

VIDEO 3 Study Guide

In the video we just watched, we talked about the experience Elijah had with Ahab and Jezebel, and how that experience led him to falter in his faith, and instead he acted out of fear.

Open your bible to 1 Kings 18:20 and starting with verse 20, read through all of chapter 19. When you read this, be sure to be comfortable and at rest; not in a hurry. Sit in the resting place you created as your place in your home for being alone and quiet with the Lord, and before reading, simply take some time to be fully aware that your Father is with you. Even if it means that before you read the passages, you just sit with Him. In the quiet and place your thoughts on Him. Repent and enjoy the reality of being with such a loving, forgiving and compassionate Heavenly Father. Then, begin reading.

When you read these passages, what emotions did it stir in you? Were you angry or maybe a little discouraged at the fact that Ahab and Jezebel did not repent and want to worship the one True God, after all the displays of God's glory they had just witnessed? Did you feel frustrated toward the cowardice Ahab, and how he bowed to his wife's evil ways? Did you totally identify with the emotions of Elijah as he ran away afraid of the threats that were coming at him? What did you feel? Where did you see yourself in the Scripture you just read?

Jezebel was an evil woman who was also very shrewd. She very well could have suspected that Elijah would be or could be poised for an emotional and physical "come apart" after his very dramatic day on Mount Carmel, and she was exactly right. So her motivation in sending him a death threat was to remove him entirely from the people who just observed victory, and they would (as Jezebel wanted them to do) return to worshipping Baal.

As Ancient church fathers used to say, "Beware of human reactions after holy exertions." Elijah's human reaction to her death threat was, as Charles Spurgeon says, "he treated before a beaten enemy." The fact that Elijah was experiencing emotional burnout, hunger, was beyond exhausted and felt like a complete failure, plus the lack of faith in the Lord, it all worked against him and led him into a deep depression. ... with pride and self-pity chained to his ego. He felt that he "wasn't as good as his fathers," but God never asked him to be as good as his fathers. He only asked him to hear His voice (His Word) and obey it. Elijah, at his lowest point, prayed that he would just die. He felt he was the only true servant of the Lord left and just wanted out of it all. He didn't feel his life was effective, yet the Lord seldom allows His servants to know the good they have done, because we walk by faith, not by sight.

But as you read in Elijah's case, when the mind and body and heart is just weary and heavy, the best answer is sleep. Nothing, not a thing, ever seems right when we are spent! When we are sheer exhausted.

But when you read that "an angel of the Lord" came and provide bread and water to Elijah first, what thoughts does that bring to your mind? What do you think about your Heavenly Father when you read that a provision to Elijah's physical needs was made available to him by Jesus Christ? An Old Testament title for "angel of the Lord" is an Old Testament title for the second person of the Godhead - Jesus.

Read Genesis 16:10, Exodus 3:1-4, Judges 2:1-4 - in these passages you will find the Lord speaking and acting as God would speak and act.

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What is it that you need in your life? Food? Water? Clothing? Money? A job? Friends? Or maybe you need joy, peace, passion and freedom? Take some time to jot down what you need most, right now, today in your life. Are you in a “wilderness” time where you feel fear, rejection, worry, or confusion? Write these things down. The third person of the Godhead, The Holy Spirit, is with you and will be with you as you write down what you need? Where you are in life? If you have no needs, if you are at a wonderful and beautiful place with God, then write a prayer of praise! But then, intercede in prayer for that friend, that family member, that co-worker that you know has needs.

When you stop and realize that as Elijah was abandoning himself to the wilderness, running away from what gripped his life with total fear, and he just was not walking in faith with God — what do you think about God Himself when you read in those passages in 1 Kings? He saw Elijah running, and He saw Elijah’s mental and emotional state. So, what comes to your mind about God when you think about Him fully aware of Elijah?

When you read that Elijah laid down under a juniper tree, did you picture a big tree like an oak? Well, a juniper tree is actually a flowering shrub, and some translations call it the “flowering broom tree.” It flourishes in the wilderness...flourishes! And it provides shade for flocks, herds and travelers. The branches are thin and supple like those of the willow and are used to bind bundles. The Hebrew word for this shrub means “to bind.” This is no coincident that Elijah found comfort enough to sleep under a tree that symbolized the condition of his life - all bound up in fear and failure. Yet, he did something truly noble and worth our full nod of recognition - he prayed. It was the wise thing to do, yet, his prayer was not wise. He had had enough and wanted to die. Suicidal thoughts were already binding up his mind because he was already bound up in emotional burnout, weariness, hunger, and a deep sense of failure. (1)

Yet ...

God prepared for Elijah “a table in the wilderness.” God literally prepared and provided the table of hot bread and water for Elijah WHILE Elijah was experiencing the darkest and most despairing wilderness of his own unbelief.

When you think of a wilderness, what comes to mind? Describe it.

In my own life, I knew I was in a wilderness when my circumstances robbed me of peace and rest, in some form. But a wilderness will always be a place where our faith will be tired. Our beliefs will be tested. And our convictions of who God really is may even be shaken. But, while you and I are in the wilderness, ... Jesus comes and sets a table before us. He meets our needs. He sustains us and nourishes our very life.

What does that truth - that reality about who Christ is - what does that do to *your* emotions? To your very next decision? How do you *respond* to such a loving, caring and gracious Lord?

Read this verse, **“He looked and by his head there was a bread cake baked on hot coal and a pitcher of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again.”**

When you read that verse, read it out loud slowly.

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Now, read it again out loud, but this time read it picturing *yourself* - having run into the wilderness terrified and exhausted and praying you'd die - but then opening your eyes and seeing baked bread on hot coals and a pitcher of water.

What comes to mind? Jot it down using only 1 word.

For the next few days, let that one word springboard your time alone with God. Keep going back to it. Look up verses in the back of your Bible in the glossary that either have that word in the verse, or speaks toward that word. Really be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and the circumstances and surroundings of your life these next few days and how that one word resonates in your heart and mind.

I love you, my friend!! I just want you to know that it means so much to me that you want to draw closer to the heart of God with me in this series. I pray that you will be overwhelmed by the life of REST He has made for us in Christ. We get to rest in what He provides, rest in His promises, and rest in His redeeming love!! And each week, we will just keep going deeper and further together!

Resting,
lisa

(t) Warren Weirsbe Old Testament Commentary, page 660