

## December 9

**Scriptures:** Read 1 Kings 19

**Key Verse:** "... The Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice."  
(1 Kings 19:12)

### Overview

When Ahab reported to Jezebel all that had happened, there was no change in her heart toward God. Elijah would have hoped for such a change, but Jezebel became more infuriated than ever, because her very own prophets of Baal had been executed. She may have thought that Elijah's death would vindicate her god. This was not an empty threat, for she was powerful enough to have her desire accomplished; so Elijah ran for his life.

Elijah headed south, as far away as he could get from that wicked woman. After reaching Beersheba, the southernmost city of Judah, he travelled for another day into the desert. In his discouragement, he sat under a desert shrub and wished to die. He had expected a nationwide revival after the great demonstration of God's power on Mount Carmel. Instead he discovered that Jezebel was still propagating Baalism, probably more fervently than ever before. He felt himself fruitless and, since the purpose of his life was unfulfilled, he asked God to take him. Instead, the Lord sent an angel to comfort and strengthen Elijah, for the Lord was not finished with him yet.

Just as God had sustained Moses without food for forty days and forty nights upon Mount Sinai, and also Jesus in the wilderness, so He would do for His servant Elijah. The meal prepared for him by the heavenly messenger gave him the strength to go through the desert for forty days until he reached Mount Horeb (Sinai), about 400 kilometers south of Beersheba.

It was there that God had made a covenant with Israel, and there Elijah told God that the covenant had failed, for Israel was not faithful to Him. He felt that he alone was truly loyal to God and that Israel deserved a more severe judgment than the three years of drought and famine they had just experienced. Unlike Moses, who pleaded for God's mercy upon Israel, Elijah stood to condemn them and plead against them. He wanted to see God use His great strength to punish Israel (cf. Romans 11:2-4).

God demonstrated to Elijah that He was indeed capable of bringing judgment through the natural elements — the wind, earthquake, and fire. But in each case, God was not present in it. This may have signified that it was not God's will to destroy them at that time, for He was more merciful than Elijah (cf. 2 Samuel 24:14). God, however, was present in the still small voice, something Elijah probably did not expect, especially after he had seen God send the great consuming fire on Mount Carmel.

Elijah was to learn that it was not always God's way to get His message across with terror (cf. Hebrews 12:18-24); He can speak quietly into the ears of those who have an ear to hear (cf. Isaiah 30:21). Our Lord Jesus represented that still small voice. He was the meek, mild, and usually soft-spoken Messiah, but He was able to do more of a work in the hearts of mankind through His Spirit than any dramatic demonstration could do (Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 12:18-21).

When Elijah later appeared, speaking with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-3), he fully understood God's plan of mercy and grace for the salvation of world.

God encouraged Elijah by telling him he was not alone; there were 7,000 in Israel, a remnant who had remained loyal to him, but for His enemies there would indeed be judgment at the hands of Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha. Unlike the others, Elisha would not bring judgment with the physical sword, but with the sword of the Spirit and the prophetic words of his mouth (e.g. Hosea 6:5; 2 Kings 8:1, famine).

God also encouraged Elijah that his work would be continued. God will always raise up someone to witness for Him, and Elisha was honoured to be chosen as Elijah's student-prophet. He understood what it meant when Elijah threw his mantle around him and immediately showed his enthusiasm at the call of God upon his life by preparing a celebration meal of his oxen, cooked upon his burning ploughing equipment. This showed his willingness to give up his profession and possessions in order to follow God.

## **Prayer**

O Lord, You have spoken to us in that "still small voice", and in Your Holy Word. Give us ears to listen and hearts and wills to obey. We pray this with confidence because Christ dwells in us by faith, and He pleased You in everything He did.