



# Fire from Heaven

Eight Studies in the Life of Elijah  
from 1 Kings 17 to 2 Kings 2  
by **Peter J Blackburn**

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## 5. Quiet Stillness on Sinai

### Bible Reference: 1 Kings 19

There was a sense of victory and elation as the rain began to fall – “The power of the Lord came on Elijah; he fastened his clothes tight round his waist and ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel” (1 Kings 18.46). But then (19.1-2) Ahab told Jezebel about all that had happened, and she took a solemn vow to kill Elijah. At that point “Elijah was afraid, and fled for his life” (v. 3a).

#### Reflect:

- Are we ever excited and secure about the Christian faith when in the company of those who affirm with us that the Lord is God, but fearful and “going into hiding” about our faith when we perceive opposition?

#### On the Run!

#### Read: 1 Kings 19.1-9a.

Elijah headed south into Judah, left his servant at Beersheba in the south and went a day’s journey further on. Dejected, he sat under a broom tree and prayed that he might die – “It’s too much, Lord. Take away my life; I might as well be dead!” (v. 4). He slept, received food and drink, then travelled forty days to Horeb, the mountain of God (vv. 5-8) – better known to us as Sinai, where Moses received the ten commandments.

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#### 6. I Want that Vineyard! Bible Reference: 1 Kings 21.

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**Reflect:**

- Today it would be called "burn-out". How does God deal with us when we feel we have come to end of our tether?

**God's Quiet Voice**

At Sinai Elijah heard the word of the Lord, "Elijah, what are you doing here?" Elijah replied with all the reasons for his despair (v. 10). He was directed to "go out and stand before me on top of the mountain" (v. 11a).



What could he expect as the sign that the Lord was truly here? When the Israelites came to Mount Sinai in Moses' time (Exodus 19), there was "thunder and lightning, a thick cloud appeared on the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast was heard" (v. 16). "The whole of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord had come down on it in fire. The smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, and all the people trembled violently. The sound of the trumpet became louder and louder. Moses spoke, and God answered him with thunder" (vv. 18,19). And in Elijah's own experience, back at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18), the Lord had answered with fire.

But now (19.11-13), "the Lord was not in" the wind, the earthquake or the fire. But after the fire "the soft whisper of a voice" (literally, "a voice of quiet stillness").

**Reflect:**

- What, for us, are the signs of the Lord's presence and activity?
- To what extent do we long for the dramatic but need the "voice of quiet stillness"?

**Time to Get Moving****Reading: 1 Kings 19.9b-18.**

Then he heard again, "Elijah, what are you doing here?" and he gave the same complaint in reply. It was as if nothing had changed –

same question, same answer. Yet those same words were saying something different. The Lord had firstly been inviting Elijah to pour out his story – but now, Elijah, should you really be staying on down here? You had to come here because you could only hear me in the loud dramatics, Elijah – but now you have heard my quiet voice! Elijah, for his part, was now insisting – Lord, don't forget my precarious position! I'm all alone, you know!

This time the Lord indicated that his will would be fulfilled through a new king of Aram, a new king of Israel and through Elisha who would follow him as prophet. Further, the situation was not really as grim as Elijah had thought – there were seven thousand in Israel who had not worshipped Baal (vv. 15-18).

**Reflect:**

- Our situation is by no means as extreme as Elijah's. Nevertheless, how can there be a greater measure of solidarity and support of one another as Christian believers?

**The Call of Elisha****Read: 1 Kings 19.19-21**

Elijah left Sinai and found Elisha "ploughing with a team of oxen". Elisha wanted to say farewell to his parents before following Elijah. This was so different from the would-be followers of Jesus in Luke 10.57-62! In fact, Elisha prepared a barbecue for his family – using the yoke for fuel and the oxen for meat. For Elisha there was no turning back once he began to follow Elijah (vv. 19-21)!