



# NEW DAYS | OLD DEMONS

A STUDY OF ELIJAH

Mark Driscoll



# **NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS**

**A Study of Elijah**

**REALFAITH.COM**

**By Mark Driscoll**

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# REAL GROUPS WITH REALFAITH

*Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith.*

James 2:20, TLB

At RealFaith, we believe that the Word of God isn't just for us to read, it's to be obeyed. And living in community with fellow believers is one of the ways God the Father allows us to learn and grow to become more like His Son Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. We do this through something called Real Groups. Here are a few tips to start your own.

## **1. Invite**

Invite your friends, neighbors, family, coworkers, and enemies, because they all need Jesus whether they know Him or not! Whether it's a group of men, women, families, students, or singles, explain that you'd like to start a weekly sermon-based small group based on Pastor Mark Driscoll's sermons.

## **2. Listen to the sermon on [realfaith.com](http://realfaith.com) or on the RealFaith app**

You can host a viewing party to watch RealFaith Live and discuss it all at once, or you can watch it separately and gather to discuss it at another time that works for the group.

### 3. Get into God's Word

In addition to watching the sermon, make sure you and all group members have a study guide from [realfaith.com](http://realfaith.com) for the current sermon series. There are questions for personal reflection as well as for groups that can guide your devotional times throughout the week. You can also sign up for Daily Devos at [realfaith.com](http://realfaith.com).

### 4. Gather together

Whether at someone's house, a public place, or through something like Zoom, meet weekly to discuss the sermon and what God has taught you through it. The great thing about Real Groups is that you don't all have to be in the same location. You can talk about sermon takeaways, what stood out to you in the study guide, or what God taught you in His Word that week. Focus on personal application as much as possible.

### 5. Pray

When you gather, feel free to share prayer requests, pray for each other on the spot, and continue praying throughout the week. Prayer is a great unifying force that God gives us to strengthen His family.

### 6. Share

Send us photos, videos, testimonies, and updates of how your group is doing to [hello@realfaith.com](mailto:hello@realfaith.com). You might even be featured on our RealFaith Live show!

There are plenty more resources to discover at [realfaith.com/real-groups](http://realfaith.com/real-groups), as well. We will be praying for you and your group and look forward to hearing what God does through it.



# CHAPTER 1

## God Creates, Satan Counterfeits

One of the primary metaphors the Bible uses to describe spiritual warfare is light versus darkness. God wants His people to live in the light, and Satan wants us to live in the darkness. Much like a dimmer switch, Satan and demonic forces know that if they simply flipped everything from light to darkness, it would be too obvious and stark. So, evil forces at work in the world slowly turn things darker and darker hoping that, over the course of years and generations, the darkness is winning without being alarming. This is precisely the backdrop for the ministry of Elijah – things had grown dimmer and darker for generations, and Elijah came to turn the light on.

### God creates, Satan counterfeits

Throughout the Bible, God creates and Satan counterfeits. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning, God created...” 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 [NLT] speaks of, “the work of Satan”, as, “counterfeit power and signs and miracles. He will use every kind of evil deception...”

Demonic counterfeits are often referred to as “false” throughout the Scriptures and include everything from false teachers to false prophets, false apostles, and false teaching. Christian discernment is the ability to rightly distinguish between that which God creates and that

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which Satan counterfeits. In the book *Win Your War* that I wrote with my wife, Grace, we delve deeply into this reality of spiritual warfare and give numerous examples including angels vs demons, truth vs lies, Spirit-filled vs demon-possessed, humility vs pride, forgiveness vs bitterness, worship vs idolatry, shepherds vs wolves, Spirit vs flesh, church vs world, and Heaven vs Hell.

The backdrop of the life and ministry of Elijah is spiritual warfare as God is seeking to sustain His Kingdom that He created, and Satan is at work through a succession of demonic kings creating a counterfeit kingdom to tempt God's people away from worship and into idolatry.

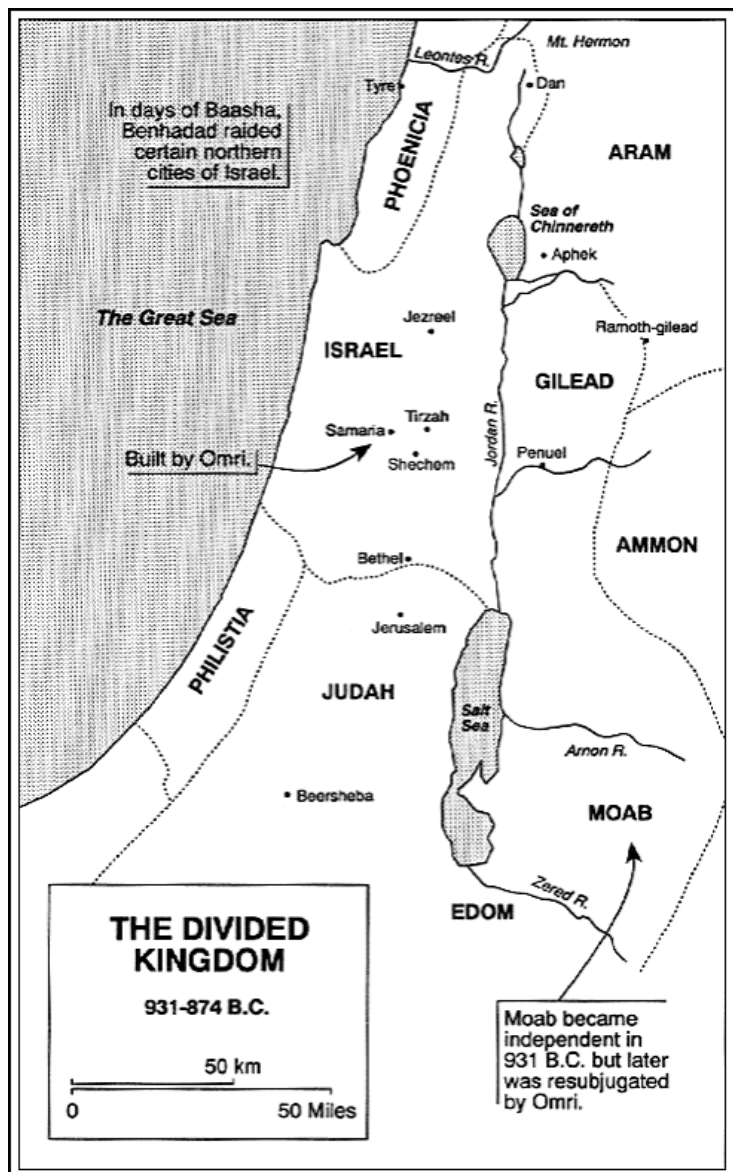
God was very clear about His commands for kings to worship Him alone and serve as the worship leader of His people.<sup>a</sup>

In disobedience to God, King Solomon built the Temple for the worship of God, and sadly took many foreign wives who turned his heart away from God, eventually causing him to sanction and support the worship of demonic false "gods" that included child sacrifice, the same murderous act of modern-day abortion.<sup>b</sup> After the death of Solomon, his kingdom was divided into two parts – the northern kingdom (Israel) and southern kingdom (Judah). Keeping this fact in mind is helpful when studying the Old Testament because there is division between God's people and two kings and kingdoms from this point forward in history. In some ways, the situation would be akin to what America would look like had the Civil War resulted in one nation in the north and a separate nation in the south. For Israel and Judah, both kingdoms had numerous evil kings who despised God and deceived God's people.

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<sup>a</sup> Deuteronomy 17:14–20 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 11:1–13

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## Angels and Demons

Throughout the story of Elijah, there is the appearance of both angels<sup>a</sup> and demons or “gods”<sup>b</sup>, including named demon gods like Baal and Asherah.<sup>c</sup> Demons (fallen spirit beings) may also pose as gods and elicit worship, possibly even through counterfeit signs, wonders, and miracles. This is precisely the backdrop for Elijah’s ministry in a spiritual war against these counterfeit demon gods working through a godless king and false prophets.

From the beginning, God’s people have lived with constant pressure to accept other religions and “gods” as equally worthy of worship as the God of the Bible. Too many times people are like Solomon and divide their devotion between God and the “gods”.<sup>d</sup> His failure to remain devoted solely to God set in motion the splitting of two kingdoms and the succession of demonic kings that we will study next. To embolden us, the Bible presents stirring stories of faithful followers like Elijah and Elisha who would not compromise their devotion to God despite facing opposition and persecution.

## Israel’s Evil Kings

Just prior to the entrance of Elijah in 1 Kings 17, the scene is set with the reporting of the demonic kings who became increasingly evil with every generation in the northern kingdom of Israel.

King Jeroboam, we are told in 1 Kings 13:33, “...did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people. Any who would, he ordained to be priests of the high places.” 1 Kings 14:16

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 19:5,7; 2 Kings 1:3, 15 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 19:2, 20:10, 20:23 <sup>c</sup> Genesis 3:5; Isaiah 14:14; John 8:44 <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 11

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speaks of "...the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and made Israel to sin."

King Nadab's brief reign is reported in 1 Kings 15:25-26, "Nadab the son of Jeroboam...he reigned over Israel two years. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin which he made Israel to sin."

King Baasha killed Nadab and murdered all of the descendants of Jeroboam.<sup>o</sup> God rebuked Nadab saying in 1 Kings 16:2-4, "...you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have caused my people Israel to sin, provoking me to anger with their sins, therefore, I will consume Baasha and his house... Anyone belonging to Baasha who dies in the city the dogs shall eat; and anyone of his who dies in the field the birds of the air shall eat."

King Elah's short worthless reign is reported in 1 Kings 16:8-10,13, "he reigned two years. But his servant Zimri... conspired against him. When he was...drinking himself drunk...Zimri came in and struck him down and killed him... because of all the sins of Baasha and the sins of his son Elah that they committed, and that they caused Israel to commit, provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their idols."

King Zimri's short and sick reign is reported in 1 Kings 16:15-19, "...Zimri reigned seven days...Now the troops... heard it said, 'Zimri has conspired, and he has killed the king'; therefore all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. So Omri went up...and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the king's house; he burned down the king's house over himself with fire, and died – because of the sins that he committed, doing evil in the sight of the Lord,

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<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings 15:27-32

walking in the way of Jeroboam, and for the sin that he committed, causing Israel to sin.”

King Omri established Samaria as the new capital instead of Jerusalem. 1 Kings 16:22-26 says, “...Omri became king...he reigned for twelve years...He bought the hill of Samaria...he fortified the hill, and called the city that he built, Samaria...Omri did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; he did more evil than all who were before him. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam...and in the sins that he caused Israel to commit, provoking the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols.”

King Ahab, we are told, is the worst of the worst in 1 Kings 16:29-33, “...Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years...Ahab son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him. And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, he took as his wife Jezebel daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. Ahab also made a sacred pole. Ahab did more to provoke the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than had all the kings of Israel who were before him.” 1 Kings 21:25 concludes, “There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited.”

This haunting historical backdrop sets the stage for the entrance of Elijah. According to a Bible commentator, “The prophet Elijah prophesied to Israel, the northern kingdom, during the tumultuous reigns of King Ahab (874–53 bc) and King Ahaziah (853–32 bc).”<sup>1</sup>

Most of what we know about Elijah is found in 1 Kings 17 and the report of his spiritual war against King Ahab and his demonic wife Jezebel. Elijah was a prophet with a prophetic name that foreshadowed his ministry. Eli means

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strength of the Lord, and Jah means my God is Jehovah. Together, Elijah means “I live by the strength of the Lord my God”. Simply stated, the Holy Spirit sustained Elijah to live beyond his natural limitations to live a supernatural life. We will study that next as we learn about this battle between a true prophet and 850 false prophets.

### Elijah, A True Prophet

Elijah is called a prophet repeatedly.<sup>a</sup> Elijah is clearly a true prophet empowered by the Holy Spirit, and he is in spiritual battle against the unholy spirits working through the 850 false prophets of Baal and Asherah who work for King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. The Jezebel spirit at work in the days of the New Testament also claims to be a prophet but is in fact a false prophet according to Jesus Christ, who says in Revelation 2:20-21, “I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.” Elijah is a true prophet working with other true prophets, and Jezebel is a false prophetess working with false prophets.

Elijah’s ministry begins by predicting a three-year drought<sup>b</sup>, which he later prophesies the end of.<sup>c</sup> Elijah also foretells the death of Ahaziah<sup>d</sup>, and a plague from God as judgment in the days when Jehoram reigned as king of Israel.<sup>e</sup> God does supernatural miracles for and through Elijah, including multiplying flour and oil for the widow who houses him, and raising her son from the

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 18:22, 36; Malachi 4:5; Matthew 16:14; Mark 6:15, 8:28; Luke 9:8,19; John 1:21, 25 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 17:1 <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 18:41-46 <sup>d</sup> 2 Kings 1:2-17 <sup>e</sup> 2 Chronicles 21:12-15

dead.<sup>a</sup> Elijah predicts the judgment and gruesome death on the family of Ahab, including his wife Jezebel which comes to pass as promised.<sup>b</sup> Elijah also receives the “word of the Lord which gives him divine authority to speak for God”.<sup>c</sup> We are also told that Elijah obeys the word of God, and commands others to do the same. Others recognize Elijah’s relationship with the word of God, including the widow who says, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth”.<sup>d</sup>

In the history of Israel, the northern kingdom, there were no descendants of David who ruled as king, and none of their kings was godly or righteous. In contrast, eight of Judah’s kings in the south were godly and righteous. By the days of Elijah, the northern kingdom was completely overrun by a demonic counterfeit. The demonic kings did not want God’s people to travel to the real temple in Jerusalem, and so they established two counterfeit temples with golden calves as the object of worship. This was a direct violation of the Second Commandment, which God gave His people who were guilty of worshipping a golden calf in the days of Moses. This syncretism infuriated God.

### Syncretism and Apostasy

One Bible dictionary says, “The term syncretism is used by anthropologists and historians to refer to the blending of religious beliefs...As the two groups interact, members of one group may begin to assimilate aspects of the religious beliefs of the other, resulting in a transformation of the traditional religion. For Christians throughout history, the notion of syncretism

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 17:17-24 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 21:20-24; 2 Kings 9-10 <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 17:1 <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 17:24



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has had largely negative connotations and is sometimes associated with heresy. This is due to the fact that assimilation is often perceived as a departure from the purity of the original.”<sup>2</sup>

The result of syncretism is apostasy. Apostasy is, “A public denial of a previously held religious belief and a distancing from the community that holds to it. The term is almost always applied pejoratively, carrying connotations of rebellion, betrayal, treachery, or faithlessness.”<sup>3</sup>

Today, syncretism and apostasy are tragically widespread. The dirty streams of wokeism, deconstructionism, and socialism are continually trying to flow into Christian churches and pulpits. Cults keep trying to add their books to the canon of Scripture. Social justice warriors keep trying to get their godless agendas (often for redefining sex, marriage, and gender) to be virtue signaled with rainbow flags hanging on church buildings. Tolerance and diversity advocates are constantly pressuring Christians to worship and pray with other religions, spiritualities, and ideologies, thereby erasing any lines separating darkness and light.

The God of the Bible demands to be worshipped in the way that pleases Him. The God of the Bible does not permit worshippers to worship in the way that pleases them. At the bottom of all syncretism and apostasy is one simple question – will you worship God how He wants, or how you want? To help you learn about, and be discerning of good versus evil, in the next chapter we will learn more about the Ahab and Jezebel spirits. These powerful demonic forces were at work in the days of Elijah, and continue doing evil in our day.

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# CHAPTER 2

## The Ahab and Jezebel Spirits

When King Ahab married Jezebel, she was young, beautiful, sensual, and pure evil. Their marriage united the kingdoms of Israel and Tyre and welcomed the demonic into Israel. Jezebel's father was the Sidonian King Ethbaal.<sup>o</sup> The ancient historian "Josephus, drawing his information from the historian Menander, states that Ithobalus, an alternate form of the name Ethbaal, was a priest of Astarte who gained the throne by assassinating Pheles, king of Tyre..."<sup>4</sup>

Jezebel's father's name literally means "with Baal", and "enjoying his favour and protection".<sup>5</sup>

Jezebel was born into a completely demonic family under a generational curse with a father who was with Baal and worshipped Asherah as a pagan priest (Astarte is another name for Asherah). This explains why she quickly used her position as queen of Israel to destroy the worship of the real God and demand the worship of demonic counterfeit deities.

Jezebel was a fiercely independent woman, adept at controlling and manipulating her passive husband, King Ahab. In the spirit of modern-day feminism, Jezebel's name means, "un-husbanded", which explains her complete disregard for her husband as she seeks to unseat and usurp in order to be the head of their marriage

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<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings 16:31

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and household.<sup>6</sup>

Instead of being married to her husband, Jezebel's highest allegiance and authority was the demon Baal. The name Jezebel is, "perhaps derived from Phoenician name meaning 'Baal is the prince.'"<sup>7</sup>

Jezebel had a Temple (along with numerous other shrines and worship sites) built in Israel devoted to the worship of the demonic counterfeit god Ashtoreth (also called Ashtart or Astarte). She also funded 450 demonic counterfeit priests for Baal, considered the king of demons, as well as 400 priests for Ashtoreth, considered the mother queen of demons.<sup>a</sup> The large demonic temple in Samaria was often filled with overflowing crowds of worshippers, as Ahab and Jezebel had the altars (worship centers like churches today) torn down and replaced with shrines and temples to demons masquerading as gods and goddesses.

True believers and God's prophets were persecuted and killed, Bible teaching schools for the prophets were closed, and biblical faith was on its death bed in Israel. The same demonic spirits are at work today seeking to close the church, control the education of children, and cancel any Spirit-filled Bible preacher who would dare speak out as Elijah did. The godly Obadiah hid a few remaining prophets of God in the limestone caves of Carmel, feeding and protecting them at the risk of his own life. There were only 7,000 Spirit-filled leaders who had not "bowed to Baal".<sup>b</sup> Elijah was unaware that he was not alone but still stood up against everything and everyone opposed to God.

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<sup>a</sup>1 Kings 18:19 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 19:17-19

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### Baal and Asherah

In the days of Elijah, King Ahab was the embodiment of the demon Baal, and his wife Jezebel was the embodiment of the demon Ashtoreth. This couple literally worshipped these demons, funding and promoting their worship in Israel.<sup>o</sup>

Ashtoreth or Asherah (also known as Venus) is the Canaanite goddess of fertility and sex, often worshipped with her male counterpart Baal, with sex being part of their cultic worship. They were considered king and queen of the “gods” or demons. It was believed they had an intense sexual relationship and liked to be worshipped by people having sex without any limitations. Uncovered ancient monuments to Asherah show her in lewd terms with large breasts. As early pornography, Asherah plaques uncovered by archaeologists explain, “She is always naked and her...[private anatomical part]...is always very well articulated.”<sup>8</sup> Worship sites built by Jezebel to Ashtoreth included “poles” that were male phallic symbols used to advertise sexual sin of all kinds at these demonic worship sites, “the sacred pole erected as her symbol (1 Kgs. 16:33, 2 Kgs. 13:6).”<sup>9</sup>

Mentioned repeatedly throughout the Old Testament, Baal (usually worshipped with Ashtoreth) was a constant threat to holiness among God’s people. Just like our day that has landmarks, icons, and signs to let people know where churches and businesses are, this sex cult had large poles put in the ground atop high places as phallic symbols to let everyone know where to go to find the most sinister sex. 2 Kings 9:22 summarizes all of this speaking of, “...the whorings and the sorceries of...Jezebel”.

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<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings 18:19

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She was one of many ancient demons considered the “holy ones” or sacred prostitutes, and idols representing her were often nude and pornographic. God commanded his people to stop sinning at these places, and instead tear them down and burn everything related to it.<sup>a</sup>

Baal was considered by the godless Canaanites to be the god of storms, rain, and the highest-ranking demon in the unseen realm. The fact that Elijah prayed to His God to stop the rain, and it did not rain for three years, was seen as clear defeat of Baal.<sup>b</sup> He was worshipped for fertility to crops, animals, and people. This demon was worshipped through sex, and temples devoted to him included uninhibited sex. The worship of Baal included child sacrifice in what were the demonic prototypes for Planned Parenthood clinics.<sup>c</sup> Baal appears by a variety of names, including Chemosh, which was the name used by the Moabites.<sup>d</sup> A Bible dictionary says, “Together with his wife, Jezebel, Ahab and his successors made Baal worship the national religion of Israel. The people worshiped various Canaanite deities alongside the worship of Yahweh as represented by two golden calves (1 Kgs 12:28). However, when Ahab married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon, the couple established Baal worship (1 Kgs 16:30–31), and even persecuted those who worshiped Yahweh as prescribed by the Law (1 Kgs 19:10).”<sup>10</sup>

The same Bible dictionary also says, “Together, the demonic counterfeit worship of Ashtoreth and Baal included all of the various lesser-known demons and occultic activities opposing worship of the only true Creator God. It often appears that Baal worship in the Old Testament is a catch-all description of either non-

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<sup>a</sup> Deuteronomy 7:5, 12:3; 2 Kings 18:4, 23:6; Judges 6:25–30; Micah 5:14

<sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17 <sup>c</sup> 2 Kings 3:27 <sup>d</sup> Numbers 21:9

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Yahwistic, Canaanite worship or non-sanctioned religious practice. The case is similar with Asherah, a female deity..."<sup>11</sup>

### The Passive Ahab Spirit

We learn several things about Ahab throughout Scripture. First, Ahab is a counterfeit of Jesus Christ, ruling over a completely demonic kingdom, fully devoted to evil. Second, Ahab and his counterfeit religious leaders have supernatural powers, not unlike Pharaoh in the days of Moses. Third, people live either by the Spirit, flesh, or demonic according to the repeated teaching of the New Testament and the depth of evil in the life of Ahab is truly demonic. Fourth, Ahab's wife Jezebel is clearly demonically empowered, as we have already established, and so they are a demonic couple aligned for evil. Fifth, in 1 Kings 16:29-33, we are told that Ahab, "did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him... took as his wife Jezebel...and served Baal, and worshiped him. He erected an altar for Baal...Ahab also made a sacred pole. Ahab did more to provoke the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than had all the kings of Israel who were before him." The word "evil" is the same word used to explain the spirit that tormented King Saul.<sup>°</sup> Sixth, Ahab<sup>b</sup> and his wife Jezebel<sup>c</sup> are clearly stated to have worshipped false gods. Seventh, 1 Kings 21:25 says, "There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab..." This language strongly indicates that Ahab made a proverbial "deal with the devil" and sold his soul into the service of Satan, much like Judas Iscariot would many years later. In summary, Ahab is not just a man, but an evil man empowered by an

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<sup>°</sup> 1 Samuel 16:14,15,26, 23; 18:10, 19:9 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 18:24 <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 19:2

unholy spirit.

Continuing the story of Ahab, a theologian explains he was a godless king who allowed Jezebel, his wife, to usurp his authority saying, “The Ahab spirit causes men to be weak as leaders in the home and church (Isa. 3:12). This spirit works with fear of Jezebel to prevent God’s order in the home and the church. The result is the destruction of the family priesthood. This is a curse that must be broken before Ahab spirits can be driven out. The curse of Jezebel opens the door for these spirits to operate in a family.”<sup>12</sup>

### The Controlling Jezebel Spirit

The Jezebel spirit was at work roughly a thousand years after the actual woman died, doing the very same things in the church at Thyatira that she did in Israel – preaching and teaching lies and false doctrine, encouraging sexual immorality, attacking godly leaders (especially Bible teachers operating with a prophetic anointing to preach truth and call sinful darkness to light), and tolerating and celebrating instead of repenting of sin.<sup>o</sup> The Holy Spirit of Elijah, and the unholy Jezebel spirit continue to work and war in the world today. The same is true of the unholy Ahab spirit.

Speaking of the demonic Jezebel spirit, a spiritual warfare manual says, “The spirit of Jezebel causes wives to forsake the covering of their husbands. It is a Hebrew name meaning untouched, untouchable, non-cohabiting, without husband, adulterous, base, licentious. This spirit is characterized by domination, control, and manipulation of the husband instead of submission to his authority. The spirit of Jezebel also operates in the church with spirits

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<sup>o</sup> Revelation 2:18-29



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of seduction, fornication, and idolatry (Rev. 2:20). It works with the Ahab spirit in men but hates the Elijah spirit (Mal. 4:5–6). It is a very religious spirit and loves to operate in the church. This spirit has been known to operate in both males and females. Jezebel was very religious and a devout high priestess of Baal. Athaliah (2 Kings 11:1)—daughter of Ahab and Jezebel who married into the royal family of Judah. She had the same spirit as her mother in usurping authority in the kingdom of Judah, an example of how this spirit is transferred from Jezebellic mothers to their daughters. These spirits also operate through curses of destruction of family priesthood, destruction of family, and Ahab and Jezebel.”<sup>13</sup>

Adding the story of Ahab, it goes on to explain he was a godless king who allowed Jezebel, his wife, to usurp his authority, “The Ahab spirit causes men to be weak as leaders in the home and church (Isa. 3:12). This spirit works with fear of Jezebel to prevent God’s order in the home and the church. The result is the destruction of the family priesthood. This is a curse that must be broken before Ahab spirits can be driven out. The curse of Jezebel opens the door for these spirits to operate in a family.”<sup>14</sup>

The Ahab and Jezebel spirit feed off one another. The Ahab spirit avoids conflict, disagreement, and confrontation. The Ahab spirit is often most entrenched in a person who is insecure, needy, and struggles with “fear of man.”<sup>o</sup> This causes their passivity. Sometimes, a shy personality, bad upbringing, or unhealed trauma can make their passivity even more severe. A person with the Ahab spirit is particularly vulnerable to someone with the Jezebel spirit. Because the Jezebel spirit is controlling, domineering, and rules by threat, fear, sexual seduction, and punishment or reward depending upon whether they

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<sup>o</sup> Proverbs 29:25

## NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

are obeyed, a person with the Jezebel spirit can easily rule over someone with the Ahab spirit forever, unless they are stood up to, which is exactly what Elijah did. Someone with the Elijah Spirit (the Holy Spirit of God) is particularly hated by the Jezebel spirit because they refuse to tolerate evil. Whenever there is tolerance of, working around, and making excuses for Jezebel, you know the Ahab spirit is at work.

# CHAPTER 3

Personal and Group Study Guide for  
1 Kings 17-2 Kings 2

New Days, Old Demons: A Prophetic Word about  
Progressive Wokeness

NOTES

NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

A STUDY OF ELIJAH

## **Are the Elijah, Ahab, and Jezebel Spirits Active Today?**

**Scripture to Read:** 1 Kings 17:1-7

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *James 5:17-18 (NLT) – Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops.*

### **Commentary:**

In the midst of dark and demonic decline, one man stepped onto the stage of history from prior obscurity. We are not told about Elijah's parents, upbringing, education, or much of anything else. All we are told is that he was from "Tishbe in Gilead". Tishbe is apparently such a small ancient town that, to this day, we don't know exactly where it was. Elijah started as literally a no one from nowhere. His name means, "My God is Yahweh".

Gilead is a region known as a remote place of refuge. It was home to rugged mountain men who enjoyed the privacy of the desolate and rocky hill country. The people living there generally lacked social etiquette and educational credibility. There is a television show called "Alone" where outdoor survivalists are dropped into remote areas utterly alone with only a few items. They must build shelter, obtain water, hunt food, and manage a fire to remain alive. The person who can endure this rugged lifestyle the longest without tapping out emotionally or physically each season is declared the winner. Elijah would have won this show. He was a rugged mountain man and looked every bit the part. 2 Kings 1:7 describes the reported sighting of Elijah the unpolished prophet: "He said to them, 'What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?' They

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answered him, 'He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist.' And he said, 'It is Elijah the Tishbite.'" In many ways, Elijah and his successor many years later, John the Baptizer, are brothers in spiritual battle. Matthew 3:4 reports, "John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey."

How Elijah got a meeting with the evil king Ahab we will never know. A man of few words, he makes it clear that a battle is brewing between the powerful demon Baal worshipped by Ahab, and the One True God, "the LORD, the God of Israel." Like Jesus who would later stop a storm by the sheer power of His word, Elijah prophecies that rain will not fall for three years when he will pray to God for rain to fall again. A man of few words, God has Elijah openly and publicly starting a fight with Baal, who was worshipped as the god of rain who was believed to control the seasons, crops, and fertility. In addition to prophesying, James tells us that his power came from also praying.<sup>o</sup>

We are then told that "the word of the Lord came to him" which is a common refrain in the Bible. According to the OT scholar Gerhard von Rad the phrase "the word of Yahweh" appears 241 times in the OT, 221 in relation to a prophet. Ahab could and should have repented of his sin and received the Word of the Lord, but instead, like King Pharaoh before him, King Ahab hardened his heart against God and sought to put the prophet to death for commanding him to put his sin to death.

For the prophets, the Word of God was the highest authority and allegiance. This explains why Elijah immediately obeyed the word of the Lord, awaiting further instructions from the Lord. This time in solitude was a

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<sup>o</sup> James 5:17-18

blessing from God. This time of separation was for Elijah's protection and preparation, much like Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness<sup>a</sup> and Paul's three years in the wilderness.<sup>b</sup>

Curiously, we are told that God sent Elijah to "Cherith". That name can mean either to "cut off" or to "cut down". Both happened to Elijah at Cherith.

First, Elijah was cut off from the rest of society in solitude. There is a major difference between isolation and solitude. Isolation is bad for us, as we are avoiding the people and circumstances God has called us to, which causes us to be unwell because it is not good to be alone, as God said.<sup>c</sup> Solitude, however, is where we separated from people for a period so that we can be present with God in a more-focused and less-distracted way. This is precisely what Elijah was doing – he was not alone, he was alone with God which is clarifying, healing, and strengthening. Jesus, we are told numerous times in the four gospels "withdrew", often from crowds. Luke 5:16 (NIV) says, "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

Second, Elijah was cut down. In the military, the best way to build a soldier is to first break a person down then rebuild them prepared for battle. This process starts in bootcamp. Cherith was Elijah's spiritual boot camp. God both cut him off and would cut him down before building him back up for increasingly intense spiritual battles.

God supernaturally sustained Elijah. Like the Israelites who wandered in the wilderness for forty years, God provided him bread. Apparently, a raven (curiously an unclean bird in the Old Covenant according to Leviticus 11:13-15) was the first at-home food delivery company bringing bread and meat daily.

Eventually, the lack of rain caused even the brook Elijah drank from to dry up as crisis had hit the nation

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<sup>a</sup> Matthew 4:1-2 <sup>b</sup> Galatians 1:17-18 <sup>c</sup> Genesis 2:18



## A STUDY OF ELIJAH

under God's judgment. We are simply told, "the brook dried up".<sup>o</sup> This is a complete crisis, as the entire nation is under the judgment for sin as a reminder of the universal curse everyone is under because of sin. A person can go a few weeks without food, but only a few days without water, especially in a desert climate. Everything from crops to animals and people would be dying slowly and painfully. God is patient, but His judgment is certain. During this entire time, Ahab did not repent and so it did not rain.

At points in our life, we all have our brook dry up. The business that paid us goes broke, the church that we loved falls apart, the marriage we committed to comes to an end, the city we've lived in is no longer our home, etc.

What is perhaps most surprising about Elijah is that he was an ordinary person that God used in an extraordinary way. Elijah was not a superhero with special powers, but a mere mortal like the rest of us. James 5:17 (NLT) says, "Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years!" In the next section, we will see this miracle occur.

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. What do you learn about God's sovereign power and control in this account?
2. The account of Elijah begins with the authority of the Word of God. Look up the following verses to learn more about the Word of God: Isaiah 40:7-8; Psalm 119:1-16; Proverbs 30:5-6; John 1:1-18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12.
3. Elijah obeyed God's Word. Is there anything the group can be praying for you about to grow in

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<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings 17:7

obedience to God's Word?

**Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. Take a few minutes to introduce yourself and share what you are looking forward to in studying the life of Elijah.
2. What is the most surprising thing you've learned so far in the beginning of this study of Elijah? What has the Holy Spirit highlighted for you to remember?
3. When have you had your brook dry up? How did you respond and what can you learn from Elijah's response to his brook drying up?

**NOTES**

A STUDY OF ELIJAH

NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

## Does God Perform Miracles Today?

**Scripture to Read:** 1 Kings 17:8-24

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *Luke 4:24-26 – [Jesus] said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.”*

### **Commentary:**

In this section of Scripture, the life of Elijah intersects with a very poor widow and her son. To spare his life, as Ahab and Jezebel are determined to hunt him down and end his life, God sends His faithful prophet into a season of separation for preparation. Sometimes, preparation for what God has planned next in our life requires separation from the normal routine we are accustomed to. We tend to listen better and learn more when our life is disrupted, and those seasons that can cause us frustration or even anxiety are often God’s divine disruptions to prepare us for what He knows is coming next in our life.

We are told that God sent Elijah to “Zarephath”, which means to melt or smelt, as one would a metal. Apparently, it was a place where metals were melted and smelted down, so that impurities rose to the top to be removed, leaving only the most precious and pure metal. This process requires a lot of heat and pressure, and God was purifying and preparing Elijah spiritually for both in his spiritual war with Ahab and Jezebel.

What is surprising about the scene is that God sends His Jewish prophet, traveling likely by foot, around 100

miles through rugged terrain while on the Most Wanted list of King Ahab, to live with a very poor Gentile woman and her son. Elijah was called to a city that was the very center of Asherah worship. This seems like the last place the prophet should go, but he goes in obedience to God's command. God knows where Elijah is, comes to him, and tells him where to go. This same God knows where you are, will speak to you, and knows when and where you should go in the future. This reveals God's ruling over everyone and everything and complete knowledge of every aspect of your life. His ways often do not make sense to us but, like Elijah, the key is to obey in faith until we see by sight that God knows what He's doing.

Returning to the story, the poor woman could not feed her child, let alone herself, and taking on the burden of housing and feeding this man (Elijah) indefinitely seemed like a lot to ask. One Bible commentary says, "...surprisingly to Western minds, he says that the first loaf is *for me*, and then *for yourself and your son* (v. 13). The time-honoured practice of Middle Eastern and Central Asian hospitality is to feed the guest, even if one's own family goes without. God's gracious provision means that she does not have to shut her eyes to the stranger who seeks hospitality."<sup>15</sup>

This poor, widowed woman is a model of humility, generosity, and hospitality. God rewarded her. By blessing God's servant, God would serve and bless her. Years later, Jesus would honor this woman even further by using her as an example of faith and God's heart for those who are poor, outcast, and often overlooked.<sup>a</sup>

By a miracle provision of God's grace, reminiscent of how He provided manna in the wilderness for 40 years, sustaining His people day by day<sup>b</sup>, there was food every

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<sup>a</sup> Luke 4:23-30 <sup>b</sup> Exodus 16; John 6:30-32

## A STUDY OF ELIJAH

day in the form of flour and oil. Suddenly, her burden became her blessing, as the presence of this man of God in her home also brought the presence of God into her home. Much like the little boy who would later give his lunch to Jesus, this woman saw the little she had miraculously multiplied. God revealed Himself to her in her kitchen, as our humble God often shows up in the most ordinary places to meet with us.

In this lesson, we learn that God is to be trusted one day at a time. Faith allows us to sleep at night, believing that the God who got us through that day will get us through the next.

Suddenly and tragically, her son then died. Hurting, the woman who literally had no one and nothing but her son blames it on Elijah saying in 2 Kings 17:18, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!” It’s comforting to see that Elijah does not take or make this insult personal. Sometimes, people are overwhelmed, struggling, and just need grace for saying what was out of line. She sadly thinks that because of some sin in her life, God punished her by killing her child. If she understood the gospel, she would know that the Son of God was punished for sin so that she and her son would not have to be.

For reasons we will never know, Elijah the prophet takes the son upstairs, lays him down, and stretches himself over the son three times, which would have made him “unclean”.<sup>a</sup> Elijah loudly prayed for God to bring this dead son back to life, and you can envision both he and the widow in tears pleading with God for a miracle. In prayer, Elijah, “...cried to the LORD, ‘O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?’”<sup>b</sup> Even the godliest people

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<sup>a</sup> Luke 4:23–30 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 17:20

and greatest theologians still have many questions when faced with painful human suffering. The scene is heartbreaking and hopeful. They are praying for a miracle, just as we should be praying for miracles.

God does not answer Elijah's question, but He does answer Elijah's prayer. God then does His second miracle in this scene and raises the boy from the dead. Up until this point, there is no record in the Bible of someone being raised from the dead. Of course, the raising of the widow's only son foreshadowed the raising of God's only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In the lengthiest chapter in the Bible regarding resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15, Paul begins by explaining Jesus' resurrection, then promising the future hope of all Christians joining their risen Christ with eternal life.

This scene reports two miracles, the renewing of flour and oil, and the raising of a son. These are miracles. A miracle is, "An event that defies common expectations of behavior and subsequently is attributed to a superhuman agent; an occurrence that demonstrates God's involvement in human affairs."<sup>16</sup>

A miracle occurs when God overrides natural laws and does what is often described in the Bible as a "wonder" that is otherwise impossible. Those with an atheistic view of the world as a closed system devoid of God are naturalists. Christians, in contrast, are supernaturalists. The entire storyline of the Bible is built upon God creating everything and everyone out of nothing.<sup>o</sup> The Bible often refers to a miracle as a "sign" that points to the Kingdom of God. Before sin entered the world, and after Jesus returns to raise the dead and lift the curse, the Kingdom of God will have no sickness or death.

Miracles are signs that point us forward in faith to

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<sup>o</sup> Genesis 1-2; Hebrews 11:3



## A STUDY OF ELIJAH

the Kingdom of God ruled by our miracle working King Jesus! That is precisely what we see in this scene. God's miracles of providing their daily bread, as Jesus prayed, and raising the dead, as Jesus did, point them and us to the King and Kingdom. God can and does do miracles today! This is why believers pray for everything from people to be saved, bodies to be healed, provision to be given, and even the dead to be raised. Why? Because God is free to do whatever He wishes, and no one can stop His will from coming to pass. There is a theological belief called "cessationism", which basically says that the supernatural gifts and outpouring of miracles ceased (with possible rare exception), at or very soon after the days of the apostles. I have never held this position, or understood it, and find it to lead to a downplaying of both the supernatural godly and demonic events in the Bible, as well as providing a less-than-clear picture of God.

Lastly, the widow gets the final words, respectfully assigning two titles to Elijah. One, he is called a "man of God", a title he will later also use in reference to himself.<sup>a</sup> Two, he is called a prophet as, "the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth".<sup>b</sup> In the next scene, we witness this courageous man of God delivering the Word of God to Ahab and Jezebel.

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15 to learn more about resurrection, and how Jesus' resurrection will lead to your resurrection just like the widow's son.
2. There are two miracles reported in this scene – the provision of daily food for bread and the raising of a dead son. Elijah and the widow both witnessed these signs. Which miracles in the Bible do you wish

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<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings 1:10 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 17:24

## NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

- you had been present for? Why?
3. Look up the other occasions where someone was raised from the dead before Jesus' resurrection. One is connected to Elisha, who succeeded Elijah (2 Kings 4:18-37). The other happens when a man is thrown into Elisha's grave (2 Kings 13:20-21).
  4. If you want to dig deeper into living by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, go to [RealFaith.com](http://RealFaith.com) and listen to the series *Spirit-Filled Jesus* or get the book *Spirit-Filled Jesus* from the store.

### **Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. Have you ever had a difficult season where you wrongly blamed God or someone else for your suffering, as this woman did? How comforting is it to see God and Elijah's loving, compassionate, and helpful response?
2. Have you ever seen a miracle or know of a person who has experienced one?
3. This woman was reunited with her son. Who are you most looking forward to being reunited with in the Kingdom of God upon the resurrection of the dead?

## NOTES

A STUDY OF ELIJAH

NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

**How Can We Stand Against the Ahab and Jezebel Spirits Today?**

**Scripture to Read:** 1 Kings 18:1-19

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *Deuteronomy 11:16–17 – Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the Lord is giving you.*

**Commentary:**

After three long years of drought, without any rain in Israel, the time had come for God to defeat the demonic spirits working through Ahab and Jezebel. So, God spoke yet again to Elijah, commanding his servant to personally tell King Ahab that God was going to send rain.

Importantly, we see that Elijah does nothing but pray and wait until God tells him the time for action has come. In this, we learn the importance of knowing both God’s will and God’s timing.

For Elijah, confronting Ahab was risking his life. Like his predecessor John the Baptizer many years later, the king had been hunting for his head. To arrive at the palace uninvited could easily have made him a martyr. Elijah’s obedience shows his deep faith, which allowed him to overcome understandable fear.

Entering the story in this scene is another man named Obadiah who, “feared the LORD greatly”<sup>a</sup> and says, “I... have feared the LORD from my youth.”<sup>b</sup> This Obadiah was apparently a wealthy and powerful man, but not the

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 18:3 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 18:12

same prophet with a book of the Bible named after them. Obadiah holds an administrative position in the godless government, much like Joseph, Daniel, and Nehemiah. With the decree of Jezebel to kill God's prophets and replace them with the 850 demonic prophets devoted to Baal and Asherah, Obadiah courageously kept 100 godly prophets alive in a cave, feeding and providing for them (much like God had preserved, provided for, and prepared the prophet Elijah when he was alone in Cherith, and with the widow and her son in Zarepath). All of this was done in a fashion that resembles modern day "underground churches" that meet privately in defiance of the godless government that outlaws the worship of Jesus Christ.

In God's providence, Elijah and Obadiah's paths cross. Obadiah recognizes the eccentric mountain man and immediately fears for his life. Elijah is the most wanted man in Israel, likely with a hefty bounty on his head. Elijah gives a ministry assignment to Obadiah that could cost him his life – go tell Ahab that Elijah is coming for a fight! Obadiah responds first with fear, but then with faith. Obadiah is a godly man but still was human and imperfect like the rest of us. Like Obadiah, fear will come upon us, but we need to not let it in us. Counselors tell us that the best way to overcome fear is to run at it rather than away from it. Obadiah fears Ahab, but since he loves the Lord more than he fears the king, Obadiah runs to the same Ahab he had been previously running from in faith.

Elijah promises that he would be at the palace within hours of the announcement, and that "the LORD of hosts" is involved. Working with and through Ahab and Jezebel, along with their 850 false prophets, are numerous demons. In contrast, the Lord of hosts is, "A phrase describing Yahweh's role as the Lord of the heavenly armies, the commander of the cosmic forces, the head of the divine council, and the leader of Israel's army..."

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The phrase ‘Lord of Hosts’ communicates God’s role as a warrior who fights both in the cosmic conflict against divine forces and through human historical events for His people, Israel. The phrase appears 285 times in the Old Testament...”<sup>17</sup>

As believers, we eventually find ourselves in the same position as Elijah, admittedly with less at stake. Someone has a problem with God, and God has a problem with them. We are caught in the middle and when we take God’s side, they declare war on us as their enemy and the source of the problem. This is precisely the spiritual war playing out as interpersonal conflict between Ahab and Elijah. Ahab worshipped the demon god Baal, who was believed to rule the rain. Yet, it had not rained for three years and, “the famine was severe”.<sup>a</sup> Businesses, crops, animals, and people had died in large numbers. Every day was a funeral for the entire nation of Israel because of the sin of their head, Ahab. Just as Adam’s sin as our head brought death to all mankind, so Ahab’s sin brought death to all under his leadership. However, he was so selfish that he could not even consider that he was the problem and that if he humbly repented, the real God would send the rain and bless the people. He cared nothing for God or others, the very two things Jesus told us to love. Instead, Ahab blames Elijah and God, calling him, “troubler of Israel”. The word “troubler” is sometimes translated, “asp”, or “viper”, or basically a serpent like Satan.<sup>18</sup>

Satan is referred to as the “deceiver”.<sup>b</sup> Perhaps the worst deception is self-deception. A person who is self-deceived reinterprets everything in their life in terms of a lie. They lose touch with reality and constantly see themselves as the victim, even blame shifting to innocent

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 18:2 <sup>b</sup> Genesis 3:13; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14; Revelation 12:9

## NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

people, wrongly accusing them of doing evil. Like Ahab, deceived people are villains but only see themselves as victims.

There is a partial truth in Ahab's words that Elijah is a "troubler". The problem with the Church today is that being nice seems to be the only criteria for leadership. If a leader acts like everyone is Jesus and every day is Christmas, is smiling and encouraging, and never causes any trouble, we think they are godly. The truth is, sometimes the godliest people cause some holy trouble.

God had clearly promised that drought would come unless sin came to an end.<sup>a</sup> Therefore, none of this should have been a surprise to anyone, including Ahab. He was willfully defying God and ignoring the Word of God.

Elijah once again calls Ahab to reality and repentance boldly saying, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baals."<sup>b</sup> In Elijah's example, we learn that God's people are to be His messengers, not His editors. When God has something to say, especially when it is in the Word of God, we can have fear of man<sup>c</sup> instead of fear of the Lord<sup>d</sup>, wrongly choosing to remain silent or say something other than what God has said. At some point, people will ask questions like, "Am I going to Hell if I don't believe in Jesus Christ?" or "So God thinks I'm a sinner that needs to repent of my sin to be forgiven?" or "So the Bible is right, and I am wrong about my progressive beliefs about gender and sex?" and probably won't like the answers. With love, we must look them in the eye and say, "yes". When people and God disagree, the issue is not if we will get in trouble, but who we will get in trouble with. We can either say what God says and get in trouble with the

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<sup>a</sup> Deuteronomy 11:16-17 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 18:18 <sup>c</sup> Proverbs 29:25 <sup>d</sup> Proverbs 1:7



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person or say what the person wants to hear and get in trouble with God.

For Elijah, there had to be a tremendous temptation. If he aligned with Ahab, the bounty on his head would be lifted and he would be treated like a king in Israel living in luxury with fame and fortune, but he would have lost God's anointing and become a false prophet. This moment was a bit like the day when Jesus and Satan came face-to-face, and Jesus was offered all the pleasures of the world in an instant if He would just bow down the King of Darkness.

The fight will take place on "Mount Carmel", which the Canaanites believed was a place where their demon gods ruled from in power. Baal was worshipped as the god of crops in a barren land, god of rain during a severe drought, and god of the sun or fire, which would not come down for him, as we will learn in the next scene of this supernatural story.

Lastly, a soldier will tell you that the toughest fight is battling someone on their home turf, and that is exactly how this spiritual war is going to play out. The fight will be between one of God's prophets, Elijah, and the 450 demonic prophets of Baal, along with the 400 demonic prophets of Asherah. In a fight, 850 versus one is not good odds, unless God is on your side.

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. Look up the following Scriptures to learn more about spiritual warfare, which is the focus of this scene of Elijah's life: Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 John 4:1-6.
2. How is the battle in Elijah's day a repeat of the war in Heaven? (Revelation 12:7-9)
3. What parallels do you see between Elijah's battle and Jesus'? (Luke 4:1-14)

## NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

### **Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. What do you learn about Elijah's prayer, and the power of your prayers, in light of James 5:17-18?
2. Who has had the courage to tell you a hard truth, like Elijah did Ahab?
3. Who in your life has God called you to tell a hard truth to? How and when will you deliver that news?

### **NOTES**

A STUDY OF ELIJAH

**Do Powerful Demons Run Religion and Government  
Through False Prophets?**

**Scripture to Read:** 1 Kings 18:20-40

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *Romans 11:2-5 – Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” But what is God’s reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.*

**Commentary:**

The battle in Israel, just like the war in Heaven<sup>o</sup>, was over who got to sit on a throne. Isaiah 14:13-14 says of Satan and demons, “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’”

The demonic king Ahab sat on David’s throne in Israel. God had been very clear that David’s throne was under His throne, as well as several traits regarding those who sat on David’s throne:

- Had to be a Hebrew who married a Hebrew
- Lived in obedience to the Word of God in the fear of the Lord
- Guarded his heart from the false trinity of greed, pride, and pleasure
- Cared for God’s children with the love that he had for

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<sup>o</sup> Revelation 12:7-9

## A STUDY OF ELIJAH

his own children

- Led the nation in singular devotion to the Lord<sup>a</sup>

Ahab did exactly the opposite of everything God commanded. Ahab was not God and, unless he was a servant of God, the real God would remove him from the throne. Amid the Elijah story, 1 Kings 22 reports this two-throne truth. The first thrones are occupied by the rulers of the northern and southern kingdoms, “Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes”.<sup>b</sup> The second throne is revealed to be God’s throne in the unseen realm ruling over all thrones in the seen realm, “I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left”.<sup>c</sup>

The battle at Mount Carmel was ultimately spiritual warfare between God’s throne on earth, and whether He would permit Satan to occupy it through Ahab and Jezebel. The scene is very public, as this is an evangelistic moment. Elijah does not speak much to the false prophets. Instead, he speaks to the fearful people. In that day, many of God’s people were apostate, lukewarm, and living compromised lives. They saw the religious schools closed and religious leaders killed, so they decided to dilute their faith rather than destroy their life. The same is true in every day, including our own. Like Billy Graham at an old school crusade, Elijah was calling the people to a decision saying, “‘...If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.’ And the people did not answer him a word.”<sup>d</sup>

The people did not answer, because they wanted to see who won the fight before they declared their allegiance. They were living by sight, not by faith. However, God graciously and patiently pursues them as He does

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<sup>a</sup> Deuteronomy 17:14–20 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 22:10 <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 22:19 <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 18:21

us. In this scene, we learn some important lesson about evangelism.

First, our faith is to be public and not private. Since God is Lord over our public and private lives, our worship of Him and witness for Him must be both private and public.

Second, some people come to saving faith through persuasion and others through power. Those who come to faith through persuasion typically have a lot of questions and objections to be answered. Those who come to faith through power typically see God show up and do some sort of supernatural miracle that proves to them, through experience, that God is real. In this scene of Elijah's evangelistic ministry, the people will need to see God's power to convert. Like any battle, the terms are publicly stated so that the winner is obvious in the end, "...you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God."<sup>a</sup>

The 850 demonic false prophets of Baal and Asherah were invited to go first. As we have noted, Baal was worshipped as the god of the crops, rain, and fire. He had failed at the first two for three years and now had one final chance to prove himself publicly by bringing down fire to consume a bull as a sacrifice. The prophets of Baal danced, shouted, and cried out to their demon god for hours. This entire scene is witchcraft, the human attempt to control the demonic realm for personal benefit. Despite all the magic and witchcraft, nothing happened because the Lord of all is also Lord of the demons, and He did not permit them to appear. Elijah then mocks the entire spiritual structure of all of Israel under the rule of Baal, accusing their "god" of being constipated and tied up on the toilet all day, unable to make an appearance. One

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 18:24

## A STUDY OF ELIJAH

Bible commentary says, "Elijah was saying that Baal could not respond to his worshipers because he had gone to the toilet."<sup>19</sup>

The false prophets respond by cutting themselves and shedding their blood. This scene is a grotesque counterfeit of what God would do by sending His Son to shed His blood in our place for our sins. The real God does not demand our blood, but rather gives His own. The gospel of Jesus Christ tells us that this counterfeit was trying to deceive people, as Jesus shed His blood and then sent fire down from Heaven on Pentecost. His blood and fire are the truth, and this scene is the demonic counterfeit.

Elijah begins by honoring God through rebuilding the altar which had belonged to the Lord but had been destroyed when the worship sites for God were torn down. Elijah then has the entire sacrifice drenched in water (possibly salt water which was available nearby as fresh water was scarce from the drought) to show God's power without question. Unlike demonic false prophets who sought to control through witchcraft, Elijah merely prays to God, who is free to do as He pleases and cannot be controlled or manipulated by anyone. God then sends fire from Heaven that consumes the bull, the stones, and even the water and dirt. This moment had to look something like a military airstrike from Heaven, exactly on target arriving in an instant, reminiscent of the days when God did the same on Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>o</sup>

What they really wanted was rain and what they got was fire. God often works this way, giving us what we need before giving us what we want. The fire they needed came first and, as we will see, the rain they needed came next.

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<sup>o</sup> Genesis 19:24; Luke 17:29

## NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

Once again, we see the power of prayer as Elijah's simple prayer is answered by God in power. Stunned, the people fell and worshipped the Lord. In this instant, it was obvious who the true versus false prophets were and who the true God was versus the false gods.

Elijah then had the 850 false prophets slaughtered. Why? Because they were so demon possessed that, like Judas many year later, they would never repent or change. They would only continue to do evil and invite the demonic back into Israel. Had this not been true, they would have fallen and worshipped the Lord with the people when fire came down from Heaven, but they did not. Evil does not stop itself, and so it must be stopped.

Some years later, James and John the "sons of thunder" ask Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them [a Samaritan Village that rejected Jesus]? But he turned and rebuked them."<sup>a</sup> In shocking arrogance, the two disciples thought they could snap their fingers and call down fire from Heaven as Elijah had. Jesus rebuked them because God alone sends the fire of judgment, and that is not the place of His servants, even the disciples, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."<sup>b</sup>

Today, although these people no longer live, their demons do. They continue their same work today, as they did in Elijah's day, in everything from politics, to business, and religion. They continue to oppose, threaten, and even silence those who speak the Word of God truly and boldly as Elijah did. These same spirits cause the same fear in many of God's people as they did in the past.

Today, a statue of Elijah stands on Mount Carmel in his honor. He, however, is a normal person with an abnormal faith. He's not as superhero, as James 5:17 (NLT)

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<sup>a</sup> John 9:54-55 <sup>b</sup> Romans 12:19



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says, “Elijah was as human as we are...” In this magnificent scene, the apex of Elijah’s life, and one of the most astounding moments in world history, his humanity and imperfection were evident.

Lastly, when Elijah said in 1 Kings 18:22, “...I only, am left a prophet of the Lord...”, he was feeling perhaps a bit arrogant and even sorry for himself. When he had met Obadiah, he was told, “I hid a hundred men of the Lord’s prophets”.<sup>a</sup> In Elijah, we see that God does imperfect work through imperfect people, which should only encourage us to do whatever work the Lord has for us.

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. Look up the following Scriptures to see what Jesus, Paul, and John said about true versus false prophets: Matthew 7:15, 24:11,24; Acts 20:29-31; 1 John 4:1.
2. Look up the following Scriptures to learn more about how to discern true from false prophets: Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Deuteronomy 18:14-22; Jeremiah 23:9-40.
3. Look up the following Scriptures to learn more about God’s fire: Exodus 3:2, 19:18; Leviticus 9:23-24; Deuteronomy 4:24; Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:3-4; Revelation 20:12-15.
4. If you really want to go deeper on understanding the unseen realm, demonic, and spiritual warfare, go to RealFaith.com and listen to the *Win Your War* sermon series or get the *Win Your War* book from the store.

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 18:13

## NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

### **Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. What are the big lessons you learn about the problem of compromised Christianity in this section of Scripture?
2. How are the same forces seducing God's people into the same sins in our day as in the days of Elijah?
3. Who has been a little bit like Elijah in your life, standing against evil, saying what needs to be said, and doing what needs to be done with a humble courage?

### **NOTES**

A STUDY OF ELIJAH

**Can Believers Access Supernatural Power Today?**

**Scripture to Read:** 1 Kings 18:41-46

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *James 5:16-18 – The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.*

**Commentary:**

God, through Elijah, said it would not rain until God gave the word<sup>a</sup>, and after three years, God said that time had come.<sup>b</sup> After God defeated and Elijah destroyed the 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah, the prophet knelt likely in prayer atop the battle scene of Mount Carmel that was believed to be the seat of the defeated demon gods.

The monsoon rain begins with a single cloud rising out of the sea, seen by Elijah’s “servant” who is mentioned for the first time. Elijah’s servant tells King Ahab that there is a narrow window to return to the palace on his horse drawn chariot before the water makes travel impossible. We are then told, “the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain”.<sup>c</sup>

Amazingly, Elijah passes King Ahab as they race to escape the floodwaters that likely felt a bit like the days of Noah. Elijah the prophet outran the horse pulling the king’s chariot because “...the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.”<sup>d</sup> This is a run of at least

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 17:1 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 18:1 <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 18:45 <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 18:46

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10 miles over some rough terrain made possible by a supernatural miracle of God.

In the life of Elijah, we see miracles. God stopped the rain for three years in answering Elijah's prayer. At the widow of Zarephath's house, her oil and flour supply were supernaturally renewed daily, and her dead son was brought back to life, which was a miracle that had never happened previously. On Mount Carmel, God sent fire from Heaven. Then, God sent the rain in response to Elijah's prayer, which was another first-time miracle, and Elijah outran a horse to escape the ensuing floodwaters.

In the theological textbook I co-authored, *Doctrine*, we explain:

*"There has been no shortage of controversy regarding the so-called 'sign gifts' – tongues, miracles, and prophecy – and whether they are to be practiced by the Church today. The following chart outlines the basic positions without getting into great detail..."*

NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

Cessationist	Functional Continuationist	Continuationist	Word-Faith
<p>Supernatural gifts, especially the speaking gifts (tongues, miracles, and prophecy) functioned only in the early church and are not to be practiced today. God speaks today but only in Scripture. Contemporary "revelations" do not come from God.</p>	<p>Supernatural gifts are given to every generation and God may continue to speak but the abuses are so rampant that it is better to avoid them. It is safer to rely solely on the Bible and Spirit-empowered wisdom.</p>	<p>Supernatural gifts are given to every generation. Contemporary revelations are valued but always secondary to Scripture. Supernatural manifestations are sought but must show the fruit of the Spirit.</p>	<p>Supernatural gifts are given to every generation. God's Kingdom is a present reality with immediate healing and prosperity for anyone who exercises a faith confession. Contemporary revelations are highly valued.</p>

To believe the Bible is to believe in miracles. I have always held the continuationist view and could not fathom how to preach through books of the Bible with a cessationist or functional cessationist bias.

I also see the Word-Faith perspective as abusive. It tells people that they can manipulate God with their faith,

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which is, by definition, witchcraft and putting a person instead of God as the authority over the supernatural realm. Furthermore, this view encourages people to chase signs and wonders, often more focused on miracles than sound Bible teaching and the true character of God. Jesus rebuked this very thing saying, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign...”<sup>a</sup> There is a healthy longing for God to show up in power. God can do anything, so we pray for the sick to be healed, revival to come, and God to send angels and dreams to reach lost people in countries closed to missionaries. However, an unhealthy view of miracles can leave people open to demonic counterfeits, “...the work of Satan...counterfeit power and signs and miracles. He will use every kind of evil deception...”<sup>b</sup>

I have seen miracles in my life – people healed, dreams while asleep, visions while awake, deliverance from crippling demonic oppression, and much more. I have also seen demonic counterfeits. Just like in the days of the Exodus where God had miracles and his servant Moses, demonic powers did counterfeit miracles by their servants under Pharaoh. Apparently, the false prophets of Asherah and Baal were accustomed to seeing counterfeit signs and wonders, which explains why they showed up expectant for the showdown on Mount Carmel. 1 John 4:1 tells us, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” This remains true today as the same demons are at work in the world.

Since miracles are, by definition, non-repeatable, one-time events, miracles do happen, but not frequently, and sometimes are never to be repeated. This is precisely what happens at the end of Elijah’s life when God sends

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<sup>a</sup> Matthew 12:39; cf 16:4; Luke 11:29 <sup>b</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 (NLT)

a chariot to pick him up and fly him first class to Heaven without ever dying.

For the believer, there is much hope in this scene of Elijah. The Great War started in Heaven when Satan and demons declared war on God and the angels.<sup>a</sup> Many of the battles in Scripture and history are part of the Great War. The defeat of Baal at Mount Carmel is a foreshadowing to the end of time recorded in the book of Revelation where Jesus will return as the greater Elijah to make war against the demonic political and spiritual leaders continuing in the spirit of Ahab and Jezebel. He will bring fire with Him and cease their ability to do evil as Elijah did to the prophets of Baal and Asherah. Just as the temporary curse of a drought was lifted after the battle, so too the curse over all creation will be lifted once Jesus wins The Great War, ending all wars. Until then, God's people are to remain faithful like Elijah, public with our faith, bold, praying for God's power to vindicate His fame, standing up against lies and evil, while discerning like Jesus warned of the last days, "...false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."<sup>b</sup>

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. Look up the following times that even Jesus' enemies testified to His supernatural miracles: John 3:2; 5:36; 10:25, 32, 37-38; Acts 2:22; 10:38.
2. Look up the following Scriptures to learn more about supernatural miracles: Psalm 105:1-106:23, 135:1-136:26; John 14:10-14.
3. If you want to really dig deep on the issue of Miracles, I would recommend Craig S. Keeners two-volume book set *Miracles: The Credibility of the New*

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<sup>a</sup> Revelation 12:7-9 <sup>b</sup> Matthew 24:24



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*Testament Accounts.*

### **Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. How have you seen God show up in powerful ways in your life or the life of someone you know?
2. What lessons can you learn from Elijah's prayer life in 1 Kings 17-18?
3. What things are you persisting in prayer for?

### **NOTES**

NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

## What Causes and Cures Spiritual Depression?

**Scripture to Read:** 1 Kings 19:1-8

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *1 Kings 19:3-5 – [Elijah] was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life...he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." And he lay down and slept...*

### **Commentary:**

At some point, even the godliest person experiences discouragement, and even depression. This is a normal part of the Christian life, and something many people battle like a dark shadow. In the book of Psalms, the largest category is "lament", people who are discouraged, fearful, and even depressed processing their emotional struggles in prayer and song. There's even an entire book of the Bible called "Lamentations", and entire sections of books of the Bible like Jeremiah that explore the depths of spiritual depression and lamenting.

In some Christian circles, it is expected that a mature Christian would only smile and pretend that every day was Christmas. However, if you have battled spiritual depression, you stand with spiritual giants like Martin Luther, John Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, and Abraham Lincoln. Martin Luther "was often in the seventh heaven of exultation, and as frequently on the borders of despair", and Charles Spurgeon battled a kind of "causeless depression" which, he said, "is not to be reasoned with...You might as well fight with the mist as with this shapeless, indefinable, yet all beclouding hopelessness."<sup>20</sup>

Jesus Christ lived a perfect human life, and the four

gospels include some 60 times in which His emotional life is mentioned. Jesus experienced some very real down times as I explore further in my book and sermon-series *Spirit-Filled Jesus*:

### **Jesus' Emotions in Matthew**

- 26:37–38 – “sorrowful and troubled”; “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.”
- 27:46 – “Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying...‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

### **Jesus' Emotions in Mark**

- 3:5 – “anger, grieved” (ESV, NASB, NKJV); “anger and sorrow” (HCSB); “anger and, deeply distressed” (NIV); “angrily...deeply saddened” (NLT)
- 7:34 – “He sighed” (ESV, NLT, NKJV); “He sighed deeply” (HCSB); “deep sigh” (NASB, NIV)
- 8:12 – “sighed deeply in his spirit”
- 14:33–34 – “greatly distressed and troubled...‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.’”
- 15:34 – “Jesus cried with a loud voice...‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

### **Jesus' Emotions in Luke**

- 12:50 – “Great is my distress” (ESV); “what constraint I am under” (NIV); “how distressed I am” (NKJV); “I am under a heavy burden” (NLT)
- 19:41 – “He wept.”
- 22:44 – “in agony” (ESV, NASB, NKJV); “in anguish” (HCSB, NIV); “in such agony of spirit” (NLT)

### **Jesus' Emotions in John**

- 11:33 – “deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled” (ESV); “angry in His spirit and deeply moved” (HCSB); “groaned in the spirit and was

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- troubled” (NKJV); “a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled” (NLT)
- 11:38 – “deeply moved again” (ESV), “angry in Himself again” (HCSB), “deeply moved within” (NASB), “again groaning in Himself” (NKJV)
  - 12:27 – “Now is my soul troubled.”
  - 13:21 – “troubled in his spirit” (ESV); “deeply troubled” (NLT)

In this scene from 1 Kings 19:1-8, we see Elijah go from the highest of highs calling down fire from Heaven on Mount Carmel and God bringing rain in answer to his plea after three years, to running for his life. Despite seeing God do the impossible for him, Jezebel’s threat to kill Elijah came with demonic oppression so powerful that he “ran for his life...into the wilderness...And he asked that he might die, saying, ‘It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.’ And he lay down and slept under a broom tree.”<sup>a</sup> Jezebel was so possessed that the demonic in and around her came over and oppressed Elijah.

Jezebel is the most extreme example of a domineering, overbearing, controlling wife. She doubled down on control after the demonic “gods” she demanded be worshipped in Israel lost the battle on Mount Carmel to the real God of whom she had torn down the churches, closed the Bible teaching schools, and killed the prophets. This is the telltale sign of the demonic Jezebel spirit – control at all costs, emotional fury, and a complete unwillingness to repent. She makes an oath to her demon “gods” that Elijah will be martyred for standing up for his God. Her demonic power is so great that it overwhelms Elijah.

Abraham Heschel once wrote, “To be a prophet is both

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 19:3-5

a distinction and an affliction.” This is true of all ministry calling, especially the prophetic, because the stronger the anointing, the deeper the suffering. It has been said that an hour of good old-fashioned Bible preaching taxes the preacher the same amount as working a full eight-hour day at another job. This is because not only do people show up to church, so do demons. Their anti-ministry causes ministry to be like running in water up to your waist. It is exhausting. Most pastoral resignations, we are told, happen on Mondays when the preacher is spiritually depleted and depressed. This is precisely the letdown Elijah is experiencing and needing to recover from.

Paul describes this same low point saying, “we were completely overwhelmed – beyond our strength – so that we even despaired of life”.<sup>a</sup> On a very dark day, Jeremiah the prophet was upset with God saying in 24:14-18, “because he did not kill me in the womb”, wished “my mother would have been my grave” and asked, “Why did I come out from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame?” Following repeated spiritual war that gutted his life, Job “opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth”.<sup>b</sup>

Elijah is spiritually depressed, meaning he is overwhelmed and depleted in all areas. Physically, he is simply worn out and exhausted following the adrenaline letdown he was experiencing following a demonic battle and run of at least 10 miles followed by an additional long hike to hide in the wilderness. Spiritually, the demonic battle he fought has his soul disoriented and exhausted. Mentally, he is ground down by the constant attacks and threats and can no longer process information in a healthy manner. Emotionally, “he was afraid”, and unable to operate in faith and likely under attack from the

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<sup>a</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:8 (HCSB) <sup>b</sup> Job 3:1

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demonic “spirit of fear”.<sup>a</sup> This amazing man of God was still just a man as James 5:17 (TLB) says, “Elijah was as completely human as we are”.

What should comfort us in this scene is that Elijah had run from everyone, but God pursued him, not for rebuke but for recovery. We’ve all been where Elijah was, and thankfully our God is patient with us, moves past our worst moments, and comes to help us get to a better version of ourselves. The world desperately needs more people who follow His example.

Of all the emotions mentioned of Jesus in the Bible, the one that appears most frequently is “compassion”, the very thing that God has for Elijah and all His other servants, including you. God’s recovery plan for Elijah, as outlined next, should give us wisdom and permission to share these same means of grace with others and apply them to ourselves.

One, “he lay down and slept”.<sup>b</sup> You are a human being and need your sleep, especially when you are overwhelmed. Your mind, body, and soul need to rest and recover.

Two, “an angel touched him and said to him”.<sup>c</sup> There are parts of your pain that cannot be healed apart from God’s touch. In prayer, it is good to name those places in your life and soul that need a touch from God and invite the Holy Spirit to heal you with His touch.

Three, after sleeping we see him “Arise and eat”.<sup>d</sup> Healthy nutritious food is required for your body to recover from depletion and exhaustion.

Four, he ate a “cake baked on hot stones”.<sup>e</sup> Enjoying a delicacy during a downtime can be a way of feasting and starting to recover your joy.

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<sup>a</sup> 2 Timothy 1:7 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 19:5 <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 19:5 <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 19:5 <sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 19:6

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Five, he drank “a jar of water”.<sup>a</sup> Hydration is crucial to be a healthy human being and, without enough water, your mind and body will be unwell.

Six “the angel...touched him [again]...”<sup>b</sup> As you are processing your experiences and emotions during a bout with spiritual depression, expect it to likely not be an instant of healing and deliverance, but rather a process with multiple touches from God.

Seven, he again “ate and drank”.<sup>c</sup> To rebuild strength and stamina, continuing to develop healthy habits is crucial.

Eight, he took a sabbatical for “forty days and forty nights”.<sup>d</sup> Sometimes you need to simply stop all that you are doing and get a break before you completely break in a way you may never physically, mentally, or spiritually recover from.

Nine, he went away to “Horeb, the mount of God”.<sup>e</sup> Rather than running from your problems, during your sabbath times you must run to God, since He is your shield of protection and the source of your healing. Horeb (also called Mount Sinai) is where God met with His people in the Exodus, giving them the Ten Commandments.

Ten, God gives him “Elisha”<sup>f</sup> in the next scene. A trustworthy friend who humbly serves and lifts burdens can make all the difference, and Elisha is that very gift Elijah desperately needed to continue in his calling.

Elijah was the greatest Old Testament prophet along with Moses. When the Bible says that he was like us, it also means that you are like him. God took care of him, and God wants to meet with you, care for you, and give yourself permission for self-care without wrongly thinking

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 19:6 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 19:7 <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 19:8 <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 19:8 <sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 19:8 <sup>f</sup> 1 Kings 19:19



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you are being selfish. The truth is, God often treats us better than we treat ourselves.

Later we will even see God not only spared the life of this man who wanted to die but took him to Heaven before he ever tasted death. On one occasion, many years later, Elijah would come down with Moses to also see Jesus transfigured on a mountain.<sup>a</sup> Elijah, at times, despaired of his life but he could not have imagined the good and glory that God had planned for him. The same is true for you, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”.<sup>b</sup>

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. Look up the following laments in Scripture to learn more about processing spiritual depression: Psalm 3, 10, 13, 17, 31, 42, 43, 60, 79, 80, 94, 102.
2. Get a journal and process some significant struggle in your own life by writing your own prayerful lament to God.
3. To dig deeper into understanding spiritual depression, I would recommend the classic book by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*.

### **Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. Have you ever felt pressure from other Christians to fake being fine, hiding your struggles, and not being honest with how you are doing? How is that actually unhealthy, unhelpful, and unholy?
2. What bouts have you had with spiritual depression?
3. Which of the 10 aspects of God’s recovery plan would be most helpful to you?

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<sup>a</sup> Matthew 17:3 <sup>b</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:9

NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

NOTES

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## How Do You Discern the Presence of God?

**Scripture to Read:** 1 Kings 19:9-21

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *Romans 11:2-5* – “...the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God... But what is God’s reply to him? ‘I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.”

### **Commentary:**

In this scene of Elijah’s life, we see God’s version of a surprise party. For starters, Elijah thinks he is utterly alone. He’s in a cave, having a combination of pity party and pride telling God, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”<sup>a</sup> In effect, Elijah is saying that he’s the only true Christian left on the earth, and that his life was very hard because he alone was standing up for the Lord.

If we’re honest, we’ve all felt this way at some point. Whether at school, work, or even our church, it can seem like everyone else has fallen away and we are the last true believer around. If Elijah has some bouts with self-righteousness and self-pity, then we all will. One pastor friend of mine calls this the “Elijah Complex”. Some people have an inferiority complex, others have a superiority complex, and still others have an Elijah Complex thinking that they alone are carrying the true faith in the world.

In Romans 11:1–6, Paul writes, “I ask, then, has God

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<sup>a</sup>1 Kings 19:10

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rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? ‘Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.’ But what is God’s reply to him? ‘I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.”

Paul uses this scene from Elijah’s life as an illustration of the “remnant”. In every age, “by grace”, God preserves at least a few faithful believers who remain devoted to the Lord. Examples include Noah and his family<sup>a</sup>, Joseph<sup>b</sup>, the days of Isaiah<sup>c</sup>, and Jeremiah<sup>d</sup>, Ezekiel<sup>e</sup>, and the future vision of Daniel.<sup>f</sup> Jesus refers to the remnant as a “little flock”<sup>g</sup> and honors the remnant in the Church at Thyatira as “the rest of you...who do not hold to this teaching...of Satan” and who do not yield to the Jezebel spirit.<sup>h</sup>

God tells Elijah about the remnant naming, “seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”<sup>i</sup> In our day, there is in fact great spiritual apostasy driven by the demonic. However, there are still faithful believers, churches, and Bible teachers who have not bent their knee in surrender to Baal. This should encourage true believers to remain true to God, and to find one another to encourage each another as the days grow darker.

This kind of mutually encouraging Christian friendship

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<sup>a</sup> Genesis 7:23 <sup>b</sup> Genesis 45:7 <sup>c</sup> Isaiah 10:21-22 <sup>d</sup> Jeremiah 6:9, 50:20 <sup>e</sup> Ezekiel 11:13-21 <sup>f</sup> Daniel 11:35 <sup>g</sup> Luke 12:32 <sup>h</sup> Revelation 2:20-24 <sup>i</sup> Elijah 19:18

is exactly what God provides Elijah, with the arrival of Elisha, who becomes a spiritual son<sup>a</sup> much like Timothy and Titus in relationship with Paul in the New Testament. Elijah was simply working a regular job when they met, plowing a field with the help of oxen. Elisha's name means, "God saves", he is part of the remnant, loves the Lord, and is living a rather quiet and private life when everything changes, and this "man of God" is called to assist Elijah with his ministry. We are told, "Elisha was active in Israel for 60 years (892–832 bc), performing miracles, teaching students, and acting in state affairs..."<sup>21</sup>

Like the disciples who dropped their fishing nets to follow Jesus, Elisha literally walks off the job to start walking with Elijah. Completely devoted to the Lord, he immediately kills the oxen, which are the source of his wealth, and throws a lavish BBQ for his neighbors before heading off on the prophetic lifetime adventure God has planned for him. Elisha would spend the next years in training, learning from Elijah, until the leadership mantle is passed to Elisha when Elijah is taken up to Heaven.<sup>b</sup> Elisha's life is recorded in 2 Kings 2-13, and Jesus mentions him in Luke 4:27.

Lastly, in this scene of Elijah's life, how God speaks to him is among the most famous stories about Elijah's incredible life. God said, "'Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.' And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke 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. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave."<sup>c</sup>

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<sup>a</sup>2 Kings 2:12 <sup>b</sup> 2 Kings 2:1-12 <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 19:11-13

## A STUDY OF ELIJAH

The Word of the Lord had come to Elijah yet again. We are repeatedly told that God's Word came to or through Elijah, showing his utter dependance on the Word of God and our need for the same.<sup>o</sup> Although Elijah knew God's Word, and was a mature man of God, he was still learning how to discern God's presence. In Elijah's example, we see our great need for God's Word and God's presence.

Discerning God's presence is something every believer is constantly learning. Elijah had experienced God's presence in everything from fire sent from Heaven to an angel ministering to him during a time of spiritual depression. The truth is, God is free and creative. He is free to be present in our lives however He chooses, and often does so in unexpected ways. This is Elijah's experience.

Something like a hurricane came, but God was not in it. At other times, God was in the wind<sup>b</sup>, but not this time. God had revealed Himself to Elijah previously in the "wind"<sup>c</sup>, but this encounter with God would be fresh. Then, an earthquake came, but God was not in it. At other times, God was revealed in the earthquake<sup>d</sup>, but not this time. Perhaps God had revealed Himself to Elijah previously if the ground shook when the fire that consumed the offering on Mount Carmel, coming with such lightning-like force that even the stones were utterly destroyed<sup>e</sup>, or if the ground shook when pounded by the "great rain"<sup>f</sup>, but this encounter with God would be different.

Next, a fire came, but God was not in it. At other times, God was revealed in the fire<sup>g</sup>, but not this time. God

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<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings 17:2, 5, 8, 16, 24; 18:1, 36; 19:9; 21:17, 28; 22:38; 2 Kings 1:16-17

<sup>b</sup> Genesis 8:1; Exodus 10:13, 14:22; Hosea 13:15; John 3:8 <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 18:45

<sup>d</sup> Exodus 19:18; Numbers 16:31-33; 1 Samuel 14:15; Matthew 27:51-54;

Acts 16:26 <sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 18:38 <sup>f</sup> 1 Kings 18:45 <sup>g</sup> Exodus 19:18; Numbers 16:31-33; 1 Samuel 14:15; Matthew 27:51-54; Acts 16:26

had revealed Himself to Elijah previously in “the fire of the Lord”<sup>a</sup>, but this encounter with God would be different.

Lastly, there was “a low whisper”. God came this time not boldly, but humbly. Not powerfully, but gently. Not in a big way, but in a little way. Many years later, God would come as the baby boy Jesus Christ, who was humble, gentle, and little. God has a way of surprising us when He reveals His presence. Elijah was immediately aware of God’s presence in the “low whisper” and “when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak”. The scene is reminiscent of the angels who minister in the presence of the Lord Jesus in the unseen realm, declaring His praises all day, “the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two *he covered his face*, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew”.<sup>b</sup>

Perhaps God is still speaking, and few are listening. We get so busy talking and fill our lives with so much noise and nonsense, largely due to technology, that if God did whisper to us, we would not hear Him.

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. To learn more about the power of God’s Word in Elijah’s life, look up these Scriptures: 1 Kings 17:2, 5, 8, 16, 24; 18:1, 36; 19:9; 21:17, 28; 22:38; 2 Kings 1:16-17.
2. To learn more about the remnant, there are three sermons on the past, present, and future remnant (sermons 23-25) at <https://realfaith.com/sermon-series/romans/>.
3. To learn more about how God speaks, the lecture and notes “Revelation: God Speaks” is free: <https://realfaith.com/sermons/doctrine-7-revelation-god-speaks/>. You can also go to RealFaith.com and get

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<sup>a</sup>1 Kings 18:38 <sup>b</sup> Isaiah 6:2; cf. John 12:41



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the entire revised *Doctrine* theological textbook in the store.

### **Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. What are some of the ways God has spoken to you?
2. How are you at getting times of silence to clear your mind and hear from God? What are some possible bad habits that have hindered this pursuit of silence?
3. Have you been like Elisha for someone or has someone been like Elisha for you?

### **NOTES**

NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

A STUDY OF ELIJAH

**Why Do Good Things Happen to Bad People  
and Bad Things Happen to Good People?**

**Scripture to Read:** 1 Kings 21:1-29

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *Revelation 2:20-21 – I [Jesus] have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.*

**Commentary:**

In this scene from Elijah's life, the time has come for God to straighten things out with King Ahab. Ahab was not content, despite his family ruling over the nation of Israel for generations as evil dictators, living in a lavish castle, and owning more land than he could ever need. This truth just goes to show that enjoying our life has a lot more to do with the attitude in us than the possessions around us.

One day, perhaps peering out a window high atop his towering palace, the king saw a piece of land that he did not own, and suddenly he began breaking the 10th commandment by coveting, which led to his wife breaking the ninth and sixth commandments against bearing false witness and committing murder, all so they could break the eighth commandment, all of which was set in motion by them also breaking the first and second commandments by worshipping other gods and making idols. His sense of unlimited entitlement would be the beginning of his end.

Ahab did not really need the land, just like Adam and Eve did not need the forbidden fruit. But, once he

## A STUDY OF ELIJAH

saw it, the king began obsessing over it. He offered its' owner, Naboth, either a land swap deal, or an outright purchase. Naboth refused saying, "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."<sup>a</sup> Naboth was apparently a godly man, his land had belonged to his family for generations, and he would be sinning against his God and family if he took the deal. One Bible commentary explains, "Priestly legislation viewed the land of Israel as YHWH's possession, and the Israelites as temporary dwellers on it; therefore, it was not theirs to sell in perpetuity or alienate from the family, and the property would revert to its owner in the jubilee year (cf. Lev. 25:23-28; Num 36:7)... that the proposed act of sale would be a desecration and so was to be avoided at all costs; cf. Josh 22:29; 1 Sam 12:23; 26:11; 2 Sam 23:17; and without yhwh, e.g., Gen 44:7, 17. It sometimes precedes an oath, to strengthen it, as in 1 Sam 24:6-7."<sup>22</sup>

Acting very much like a boy who can shave, King Ahab then threw a temper tantrum as, "he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food."<sup>b</sup> In this dysfunctional demonic relationship, we continually see the Ahab spirit as passive and the Jezebel spirit as controlling. We also see the Jezebel spirit using the authority that belongs to Ahab for evil and the frequent using of other people to do the dirty work. We read, "Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, 'Why is your spirit so vexed that you eat no food?' And he said to her, 'Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money, or else, if it please you, I will give you another vineyard for it.'" And he answered, "I will not give you my vineyard.'" And Jezebel his wife said to him, 'Do you now govern Israel? Arise and eat bread and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard

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<sup>a</sup>1 Kings 21:3 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 21:4

of Naboth the Jezreelite.”<sup>a</sup>

Jezebel then commits a series of sins and crimes without blushing. First, she forged legal government documents fraudulently, “...she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal...”<sup>b</sup> Second, Jezebel plotted the murder and coverup of Naboth as she “...set two worthless men opposite him [Naboth], and let them bring a charge against him, saying, ‘You have cursed God and the king.’ Then take him out and stone him to death.”<sup>c</sup> Third, Jezebel deceitfully gives the appearance of obeying God’s law in condemning the innocent Naboth, finding two “worthless men”<sup>d</sup> meeting the requirements of “two witnesses”<sup>e</sup>, even though they bring false testimony. Fourth, Jezebel actually appeals to the Scriptures and God to murder an innocent man. In this scene, we see the common pattern of the Jezebel spirit weaponizing God’s Word, twisting it as Satan did with Adam and Eve, along with Jesus. Completely defiant of God’s Word having any authority in her own life, she falsely and wrongly judges and condemns Ahab, who did not do what her lying plot convicted and condemned him for! Make no mistake, Jezebel was very religious, and the most dangerous people are those who are religious and weaponize the Bible to abuse people by the Jezebel spirit. She is lying and committing murder, all to steal a piece of land, while publicly pretending to honor the Lord.

In this sickening scene, we see a common pattern in a demonic and dysfunctional marriage. Sadly, many passive men with the Ahab spirit are married to controlling and domineering women like Jezebel and have the same twisted relationship. Over and over, the marriage between Ahab and Jezebel is more like son and mother than

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<sup>a</sup>1 Kings 21:5-7 <sup>b</sup>1 Kings 21:8 <sup>c</sup>1 Kings 21:10 <sup>d</sup>1 Kings 21:10

<sup>e</sup>Deuteronomy 17:5-6

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husband and wife. He is passive, pouty, and pathetic. So, she takes over, calls the shots, rules the roost, and he goes along with it, likely because he's afraid of her, and he often gets what he wants without having to work for it, as is the case with Naboth's field.

Apparently, the passive Ahab is also incompetent. He hears that Naboth is dead but does not inquire what happened to the man because he does not care about anyone but himself. Once again, God summons Elijah to rebuke and prophesy doom over Ahab and Jezebel as 1 Kings 21:17-21 recounts, "...the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession. And you shall say to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Have you killed and also taken possession?'" And you shall say to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood.'... I will bring disaster upon you. I will utterly burn you up, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free..."

God had simply had enough with this couple and the demons working in and through them and their day of death and judgment is sealed. Furthermore, unlike most kings and queens who are honored in death, this royal couple of crooks will have wild unclean stray dogs licking up their blood on the land where they shed Naboth's blood. God's prophecies through Elijah were later fulfilled exactly as promised.

When they went to bury Jezebel's dead body, we read in 2 Kings 9:35-37, "But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. When they came back and told him, he said, 'This is the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite: "In the territory of Jezreel

the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel, and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as dung on the face of the field in the territory of Jezreel, so that no one can say, This is Jezebel.'”

When Ahab died, his line did as well. 2 Kings 10:10-11,17 reports, “‘Know then that there shall fall to the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab, for the Lord has done what he said by his servant Elijah.’ So Jehu struck down all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, all his great men and his close friends and his priests, until he left him none remaining...And when he came to Samaria, he struck down all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had wiped them out, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke to Elijah.”

The Jezebel spirit was and is a murderous spirit and is guilty for the taking of many godly lives from the days of Elijah (including the prophets of God she slaughtered to the innocent Naboth) to our own day. When confronted by Elijah for the evil done for him by Jezebel, Ahab demonstrates for the first time what the Bible calls “worldly sorrow”. This counterfeit of real repentance does not grieve the sin, or the offense against God and others, but instead the consequences the sinner must pay for their sin. In this way, people with “worldly sorrow” falsely appear to have a heart change, but their heart remains selfish and unrepentant. They don’t regret who they are, or what they have done, but instead merely mourn the price they pay for who they are and what they do. 2 Corinthians 7:10 (NLT) says, “For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.” Make no mistake, though outwardly Ahab, “tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted and lay



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in sackcloth and went about dejectedly<sup>a</sup>, inwardly it was worldly sorrow and not godly repentance. God then kindly permitted Ahab to live a little longer before sending him to Hell and bringing “disaster upon his house”<sup>b</sup>.

Elijah and Naboth were godly people and, during their lifetimes, bad things happened to them. They were poor, lied about, hunted for death, and suffered greatly. For them, life on earth was as close to Hell as they got, and now they are spending forever in Heaven.

In this life, good things happen to bad people, and bad things happen to good people because the presence of evil and the demonic is very real in this life. The Bible is clear on this fact. Too often, believers look at life and assume that God is failing. The truth is life as we know it is lived on a battlefield, which is why God’s people keep getting shot by a real Enemy. Here’s reality for our world according to the Bible:

- John 12:31 – Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.
- 2 Corinthians 4:4 – ...the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers...
- Ephesians 2:2 – [Satan is] “prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...”
- 1 John 5:19 – ...the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

In summary, for the believer, this life is our temporary Hell until we get to our eternal Heaven. For the unbeliever, this life is their temporary Heaven until they get to their eternal Hell. Just as there was a massive, swift, judgment of reversal for Ahab and Jezebel, so to it will be when the real king, KING JESUS, returns with His Kingdom to rule and reign in justice and truth! Proverbs 13:22 tells us to

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<sup>a</sup>1 Kings 21:27 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 21:29

look to that day of our eternal inheritance as “the sinner’s wealth is laid up for the righteous.”

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. To learn more about God’s holiness, look up the following Scriptures: Leviticus 20:23-26; Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:14-16; Revelation 4:8, 15:4.
2. To learn more about God’s wrath, look up the following Scriptures: Nahum 1:2-11; John 3:36; Romans 1:18-32, 2:1-5, 12:19-13:5; Hebrews 3:7-11.
3. To learn more about Hell, look up the following Scriptures: Daniel 12:2; Isaiah 66:24; Matthew 10:28, 25:41-46; Mark 9:42-50; John 5:25-29; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 14:10-11, 20:12-15.

### **Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. How have you seen good things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people, like this story? How does this story give you comfort and hope?
2. Why is God’s holiness, judgment, and wrath really a loving thing for His people?
3. What do you learn about the spirits at work behind Ahab and Jezebel in this scene?

## NOTES

A STUDY OF ELIJAH

NEW DAYS, OLD DEMONS

**Why Does God Allow Evil, and How Does  
He Use It for Good?**

**Scripture to Read:** 1 Kings 22:1-53

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *Matthew 24:24 – “...false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”*

**Commentary:**

Every day, we witness wrongdoing, and even evil, in our family, church, and government. This leads us to one of the most difficult questions, “God is sovereign, powerful, and good. Evil exists and creatures bear moral responsibility for it. How can we reconcile the character of God with the reality of sin?” Often, this question is referred to as “the problem of evil”, or “theodicy”.

In 1 Kings 22, evil and suffering are reported in painful detail.

One, after three years of peace, there is a rising threat of bloody war between nations. If war breaks out, young men are dying, mothers will lose their sons, wives will bury their husbands, and children will grow up not knowing their father.

Two, there are true prophets being opposed by false prophets. This leads to obvious confusion among the people and causes divisions and factions. The 400 demonic false prophets of King Ahab of course, “prophecy” victory, only telling the rulers what they want to hear. Conversely, there is only one true prophet of God available, Micaiah, who was imprisoned. Released from prison, Micaiah begins by mocking the false prophets, and then telling God’s truth that King Ahab would die in the battle and Israel would be scattered.

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Three, the prophet Micaiah revealed that the Lord had allowed a "...lying spirit in the mouth of all his [Ahab's false] prophets..."<sup>a</sup> This meant that the demonic work of the 400 false prophets was somehow permitted by God as part of His bigger plan. Micaiah was struck on the face, sent back to prison and given bread and water, punished for being a man of God. His name means, "Who is like the Lord"? and his devotion to God was unwavering, even though he stood alone, like Elijah.

Four, the passive coward King Ahab sought to avoid death in the war. To hide, he disguised himself so that no one would know he was a king. The King of Syria's battle plan was to focus all his soldiers on the singular mission of killing King Ahab, "Fight with neither small nor great, but only with the king of Israel."<sup>b</sup> His adversary, King Jehoshaphat, went into battle with faith in the Lord, wearing his royal robes, which would have made him an obvious target to be killed first by the enemy. God honored his faith and spared his life. Ahab was killed by what looks like an accident but was part of God's sovereign plan as "a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate."<sup>c</sup> Later that night, propped up to watch the battle, King Ahab died without any honor, "So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria. And they washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood, and the prostitutes washed themselves in it, according to the word of the Lord that he had spoken."<sup>d</sup> This fulfilled the prophecy given in 1 Kings 20:42.

Five, in the northern kingdom, the godless demonic King Ahab's family had ruled over Israel for generations, and now there was going to be a new king in Israel. Sadly,

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<sup>a</sup>1 Kings 22:22 <sup>b</sup>1 Kings 22:31 <sup>c</sup>1 Kings 22:34 <sup>d</sup>1 Kings 22:37-38

## A STUDY OF ELIJAH

it was Ahab's son Ahaziah, who was just as demonic and evil as his father.

Six, in the southern kingdom Jehoshaphat was a godlier king, but did not lead with full courage and integrity, "He did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the Lord. Yet the high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places. Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel."<sup>a</sup>

Seven, to secure peace between the Northern Kingdom of Israel ruled by the godless King Ahab, and the Southern Kingdom of Judah ruled by the godlier King Jehoshaphat, an evil thing was done. Jehoshaphat had his son marry the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.<sup>b</sup> This unholy marriage alliance brought the demonic Ahab and Jezebel spirits into the southern kingdom of Judah, leading to the worship of Baal and Asherah in both kingdoms. The tragic demonic report is, "[Jehoram King of Judah in the South] walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife. And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord...Ahaziah [King of Israel in the North]...he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah; she was a granddaughter of Omri king of Israel. He also walked in the way of the house of Ahab and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab."

Eight, we now have God's people united politically, which is good. However, they are also divided spiritually, which is bad. Jehoshaphat is tolerating the Ahab and Jezebel spirits, though he personally walks with the Lord. It seems like political matters are a higher priority than spiritual ones with some exceptions including, "...from

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<sup>a</sup>1 Kings 22:43-44 <sup>b</sup> 2 Kings 8:16-18, 26-27

the land he exterminated the remnant of the male cult prostitutes...”<sup>a</sup>

Nine, in Israel, nothing changed, and the demonic evil pattern continued, “Ahaziah the son of Ahab...reigned two years over Israel. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger in every way that his father had done.”<sup>b</sup>

In most movies, the plotline is between good and evil. In this scene, and the rest of the Bible, the battle seems to be the really bad versus the not as bad. In this scene from the days of Elijah, it is obvious that, spiritually and politically, the churches and the governments are a mess, lacking consistent godly leaders with integrity. Our day is no different. Even our best leaders remain sinners who make mistakes, broker deals that are short-sighted, listen to bad information and take bad advice, and even allow their children to marry the wrong people, or even walk in evil defying the faith of their fathers.

In a systematic theology I co-authored called *Doctrine* we write:

*“Here’s the question: If God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good, why is there suffering and evil? This is one of the most practical, painful, and problematic questions that every generation asks about God. If this were a multiple-choice test, there are six possible answers.*

*1. There is no God. Atheism wrongly concludes that there is evil and suffering because there is no God to stop it. This is hopeless, which is why atheism leads to despair*

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 22:46 <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 22:51-53



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*and even suicide.*

*2. God is not all-powerful. Finite Godism wrongly concludes that God is impotent and lacking the power to overcome evil and suffering. God is simply a loser and evil is a winner. This too is hopeless.*

*3. God is not all-knowing. Evolutionary Godism, or Open Theism, wrongly concludes that God does not know the future but is experiencing life as it comes, doing His best to learn, grow, and respond much like we do. This God might be a good friend for life's journey, but He is stuck rowing in the same boat we are. This is yet again hopeless.*

*4. God is not all-good. The Pantheism and Panentheism in many Eastern religions wrongly concludes that God is both good and evil and that both darkness and light come from and are expressions of God's character. If God is evil, then we are doomed as there is no one solely good outside of our broken world to mend it.*

*5. There is no suffering and evil. Subjectivism and Pluralism wrongly conclude that evil and the experience of suffering are not absolute but rather relative and therefore not always wrong or negative. This is of no help when your body or soul get shot and you need healing.*

*6. God is not done yet, so live by faith, not sight. Biblical Christianity concludes that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good and that our good God has a problem with evil. Therefore, suffering and evil are not the way that God is, the way that God made the world, or the way that the world will be when Jesus returns and establishes His Kingdom. God is at war with the devil and his dark kingdom. Jesus' followers partner with Him to*

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*overcome evil with good and crush the serpent. Until then, God reminds us that 'the righteous shall live by his faith' (Habakkuk 2:4)."*

The Bible promises us that one day, possibly not until we enter the Kingdom of God, evil will be bent for God's glory and our good. Until then, evil is a problem that causes pain.

Returning to the story in 1 Kings 22, there are five things that we must remember to understand why God allows evil and how He uses it. This is on full display with God working in this scene through evil kings, deception in battling false prophets, and a lying spirit.

1. God is only good and does not ordain evil
2. God allows evil
3. People and demons who do evil are morally responsible
4. God uses evil
5. God overcomes evil

In the *Doctrine* book, we go on to explain our days before the Second Coming of Jesus saying:

*"In the meantime, evil is never outside the providential control of God. He is at work to do His good purposes in the context of evil. We see this in the story of Joseph in the final dozen chapters of Genesis. We read of Joseph's betrayal at the hands of his brothers, unjust suffering, and eventual rise to power because the Lord was with him, whereby many lives were saved. When he confronted his brothers, the providence of God at work in the life of Joseph crescendos: 'As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.'<sup>o</sup>*

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<sup>o</sup>Genesis 50:20

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*Many years later, a descendant of Joseph named Jesus Christ suffered similarly. He too was betrayed by His 'brothers,' suffered the worst injustice in history, died in shame on a Roman cross, and, like Joseph, was thrown in a hole from which He emerged to sit at the right hand of a king ruling a kingdom. With Joseph and Jesus, God was vindicated as fully sovereign, good, and powerful despite human evil.*

*God also used the freely chosen evil of Judas, Herod, Pilate, Gentiles, and the Jews to accomplish His perfect purpose.<sup>a</sup> In the same way, God used the Chaldeans, a horribly evil nation, to punish the persistent sin of Judah and Jerusalem.<sup>b</sup> This does not mean that their evil is God's responsibility. People freely kill and destroy. In a cosmic irony, the God of all providence uses evil to judge evil. Even as His hand brings punishment to Israel and death to Jesus, He also brings redemption and resurrection into the context of judgment and death.*

*A day is coming when we will also rise with and to Jesus. On that day, our faith will be sight and we will see God fully vindicated. Until that day, our answer to the question of how God's sovereignty relates to sin is ultimately a prayerful, worshipful, humble, and continual meditation on Romans 8:28, which promises, 'We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.' That day is coming."*

Until Jesus returns, the point of 1 Kings is simply that we tend to have the spiritual and political leaders we deserve, but not the ones we need, until Jesus Christ

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<sup>a</sup> Acts 2:23; 4:27-28 <sup>b</sup> Habakkuk 1

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comes back. There is no Heaven on earth until King Jesus brings His Kingdom to earth. Then, He will lift the curse, raise the dead, judge everyone, fill Heaven and Hell, and rule and reign spiritually and politically perfectly forever. Until the King of Kings comes, there will still be problems no matter who is leading.

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. Moses (Deuteronomy 13), Jesus (Matthew 7:15, 24:11,24), Paul (Acts 20:29-31) and John (1 John 4:1) all promised that false prophets would come. Read these Scriptures to hear what they said.
2. If you want to really dig deep into the problem of evil, or theodicy, read Randy Alcorn's book *If God is Good: Faith in the Midst of Suffering and Evil*.

### **Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. What is your biggest takeaway from the unfolding drama in 1 Kings 22? Why?
2. In the story of 1 Kings 22, who do you identify with most? Why?
3. In the story of 1 Kings 22, what is both most shocking and comforting? Why?

## NOTES

A STUDY OF ELIJAH

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**Will Jesus Burn Evildoers Like in the Story of Elijah?**

**Scripture to Read:** 2 Kings 1:1-18

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *2 Kings 1:10 (NLT) – ...Elijah replied...“If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!” Then fire fell from heaven and killed them all.*

**Commentary:**

What is happening in the northern and southern kingdoms in the days of Elijah is similar to a fast-spreading wildfire. The flames of Hell were spreading with the worship of Baal, consuming God’s people, destroying places in which God was worshipped, and even overtaking every aspect of the government and culture. Although the evil King Ahab was dead, King Ahaziah continued in the same demonic direction as his father. This family has learned nothing for generations, and the children do evil and invite demons just like their parents without pause or repentance.

Even though the demon god Baal (along with his spiritual consort Asherah), were completely defeated on Mount Carmel, King Ahaziah was determined to lead his people in the continued worship of Baal. This threatened the future of that region, much like a forest fire that has ravaged a forest is contained except for a few hot spots that need to be put out or risk starting yet another raging wildfire.

In this scene of Elijah’s life, Moab rebelled. The Moabites were a people previously subdued by King David<sup>o</sup>, who obtained their freedom after the death of Solomon. They would be a problem for Judah, the southern

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<sup>o</sup>2 Samuel 8:2,12

kingdom. The backdrop is that king Ahaziah is seriously injured and seeks out help from “of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron”, also known as “lord of the flies”, curiously also the same title of a well-known book. The name this demon refers to, “was a localized form of Baal worship” and some sort of “a health god”.<sup>23</sup>

Ekron appears nearly two dozen times in the Bible, all negative. As home to the demon god Ekron and Philistines roughly 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem, these people and place were a constant source of friction and conflict. These people knew about the God of the Bible, but they intentionally did all they could to spiritually and political oppose Him. Later, it was a derivative of the name of this demon god that religious leaders opposing Jesus accused Him of operating by the power of as the name Beelzebul is the Greek form of “Baal-zebub”. Matthew 12:22–24 says, “Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, ‘Can this be the Son of David?’ But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, ‘It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.’”

God’s anger is stirred because He is willing to hear and answer prayers, as we see throughout the life of Elijah. Here, King Ahaziah is not praying to God, but instead choosing the demonic counterfeit, namely witchcraft. Through divination, sorcery, and fortune telling, people seek to get answers and help from the spirit-world and, in so doing, engage with demons. God’s people are expressly forbidden from such witchcraft. Leviticus 19:31 says, “Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 20:6 says, “If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them,



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I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.”

This tolerance of the demonic was a longstanding problem. Centuries earlier when God’s people took possession of this region, the people they defeated were into every sort of demonism. God commanded His people to drive the evildoers out of the land, which they did not. This set the stage for the ongoing corruption and conflict in the days of Elijah. The disobedience that led to the demonic is reported in Deuteronomy 18:10-12 (NLT) which says, “...never sacrifice your son or daughter...do not... practice fortune-telling, or use sorcery, or interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord.” The moral of the story is that a small act of compromise and disobedience can lead to generations of demonic strongholds and evil.

Throughout the life of Elijah, we see that God is all-knowing. Over and over, the Lord speaks to His prophet, revealing specific details of individual people’s lives, then commanding Elijah to respond, usually by travelling some distance to deliver a word from the Lord. The same is true with King Ahaziah, “...the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, ‘Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, “Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus says the LORD, You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.”’ So Elijah went.”<sup>a</sup> God was going to do the very thing that, many years later, Jesus’ mother Mary would sing about in worship to the Lord, “...he has brought down the mighty from their thrones...”<sup>b</sup>

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<sup>a</sup>2 Kings 1:3-4 <sup>b</sup> Luke 1:52

Attempting to stop Elijah, King Ahaziah sends 50 soldiers to stop him. Just as on Mount Carmel, God sends fire from Heaven to destroy them and protect His servant. Undeterred and unrepentant, the king sends another 50 soldiers, who likewise are consumed with fire from Heaven. The king sends yet another platoon of soldiers, and their commanding officer fell on his knees to beg Elijah for mercy, which was granted, allowing his men to live. Today, this would be like calling in a military airstrike.

Deism is the false teaching that a god made the universe but then left his creation alone and has no dealings with it, a bit like an absentee landlord. With a god absent, deism teaches that the world runs by natural laws that a god established to govern his creation. Subsequently, miracles are impossible because the universe is a closed system, and a god does not intervene in his creation or overrule his natural laws. This is a commonly held belief and explains why scenes like the fire strike from Heaven to protect Elijah are often rejected as myth or dismissed as primitive ancient suspicion. However, the worldview of the Bible is that there are two realms – seen and unseen – that form one reality. God rules over both, and these two worlds originally were together as one.

You cannot believe God's Word or understand God's world unless you embrace the supernatural. From beginning to end, the Bible is about an unseen realm as real as the visible world. Faith is required to believe in beings as real as we are who live in a world as real as ours and travel between these worlds, impacting and affecting human history and our daily lives. As a result, everything is spiritual, and nothing is secular. What happens in the invisible world affects what happens in the visible world and vice versa. Furthermore, everyone is both a physical being with a body that is seen and a spiritual being with

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a soul that is unseen. Spiritual warfare is like gravity—unseen. It exists whether you believe in it, and it affects you every moment of every day. This worldview is on full display in this and other scenes of Elijah's life. When we rise from death and enter into God's Kingdom, we will do so with a physical body and a spiritual soul to live in both realms with human and divine beings as God's full forever family.

Before that day, the Bible reveals one final day of judgment by fire. The fire that judged and consumed the soldiers of Ahaziah is a foreshadowing of the White Throne Judgement and sentencing of evildoers to Hell. Just like king Ahaziah and his soldiers were judged with fire, Hell is "the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels".<sup>a</sup>

The person who teaches most about Hell in the Bible is Jesus Christ. In roughly 13% of His teaching, the themes of eternal judgment and Hell are present. Most of Jesus' teachings about judgment and Hell are in the form of parables, which are little stories that teach big truths. On 11 occasions, Jesus speaks of Hell in terms of Gehenna, which was an accursed and forsaken garbage dump that burned day and night. Jesus used this well-known horrifying sight where atrocities had been committed to refer to hell in terms of fire, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Some people wrongly believe that Satan rules Hell. However, when King Jesus returns to put down all kings (like Ahab and Ahaziah), He will sentence evildoers to Hell. Since Jesus is Lord over all, He also rules and reigns in Hell. Jesus Christ is both Lion and Lamb.<sup>b</sup> In Heaven, God's people experience Him only as Lamb. In Hell, everyone else will experience Him only as Lion. Revelation

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<sup>a</sup>Matthew 25:41 <sup>b</sup> Revelation 5:5-6

14:10-11 says, "...he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night."

**Dig Deeper.**

1. Elijah calls himself a "man of God". Look up other occasions to see who else has this title including Moses (Deuteronomy 33:1; Psalm 90:1), Samuel (1 Samuel 9:6-10), David (Nehemiah 12:24, 36), Elisha (2 Kings 4:7,9,16), and Timothy (1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 3:17)
2. If you want to learn more about God's judgment, along with Heaven and Hell, the sermon and notes for "Kingdom: God Reigns" are free at <https://realfaith.com/sermons/doctrine-11-kingdom-god-reigns/>. You can also visit the store to obtain the entire revised theological textbook *Doctrine*.
3. If you want to learn more about the unseen realm, the sermon series *Win Your War* at RealFaith.com is available, along with the corresponding book in the store.

**Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. Do you struggle with God's judgment of evildoers? Why? Why not?
2. Do you struggle to embrace the spiritual worldview of the Bible? Why? Why not?
3. If you could have been present for any one event in Elijah's life up to this point, which would you choose?

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NOTES

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**When Will Elijah Return to Earth for His  
End Times Ministry?**

**Scripture to Read:** 2 Kings 2:1-18

**Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:** *2 Kings 2:11*  
– ...chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven...

**Commentary:**

In the old western movies, it was common that the movie would end with the hero riding off into the sunset. This theme was so common that the idiom “ride off into the sunset” has become a well-known metaphor for a peaceful and restful future following a life lived battling against evil doers. In many westerns, the closing scene was the good guy wearing a white cowboy hat as he rode into the sunset. In this final scene of Elijah’s earthly life, we do not know if he was wearing a white cowboy hat, but we do know that the Lord sent a horse for him to ride off into the sunset.

God’s prophets had been told by revelation that the time had come for their fearless leader, the mountain man Elijah, to be taken to Heaven without tasting death. This had happened only once prior with Enoch. Genesis 5:24 (cf. Hebrews 11:5) says, “Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”

For the latter portion of his ministry, Elijah was blessed to have Elisha with him as a faithful friend and trustworthy assistant. The relationship between these men was like father and son. In fact, Elisha refers to him in this scene as “my father”.

We all have physical fathers. This is the man with whom we share a genetic physical connection and general longing to have a relationship with and loving help

from. We also have spiritual fathers. These are Christian leaders whom we share a spiritual connection with. In addition to physical parents, the Bible teaches that we also have spiritual parents. This is the heart of spiritual fathering and the kind of relationship that Elijah had with Elisha.

Once Elijah is taken to Heaven, Elisha faithfully carries forth the message and mission of spiritual father. Today, in business or ministry leadership, we would call this succession. The insight is that the best successor to a godly leader is someone who sees the previous leader as their father and learns from them to continue their work in new ways.

Reminiscent of the days of Moses when God parted the Red Sea, God then performs yet another miracle as the prophets of God look on. It must have felt something like a sports team watching the greatest player to ever play the sport take his last shot, or a legendary soldier firing his last round before walking off the field of battle forever. We read of Elijah at the Jordan River in which Jesus would later be baptized, "Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground."<sup>a</sup> Following Elijah's departure to Heaven, Elisha crosses back over the Jordan by striking the water with the cloak of Elijah, parting it yet again. It is evident that the anointing was transferred to the next generation of leadership.

In an emotional farewell scene where Elisha will say his last goodbye to Elijah, he makes one request, "When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.' And Elisha said, 'Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me.' And he

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<sup>a</sup>2 Kings 2:8



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said, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so.'<sup>a</sup> Elijah was empowered by the Holy Spirit. What Elisha is asking for is the same anointing. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is the power and presence of God to be at work for us, in us, through us, and around us. Elisha rightly knows that to continue supernatural ministry will require the Spirit of God.

In what is truly a first-class flight, God sends a chariot with horses to deliver Elijah home as he rides off into the sunset. For Elijah and the other prophets standing below, watching him fly away might have felt like a scene from a Christmas movie with flying reindeer transporting Santa Claus.

Throughout his life, Elijah honored God. As we have examined, he was not a perfect man, but he was a great "man of God." God honored Elijah with a very public homecoming unlike anyone before or since.

The reason Elijah battled ungodly kings on earth was because he was fighting for his God King in Heaven, Jesus Christ. Many years after Elijah went up, King Jesus came down. Jesus was empowered by the same Holy Spirit as Elijah, and the two men were so much alike that some thought Jesus was Elijah come back down to earth.<sup>b</sup>

On one occasion, Elijah did make a brief return trip to earth to a mount other than Carmel, what we now refer to as the Mount of Transfiguration. There, Jesus along with Peter, James, and John were visited by Moses and Elijah.<sup>c</sup> The inner circle of three disciples, along with the two great prophets, were present to see Jesus, who was living in humility, reveal Himself as God in glory.

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<sup>a</sup>2 Kings 2:9-10 <sup>b</sup> Matthew 16:13-15 <sup>c</sup> Matthew 17:1-13, cf. Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36

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It seems that Elijah will return to earth one last time to finish his ministry, preparing the way for Jesus' Second Coming. Malachi 4:5-6 says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." This prophecy has a double fulfillment because Jesus comes to earth not once, but twice.

In Jesus' first coming, this prophecy was fulfilled by John the Baptizer who prepared the way for Jesus' first coming. Numerous Scriptures reveal this fact.<sup>a</sup> The key is that John the Baptizer came, "in the spirit and power of Elijah"<sup>b</sup>, as he had the same Holy Spirit anointing as was given to Elisha. When asked, "'Are you Elijah?' He [John] said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet?' And he answered, 'No.'"<sup>c</sup> The similarities between Elijah and John the Baptizer are many. One, both men have a similar prophetic gifting and ministry.<sup>d</sup> Two, both men dressed in eccentric mountain man ways.<sup>e</sup> Three, they both lived in the wilderness.<sup>f</sup> Four, both men preached repentance of sin. Five, both men had battles with evil kings and queens.<sup>g</sup>

In Jesus' Second Coming, the prophecy of Malachi will be completed and fulfilled by Elijah. Prophesying the time leading up to Jesus' Second Coming, Revelation 11:3,6-13 says, "'...I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.' ...They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying [possibly Elijah], and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood

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<sup>a</sup> Matthew 11:11-15, 17:10-13; Mark 6:14-16; Luke 1:16-17; John 1:19-23

<sup>b</sup> Luke 1:17 <sup>c</sup> John 1:21 <sup>d</sup> Luke 1:17 <sup>e</sup> 2 Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4 <sup>f</sup> Matthew 3:1; 1 Kings 17:1, 19:4 <sup>g</sup> 1 Kings 18:17; Matthew 14:3

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and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire [possibly Moses, or Enoch along with Elijah never died]. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street...after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here!' And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell... and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven."

It is common among Bible scholars to identify one of these witnesses as Elijah. The prophecy is that of a prophet who would shut the sky and prevent rain from falling which corresponds exactly with Elijah. It makes sense that Elijah, one of God's toughest prophetic soldiers, would be spared death and sent back for the last battle on earth before the Second Coming of Jesus. We are told that both prophetic witnesses will be killed and will be the risen from death to vindicate his loyalty to the Lord. The second prophetic witness is believed by some to be either Enoch or Moses. Since Enoch did not die<sup>o</sup>, these are the only two men who escaped death, which leads some to conclude that their death would come in the last days. Others believe that the second witness is Moses because the ability to turn the waters to blood echoes the Exodus 7:14-25 account where Moses struck his staff in the Nile, and it turned to blood. One day, we will know for sure.

Until that day, as we see Elijah ascending into Heaven,

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<sup>o</sup>Genesis 5:14

we are to remember that it was a foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus' ascension after his rise from death to forgive sin. Acts 1:9-11 reports, "...he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'"

Some theologians have referred to the Second and Final Coming of King Jesus as the Parousia, "*Parousía* was in use as a technical term for the arrival of the emperor or other dignitary when he visited his subjects... This was a great event, sometimes marked by the striking of special coins or the erection of monuments. The word thus has overtones of greatness that should be kept in mind when it is used of Christ's return."<sup>24</sup>

On the day of Jesus' Second Coming following the crucifixion and resurrection of Elijah, all believers will experience the same kind of homecoming that he did when God took him up in the clouds. To encourage us about believers who have died (asleep) and our own death, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 says, "...we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet

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the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

Be encouraged. Your chariot is coming, and you will be riding off into the sunset.

### **Dig Deeper.**

1. Read the Appendix: Elijah Outside 1-2 Kings to see what else the Bible has to say about this prophetic mountain man of God.

### **Walk it out. Talk it out.**

1. Having studied the life of Elijah, what would be the top one or two things that the Holy Spirit has highlighted for you to learn from?
2. What are you most looking forward to with the return of Jesus Christ, resurrection of the dead, and rule of the Kingdom of God forever?
3. What are you thankful for after studying the life of Elijah?

## **NOTES**

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# APPENDIX

## Elijah Outside 1-2 Kings

Elijah is listed along with Moses as one of the most towering prophets in the Bible. In addition to his appearances in 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 2, which are the focus of this Bible study, he also appears on numerous occasions throughout the rest of Scripture.

A Bible dictionary says, “Elijah is the fourth most frequently cited OT figure in the NT (Moses, eighty times; Abraham, seventy-three times; David, fifty-nine times; Elijah, twenty-nine times). All but two of these references are in the Gospels (Rom 11:2; Jas 5:17). Only two of these citations are in John (1:21, 25). The remaining twenty-five references within the Synoptics are widely distributed, though most appear in at least two of the Synoptics. One text is unique to Matthew (11:14). Two are unique to Luke (1:17; 4:25–26). Some passages are shared by all of the Synoptics (Mt 16:14...Mk 8:28 and Lk 9:19; Mt 17:3–4, 10–12...Mk 9:4–5, 11–13 and Lk 9:30, 33). Some material is shared by Mark and Matthew (Mk 15:35–36...Mt 27:47, 49) and one passage by Mark and Luke (Mk 6:15...Lk 9:8). Allusions to Malachi also appear (Mk 1:2–3; Mt 10:11; Lk 7:27), as do references to a ministry of fire (Mt 3:11; Lk 9:54; 12:49), recalling Elijah’s ministry of judgment at Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18) and his calling fire down on the messengers of King Ahaziah (2 Kings 1).”<sup>25</sup>



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Elijah is also intimated numerous times.<sup>o</sup> However, for the sake of this Bible study, we will simply list the most prominent mentions of Elijah in the Scriptures. We will start with the Old Testament, and then examine the New Testament.

### Elijah in the Old Testament

*2 Chronicles 21:12–15 – And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, “Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father, ‘Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel and have enticed Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem into whoredom, as the house of Ahab led Israel into whoredom, and also you have killed your brothers, of your father’s house, who were better than you, behold, the Lord will bring a great plague on your people, your children, your wives, and all your possessions, and you yourself will have a severe sickness with a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the disease, day by day.’”*

*Malachi 4:4–6 – “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”*

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<sup>o</sup>e.g., Luke 4:25-27, 7:16, 9:8, 9:19, 9:62

Elijah in the New Testament

*Matthew 11:11–15 – Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*

*Matthew 16:13–15 (also in Mark 8:27–30; Luke 9:18–20) – Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”*

*Matthew 17:1–13 (also in Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36) And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” And when*

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*they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead." And the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.*

*Matthew 27:46–50 (also in Mark 15:34–36) – And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.*

*Mark 6:14–16 (also in Luke 9:7–9) – King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."*

*Luke 1:16–17 – "...And he [John the Baptizer] will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the*

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*disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."*

*Luke 4:24–26 – And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow..."*

*John 1:19–23 – And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."*

*Romans 11:1–6 – I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.*

## A STUDY OF ELIJAH

*James 5:17–18 – Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.*

*Revelation 11:3,6-13 – “...I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth”...They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying [possibly Elijah], and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire [possibly Moses, or Enoch along with Elijah never died]. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

# ENDNOTES

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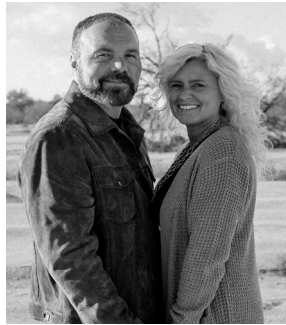
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With Pastor Mark, it's all about Jesus! He is a spiritual leader, prolific author, and compelling speaker, but at his core, he is a family man. Mark and his wife Grace have been married and doing vocational ministry together since 1993 and, along with their five kids, planted Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona as a family ministry.

Pastor Mark, Grace, and their oldest daughter, Ashley, also started RealFaith Ministries, which contains a mountain of Bible teaching for men, women, couples, parents, pastors, leaders, Spanish speakers, and more, which you can access by visiting **RealFaith.com** or downloading the **RealFaith app**.



With a master's degree in exegetical theology from Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon, he has spent the better part of his life teaching verse-by-verse through books of the Bible, contextualizing its timeless truths and never shying away from challenging, convicting passages that speak to the heart of current cultural dilemmas.

Together, Mark and Grace have co-authored *Win Your War* and *Real Marriage*, and he co-authored a father-daughter project called *Pray Like Jesus* with his daughter, Ashley. Pastor Mark has also written numerous other books including *Spirit-Filled Jesus*, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, *Vintage Jesus*, and *Doctrine*.

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