

**June 6, 2021 James Gallaher**  
**Prelude: Preparation for Sabbath**

The word "prelude" is defined as an action or event serving as an introduction to something more important. It's a building of excitement. A prelude begins movement toward something much greater like Moses' forty days on the mountain before given the 10 commandments and Jesus being led into the desert before His ministry began. God prepares individuals. God is preparing our church. What is needed before and most importantly is a moment of restoration in our own lives! Especially after this past year of struggles, God offers His hand of healing.

**I Kings 19:1-4** *Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."*

Israel's King Ahab and Jezebel brought idols to the people of Israel. God used His prophet, Elijah, to do great things against Ahab. Elijah sees His God bring deliverance and provision. Yet, after such deliverance, Elijah finds himself running from the threat of Jezebel. Why would he react that way? Elijah had a nature like our own.

**James 5:17** *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.*

Here is this great prophet, exhausted, fearful, completely alone, and pleading with God for this own demise. The victory over the idol worshippers did not have the desired outcome. Elijah expected King Ahab and Jezebel to turn to God and yet they only threatened death. It's interesting that this downcast time in Elijah's life immediately follows what was perhaps the greatest miracle he had ever seen. Surely Elijah would see what God had already done and believe. Yet, Elijah was a man with a nature much like our own.

Do our own past victories from God seem distant from our troubles of today? Elijah could see all the things God had already done, surely he wouldn't believe that God would now abandon him. Elijah was one of the most significant prophets of the Old Testament and yet finds himself alone and in the desert, begging God to take his life.

Elijah's life had been marked by hardship: emotional, physical, spiritual, yet was called by God and used by God. He watched his people reject God over and over. He spent most of his time in ministry hiding in the desert. Suddenly, it makes more sense why this exhausted, discouraged prophet would make such a request.

How would we respond to Elijah? Truthful? Helpful? Condemning his lack of faith? God is faithful but you are wavering in faith? I told you so?

How did God respond? God refused to take his life. He doesn't correct him. **1 Kings 19:5** *Then he lay down and fell asleep under a broom tree; but behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, "Arise, eat!"* God listened to Elijah's cries and then sent an angel to comfort him. Then He feeds him... then more rest. God comforts us in every situation. We must not forget that we serve a compassionate, loving God, and a God who is sympathetic to our weaknesses. He is also a God of peace.

**1 Kings 19:7** *But the angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him, and said, "Arise, eat; because the journey is too long for you."*

Often, we misunderstand the Bible to say that God will not give you more than you can handle. We become self-sufficient in our efforts when we see it this way. **1 Corinthians 10:13** *No temptation has overtaken you except something common to mankind; and God is faithful, so He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.* God will provide! When God gives you what you can't handle, He will provide! It's not about trying harder, praying harder, doing more. The angel says the journey is too hard but God has provision, just trust Him.

We all have impossible things in our lives. We should never say that God will not give us more than we are able but that God will take us through the impossible situations if we rely on Him instead of ourselves. **2 Corinthians 1:8-10** *For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of our affliction which occurred in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead, who rescued us from so great a danger of death, and will rescue us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us.* God will provide the way through those difficult things.

In Elijah's greatest moment of weakness, God provides rest, comfort, and replenishment. At no point did God fix His theology. God restores Him. God doesn't want us to do this life alone. **Philippians 4:13** *I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*

**1 Kings 19:8** *So he arose and ate and drank, and he journeyed in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.* It was about 260 miles and should have taken 10 or 11 days, not 40. Possibly, in that moment of anguish, Elijah wandered (in the same desert the Israelites wandered for 40 years). Alone, broken, and fearful, Elijah wandered until he got back to the last place God had spoken to his people.

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What difficult relationship, situation, or question is heavy on your mind?

What big challenge are you facing that you can't see beyond? How can you let God be in the midst?

What unknown answer are you seeking?

Do you have God's provision for the task ahead?