

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS**  
**TUMBLING FROM FAITH TO DEPRESSION**  
**1 KINGS 18:46; 19:1-4**

**Introduction**

Recorded in the closing of this chapter is an unusual thing. One might call it the great feat of Elijah's feet. As the great rain began coming down, we see Ahab was returning home in his chariot as Elijah told him he needed to do. But get this, Elijah ran ahead of the chariot to Jezreel and actually beat Ahab to Jezreel.

Jezreel was the winter capitol half-way between Mt. Carmel and Samaria. This would have been about a twenty-mile run (about 3/4 of a marathon). Now we need to realize that Elijah had not been in training to run a 3/4 marathon. Also, he had been so busy up on Mt. Carmel that if he had anything to eat at all, it probably would have been very little! **How then was he able to do this? Scripture tells us: "The hand of the LORD was upon him."**

The lesson here is that **when the hand of the LORD is upon us, He can enable us to do the difficult and even what might be considered impossible by some!**

So there is another question that begs to be asked here. **Why did Elijah run like this? To what purpose did he run the way he did?**

Well, I've read where it was customary in that time for kings to have runners before their chariots. Some say that Elijah was demonstrating humility and loyalty to his king by rendering this service. **Whatever the reason, he did this feat with the help of the LORD!**

Notice how it says here that **"...he girded up his loins..."**. Had he not done that, what he was wearing could have been a hindrance to him as he was running. So, by **"girding up his loins"** for this task, **he removed the possibility of his clothing being a hindrance to him.**

**As we run the race that the LORD has given us, we need to remove our hindrances as well.**

*Hebrews 12:1—"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."*

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS**  
**TUMBLING FROM FAITH TO DEPRESSION**  
**1 KINGS 18:46; 19:1-4**

**Many Believers have crippled their effectiveness for Christ because they are loaded down with worldly obligations and worldly pursuits and interests.**

The question we need to ask ourselves in light of this is, **"Are our priorities right?"** AND, can we truly say that **Jesus is Lord of our life?** Or are we all entangled with the same things the world is entangled with to the exclusion of doing the LORD's will in our life?

*Matthew 6:31-33 "31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

**Now, on to chapter 19.**

**Have you ever been in a situation where you walked by faith and experienced a great victory in the LORD and all that goes with it, only to find yourself shortly thereafter being under spiritual attack and going from faith to fear to being depressed, blue, or down in the dumps?**

**Why does this happen? Why are we so vulnerable after a victory?**

Success and victory can have a tendency to excite or elate us to the point that we sometimes are caught off guard and more open to the attack of our enemy! We get our focus off of the LORD and the victories He allowed us to experience and on to our circumstances. Adverse circumstances can flip our faith to fear and fear can lead us to depression!

In this story, Elijah shows us how quickly one can go from the mountaintop to the valley. He shows us how vulnerable we can be after a victory.

We see here in chapter 19 how Elijah tumbled from faith to fear in light of one negative tidings that came his way! Just like flipping a light switch, Elijah went from a great victory to living in fear for his life, to then wishing that his life was over! And we will see how the LORD coaxes Elijah back to faith!

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS**  
**TUMBLING FROM FAITH TO DEPRESSION**  
**1 KINGS 18:46; 19:1-4**

**I. WE SEE THE REPORT TO JEZEBEL FROM AHAB! (19:1)**  
Understand that Jezebel was NOT present at Mt. Carmel and we have NO indication that she has any idea what has happened until this point!

When Ahab got to Jezreel, he probably didn't want to, but he told Jezebel ALL that Elijah had done, and how he had slain ALL the prophets with a sword!

Do you get the idea here that Jezebel was the one who was the dominant personality in this family! Ahab was more of a mouse than a man!

**II. WE SEE JEZEBEL'S THE RESPONSE TO THE REPORT! (19:2)**

Jezebel's response shows hardness, defiance, and blindness to the truth. She was wicked, idolatrous, conniving, and used to having her way! She was one like those described in *Romans 1:28*—“*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;*”

So, Jezebel sent a message to Elijah decreeing that she was going to do to him what he did to her prophets within the next 24 hour period. She was so determined to do this that she called for her own gods to the same to her and more if she didn't kill Elijah!

Her saying that was actually a meaningless show considering the fact that her gods did not exist. There is some debate of whether she was sincere here or bluffing. Some believe she just wanted Elijah to flee the land and get out of her hair!

If she was sincere, why didn't she send an executioner instead of just a messenger? Anyway, God turned her counsel into Elijah's benefit.

Jezebel here ended up warning Elijah of her intentions and he fled!

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS**  
**TUMBLING FROM FAITH TO DEPRESSION**  
**1 KINGS 18:46; 19:1-4**

**III. WE SEE ELIJAH'S RESPONSE TO JEZEBEL'S MESSAGE! (19:3)**

Elijah fled for his life! That was a knee-jerk reaction!

All this time, we have seen the word of the LORD move Elijah when and where the LORD wanted him to be!

We don't see Elijah praying to the LORD here and looking for a Word from the LORD! Maybe he felt constraint by the timetable here and had the attitude that there wasn't time to talk to the LORD and wait on an answer!

He is given no direction from the LORD here because he has not prayed about this decision!

**What character trait was Elijah known for? Most people would probably say that it was his boldness and courage!**

This is the man who, at the Word of the LORD, went to the king and told him it would not rain until he said so.

This is also the one who, at the Word of the LORD, returned 3 ½ years later with a message to the king and said to Ahab's servant Obadiah, “*Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here!*”

And, this is the one who, at the Word of the LORD, withstood 450 prophets of Baal and boldly ordered and oversaw the execution of these false prophets.

So the question that arises at this point is, “*Why is Elijah running from Jezebel?*” The best of men are only men at best. Elijah was human. God shows us both sides of this great man. He shows his great faith! But He shows us his weaknesses too.

He fled to Beersheba which was about 120 miles away. We see that Elijah left his servant in Beersheba! A man that is quitting has no need for a servant anymore! But why is he quitting?

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS**  
**TUMBLING FROM FAITH TO DEPRESSION**  
**1 KINGS 18:46; 19:1-4**

Think about this with me for a minute! Elijah had experienced two great victories on Mt. Carmel (there was the victory of the LORD showing Himself mighty in consuming the sacrifice and the victory of the LORD ending the drought with a great rain). But listen, the war was not over! There were more battles to be fought!

I want you to understand that **the war is not over for us either until the LORD comes back to take us home to be with Him whether that be in death or at the Rapture!**

**As long as the LORD allows us to live here in this world, we are going to face opposition and persecution as we live for the LORD!** But we are to persevere through the difficulties as we lean upon the strength and grace that the LORD gives us!

*2 Timothy 3:12—“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”*

**IV. WE SEE ELIJAH’S REQUEST TO THE LORD TO LET HIM DIE! (19:4)**

Elijah went a day’s journey (15 to 20 miles) into the wilderness. He was all alone, yet He was not alone at all because the LORD was there with him! **That’s a great truth! Even when we are all alone, we are not really all alone—the LORD is always there!**

His attitude here was *“Lord, I have had enough. I just want to die.”* Have you ever been there? That’s really not a very wise prayer, is it? **Oh how strangely we can think and how strangely we can pray when we get down in our spirit and are depressed!**

Because that is what is happening here! Elijah was facing a very deep bout of depression here all because of the threats of a wicked woman!

Elijah prayed for death...but, did he really mean it? **Depression has a way of confusing our thinking and our actions.** If Elijah really wanted to die, then why did he run?

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS**  
**TUMBLING FROM FAITH TO DEPRESSION**  
**1 KINGS 18:46; 19:1-4**

All he had to do was stay where he was and Jezebel would have killed him!

**Many men of God have had times when they have been deeply depressed.** Elijah was under a juniper tree which grows to about 12 feet. It has small leaves and fragrant flowers. Elijah was in the desert under this tree when he told the LORD he wanted to die!

**A similar thing happened to Jonah.** His preaching produced one of the greatest revivals in world history at Nineveh. But it was a revival he’d rather not be associated with! He wanted the LORD to destroy Nineveh! *Jonah 4:3,8— “3 Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. 8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.”*

**Moses became depressed from the complaints of the people.** *Numbers 11:13-15— “13 Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. 14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. 15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.”*

**The health problems of Job drained him physically and emotionally.** *Job 6:8-9— “Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off.”*

*Job 10:1— “My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.”*

**David's troubles, especially with King Saul, depressed him.**

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS**  
**TUMBLING FROM FAITH TO DEPRESSION**  
**1 KINGS 18:46; 19:1-4**

*Psalm 42:6— “O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.”*

**Jeremiah struggled with depression to the point that he wished he had never been born.**

*Jeremiah 20:14-18— “14 Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. 15 Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. 16 And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; 17 Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me. 18 Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?”*

**John Wesley, one year after his victorious ministry at Aldersgate Street, became depressed and doubtful.** He wrote, *“I am not a Christian.”* Wesley is said to have rode one quarter of a million miles on horseback, preached 40,000 sermons and saw 100,000 professions of faith.

**Spurgeon struggled with depression too.** He called it the *Minister's Fainting Fits*. Spurgeon's success appalled him and cast him into depression. He said, *“Who am I to lead so great a multitude.”*

The LORD tells the whole story about the men he uses in Scripture. He uses them to warn us of the vulnerability of victory.  
*1 Corinthians 10:12— “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”*

It is interesting that Elijah's point of greatest strength in chapter 18, his faith, became his most vulnerable point in chapter 19. Elijah had won the battles on Mt. Carmel by faith, but then he lost his peace by fear!

**BOOK OF 1 KINGS**  
**TUMBLING FROM FAITH TO DEPRESSION**  
**1 KINGS 18:46; 19:1-4**

But why? How did Elijah get to this point? What are some of the factors that may have led to Elijah's depression?

Well, we don't have enough time to examine that tonight! So, next week, LORD willing, we'll take a look at some possible factors from we see here!