

## God Remains in Control

‘A woman went into the office of a cemetery manager and complained, “I can’t find my husband’s grave. I know he’s buried here”. “What is the name?” the manager asked. “John Jones”, she replied. Referring to his [computer], the manager said, “Madam, we have no John Jones. We just have a Mary Jones”. “That’s my husband”, she said. “Everything’s in my name”.

Well, it looks like we know who “wears the pants” in that family! Actually, isn’t that description a bit sexist? But, amazingly, I’ve heard that very expression used a few times these past few weeks in news reports and articles. Seems that wife, long before her husband had passed, had put everything in her name. In short, she had everything under control. Her control!

Not to imply that all women are like Queen Jezebel, but undoubtedly some are. If there ever was a woman who truly lusted after power and control, it was Jezebel, King Ahab’s wife. In our modern day, a comparison could be made with some accuracy, to the former “first” lady, Jill Biden, oh, I’m sorry, *Dr.* Jill Biden. I digress. Back to Jezebel. When, in the previous chapter, I Kings, 18, the prophet Elijah had the showdown with the prophets of baal and asherah on Mt. Carmel, with a dazzling display of God’s “godliness”, His *omnipotent* power; in stark contrast the people wit-

nessed the *impotence* of the false gods, baal and asherah. But it didn't end with those gathered turning from the false gods and proclaiming in I Kings 18:39 that the One and Only Living God, He is God, saying, "ADONAI, He is God! ADONAI, He is God!". Under the anointing of God's blessed Holy Spirit, Elijah was then moved to execute the Lord's judgement on those false prophets of baal. Not there were any real or true prophets of baal, either. A "true prophet" of a false god is not only an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms, it's a veritable impossibility. There is no sense in which anyone can be a true prophet if they're not prophets of God Almighty. People worshipping any supposed deity other than ADONAI God, no matter how much they may act, sound and look like a prophet, are not prophets at all. They're at best doppelgängers, imposters. Because they're not of God the Lord, by definition and reality, they are instruments of the devil.

Well, the devil's instruments were now fully exposed on I Kings 18 on the mountaintop. God's judgement upon them who had led so many in Israel astray was swift, altogether fair and righteous: death by the sword. Elijah's sword. With the riled people rounding them up, every last one of the 450 "professional prophets" was slain, as they so richly deserved. Perhaps the climax of the day. Not! For God had withheld all rain on the land because of their rank idolatry and blasphemy of their actual God and Savior. Three and a half long years of not a drop of rain, the land was thoroughly parched, nearly lifeless. The people were

suffering famine. We can imagine their plight as we've all seen photojournalist's reports from recent famines in Africa. Well, the time had come for the famine to end. The prophets of baal and asherah, now thoroughly discredited. Those of baal paid for their insanity by literally losing their heads. baal was supposed to be the highest deity, ruling weather, crops. If he who controlled the weather couldn't send rain to help "his" people, then what kind of god was he? A fake one! To hammer the point home, Elijah was now led to pray for the famine to end. Climbing again to the top of Mt. Carmel, he prayed for rain. Not once, not thrice, but seven times before a small cloud appeared on the horizon. It drew closer and as it did, grew larger and larger until it blackened the entire sky, and dropped a downpour that inundated the land, ending the drought. Though perhaps not as eye-catching or spectacular as God's fire falling from the sky burning up the offering, the altar, and instantly boiling away all the water in the trenches around the altar, this was the far more important miracle of that day.

But the day wasn't over yet! There was yet to be another meeting between Elijah and King Ahab, and it was to be in Jezreel, the capital city, eighteen miles away. Ahab, being a king, rode in style in a royal chariot, pulled by the swiftest and best horses. Elijah, empowered by the Lord, ran the whole way, and arrived at Jezreel before the king and his powerful steeds made it! Upon entering the city the king immediately told Jezebel of Elijah's massacre of her 450 prophets. She was enraged. We can

relate. She had lost control of that situation. But it was just to be a momentary lapse! No sooner had she heard the report that she issued “shoot on sight” warrants to bring Elijah to “justice”, dead or alive. Preferably dead! Either way, he would forfeit his life. Within 24 hours! Only one day left to live. He would come to experience the deadly consequences of defying the queen. She would have the last word. Or so she thought.

Now in I Kings 19, Elijah was burnt out. For “this man of God climbed Mount Carmel, built an altar, called down the fire, began interceding for rain, and outran Ahab’s horse to Jezreel, ... all in one day” (Perry Stone). Learning of his death sentence issued by the crown, he found himself literally exhausted in every way—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. He fled for his life to Beer-sheba, hid in the nearby wilderness, and prepared to die. He prayed for his end to be peaceful. Depressed as he was, he lost sight of God. Looking on his own desperate plight, forgetting the stupendous victory the previous day on Mt. Carmel, he had taken his eyes off of the Lord and focussed on his own “personal” problems. Big mistake! For God had other plans. Despite how things looked. God was still in control. The Lord sent an angel to feed and strengthen the despondent servant.

With that supernatural nourishment and empowerment, he traveled 180 miles south to Mt. Horeb. Note this mountain was called in earlier times Mt. Sinai. It was the same mountain on which Moses some 400 years before had received the Ten Com-

mandments, and the same mountain on which Moses was allowed to see the actual personage of God, although only the Lord's back. Here we see Elijah being commanded by God to stand before the Lord on the mountain. Elijah was standing in a cave in the rock face. Almost certainly the very same cleft in which Moses stood when he beheld the Lord's back. Elijah knew God well enough to realize that the Lord was not in the the mighty windstorm, the earthquake, nor even the fire, but when the gentle whisper sounds, Elijah covered his face, standing at attention. Now the Lord commissions him for his next assignments: anoint Hazael king of Aram in Damascus, Jehu as Israel's next king, and finally anoint Elisha as his own servant and successor! Then the Lord calmly, almost matter-of-factly, informs Elijah that he is far from the only faithful one left in Israel. God has reserved 7,000 others for Himself who had not defiled themselves by worshipping devils. Seems that God had had everything in control all along!

Folks, this is no anomaly. Regardless of how things may look, God has everything in control for His people. This does not mean that God *wills* everything bad or evil that happens in the world, that happens to us. God knows what will happen, and who will be doing what and to whom. Regardless, God works everything for the good of those who love Him. For God is God. He is omnipotent. As much as evil tries to kill, steal and destroy us, as much as the devil and his angels and demons do their best to inflict suffering on us, yet they never have the last word for us who

have given ourselves to the Lord's care and keeping.

It's instructive to see that not everyone who wanted to follow the Lord Jesus actually followed through! Luke 9:61-62 relates it: 'Still another said to Him, "Lord, I want to follow You too. But first let me go home and say good-bye to my entire family". Jesus responded, "Why do you keep looking back to your past and have second thoughts about following Me? If you turn back you are not fit for God's kingdom".' Contrast that response to Elisha's. He stopped his grueling labor of plowing, took the oxen, slew them for burnt offerings, offered on the burning yoke, shared the meat with his hometown people, and when all was gone, went with Elijah and never looked back. It all symbolized the complete and total break with all that was important to Elisha and all he had known before. He forsook it all and served and followed Elijah. When the Lord called Elijah into heaven, he asked for double the anointing that Elijah had had. He received it and performed exactly double the miracles that Elijah had performed. Somehow, it seems that God was in control of Elisha's life and ministry as well. And this is how it is with us, too. Even in our old age, the more we give up control of the things of this life to our Lord God and Savior, the more directly and distinctly our Lord's perfect will and goodness becomes evident in our lives. Not only our lives, but our family's, our neighborhood's, our city's, our state's and nation's. The whole world's. As God has always predestined it to be. Thus, we never need worry about anything!

