



ELIJAH 8: THE STILL SMALL VOICE (1 Kings 19.1-18)

Ps. Hennie Swart

1 Kings 19.7-18

⁷The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." ⁸So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he travelled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

1 Kings 19.7-18

¹¹The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹²After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

1 Kings 19.7-18

¹⁴He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹⁵The Lord said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram."

1 Kings 19.7-18

¹⁶Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. ¹⁷Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.

Outline

Even though Moses is not explicitly mentioned, this passage teaches us a few things about Elijah and Moses:

1. Elijah was a second Moses
2. Elijah and Moses both received the Word of God
3. Elijah and Moses both thought they stood alone

1. Elijah was a second Moses

The writer of Kings intentionally records this episode in Elijah's life in a way that reflects the experience of Moses (Dillard 1999: 54-55):

- 1) Both Moses and Elijah experienced the power of God on a mountain only to come down and find the people in idolatry (Ex 32; 1 Kings 19.1-2)
- 2) Both Moses and Elijah complained that they had had enough and asked God to take their lives (Num 11.15; Ex 32.32; 1 Kings 19.4)
- 3) Through Moses God provided food and water for Israel during forty years in the desert (Ex 17), and now He provides Elijah with food and water that carries him for forty days through the desert (1 Kings 19.8)

1. Elijah was a second Moses

- 4) Both Moses and Elijah went up the 'mountain of God' (Ex 24.13; 1 Kings 19.8)
- 5) Both Moses and Elijah experience God in wind, earthquake, and fire (Ex 19.16-19; 1 Kings 19.11-12)
- 6) Both Moses and Elijah hid from the power of God in a cave/cleft (Ex 33.22; 1 Kings 19.9, 11)
- 7) Both Moses and Elijah were on the same mountain, maybe even the same cave/cleft, when God 'passed by' them (Ex 33.19, 22; 1 Kings 19.11)
- 8) Both Moses and Elijah avoided looking directly at God (Ex 33.22-23; 1 Kings 19.13)

1. Elijah was a second Moses

- 9) Both Moses and Elijah avoided looking directly at God (Ex 33.22-23; 1 Kings 19.13)
- 10) Both Moses and Elijah had their commissions removed and were sent back to their tasks (Ex 33.12-14; 1 Kings 19.15-16)
- 11) Both Moses and Elijah were the object of God's special care at their deaths (Deut 34; 2 Kings 2)
- 12) Both Moses and Elijah were concerned with the covenant God made with His people (Ex 24.8; 34.27; 1 Kings 19.10, 14)

2. Elijah and Moses received the Word of God

Both Moses and Elijah received the Word of the Lord in a special way (Ex 24.12, 15; 1 Kings 19.12; cf. 2 Cor 3.5-8; Rom 8.14-16)

2. Elijah and Moses received the Word of God

Both Moses and Elijah were mistaken in thinking they had to carry the purpose and people of God alone (Num 11.14; 1 Kings 19.10, 14)

Both Moses and Elijah were instructed by God to appoint other prophets to help them (Num 11.16-17, 25; 1 Kings 19.16-17)

Exodus 33.18-23

¹⁸Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

¹⁹And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

²⁰But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

²¹Then the Lord said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²²When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Conclusion

Both Moses and Elijah only point towards Jesus in a imperfect, incomplete way.

What they could not do, Jesus did!
