

1 Kings Chapter 19 Commentary

1Ki 19:1 ¶ "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time. 3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers."

Ahab, upon returning to Jezreel, tells Jezebel all that Elijah the prophet of God has done. Jezebel sends a message to Elijah that by tomorrow about this time you too will be dead. Elijah immediately flees for his life. Now, it is easy to cast stones at Elijah, and question his faith in God, because he flees for his life. However, we can say in his defense, what he does puts him, providentially, in the place he needs to be, to accomplish what God has yet for him to do as a prophet of God. It certainly does not hide him from the face of God, although he is hidden from Jezebel, and she is unable to carry out her wishes.

Elijah even asks God to take away his life, which God does not do because he is not through with Elijah. This is a reminder that God protects his own, to accomplish his own will and purpose in their lives. We are reminded of this in **Ec 3:1 ¶** "**To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:**" Think of how many times King David had to flee for his own life, yet God sustained his life. So it shall be with Elijah, the prophet of God.

Even in our lives of fellowship in the New Testament church, there are times that we are to flee for our own lives. One place we see this is in **Mt 10:23** "**But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.**" This is a thing that I have seen come to fruition in my own spiritual life, and the lives of others, to the glory and praise of God's Holy Name.

"It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." We point out, Elijah does not take any glory to himself, for the work that God has performed through him. The only glory Elijah has is that God has manifested that Elijah is a true prophet of God. Elijah has no desire to do any more work and request that God take his life.

5 "And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. **6** And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. **7** And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. **8** And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. **9 ¶** And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, **What doest thou here, Elijah?**"

An angel awakes Elijah from his sleep and feeds him two times, preparing him for the journey before him. In the strength of the food provided by God for him, Elijah is enabled to go forty days and nights. Elijah goes to Horeb, the mount of God, and enters a cave there. While he lodged there, the word of God comes to Elijah and asks him "**What doest thou here, Elijah?**"

This scene presents to us the need of the food of God, which is the bread of life, to sustain our lives for the journey that is set before us, as children of God, in whatever office God has put us. Our minds can get so discombobulated that God may have to ask us what we are doing.

10 "And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. **11** And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: **12** And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the

fire a still small voice. 13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Elijah tells God: I have been very zealous for the Lord, but Israel has torn down thy altars, forsaken thy covenants, slain thy prophets, and I am the only prophet of God left, and they seek my life. God tells Elijah to go forth and stand upon the mountain before the Lord. God sends a strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire, but the Lord was not in the midst of them. Then God sends a still small voice, and Elijah recognizes that the presence of God is at hand. Elijah wraps his face in his mantle, that he might not see the face of God and die, and when he went out of the cave, God asks again "**What doest thou here, Elijah?**"

We notice that Elijah has gone to mount Horeb, which is mount Sinai where the law was given, and is hiding in a cave there. God sends these three catastrophic events, but does not appear to Elijah out of them. This demonstrates to us that sometimes catastrophes come into our lives, which are to get our attention and remind us that God is on the throne and in charge of all that happens in heaven and upon the earth. Having gotten our attention, then God speaks to us in that still small voice, through the Holy Spirit through our consciences, and we know that it is the voice of God. Again, God asks "**What doest thou here, Elijah?**" Understand, while Elijah is hiding in the cave, Elijah is not serving God, nor magnifying the name of the Lord upon the earth.

Sometimes in the frailty of our faith and trust in God, God has to ask us what we are doing, which is a reminder to us, God is still on the throne and in charge of everything that exists. Elijah is hiding his candle under a bushel right now, and we often are guilty of the same thing.

14 "And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. 15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: 16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. 17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. 18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

Elijah repeats to God **14 "And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."**

God commands Elijah: return by way of Damascus and anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; then, anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat to be prophet in thy stead. God further declares: Those who escape the sword of Hazael, shall Jehu slay, and those that escape the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. God further declares to Elijah, you just think you are alone, I have reserved seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to, nor kissed, Baal.

This is a great reminder to us that we do not see the whole picture of the plan of God in this life. We only see that which God reveals to us, as he reveals it to us.

God is explaining to Elijah, I have a plan of judicial judgment for this sinning Israel who have turned from worshipping me to idolatry. We have the same thing to count on in this age of salvation by the grace of God. No matter the amount of persecution, and no matter the host that have turned to idolatry, God has a day of judgment coming in which God will judge all people of the earth. We do not wish to fall into the hands of foreigners to be slain, nor to be slain for idolatry, putting ourselves in a situation that may render us the eternal judicial judgment of God to be sent to the eternal lake of fire. Our prayer, and belief, is that we be found among the number, the faithful, whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

19 ¶ "So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. 20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? 21 And he returned back

from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him."

Elijah departs from mount Horeb and finds Elisha, who is plowing, and cast his mantle upon him. Elisha realizes that this means that he has been chosen to be a prophet of God, who will learn under the guidance of Elijah. Elisha request of Elijah, let me go kiss my family goodbye and I will return and follow you. When he returns, Elisha takes a yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and fed the people, Then he follows Elijah and ministers unto him.

What would this have to do with us today? The very first thing we see is that it is God who chooses who his ministers will be. A self-made, self-appointed minister, is not a minister of God. These self-made ministers are those who comprise the leadership of the false religions of the world. This is the very thing that has happened in the world of religion today.

It is not the responsibility of the church to choose who will be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The calling must come from God, and from experience I can tell you, if you are called to the ministry of God, God will make it plain to you that this is your duty. I can say this from my own experience.

Elder Clarke Lee's Call To The Ministry

My own experience, of being called to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, was long in coming to fruition, but it came surely, in God's own time. My first inclination that this was to be my lot in life was soon after I joined the church fellowship at 17 years of age. The day I was baptized, when I came up out of the water, I saw in a vision a white dove come down from heaven, lighting upon my shoulder, and putting his beak in my ear and speaking to me.

The second was I found myself lost in sin: I promised God that if He would forgive me, and deliver me out of sin, that I would do whatever He wanted me to do, with the very thought of serving in the ministry coming into my mind as I made this vow to God.

The third was one night I dreamed that I was in the heavens looking down upon the earth, and I was standing beside a great rock. That rock had a stream of water running out of it and falling to the earth far below. As I looked over the precipice, I could see the stream of water breaking into smaller streams and finally into droplets of water and they were falling upon a pool of water upon the earth. I remember the great power I felt as the water poured forth from the rock as it made the very hairs of my body stand up.

The next was just a few years before I began to exercise, I dreamed one night that my body was transformed into a pitcher pump. The clapper was down in my heart and the rod to the handle came up through and out the top of my head, with the handle attached to it and hanging down my back. Then I saw a great white hand come down from heaven and take hold of the handle and begin to pump. Each time the hand pumped there was great pressure in my chest as though it would burst asunder, but rather a little stream of water came running out of my mouth.

The next dream came and it was me, in an out of body experience, at church where God laid his hand upon me and the words came out of my mouth so fast that I could barely keep up with what was being said. I made this confession to the brethren at Oak Grove who gave me time to exercise, but the time was not right, I was in the wrong place, and the Lord had not yet revealed to me what true preaching was like.

Because of Sacred Harp singing and us visiting with other groups who sang Sacred Harp music, since they had prayer at these sings my home church said I was participating in other religions and expelled me from the fellowship. I traveled to many different denominations and places for about five years, but I was continually drawn back to Mars Hill Primitive Baptist Church where I finally rejoined the New Testament church fellowship. During those years when we were out of the church fellowship, we were invited to Mt Pisgah Primitive Baptist Church in Alabama. The day we visited the minister who preached, Elder Ben Keeble, opened the bible and began to preach from the word of God, which was something I had never seen before. Every time he wanted a supporting scripture the bible just automatically turned to the right place. This happened so many times until he finally stopped and stated that he had never had that experience before. I knew that day that that was what the preaching of the gospel was about and that it must come from the bible.

A few months later we were at the same church for a Sacred Harp Sing. Brother John Ehteridge led the hymn 422 in the Sacred Harp book, The Grieved Soul, the lyrics are: Come my soul and let us try for a little season, every burden to lay by, come and let us reason. What is this that cast thee down? Who are they that grieve

thee? Speak and let the worst be known, ***Speaking may relieve thee.*** When we got to that last line. I was melted to tears knowing that I must give in and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Brother John saw it also and he melted into tears too.

Not long after I joined Mars Hill Church, I confessed my need to speak and ease the pain in my heart. They gave me place to speak, and God moved to make me speak from the scripture in a way that everyone knew It was not Clarke speaking, for I am very slow of speech. In a short time, they licensed me to speak, and a short time later they ordained me to the ministry to the office of Elder, and I was immediately called to pastor Big Creek Church. Later I was called to serve at Empire Church, and lastly to pastor of Mars Hill Church. So, I know in my heart, God does the choosing of those He would have to fill the offices of the New Testament Church. All Praise and glory to his name! Amen!