
BIG WORD: 1 Kings
Homework for Chapters 19—20
Discussion Dates: 24 April 2013 (in house)
and 25 April 2013 (online)

DAY ONE: Overview

PRAY for the Holy Spirit to clear your mind so that you may focus on God's Word without distractions or preconceptions. Ask Him to help you discern only what He wants for you in this reading and for this day.

READ: 1 Kings 19—20.

If possible, read both chapters in one sitting. Make notes of any details that stick out to you, questions that rise and/or personal insights God gives you while you read.

DAY TWO: The Aftermath

We know from our last study session that Jezebel had 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah that ate regularly at her table and that Elijah had just slaughtered them. 1 Kings 18:46 tells us that "the hand of the LORD was on Elijah" during those events. But here in chapter 19 we see what happened next.

READ 1 Kings 19:1—3.

Ahab saw the fire of God with his own eyes. He saw the proof that led all of Israel to fall prostrate in exclamation that the LORD is God. What impact, if any, did it have on him?

Did the extravagant evidence of God's superiority at the Battle of Prophets convert Ahab and Jezebel?

What vow did Jezebel send to Elijah?

Why do you think she sent him a message? Clearly, she wanted him dead. If she knew how to find Elijah, why not just send an assassin?

Scripture has relayed witness of Ahab for a number of chapters now. What do these situations and accounts teach us of his character?

Who do you think is really in charge of Israel – Ahab or Jezebel? Are they co-regent?

DAY THREE: Elijah flees.

READ 1 Kings 19:4—10.

How did Elijah react to Jezebel's message?

Describe Elijah's mentality and emotional state. What did he ask of God?

James 5:17 says that "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours." The verse continues to emphasize the power and importance of prayer, which we covered briefly during our last study session. The point I take from James's assessment, however, applies more to the side of Elijah that we see here in 1 Kings 19. He was human, just like you and me.

Too often we idealize characters in Scripture. We put them on pedestals and strive to emulate their impeccable character. It's never bad to pursue epic faith, but sometimes we need a reality check. We need to know that we are not the only ones who struggle, that even great heroes of faith had their days of doubt.

An old adage reminds us that “The best of men are but men at their best.”

Some have said that this passage shows the prophet struggling from a classic case of burnout. Would you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?

Do you see anything in Scripture that indicates a cause for this? Could it have been prevented?

What are the dangers of burnout in ministry?

What are warning signs of burnout?

How does God continue to exhibit His superior provision and care for Elijah?

Ancient church fathers used to admonish their disciples to “beware of human reactions after holy exertions.” Is that still a valid instruction for us today? What, if anything, makes it true?

Have you ever experienced ministry burnout? How did you manage it?

What suggestions do you have for loving on and encouraging other believers who are in the midst of spiritual burnout?

DAY FOUR: Wind, Earth and Fire

READ 1 Kings 19:7—18.

This is a rather familiar passage. Is there anything new you see in it this time that you have perhaps never noticed before?

God and Elijah hold the same conversation twice, nearly verbatim, in verses 9-10 and 13-14. Why?

Why do you think God came in a whisper and not in the other, more dynamic displays?

How did Elijah know it was God?

What message of hope, what remnant, remained for Elijah?

READ Isaiah 40:25—31.

Do you see any parallel between these verses and God's interactions with Elijah in 1 Kings 18-19?

DAY FIVE: Elisha

READ 1 Kings 19:19—21.

Who was Elisha?

What qualifications did he have to follow Elijah?

DAY SIX: Ahab's Wars with Syria and Ben-hadad

READ 1 Kings 20:1—34.

DAY SEVEN: What about these prophets?

Throughout chapter 20, we see Ahab interacting with prophets. What, if anything, does this say about his faith?

Who initiated the conversations?

Did Ahab listen to the prophets?

READ 1 Kings 20:35—43.

Describe this passage in your own words. What do you make of it?