

Eliyahu ~ Part 5

In my last post, we explored **A Miraculous Resurrection** in **1 Kings 17:17-24**. In this post, we learn of **God Ordering Eliyahu Back into Enemy Territory** in **1 Kings 18:1-15**.

Mission Impossible

Oh, no, Lord, why are you sending me back to **King Ach'av**? He will undoubtedly have me murdered! Why now? God had an important, but positive message for **Eliyahu** to give to **King Ach'av** ~ the rain is coming.

"¹ A long time passed. Then, in the third year, the word of Adonai came to Eliyahu: "Go, present yourself to Ach'av, and I will send rain down on the land."² When Eliyahu went to present himself to Ach'av, the famine in Shomron had become severe. ³ Ach'av called 'Ovadyah, who was in charge of the palace. Now 'Ovadyah greatly revered Adonai; ⁴ for example, when Izevel was murdering Adonai's prophets, 'Ovadyah took a hundred prophets, hid them in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water. ⁵ Ach'av said to 'Ovadyah, "Go throughout the land, and check all the springs and vadis; maybe we can find grass somewhere, so that we can keep the horses and mules alive and not lose all the animals."⁶ So they divided between them the territory to be visited; Ach'av went one way by himself, and 'Ovadyah went another way by himself.

⁷ 'Ovadyah was on the road when suddenly Eliyahu encountered him. 'Ovadyah recognized him, fell on his face and said, "Is it really you, my lord Eliyahu?"⁸ He answered, "Yes, it is I; go, tell your master, 'Eliyahu is here.'"⁹ 'Ovadyah replied, "How have I sinned, that you would hand your servant over to Ach'av to kill me?¹⁰ As Adonai your God lives, there can't be a single nation or kingdom where my master hasn't sent to search you out; and in each kingdom or nation where they said, 'He isn't here,' he made them take an oath that they hadn't found you. ¹¹ Now you say, 'Go tell your master, "Eliyahu is here.'"¹² But as soon as I leave you, the Spirit of Adonai will carry you off to I don't know where; so that when I come and tell Ach'av, and he can't find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have revered Adonai from my youth — ¹³ wasn't my lord told what I did when Izevel killed Adonai's prophets, how I hid a hundred of Adonai's prophets by fifties in caves and supplied their food and water?¹⁴ Now you say, 'Go tell your master, "Look, Eliyahu is here.'"¹⁵ Why, he'll kill me!"¹⁵ Eliyahu said, "As Adonai-Tzva'ot [Lord of Heaven's Armies] lives, before whom I stand, I will present myself to him today." ~ 1 Kings 18:1-15 (CJB)

The Holman Christian Study Bible Notes says that:

*"chapter 18 describes one of history's great power encounters between God and evil; it is comparable to the encounter between the Lord and the gods of Egypt before the Exodus. ... The power encounter with Egypt freed the Israelites from physical bondage. One might expect that God's confrontation with Ba'al freed Israel from spiritual bondage, but it is hard to find evidence for this. Neither **Ach'av** nor **Izebel** repented. The moral life of the northern kingdom was not noticeably influenced. But we cannot know how much worse things would have gone for faith in Yahweh without this encounter. ... Humanly speaking, without such manifestations of God's power as these, the Hebrew faith might have perished long before the exile."*

For three years, **Eliyahu** had hidden himself at the **Vadi K'rit** and then with the widow in **Tzarfat**, but now he was commanded to **present himself** to wicked **King Ach'av**. But along with God's command was God's promise that He would send rain and end the drought that He had sent to punish the idolatrous nation for over three years. Waiting on God is one of the hardest things we can do. That means virtually doing nothing until He gives us the signal. Part of the genius of **Eliyahu** is that he did nothing until God gave the word.

'Ovadyah encountered **Eliyahu** before **Eliyahu** ran into **King Ach'av**. He was a man of great authority, he was administrator of the royal palace as well as steward and supervisor of whatever estates the king possessed. But was he a courageous servant of God (his name means "servant of Yah") or a timid compromiser who was afraid to let his witness be known? The text informs us that **'Ovadyah greatly revered Adonai**; and proved it during **Izebel's** purge of Israel's prophets by risking his life to rescue and support one hundred prophets of the Lord. That doesn't sound like a man who was compromising his testimony! Why should he tell the king and queen what he was doing for the Lord? The Lord had put **'Ovadyah** in the palace to use his God-given authority to support the faithful prophets at a time when openly serving the Lord was a dangerous thing.

'Ovadyah was probably one of the seven thousand faithful men of God, of whom **Eliyahu** was unaware we will read about in 1 Kings. 19:18.

The Lord led **Eliyahu** to the road that **'Ovadyah** was using and the two men met. **'Ovadyah** had such reverence for **Eliyahu** and his ministry that he fell on his face on the earth and called him, "My lord, **Eliyahu**." But **Eliyahu's** aim was to confront wicked King Ahab, and he wasn't about to go looking for him; so he commissioned **'Ovadyah** to tell the king where he was. We can understand **'Ovadyah's** concern lest the king come back and not find the prophet. During the three years Ahab had been searching for **Eliyahu**, no doubt he had followed up many false leads, and Ahab wasn't interested in wasting time and energy at such a critical point in the nation's history. Furthermore, Ahab might punish **'Ovadyah** or even suspect him of being a follower of **Eliyahu's** God. But when **Eliyahu** assured the officer that he would remain there and wait for the king, **'Ovadyah** went off to give Ahab the message.

Not all of God's servants are supposed to be in the public eye like **Eliyahu** and the other prophets. God has His servants in many places, doing the work He's called them to do. **Nakdimon** [Nicodemus] and **Yosef of Ramatayim** [Joseph of Arimathea] didn't make a big fuss about their faith in **Yeshua**, yet God used them to give proper burial to the body of the **Messiah** (John 19:38-42). **Ester** kept quiet about her Jewish heritage until it was absolutely necessary to use it to save the life of the nation. Over the centuries, there have been numerous believers who have kept a low profile and yet made great contributions

In my next post, we will continue to explore the Biblical story of **Eliyahu** in **1 Kings 18:16-19**. In this passage, we examine **Eliyahu's** encounter with **Ach'av** setting the stage for **Eliyahu's Finest Hour ~ Let the Fire Fall**.