

Despite Elijah defeating the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel in a spectacular victory, he soon became despondent when he realised that Jezebel was going after him to kill him. This account of the pre-incarnate Christ appearing to Elijah took place during Elijah’s lowest point in his life and is a prelude to Elijah’s encounter with God at Mount Horeb.

1. The Occasion and Need for Restoration. Upon receiving Jezebel’s message from her messenger, Elijah became downcast and discouraged. Fearing for his life, he ran from Mount Carmel to Beersheba in South Judah, and in self-pity, asked God to *“take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers”* (1 Kings 19:4).

Faithful and diligent servants of the Lord will suffer persecution, for the devil will find ways to hinder and oppose them. In fact, it is when experiencing spiritual victory that our guards are lowered, and we become most vulnerable to threats like pride and complacency. This account demonstrated the false human belief that miracles and victories must lead to the people’s right response. We may also think similarly that since “I am doing this for people, people must respond in a certain way.” However, such a mindset is both self-centred and inward-looking. Instead of looking to self, we must look to the Lord.

2. The Means of Restoration. Are you downcast, lonely or discomfited? Look to our merciful God, for there is great gentleness in His restoration. Instead of rebuking Elijah (“Why are you running away? Why are you hiding?”), Jesus simply *“touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat”* (1 Kings 19:5). What a picture of love and care!

Oftentimes we are quick to demand explanations for the failures of others, but here we see the gentle, understanding love of God. He knows we are but sinners. The Bible records the failings of the saints of old and the heroes of faith in the Book of Hebrews. It is an encouraging reminder that even the greatest of the saints were imperfect and faced many struggles. It is due to the mercy of God that He called us (imperfect beings) to be His instruments in His hands.

God truly provided for Elijah’s needs, miraculously (1 Kings 19:6). This is a reminder that our God can provide in the most unexpected ways. Oftentimes, we foolishly limit God, and overestimate our abilities, thinking that God must work through our plans. In providing for Elijah, God proved that He did not need any human participation. We must trust the Lord, for He has promised to *“supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”* (Phil 4:19). This knowledge should also keep us humble, for we never know how God can work. It is a reminder not to rely on our own strength!

3. God’s Purpose for Restoration. God can easily take us home to heaven, so why does He still restore us? God still has a mission and purpose for us on this earth, as seen by how He directed Elijah to Mount Horeb, the Mount of God (1 Kings 19:8).

May we be reminded of our need to fulfil God’s will and calling for us, as well as to the truth that we cannot do so on our own. May we daily commune with Him, meeting face-to-face with Him to ask for renewed zeal and strengthening. May we not neglect this means of grace because of our busyness. Indeed, let us be like Martin Luther, who understood that in having more things to do for the Lord, more time must be devoted to prayer, for we need God’s strength, help and wisdom. Look to Him who restores, and when He restores, commune with Him and go back to doing His work!