

1 Kings 19

1 Kings 19:4 It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers

“Perhaps Elijah was already then fairly elderly, which would help explain why he said he need not live longer, or perhaps he felt his mortal mission had ended and he simply wanted to be released, feeling that he could not go on any longer, that he had nothing more to offer. His mention of not being better than his fathers may refer to his spiritual fathers, the earlier prophets, who had likewise been rejected. They had died; why not him? His asking to die showed his acknowledgment that his life was in God's hands, not his own. Elijah's discouragement also mirrors that experienced by Moses when he was discouraged by the hard-heartedness of the people he was called to lead (see Exodus 5:22 and Numbers 11:12-15). Moses had exclaimed, ‘And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness’ (Numbers 11:15).

“Elijah momentarily gave in to a feeling of despair, of wanting to give up. But the Lord had more for Elijah to accomplish.” (Byron R. Merrill, *Elijah: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], chap. 8)

1 Kings 19:8 he arose... and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights

“I had had a difficult night. My joints, afflicted with rheumatoid arthritis, were hot and swollen, and it hurt even to breathe. The acute conditions had gone on for weeks, making sleep difficult, and on that Sunday morning I felt I could not go on, worn out from suffering.

“Then my four-year-old son climbed in bed with me. ‘Tell me a story, Mommy,’ he said.

“I thought of the prophet Elijah sitting under the juniper tree, so I told my son his story. Elijah had called Israel and its king to repentance, but the king and his wife would not repent. Elijah called down fire from heaven that consumed the altars of the prophets of Baal. Queen Jezebel became very angry and swore to have him slain. Elijah fled alone into the wilderness and sat under a juniper tree. Tired and discouraged, he said, ‘It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life’ (1 Kgs. 19:4).

“Those words expressed how I felt that day—I had tried my best and had given my all; I too wanted the ordeal to be over. It is enough, I thought to myself.

“Somehow I dressed and went to church, but sacrament meeting had scarcely begun when the pain in my hips made sitting in my wheelchair unbearable. In tears, I asked my husband to take me to the foyer.

“As we sat there I told him the story of Elijah sitting under the juniper tree. I explained that after praying, Elijah fell asleep. Then an angel touched him and bade him eat the food set there for him. Elijah ate and drank, then slept again.

“A deacon came through the door with a tray and offered us the bread of the sacrament.

“A few moments passed, and then I continued in a hushed voice with Elijah’s story. A second time the angel came to Elijah. ‘Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee’ (1 Kgs. 19:7). He did so and received strength enough to travel 40 days and 40 nights.

“Soon the deacon returned. As I took the cup of water from the tray, a still, small voice spoke to my heart. Surely the Lord knew that the journey was too great for me and that I needed strength. Like Elijah’s heavenly feast, the bread and water the deacon offered would also sustain me. My feelings of weariness and despair departed, and they have never returned. I knew I could go on, in spite of the pain, for however long was necessary.

“I am thankful for the Savior. Even though at times the journey may seem too long, I know that he is mindful of each of us and will give us strength to go forward.” (Toni Thomas, “Sharing Elijah’s Juniper Tree,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 66-67)

1 Kings 19:8 forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God

Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights while communing with the Lord on the mount Horeb. Moses, probably on the same mountain, “was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water” (Ex 34:28). Jesus, before beginning his mortal ministry, was “led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be with God” having “fasted forty days and forty nights” (JST Matt 4:1-2).

Elijah, Moses, and Jesus Christ—each with the same forty day period period of fasting, communion, and revelation—must have been shown the mysteries of God. Even latter-day revelation in all its glory doesn't hold the secret to these extraordinary visions. Perhaps they were instructed that they must transfer the keys of the priesthood to Peter, James, and John. Together on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17), Moses and Elijah did appear in glory with Christ. Here, the keys of the kingdom were transferred; they heard the voice of God; and they were undoubtedly shown many more things. We know the apostles were shown the glory and majesty of the transfigured Christ as well as a vision of the transfigured earth during the Millennium (D&C 63:21).

Elijah, Moses, and Jesus Christ would be together again in the Kirtland Temple (D&C 110). Again, the keys were transferred and the declaration made: "Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors." (D&C 110:16) Elijah, Moses, under Christ's direction hold the very keys of the "power of godliness."

And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh (D&C 84:19-21)

Just as with Moses and Christ, we are left with little information as to what really took place. It wouldn't take 40 days for Moses to get the Ten Commandments. It didn't take 40 days for Satan to tempt Jesus. And it didn't take 40 days, for the Lord to tell Elijah to anoint Elisha and a couple kings.

Joseph Fielding Smith

There was a reason for the translation of Elijah. Men are not preserved in that manner unless there is a reason for it. Moses was likewise taken up, though the scriptures say that the Lord buried him upon the mountain. Of course, the writer of that wrote according to his understanding; but Moses, like Elijah, was taken up without tasting death, because he had a mission to perform.

(*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 2: 107)

1 Kings 19:11-12 the Lord was not in the earthquake... the Lord was not in the fire

There are two main ways an individual can hear the word of the Lord. He can hear the earthquake, the wind, and the fire; or he can hear the still, small voice. Obviously, the wicked choose to hear the word of the Lord through the violence of the elements. Especially prior to the Second Coming, the wicked will hear the voice of the Lord from “the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of her... [and from] the testimony of the voice of thundering, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds” (D&C 88:89-90). That is one way to hear the voice of the Lord.

Latter-day Saints should be familiar enough with spiritual things that they can recognize the “still small voice.” Helaman heard the voice, “It was not a voice of thunder, neither was it a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but behold, it was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul.” (Hel. 5:30.) Sometimes, members of the church want something more. For them the “still small voice” isn’t enough. **The First Presidency** in the Nauvoo days warned these:

The Lord cannot always be known by the thunder of His voice, by the display of His glory or by the manifestation of His power; and those that are the most anxious to see these things, are the least prepared to meet them, and were the Lord to manifest His power as He did to the children of Israel, such characters would be the first to say, "Let not the Lord speak any more, lest we His people die." (James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 1: 148, June 1842)

Dallin H. Oaks

[For] every communication from our Heavenly Father: “It shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.” (D&C 88:68) We cannot force spiritual things.

In most cases, “his own way” is not the thunderous interruption or the blinding light, but what the scriptures call “the still small voice” (1 Kgs. 19:12; 1 Ne. 17:45; D&C 85:6). Some have misunderstood this principle. As a result, some have looked exclusively for the great manifestations that are recorded in the scriptures and have failed to recognize the still, small voice that is given to them. This is like making up our minds that we will learn only from a teacher who shouts and that we will refuse to listen to even the wisest teaching when it comes in a whisper.

We need to know that the Lord rarely speaks loudly. His messages almost always come in a whisper. ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 11–12)

Boyd K. Packer

The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it at all. ("The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 53)

Gordon B. Hinckley

Such almost invariably has been the word of God as it has come to us, not with trumpets, not from the council halls of the learned but in the still small voice of revelation. (*Conference Report*, April 1964, Afternoon Meeting 39)

1 Kings 19:12 after the fire a still small voice

Gordon B. Hinckley

[Interview With Mike Wallace, Salt Lake City, Utah, 18 December 1995]

Mr. Wallace: The Mormons, Mr. President, call you a "living Moses," a prophet who literally communicates with Jesus. How do you do that?

President Hinckley: I do it in prayer. Let me say first that there is a tremendous history behind this church, a history of prophecy, a history of revelation, and a backlog of decisions which set the pattern of the Church so that there aren't constant recurring problems that require any special dispensation. But there are occasionally things that arise where the will of the Lord is sought, and in those circumstances I think the best way I could describe the process is to liken it to the experience of Elijah as set forth in First Kings. Elijah spoke to the Lord and there was a wind, a great wind, and the Lord was not in the wind. And there was a tempest, or an earthquake, and the Lord was not in the earthquake. And there was a fire, and the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire a still, small voice, which I describe as the whisperings of the Spirit. Now, let me just say, categorically, that the things of God are understood by the Spirit of God, and one must have and seek and cultivate that Spirit, and there comes understanding and it is real. I can give testimony of that. (Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1996], 585 - 586)

Gordon B. Hinckley

Somebody asked Brother Widtsoe once, "When are we going to have another revelation? How is it that we haven't had any revelations since the Doctrine and Covenants was compiled? How long has it been since we've had a revelation?" Brother Widtsoe replied, "Oh, about last Thursday." Now, that's the way it goes. Each Thursday, when we are at home, the First Presidency and the Twelve meet in the temple, in those sacred hallowed precincts, and we pray together and discuss certain matters together, and the spirit of revelation comes upon those present. I know. I have seen it. I was there that June day in 1978 when President Kimball received revelation, surrounded by members of the Twelve, of whom I was one at the time. This is the work of God. This is His almighty work. No man can stop or hinder it....

Now we have a great body of revelation which guides us in the everyday conduct of the affairs of the Church. Situations arise where we feel we need guidance. When those conditions happen, we discuss the matter, pray about it, perhaps fast about it, and go to the Lord about it. It is like the experience recounted by Elijah, who needed help on a problem and went to the Lord, and a great wind occurred and the Lord was not in the wind. Then an earthquake, and the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then a fire, and the Lord was not in the fire. And then a still, small voice. That is the way it works. (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 556)

Henry B. Eyring

Now, I testify it is a small voice. It whispers, not shouts. And so you must be very quiet inside. That is why you may wisely fast when you want to listen. And that is why you will listen best when you feel, "Father, thy will, not mine, be done." You will have a feeling of "I want what you want." Then, the still small voice will seem as if it pierces you. It may make your bones to quake. More often it will make your heart burn within you, again softly, but with a burning which will lift and reassure. ("To Draw Closer to God," *Ensign*, May 1991, 67)

1 Kings 19:16-21 Elisha... shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room

Few instances in all scripture better show the chain of authority from prophet to prophet. Here we have the direct word of the Lord to Elijah calling Elisha. We have Elijah casting his mantle on Elisha. We have the promise that Elisha receives a "double portion" of the spirit of Elijah (2 Kgs. 2:9-15). Certainly, there was no apostasy after Elijah. Why then is Elijah the last prophet to hold the keys of vicarious sealings?

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** said, “Elijah was the last Prophet that held the keys of the Priesthood, and who will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and deliver the keys of the Priesthood” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 172). Now we all know that it is one thing to *hold* the priesthood and another thing altogether to *hold the keys* of the priesthood. Elijah held the keys. For some reason not revealed, these keys *were not* transferred to Elisha. He may have received a double portion of his Spirit. He certainly held the Melchizedek Priesthood, but he never received the keys associated with Elijah’s mission of vicarious sealings.