

WHAT DOEST THOU HERE?

January 12, 2014

I Kings 19:1-21

“And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?” I Kings 19:9

“Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are” (Jas. 5:17). In this passage he appears to be suffering “meltdown.” He had just prevailed single-handedly and decisively over 450 prophets of Baal in a nationally publicized confrontation. His courage and faith were unprecedented and unparalleled. But now he is at the opposite extreme of fear and doubt, running from a wicked queen who has vowed to kill him (v. 2).

Sometimes God’s people face extremes. These never surprise God. Sometimes He sends His people into the storm, just as He did His disciples on the Sea of Galilee (Mk. 4:35-40; 6:45-51). But it is always for good purposes: searching the heart, sobering the spirits, showing His presence and goodness.

After Elijah’s extraordinary triumph, God sent him into the wilderness, back to the place where God revealed Himself to Moses. There, the question had profound meaning: “Elijah, what doest thou here?”

The greatest saints became battle-weary, yet these experiences were profitable to them. God permitted Paul to suffer a “thorn in the flesh,” from which he sought escape three times without relief (II Cor. 12:7-10). Through it he was humbled as God revealed to him more truth than to any other living man. Herein Paul is the instrument through whom we receive knowledge of God. Paul learned the sufficiency of God’s grace to amid this suffering. Elijah revealed God to man as Paul did, and immediately after one of his greatest revelations he suffered a great letdown, in order that God might lift him up again.

Consider these lessons from Elijah’s experience:

1. Our Lord observes our circumstances, external and internal, and knows where we are (5-7).
2. He knows our needs, present and future, and meets them abundantly (6-7)
3. He directs our paths to bring us into His communion (7-8)
4. He searches hearts and exposes our weakness (9-10)
5. He answers our weakness by displaying His might (11-12)
6. He examines our ways, and forces us also to examine them (9, 14)
7. Testing is never in vain, but is preparation for greater service (15-17)