

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

October 20, 2024

The Garden



What do you desire from your relationship with God? I know some people want 'to be blessed in the city, blessed in the fields, blessed when they come and when they go.' Some people want to know that when they die, they are going to heaven. What is your reason for knowing Christ?

Since God saved us, the question should be directed more toward Him than to us. What are His purposes for saving us? There are three primary purposes for searching the scriptures.

"..... I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10).

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13).

In these verses, a thread of thought runs through them. God made us in His 'image and likeness,' and He died to get us back to our original state; "as being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18; third purpose); So, God provides the life so that He can have us as friends once again. This determines how He guides us through trials (Hebrews 12:7-11; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:3-9). In each of these verses, we are being directed back to His image; ".... it is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21). It is for this purpose that at the point of salvation the Holy Spirit came into our lives (Titus 3:4-8). As the Helper of Christ (John 14:16-17), He transforms us by renewing the mind (Romans 12:2). We must commit our lives to this process.

J. Stuart Holden gives a beautiful illustration. He says, "I have a garden around my home. In that garden and its possibilities, I have the mind of nature. For instance, I know what soil and what seed should produce this, that, and all the other kinds of flowers and fruit; I outlined in the seed merchant's catalogs the wonderful things that the garden should bring forth...But mark you, the flowers and the fruit are only produced by labor, by obedience to the laws of nature. When the garden has been made beautiful and fruitful, it has been made so only by intelligent cooperation with nature. The fruit of the Spirit is only made evident in our lives as we wholeheartedly cooperate with the Lord in complete submission and obedience to Him by letting His Spirit fully control us—body, soul, and spirit. (from Illustrations of Bible Truths Copyright © 1995, 1998 by AMG International, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission.)

It is my prayer that you would take the time to grow in Christ rather than just go to Church.

UPCOMING Events



LAST LEADERSHIP TRAINING OF 2024
Calling all elders, deacons, ministers, teachers, facilitators, ministry leaders, coordinators and staff, join us for the last Leadership Training of 2024. Don't miss this opportunity to collaborate, learn, grow and get prepared for all activities for the rest of 2024 and plan for 2025. Register at <https://bit.ly/LeadershipOct2024> or for more information, contact Pastor Duane Lawrence at (281)260-7402



WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE THE BOOKS OF 1ST JOHN & ACTS
Join us for a new Bible Study Series September 3rd—November 19th on the Books of 1st John and Acts. For more information, call the church at (281) 260-7402. Follow along with Bible Study notes on the website at www.lwfellowshipchurch.org/bible-study-notes



HARVEST FEST 2024—OCTOBER 31ST 6 PM
Join us for a fun-filled festival on October 31, 2024 from 6-8:30 p.m. at Living Word Fellowship Church. FREE food, fun, games, candy, slaunted house, and much more! **DONATE CANDY** in the foyer or in the Children's Wing and sign up with the Children's Ministry to volunteer. For more information contact **Keron Brown** at keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org or **Sylvia Edwards** at sedwards@lwfellowshipchurch.org



SKATING PARTY FOR ALL AGES—11/2/2024
Join the L.E.G.I.T. Young Adults Ministry for a Skating Party for all ages. This Family event will be Saturday, November 2, 2024 at 12:30 p.m. at Skate Champions Roller Rink at 5504 Fellowship Ln, Spring, TX 77379. For more information contact Keron Brown at keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org Register Online at: <https://bit.ly/LEGITskatingNov2024>



LWCA/ABC AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
LWCA/ABC has a dynamic after school program available for \$75 per week with a \$55 Registration fee. The program focuses on the four cornerstones of child development: Academic, Physical, Emotional and Spiritual. Activities include robotics, karate, arts and crafts, outside play, academic enrichment, cooking classes, sports & more, Register at <https://bit.ly/LWCARegister> or call (281) 445-9673.



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

"Fight or Flight"

1 Kings 19:1-13

Pierre Cannings, Ph.D.

Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website

Call to Discipleship

Please remain seated at this time

Visitor's Welcome

Benediction

Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.

Infants—6th grade



Fight or Flight 1 Kings 19:1-13

I. "Empty" Threat – vs. 1-2

- a. Jezebel –
 - i. Jezebel became the influential queen of the North kingdom as the foreign wife of Ahab.
 1. This woman has the fierceness Ahab lacks, the civil authority the prophets of Baal lacked, and a freshness for battle that Elijah no longer possesses
 - ii. She fostered the worship of Canaanite fertility deities, supporting 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah at her royal table (1 Kgs 18:19).
 - iv. In the meantime, she ruthlessly persecuted the rival prophets of Yahweh, causing them to go into hiding (1 Kgs 18:4).
 1. Jezebel has killed Yahweh's prophets before (cf. 1 Kgs 18:4, 13), so Elijah has no reason to doubt her threats indicate her true intentions.
 - v. So far, Elijah has encountered serious yet less-than-overpowering opposition. At this point in the story, though, he meets the one person as committed to Baal as he is to Yahweh. What Jezebel hears from Ahab causes her to threaten Elijah's life. She swears by the "gods" that Elijah will die.
- b. Life as Life of Prophet by tomorrow
 - i. She threatened to take his **life** in 24 hours in retaliation for his slaughtering the 450 Baal prophets.

II. Give Up – vs. 2-5

- a. Afraid –
 - i. He was afraid. Read wayyirā', with most versions and some mss mt, wayyar', "he saw," is meaningless. Pointed difference between the present depiction of Elijah and the bravery he displayed on Mount Carmel; fear for his own personal safety accompanies the prophet throughout the present episode
 - ii. fatigue, lack of faith, or a sense of resignation at the prospect of never having peace—Elijah flees. He fears death the way Obadiah did (18:9–14).
 - iii. Ironically by contrast he had told the widow in Zarephath not to be afraid (17:13).
 - iv. He had just demonstrated that the gods to whom she now appealed in her curse had no power at all. (Her statement that she was willing to be dealt with severely by the gods [cf. 2:23; 20:10; 2 Kings 6:31] points up the seriousness of her threat.
 - v. She was so certain she would kill Elijah that she willingly put her own welfare "on the line.")
- b. Ran for his life
 - i. he set right out" (see Note on 17:10) have as their object "for the sake of his life).
 - ii. Indeed, the fact that he dismisses his servant in Beersheba, the southernmost point in Judah, then goes a day's journey farther may indicate he has given up his ministry altogether
 - iii. and he fled to Beer-sheba of Judah on the southern border of the Sown, merely a stage in his flight, for he was going into No Man's Land.
- c. Wanted to Die - Num 11:15; Jer 20:14–18; Jon 4:3, 8
- d. Slept it off
 - i. Elijah had forgotten the lessons God had been teaching him at Kerith, Zarephath, and Carmel.
 - ii. His eyes were on his circumstances rather than on the Lord.
 - iii. His statement that he was no better than his ancestors (19:4) suggests that he was no more successful than his forefathers in ousting Baal-worship from Israel. Exhausted and discouraged, Elijah lay down ... and fell asleep.
 - iv. Rather than resting in God for His protection as he had for the past three and one-half years, Elijah ran for his life. He ran all the way through the kingdom of Judah to the southernmost town in the land, Beersheba.

III. Get Up – vs. 6-8

- a. Angel of the Lord
- b. Arise and Eat
 - i. Now God begins to renew his faith by miraculously feeding him. In other words, the Lord ministers to him as in the past. Twice an angel feeds him, thereby giving him strength to travel to "Horeb, the mountain of God"
- c. Second time
 - i. The Journey is too great for you - the distance was far (enough) 1S 26:13, ַיִּיָּאָר too long a journey 1K 19:7
 - ii. Went in Strength forty days
 1. A direct trip from Beersheba to Mount Horeb (the ancient name for Mount Sinai; cf. Ex. 3:1; 17:6; 33:6; Deut. 5:2; 1 Kings 8:9; Ps. 106:19; Mal. 4:4) would have taken Elijah only about 14 days on foot (a distance of ca. 200 miles). God was reminding him and teaching him during those 40 days and nights
 2. Finally He went to the mountain of God, the very place where God had revealed Himself to Moses and the Israelites and where He had entered into a covenant with His Chosen People.

III. Get Up – vs. 6-8 continued

- iii. Horeb Mountain of God
 3. He knows God revealed himself at Horeb, the mountain of Moses' calling and the giving of the covenant (Cf. Exod 3–4; 20–24). Here at another mountain Elijah will decide for himself if the Lord is God.

IV. Go Out vs. 9-13

- a. Cave Lodged
- b. The Lord Appeared
 - i. What are you doing here?
 1. God has fed him as before, and God has spoken to him as in the past. Why has he fled?
 2. Elijah witnessed what Moses had seen in those mountains centuries before (Ex. 19:16–18) and what he himself had seen on Mount Carmel only a few days earlier (1 Kings 18:38, 45), namely, a spectacular demonstration of the power of God, this time in wind, an earthquake, and fire. But on this occasion the Lord was not in any of these, that is, they were not His instruments of self-revelation.
- c. Elijah responds
 - i. Zealous
 1. to rebel against, to campaign for, inveigh against The phrase 'the zeal of the Lord (of hosts)' occurs several times (2 Ki. 19:31; Is. 9:7; 37:32; cf. Is. 26:11; 63:15) and means his jealous concern for his own people and their welfare
 2. Apparently he had hoped that the Mount Carmel episode would produce a final victory over Baalism.
 - ii. They forsook your covenant
 1. Torn down altars
 - a. your altars they have destroyed. The altar to YHWH on Mount Carmel was noted as having been destroyed; cf. 18:30.
 2. Killed prophets
 - a. your prophets they have killed by the sword. Jezebel's persecution is referred to in 18:4.
 - b. God's word, which never fails. The first "word of the Lord" asks him why he is at Horeb. He replies that Israel is apostate, they kill the prophets, and he alone stands for covenant faith
 - iii. I alone am Left
 1. They seek my life
 2. Take away
- d. Again
 - i. A second word of the Lord invites the prophet to "stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord," for God will pass by there. This theophany, or appearance of the Lord, reminds readers of Exod 33:18–22,
 - ii. The Lord does not speak, however, through these natural phenomena. Certainly Elijah has experienced God's sovereignty over nature, and has benefited from miraculous fire, but what he needs now is a definitive word from the Lord.
 - iii. Evidently some time later when Elijah was back in his cave (19:13) he heard the sound of a gentle whisper
 1. "Go back the way you came," a command that calls Elijah back into active service of the Lord

PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Robert James & family, Myrtle Nichols & family, Terrance Ford & family, Cheryl Beal & family, Margaret Jefferson & family, Phillip Baillou & family, Mary Wheatley & family, Roderick Williams & family, and the family of Birdie Williams.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Cici Sharpe, Margaret Baptiste, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Tanisha Collins, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Kevin Carey, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Williams, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Elizabeth Bean, Patsy Gatterson, Joyce Newsome, Arleatha Housley, Patrina Johnson, Elvis Anderson, Cheryl Walker, Walter Banks, Carolyn Hadnot, Angelique Hudson, Sheryle Crowe, Arnie Glover, Clarence Coleman, Diana Doyle, Vivian Phillips, Shannon Rice, Freddie Reid, Janie Buchanan, Yolanda Barnes, Rochelle Carter Brown, Terrance Ford, Robert Edwards, Beatrice Williams, and Jessie Austin.



FIGHT
or
FLIGHT

1 Kings 19:1-13