**The Power of God’s Word**

*1 Kings 19:11-12*

**Introduction**

1. Elijah found himself despondent under a broom tree as Jezebel sought his life – **1 Kings 19:1-4**
2. Preceding events:
   1. Ahab takes the throne in Israel – **1 Kings 16:30, 33** (did evil more than any king before him) – married Jezebel, a Gentile idol worshiper (**1 Kings 21:25**).
   2. Ahab led the people in the worship of Baal – **1 Kings 16:32**
   3. Elijah comes on the scene as Ahab reigns – **1 Kings 17:1**
      1. Prayed for a drought – 3 ½ years
      2. Presented self to Ahab – **1 Kings 18:17-19** – called him on his sin and challenged Baal and his prophets.
      3. Gained victory on Mount Carmel over the prophets of Baal – God quenched the sacrifice drenched in water with fire when Baal did nothing.
      4. Slew the prophets of Baal – **1 Kings 18:40**
3. After being given provisions from an angel, Elijah journeyed as far as Horeb (Mt. Sinai), and went into a cave (some suggest the same as when Moses was on the mount) – **1 Kings 19:5-8**
4. God questioned Elijah’s actions – going to Horeb, and residing in a cave – Elijah responded with his frustration concerning the nation, and his own zeal which he seemed to think was ineffective/unnoticed – **1 Kings 19:9-10**
   1. Elijah’s zeal is evident in his actions against the evil Ahab, and apostate nation.
   2. Israel had:
      1. Forsaken God’s covenant – they have been unfaithful to God despite His goodness.
      2. Torn down God’s altars – so as to eradicate true worship of the true God.
      3. Killed God’s prophets – to silence God’s word, and the reproof of their actions.
   3. Elijah’s pessimism in his despondency – I am left alone.
   4. Being a man with God’s interests in his heart, it tore Elijah up to not only see the rebellious state of the nation, but to perceive the helplessness despite the great displays before.
      1. The people confessed God – **1 Kings 18:38-39**
      2. However, evidently it was an empty confession as changes ultimately didn’t come.
5. God teaches Elijah a lesson – **1 Kings 19:11-12**
   1. God does not always carry out His will in fantastic displays that strike awe in the beholder – He was not in the wind, earthquake, fire, but the voice.
      1. Elijah could not comprehend why such displays like that on Mt. Carmel would not do the job. (Or the 3 ½ year drought)
      2. Also, it was Elijah’s thought that he was completely alone in the service of God.
   2. Elijah responded to the voice – God was in the voice – **1 Kings 19:13-18** – God tells Elijah to get back to work and appoints tasks for him which would address problems in the nation, and then revealed to Elijah that he was not alone.
      1. **(v. 18)** – how had God reserved these 7,000?
      2. They weren’t the ones there to witness the events on Carmel – else, why is Elijah claiming to be alone?
      3. Used by Paul – **Romans 11:2-6** – how is it that a remnant remains in Paul’s day?
         1. **Romans 9:27-28, 30-33; 10:17** – seeking God’s righteousness by faith – comes from God’s word.
      4. The power God wields to accomplish His purposes is His word.
         1. Other, miraculous displays may be used, but only to confirm that it is His word so it can be obeyed.
         2. **Cf. 1 Kings 17:24** – now I know you speak God’s word – after Elijah raised the widow’s son.
      5. What Elijah wasn’t taking into consideration was the powerful influence of God’s word to turn people back to Him, and reserve people for His service.
         1. He had forgotten so quickly about Obadiah – **1 Kings 18:3-4**
         2. The 7,000 may not have been one apparent group that Elijah could easily see, but they were faithful people spread throughout the rebellious nation.
         3. Elijah was not alone in faithfulness because the power of God’s word had proven effective, and it would be further effective in future work if Elijah got to work as God required.
6. We need to understand the power to be in God’s word, and not mistake our own concepts as wielding such power, but trust in God’s revelation.
7. God’s Word is the Emphasis
8. The “Spirit and Power of Elijah” in John
   1. Malachi’s prophecy – **Malachi 4:5-6** – Send Elijah before the day of the Lord – before the Messiah.
   2. Jesus’ identification of ***“Elijah who is to come”*** – **Matthew 11:11, 14** – John the Baptist.
   3. John denies being Elijah – **John 1:21**
   4. How is he the Elijah of Malachi? – **Luke 1:16-17** – ***“spirit and power of Elijah”***
   5. What we might think of:
      1. Prayer for the drought and then return of rain – 3 ½ yrs.
      2. Raising the widow’s son back to life.
      3. Victory at Mt. Carmel over prophets of Baal.
      4. Calling down fire to consume the soldiers sent by the evil king Ahaziah. (**cf. Luke 9:54** – James and John when the Samaritans didn’t receive Jesus.)
      5. Parting the Jordan for he and Elisha to walk through.
      6. Ascending to heaven by a whirlwind.
   6. However, there is not even a hint of a miracle performed by John the Baptist.
   7. What was his work **– John 1:22-23** – ***“I am ‘The voice’”***
      1. **Isaiah 40:6-8** – the word of the Lord.
      2. Like Elijah, John the Baptist sought to turn the hearts of the people back to God. He spoke the word unapologetically, and without reservation.
9. God’s Revelation of Self to Moses at Sinai
   1. NOTE: The same mountain on which God would demonstrate His power to Elijah, and teach him the lesson of God’s ultimate instrument – the word.
   2. Moses’ request – **Exodus 33:18** – show me Your glory.
   3. God’s reply – **Exodus 33:19-23** – you won’t see Me, but I will proclaim my name to you.
   4. God’s revelation – **Exodus 34:5-7** – not revealing to Moses His figure, and allowing Moses to see Him, but proclaiming truth about Himself.
      1. Similarly, with Philip and Jesus – **John 14:8-11**
      2. The power of God’s revelation of Himself to Moses was not in any spectacular display seen with the physical eye, but in revelation of His will/character.
10. God’s Instruction at Jesus’ Transfiguration
    1. NOTE: Not on the same mountain, but on a mountain nonetheless – Moses AND Elijah appear.
    2. The events of the transfiguration of Jesus – **Matthew 17:1-8** – Peter, James, and John there to experience it.
       1. **(v. 3)** – Moses and Elijah there. (Law and prophets)
       2. **(v. 5)** – Hear Jesus. (Word greater than law and prophets)
       3. **(v. 8)** – Moses and Elijah gone.
       4. NOTE: **(v. 2)** – transfiguration had importance, but Jesus did not show His glory in this way during His ministry. (**cf. John 1:14** – full of grace and truth)
    3. The emphasis of Peter – **2 Peter 1:16-21** – Apostolic teaching of Jesus’ return in glory confirmed by the eyewitness of the glory of His transfiguration.
       1. What makes the word of the apostles concerning this doctrine of Christ even more certain/reliable?
       2. ***(v. 19) – “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed” (KJV); “And we have more firm the prophetic word” (YLT)***
          1. I.e. the eyewitness testimony of Jesus’ glory on the mount is enough to trust the teaching concerning His coming in judgment.
          2. However, what is even more sure than this is the word of the prophets because it is from God!
          3. **2 Peter 3:2** – be mindful of the apostolic word, and that of the prophets.
11. **The Bible is filled with teachings and examples which emphasize these truths that the ultimate power of God is in His word!**
    1. **In what way was John in** ***“the spirit and power of Elijah”*** – NOT MIRACLES, BUT THE FIRM PREACHING OF GOD’S WORD.
    2. **In what way did God show His glory to Moses** – NOT IN A MARVELOUS DISPLAY, BUT IN THE MESSAGE OF HIS CHARACTER AND WILL.
    3. **What was the emphasis of the transfiguration of Jesus, who was shown to be superior to even Moses and Elijah** – NOT MERELY HIS MIRACULOUS POWER, BUT WHAT IT ULTIMATELY CONFIRMED – HE HAS THE WORDS OF LIFE, AND WE NEED TO HEAR HIM.
12. God’s Word Should be Our Focus
13. God’s Word is the Power to Accomplish God’s Will
    1. **Isaiah 55:8-11** – we should value God’s ways above ours, and trust in the power of His word to accomplish its task.
    2. When we underestimate the transcendence of God’s word our thoughts and ways get in the way.
    3. It is only by letting God’s word have free course that God’s will is accomplished.
14. God’s Word is the Power for Salvation
    1. **Romans 1:16** – power to salvation.
       1. **1 Corinthians 1:18** – saved through message preached.
    2. **James 1:18, 21** – brought us forth, able to save souls.
    3. **2 Peter 1:3** – has all things pertaining to life and godliness (“divine power…knowledge”)
    4. **John 14:6** – Jesus is the only way to salvation.
       1. **John 6:37-38, 40, 44-45** – come to Jesus for salvation, drawn to Jesus through being taught (word of God).
       2. **John 6:67-68** – Jesus saves because He has the words of eternal life.
       3. **Nothing will truly attract them to Jesus except His word** – **Luke 16:27-31** – they have Moses and the prophets.
    5. Power is not in:
       1. Being relevant – to attract others to Christ.
       2. Gimmicks, entertainment, etc.
15. God’s Word is the Power for Growth
    1. **Philippians 2:12-13** – need to work out salvation (speaking to Christians), w/ God’s aid.
       1. **1 Thessalonians 2:13** – God’s work is through the word.
    2. **Ephesians 4:11-13** – the mature (perfect) man is produced from the building up by “the faith” – the word of God.
    3. **Colossians 2:2-10** – one is complete in Christ, and is to be built up in Him, not through the vain persuasive words and human wisdom.
    4. Power is not in:
       1. Man’s wisdom – such does not make good Christians, but good followers of such carnal teaching.
       2. Emotionalism – such is closer to idolatry. (Elijah to prophets of Baal – **1 Kings 18:27-29** – it didn’t matter how fervent they were in their cries and actions, they didn’t have the truth.)
16. God’s Word is the Power for Defense
    1. **Ephesians 4:14** – the edification by and in God’s word is a defense against error.
    2. **Acts 20:25-32** – Paul labored in God’s word among the Ephesians to prepare them for the danger of false teachers.
    3. **2 Corinthians 10:4-6** – God’s word is that which can defeat onslaught of error from Satan.
    4. Power is not in:
       1. Purely positive preaching – **2 Timothy 4:2-5**

**Conclusion**

1. There are many things Satan seeks to distract us with, things which boast of power, but which lack any at all.
2. God’s power to carry out His will in the world and eternity is His word.
3. We must understand God’s wisdom in this, and not be swayed by the worldly tactics disguised as spiritual power.