

*Then Ahab told Jezebel his wife all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup> Then Jezebel sent to Elijah, saying, "If you are Elijah and I am Jezebel, So may God do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." <sup>3</sup> Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.*

*<sup>4</sup> But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." <sup>5</sup> And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, someone touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." <sup>6</sup> And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. <sup>7</sup> And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." <sup>8</sup> And he arose and ate and drank and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to mount Horeb.*

(1 Kings 19:1-8)

---

Long ago across the eastward sea, a man of noble birth treaded middle earth. He had a household to tend, wealth to spend, and friends and brothers to drink, to fight, and to be jolly. And he served with utmost delight a lord of many winters. When the lord saw that man, he would embrace and kiss him on the forehead as a father blesses his son. And at times during great feasts when all were invited to the lord's castle by the sea, that noble would lie as a young son with his father, besides his lord at his throne. But amid the feast, the herald rushed into the throne hall, crying out that armed men with boats are arriving to the castles beach hungry for loot and blood. So the lord levied his men and they

marched to meet them in battle, and lifting up their standards and blowing their horns they charged into the fray.

But those were the last memories that noble had, when he woke up the next day bloodied, and it was all gone. The friendless man looked around only to see fallow waves, sea birds bathe, frost and snow mixed with hail falling to a lifeless ground. He hid his Lord in the darkness of the earth that day, found a boat, and rowed most sorrowfully over the sea's frozen waves and currents, the path of exile.

Years later, the wanderer, that earth-stepper, keeps this distant memory to himself since there's none living who he dares to speak his innermost thoughts to them. He cannot even think why his spirit doesn't darken when he thinks about life, why this middle earth slowly droops and decays day by day, month by month, winter by winter. He found dissatisfaction with many men who call themselves wise; since they do not realize the importance of speech, and have not seen the fruits of folly, which lay all over middle earth as wealth lied to waste.

Standing frost-covered walls once housing halls of many men,

dotted the landscape as maskless graves of long forgotten lords and kings.

Once in awhile he would sing, as he walked through those ancient halls.

“ Where is the horse gone? Where the rider?

Where are the kindred? Where are the revels in the hall?

How that time has passed away,

Dark under the cover of night

As if it had never been.

And So the creator of Men destroyed this city,

Until deprived of the noise of her folk,

The ancient work of giants

Stood empty.”

Yet he would always say to those listening to him as if he found grace for himself from the Lord’s mercy on him,

“It will be well for those who seek the favor, the comfort from The Father in heaven, where stability presides for us all.”

How would we converse, or even utter a word, with such a wanderer, who in his pain, depression, and grief wrote his words as a poem twelve-hundred years

ago<sup>1</sup> which Tolken took such great interest that he even included parts of it in  
own his great trilogy?<sup>2</sup> How would we comfort such a man?

### **Enter: Elijah the Wanderer ( 1 Kings 17:1)**

Now before I begin the text, I want to do a brief character study on Elijah, so let us to turn to 1 Kings 17:1. Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “**As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.**” Just from this one verse, we can learn a lot about who Elijah is. Elijah’s name is an English slang, or an Anglicism, of the Hebrew name Eliahu (אֵלִיָּהוּ), which is a compound of Two Hebrew words of Eli, or my God, and Yahu, the short form of the Name of God (YHWH). These two words are brought together men my God is YHWH. Also take note of his title “**The Tishbite from Tishbi of Gilead.**” The majority, if not all, of English translation, along with the Greek Septuagint, would transliterate these phrases from the Hebrew, which suggest that this word is in reference to a town or village in the region of Gilead. Gilead is commonly referred to in the old testament as the region east of the Jordan river by the Sea of Galilee, which was

---

<sup>1</sup> Poem: The Wanderer <http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=get&type=text&id=wdr>

<sup>2</sup> The Lord of the Rings – The two towers – Chapter 6.

either in the Israelite tribes of Manasseh or Gad. In the sermon manuscript, I've provided a map of Israel's geography with Gilead's location for those who want a visual aid. However, there is no evidence for the town of Tishbi in Gilead currently, since not only this town not has survived to this day, but also 1 Kings 17:1 is the only reference of this town in the whole Old testament. Strangely when one looks at the vulgate and the targum, you encounter this translation "Then Elijah the Tishbite of the inhabitants/sojourners of Gilead." This translation is based on the a common pronunciation of this word in Hebrew *Mi Toshabi* (מִתְּשִׁבִי גִלְעָד) or from Toshabi.<sup>3</sup> Strangely, Toshabi is a relatively common word in the book Genesis to Numbers which is commonly translated as "sojourner" and has a connotation of a brief temporary resident.<sup>4</sup> But from the book of Deuteronomy onward this word is found only once right in this verse and in 1 Chronicles 29:15 which is translated also as "sojourner." When a word appears only once in a text, such as in the book of kings, scholars coin a fancy Greek term Hapax legomenon (ἄπαξ λεγόμενον) which means in English "being said once." Therefore, due to the absolute rarity of this word in the books of the Kings and the lack of context of this word, many translators default to translating this

---

<sup>3</sup> This word is also commonly red in Hebrew paraphrase of this word Tishbi (תִּשְׁבִּי).

<sup>4</sup> See. Rödiger Emil, Francis Brown, S. R Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. 1906. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon : With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible Based on the Lexicon of William Gesenius As Translated by Edward Robinson*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, p. 444.

Hebrew word as a place in Gilead. However, I would prefer translating Tishbi as sojourner or even wanderer or alien when we look at Elijah's life more closely. Throughout first kings, when we encounter a named prophet, we have a brief genealogy of that prophet, such as Elisha Son of Shaphat (1 kings 19:19), Micah son of Imlah (1 kings 22:9), Nathan son of David (2 Samuel 5:13-14), Jonah son of Amittai. Other prophets in kings are also mentioned, but they are nameless and have no genealogy. But Who was Elijah's father? That, is an enigma. The reader would be expecting some sort of lineage, but we have none. It is as if Elijah was alone, solitary, and had no one to go back too when he suffered hardship. When we look at where Elijah went throughout his life we see that he was all over the place. If you're reading through the sermon manuscript today you can look at the map where Elijah journeyed throughout this ministry. He travelled from Gideon to Samaria then back to Gideon then up to the land of Sidon then back to Samaria and then all the way to the Sinai wilderness and then back to the area around Shechem, by Samaria and then went across the Jordan to be ascended to heaven by chariots of fire. Just looking at where Elijah travelled tells us another thing: that Elijah had not relatives or family take care of. This could be a blessing in one sense, in that Elijah had no elderly to care for, no children to raise, and no wife to attend to, and no wife to nag at him. In another sense it was a curse in that he

had nowhere to rest his head, nowhere to share his troubles, no one to call to, nowhere to retreat to safety, except with strangers of foreign land and with God alone in the wilderness. In one sense popular culture would categorize such a single man as a sigma male, who by definition is a man who lives by his own rules, is his own boss, does not care what others say, willing to challenge authority, an independent thinker, and a man who doesn't need to fit for anyone or anything. In other words, he's a troublemaker and a man who only thinks about he, him, and himself.

Despite this alternative lifestyle Elijah has a strong passion for God, especially in God's justice. Take notice what Elijah said in this verse,

**“As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”**

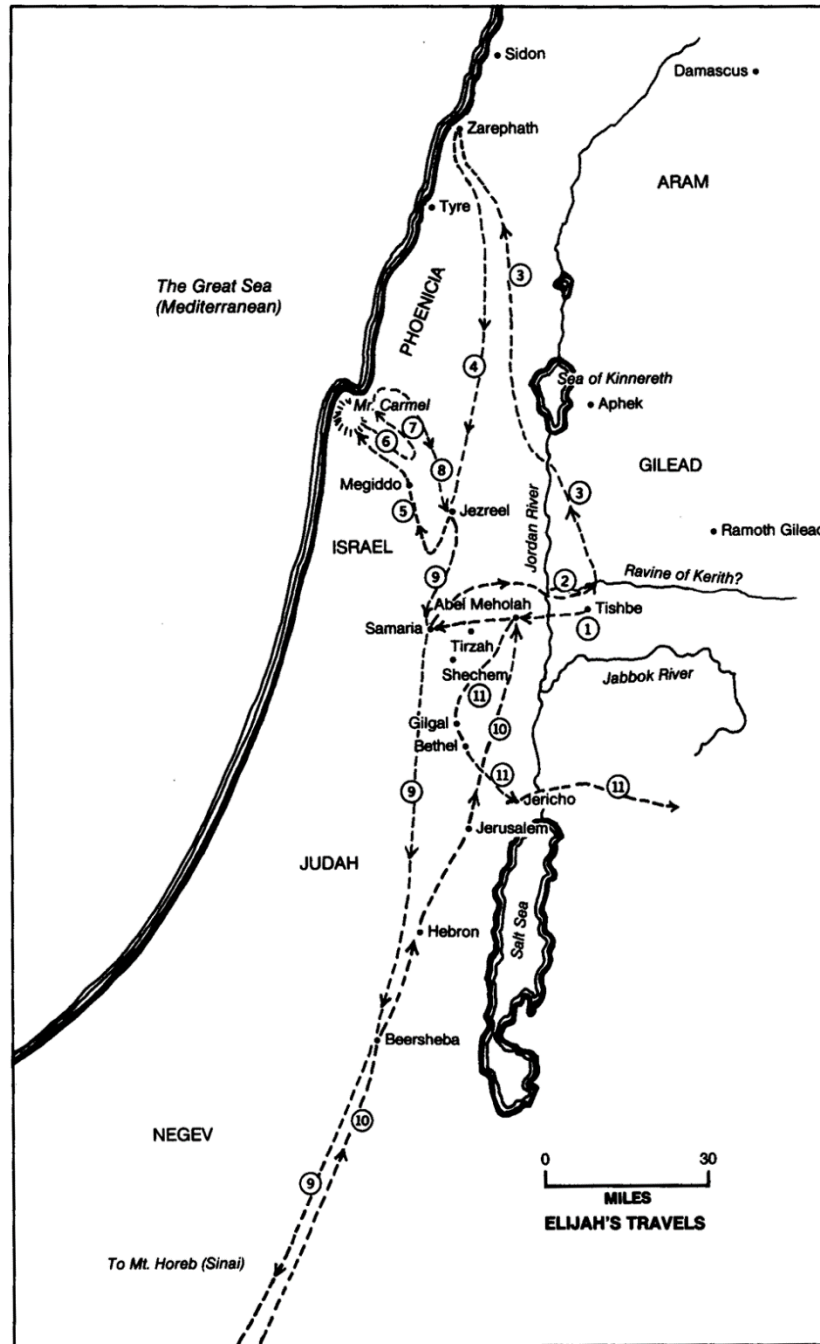


Figure 1 Elijah's Travels Numbers 1-9 Correlate to Elijah's Narrative to his arrival (1), his dwelling at Kerith during the drought (2) his stay at Zaraphath at Sidon (3), Elijah's Fight against the priests of Baal (4-8), Elijah retreat to Horeb (9) Elijah's Call of Elisha (10) to his departure with Chariots of fire (11).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Thomas L. Constable, "[1 Kings](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 522.



Earlier we read through God's law in Deuteronomy in which God promises that if Israel does not carefully follow all of God's law he will curse the land with infertility, drought, and disease. Elijah, then knowing that Israel is not only failing to follow God's law, but even outright rebelling against God, is zealous for God's promises since he knows God's scriptures from the back of his hand. Therefore he had a powerful prayer life, not because he believes in "you name it you claim it," but because of his knowledge of God's promises when Israel follows or breaks his law.

His zeal for God is also echoed in his encounter with the priests of Baal. Let us briefly turn to 1 Kings 18:29. While Elijah gazed at the priests of Baal shouting and dancing around their altar waiting for their god Baal to consume the sacrifice at mount Carmel, but nothing happened, he mocked "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Could he be absorbed in thought, or he's relieving himself, or he's on a journey? Perhaps he's asleep and needs to be awakened?" Take notice that although Elijah is saying the obvious fact about the impotence of other so-called gods such as Baal, he can also be a jerk and a bully, in that he would have a very hard time integrating in Boulder society. And you do not want to be on Elijah's bad side like the priests of Baal were, for in a short while Elijah compelled all the Israelites to kill all those priests of Baal by the sword. But when we think deeper on Elijah's

words, his ill-manners and cruelty could be a reflection of his pride. Pride in what? Perhaps Elijah's pride rooted from his deep knowledge of God and his law and that he is blessed with the Miracles that God preformed through him. Therefore, Elijah viewed that by the power of God and God's law on his side, he would turn Israel away from Idolatry through his God-given works. If this passage is difficult to contemplate on his pride, let's turn back to 1 kings 17:1, when Elijah says "there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by My Word." Just by hearing that last clause oozes of Elijah's pride on his own authority on stopping the rain, although Elijah himself knows that it's God alone who stops the rain. The Hebrew is even more self-centered when it can be translated as "except by the mouth of my word."

Let us now turn to 1 kings 18:46, take notice of the following words and notice Elijah's body language "And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."

Because Israel returned to the worship of the Lord from the episode on mount Carmel, God brought rain back into the land, the priests of Baal are dead, all of Israel is on Elijah's side, and even Ahab is by behind Elijah's lead. Elijah's ego is high and mighty, and he runs ahead full of adrenaline to finish his divine coup, to make Israel great again. What can possibly go wrong?

## Elijah's Retreat

1 kings 19:1 “Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets (of Baal) with the sword.” Jezebel, daughter of Itbaal is running out of options. She had her husband Ahab in her thumb and almost established her god, Baal, in the land, but divine interference, an ill omen, crumbled her ambitions through the person Elijah. Her close religious allies, dead by Elijah, her husband, swooned by Elijah, and everyone else, on Elijah's side. Sure, she can lie about her bitterness to Elijah, greet him at the gates Jezreel, and later smother him to death by pillow at night. Or possibly arrest Elijah for blasphemy and treason against Baal and Israel. But that deathly intrigue or judicial execution would only make Elijah and his cause more powerful than ever before to the Israelite populace, and her reign would surely be cut short by the people. But if, if Elijah fled and nothing happens at Jezreel, she would cut short this bloody coup peacefully. Since it would deceive the Israelites that YHWH still supports the status quo of Jezebel and Ahab's reign. So perhaps she could threaten his death on him and perhaps it could intimidate him to flee. Sure, he could simply ignore her threat and she probably wouldn't have the political power to execute such a death warrant, but it's worth the gamble, especially if her life at hand. So “Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, ‘So may the gods do to me

and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them (the priests of Baal) by this time tomorrow.’ (1 kings 19:2)<sup>6</sup>.

“Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life” (1 kings 19:3a) and just like that, her stumbling block tripped Elijah’s running pride and he fell flat on his face. Her political gamble succeeded, maybe succeeded too well, as if it was ordained. Elijah’s pride took a huge fall and he fell into despair. He bit off more than he can chew. Elijah lived throughout his life free of care, free of rent, and free of charge and at the moment a speck of real consequence and responsibility fell before him, he panicked. He “ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.”<sup>7</sup> (1 kings 19:3) Elijah was so desperate to be as far from Jezebel’s regime as possible, that he fled even to the southernmost city in the kingdom of Judah, Beersheba; although she was at her weakest moment politically two verses ago.

“ But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree.” Take notice of the structure of this unfolding narrative that despite Elijah is in depression and despair, his pride still greasily covers his character. He unconsciously characterized his own retreat to Moses’ flight from

---

<sup>6</sup> Some scholars suggest that if Jezebel actually intended to arrest Elijah, she would have sent her bailiffs and not a messenger. DeVries, Simon. 2015. 1 Kings, Volume 12 : Second Edition. Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing. Accessed September 15, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central, pg. 320.

<sup>7</sup> He’s perhaps Obadiah, an administrator in Ahab’s regime who was devout to God. – 1 Kings 18:1-15

Egypt after he killed a Hebrew-beating Egyptian. I've included a table on the parallels of this passage to the exodus narrative in the sermon manuscript. What's more important than this though is that Elijah is not only retreating from Jezebel, but he's even removing himself from the scene. By leaving his servant in Beersheba and fleeing into the wilderness, he doesn't want any interaction from any other individuals, as if he doesn't want to hear from any Israelite, any Judean or anyone criticizing his cowardice. He fundamentally does not want to feel mocked or ashamed by others.

*Table 1 - Parallels to 1 Kings 19:1-8 to the Moses Narrative*

Elijah's Narrative	Moses' Narrative
<b>1 Kings 19:1-4a</b> Elijah Fled to wilderness due to political ramifications of killing 400 prophets of Baal.	<b>Exodus 2:11-14</b> Moses Fled to the wilderness, Midian, due to political ramifications of killing a Hebrew-beating Egyptian
<b>1 Kings 19:4b-5a</b> Elijah Pleas for his death, Note he said "I am not better than my fathers"	<b>Exodus 16:3</b> Moses' people wish to die in Egypt because there was at least food there
<b>1 Kings 19:5b-7</b> The Angel of the Lord provides Elijah with Bread and water 1 kings.	<b>Exodus 16 (esp 16:15);17</b> God Fed his people in the wilderness and gives water to them from a rock.
<b>1 Kings 19:8a</b> Elijah Travelled 40 years on the food.	<b>Exodus 16:35</b> The people of Israel ate manna for 40 years, until they arrive to Caanan.
<b>1 Kings 19:8b</b> Elijah arrives to Mt Horeb, where God will pass by,	<b>Exodus 33:21-22; 34:5-6</b> Moses, in Mt Sinai(Horeb) sees God's glory passing by.

**"And Elijah asked that he might die, saying, 'It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.'" (1 kings 19:4).** When he arrived at the single broom tree, any sense of pride collapsed, and his depression and

despair took over. Elijah knew that Israel's restoration was right in his grasp and he blew it, and it was his fault. Although he had God at his side, he viewed God's power as his, and consequently his pride puffed up. And pride is such an unfirm foundation to have assurance in that when such pride is taken away, Elijah shrunk back to cowardice. And his cowardice is the same cowardice that his fathers in Israel had along with his fellow Israelites. They, like Elijah, were too cowardly to face against Ahab's oppression and institutional idolatry along with the previous kings of Israel up to the founder of the Northern kingdom who usurped that kingdom from Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Also take note on his suicidal thoughts. This is a thought that comes straight from depression saying that there's nothing that Elijah can do to satisfy his ego. Elijah knew that he went against God's desires and stumbled on his prophetic ministry. Therefore, Elijah desires to forcefully end his prophetic ministry whether it's by God taking his life away or by starving alone to death in the wilderness.

Isn't this prayer somewhat relatable to a Christian who just wants to escape from this corrupt world once and for all when their pride is also shot to the ground by the world?

## 1 kings 19:5

**“And then he lay down and slept under a broom tree.”**

Then the Hebrew in this passage says the following in wooden English **“And behold now this messenger** (or angel I may say) **touched him.”** Take notice the phrase “and behold” which reflects something the author wants you to see, like a inventor says to his audience “behold, look at my creation.” The author wants you to pay attention to what he writes next. “this messenger” Your first question would be “what is this messenger?” There’s a huge difference between saying “a car flattened my cat” to “look THIS car flattened my cat snuffles” but because the author doesn’t immediately answer this, this passage creates an eerie and ominous mystery to this sudden character מַלְאָךְ הַזֶּה (tzeh Malak) or in English “this messenger” especially when the word “this” or “tseh” in Hebrew, is used. Although there’s no problem translating the Hebrew word מַלְאָךְ (malak) to “angel,” the ESV blurs any literary ambiguity that’s present in the Hebrew when it reads **“behold, an angel touched him.”** On the other hand, the Septuagint reading of the passage, which we read today, decided to not translate or even include the Hebrew word “angel or messenger” in the text, but instead faithfully preserved

the ominous ambiguity of this messenger when it reads “**and behold, someone touched him.**”<sup>8</sup> Talk about translation philosophy.

### **An Unexpected Friend**

Then this someone said to him “**Arise and eat. And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water.**” Notice the word “hot stones” which the cake was baked on, which in NASB, the King James, and a few other translations render as “hot coals.” Now hold on a second, what’s going on? Elijah uttered a prayer out of despair and hopelessness and then he has food cooked on burning coals which then touch his mouth? What does that sound like?

Let’s briefly turn to Isaiah 6:5 “**Woe is Me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts.**” (Isaiah 6:5) After prophet Isaiah said that, “**one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin is atoned for.**” (Isaiah 6:6-

7) Take note of the word in Isaiah “burning coal” which in hebrew is רִצְפָּה

(ritzpah), has a very similar lexical meaning as burning stones רִצְפִּים (ritzaphim)

in 1st kings. Also notice where does that burning coal come from. In Isaiah, the

<sup>8</sup> καὶ ἰδοὺ τις ἤψατο αὐτοῦ 1 kings 19:5b LXX



coal comes from the burning altar in the heavenly temple, which corresponds to the altar in the earthly temple that Isaiah was present here in this passage, the altar on which sacrifices are burned as described in book of Leviticus.

*Table 2. Parallels between 1 kings 19 and Isaiah 6*

1 kings 19	Isaiah 6
<p><b>1 Kings 19:4b</b>            ...And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."</p>	<p><b>Isaiah 6:5</b>            And (Elijah) said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"</p>
<p><b>1 Kings 19:5b</b>            ...And behold, <b>an angel</b> touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." 6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on <b>hot stones(hot coal)</b> and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again</p>	<p><b>Isaiah 6:6-7</b>            Then one of the <b>seraphim</b> flew to me, having in his hand a <b>burning coal(hot coal)</b> that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he btouched my mouth and said: "<b>Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.</b>"</p>
<p><b>1 Kings 19:8</b>            7 And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "<b>Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.</b>"</p>	<p><b>Isaiah 6:8</b>            And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "<b>Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?</b>" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."</p>

Now lets turn back to 1 kings 19:6. "Then Elijah ate and drank and lay down again.

**"Then the Angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him"**

Now we know who is this someone, who is none other than this character called the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of YHWH.<sup>9</sup> This particular angel or messenger appears throughout the scripture. In Genesis 22, When Abraham reached out his

<sup>9</sup> LXX decided not to translate the word "malak" in this 1 kings 19:1 and 6

- Possible reasons:to avoid confusion the Greek word of Angel, which has a double meaning (messenger or angel) in the Hellenistic jewish world
- to give a more dramatic literary introduction to the Angel of the Lord

knife to sacrifice his son to obey YHWH's command, it was the angel of the Lord who called out from heaven, "Don't do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you, have not withheld from me, your son, your only son (Genesis 22:12). Wait a second, who commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son? In Exodus 3, When Moses was tending Jethro's flock by Mount Horeb, it was the Angel of the Lord who appeared to him in the burning bush (Exodus 3:2) and God called out to Moses from the Bush (Exodus 3:4) wait... who's in the bush again? In Judges 13, It was the Angel of the Lord who appeared to Samson's parents (Judges 13:3), but once Samson's mom realized that this angel was the Angel of the lord, she cried out, "Oh no, We shall surely die, for we have seen God." (Judges 13:22) Wait... Isn't that statement given to God YHWH alone? In Judges 2, when the Angel of the Lord went up to Bokim from Gial, he said "I Brought you out of Egypt and led you into the land I swore to give to my ancestors. I said 'I will never break my covenant with you.'" Wait isn't this what YHWH God Said?

Who then is this angel... Other than YHWH God himself!<sup>10</sup> Who manifested right here in front of Elijah. Who just gave him bread from heaven, just as the LORD gave Israel bread from heaven in the wilderness; and who gave him water,

---

<sup>10</sup> It was the Angel of the Lord who called Gideon to deliver Israel out of Midian (Judges 6:11,14), but when Gideon realized that this angel was the angel of the Lord, Gideon exclaimed after he left "Alas, Sovereign Lord, I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face. And the Lord said to him. "Peace, don't be afraid. You won't die (Judges 6:22-23)." – this passage communicates that While the Angel of YHWH is identical to YHWH, it's also distinct from YHWH, This sounds like John 1:1 "The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

just as the Lord gave Israel water through the living rock; and he will guide Elijah through the wilderness, Just as God guided Israel in the wilderness. Then the Angel said, “**Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.**” Scholars are uncertain on how to interpret what the Angel said.<sup>11</sup> What journey? When we crack open the Hebrew text and look at the Hebrew word, we end up with even more questions since that word is a common Hebrew word for “way” or “path.” What journey is Elijah travelling? Was Elijah even in a journey? How relatable is this passage when we do not know what’s ahead of us financially, what’s ahead of us relationally, and what God has for us ahead.

Whatever this journey is, it certainly has a destination, since after Elijah “**arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb (or Sinai), the mount of God (1 Kings 19:8).**” Although this immediate verse is reminiscent of how God’s bread from heaven sustained Israel throughout their forty years in the wilderness, we are now sure that Elijah is trekking that journey the Angel of the Lord directed him.

Why was this journey forty days when the distance from Beersheba to Sinai is less than a week? We can only look back to Elijah’s earlier pride that he views

---

<sup>11</sup> Robinson, Bernard P. “ELIJAH AT HOREB, 1 KINGS 19:1-18: A COHERENT NARRATIVE?” *Revue Biblique* (1946-), vol. 98, no. 4, 1991, pp. 513–36. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44089073>. Accessed 23 Sept. 2023, p. 518-520.

himself like Moses in that just as Moses's journey to the mount Sinai was forty days (Exodus 24:18), he also needs his journey to that same mountain also to be forty days. Even after he was humbled, he still cannot get out of his Moses-Complex.

On the other hand The Angel of the LORD, YHWH himself, sees Elijah in the Exodus narrative, not as Moses, but as hopeless and cowardly Israel. An Israel who's in complete despair, depression, and in need of his heavenly food. God doesn't see Elijah as the prophet Moses but a man who's even more disparaging, and more unclean than prophet Isaiah. The LORD sees not a prophet but a man who is completely undone by the world, despite all the blessings, signs, and wonders He gave him, and he has fallen from his post. Yet he gives him sleep, he nourishes him, and he calls him to God's path.

Now why should we care about who the Angel of the Lord is? What do we lose here when we just read that this angel is just a normal messenger from the Lord. What we lose here, just by interpreting this angel as a mere angel, is not only this majestic appearance of God, but even this appearance of Christ and his atoning work!

## The Gospel Which the Prophets bore Witness

Let us now turn to Zechariah 3 briefly. we encounter a vision that the post exilic prophet Zechariah saw in verse 3 of his high priest Joseph with the Angel of the Lord. “Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the Angel. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.” The priest’s role is to represent the nation of Israel and was the middleman between Israel and God, but the priesthood has fallen because of their idolatry, hence the destruction of Solomon’s temple. But now God has provided grace, kept a remnant, and restored the priesthood when the Jewish people returned to Jerusalem. Notice this atoning work that the Angel of the Lord did, doesn’t this sound familiar?

In Romans 3 Paul declared to the church, “3:21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by

his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

Table 3 Parallels between Zechariah 3 and Paul's writings

Zechariah	Paul's writings
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Zechariah 3:1-2</b></p> <p>Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, <b>and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.</b> And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! <b>The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!</b> Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?"</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Romans 3:23-24</b></p> <p>for all have <b>sinned and fall short of the glory of God,</b> 24 and are <b>justified by his grace as a gift,</b> through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Zechariah 3:4</b></p> <p>And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your <b>iniquity</b> away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Romans 3:25</b></p> <p>...whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former <b>sins.</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Zechariah 3:4-5</b></p> <p>5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and <b>clothed him with garments.</b> And <b>the angel of the Lord</b> was standing by.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Galatians 3:27</b></p> <p>For as many of you as were baptized into Christ <b>have put on Christ.</b></p>

What we see right here in Zechariah is that Joshua the high priest is freely justified, or made right, by the redemption of the Angel of the LORD; in such a similar way that all who trust in Christ are freely justified through redemption by Christ. Paul also cried out in Galatians 3:27 that "For all who are baptized in Christ put on Christ." We see in Zechariah that the Angel of the Lord literally washed

Joshua and clothed him with his vestments. What We see in this passage in Zechariah is the prophet literally bearing witness to the Gospel, in that Jesus is the Angel of the Lord who freely justified the Israelite priesthood, and who will expand his justification to all who will repent and believe in the Cross.

Let us turn back to 1 Kings 19, where Elijah also bore witness to the gospel. What we see here in this passage is that the angel of the Lord, Jesus, is atoning for Elijah's pride, selfishness, and hopelessness through providing him his bread which was baked with the same coals in the heavenly altar that touched Isaiah lips, where sacrifices are burned to give a pleasing aroma to God, before he is even crucified. We see the lamb, who was sacrificed before the foundation of the world, freely justifying Elijah even with the fruits of his coming sacrifice, and Christ sees with is own eyes what the changing power of his coming atonement did on Elijah, through Elijah's spiritual death and resurrection.

Christ even bore witness the power of regeneration, Just as when Christ called Elijah to eat his food, and he naturally ate without compulsion by his nature, When Christ's gospel raises our spiritual deadness through the work of the holy spirit, our new heart would naturally want to cling fast to his gospel and pursue to eat Christ's spiritual food and worship God the Father. And Christ

bearing witness to Elijah fully knows that he will succeed where Elijah failed and then he would then suffer in behalf of Elijah's failures, pride, and selfish depression.

### **The Assurance to the Wanderer**

We can also learn, O Christian, that Elijah's depression comes as an obstacle against his pride, which happens when someone's pride suddenly realizes that they do not have control over their situation. Dare I say that depression is a deep emotion that can be ordained by God to humble a prideful man. Yet I cannot talk about depression lightly, since it's such a deep emotion of hopelessness, that so many people cannot escape out of that bottomless pit of darkness to the point that it is like a medical condition. Depression is such a self-conscious emotion that we would constantly think alone of our failures, and we become enslaved to our thought patterns of despair, hopelessness, loneliness; The Christian say, how I am no better than my broken family or this perverted world and I do not deserve to live; despite the physical blessings his family has given to him and the spiritual blessings God has given to you. Sure I can say count your blessings, but there is a greater hope for this physical, mental, and spiritual ailment. And it is that there's hope for depression.



Not some bland hope that God will make everything better, but that just as Christ was present in Elijah's hopeless, loneliness, and depression, and he nourished him, Christ is present with us today in the Holy Spirit who indwells with us and he nourishes us through the food he provides us with word and sacrament. How important is it then to participate in the life of the church, to share your burdens, to pray for one another, to realize that you are not alone. Through your repentance and belief in Christ, you are never alone, since God is always present with you, who hears your cries and pleas and will provide what you will need. The church is the means that he provides to heal the Christian from depression and thoughts of suicide, since the church is a constant reminder that you are not alone and rejected, because the Church is Christ's body.

How depressing is it then , O man, you who are far away from Christ, you who reject and rebel against God and what he has said to you, to not have this comforter. Do you not realize the grace that God gave to the pagan Jezebel to avert her demise, to protect her dignity as a ruler and as a woman, by stumbling Elijah? Do you not realize that God has given her such great gift intellect so she can devise such a plan, yet she used it for evil and deception? What will be her fruit other than death? How much grace has God given to you, yet you despoil that grace like a foolish prince and do not give credit to who it is due? Will you

lead your family and friends to destruction and ruin or to life? Will God do justice on you for the ones you injured and afflicted after you die? Or perhaps you are lost in the raging ice cold sea of a wilderness, and no one is for you. You are rejected by the world and your work, your friends. Or perhaps even a so-called church twisted and exploited you, and your family curses your name. Or you lost all of that and you are a ghost wandering this world. Or perhaps you abused your neighbor, you abused your tongue, you abused your body, and you want to cut it short. It is time to wake up. Look at the Angel of the Lord, Jesus Christ, who has sustained your life up until now, do not stay asleep in your pride, do not stay asleep in your sorrow, do not stay asleep in your past. "Wake up sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

No matter your state of life, cling onto Christ and God will take care of you. For Christ has lived and suffered by the cross for all who trust in his promise of eternal life. He will provide you with his food despite your sins. He will wipe away every tear from your face, and he will use your broken wayward soul for his plans and desires. Taste and see that the LORD is Good.

## Bibliography.

DeVries, Simon. 2015. 1 Kings, Volume 12 : Second Edition. Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing. Accessed September 15, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central, pg. 320.

Herr, Denise Dick. "Variations of a Pattern: 1 Kings 19." *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 104, no. 2, 1985, pp. 292–94. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3260969>. Accessed 23 Sept. 2023.

Morrow, Jeffrey L. "Arise and Eat": 1 Kings 19: 3-8 and Elijah's Death, Resurrection And Bread from Heaven." *The Journal of the Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies. Vol3* 1 (2010): 1-7.

Robinson, Bernard P. "ELIJAH AT HOREB, 1 KINGS 19:1-18: A COHERENT NARRATIVE?" *Revue Biblique (1946-)*, vol. 98, no. 4, 1991, pp. 513–36. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44089073>. Accessed 23 Sept. 2023.

Thomas L. Constable, "[1 Kings.](#)" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 522.