

What Are You Doing Here?

1 Kings 19:11-13

Elijah is on the Run ...

Elijah is running for his life! This flight begins immediately after an unprecedented spiritual victory. Though he emerged as the champion, he certainly doesn't look like one now as he flees from the city. What exactly transpired?

Just before this, the Prophet Elijah had posted an unconventional challenge on King Ahab's behalf. A heated debate had arisen concerning the true God. King Ahab placed his faith in the god Baal, while Elijah stood firmly for Jehovah. Neither would yield, so Elijah proposed a challenge.

"Gather your 450 prophets," he declared. "We'll set up two altars with wood and everything needed, including a bull for each of us. But we won't light the fires ourselves—we'll let God do that."

King Ahab found these terms fair, and the contest began. At daybreak, everyone assembled, and Elijah, showing courtesy, offered the first turn to Ahab's prophets.

The prophets of Baal began their ritual, dancing and prancing, even cutting themselves as their liturgical practices required. They performed every necessary ritual to summon Baal to ignite their sacrificial altar. Yet nothing happened. Nine o'clock passed, then ten, eleven, and noon—still no fire appeared.

Elijah couldn't resist some playful taunting: "What's the matter? Perhaps Baal is out to lunch since he's not responding! Take more time if you need it, but you might want to shout louder!"

The prophets of Baal prayed with increasing desperation. There was plenty of dramatic activity, but no fire appeared. At three o'clock, Elijah declared, "Enough theatrics—it's time for the true God to act!"

As Baal's prophets stepped aside, Elijah took center stage. He arranged his bull and wood on the altar. Then, to prove there was no deception, he drenched everything in water. Stepping back to clear the area, he offered a brief 30-second prayer—and Jehovah God responded with fire from heaven!

Afterward, he addressed the crowd: "Those 450 prophets—they're no longer needed." They were then put to death. (This detail comes directly from scripture—it's not an embellishment.) Elijah had just witnessed a magnificent divine miracle. In faith, he had challenged both the king and the followers of a popular deity—and prevailed! With the Almighty's help, Elijah stood victorious in the center of it all.

The Celebration Cuts Short

The victory celebration proved brief. Word reached Jezebel, King Ahab's wife, and she was livid. Her fury led her to place a bounty on Elijah's head. She sent a messenger with this threat: "Within 24 hours, you'll be as dead as the prophets you killed. This I swear."

Elijah Finds Shade

So Elijah runs, covering at least a day's journey. Exhausted and unable to continue, he rests beneath a broom tree and begins to pray. Listen to his words: "O Lord, take my life. I am no better than my ancestors."

Have you experienced a 'broom tree' day? It's that moment of "woe is me, I'm all alone, nobody loves me, there's no use in trying" feelings. It might last a day, a week, or even a month.

Most of us have either experienced this ourselves or supported someone going through such an episode. Under the broom tree, life appears one-dimensional—hopeless. It's a lonely, tormenting place. Perhaps you're under attack right now, sitting beneath your own tree, dazed and confused, thinking, "Lord, I've had enough. I can't endure this much longer!"

Here's what you need to know: God remains with you, even when you're running! God saw Elijah in his despair and sent a personal angel to serve as his butler and cook!

The angel touches him and provides freshly baked cake and water, not once but twice. Then comes the instruction: "Get up and eat—you have a long journey ahead." I believe the Lord's instructions to the angel before sending him to Elijah were:

"Be patient with him! He's hurting, confused, full of questions. He thinks he wants to die, but he really wants to live. He feels useless, at the end of his rope. But I still love him! I have much more work for him to do in My kingdom. Soon I'll awaken his spirit. But for now, feed him well—refresh him!"

Elijah rises, eats, and once again, he's on the run.

Elijah Finds a Cave

Elijah's destination is Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. The journey takes forty days, sustained only by the angel's food he ate beneath the broom tree. Mount Horeb, made famous by Moses, serves as a meeting place between humanity and the divine. He seeks it out because of its sacred significance.

But for now, he simply runs. One day becomes two, then three. He keeps moving through days 10, 11, and 12. Days 25, 26, and 27 pass behind him, and still he's not hungry. Days 37, 38, and 39 give way to day 40, when Mount Horeb finally appears.

Consider this: Elijah travels 40 days to reach God's mountain, but upon arrival, rather than ascending to the summit for a divine encounter, he settles for a cave! This spiritual journey of such magnitude shouldn't end in a cave!

Rocky Balboa would be disappointed! The story should read differently. Elijah should charge up the mountain accompanied by a 5,000-voice angelic choir as the clouds part to reveal glorious sunshine. Instead... he retreats to a cave.

In the Cave

The cave represents darkness and limited vision. When you lose your vision, you lose your sense of purpose, and when purpose vanishes, passion follows. Once passion disappears, you spend considerable time running!

Some run for days, others for weeks, months, or years. People seeking to regain vision, purpose, and passion keep running, searching for answers. Like Elijah, you might find yourself at the edge of God's mountain, within arm's reach of the Creator Himself, yet still seeking refuge in darkness.

Perhaps you know what it feels like to be in a cave. You've journeyed to God's mountain where joy should overflow, where His presence should envelope you, but instead, God feels distant. While others around you experience heaven's touch, you feel only depths of despair.

This experience leads you to question your relationship with the Almighty. You doubt your calling, your anointing, wondering if you've somehow missed God's path. You ask yourself: Have I been disobedient? Did God turn right while I turned left? Why can't I understand what's happening to me?

Here's the good news: God remains very close to your cave. You haven't backslidden! You haven't been disobedient! God hasn't forsaken you!

Your calling remains! Your anointing persists! God hasn't changed His mind about using you. This cave represents a temporary condition.

The cave forces us to pause and take spiritual inventory. Here, we must answer crucial questions:

- Am I moving with the anointing or merely going through motions?
- Am I acting and living on God's word?
- Have I lost my God-given vision?

With the right response, the cave becomes a womb for new vision and anointing. You'll emerge with renewed purpose and unquenchable passion for God. What appeared to be

Elijah's tomb, where his life and ministry might end, became the launching pad for his next phase of ministry.

But for now, Elijah remains in the cave. He lacks the emotional resilience to stand in the open awaiting the Almighty's appearance. Then God makes His presence known:

- A violent wind tears through the ridges, roaring through canyons and over the mountaintop. Stones and boulders crash against each other. But God was not in the wind.
- An earthquake follows, causing massive rockslides and fissures everywhere. But God wasn't in the earthquake either.
- Then comes a furious fire, consuming all vegetation on the mountain. But God wasn't in the fire either.

Finally, it happens. After the wind dies down, the earth stops trembling, and the fire extinguishes, absolute stillness descends upon the mountain. The contrast between chaos and silence proves both uncanny and unsettling. In that intense silence comes a whisper—God's voice.

Sometimes we need advice, which can come from spouses, close friends, or spiritual advisers. But occasionally, we need more than advice—we need a WORD from the Lord!

We search extensively for "a word." We'll travel to the latest "Holy Ghost meeting" with its wind and noise. We'll seek out the nearest prophet with thunder and earthquakes. We'll visit local churches where fire burns hot. We journey far and wide for our "Word."

But God wants you to pause. He might lead you into a cave if necessary. He wants you to find solitude, quieting all distractions so He can remind you that His still, small voice speaks through His written Word! Will you let Him speak to you today through the Logos—the written Word?

Elijah hears the commotion from inside his cave. Scripture tells us he "pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave."

Having survived the hurricane, earthquake, and fire, Elijah waits patiently. He positions himself to hear God's wisdom. After a 40-day spiritual journey, surely this message would prove profound! Finally, the word from on high comes: "Elijah, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?"

God doesn't want you hiding in a cave when you should be standing against your Jezebel! What are you doing here? Leave that dark, cold place and return to your post!

You weren't created to dwell in caves! Though you might be in one now, ensure it remains temporary. It's time to transition from cave-dweller to God's anointed. Emerge from your cave spreading oil! Come forth with fresh fire, renewed vision, new passion, and restored purpose.

What Are You Doing Here? From Victory to Cave

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Key Kingdom Principle

Even after great spiritual victories, we may find ourselves in caves of isolation, but God meets us there with purpose and transformation.

Elijah's Journey Stages

1. The Victory

- Challenge to Baal's prophets
- Demonstration of God's power
- Fire from heaven
- Complete triumph
- Unprecedented success

2. The Flight

- Jezebel's threat
- Sudden fear
- Rapid retreat
- Physical exhaustion
- Spiritual depletion

3. The Broom Tree

- Place of despair
- Divine provision
- Angelic ministry
- Physical refreshment
- God's patience

4. The Cave

- 40-day journey
- Mountain of God
- Place of hiding
- Limited vision
- Divine encounter

The Cave Experience

Characteristics:

- Loss of vision
- Diminished purpose
- Fading passion
- Spiritual questioning
- Temporary condition

God's Response:

- Not in the wind
- Not in the earthquake
- Not in the fire
- In the still, small voice
- Personal encounter

Steps to Restoration

1. Spiritual Inventory

- Examine motives
- Check anointing
- Review vision
- Assess passion
- Evaluate purpose

2. Divine Encounter

- Quiet distractions
- Listen intentionally
- Receive God's word
- Accept direction
- Embrace change

Remember

The cave is not your tomb—it's your womb. What seems like an ending can become a launching pad for your next phase of ministry. God's question "What are you doing here?" isn't a rebuke but an invitation to emerge with renewed purpose, fresh vision, and restored passion.

