

God intends for every believer to be in full control of his or her life - through the power and might of the Holy Ghost! The Bible makes it clear that our walk is to be ordered by the Lord. David testified, "*Those who trust in the Lord will not be confounded*" (see Psalm 22:5).

Your life is not under control, however, if you are being victimized by a spirit of fear, lust, despondency or depression. If you are constantly bombarded with feelings of worthlessness or thoughts of giving up - your life is not under control!

If any of this describes you, I pray that the Holy Ghost will use this message to grip your soul - and to put some fight back in you. God wants you to stand up against the devil - to reclaim all the territory you've given up to him!

I want to show you how one of the most powerful, Godly men in all of the Bible lost control of his life for a season - and how he got back in control. It is the story of Elijah!

God told this mighty prophet to call together the 450 priests of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah at the top of Mount Carmel, God was going to have a contest - a showdown with the devil! It was all about who would be worthy of worship - the pagan gods, or Jehovah God.

You remember that Holy Ghost fire came down from heaven, consuming the sacrifice on Elijah's altar and licking up the twelve barrels of water. When the middle-of-the-road believers saw this, they all fell on their faces and worshiped the Lord!

Then these people fell into a holy rage - because they had been fooled! Their exposure to the

Don't Run from Jezebel

worthless idolatry had kept them under bondage in captivity. So they took those 850 heathen priests and slew them all!

Meanwhile, Elijah told King Ahab, "Get ready for rain!" And the prophet went up on the mountain and prayed down a mighty thunderstorm, ending the drought. Then the Spirit of God fell upon him - and Elijah outran Ahab's chariot for sixteen miles, back to the palace in Jezreel!

Scripture says, "*And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah*" (1.KIN 18:46). Indeed, no man could do any of this without the Spirit of God resting upon him mightily.

Elijah's Personal Battle Began at the Gate of Jezreel!

When Elijah came to Jezreel, he stopped outside the city gate and wouldn't go in. He represents where many of us are right now - outside the gate of evil, separated from sin, beyond the reach of all enemies.

Up to this point, Elijah was very much in control of his life. He was uplifted, fearless, zealous for God and hating idolatry. His prayers prevailed - none of his words fell to the ground. And God had just used him in the greatest manner of all

his ministry. Elijah single-handedly had shaken the very powers of hell!

We don't know what Elijah was thinking as he sat outside the city gate. But we do know he "*...was a man subject to like passions as we are*" (JAM 5:7). He was fully human, in spite of all he had just accomplished.

I believe Elijah greatly expected God to finish the work He had begun - to bring down all idolatry in the land! He probably thought, "Perhaps those righteous ones who saw the fire fall will rise up and cast Jezebel out of her palace. Surely she's fearful. She's probably packing her bags and ordering a chariot right now.

"There could be riots in the streets. And the people are going to need a prophetic voice when everything erupts. I've got to be here!"

As he waited outside the city in anticipation of God's move, Elijah felt very important, very needed - and mighty in God. But, beloved, **you can experience something like Elijah did on Mount Carmel - pulling down strongholds prevailing in prayer, rescuing souls from Satan's clutches and yet immediately experience a great fall!**

The most vulnerable point in your life as a Christian is right after

you've experienced a mighty victory. Many pastors, evangelists and lay-people who have been greatly led of God have fallen because they became careless and smug in their hour of power. They thought they'd come to a place in God where they were above being attacked - that they could handle anything without any trouble.

But an angry devil moved in at the first sign of their smugness. He injected into their minds a spiritual pride - and they fell because they were not prepared!

That same pride was in Elijah! The true contents of his heart came out later as he hid in a cave on Mount Horeb:

"And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (1.KIN 19:10). Elijah was saying, "I'm one of a kind, Lord. I'm the only one left in Israel who is fighting for You!"

There Are Two Battles in This Story!

The battle on Mount Carmel never was between Elijah and Jezebel - it was between God and the devil! Elijah was full of God's Spirit, and Jezebel was possessed by satan. It was a battle between the powers of hell and God's corporate body on earth!

This is the kind of warfare most of us are engaged in right now. It is a battle over morals, between the church of Jesus Christ and the workers of iniquity - abortionists, drug pushers, flaunted homosexuals, pornographers, godless politicians.

Yet we also see in Elijah's story a personal battle unfolding. This one is between the devil - and Elijah alone! Satan is saying: "I may have lost the battle for the church. But I'm going after God's man!"

Jezebel represents satan in this story. Everything she did was directed by the devil. She was his tool to bring confusion, disorder and turmoil to Israel. Listen to how God's Word describes her:

"I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication.... And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds" (REV 2:19-22).

Jezebel is a type of the devil-reprobate, past repentance. She represents a seducing spirit that is at work in the world right now, desiring to bring mixture into God's house. The spirit's aim is to rob the church of all holy worship given to the Father. It seeks to sidetrack believers out of worshipping God from a pure heart!

"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had slain all the prophets with the sword" (1.KIN 19:1). Jezebel listened as Ahab told how the miraculous fire fell on Elijah's altar...how the people fell to the ground in awe and fear of God...and how they slew her 450 Baal priests and the 400 prophets of Asherah!

Suddenly, Jezebel's face turned red with anger. (It was the devil rising up in her!) She said, "I may have lost all my priests. I may have lost the affection and worship that I expected from the people of God. This is a crippling blow to all my plans.

"But now I'm going after Elijah! I'm focusing all my attention on this servant of God who has caused such havoc in my kingdom. I don't care what else happens - I'm going to get this man!"

At this point Elijah is sitting outside the city, minding God's business blameless, victorious, not an unholy thought in his mind. Then suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, a messenger of satan appears with a message from hell! *"Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time" (19:1-2).*

Satan was threatening: "Elijah, you're as good as dead! You've gone too far - and now the battle is between you and me. You've had it - you're a dead man!"

Beloved, God allowed this personal challenge for a reason! And it's the same reason every godly,

dedicated believer must experience the same battle!

You see, it's one thing to stand up against the workers of iniquity. when you see the forces of evil at work in America - judges ruling God's name out of school, doctors killing babies, lesbians preaching from church pulpits - you know that satan is working against the whole body of Christ. And that is a corporate battle.

Yet is another thing entirely when you come face to face with an angry devil - and he's out to get you personally! He comes after you as an individual, because you've made an impact in the kingdom of God - you've shaken hell!

It Was a Lie Jezebel Would Kill Elijah!

The devil uses lies and fear to try to take control of believers' lives. And he did it with Elijah!

First, Jezebel swore her oath by gods that already had been exposed as powerless. Elijah had nothing to fear from those gods. Furthermore, God had put a wall of fire around Elijah; He had surrounded His servant with chariots of fire and a host of angels. The prophet wasn't in any danger!

But Elijah wasn't thinking about those chariots. Nor was he thinking about the God who was with him on Mount Carmel - the One who could help him through his personal battle as well.

No - Elijah panicked! Scripture says, *"... He arose, and went for his life"* (verse 3). In just a few hours he went from holy boldness, assurance and authority - to fear, despair and confusion!

You must understand, the devil could not kill Elijah. Only God holds the keys to life and death. And besides, satan didn't want to kill Elijah - because he knew death would only propel him into God's presence and out of his reach!

Nevertheless, just twenty-four hours after Elijah's great victory, the prophet was sitting in the desert under a juniper tree, moaning, "I've had enough! I can't take any more. I want to die!" *"He himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he*

requested for himself that he might die" (verse 4).

I ask you - are you under the juniper tree? Are you worn out, confused, your life out of control? Is all power gone - all victories fading fast, with fear and despair setting in? Have you ever said, "Enough, Lord - I want to die!"

Jeremiah Experienced The Same Great Battle!

The prophet Jeremiah was another holy man of God. He was righteous, blameless, without an unclean spot in his life. This man sounded so in control:

"The Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: Their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten... Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers" (JER 20:11-13).

This sounds like a man who is full of faith and victory. Yet, suddenly we hear the groaning of a confused, dismayed, dejected prophet! Jeremiah sounds like he, too is sitting under the juniper tree:

"Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad... Let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not... because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me" (verses 14-17).

This holy man of God was saying, "Why didn't they kill me when I was born? If only I had died in the womb!" What had happened to make his attitude change so quickly?

The devil had come directly against him - through Pashur, the chief governor, who beat him and cast him into prison!

Jeremiah fell into confusion: *"O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me"* (verse 7). He was saying, "I have to do Your will, Lord, because You're

stronger than I am. But whenever You tell me to prophesy, nothing comes to pass! Everybody mocks me!"

Dear saint, I ask you - do you walk holy and righteous before God? Is your heart set on obeying and loving Him? Are you hungry for God - walking according to His power with all the light you've been given?

Let me warn you - it is possible for you to have a season when things spin out of control! **The enemy will come at you in the your time of greatest blessing - because of what you have done to his kingdom!**

We all know that addicts, alcoholics and ungodly people live their days out of control. But many godly people also go through seasons of running from the devil, their lives out of control. Few of us, in fact, can say with Nehemiah: *"Should such a man as I flee?... I will not [run]"* (NEH 6:11). Most of us have already run, like Elijah!

Perhaps you're under attack right now - and you're sitting under the juniper tree, dazed and confused. You're saying within your heart, "Lord, I've had enough. Take me home!"

Dear saint of God, I want to show you how to take back control of your life from the devil - how to reclaim the ground you've lost to him!

Here are three things the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart on this matter:

1. You Must Keep in Mind That God Is with You - Even in Your Running!

God is with you during every attack of the enemy. He never leaves you nor forsakes you!

Elijah was in utter despair - totally confused, fearful, wanting to give up. But God looked upon him in his despondency and sent him a private angel - to be a butler and a cook for him!

Scripture says: *"As he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat, And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again."*

"And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights" (1.KIN 19:5-8). Have you ever been served a meal so nutritious, it lasted forty days? That had to be some meal!

Here is what I believe the Lord said to the angel before sending him to Elijah:

"Be patient with him! He's hurting, confused, full of questions. He thinks he wants to die, but he really wants to live. He feels useless, at the end of his rope. But I still love him! I've got much more work for him to do in My kingdom.

"Soon I'm going to awaken his spirit. But, meanwhile, feed him well - refresh him! And tell him the journey is too great for him. He can't make it without eating the food I supply!"

Thank God the angel said that to Elijah! It is true - the journey is too great for all of us! We can't handle it. That is why God has given us this Word - and it's better than any angel! He says, **"Go to My Word - eat and drink. There you will find all the strength you need to go through this trial!"**

2. Taking Back Control Requires Dealing with The Lord's Still, Small Voice!

The voice of the Spirit will ask you the same thing He asked Elijah: *"what are you doing here, Elijah?"* (1.KIN 19:9, NAS).

God was saying to his servant, "How long will you allow the devil to lie to you? When will you wake up and say, 'Enough of this foolishness!' It's time to take a stand, to fight back - to take control!"

Perhaps the Lord is saying the same thing to you right now: "Why are you hiding here, living in this fear and depression? How long will you let this go on? You don't need to fear - I have never left you. Get up! Your work for Me is not done. Get out of this cave of sadness and guilt!"

God had to put this question to Elijah twice. At first, Elijah answered that his holiness and zeal had gotten him in trouble:

"Lord, they've slain all Your prophets. I'm the only one left -and they're trying to kill me!"

But God asked the question again - because Elijah hadn't told the whole truth! You see, God was after what was deep in Elijah's heart - the real reason his spirit and soul were down and out. It was this:

"God, you let the devil get to me! You let him harass me, take away my joy, put fear in me. And I did not deserve such treatment! I have been holy, obedient, doing all You told me to do, Yet after all my praying, preaching and obedience, I ended up with the biggest battle of my life!"

Does this describe your spirit as well? You've tried your best to do God's will and work, giving Jesus your whole heart and energy - and yet you've fallen under attack from the devil!

The Lord is coming to you now, asking, "Why are you so down - why so panicky? Let's get to the heart of this. What's the real problem behind it all?" He wants you to admit what is really in your heart: "God, I didn't deserve this attack from the enemy, when I was trying so hard to please you!"

Perhaps you already have poured out your heart to God in this way. But have you told Him the rest of what's deep inside:

I'm tired of all the lessons, Lord! I don't want to learn anymore. I'm here simply to do Your will - to win victories for You, to save souls. Just let me do that and then go home to glory!"

Beloved, this is the whole issue, the whole problem: We're tired of learning God's ways! We think, "Is there never a time when I can sit back and know the devil is defeated? Won't my battles ever end?" No - God has a different plan! And it is this: "When you learn how to resist the devil, he will flee from you!" (see James 4:7).

You may say, "I already know that!" But many Christians think resisting the devil means railing at him - yelling, trying to scare him away. But that is of no effect!

God is talking about something entirely different here. He is saying: "How can you learn how to resist satan until I have let him come at you, roaring and threatening? He is not a figment of your imagination - he is a real devil! And you have to learn to give opposition to him!"

Professional snake handlers - those who draw poison from rattlesnakes for medicinal purposes - get their training by going straight into the snake pit. It is the only way they can rid themselves of fear. And it is the only way to learn snakes' devices how they move and operate.

Beloved, God wants to take you into the pit - to stand face to face with the devil! He wants you to hear the enemy's crafty lying and roaring, so you can learn how to resist him. He - wants to teach you to stand firmly - to quietly withstand all of satan's empty rattling!

Scripture says of Michael the arch angel: "*Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, [dared] not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee*" (Jude 9). Michael was saying, without fear: "I don't have time to play games with you, devil I have work to do. The Lord will take care of you!"

3. You Regain control When You Begin to Understand Why God Has Allowed You to Endure Such a Personal, Grievous Battle!

First, God allows your trial because He wants to make you "devil-proof"! That doesn't mean you won't be attacked again. But you will be trained to stand! It is all part of His preparing you for greater service, greater anointing, expanded usefulness in His kingdom.

Furthermore, the Lord is trying to strengthen you against the devil's wiles. He is raising up a body of believers who have faced the devil, who have been strengthened against him - and who know his devices and are not afraid of him! God is saying, "Once you understand why you're going through this, you will have taken back all the ground you've lost. You will be in control again - by the power of the Holy Ghost!"

Once Elijah's trial was over, he would never run again. He now had a sense of direction - he was reassured in his spirit. You see, God was about to send him to nations to raise up kings, leaders and prophets!

God told him: "*Go, return on thy way... anoint Hazael to be King over Syria... and Jehu... to be king over Israel... and Elisha... to be prophet in thy [stead]*" (1.KIN 19:15-16). Elijah had been given fresh anointing power. He was in control again!

"*So he departed thence*" (verse 19). Elijah came out of the cave to do God's will! He didn't have to shed a river of tears. No - he simply had heard the Word of the Lord!

Beloved, the only hold the devil can have on you is fear. And you've got to shake it off in faith! You have to say, "I'm not going down. God is going to give me a fresh anointing from heaven - He's going to use me!"

Do you believe that God is not finished with you - that He is teaching and training you for better things? He wants to speak to you in your cave of despondency. He wants to tell you what to do and where to go - and He wants to bring you out!

So get up out of your despair - shake off the bondage of fear and depression! Depart from your cave. You'll discover that the moment you get up and walk out, the anointing will flow! Amen!

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