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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1895 ~ Elijah Flees from Jezebel.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, King Ahab of Israel has agreed to a contest with God's prophet Elijah to determine who is the true God of Israel: Elijah's God Almighty Creator God or King Ahab's pagan god Baal, that Israel now worshipped. All the people of Israel were summoned to watch the contest held on the top of Mount Carmel to see if their god, Baal, whom they worshipped was a real god or not. Elijah told the prophets of Baal to prepare an animal sacrifice to Baal, but not light the wood with any fire to make it burn. The prophets did this and then they called on Baal, the pagan god that they thought was responsible for rain, to send fire to burn up the sacrifice. They shouted out to Baal all day, but nothing happened. Then they cut themselves to try and get Baal's attention but still nothing happened. Then it was Elijah's turn.

At the same time of the evening sacrifices at the Temple of God in Jerusalem, Elijah rebuilt a broken altar, set an animal sacrifice on it and laid it with wood. Then he dug a trench around the sacrifice and he poured water over the sacrifice, making the sacrifice very difficult to burn. Elijah poured so much water over the altar that it ran down and filled the trench around the altar. After Elijah prayed to the Lord God of heaven, whom he served, God immediately answered with fire from heaven so hot that it consumed the offering, the stones of the altar and even the water in the trench! The people were convinced and declared the Lord God again as their true God.

Elijah then commanded that all the 450 prophets of Baal be killed as false prophets. When it was obvious that the people of Israel had turned back to worship God Almighty as their God, Elijah prayed in faith to God to send rain to the drought-stricken land. Seven times he prayed before anything happened. But when Elijah's servant saw a very small cloud rising over the sea, Elijah sent him to tell King Ahab to hurry quickly back to his palace before the ground became so waterlogged that Ahab's chariot would become bogged. God gave Elijah the supernatural ability to run ahead of Ahab's chariot for 35 kilometres to Jezreel, the place where Ahab's 2nd palace was.

When Ahab arrived during the great rain downpour, Ahab's wife, Queen Jezebel, wanted to hear what happened on Mount Carmel.

In 1st Kings, Chapter 19, Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done. Jezebel was simply furious about all her false Baal prophets being killed. When Elijah heard that Jezebel had promised to kill him also within the next 24 hours, he fled from Israel. Elijah had a very big day and now needed food, rest and to think about what had happened. Elijah quickly travelled south, all the way through the southern kingdom of Judah to the city of Beersheba, which was a journey of about 160 kilometres. There he left his servant while he went on for another day's journey of about 30 kilometres, into the desert. By this time, Elijah was exhausted and discouraged, and so he sat down under a tree and prayed to God that he might die. How disappointed Elijah must have been in himself that he hadn't prayed in faith to God for protection or advice on how to respond to Jezebel's threat that she would kill him in revenge?

Elijah was human, like we are. Our expectations of him are that he would have continued to show the same great faith like he had for the past 3½ years to stop the rain and dew from falling, and he later proved that God was Lord of all on Mt Carmel. Like Elijah, we too might do well in certain circumstances while in others, quite poorly. We need to bring our fears to the Lord and ask Him for His forgiveness for where our faith and actions have failed, and His help to return to living again in God's will.

A writer once said: "Life is a series of highs and lows: be grateful for the highs and gracious in the lows and find contentment in the middle ground." The more excited we get about something, the lower we tend to fall often only a short time later. The next time you are in one of life's lows, pray to God and express your thankfulness to Him for the things that you're truly grateful for. An attitude of gratitude will lead you back to the middle ground where you can turn your thoughts to Jesus and seek His guidance to give you hope again.

God didn't answer Elijah's prayer to die, so Elijah lay down and slept under the tree. Suddenly, an angel woke Elijah and told him to get up and eat a freshly cooked cake that before him. After eating, sleeping and eating again another such meal, Elijah gained strength from that food to last him 40 days and 40 nights while he travelled south to Mount Horeb, located at the bottom of the Sinai Peninsula and not too far from the Red Sea. This mountain was also known as Mount Sinai, and this was where Moses and the Children of Israel had met with God after leaving slavery in Egypt. Elijah was led to a place where he would receive a fresh vision of God and would be given further instructions. When Elijah arrived at Mount Horeb, he spent the night in a cave.

The Lord called out to Elijah and asked what he was doing there. This question implied that Elijah wasn't where he should have been. He'd been led to Horeb by the Lord, but that was only because Elijah had been off-track in the first place to flee from Jezebel to Beersheba. Elijah's reply to God's question was an answer full of self-justification and self-pity. He seemed to have forgotten the complete change of heart the Israelites had developed towards the Lord. Elijah also proclaimed that he was the only prophet of God left in all Israel, a situation that upset him greatly. The Lord didn't directly respond to Elijah's reply but told him to come and stand in His presence, as He was about to pass by.

Elijah then witnessed a dramatic series of events: a raging wind, a terrible earthquake and a great fire on the mountain. But God's presence was not in those events. Then God showed Himself to Elijah in a gentle whisper, and immediately, Elijah recognized the Lord and hid his face from Him. We, too, shouldn't expect God to show Himself to us in spectacular ways but rather, in a small gentle voice. This most often happens when we're alone quietly in prayer or as we read the Bible. God puts answers to our questions for guidance into our minds and hearts as we wait on Him.

God then again asked Elijah what he was doing at Mt Horeb and once again, Elijah gave God the exact same answer. God sent Elijah back the way he'd come with the simple instructions of appointing three people: Hazael, to become the king of Aram (which is present-day Syria), Jehu, to be God's instrument for destroying the house of Ahab, and Elisha, to be Elijah's successor. Between those three appointed men, God's enemies in Israel would be eliminated.

And much to Elijah's surprise God told him that there were still 7,000 people in Israel who hadn't bowed themselves down to Baal. Elijah had minimized the faith of everyone else in Israel but himself. And this is an easy trap for each one of us to fall into too. Sadly, in every generation, there are those who discount the faith of other believers and in doing this, they create conflict and division among God's people. In Philippians, Chapter 2, the Apostle Paul gives the remedy for this: "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves."

How honestly the Bible shows its heroes as being people with both strengths and weaknesses - times of strong faith and times of overwhelming doubt! Despite Elijah's flaws God powerfully worked through him to turn the Israelites back to Himself. In the same way, God can work through each of us in many ways. Although we might let God down at times, He'll always find us and restore us if we are willing for restoration to happen. God will take us back to the place or time we went astray and then in our repentance, continue on from there to strengthen our obedience and dependence on Him. It's never too late for God to restore and continue to use us in His service.

So Elijah returned to Israel and visited a city on the Jordan River, east of the city of Samaria. Elijah found a local man called Elisha ploughing a field with 12 teams of oxen, with Elisha ploughing with the 12th team. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak over Elisha with a symbolic act to indicate that Elisha would become his successor. Without a word, Elijah then walked away.

Elisha left the oxen standing there, ran after Elijah and said, "First let me go and kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you!" Elijah replied, "Go on back, but think about what I have done to you." Elijah indicated that it wasn't himself but God, who had called Elisha to be a prophet of God. It was up to Elisha to decide how he would respond to God's call on his life. So Elisha returned to his oxen and slaughtered them. He used the wood from the plough to build a fire to roast their flesh, which he passed around to the townspeople, and they all ate. Then Elisha went with Elijah to be his assistant.

By sacrificing his team of oxen, Elisha made a complete break with his past. God's call to many of us may also require a complete change of direction and break from our past. And like Jesus' disciples, we too need to be ready to forsake all and follow Him. This is just what many missionaries have done. Like Elijah, missionaries urge people living in sin and superstition to turn and to be reconciled to the living God instead. In Isaiah, Chapter 45, Verse 22, the Lord God says: "Let all the world look to me for salvation! For I am God; there is no other."

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The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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