

What Doest Thou Here?

1 Kings 19:9



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FOCAL Read Responsively 1 Kings 19:9^{KJV} And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, **What doest thou here, Elijah?**

Our Lord often asks us questions, not because He doesn't know the answer, but because He wants us to know the answer. **God knoweth the secrets of the heart (Psalm 44:21)**, and **all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do (Hebrews 4:13)**. When Adam sinned the Lord asked him **“Where art thou?” (Genesis 3:9)** because He wanted Adam to examine his life. Why was Adam – up until recently covered with the glory of God – now hidden and covered with pitiful fig leaves? Sin led him where he was. Sin always takes us from a mountaintop to a valley.

Why was Elijah in this cave? Here is one of God's most mighty prophets, a man that prayed and brought a three year drought on unbelieving Israel. This man stood on Mount Carmel and, in the power of God, faced down 450 false preachers. This was literally a *mountaintop experience*. Once Israel saw these prophets exposed for what they were, Elijah said:

1 Kings 18:40 ... Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

Elijah thought that this one great catastrophic event would change the nation of Israel, drawing her back to

KJV All texts KJV, unless otherwise noted. Any other translations used are used for the purpose of clarity.

the Lord. Did it? No, it didn't. I'm sure that Elijah – like any of us – expected that the nation would rouse itself and throw out the evil government that sponsored Baal worship. It just didn't happen. The Bible says that:

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:2-3^{NIV} .. Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.

Elijah took his eyes off of the Lord. This mighty man of God let the foolish evil of Jezebel scare him, and he literally ran for his life. He ran away from Jezebel, his servant, and showed yellow for all the world to see. Once Elijah realized what he had done he was about a day's journey into the wilderness. That's significant.

ILLUSTRATE WILDERNESS When Abraham tried to have a child by Hagar his maid his wife Sarah chased her out of the camp. Hagar went into the wilderness to die (Genesis 16:7) and God found her there. Joseph was cast into a pit in the wilderness by his jealous brothers (Genesis 37:22), and slavers carried him away – but God found him in the wilderness. When Moses ran away from home he ran to the deserts of Midian, but the Lord called him to service “in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush” (Exodus 3:2). The Lord often seeks and speaks to people while they, discouraged and alone, are in the wildernesses of life. While in the wilderness Elijah prayed to die, saying:

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:4 ... It is enough; now, O

LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

Elijah said, “Lord, I've failed You. I'm no better than any one else. I should have done better.” Did the Lord take Elijah's life? Did the Lord chastise Elijah for his failure? No, not at all. The Bible says that as he lay despondent in the desert that God sent an angel to him to feed him.

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:5-6 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. {6} And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

Depression and low self esteem takes the life out of you. The Lord allowed Elijah to lay and rest, then had him eat again. After the second meal the Bible says:

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:8 ... {Elijah} arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

God performed a miracle to get Elijah to that Cave in Horeb. When the Lord asked “What doest thou here Elijah” the Lord wanted Elijah to examine his life. “Why are you here, Elijah? What is your purpose in being? Are you doing what I want you to do, or are you on your own path right now?”

The Bible says of the Church that it is founded upon the

Rock of Christ. Jesus said:

Matthew 16:18 ... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Satan cannot destroy the local Church. There are only one thing that can destroy the Church, and that is a willful disobedience to do what God says do. The more billy goats there are in the local Church the weaker it becomes. These are people who, upon hearing the Word of God, say “I know what You're saying God, BUT”. They strive against God. Their eyes are on their lives, and not on what the Lord wants them to do.

Why are you here? If you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and have been saved, then you are here to share the **good news** of the Gospel with others. Like Elijah you are called to stand against the spirit of the age while you stand with God.

ILLUSTRATE NEWS The Gospel of salvation is filled with **Good “News”**. The Gospel was prophesied in the Old Testament, but fulfilled in the **NEW Testament**. Jesus Christ shed His Blood on Calvary so that the believer could approach God in a **NEW and living way (Hebrews 10:20)**. Those who believe in Christ are given a **NEW birth**, which makes us **NEW creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17)**. The Christian is given a **NEW name** by God our Savior (**Revelation 2:17**) and a **NEW song** to sing (**Revelation 14:3**). We walk in **NEWness of life (Romans 6:4)** following the **NEW Commandment** to “love one another” (**John 13:34**). Everyone who is

truly saved by faith in Christ is under the **NEW Management of the Holy Spirit of God (Galatians 5:25)**, and as God's people we are headed toward the **NEW Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2)**, bound for the Promised Land in Glory. In the last chapter of the Bible our Lord Jesus says, “**Behold, I make all things new (Revelation 21:5)**”.

You are a miracle of God if you are a Christian, remade and empowered, and you have a job to do. **What doest thou here, Elijah?** You are here to tell others the NEWS, the GOOD NEWS of salvation, that **whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved**.

The Still, Small Voice

FOCAL 1 Kings 19:9 **And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?**

Though I admit it would be nice to hide in a cave with God, that's not why the Lord left us on this earth. Elijah was hurt, suicidal, and useless to God in this state. The Lord asked him, “**What doest thou here, Elijah?**” and that great old Prophet said:

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:10 ... **I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.**

How many times do you see the word “I” in Elijah's question?

Note the number of times the word “I” appears in Elijah's statement. Elijah focused on God was a power to be reckoned with. Elijah standing on Mount Carmel looking toward Heaven could not be defeated, but Elijah hidden in a cave looking at his own life was easily cast down. Elijah said, “**they seek my life, to take it away**”. I have no doubt that they sought Elijah's life while he stood on Mount Carmel. But since Elijah was focused on God at that time he was invincible. Now he is just scared. The Lord told Elijah:

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:11a And he said, **Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD.** And, behold, **the LORD passed by,**

Elijah was to leave the cave and stand at the mouth of the cave while God demonstrated something to him. The Bible says that Elijah obeyed God. What did he see?

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:11b-12 and a great and strong wind rent 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: {12} And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire**

The LORD – this is the Eternal Name of God, the **Great I AM** – caused three terrifying things to happen. He

caused the mountains to tear in pieces through perhaps a tornado. He caused a terrific earthquake to break up the land. And perhaps because of the earthquake the Lord caused fire – perhaps molten lava – to cast out terrific heat. There are *three terrible displays* of power, but the Bible says “**the Lord was not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire**”. Where was God?

In the **still, small voice**.

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:12b – 13 ... and after the fire a still small voice. {13} And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. ...

God caused the catastrophes, but He wasn't IN them. **God wasn't in Jezebel as she threatened the life of the Prophet.** God wasn't in Jezebel's servants as they blustered and threatened to kill this man of God.

God was in the still, small Voice.

Shocked Hearts Do Not Usually Turn To God

We often think that – if God would but send a terrific catastrophe on the land – that the people would turn back to Him. Elijah thought that the killing of 450 prophets of Baal would bring Israel around. He thought that the rain that he prayed for would show Israel they needed to cast out Jezebel and return to God. Dear friends, the Word of God says:

Jeremiah 17:9-10 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? {10} I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

The heart of man may *temporarily* be swayed by disaster, but like Pharaoh, the shocked heart does not stay in tune with God.

When Jesus and His disciples wanted to pass through Samaria but were prevented they said:

Luke 9:54 ... Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did?

Elijah called fire from Heaven to consume the sacrifice on the altar, but God did not send fire from Heaven upon the people. The Lord told the disciples:

Luke 9:55-56 ... Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. {56} For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. ...

God did not come to this earth to kill people, but to save lives. There is coming a day when God will return to avenge Himself against those who will not hear the Gospel. At a terrible battle the Bible says that Jesus will return:

Revelation 19:12-16 His eyes were as a flame of fire,

and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. {13} And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. {14} And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. {15} And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. {16} And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

That day is coming. But God during this Age speaks to men to convert them. He – **through the still small Voice**- leads as many as will to the Cross of Calvary.

ILLUSTRATE I remember when the attacks of **September 11, 2001** occurred people flooded into the local Churches. So many Christians thought that this singular disastrous event would change America for the good. A dear friend of mine was on staff at Bellevue Baptist Church during that time. He said that the attendance at Bellevue doubled for a few weeks, then things went back to “business as usual”.

Catastrophic events do not change hearts, and neither do secular tools. When the movie “**The Passion of The Christ**” by Mel Gibson came out people flocked to watch it. Everyone predicted that there would be a high number of people saved as a result of this movie. Dear friends, God is not in the wind, the earthquake, or the

fire.

Less than 1/2 of 1% of those who watched the movie "The Passion Of The Christ" were swayed toward Christianity. In fact, as the movie played at one theater an armed robber held up the office and stole the days ticket sales.

What doest thou here, Elijah? If people are going to be changed the people of God – His Elijah's – *must come out of the cave and carry the Word to the lost and dying.* Before Jesus Christ left this earth He told His disciples:

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: {20} Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

We are to GO, to TEACH, and to require every believer be BAPTIZED. We are to leave the confines of the Church walls and go out to **all nations**. I heard not too long ago of a local Church that forbids people of other colors from attending its services. This is blasphemous, and totally against the Word of the Lord. We are to GO believing that God is able.

Never Lose The Wonder

ILLUSTRATE Rodney "Gypsy" Smith was a great evangelist of the early 20th century. He never had any

theological training, but after teaching himself to reach and write he trusted what God wrote – and acted on it. Gypsy used to sing at some point during his sermons. Someone once told him that he could sing better "**if you sing from your diaphragm**". Gypsy replied, "**I don't want to sing from my diaphragm – I want to sing from my heart**". He preached well into his 80s. Someone once asked him, "**What is the secret of your long ministry**". Gypsy replied, "**I never lost the wonder of it all**".

Jesus illustrated faith one day by using a little child. The Bible says:

Matthew 18:3-4 ... Verily I say unto you, **Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.** {4} **Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**

I have seen little children spend hours watching ants work on an ant hill. We, however, either step on them or poison them. Little children don't over analyze things. They trust, and do. Little children make mistakes, and are disobedient, but they are never puffed up.

We who are God's are called to be like little children. Not childISH but childLIKE. Salvation is a wonder, communicated by wonders.

It is a wonder that God would care enough to save anyone, much less me. Salvation is a wonderful mystery.

The one who has been saved is truly changed at the heart. The Bible says that:

Romans 5:5-6 ... the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. {6} For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

The **love of God is shed abroad in the hearts** of the saved. God blesses us for a purpose. We have purposes. **What doest thou here, Elijah?** We are not called and saved to stay in a cave. As much as I love the assembly of the Saints, I must go out into the world and do as God directs.

Someone once said that **there are two stages to every movement: the apostolic and the mechanistic.** Those who still have the wonder follow in the footsteps of the Apostles. Those who have lost the wonder lose sight of God, and focus on the ME and the I, or else expect OTHERS to do the work.

Elijah had lost the wonder.

After giving Elijah a wonderful display of power followed by the **still small Voice of God** Elijah **wrapped his face in his mantle.** Like the angels he covered his face rather than look on the immense holy power of God. God asked Elijah a *second* time, **“What doest thou here, Elijah?”**, and Elijah refused to change his tune. Just as he answered before this great man said *verbatim* the same thing he said before:

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:14 ... I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Nothing changed. He was still focused on himself, and on his life. He thought he was by himself. He said, **“I, only I, am left, and they seek to take my life”**. Elijah heard the **still, small Voice of God**, but was no longer responsive to it. How did God reply? The Lord told Elijah:

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:15-16 ... Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: {16} And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

Someone else is going to take your place, Elijah. God was going to have Elijah anoint a farmer named Elisha take his place. But I want you to notice what God told Elijah *very carefully*:

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:15-16 ... Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: {16} And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel:

As **Matthew Henry** notes:

“Well,” says God, “be content; it is all in good time; judgments are prepared for those scorers, though they are not yet inflicted; the persons are pitched upon, and shall now be nominated, for they are now in being, who shall do the business.” 1. **“When Hazeal comes to be king of Syria, he shall make bloody work among the people (2 Kings 8:12) and so correct them for their idolatry.”** 2. **“When Jehu comes to be king of Israel he shall make bloody work with the royal family, and shall utterly destroy the house of Ahab, that set up and maintained idolatry.”**

God had a plan. God always has a plan. As **C.H. Spurgeon** once said:

“God is too good to be unkind. He is too wise to be confused. If I cannot trace His hand, I can always trust His heart.”

There are many times when God's children **cannot trace His hand**. He is much more than we are. Yet, dear friend, never lose hope. Never lose the wonder of your faith. Keep on telling others about Jesus. Keep on reading and meditating on His Holy Word. Keep on doing good. Don't worry about what others are doing. Don't worry about the evil. Trust Him, love Him, and obey Him.

When Elijah lost his focus, he was of no longer any use to the Lord on this earth. Though the Lord would take

him from this world by a chariot of fire, he would nonetheless GO HOME. God ended His discussion by telling Elijah:

CONTEXT 1 Kings 19:18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

“It's all under control, Elijah. You're not by yourself. There are *seven thousand others* who are working with you. I'm still with you, for I will never forsake you”.

God is in control. Never lose the wonder of your faith. And if you have never met the Lord Jesus Christ, may I encourage you to hear His Words:

Romans 10:9-11 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. {10} For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. {11} As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

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