

30. Elijah and Decision

Elijah seemingly came out of nowhere.

He was a prophet to the northern kingdom from 883 BC until 868 BC, around 15 years.

We do not know his age; he was called “the Tishbite,” and it says that he came out of Gilead, which is the region given to Manasseh on the east side of the Sea of Galilee.

He pushed his way into King Ahab’s court in the capitol city, Samaria, located in the portion of Manasseh on the west side of the Jordan.

Elijah spoke one line in all firmness, “As God lives, no rain until I say,” and then he vanished.

A Still Small Voice.

We know little of Elijah's relationship with God except for 1 Kings 19, when he flees to Mt. Sinai and God reveals Himself to Elijah as a still, small voice.

And that tells us all we need to know to understand that James was right, Elijah was just like us.

I have no doubt that Elijah had already heard that still small voice a number of times; his experience at Sinai was God separating everything else away from that voice.

Like Abraham did, Elijah knew without ever wondering, that this voice was the All-Carrying One inside of whom all live and before whom all stand.

The “Elijah to Come.”

The defining verse concerning Elijah is a verse that affects the definitions of all from the moment Malachi ended the Old Testament with this great pronouncement.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

Everyone is looking for an “Elijah to come,” some visibly mighty prophet of God to herald the coming of the Messiah. Thus, Elijah himself is imaged as a ‘demigod’ above most.

Just Like Us.

We agree with James, that Elijah and all the other figures of the Old Testament were not demigods, but people just like us who knew the Lord and trusted in Him.

The prayer of a just man is very strong and energizes effectively. Elijah was a man just like us, and he prayed a prayer that it not rain, and it did not rain upon the earth three years and six months. And again, he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit (James 5:17-18 – rough JSV).

But Elijah is set by God as His contention of choice between two, the same as in Eden, between life and death.

The Least Believer.

Since “Elijah to come” is so all-pervasive in people’s minds in a way that is totally contrary to the gospel, we need to include Jesus’ argument as well.

“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he **who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.**”

The LEAST believer in Jesus is GREATER THAN Elijah and is greater than “Elijah to come.” And this is a view that we apply to one another in every direction.

Thus I have said, “If you want to be wowed with God, find the person in your church who cleans the toilets and be wowed with God.”

The Valley of Decision.

We must apply Elijah to ourselves, for there is no other possibility. But this is the only mind in which we view this pattern of God.

At the same time, I refuse to “figure out” prophetic Scripture, for the only thing I wish to know is Christ my life.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision (Joel 3:14).

After the word Elijah spoke that caused the rain to cease, Elijah fled to a ravine on the east side of the Jordan to hide from King Ahab. He was there probably less than a year, until the intermittent brook, Cherith, had vanished.

Give and It Shall Be Given to You.

Then, Elijah made his way to Zarephath, in Phoenicia, outside of the jurisdiction of Ahab, where he stayed with a woman and her son whom we know only as “the widow.”

Now this is an amazing story, one worth long reflection.

God told Elijah that He would provide for him through this woman. Yet when Elijah asked her for food, she had nothing.

Then he said, “Give me what you have, and you will never run out.” And so it happened.

Then, he raised her son back to life, but in a very specific way, by placing his body fully upon the boy’s body 3 times.

What James Meant.

By these two means, then, by the flow of provision and by the impartation of life, the widow said, “Now I know... that the word of the Lord in your mouth is the truth.”

Now, our purpose in this lesson is to understand what James meant when he said that Elijah is just like us, that is, we want to know the heart of this man towards God and the real manner in which God moved through him.

We must begin with what Elijah is not.

Jesus' disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, “Like Elijah.” But Jesus said, “You do not know of what spirit you are. I have not come to destroy **men's lives but to save them.**”

Restoring Father's Heart.

Then, by Malachi's prophecy, we see that, in God's mind, the essence of "Elijah" is one who restores the Father's heart in the knowing of all.

And, of course, that is something we can do. In fact, when you speak gentle words of encouragement into another person, you are the "Elijah to come," which is not a big deal, but little, which, in God, is the biggest deal of all.

The least and the littlest can do little acts of kindness and speak gentle words of encouragement. As Jesus said, the least in the church is 'greater than' Elijah.

The least and the littlest can reveal God.

A Pure Heart.

But the key for us is what it is that motivates Elijah.

You see, Elijah did what he did because something really bothered him, something did not sit right in his gut and he could not rest until he had set things right.

Here is an expression of that. Then it happened, when **Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, “Is that you, O troubler of Israel?” And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have.”**

The criminal accuses his opponent as being the one who committed the crime. But Elijah was motivated by a pure heart; Elijah was concerned about God blessing the people.

The Normal Christian Life.

The “Elijah to come” is the normal Christian life. Every believer in Jesus, according to Jesus and James, is the “Elijah to come.”

Every believer in Jesus is a prophet of Christ; every believer in Jesus shows people the Father.

Yet here is where we gain the same heart that was in Elijah.

The more I speak and write the words of Christ now made personal as me, the more I sense and know the Father’s heart. And the more I know the Father’s heart, the more awful all speaking against becomes in my ears.

I cannot bear words that speak against Christ.

Speaking Anti-Christ.

The Father is meek and lowly of heart, and, because He sees others as better, He is always lifting others up.

Words that cut people down, however, make the Father very angry, and especially words that deny Christ.

John Gray preached the last time we visited Lakewood Church. He presented the word of the Lord to the congregation – As He is, so are you in this world.

Then he spent the next twenty minutes saying to them that they are NOT like Jesus, but they ought to be.

John Gray's words were the curse of anti-Christ entering into people beloved of the Lord, yet they gave him ear.

Pain.

And this is what Elijah said – **you AND your father's house.**

You see, twelve thousand precious believers in Jesus gave ear to the rejection of Christ because they imagined this is what Christianity actually teaches – **your father's house.**

Those twenty minutes were as painful to me, every single second, every word being spoken, as any pain I have known in my life.

Nothing gives me more distress than preachers speaking anti-Christ into God's beloved people, especially when it is a live service and I cannot shut it off.

Speaking anti-Christ into Christ! – Not a good idea.

Gospel Realities.

The great travesty of the un-Biblical interpretation of Revelation is the assumption that, in the “return of the Lord,” everything reverts back to Old Testament realities.

The “gospel,” then, is confined to “heaven-only.”

We do the opposite. We convert everything “Old Testament” into gospel realities, for that is exactly what all the writers of the New Testament did as well.

Therefore, we do not say, “Gather the 450 prophets of Baal.” We say, “Gather all the Christian preachers who preach the serpent’s gospel into their congregations.”

And we say, “I am the one who speaks Christ into you.”

The Decision.

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.

Wow, what a verse. Here’s how we say it.

As He is, so are you in this world. – “If God is telling you the truth, then believe what He says and see where such a word takes you (follow Him). But if Satan has convinced you that God’s word is not true until you make it true, then see where such a word takes you (follow him.)”

It is a GOOD thing that the people closed their mouths, as Paul and Moses said they should do.

Causing Death.

Now, in mentioning John Gray, I am not in any way speaking against him as a brother in the Lord, for he belongs to Jesus and is carried by Him just as much as I.

John Gray did not offend me or cause me pain. The words coming out of his mouth did – BECAUSE OF the death those words were causing in my brothers and sisters.

Now, this is going to become a critical issue in the next few years of my life story, even a dangerous issue. And I am filled with gratefulness, for God is giving me the way to present this issue as it unfolds, and this teaching is very much part of His gift of understanding to me.

Elijah Was Wrong.

Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men.”

This is where we get the arrogant statement, “*I am God’s prophet for today.*”

Elijah was WRONG – and God rebuked him for his wrong thinking not long after. I have reserved seven thousand in Israel. – Sorry, Charlie, but there are thousands of believers in Jesus who love the good-speaking of Jesus, not just you.

When God enters our world He humbles Himself, and those through whom He enters just as much.

My Cry of Agony.

I always wondered why Elijah was so strong one moment and then running for his life the next, when Jezebel said, “I’m going to kill you.”

God was not about to let Elijah’s self-pity – “I’m the only one,” to stand. In fact, that is the entire issue of Chapter 19.

I spoke of the great issues coming up in the next few years of my life story. Here is what I mean. *The Covenant*, Chapter 6, “[God of the Cup](#).” Here is my cry of agony.

“If God reveals Himself to my neighbor BEFORE He reveals Himself to me, will I accuse my neighbor of heresy and deception and will I put my neighbor to death?”

Precious Understanding.

To be honest with you, I would read this entire chapter to you in order to convey the real meaning of sharing the same heart with Elijah, that is, Christ.

– “God does what He wills with His own and He asks no man’s pleasure.” –

Up until now, God gave me understanding concerning the events of my life AFTER I had written about them.

I am so grateful that now that has turned around and God is giving me understanding before I write.

Part of the reason why is that there is some danger in going forward, that is, words spoken against me.

The Contention of Word.

Forgive me for being cryptic, but this contention, the same heart agony that motivated Elijah, ran from writing “The Altar of Incense” in August of 2012 to writing “Defining the Apostolic” in April of 2014, about a year-and-a-half.

And I will show you the thread of this agony as I write the three chapters that include portions of this time period.

I am deliberately placing this here for my own sake, that I might be grounded in God’s understanding as I write what is now becoming the most important period of my life.

Elijah is real to our normal and daily Christian life and to the contention of word that speaks against Christ.

God-Fire.

“Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.”

The God who answers by fire. – Our God is a consuming Fire; let brotherly love continue.

I would point you to the two chapters in *A Highway for God*, “Word as Fire” and “Sent as Judgment,” for the gospel meaning of “the God who answers by fire.”

And, of truth, it fits this picture of Elijah. Elijah had them pour water upon the sacrifice so that when the fire burned, the people would know it was God-fire and not his.

Like Elijah.

Do you want to know when we are really like Elijah?

It's when Father's Heart is more important to us than our own life.

It's when we close our ears to "*the Bible says, the Bible says,*" for we must KNOW what our Father actually says.

It's when the least person who believes in Jesus is more important to us than anything of ourselves.

It's when the thought of giving our own strange fire to God's people is an unmitigated horror in our minds.

It's when the task of joining the Father's heart with the heart of this dear one is the greatest privilege ever given.

Reading for Next Time.

The next lesson is “Elisha and Confidence.” To prepare, please read 1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2, 4:1-37, 5:1-19, 6:14-18, and 2 Kings 13:14-21.

In writing this lesson, Elijah became real as a brother in the Lord to me. This is the great value of our present approach to these stories. I want the Lord to do the same thing for us with Elisha.

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 [two mouths] of your spirit be upon me.” 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...

Let's Pray Together.

God never removes from any human throughout this age the confrontation between life and death as began in Eden.

In fact, you could find that very thing as the driving force of my life – “I don’t want to die; I want to live.” That is, “I don’t want to be ignorant of Father with me; I want to know God with me, coming through me into my world.”

“God, our Father, we know that You are always confronting every human with this enormous choice between life and death, but especially Your Church, that she might choose life.

“God, our Father, we ask You to be LIFE in Your Church.

Be a Burning Fire.

“Father, we call You into our world. We call You to be Fire; we call You to be Love among us and through us, that our brethren might know that Jesus alone shows us God.

“Father, we ask You to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet Joel, to bring Your people across the earth into the valley of decision, that they might be faced with this stark reality of which image shows us God, Jesus or the serpent.

“Father, cause the distinction between life and death to become clear in the mind and face of every person who calls upon Your name. Be a burning Fire, be the Energeia of their lives, until they KNOW You only through Jesus Sent into them, written as life upon their hearts.

Be Our Burning Hearts.

“God, our Father, You burn as Fire inside our own hearts as we intercede for the sake of our brothers and sisters, millions of believers in Jesus all across the earth.

“Father, be the Love of God poured out in our hearts, now flowing out from us to them as we love one another.

“Father, this is the ‘Elijah to come,’ this burning heart You are inside of us, that we will not let You rest until You make Jerusalem, Your beloved Church, to be a praise and a glory in all the earth.

“Father, be through us Your mighty deeds of kindness and Your life-giving and power-filled words of **encouragement.**”