and the superiority of God over Baal and any other idol, so his first and most critical step to take was to put the battle in God's hands. By building the altar in the Lord's name, Elijah was shifting the battleground from earth to heaven.

'For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,' II Corinthians 10:3-4

'which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.' Ephesians 1:20-21

**Reflect:** Jesus is seated far above all principalities, powers, circumstances, situations that we may face. Whatever it is that you're going through, the first step you should take is to go to the altar of prayer. That is where issues are resolved because that is where the exchange of responsibilities takes place as we lay our burdens at the feet of Jesus and obtain the victory He's already given us. Your prayer life is your power base, you cannot afford to neglect it.

## Day 9

### Victory

'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.' I Kings 18:36

Elijah had not only prepared the offering but had also asked that water be poured on the sacrifice, the wood and in the trenches not just once but three times. Clearly only a miracle could lead to there being any fire anywhere. But the Elijah prayed and asked God to show Himself as the one true God in Israel and God showed up.

'Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" I Kings 18:38-39

Even though all the prophets of Baal had made noise all day, cut themselves until they bled, Elijah's prayer led to a tangible demonstration of God's power and unquestionable authority. Why was all this necessary? Yes it was a demonstration of God's power and sovereignty, but there was another purpose revealed in verse 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.'" I Kings 18:37

Even though the people had sinned and had worshipped other idols, God was turning the hearts of His people back to Him again.

**Reflect:** The Lord's desire is to have your heart committed to Him and for you to be built up as you grow in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). So victory in a particular situation may bring you to seek Him, but He doesn't expect us to stay at that level. We must mature in the things of Christ.

## Day 10

### Persistence

'Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." I Kings 18:41

After a three-year drought, Elijah proclaimed that there would not only be rainfall but an abundance of rain. At the point Elijah made this proclamation, not one drop of rain had fallen, neither were there signs of rain. But Elijah prayed and kept on praying because he had heard from God. Sometimes we think that we need only pray once about a matter, but there are occasions where we may have to persist in the place of prayer over a matter. Elijah prayed 7 times before he saw any evidence of the rain that was about to come.

'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.'" I Kings 18:44

'And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ' Luke 18:6-7

'Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.' Daniel 10:12-13

In Daniel's example, his prayer was answered the first day he prayed, however demonic forces delayed the angel bringing the answer. There are times we may experience these delays due to such interference. There are times God in His sovereignty and wisdom may choose to delay the manifestation of the response to our prayer in order to align with His plans for our lives. There are also times God has answered but we don't recognise the answer because it didn't come in the way we expected. Even when we don't have full clarity on why our prayers haven't been answered, if we keep our hearts fixed on God, He gives us peace even in the waiting period.

**Reflect:** 'Never stop praying.' 1 Thessalonians 5:17



## Day 11

### Acceleration

'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.' I Kings 18:46

Elijah had been praying for rain and his prayers had been answered. The Bible says the sky was dark black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. It's clear that there was quite a downpour, so it would be reasonable that Ahab's chariot would have been moving swiftly as he rode away to Jezreel.

In those days a chariot typically had two horses attached to it and Ahab would have been driving the horses fast because of the rain. Yet Elijah outran Ahab and his chariot (even though they started the journey before Elijah) because the hand of the Lord came upon him. The Bible isn't specific on Elijah's age, but even if he had been a young athlete, it would have been humanly impossible to achieve this feat.

'Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.'" Matthew 19:26 (NLT)

'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...' Acts 1:8a

We should not underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit and what He can do in our lives. Had Elijah run in his own strength, he could never have caught up with, talk less of overtake Ahab's chariot. Likewise, there may be things we are trying to achieve in life in our own strength.

**Reflect:** God understands human limitations, that's why He gave us the Holy Spirit as our helper. We should not limit the Holy Spirit to just church services. Yes, He alone has the power to transform us from the inside as we are conformed to the image of Christ. But He's available to help us in every conceivable aspect of our lives. When we yield to the Holy Spirit and allow him to take control, He is able to move in ways that would truly astound us. Stop running in your own strength.

## Day 12

### Vulnerable

'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.' 1 Kings 19:3

Elijah had just called down fire from heaven to burn a sacrifice and altar drenched in water, executed the prophets of Baal, prayed for rain which brought an end to a 3-year drought and run faster than the king's chariot (1 Kings 18). However, when Jezebel sent a messenger to threaten him, he ran for his life. Why did he run?

Elijah was human just like any of us. While we may not know exactly what was going on in his mind, it's not impossible that he may have felt invincible after all the public dramatic miracles God had worked through him. Put yourself in Elijah's shoes and think how you may feel after all these victories. However, rather than Jezebel bow and tremble before Elijah in fear, she promised to execute him as he had done her prophets (1 Kings 19:1).

'Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.' 1 Corinthians 10:12

Once we take our focus off God and look to ourselves, we become vulnerable. Elijah appears to have taken his eyes off God and focused on himself, opening the door for fear to enter. Faith and fear cannot co-exist, one has to give way to the other.

Jezebel swore by her gods to kill Elijah – the same gods he had mocked and shown to be powerless just the day before. But because Elijah had opened the door to fear, he believed the lie that these gods could somehow harm him.

'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.' II Timothy 1:7

"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? ' Jeremiah 32:27

**Reflect:** We only fear those things that we believe have power over us, things we think we don't have the ability to control. But when we shift our gaze and focus instead on the power of our God, we begin to view things not in the context of our limitations, but His unlimited power. And nothing is too hard for Him.



## Day 13

### Sustenance

'Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." 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. 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.'" 1 Kings 19:5-7

Elijah was going through a very tough time personally. He'd been threatened by Jezebel after executing the prophets of Baal and was now on the run. We've talked about how Elijah got to this point – taking his focus off the Lord and opening the door to fear – but now he was at this point what was he to do? He was really overwhelmed and ready to give it all up. It's at this point in his journey that the angel stepped in and provided supernatural sustenance in the form of food to equip Elijah for the journey ahead.

We may not be going to Horeb as Elijah was, but there's something to take note of. When things start appearing too great for us, that is the best time to pause and consciously hand the situation over into God's hands. We may have reached the end of our capacity but haven't even begun tapping into God's strength.

'...For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"' Hebrews 13:5b-6

'Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Matthew 11:28

**Reflect:** The challenges of life will certainly come, but we shouldn't put ourselves under pressure to try and resolve every issue by ourselves in our own strength. Are you stressed out or overwhelmed? There is a place of refuge we have in the Lord. At times we just need to stop and pray, "Jesus, please help me" and He has promised to answer us.



## Day 14

### Perspective

'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?"' 1 Kings 19:9

God asked Elijah an interesting question when he got to Horeb and spent the night in a cave: "What are you doing here?". The Lord asked the same question twice (1 Kings 19:13) and Elijah's response was the same both times:

'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.'" 1 Kings 19:10

Let's take note of the question and the response. The question speaks to both Elijah's physical and spiritual positions. Perhaps God was asking why Elijah didn't ask Him what to do before fleeing from Jezebel, especially after all the victories that were won. Perhaps He wanted Elijah to reflect on his spiritual position and understand that he had shifted his focus from God to himself.

Elijah's response showed that he focused on himself – his zeal for God and how he alone was left. Yes, the children of Israel had done many things wrong and Elijah really was zealous for God, but it wasn't all about him.

'Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.'" 1 Kings 19:18

God's response showed Elijah that he had been focusing on the wrong things. Elijah thought he was alone, the Lord told him there were 7000 others. Elijah thought Jezebel would destroy him, but she was actually a distraction. The Lord's instructions that showed Elijah would be instrumental in replacing the kings of Syria and Israel as well as anointing Elisha.

**Reflect:** If we get our perspectives wrong, we can miss what God is doing in and around us. Elijah still had a role to play in changing the destiny of nations, but he couldn't see it until God stepped in to re-focus him. Ask the Lord to give you divine perspective so you're able to correctly assess every situation so you can respond accurately.

## Day 15

### Stillness

'Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord ." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord , but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.' I Kings 19:11-12

How did Elijah know the Lord was not in the wind, earthquake or fire? He had developed an intimacy with God that helped him recognise God's presence and not confuse it with external activities.

'And I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.'" Exodus 33:2-3

'And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'" Exodus 33:14

In Exodus 32, the children of Israel had created a golden calf which had caused God to be angry with them. Because He is faithful and had promised them the land of Canaan, God would still give them the land, but His presence wouldn't be with them. Moses understood the importance of God's presence and so he interceded for Israel and the Lord accepted to have His presence go with them.

Both Elijah and Moses understood something – only someone who's been in a close relationship with God will know if His presence is in a situation or not and appreciate the impact of God's presence. To be in a close relationship requires investing attention in the relationship. Elijah said it clearly that he stood in God's presence, so he knew what the presence of God was and what it wasn't.

**Reflect:** Have you invested in your relationship with God to the extent that you know His voice and recognise His presence? Does it matter to you?

## Day 16

### The Call

'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.' I Kings 19:19

Elijah immediately set to work to complete the assignments the Lord had given him and the first thing he did was to throw his mantle on Elisha, signifying that Elisha was being called to join Elijah.

'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?"' I Kings 19:20

Elisha understood what had just happened and he could have said no but rather Elijah responded immediately by running after Elijah to let him know he would answer the call. And he kept true to his word.

Let's analyse this a bit deeper. Elisha wasn't sitting idle when he was called, he was at work ploughing the field. The Bible tells us that Elijah was with the twelfth yoke – a yoke typically had two oxen so there were at least 24 oxen engaged in plowing. That would have been a reasonably sized field so it's fair to say Elisha's business wasn't doing too badly.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

By slaughtering a yoke of oxen, and burning the plowing equipment, Elisha's response showed that he was willing to let go of the past (he said goodbye to his parents, business and towns people) all to become Elijah's servant. Many may have thought Elisha foolish for doing so, but the Lord knew His plans for Elisha. And Elisha was willing to go on the journey.

**Reflect:** God's assignments may not come at a time that is convenient for us, and it may not make sense in the immediate either to us or those around us. However, the rewards of following the Lord will always far outweigh whatever price we may have to pay.

## Day 17

### Gilgal

'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.' II Kings 2:1

Elijah was about to be taken up to heaven by a whirlwind and on the way he and Elisha stopped at four locations, the first of which was Gilgal. At each location Elijah was willing to continue the journey alone, but Elisha refused to leave him. Let's look at each stop and its significance.

'So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. Then the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.' Joshua 5:8-9

Gilgal was the location where the children of Israel camped after crossing the Jordan with Joshua as their leader. At Gilgal the men who had not been circumcised during the 40 years in the wilderness were circumcised, re-enacting Israel's covenant with the Lord.

Gilgal signifies a 'rolling away' (Joshua 5:9) or transitioning. A place to build strength to take on the next assignment and build capacity for greater conquests. Gilgal may not necessarily be a comfortable place – there was pain from the circumcision but healing and advancement came afterwards.

**Reflect:** The first part of Isaiah 9:7 says, "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end". We are the ones God will use to work out the increase of the government of Christ. He is willing to commit greater responsibilities to us, but we must first circumcise our hearts and build capacity by the help of the Holy Spirit. We will all pass through 'Gilgal' at various stages in our lives where we have to pause and reflect on the next step. The key is understanding that it's a place of transition and guidance on how to pass through it comes from the wisdom and insight we get from the Holy Spirit as we wait on God.

## Day 18

### Bethel

'Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel.' II Kings 2:2

The second place Elijah and Elisha went to was Bethel. Bethel was the place Jacob first encountered God when he was on the run from Esau. When Jacob slept he had a vision of angels ascending and descending and more importantly, God spoke to Jacob and gave him many awesome promises pertaining to his destiny and the destiny of generations to come (Genesis 28:13-16).

'Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously.' Genesis 28:16,18-19

'Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel.' Genesis 35:9-10

Bethel represents the place of transformation. It was at Bethel Jacob first received a promise from God which showed that God was with him. When Jacob left Bethel the first time the Lord changed his circumstances, but when he left Bethel the second time, the Lord transformed his identity.

**Reflect:** In our journey with God we may have received a promise from Him, but our circumstances may not appear to reflect this promise. God has not reneged on His promise – he is not a man that he should lie (Numbers 23:19). Could it be that what is required of us is that we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us to be able to handle the manifestation of the promise when it occurs?

## Day 19

### Jericho

'Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho.' II Kings 2:4

The third place Elijah and Elisha stopped was Jericho. Jericho was the first battle the children of Israel fought after crossing the Jordan under Joshua's leadership (Joshua 6). The battle was won not because of Israel's military superiority or strategy, but because the Lord had already given them the victory.

'And the Lord said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.' Joshua 6:2

The greatest resistance Jericho had was its supposedly impenetrable wall. However, the wall stood no chance against God's counsel and crumbled as the Israelites followed God's instructions.

Jericho represents a place of overcoming strongholds. The wall of Jericho represented a stumbling block to Israel taking possession of the promised land. But as God had already given them land, the question was would the Israelites follow the Lord's instructions or try and win their own way?

**Reflect:** On the journey to the fulfilment of God's promises you will come across your own 'walls of Jericho' which represent strongholds – these may not be physical but rather mindsets which may be holding you back. Are you trying to bring down your own walls of Jericho in your own wisdom or based on God's instructions? The Israelites may have thought God's instructions foolish – how could circling a wall and shouting give them victory? But His way is always the best. Take your stronghold(s) to God and ask Him for His strategy for success. His methods may not be what you have in mind, but it is the way that will guarantee your success.

## Day 20

### Jordan

'Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on.' II Kings 2:6

The Jordan was the final stop Elijah and Elisha went to and there a miracle occurred as Elijah parted the waters.

'Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.'" II Kings 2:8-9

Elisha had been faithful in following Elijah from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho and now finally they were at the Jordan. It was at this point that Elisha's faithfulness was rewarded and Elijah requested that he ask for whatever he wanted.

'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." 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.' II Kings 2:10-11

Jordan represents the place of spiritual insight. Elijah knew that Elisha's receiving his request was contingent upon Elisha's spiritual eyes being opened. Elisha had been given an open cheque to ask for whatever he wanted from a powerful man of God who had withheld rain for years, called down fire from heaven and performed many other miracles. Elisha had recognized the power of God in Elijah's life and so he didn't ask for anything material, but a double portion of the spirit upon Elijah's life. Elisha placed more emphasis on the spiritual than material.

**Reflect:** If you were to ask God for the fulfilment of any of the promises He's already made to you in the Bible, which would it be and why? Have you taken time to search them out?



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