

The CHRONICLES of the KINGS

The Life and Times of Elijah

1 Kings 19:7-10

May 23, 2026

A few weeks ago, we looked at the life and reign of Ahab – King of Israel. Today, we will look at the life of his arch-enemy, Elijah, the Tishbite.

Elijah was from Gilead, on the east side of the Jordan. He sort of appears from nowhere going before Ahab to tell him there would be no rain in Israel for the foreseeable future, *“except at my word.”* That is the complete 1st interaction the Bible records between the 2 men.

By the Brook – 1 Kings 17:1-7:

After making his announcement, Elijah was instructed to make himself scarce by returning to the other side of the Jordan and hiding in the ravine where the Cherith stream ran.

The writer of Kings begins to differentiate Elijah from Ahab and the rest of Israel with this simple phrase, *“so he did what Yahweh had told him.”*

Here is where we pick up his story -

Elijah spent an unknown length of time camping by the stream. He had an abundant supply of water and true to his word, God sent ravens twice a day with food. Eventually, the drought took hold and the water in the stream dried up, so God told Elijah to move on.

Zarephath – 1 Kings 17:8-24

This time, he was to cross back over the Jordan and head northwest into Sidonian territory, to the town of Zarephath – which was on the coast, 13 miles north of Tyre – where God had *“commanded a widow to supply him with food.”* Again, Elijah obeyed and went to Zarephath.

After walking 100 miles +/-, Elijah finally arrived at the Zarephath town gate. There he saw a widow gathering sticks.

He asked her for a glass of water. As she turned toward the well, he added, *“and some bread, if you don’t mind.”*

She replied, *“You’re kidding right? I don’t have any bread, all I have is a handful of flour and a little oil. I’m preparing a final meal for my son and myself. After that, we’re going to die because we having nothing left.”*

“Don’t be afraid,” **Elijah said.** *“Do as you planned, but first, make me a small loaf of bread, then make something for yourself and your son. Yahweh, the God of Israel has promised that your flour and oil will not run out until the rains return.”*

She did as Elijah had told her. There was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. The jar of flour and jug of oil never ran out - in keeping with the word of Yahweh.

Sometime later, the widow’s son became ill and died. She went to Elijah, *“What do you have against me? Did you just come to remind of my sins and kill my son?”*

Elijah took the boy from her, carried him to the upper room of the house, laid him on the bed and then cried out to God, *“O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?”*

Then he stretched himself out on the boy 3 times crying, *“O LORD my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”*

Yahweh heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him. Elijah picked the boy up and returned him to his mother, "Look, your son is alive!"

Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of Yahweh you speak is the truth."

Mt. Carmel Showdown – 1 Kings 18

3 ½ years went by. Yahweh spoke again to Elijah and told him it was time to go see Ahab.

After Yahweh's great victory on Mount Carmel, the rain returned. As the rain fell, Yahweh's power came upon Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his belt and ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel (24 miles).

From Victory to Despair – 1 Kings 19

As we know, Ahab had had a no good, very bad day. When he told Jezebel all about it and she popped a blood vessel and declared that Elijah must die.

Jezebel's declaration had a profound effect on Elijah. For 3 ½ years he had lived life on the edge. He expended a great deal of physical, spiritual, and emotional energy. So instead of laughing off Jezebel's threat, Elijah was shaken to his core. His faith overwhelmed, this man of God, who not long ago had raised a boy from the dead, stared down a king, mocked the 450 prophets of Baal and out run a chariot, tucked tail and ran for his life.

In his panic he lost his handle on the power and provision of God and the further he ran the more fear and despair drove him. He ran from Jezreel all the way to Beersheba – the furthest town in southern Judah – 100 +/- miles away.

When he arrived, he left his servant and journeyed another day into the wilderness. Exhausted, he sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die, "I have had enough, Yahweh! Just kill me now!" then he fell asleep.

Suddenly, an Angel touched him, "Get up and eat." Elijah ate and fell asleep. The Angel came a 2nd time and repeated the command. Elijah ate and then "went in the strength of that food." He travelled 40 days and nights = 250 +/- miles, finally arriving at a cave on Mount Horeb (Mt Sinai) – "the Mountain of God" – where he spent the night.

Then Yahweh spoke to Elijah, "What are you doing here?"

Elijah: "I have been very zealous for You, El Shaddai. The Israelites have rejected You, broken down Your altars, and put Your prophets to death. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

Yahweh: "Go stand on the mountain. I'm going to pass by"

A strong wind blew – but Yahweh was not in the wind.

After the wind came a strong earthquake – but Yahweh was not in the earthquake.

After the earthquake came a fire – but Yahweh was not in the fire.

After the fire came the sound of a gentle whisper.

Elijah was awe-struck by the revelation of God in that sacred whisper and in response he covered his face.

Yahweh repeated his question, "Elijah, what are you doing here?"

Elijah repeated his response, "I have been very zealous for You, El Shaddai. The Israelites have rejected You, broken down Your altars, and put Your prophets to death. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

Elijah was deep in his depression and self-pity, but Yahweh would not allow him to remain there.

Pity-party over, Yahweh gave Elijah something to do, *"Go anoint Hazael king of Aram. Then go and anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi, king of Israel and Elisha, son of Shaphat, from Abel Meholah to be the prophet in your place. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu."*

But perhaps the most important thing Yahweh told Elijah was that he was not alone, *"By the way, there are 7000 in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal or kissed him."*

Elijah found Elisha plowing in the fields. He threw his cloak over Elisha and kept walking. After saying good-bye to his parents, Elisha severed all connection to his previous life, and became Elijah's attendant.

Ahaziah's no good, very bad, day – 2 Kings 1:1-17a

Ahaziah, was now king in Israel. He fell from the 2nd story of his palace in Samaria and was injured. Instead of seeking Yahweh, he instructed his men to go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of healing, at Ekron.

Yahweh instructed Elijah go meet the king's messengers on the road and tell them Ahaziah would die.

The messengers hurried back to Samaria and when they reported the news of his impending demise, Ahaziah wanted to know the identity of the, *"The guy on the road."*

After describing him (he wore a goat hair robe with a leather belt around his waist), Ahaziah became alarmed, so sent a captain and 50 men to go get Elijah. They did not return, so Ahaziah sent another captain and 50 men. Same result.

Ahaziah sent a 3rd captain and 50 men. This time the captain fell at Elijah's feet, *"Please don't kill us!"*

Yahweh told Elijah to go with the captain, so Elijah went before Ahaziah and repeated Yahweh's message. Ahaziah died.

A Chariot of Fire – 2 Kings 2:1-12

Elijah's ministry was drawing to a close. Together, he and Elisha went to Bethel and the company of prophets at Bethel went out to meet them. They asked Elisha, *"Do you know that Yahweh is going to take your master from you today?"*

"Yes, I know," he replied, "but I don't want to talk about it."

They made their way to Jericho and the company of prophets came to meet them. They asked Elisha the same question and he responded the same way, *"I don't want to talk about it."*

Elijah and Elisha moved on to the Jordan River, while the 50 prophets at Jericho stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped.

Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water and it parted. Both men crossed over on dry ground.

Elijah turned to Elisha, *"Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?"*

"Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied.

"You have made a difficult request. If you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours – otherwise not."

As they walked and talked together, suddenly horses of fire, pulling a chariot of fire appeared and separated the two men as Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Elisha saw and cried out, *"My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!"*

Elisha saw him no more and in grief, torn his clothes.

Elijah was a mighty man of God and he stood like a stone wall against idolatry. He was obedient and was not afraid to speak truth to power or tell the people what they needed to hear.

But the thing that moves me the most about his story is what happened after Mt Carmel.

Not Elijah's response to Jezebel, but God's response to Elijah.

He did not beat Elijah about the head, tell him to snap out of it or question his commitment to the cause.

He let him sleep, provided for his needs, gave him strength for the journey and allowed him to vent.

Yahweh was not in the whirlwind or the fire or the earthquake. Instead, he whispered words of comfort and strength to a tired and fearful soldier, gave him something to do and then gave him the ride of his life.

Not only was Elijah restored, but he is one of only two people that we know of who did not taste death. His temporary moments of despair and depression did not change God's opinion of him. This should give us great courage.

We would say a fiery chariot ride to heaven is a good ending to Elijah's story, but it is not the end of his story – that comes nearly 1000 years later.

Matthew 17:1-3 - *After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.*

Ellen White (DA 422.2): *Bearing the weakness of humanity, and burdened with its sorrow and sin, Jesus walked alone in the midst of men. As the darkness of the coming trial pressed upon Him, He was in loneliness of spirit, in a world that knew Him not. Even His loved disciples, absorbed in their own doubt and sorrow and ambitious hopes, had not comprehended the mystery of His mission. He had dwelt amid the love and fellowship of heaven; but in the world that He had created, He was in solitude. Now heaven had sent its messengers to Jesus; not angels, but men who had endured suffering and sorrow, and who could sympathize with the Saviour in the trial of His earthly life. Moses and Elijah had been collaborators with Christ. They had shared His longing for the salvation of men. Moses had pleaded for Israel and Elijah had known loneliness of spirit, as for three years and a half of famine he had borne the burden of the nation's hatred and its woe. Alone he had stood for God upon Mount Carmel. Alone he had fled to the desert in anguish and despair. These men, chosen above every angel around the throne, had come to commune with Jesus concerning the scenes of His suffering, and to comfort Him with the assurance of the sympathy of heaven. The hope of the world, the salvation of every human being, was the burden of their interview.*

Until Next Time.....