

Eliyahu ~ Part 9

In my last post, we explored **Eliyahu's** encounter with **Eliyahu's** confrontation with the **Prophets of Ba'al** in **Eliyahu's Finest Hour ~ Let the Fire Fall** in **1 Kings 18:30-40**. In this post, we learn that the **Rain Returns to Israel** in **1 Kings 18:41- 46**.

Let It Rain, Let It Rain, Let It Rain

"⁴¹ Then Eliyahu said to Ach'av, "Get up, eat, and drink because I hear the sound of heavy rain."⁴² Ach'av went up to eat and drink, while Eliyahu went up to the top of the Karmel. He bowed down to the ground and put his face between his knees. ⁴³ "Now," he said to his servant, "go up, and look out toward the sea." He went up, looked, and said, "There's nothing there." Seven times he said, "Go again."⁴⁴ The seventh time, the servant said, "Now there's a cloud coming up out of the sea, no bigger than a man's hand." Eliyahu said, "Go up, and say to Ach'av, 'Prepare your chariot, and get down the mountain before the rain stops you!'"⁴⁵ A little later, the sky grew black with clouds and wind; and heavy rain began falling; as Ach'av, riding in his chariot, made for Yizre'el [Jezreel]. ⁴⁶ The hand of Adonai was on Eliyahu; he tucked up his clothing and ran ahead of Ach'av to the entrance of Yizre'el." ~ 1 Kings 18:41-46 (CJB)

Two final miraculous events occur on this day: (1) the coming of the rain as a result of **Eliyahu's** prayer and (2) **Eliyahu's** supernatural strength in leaving the scene and passing **Ach'av's** chariot before the storm. Typically, the act of preceding the king's chariot could have been a friendly overture. It was an act of honor to the king and a tribute to the runner to be permitted to run before the king. But if this was **Eliyahu's** intent, it was lost on **Ach'av** and **Izevel**.

Eliyahu had announced three years before that it was his word that stopped the rain and only his word could start it again (17:1). He was referring to the power of his prayers, the words that he spoke to the Lord (James 5:17-18). It had been a long and disappointing day for King **Ach'av**, and **Eliyahu** sent him to his retainers to get something to eat. **Eliyahu** went to the top of Carmel to pray and ask the Lord to send the much-needed rains.

Eliyahu's unusual posture was almost a fetal position and indicated the prophet's humility, his great concern for the people, and his burden for the glory of the Lord. Unlike the answer to the prayer at the altar, the answer to this prayer didn't come at once. Seven times **Eliyahu** sent his servant to look toward the Mediterranean Sea and report any indications of a storm gathering, and six of those times the servant reported nothing.

Imagine how disappointed the servant and **Eliyahu** must have been.

The prophet didn't give up but prayed a seventh time, and the servant saw a tiny cloud coming from the sea. This is an excellent example for us to follow as we "watch and pray" and continue to intercede until the Lord sends the answer. We have to be persistent in our prayers.

The little cloud wasn't a storm, but it was the harbinger of the rains that were to come. **Eliyahu** commanded the king to mount his chariot and return to his palace in **Yizre'el** as soon as possible. We aren't told how he broke the news to **Izevel** that Baal had been publicly humiliated and declared to be a false god, and that the prophets of Baal that she supported had been slain. But neither the drought nor the famine had brought **Ach'av** and **Izevel** to repentance, and it wasn't likely that the fire from heaven or the coming of the rain would change their hearts (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:8-11). All the evidence notwithstanding, **Izevel** was determined to kill **Eliyahu** (19:1-2).

Strength for the Journey

Soon the heavens were black with clouds, and great torrents of rain began to fall on the land. The Lord not only proved that he was the true and living God, but He also put His approval on the ministry of His servant **Eliyahu**. **Eliyahu** had neither chariots nor retainers to drive them, but he did have the power of the Lord, and he ran ahead of **Ach'av** and reached **Yizre'el** ahead of the king. This was quite a feat for an older man and in itself was another sign to the people that God's mighty hand was upon His servant.

Yizre'el was between fifteen and twenty miles from the Karmel area. This fifteen-acre site was situated at the southeastern entrance to the Jezreel Valley between the Hill of Moreh and Mount Gilboa. It was here that **Ach'av** had built a winter capital. Excavations have unearthed a sizeable royal enclosure from this period occupying a significant portion of the mound. ¹

God had chastened His people with drought and famine but had cared for His special servant **Eliyahu**. God had sent fire from heaven to prove that He was the true and living God. Now He had answered the prayer of His prophet and had sent the rains to water the land. You would think that **Eliyahu** would be at his very best spiritually and able to face anything, but the next chapter records just the opposite. As great a man as **Eliyahu** was, he still failed the Lord and himself.

In my next post, we continue to explore the Biblical story of **Eliyahu**. In this passage, we encounter **The Enemies Message of Danger in 1 Kings 19:1-4**.

¹ The IVP Bible Background Commentary – Old Testament.