
◆ THE EDIFIER ◆

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Elijah's Restoration



Elijah was greatly used of God on behalf of Israel to defeat the false prophets of Baal. Elijah served the people of God in many mighty and spectacular ways. The power of God was uniquely demonstrated throughout his life. However, like many Christians today, who have experienced the highs and lows of serving God, Elijah also experienced a great low and found himself in need of restoration. It is my prayer that Elijah's story in 1 Kings 19 will help any Christian who finds themselves out in the 'wilderness'.

Elijah running

Queen Jezebel sought to make Elijah's life scarce. He ran from her, but not only her. He ran from God's call to serve His people - Israel. Elijah was fully aware of the terrible sins of his people and he felt that there were not many Godly people left, if any. Many Christians likewise run from their call to serve the body of Christ and this crooked generation.

Why did he run? Fear caused him to run for his life. Fear causes us to do all kinds of irrational things. Some of us because of bad religious experiences have felt the need to run so as to avoid being

choked or stifled or seriously hurt. Many a person's guard consequently goes up at the slightest hint of a spiritual encounter. There are people who have not dealt with their fears and who would rather risk their eternal relationship with God than overcome their fears. Such fears, however, need to be faced head on, or restoration will not occur.

Where did Elijah run to? Verse 4 says he ran into *the wilderness*. It wasn't 'out of the frying pan into the fire', but rather out of the frying pan into a barren, empty place. Initially there is a great emptiness when we run from a group of believers we have been strongly attached to, or from overzealous and fanatical parents or spouses, or from God Himself. Our hopes and dreams for this life and the next may at first seem much dimmer or even shattered.

What Elijah did after he fearfully ran for his life into the wilderness shows the irrationality that fear and disconnection produces in us. He lay down under a tree and prayed that he might die. He ran from Jezebel because he did not want to die, *but now he wants to die?* Fear certainly causes confusion and contradiction. Some run, in a sense, for their lives from

hypocrisy in the church, but soon end up in a spiritual sense lying down, sleeping, throwing their Bibles in the bin or even wanting to die because enough's enough. Now who's a hypocrite?

God's tender hand

Thankfully God does not leave us alone in our confusion. His response is still touching and tender. He is an understanding and compassionate God. While Elijah slept under the tree suddenly an angel touched him and provided him with cake and water (v5). God's first restorative act however did not move Elijah. He just ate and drank and lay down again. The fearful, disconnected and wounded are not easily restored and often resent the initial restorative attempts, barely responding before sinking again.

But thank God that He doesn't give up on us. The angel of the Lord came back a second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you" (v7). God gave Elijah a second touch because He loved him and had great plans and purposes for him. The God who will never leave

*A magazine dedicated to
uplifting and transforming
peoples lives through the
uncompromised word of God.*

or forsake us also has great purposes for us to fulfill. He tells us that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people that we may declare His praises.

Spiritual wanderings

The second touch greatly strengthened Elijah, as v8 says that he arose and ate and drank and went on the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God. I wonder why he was heading for such a holy place as Mt Horeb, where God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and where Moses received the ten commandments. This is only speculation, but it is a speculation that serves a purpose, because some readers might relate to it. Had he now decided to go on his own independent spiritual journey? And don't we feel a lot of strength when God lifts us off the floor; and don't we get excited about our new spiritual path that we alone are going to walk because who else is there who is really true? We have a lot more zeal and energy for it than anything else we have ever done because we feel like it is God's revelation to us. Initially we feel set free.

Forty days and forty nights is an awfully long time to go without food and drink. Elijah was greatly renewed, but as we will see in a moment, he was not yet restored, as he was not walking the path God wanted him to walk. Sometimes we may feel renewed too and experience greater strength, and self control than ever before, but there is just one major problem - we are now in a cave, a holy cave. When Elijah reached the spiritual pinnacle of Mt Horeb, according to v9, he

went into a cave.

In a cave

God, however, had a very pertinent question for Elijah. "What are you doing here, Elijah", he said? Perhaps the Lord was really querying why he was hiding out in a cave like a monk, hiding his light under a bushel or regressing to be a cave man. Now you might be forgiven for thinking that this is a rather strange question of Elijah from God when He was the one who gave Elijah the food and drink that strengthened him for forty days and forty nights, and when Elijah is at this most holy and spiritual place.



Elijah firstly responds by saying, "*I have been* very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts". The expression 'I have been' is very telling for two reasons. Firstly, if you know anything about Elijah's life before he started running, you will know that there is no doubt that he was indeed exceptionally zealous for the Lord. Most people who have been hurt badly by religious experiences would probably not have been hurt so badly if they had not zealously

invested so much in the church and their faith in the first place. Secondly, Elijah's 'I have been very zealous' is very telling because he no longer was. He was more zealous for his own well-being and saving his own life.

Elijah also responds to God's seemingly strange question by saying in v 10, "the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant". I suppose God could have bluntly responded, 'so what! - does that also give you the right to refuse to do what I have set before you to do'? Can you just imagine God giving Elijah the old cliché - 'if someone jumped over a cliff would you follow after him'? God does not abandon people because they are sinning, but rather He stretches out His hand of grace, just as we all need to do.

Finally, Elijah responds to God's probing question by giving the further excuse "I alone am left and they seek to take my life". Elijah felt all alone as a prophet of God and maybe he even believed there were few, if any, righteous men and women in the whole of Israel. I have met people like Elijah who feel that there is no church they can go to because there's none just quite right, or at least none in their area. Nevertheless, God's call to serve the people of God and to do good, 'especially' to the household of faith, remains (Galatians 6:10). Probably Elijah's greatest excuse for being in his holy cave was that his life was threatened. But God does not even accept this one. He has the keys of life and death and Jesus Himself said "he who loves his life will lose it and he

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THE POOR ARE TO HELP THE RICH

Richard Todd

Starting with the idea that the poor should help the poor, this article quickly expanded its focus on helping the rich. While that's not something we often hear, it is scripturally based as we shall see later. While 'help' doesn't necessarily mean money, it doesn't preclude the poor from helping the rich, with money, as the need arises. An example illustrating this is provided later in the article. The current financial crisis whereby the public are being asked by governments to 'bail out' the banks is another timely and interesting example.

The poor, who lack money, can nevertheless help feed many without any great burden upon themselves. And who better to relate to their needs and concerns than they themselves? For instance, by volunteering their time and labour they could help out in the kitchens of a charitable organisation set up to feed the homeless and hungry. The fact the Bible says that "now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour" (1 Cor 3:8) doesn't mean that you have to be the person who hands the food to the hungry. You can still help feed the poor by contributing and supporting that function through other means

such as doing administrative work in the charity's back office, washing dishes in the kitchen or wiping down tables. While this indirect form of assistance can be overlooked, and is sometimes not appreciated, it nonetheless is essential in meeting the hungry's needs. "If the foot should say because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?" (1 Cor 12:15).

Whilst indirect help is never 'centre stage' do not lose heart in performing your good works. Remember that in order to get the full character changing benefits of our good deeds we are neither seeking or expecting recognition and praise from man, but rather look to our Lord who will give us recognition in due season. In replying to the question "when did we feed you, and when did we give you a cup of water", Jesus said, "as much as you have done it to these little ones you have done it to me". Elsewhere on this issue He says "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret". (Matt 6:3).

Now we turn to the poor helping the rich. Whilst greatly overlooked, in that we tend to think only in terms of help flowing from the rich to the poor, there is an obligation for the poor to help the rich (including money if need be). In fact, it is a message that is often repeated throughout the Bible, even if only indirectly.

Firstly, for example, God loves all his creation. In fact "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish

but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). But even regarding the perishing, whom we seek to save as part of our duty owed to Christ, God says "For I have no pleasure in the death of one sinner" (Eze 18:32). In fact, he does not withhold his favour or concern from the ungodly in meeting their basic needs in the hope they will come to know him. "The sun will not fail to continue to shine and He makes the rain fall on the unrighteous as well as the righteous". Jesus tells us that the healthy have no need of a doctor but the dying do, and for this reason he leaves the 99 sheep and goes and seeks out the one lost sheep.



An essential part of God's character is that He is "no respecter of persons, and does not look at man the way we do", from outward appearances, status or economic wealth. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God". Concerning money and wealth He said "what is this temple that you desire to build in that you think you can confine God? The earth is my footstool and the stars of heaven are my cloak". Jesus also said "render unto Caesar the money that belongs to him, but render unto God what belongs to Him".

Secondly, God also made it clear that the poor must tithe and must do so in proportion to how they have been blessed. They are not to refrain from tithing or giving less merely because they are poor.

We too are commanded to show impartiality, a hallmark of God's character, in that "should a rich man come into the church we are not to say, 'here sit in the best seat', while to the poor we say 'here, sit at my feet'".

We have also been commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves, and not to try justifying ourselves and therefore making null and void the obligation to love our neighbour through personal judgements and imposing limits and conditions on how we choose to express that love. In reference to forgiveness, Jesus answer of 70 x 7 as being the number of times we are to forgive our brother (which is a corollary of love), extends to the number of times we should be prepared to help someone in need. If we only love those who love us, or we only extend help or give money to those able to help us or give us money, then what good is that? Do not even the tax collectors do that?

Being no respecter of persons, God extends this beyond nationality of being Jew, Greek or gentile to that of status, rich or poor. God looks at the internal heart felt condition.

A poor person is driving their old worn out car along a lonely country road when suddenly he is confronted by a man on the road waving him to stop. Unbeknown to the poor man, four other drivers had earlier driven past without stopping, thankful that they weren't robbed by this aggressive looking mad man waving his arms in the air. After all, it pays to be careful these days. Stopping, the poor man realises that the man is the owner of the brand new

Mercedes Benz parked on the side of the road. The driver had run out of diesel fuel, but the poor man's car runs on unleaded petrol. Unable to lend fuel, the poor man drives the rich man 10kms in the opposite direction to where he was travelling, to the nearest service station.

Arriving at the service station the rich man discovers they won't accept his particular credit card. Despite owning a car whose car registration costs more than the total value of what the poor man's car is worth, the rich man has no money. The poor man who is unable to qualify for a credit card, scrapes together the last of the coins he is carrying and buys enough diesel fuel to get the rich man and his car safely home. Refusing to leave his contact details the poor man chooses to give without expecting anything back.

As a follower of Jesus Christ we should not allow money or the lack of money to be a determinant of whether we offer help. An immediate need is a need that must be met immediately. Whomever is in the position to help at that time is the one from whom help is expected.

The poor have that capacity as much as the rich, although traditionally, the focus has been on the rich helping the poor on the expectation that the rich have the resources. However this undermines the obligation that exists for all followers of Jesus Christ, whether rich or poor, that all should help when needed. And if the occasion arises and they are blessed to be able to do so, the poor are to help the rich.



JESUS THE MESSIAH:

PROPHECY FULFILLED

Ever since people became alienated from God by sin, they have looked for a deliverer - a Messiah. Ancient people anticipated His coming. Men of God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, revealed many facts concerning Him. These predictions in the Old Testament later provided evidence of His identity when He appeared: thus godly men and women of His own generation recognized Him.....The purpose of this booklet is to review some of the more prominent prophecies that verify Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

**Please send for this
free booklet.**



Two Chains

“If you do well, will you not have honour? And if you do wrong, sin is waiting at the door, desiring to have you, but do not let it be your master”. (Genesis 4:7)

Did you know that sin desires to have you? It desires to have me; it desires to have all men. Jesus even told the Apostle Peter, “Satan hath desired to have you” (Luke 22:31).

When the Bible speaks of sin ‘desiring’ something, it is speaking about the devil who is the root of all sin, the one who has sinned from the beginning. What does the devil desire of us? He wants us to be his servants. He wants to be our master.

Sin is a Chain

“His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin”. (Proverbs 5:22)

I have often used the illustration that Satan has chains wrapped around the sinner’s neck and he is pulling him down to hell and this is the illustration given in this verse. Sin is a cord by which Satan controls people. When we let sin conceive in our hearts Satan finds a place to hook his chain and he begins to pull and control. In Acts 8:23 sin is called a bond or a chain.

How Many Have Been Servants of the Devil?

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by

sin; and so death passed upon all men, for they have all sinned”. (Romans 5:12)

Because of the fall of Adam, all of mankind is now born with a sin nature and a disposition to serve sin. So you are born with a sin problem and as you go through life that problem is going to mature and perfect itself by practice and use. Now let me assure you friends of this one thing, once Satan gets his hooks in you, you cease to control the sin and the sin begins to control you!

Slaves to Sin

“... Jesus answered them, verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant (slave) of sin”. (John 8:34)

Here Jesus makes the slavery of sin very plain. And it does not matter what the sin is. We often think about drugs and alcohol, but how about lust, how about covetousness, how about the love of money, how about discontentment? What ever the sin is, it is a chain by which Satan rules over you.

The Chain Breaker

“And the servant abideth not in the house forever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed”. (John 8:35-36)

Jesus is the only remedy to free you from the slavery of sin; there is no other remedy in the world today. The Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. This is why Jesus died. Matthew writes “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins”. If there was some other way to be saved from the slavery of sin then God wouldn’t have given His only begotten Son. ‘WILL POWER’ cannot help us overcome sin. Only Jesus can.

Salvation is Freedom

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil”. (1 John 3:8)

Jesus destroys the works of the devil in the lives of those who put their trust in Him. Jesus not only forgives you, but he also comes to live inside your heart, and He has ALL POWER, and with that power He breaks the chains of the devil in your life. Sin, as Romans 6:14 records “shall no longer have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace”. You are under Christ’s dominion, not Satan’s.

Freedom From Sin

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

I want to focus on verse eleven where Paul writes, ‘And such were some of you’. Whom is he writing to? He is writing to the Christian people of Corinth right? What kind of people were they like prior to conversion? The bad of the bad right? And then what happened? They believed upon Jesus Christ and He washed them, sanctified them, and justified them. He freed them and changed them by His wonderful Spirit.

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who loses his life for my sake shall find it”.

A still small voice

“Then He (God) said, ‘Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord’. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks into pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a still small voice.”



Amidst all the noise of the wind, earthquake, fire and Elijah’s excuses then comes a still small voice. We are not told what it said, but I believe it encouraged Elijah, as v13 says he moved to the entrance of the cave. If we have run for our lives into a wilderness feeling that enough is enough but have been touched by our loving Lord not once, but twice or more and then gone on our own spiritual journey only to find ourselves in a holy or not so holy cave (or have had some similar experience), then I suggest that there still is a still small voice speaking to us amidst all our fears calling us to restoration. Perhaps it is asking us ‘what are we doing here’.

In verse 13 God again repeats his ‘what are you doing here’ question

to Elijah who now, encouragingly, is at the entrance of the cave. Elijah repeats exactly the same excuses, but seemingly with much less conviction because God says to Him authoritatively “Go return on your way” and Elijah did. God now gives him the command because he knows Elijah is ready, being poised to move at the entrance of the cave.

The Lord has done all the ground work in his restoration. Just think about the restoration process so far. The Lord had come to him at his lowest and not forsaken him. The Lord had kept him alive and strengthened him to pursue the direction of his choice, knowing that Elijah will eventually learn what he needs to. The Lord challenged him with a question. The Lord let him vent his excuses and then still came tenderly to him with the still small voice of His mighty word. Only one more necessary thing remained for the Lord to fully restore him to serve the people of God, something that is also absolutely essential before those of us who are like a hand without a body can be restored to serve the people of God.

You are not alone

In verse 18 God says “Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal ...”. God is saying, ‘don’t be afraid, there are others like you’. Elijah then knew that there were Godly people to serve and that he had been wrong in thinking he was the only one. Often knowing that we are not alone helps us to overcome our fears. God dealt with Elijah’s fears. Therefore he departed to serve the Lord and the people of God going on to do many more mighty things for Israel. He was fully restored despite Jezebel’s threat to kill him still being a live one. He knew God was with him.

Our restoration

What about our restoration? God may not come to us in the special way he came to his prophet, but we still have God’s still small voice of the Holy scriptures interpreted by His still small voice of the Holy Spirit, and such tells us plainly why God wants his people who are in caves restored to fellowship where they can function as part of a healthy body. It is important that it is a healthy body, however, as it is no good a hand being restored to a body in which the heart is not pumping blood to the hand. You certainly do not want to be restored to a body where the mouth is kissing the feet of Baal. Just as Elijah was reassured however that there were seven thousand like him, we are reassured by the still small voice of scripture that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church. We are also reassured that at the end of the age there will be living Christians caught up in the air to meet the Lord and the resurrected saints at His coming. Therefore, if you do not know any, I urge you to go find a body of Bible based and Spirit filled believers, but be prepared to patiently bear with their weaknesses and error for as surely as night follows day they will need to bear with yours too.

If we already associate with other believers, but need restoration in our relationship with God and our service toward Him be assured that our God is a great God of restoration. Just as He pursued Elijah to restore him to serve the people of God He is pursuing you even now. Just reach out your hand to Him and He will be your present help. Praise the Lord!

David Kidd

The Youth Section



Old Testament Places Word Search

This Bible word search has 28 answers.

S Y D O R B D B A B Y L O N R
 H G A Z A D E E I A C X E E U
 E X M Z A C N T R O T Y I D H
 C N A S E M O H Y M A M O E A
 H O S I D O N E S R D N U B V
 E R C N M Z U L S P E D Y W I
 M B U A O N M K A D E S H M L
 Q E S I P W O E T H I O P I A
 O H C I R E J Q U Q O W Z W H
 D E Q U G O J E R U S A L E M
 D G C J O P P A E H A R Z O B
 I Y M D O E X A N L E A R S I
 G P X Y H Y Z B M O A B X W M
 E T W W J U D A H W G P N O G
 M D A B Z Y A B E H S R E E B

Eden - Havilah - Ethiopia - Ur - Babylon - Luz - Bethel - Assyria - Kadesh -
 Damascus - Sidon - Tyre - Megiddo - Shechem - Dor - Joppa - Jericho -
 Jerusalem - Hebron - Gaza - Beersheba - Sinai - Egypt - Edom - Moab -
 Israel - Judah - Bozrah

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The Chain of Christ

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls”. (Matthew 11:29)

The Christian is not freed from all that binds, but the truly free Christian is bound tightly to Jesus Christ. He is a bondservant to Christ, and serves him out of love. He is yielded to the Spirit of God, and is thus obedient to the commands of the Word.

We are Servants to Whom we Obey

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Romans 6:16)

“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness”.(Romans 6:19)

No One is Born a Christian

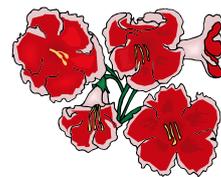
You see friends, no one is ‘born a Christian’. We are all born into sin, and that is why we must be born again (John 3:3). Without Christ men are slaves to sin. Some people’s sins are more evident than others, but we are all born into this world with our backs to God. We all go through life at least for a time under the bondage of sin and the devil.

I’m thankful that Jesus didn’t look down here and say: “These people over here aren’t that bad, I want to save them”. No, he looked down and knew that we were ALL bad, and yet He loved us enough that he came and died for our sins so that we could be forgiven and delivered from sin. If you trust in the Lord He will do all of this for you. This is how to be saved: You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God; you must believe that Jesus died for your sins, that He was buried and that God raised Him up the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

If you believe these things then simply call upon His name and ask Him to save you. The only thing He wants to take from your life is your sin. In fact that is the only thing that Jesus came to destroy!

The Bible says in Romans 10:13 “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”. Will you not call upon him today and be saved?

**By Pastor James Dugger of Church of God 7th Day Ghana
(Based on sermon by Martin Bledsoe)**



SERVICE IS NOT SPELLED SERVE-US

**Prepare my heart for
serving,
Let my spirit heed Your
call;
In obedience to the Father,
Our Lord and King of all.**

**Fill my thoughts with You,
Lord,
Renew my mind today...
I give you full control,
In the things I do and say.**

**Take these hands You
gave me,
And use them for Your
good...
To glorify Your Kingdom,
In the ways I know I
should.**

**Remove all doubt within
me,
Lord, I trust You’ll find a
way,
To mold me in Your
image...
As I walk with You today.**

~Author unknown~

