

## THE GENTLE WHISPER OF GOD

1 Kings 19:1-21 (Key Verse: 12)

*“After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.”*

In today's passage we are going to learn how God can marvelously work in each one of our lives through his Gentle Whisper, we are also going to learn what attitude we should have towards God Gentle Whisper. We are going to learn this through the prophet Elijah who after witnessing the great power of God through fire and thunder, was attacked by great fear and discouragement. Elijah was filled with great fear, when Jezebel threatened to take his life for killing the prophets of Baal. What God did through Elijah was a great and marvelous thing, a fantastic opportunity for the people of Israel to return to God, worship him and give glory to him. However, the revival of the people of Israel was hindered, Satan rose and used Jezebel to threaten to kill Elijah who was exhausted, filling him with fear and discouragement. When all this happened, God responded to Elijah with a Gentle Whisper, before God worked using fire, thunder, and many miraculous and magnificent means, but today he responded with a Gentle Whisper. We are therefore going to learn what it means that God responded in a Gentle Whisper and how we should respond to God's Gentle Whisper. May God be with each one of us today, to receive one word.

The passage today begins with Ahab who told Jezebel about everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Yes, Ahab is referring to the famous work of God through Elijah who challenged the all the prophets of Baal to pray to their god to send fire to light up their sacrifice. After countless shouting, frantic prophesying and cutting of their bodies with blood flowing all over them, the prophets of Baal failed. Elijah on the other hand poured water on his sacrifice made up of 12 stones, wood and the bull sacrifice, and when he prayed some thing miraculous happened. The fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the soil and also licked up the water in the trench. This amazed the people and they fell prostrate and cried, “The Lord – he is God! The Lord-he is God.” After this Elijah got the people to seize all the prophets of Baal, to restore the nation of Israel to come back to God and worship him. Furthermore, through Elijah's prayer God also sent heavy rain to the land after a great famine.

What happened in Israel was truly magnificent, and so Ahab filled with great excitement and joy shared this with his wife Jezebel. Now Jezebel had a bad influence on the people of Israel and the king Ahab, introducing idol worship, worship to the Baals, responsible for killing of the prophets of God and those who opposed her. And now when she heard what Elijah had done, she sent a messenger to Elijah saying: *“May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”* Instead of repenting at the hearing and witnessing of the work of God, Jezebel hardened her heart and Satan used her to threaten the servant of God Elijah. And this left Elijah afraid, and he ran for his life into Beersheba in Judah where he left his servant and went into the wilderness. Elijah had just witnessed great work of God, he witnessed God who answered his prayer with fire and thunder, now why did he not stand up against Jezebel and call on God? In **verse 4b** it says: *“He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.”* Elijah could not stand before Jezebel because he was tired, he had been through a lot, standing against the large numbers of idol prophets, he was physically, emotionally, and spiritually weak. He said I have had enough Lord. He was vulnerable to Satan's attack, and the message of opposition from Jezebel just knocked him down.

We also just like Elijah, after working hard and used by God may be vulnerable to the power of Satan, we may be vulnerable to various temptation and the Jezebels of our time. After preparing very hard for the conference, experiencing God's help and miracles we may be exhausted and tired, and this is where Satan

can take his chances, by introducing a slight opposition, challenge us and leave us afraid, discouraged, and hopeless.

But glory to God, for when Elijah was in the wilderness he prayed to God. In his prayer Elijah told God that he is quitting, he does not want to fight anymore, he does not want to carry the mission and bring spiritual revival anymore to the people of Israel. How did God respond to this? Was he disappointed in Elijah? Let us look at **verse 5b-6**: *“Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” 6 He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.”* God responded to Elijah through the angel, with a gentle touch of a mother upon her young son. The angel had prepared fresh bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. The Lord understood Elijah deeply and bore his weaknesses and forgave his sins, God was full of grace toward his servant Elijah. Likewise, our Lord Jesus Christ reveals this same compassion and grace to us as well. When we are weak and discouraged, we need to come to Jesus in prayer and he will lift us up, he came down into the world to be with us and understand us and so when we come to him, he will understand us and strengthen us like the angel strengthened Elijah with a fresh loaf of bread and ice-cold jar of water.

After the delicious meal, Elijah took a nap and thereafter the angel woke him up again to eat more, to prepare for a long journey ahead. Where was Elijah going and why? Let us look at **verse 8**: *“So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.”* Elijah travelled for 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. This was a very significant place in the history of Israel, this is the very same place where Moses met God through a burning bush. Here we see Elijah who was very intentional, before he just fled into the wilderness but now, we see him being intentional and wanting to meet God, to hear from God and be led by him. Before Elijah despaired so deeply that he wanted to die. But God did not let him die, rather he had compassion unto him, comforted him and encouraged him. As a result, Elijah was compelled to seek God and to hear from him, and when at the mountain of God Elijah went into the cave and spent the night there.

When Elijah was in the cave, God used the opportunity to allow Elijah to pour out his heart and also to help Elijah, the Lord did this by asking Elijah saying: *“What are you doing here, Elijah?”* God did this to remind Elijah about his life purpose, as prophet for the people of Israel to bring revival to the nation Israel. The Lord wanted to help Elijah to overcome his fear by gently reminding him of his mission. Now how did Elijah respond to God? In **verse 10** *“He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”* Before, when Elijah prayed, he wanted to give up, he said: *“I have had enough Lord, Take my life, I am no better than my ancestors”* However this time, after being encouraged, comforted and natured by God in the wilderness, his attitude changed, this time he humbly asked for God’s help and intervene. Even though he acknowledged his sin and fears, he did not condemn himself, but was filled faith that God can do something and help him and the people of Israel. Elijah’s response was like a voice saying, Lord please do something, your people are going astray, show me what to do, reveal your power so that your people Israel may be saved.

When the Lord heard this response from Elijah, he used it to educate him about how he works. Let us look at **verse 11-12**:

*“The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the*

*earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.*

In the past God exercised his power through visible and magnificent miracles, challenging the laws of nature, leading the Israelites to cross the red sea on dry land, the burning of the water immersed sacrifice at Elijah's prayer, the command of rain and thunder. In a way Elijah was expecting God to fix Israel situation in a similar fashion, perhaps blowing away Jezebel with a strong wind for it seemed like she was the problem. Yes, God can do this, but God wanted to teach Elijah about his power clothe in a gentle whisper. What does this mean? What kind of power is this that is clothe in a gentle whisper? This is the power embedded in God's word. And so while at the mountain of God, God gently whispered to Elijah, and for him to hear and see the power of God he had to listen with his full attention otherwise he would miss it. Elijah had to listen to God's voice with a humble mind, and with a quiet and gentle heart. If his heart was busy and noisy, or if he was proud and full of his own ideas, he could not hear the gentle whisper. So in order to hear from God, we need to give up our own prejudices, busy mind, and proud thoughts, and listen to the gentle whisper. As we listen, we must accept the Lord's word and commit to his direction and guidance.

As we prepare for the regional conference let us pray that God may grant us humble hearts and mind, to give our all attention to the whisper of God through diligently studying his words, listening attentively to the messages, praying, and sincerely writing and sharing testimony with one another. Let us not blindly go to the conference and just expect God to do his miracle, yes, the miracle of God is boundless. But let us rather, sincerely, and humbly prepare and with anticipation look forward to the whisper of God to powerfully work in our hearts.

When Elijah gave his full attention to God and humbled his heart, he could be blessed with the power of the gentle whisper of God. Through the gentle whisper, Elijah could be encouraged to go back to the people of Israel, he could be encouraged by the work of God and plan for the people of Israel. Through the gentle whisper, God showed Elijah how he has been working among the people of Israel, raising the 7000, his own servants who have not bowed down to Baal. Through the Gentle Whisper God revealed to Elijah his salvation plan for the people of Israel, how he will end it all, he made Elijah's mission clear, to anoint Israel's kings and Elisha as his successor. Through a gentle whisper, God revealed his sovereignty and control over all things.

### **Conclusion**

In today's passage we have learnt that indeed the works of God are a matter of power, where God works there is power. We have also learnt how God is able to unleash the same power through a gentle whisper. We have learnt that if we if we pay attention to the word of God, humble our hearts and minds, remove all the busy noise from our world, our own ideas and pride we will hear the gentle whisper of God and experience his power. Let us pray for God's mercy to be with us today as we look forward to the regional conference, let us repent from our sins, our own ideas and fears, let us humbly prepare our hearts through studying his word, testimony writing and prayer on daily basis.