

7-SESSION BIBLE STUDY
FOR TEEN GIRLS

FAITH AND FIRE

Elijah
for Teen Girls

PRISCILLA SHIRER

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Whether in packed-out arenas or intimate Bible study group settings, Priscilla Shirer's influence has been steady and trusted. For more than twenty years her voice has resonated with raw power and unapologetic clarity to teach God's Word. Through her speaking ministry, best-selling books and Bible studies, or even on a movie screen, her primary ambition is clear—to lift up Jesus and equip His children to live victoriously.

Priscilla has been married to Jerry Shirer for twenty-one years. Together they lead Going Beyond Ministries, which exists to serve believers across the spectrum of the church. To date, the ministry has released more than a dozen video-driven studies for women and teens on a myriad of biblical characters (like Jonah and Gideon), as well as topical studies on *Discerning the Voice of God*, *The Armor of God*, and others. Priscilla has also written a fiction series called *The Prince Warriors*, in addition to award-winning books like *Fervent* and *The Resolution for Women*.

She and her family make their home near Dallas, Texas, where between writing and studying, Priscilla spends her days trying to clean up after (and satisfy the appetites of) her three rapidly growing teenage sons.



INTRODUCTION

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME COMING.

It was 2014 when I first started studying and teaching on the life and ministry of Elijah. After sharing parts of his narrative in bits and pieces, I knew I had to write about him one day. Little did I know the resource you're holding in your hands would take another seven years to materialize.

The reasons are many. Several other projects elbowed their way in, taking priority and pushing this one to the background. The busyness of my sons' lives and my involvement with them accelerated exponentially as they blossomed into young manhood. But most of the delay came from a number of unexpected, back-to-back tragedies (I'll tell you about them soon), each of which pushed the pause button on my life, forcing me to sit still for long stretches of emotional and physical recovery.

Before any of this happened, I'd felt compelled to start keeping a journal specifically for the purpose of chronicling my own spiritual journey—keeping track of God's faithfulness, recording my raw conversations with Him, tracing the often imperceptible shifts that His Spirit was working in me at the time. I'm so glad I did. Because while I'll never know my Father's reasons for all these delays—or for the losses, hurts, and challenges that precipitated them—I do know they were, at least in part, for you.

In flipping back through those handwritten entries, reliving the many things that God reframed and refreshed in my heart, I couldn't help noticing how His work in me had added layers of heartfelt depth that would've been missing from these lessons if I'd stayed on my earlier timetable. In His providence all these delays have become detours, aligning you and me in this current season of our lives. I'm convinced God has infused this work with a power that only comes through brokenness, weakness, and struggle. And I'm praying the proof of this holy impact is somehow reflected on each page—that you don't only learn something but experience something.

A renewed faith. A fresh fire.

Our world, more than ever, is longing for the sons and daughters of God to arise in the spirit of Elijah. That's why I think this might just be the perfect time for our paths to cross here, so that God can comfort you, strengthen you, encourage you, and prepare you for the Mount Carmels that lie ahead.

Welcome, my friend—I've been waiting for you. And it's been a long time coming.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Priscilla Shivers". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being significantly larger and more decorative than the others.



Gilead

THE STARTING POINT

Faith: Committing to God's Process

The Start of a Process

Right here at the very beginning of our Bible study, I want you to know one of the beautiful things to expect as we study together over the next seven sessions. I believe that as we meet together and unfold the pages of Scripture, you are going to see the beauty of an almighty, covenant-keeping God.

He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. His plan for your redemption surpasses all time and history. He is an omnipresent, omniscient God.

I pray you will see through this study that He wants to interact with one individual. He wants to be seen by one individual. He wants to be heard and He wants to be experienced by one.

That one individual is *you*.

He wants to be seen by you, and He wants *you* to hear and experience Him. That's why He has brought you to this very moment.

So whatever reservations you might have—whatever cares and concerns you have about your ability to know and hear from God in a fresh and personal way—lay those all down at the feet of Jesus right now.

Open up your heart. Open up your hands. And let's get ready to meet with God.

Press Play

Everybody wants the Mount _____. We want the flashy display of God's _____ in our lives.

And yet in the shadows of these magnificent events is a _____. There's always a _____.

We've got to be _____ to go through the process.

Are you willing to do _____ _____ _____ to get _____ _____ _____?

Discuss

First and Second Kings contain a series of tragedies and the failures of king after king. God's people were divided and turning their backs against each other. It shows a time of idolatry where it wasn't just tolerated and celebrated, it was legislated.

Now, let's meet Elijah.

Read 1 Kings 17:1. Write down the name of the king that Elijah approached in this verse.

What did Elijah unapologetically declare before this king?

Before we move further into this text, it is important for you to know that the name Elijah means “Yahweh is God.” Which means that before Elijah ever said one word, just the mention of his name was enough for people to know where he stood.

What’s your reputation? What are you known for when you aren’t around?

Scholars are unsure of how Elijah was allowed to be in the presence of the king. But we know that it was a divine appointment given to Elijah by God, and he was probably surrounded by the king’s men. Elijah’s life was most likely in jeopardy.

Normally, when prophets or other people would approach the king, they wanted to simply pacify him in order to preserve their own lives (1 Kings 22:13), but Elijah was unapologetically bold. He made it clear to King Ahab that His allegiance was pledged to the one true God.

Describe what it might look like for someone today to declare “the Lord is God” in our culture (maybe at school or on social media).

What do we do when something asks for our allegiance or goes against our allegiance to God?

An EMBASSY is the location of an ambassador who serves and represents his home country in a foreign land.

When I think about allegiance, I think about embassies. Did you know there are American embassies situated all over the world in many countries? Behind the walls and gates of each American embassy in those foreign environments, the laws and policies of the United States reign. The embassy doesn't change and adapt or forgo American laws just because it is located on foreign soil. It is standing in a physical location, but its commitment and allegiance is pledged elsewhere.

No matter where you find yourself standing and no matter how foreign the soil may be or how different it is compared to the heart of God, remember that you are an embassy for the kingdom of heaven. You represent God right where He has placed you.

Name some areas in your life where God has called you to be His ambassador.

Press Play

Then he said to King Ahab, Yahweh _____.

Here's how God was going to remind Ahab that He alone is alive: "There shall be neither _____ nor rain these years, except by my _____."

Not only was the drought a judgment against the people's _____, but it was also a specific indictment against the _____ of Baal.

We can have the courage to rise up in the _____ of Elijah, and to make sure we are God's mouthpiece in this _____.

Discuss

What kind of relationships or material things does our culture count on to sustain us?

How does knowing that our God is alive change the way we live for Him?

DAY ONE

The Real Deal

“After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

1 PETER 5:10



“No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

**HEBREWS 12:11,
CSB**

I was scrolling mindlessly through my Instagram® feed one day when a particular image snagged my attention. Sort of grossed me out, to tell you the truth, peeking out from underneath my paused thumb.

Half of the image showed a beautifully poised, perfectly arched ballerina’s foot. Smooth, elegant, and dainty. So pretty. So precise.

But then—the other side.

This other side told a much different story. The real story.

Directly next to the dancer’s lovely, shapely right foot was her other foot. Her bare foot. Without its ballet slipper. And the contrast was visibly striking. Whole nails were missing. Several of the knuckles, swollen red, were bandaged, blistered, or bleeding. Fragments of old, stained gauze remained stuck to oozing sores. Knobs of contorted, misshapen bones bulged grotesquely beneath the skin.

And along with the picture ran the following caption, or words to this effect:

**EVERYONE WANTS THE GLORY,
BUT FEW ARE WILLING TO PAY THE
PRICE REQUIRED TO GET IT.**

Well, ain’t that the truth.

We want the highlight reel, not the practice session. Not the years of hard work. Not the consistent pattern of sacrifice. Not the going over and over again of the same, repeated steps and movements.



The stretching. The soreness. The getting out of bed on cold, sleepy mornings. The slow, slow walk of patience, whatever it takes to get it right.

What stood out to you the most while reading the Mount Carmel story?

Have you ever had an experience on social media or at school where something seems perfect on the surface but doesn't reveal the whole truth? Describe it below.

Truth be told, when we scroll through our social media feeds, we only want to see the ballet slipper. It's prettier and more palatable. The worn parts, the beat-up parts, douse the wildfire of our romantic imagination. Reality is too much for us to deal with. A close look at the hours of preparation, the years of hard work, and the grueling cost required to get there are not what we came to see. So we conveniently ignore that part.

If we're honest with ourselves and each other, that's how we tend to read the Bible, too.

Several years ago I took on the task of reading the entire Bible in a year. Frankly, I found it a bit overwhelming. Yet I distinctly remember, when I came to Elijah's narrative in 1 Kings that year, how I felt completely consumed by the startling boldness of his faith, especially the one, big highlight that stands out from his story: Mount Carmel.

Go ahead and turn to 1 Kings 18:19-39. (It's a pretty sizable portion of Scripture. But exciting. Lots of action. You'll love it.) As you're reading, list in the sidebar all the elements from this holy encounter that demonstrate the prophet's faith, courage, and commitment to prayer.

As I was reading, the Holy Spirit seemed to shine a spotlight on the encounters leading up to Mount Carmel. They tell us Elijah didn't just show up out of thin air knowing exactly what to do and exactly how to do it. All that faith, all that courage, all that boldness and confidence in prayer—all that fire!—didn't just happen.



This moment of biblical proportions, high atop Mount Carmel, followed a much less public process that God had begun in his years before—a process that is already happening in you as well, which your loving Father will continue to develop throughout this study—a progression of development that I hope you'll begin to recognize and value more than ever before.

I'm assuming you're here with me in these pages because we both want what Elijah had.

We want:

- faith, courage, and boldness,
- a prayer life that pushes back the darkness,
- character that possesses an unflinching backbone, and
- a holy conviction that doesn't bow to popular opinion.

We want to be:

- filled with the fullness of God's Spirit and power,
- brave enough to speak truth to authority with love and grace,
- singularly focused, inspiring others' allegiance to the one true God, and
- people who leave behind a lasting impact on future generations.

If you could have just two things from these lists for your own life, what would they be?



These are incredibly noble aspirations. But the question for us remains:

**ARE WE WILLING TO DO WHAT ELIJAH
DID TO GET WHAT ELIJAH GOT?**

Hear me, sister, and hear me good. The process of pursuing Christ will not be easy. In fact, I can assure you, it will cost you something.

But still, it will all be worth it.

DAY TWO

Just Like Me

*“Friends, why are you doing this?
We too are only human, like you.”*

ACTS 14:15a, NIV

Turn to James 5:17 in your own Bible. In the space below, write down the opening phrase—just through the first comma or so.

I don't know if what I'm about to say will come as a surprise, and I don't want to spoil some of the lessons we'll study down the line. But as a bit of a preview for what the Bible is going to show us about the things Elijah faced in life and how he dealt with them, prepare for these realities:

- We're going to see Elijah hungry, tired, and irritable.
- We're going to see Elijah discouraged and hopeless.
- We're going to see Elijah doubtful and insecure.

In other words, we are going to see Elijah as **human**.

Yes, the great prophet Elijah had his emotional tailspins. *We'll see them.* The great prophet Elijah was an expert at wallowing in self-pity. *We'll see it.* The great prophet Elijah failed and flailed and needed God the same way we fail and flail and need God ourselves. *Get ready to see that, too.* Even after the adrenaline rush of watching God's fire fall from heaven at Mount Carmel, and then actively participating in bringing his enemies to a fitting end, Elijah crashed into an abyss of exhaustion and fatigue. And fear. And paranoia. He ran. He was done.

So while Elijah is an example for us, he is not an exception to us. We must resist our tendency to idolize him and other biblical heroes like him. **None of the biblical heroes were intended to be an exception; they are all meant to be examples to us of what happens when an ordinary life intersects with**



James wrote to a community of Jewish Christians who were being persecuted for their faith and as a result had been “scattered abroad” (1:1, NKJV) out of Jerusalem. They were enduring intense external persecution along with internal battles of the flesh—anger, vengeance, and the temptation to sin.

“Our biblical heroes are examples of what happens when an ordinary life intersects with an extraordinary God.”

#ELIJAHBIBLESTUDY

an extraordinary God. Prepare yourself to look at Elijah this way, and then see what the Holy Spirit reveals to you in the process.

Based on some of the “coming attractions” that I told you we can expect to see in Elijah’s life, let me ask you to be introspective for a moment. In what specific ways do you deal with:

- Insecurity?
- Irritability?
- Discouragement?
- Loss of perspective?

How does it encourage you to realize someone as epic as Elijah could feel and battle with some of these same things?

Here’s how it helps me. It tells me Elijah’s limitations, weaknesses, and emotional quirks didn’t scare God off or disqualify him from serving God in a mighty way.

God knew all these tendencies in Elijah. He factored all of them into the unique plan He’d designed for Elijah’s life. He didn’t ignore His prophet’s needs and worries. He worked with them; He made use of them in showing His care for Elijah, as well as showing what He can accomplish in each of us despite our human imperfections.

Looking at the previous paragraph, underline the portions that encourage you to free yourself from feelings of self-condemnation or uselessness.

And do you know what I see, as you sit there? I see a lot of Elijah in you.

DAY THREE

These Are the Days of Elijah

“You have observed the statutes of Omri and all the practices of Ahab’s house; you have followed their traditions. Therefore I will give you over to ruin and your people to derision; you will bear the scorn of nations.”

MICAH 6:16, NIV

My nephew Kamden is a five-year-old ball of human fire, filled with more energy and precocious mischievousness than maybe any kid I’ve ever met. The fourth of five children, he is constantly trying to press the limits, to push past the boundaries. If not for the watchful oversight of his parents—my brother Jonathan and his wife, Kanika—there’d be no barrier between himself and the dangers of, say, a swimming pool, a crowded intersection, a threatening animal. You get the picture? This is the reason why one of Kamden’s frequent locations is right smack-dab in the middle of his father’s lap, being lovingly and securely held down for his own protection.

Sometimes, though, I’ve watched Jonathan let him go—not because he didn’t want to protect his son, but because he decided in the moment that Kamden would learn better through painful experience. Not enough to injure him, but enough to teach him this valuable lesson: *My father knows best.*

Our relationship with our heavenly Father is much the same. Many times, in order to keep us protected, He holds us close. He hems us in. But other times, still motivated by that same great love, He releases us to our own demands.

He lets go. And we learn the hard way.

In 1 Kings 17, as Elijah first comes into view, the sense we get from Scripture is that God had released the nation to the consequences of their duplicitous choices. Sort of like my nephew Kamden, the Israelites had stiffened their necks against God’s protective authority.

Over the course of eight decades in Israel, spanning the reigns of six different kings, the God-honoring families who once esteemed Him had incrementally relaxed their commitments. They'd departed from the singular worship of Yahweh. They'd welcomed idolatrous activity into their lives as an accepted practice.

Now Ahab, who was the king of Israel when Elijah emerged onto the scene “walked in all the way of Jeroboam” (1 Kings 16:26). This comment compels us to discover what former King Jeroboam did.

After discussions with his advisors, what did Jeroboam set up in the northern cities (1 Kings 12:28-29)?

Whom did he install as religious leaders there (1 Kings 12:31)?



Jeroboam's actions were a flagrant example of **SYNCRETISM**. (SINK-re-tism), the practice of absorbing conflicting religious views into one cosmopolitan belief system, until all roads lead to God, and nothing really means anything.

Jeroboam combined the worship of Yahweh with idolatry. He didn't forbid Israel's allegiance to God, but he made it *divided*. And whenever loyalties are divided, that's where *decline* always begins.

Ruling in this way—in “the way of Jeroboam”—was a common descriptor for all the kings of Israel. But for Ahab, it was just the beginning. He considered what the previous kings had done in dishonoring God “a trivial thing” (1 Kings 16:31). Ahab “did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him” (v. 30).

For instance, he built an altar to Baal for the Israelites to worship—not in *addition* to God, but in *place* of God (v. 32). He added to this blasphemy by making an image of Asherah, the goddess mother of Baal (v. 33). Then in complete disregard for the law of God, he married a pagan wife, Jezebel, daughter of a pagan king. She insisted the worship of Baal become the sum total of Israel's religious life, effectively criminalizing the worship of Yahweh. Israelite culture was no longer *divided* but now *demonic* and *degenerate*.

The spiritual indifference and negligence of all the kings of Israel since Solomon had been offensive to God. Year after year. Decade after decade. But the sharpness of Ahab's departure from worship of the one true God grieved the Lord even more. And at this point of the downhill spiral, God did what fathers sometimes have to do.

He let go.

And like it or not, God does so even now. The sad reality is that our current culture is experiencing some of the same effects of this divine relinquishing.

Read Romans 1:18-32. I know it's a tough passage, and a lengthy one. But the gravity of it is too critical to shortcut. As you read, underline in your Bible anything that stands out as being particularly convicting to you.

Even in this difficult reading, don't overlook God's desire to comfort, to hold us close. In verse 20, we see a loving God taking the initiative to make known His invisible presence, to establish relationship with people. He doesn't want to be hidden and unknown.

But we are simultaneously confronted. We see Him let us go. When people foolishly declare there is no God, or when they dishonor Him by refusing to acknowledge Him or give Him due reverence, He eventually lets go. When people hate the things God has called good or love the things He's called evil, He finally just lets them have what they want, as well as the consequences that come with it.

Zero in on the verses from Romans 1 reprinted in the margin. Underline each place where it says "God gave them over." Circle what they experience after He gave them over.

As children of God—saved, redeemed, and forgiven—the status of our relationship with Him never changes, just as Kamden's relationship to his daddy never changes. But it doesn't mean our experience with Him won't change if we persist in refusing to honor Him. He will sometimes choose tough, letting-go love as the best option for reminding us that the ingredients we're mixing into our lives are a recipe for disaster.

These were the days of Elijah. Days of experiencing God's letting go. But just when Israel was spiraling downward, God was stirring up a representative in the rugged mountains of Gilead who would call His people back.

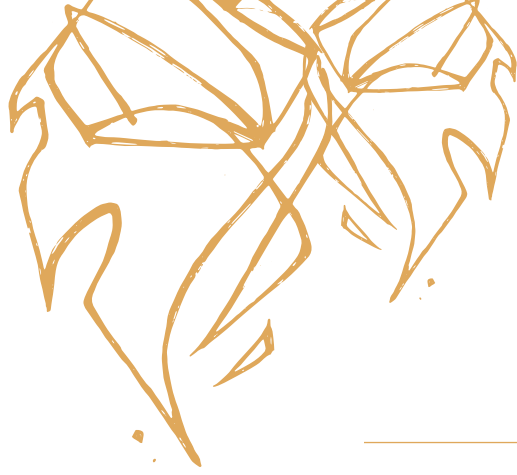
Elijah was coming.



"Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them" (v. 24).

"For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions" (v. 26a).

"And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind" (v. 28a).



DAY FOUR

The Process of Preparation

“Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead ...”

1 KINGS 17:1a

Let’s dig into 1 Kings 17. This is the first mention of Elijah in Scripture. And while we don’t learn a lot about his background from the opening verse, we at least learn this:

- Elijah was a _____.
- His hometown was in an area called _____.
- And his first allegiance was to _____.

The exact location of Tishbe, despite being home to one of the greatest figures in all the Bible, cannot really be identified. Geologists and archaeologists have never been able to pinpoint it with any degree of accuracy. But *Gilead* comes with a bit more documentation.

Gilead was hill country, covered with dense forests and wild undergrowth. It was remote and uncivilized. Even its name—*Gilead*—means “rocky” or “rugged.”

That’s where Elijah was from. And that’s who Elijah was. A mountain man. Elijah wasn’t groomed in the sophisticated manners and etiquette of the city. Elijah lacked classical education and social polish. He wasn’t brought up in echelons of society where he could earn the kinds of credentials and connections that paved his way to success.

Scholars believe he likely tended sheep on the heights of those lonely, uneven hillsides in Gilead.¹ It’s where he learned to value and endure endless stretches of solitude and silence. It’s where he had time to grow into a muscular, sinewy man with the tenacity it took to stave off predators and provide for his flocks.

Elijah came from a hard place. A rough place. An obscure place. The right place to be prepared for what God had in store for him.

Have you ever questioned why God allowed you to go through a season of hardship or to experience a certain difficulty? How so?

The various events and circumstances that have contributed to your life up until this point have not been accidental. They've not been wasted parts of your process, even if they were difficult, even if they excluded you from certain privileges that in your estimation could have propelled you forward faster. Even the evil that's been done against you by people who intended you harm has not been a total loss. This doesn't excuse their wrongdoing, of course. It doesn't minimize the real pain they've caused you. But it does add a layer of perspective and hope.

As Joseph could say, after being wrongfully treated by his brothers, after being unjustly enslaved and imprisoned in Egypt, "God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result" (Gen. 50:20).

For Elijah, the fact that he was raised in an uncivilized environment; the fact that he wasn't brought up around more cultured tastes and people; the fact that he grew up at a distance from mass civilization; the fact that he had no lineage or pedigree even worth mentioning in the Bible. There was a reason for it.

All of it set the stage for the life God had planned for him.

In Gilead.

During Elijah's unrecorded years in Gilead, he somehow came to know, to really know, Yahweh. One way or another, while doing his tedious, mundane, lonesome work, while facing hardships we'll never know, Elijah had been exposed to influences that convinced him Jehovah wasn't just one deity among many other options. He'd developed a deep knowledge, reverence, and understanding for Yahweh's covenant with His people, a holy perspective that would form the basis for his first prophetic declaration in Scripture. This God, Israel's God, was a jealous God who had no intention of sharing His glory with man-made idols.



*"God is faithful,
through whom
you were called
into fellowship
with His Son,
Jesus Christ
our Lord."*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:9



*“It is good for me
that I was afflicted,
so that I may learn
Your statutes. The
Law of Your mouth
is better to me
than thousands
of gold and silver
pieces. Your hands
made me and
fashioned me; give
me understanding,
so that I may
learn Your
commandments.”*

PSALM 119:71-73

That’s what Elijah learned in Gilead.

- In Gilead, where he was from.
- In Gilead, where his heart was formed.
- In Gilead, where his own personal set of trials and difficulties became the start of a process, a process of living and thinking and navigating his journey by faith.

The backside of that raw, rugged desert was God’s way of bringing Elijah around to know Him in a way he would never have experienced Him otherwise. Now he was ready to declare God’s word with boldness and authority.

Describe a time in your life when you have seen God use difficult circumstances to reveal Himself more clearly and to draw you closer to Himself?

Elijah’s whole life was about to become a clear, bold declaration of God’s power and provision.

And so is yours.

Where you have come from. What you have been through.

All of it has been preparing you for the purpose He’s planned next.

As you close today’s lesson, take a few moments to thank the Lord for your journey so far. Ask Him to give you the courage to trust that He is using every part of it—even the difficult or despairing parts—to form you into His image, to focus your passions and pursuits, and to funnel you into the stream of His purposes for this generation, for future generations.



DAY FIVE

Elijah Calling

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
And before you were born I consecrated you;
I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”*

JEREMIAH 1:5

In biblical days, names were quite often synonymous with a person’s calling and character. They signified one’s reputation. The syllables of Hebrew names, like a puzzle meticulously fitted together, built layer upon layer of insight into who this person really was or was meant to be. So when Elijah first arrived in town, anyone in the vicinity would have known where his allegiance stood, simply by hearing his name.

- El, meaning, “God”
- I, meaning, “my”
- Jah, meaning, “Yahweh”

People who knew Elijah knew where he stood, even before they really knew him.

Elijah’s first words to Ahab in 1 Kings 17:1 were sort of a pledge of allegiance, which corresponded with the meaning of his name. Turn to this verse and notice the layers:

- The LORD
- The LORD is _____
- The LORD is God of _____
- The LORD God of Israel _____
- The LORD God of Israel lives, and I have pledged my sole allegiance to Him.

Take a few minutes and look up what your name means. Write it in the space below.

YAHWEH is the name God calls Himself. In Hebrew tradition, His name was considered too holy even to speak aloud. So in the Old Testament, where this name appears more than six thousand times, it was changed to the word Adonai, which in English versions is printed “LORD,” in all capital letters.²

See “Digging Deeper, Part 1” on page 26.



Turn to and read Deuteronomy 29, particularly verses 16-29, where God revealed the cost to be paid by those who rejected His covenant.

What did Elijah say was God’s impending judgment on the nation of Israel because of their rebellion?

Based on what Elijah knew about God’s covenant with His people (Deut. 29, for example), he knew Israel’s rebellion deserved judgment. And despite the fact that these negative results of the people’s disobedience would adversely affect Elijah too—such as the land being “unsown and unproductive” so that “no grass grows in it” (Deut. 29:23)—he was brave enough and so committed to God that he still prayed for it.

Elijah had developed such a commitment to Yahweh that he was willing to pray for His will to be done above all else, even above his own comfort.

And he was willing to speak this unbending truth to the most powerful man in the nation.

To whom did Elijah declare God’s forthcoming judgment?

How did this guy get in here?

Scholars are unsure how Elijah ever ended up being granted an audience with King Ahab and why his life was spared when he did, especially considering the unwelcome message he came to deliver. Nothing other than the sovereignty of the Almighty God could be responsible for arranging this unimaginable appointment.

But we do know this: they understood what this meeting was about, even before the prophet opened his mouth. Elijah’s name had become synonymous with his character. His God was Yahweh.

Apparently his whole life had been shaped by the meaning of his name.

So as 1 Kings 17 opens, Elijah was physically standing before a king. But his real standing—his true allegiance—was before Yahweh.

This is how you must frame your entire life. You can attend this school or that university, participate in that organization, or answer to that coach, and at the same time keep your ultimate allegiance securely situated in the one true God.



In fact, you must treat your allegiance like this if you genuinely want to honor Him. You can be standing *there*, but really be standing here with your hand over your heart before your true Lord and King.

Because when you know your name, even if you're from a nowhere place like Gilead—when you've committed yourself to the process of learning who you are, based on the truth of the One who has called you to serve and follow Him—you can stand and declare His Word in any place, in front of anybody. You can know, like Elijah did, that your God is Yahweh, that you represent the One whom no man or worldly idol can replace, remove, or redact.

As the daughter of a King, your name has been imbued with all the rights and privileges that give you access through Christ to your Father's power. Everything God has allowed you to march through in life so far has been intended to mature your faith, fortify your principles, shape your character, and cement your allegiance to Him. It's been preparing you to take your stand in that confidence.

Your identity as a believer is something you wear today. Right now. Here is where you stand.

Turn to 1 Peter 2:9-10 as we prepare to close this week of study. Fill in the blanks in the sidebar with what the Bible asserts to be your identity as a believer in Christ.

This is who you are. Each one of these features—and more—is part of your given name. It's been your name from the moment you put your faith in Christ as Savior, and it will be your name for as long as you live.

Knowing your name—knowing who you are—gives you the courage to stand on the bedrock of eternal truth, to stand there in the name of the One who “called you for a righteous purpose” (Isa. 42:6, CSB).

So when Elijah set out from Gilead, tromping out of the hills toward the city, toward the throne room of Ahab, with God's Word in his mouth and God's strength pulsating in his heart, he may not have known much. But he did know what his name meant. And there he would take his stand.

I can't wait to see in the next six weeks where it takes him. And us.

chosen:

you are “a chosen

_____”

royal:

you are “a royal

_____”

holy:

you are “a holy

_____”

child of God:

you are God's own

“_____”

proclaimer:

made to proclaim or declare His

“_____”

called:

you've been called

“out of _____”

light:

called into His marvelous, wonderful

“_____”

Heaven's Rain



"All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the LORD upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the LORD, saying, 'Certainly He is good, certainly His faithfulness is everlasting.'"

2 CHRONICLES 7:3

Centuries before Elijah's prophetic ministry, Yahweh delivered the Hebrew children from brutal slavery in Egypt. As Moses led them toward their freedom in Canaan, he took great care to point out an interesting contrast between the two locations. Egypt was "where you used to sow your seed and water it ... But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it" is a land that "drinks water from the rain of heaven" (Deut. 11:10-11). The distinction between the land of their captivity and the promised land is that the first had been watered by hand, but the other would be sustained and watered by the loving and faithful hand of their Deliverer. In other words, an open heaven was a sign of God's favor and blessing on His people as they continued to submit to His authority and worship Him alone.

They had been warned, as they contemplated their future in Canaan:

"Beware that your hearts are not easily deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods, and worship them. Otherwise, the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the sky so that there will be no rain, and the ground will not yield its produce; then you will quickly perish from the good land which the LORD is giving you."

DEUTERONOMY 11:16-17

Elijah's pronouncement of drought to King Ahab and the nation had ramifications that went beyond a simple weather forecast. It signified the judgment of Yahweh upon Israel for their rebellion and their ongoing refusal to submit to His authority. Elijah's declaration was not rooted in his own plan. He knew the Word of his God, and Elijah based his message to Ahab on the holy covenant that had been established in the wilderness.

But that's not the only thing Elijah had in mind as he prophesied the coming drought. Baal and his female cohort Asherah were recognized and worshiped as the god and goddess of fertility. It was believed that Baal also had power over rain. Storms, they thought, were in his control.

As idol worship became more widely sanctioned and practiced in Israel, then officially legislated under Ahab and Jezebel's leadership, the people of God essentially rejected Yahweh as their primary source of provision. Israel increasingly believed that these false gods controlled the weather,

the change of seasons, and, by extension, their crops' ability to yield a bountiful harvest. They began to believe that their ability to survive rested squarely in Baal's hands. The people appealed endlessly to the gods in hopes of garnering favor, thinking it ensured rain for their crops and promised success for their agrarian society.

Each month the sky withheld rain was a personal strike against the authority of Baal to control nature. As an impotent idol, he had no control whatsoever over the rain and sun. Each of the 1,200-plus days of drought and famine would remind the people that only one God held supreme authority, and their allegiance should be to Him only.

The judgments God imposed upon ancient Israel are a reminder to us that any consequences we endure today are never about the consequences alone. They are designed to reveal the weaknesses of our idols, debunk the myth of their power, and remind us that God alone is worthy of our loyalty and worship.

Whenever we anchor our significance unwisely, putting our trust in health, success, material wealth, or relationships, thereby turning them into illegitimate gods, our heavenly Father will cut them off at the knees and remind us of their insufficiency to save.

"Like scarecrows in a cucumber patch, their idols cannot speak. They must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them for they can do no harm—and they cannot do any good. LORD, there is no one like you. You are great; your name is great in power."

JEREMIAH 10:5-6, CSB



Remember, the nation split in two after Solomon's death. The two tribes of the Southern Kingdom were known as Judah; the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom were known as Israel.