

## Elijah 3 – Mount Horeb

These are the leaders notes from the Kielder Bible Study Group for the meeting that was held on 15th May 2012

We continue our Studies – on the life and times of Elijah – A Man of faith, fire and power, loosely following the relevant chapters in 1 and 2 Kings

Read Psalm 103

V14 & V19 are ones that struck out for me

So recap on our friend Elijah

- The drought had now run for over 3 years
- God set up a confrontation between Elijah and the he 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah
- On top of Mount Carmel
- Each to sacrifice a bull, not to use any fire
- Only the real God would burn up the sacrifice
- The prophets of Ball & Asherah try for 6 hours
- Elijah rebuilds the altar using 12 stones reflecting all the tribes, even though the kingdom was now split in two.
- Pours water all over the sacrifice – so much so pools form in the troughs round the altar
- No clouds in the sky
- 1 kings 18 v38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.
- The people responded along with Elijah by killing the false prophets
- Ahab goes back home to Jezerbel and Verse 44 is lovely bit of irony telling Ahab to hurry before he gets stuck in the mud due to the rain.

So the story carries on, but before we do so we need to remember that Kings was written as a history book for the Jews as a history of their kings. It only records the interactions of others to provide the context of the story of the Kings. So our story of Elijah has some gaps in it as it would not have been relevant to a king.

We pick the story up with Ahab telling Queen Jezerbel that Elijah has just helped kill her favourite 400 prophets of Asherah along with the 450 prophets of Baal.

But before we read any of this times passage lets just read the last part of chapter 18 v45-46 again. So Elijah has just run 18 miles and overtaken Ahab.

Q Why do we think Elijah has run to be present at the kings court? A Could have been because he thought God would use him to restart temple worship

Q Did God tell him to do this? A It is not recorded that this was the case

1 Kings 19 v1-5 (first part)

So Jezebel said she would kill Elijah and he ran for his life to Beersheba – Beersheba was around ninety miles from mount Carmel. Elijah was evidently feeling fed up and depressed  
Q Can we think for four reasons why this might be ?

1. Physical and emotional exhaustion
2. Loneliness
3. Disappointment and Frustration
4. Blurred spiritual vision – What he thought God's plan was, was not quite the case.

Has anyone suffered from Depression – Do they want to talk about it?

1 Kings 19 5-8

In this case God offers some remedies for depression

1. Assure him of his love
2. Provide for his physical needs

Elijah goes to Mount Horeb – this is around 250 miles from Beersheba mentioned in v3

Q Can we think of other occasions when Mount Horeb is mentioned ?

Exodus 3 1-12 Moses and the burning bush

Exodus 17 5-7 - Moses strikes the rock and water comes out

1 Chronicles 16 1-3 & 7-36

There are some lovely verses here and hopefully they will help us understand the next section of our passage in Kings

1 Kings 19 9-10

In verse 9 the angel asks Elijah – What are you doing here? Why did they ask that?  
A Elijah had probably decided to go to Horeb himself without consulting God.

Q Elijah says he is the only prophet left in v10 – Q Is he is actually saying this??

That he is the only person willing to stand up to the evil King Ahab, as we will see in a few verses

1 Kings 19 11-14

Q What is the significance of v12 God being the the “gentle whisper “?

A Was God showing Elijah that he works in the less dramatic ways as well as the more dramatic ways e.g. the burning sacrifice

1 Kings 19 15-18

Note the word translated as anointed probably means “designate as divinely appointed”. Elisha actually carries out some of these instructions at a later date

In this section God gives Elijah some specific tasks to do. Q Can we explain the logic behind this?

1. Giving a depressed person something solid to do helps them recover – Gives a sense of purpose
2. God is going to use the surrounding heathen rulers to help stamp out the false worship and evil that is going on at the time

The writer of Romans reflects on these events in Romans 11 1-6 -

*From the message -1-2 Does this mean, then, that God is so fed up with Israel that he'll have nothing more to do with them? Hardly. Remember that I, the one writing these things, am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham out of the tribe of Benjamin. You can't get much more Semitic than that! So we're not talking about repudiation. God has been too long involved with Israel, has too much invested, to simply wash his hands of them.*

*2-6 Do you remember that time Elijah was agonizing over this same Israel and cried out in prayer?*

*God, they murdered your prophets,  
They trashed your altars;  
I'm the only one left and now they're after me!  
And do you remember God's answer?  
I still have seven thousand who haven't quit,  
Seven thousand who are loyal to the finish.*

*It's the same today. There's a fiercely loyal minority still—not many, perhaps, but probably more than you think. They're holding on, not because of what they think they're going to get out of it, but because they're convinced of God's grace and purpose in choosing them. If they were only thinking of their own immediate self-interest, they would have left long ago.*

1 Kings 19 19-21

Elijah is calling Elisha to be his assistant – This is the same word as used to describe Joshua's role to Moses in Exodus

Q What do we notice about this process

1. Gives him his cloak rather than anoints him
2. Elisha was probably reasonably wealthy as evidently owned the oxen and ploughing equipment so he could burn them for the feast
3. Accepting that there was no going back – burning his old way of life

So to recap what have we learnt from this section about Elijah s Life

- Even the great and mighty sometimes forget to pray about things
- God is present in the dramatic and also in the small
- God cares for us
- Offers some practical guidance on coping with depression