

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.1, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.1, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture analyzes 1 Kings 19-20, focusing on God's mercy towards Elijah. Following a great victory, Elijah experiences a deep collapse after receiving a threat from Jezebel. **The lecture explores Elijah's reaction, his flight, and his request to die, viewing it as a natural reaction after a period of intense spiritual high.** God provides practical help, instructing Elijah to eat and prepare for a journey back to Horeb, where the covenant began. **The lecture considers Elijah's encounter with God on Mount Horeb, emphasizing God's presence in stillness, not in dramatic displays.** Ultimately, God commissions Elijah to anoint new leaders and assures him that he is not alone, revealing the continuation of God's plan through both Elijah and his successor, Elisha.

2. 10 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).



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on15_1.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.1, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 1

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 1 Kings 19-20, Part 1, focusing on God's mercy and Elijah's experience.

Briefing Document: Oswalt on 1 Kings 19-20 (Part 1) - God's Mercy

Source: Excerpts from "Oswalt_Kings_EN_Session15_1.pdf" - Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 15, Part 1 (1 Kings 19-20, Part 1)

Main Themes:

- **God's Mercy and Forgiveness:** The lecture begins by emphasizing God's merciful nature, highlighting that God "does not remember our sins and our iniquities, but casts them as far away as the East is from the West." This sets the stage for understanding God's interaction with Elijah, even in his moments of weakness.
- **The Reality of Post-High Lows:** Oswalt emphasizes the normalcy of emotional and spiritual lows following periods of intense activity or spiritual experiences. He connects this to Elijah's reaction after the victory on Mount Carmel, explaining that Jezebel's threat merely accentuated the existing "crash" after a period of adrenaline and intense pressure. He shares a personal anecdote, describing a time when, after traveling and speaking, he experienced a similar sudden deflation. This is presented as a common human experience, not necessarily a sign of spiritual failure. "And when I was on the way home from the airport in Lexington, Kentucky, I could pretty well pick out the spot on Route 68 coming south toward Wilmore when, as I expressed it, all the air went out."
- **God's Prescription for Discouragement:** Instead of offering grand spiritual solutions, God's initial response to Elijah's despair is practical: rest and nourishment. The angel provides food and water, indicating the importance of attending to basic needs. This suggests a practical approach to overcoming discouragement: "to take up the reins of life, to do the ordinary things, to do the common things, and start looking ahead." God's prescription includes not looking back at past victories or current threats, but looking ahead to the journey.
- **Returning to Foundational Truths:** Elijah's journey to Horeb (Mount Sinai) suggests the need to revisit the core principles of faith and the covenant relationship with God, particularly in times of crisis. Oswalt raises the question of

whether Elijah was divinely directed or made the decision himself, but emphasizes the spiritual significance of going "back to where this whole covenant thing started." This return to Sinai serves as a way to regain perspective and reaffirm the foundational relationship between God and Israel. The section in Kings is, according to Oswalt, "crucially important. Will Yahweh remain the God of Israel? Or will he be replaced by Baal?"

- **Listening to God in Silence:** God's presence is not found in the spectacular (wind, earthquake, fire), but in the "sound of nothing," emphasizing the importance of stillness and listening to God's voice. This alludes to Psalm 46 and the principle of finding God in stillness.
- **Obedience and Succession:** God's instructions to Elijah involve anointing new kings and a successor, Elisha. Oswalt addresses the apparent question of Elijah's (in)complete obedience by arguing that Elijah's anointing of Elisha, who then completes the other anointings, signifies a unified ministry and the importance of succession. He poses the question, "Am I willing to have my successor, in fact, fulfill my calling? There's a certain sense of self-denial there." This speaks to the idea of legacy and working through others.
- **The Call to Discipleship:** The anointing of Elisha is portrayed as a call to radical discipleship, involving leaving behind one's former life and possessions to "walk after" God. Oswalt connects this to Jesus' call to his disciples: "Walk after me. Walk in my footsteps. Go where I go. Hear what I say. This is what discipleship means."

Key Ideas and Facts:

- Elijah's flight to Beersheba and then into the wilderness after Jezebel's threat.
- God's provision of food and rest for Elijah in his state of depression.
- Elijah's 40-day journey to Horeb (Mount Sinai).
- The question "What are you doing here, Elijah?" is asked twice.
- The revelation of God's presence not in spectacular events but in "total, total stillness."
- God's instructions to Elijah to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha.
- The significance of Elisha's wealth and his radical abandonment of his possessions and former life to follow Elijah.

- The reminder that even in times of perceived isolation, there are others who remain faithful to God ("Yet I still have seven thousand in Israel").

Quotes:

- "your property is always to have mercy."
- "does not remember our sins and our iniquities, but casts them as far away as the East is from the West."
- "he was afraid and ran for his life."
- "I have had enough, Lord. Take my life. I'm no better than my ancestors."
- "get up and eat. For the journey is too much for you."
- "Be still. And find out that I'm God."
- "Yet I still have seven thousand in Israel, all who have not bowed their knees to Baal, whose mouths have not kissed him."
- "Walk after me. Walk in my footsteps. Go where I go. Hear what I say. This is what discipleship means."

Implications:

- The passage encourages understanding and compassion towards those experiencing emotional or spiritual lows.
- It emphasizes the importance of practical care, rest, and nourishment in times of discouragement.
- It highlights the value of returning to foundational truths and covenant relationships with God.
- It stresses the significance of listening for God's voice in silence and stillness.
- It underscores the call to radical discipleship and the willingness to leave behind one's former life to follow God.
- It is a reminder that one is not alone in faith, even when it feels that way.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.1, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 1

Study Guide: God's Mercy in 1 Kings 19-20

Quiz:

1. What prompts Elijah's initial flight into the wilderness, and what is his emotional state during this time?
2. Describe the physical and spiritual state of Elijah as he collapses under the broom bush.
3. What is God's initial prescription for Elijah's despondency, and what does it entail?
4. Where does Elijah travel after being strengthened, and what is the possible significance of this location?
5. What question does God ask Elijah in the cave, and how does Elijah respond?
6. Describe the series of natural phenomena that Elijah experiences at the cave's mouth, and explain their significance.
7. What specific tasks does God instruct Elijah to perform after the encounter in the cave?
8. What comforting assurance does God give Elijah regarding the faithfulness of the Israelites?
9. How does Elijah anoint Elisha as his successor, and what does this symbolize?
10. What does following the call to walk after God entail?

Quiz Answer Key:

1. Elijah flees after receiving a death threat from Jezebel. He is overcome with fear and despair, wishing for death.
2. Elijah is physically exhausted and spiritually depressed, feeling that his efforts have been in vain and believing he is no better than his ancestors.
3. God's initial prescription involves providing Elijah with food and rest, signifying the importance of physical and spiritual nourishment to continue the journey of life.

4. Elijah travels to Horeb, the mountain of God (Mount Sinai). This location is significant as it represents a return to the foundational covenant between God and Israel.
5. God asks, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah responds by lamenting Israel's rejection of the covenant, their destruction of altars, and the murder of prophets, stating that he is the only one left.
6. Elijah experiences a great wind, an earthquake, and a fire. These represent powerful but ultimately insufficient displays of divine power, contrasting with the still, small voice that follows, signifying God's presence in unexpected ways.
7. God instructs Elijah to anoint Hazael as king over Aram, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as his successor as prophet.
8. God assures Elijah that there are still seven thousand in Israel who have remained faithful and have not bowed down to Baal.
9. Elijah anoints Elisha by throwing his cloak over him. This symbolizes the transfer of prophetic authority and the call to discipleship.
10. Following the call to walk after God entails leaving behind one's past possessions, personal comfort, and familiar ways of life to embrace a life of obedience, service, and discipleship, following in God's footsteps.

Essay Questions:

1. Discuss the psychological and spiritual factors contributing to Elijah's collapse after his victory on Mount Carmel. How does this narrative relate to the experiences of individuals in ministry and leadership positions today?
2. Analyze the significance of Elijah's journey to Horeb. How does this journey symbolize the process of spiritual renewal and rediscovering one's purpose in God's plan?
3. Explore the different interpretations of God's question to Elijah in the cave ("What are you doing here?") and discuss how each interpretation impacts our understanding of Elijah's state of mind and God's intentions.
4. Examine the theological implications of God's presence not being found in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but in the "sound of sheer silence." How does this passage challenge our understanding of God's power and communication?

5. Analyze the significance of Elisha's anointing. What does it mean to walk after God?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Baal:** A Canaanite deity often associated with fertility, storms, and kingship, whose worship was a major rival to Yahweh in ancient Israel.
- **Broom Bush:** A desert shrub that provided minimal shade and shelter, symbolizing Elijah's vulnerability and isolation.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between God and his people, establishing mutual obligations and promises.
- **Horeb (Mount Sinai):** The mountain where God revealed himself to Moses and gave the Law to Israel, representing the foundational covenant relationship between God and his people.
- **Jezebel:** The Phoenician wife of King Ahab who promoted the worship of Baal and persecuted the prophets of Yahweh.
- **Prophet:** A person chosen by God to speak his word, often conveying messages of warning, judgment, or hope to the people.
- **Samaria:** The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel.
- **The Word of the Lord:** God's revealed message or command, often communicated through prophets or other means, carrying divine authority and power.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible, signifying his covenant faithfulness and redemptive love.
- **Zeal:** Passionate devotion or commitment to a cause or person, in this context, Elijah's commitment to Yahweh.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.1, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on 1 Kings 19-20

- **Why does Elijah, after such a significant victory on Mount Carmel, become so despondent and wish for death?**
- Elijah's despair after the Mount Carmel victory is likely due to a "crash" following an adrenaline high. Humans aren't designed to live constantly at peak intensity. Jezebel's threat, while seemingly straightforward, acts as a catalyst, triggering a deep reaction and exposing Elijah's vulnerability. The text highlights how common it is to experience lows after highs, particularly for those in ministry. In these moments, instead of self-criticism, it's important to recognize this as a natural part of life and embrace ordinary routines.
- **How does God respond to Elijah's desire to die?**
- God responds with practical care and a renewed sense of purpose. First, an angel provides Elijah with food and water, addressing his physical exhaustion. Then, Elijah is directed on a 40-day journey to Horeb, the mountain of God. This journey serves as a time for reflection, a return to the foundational covenant made at Sinai, and a reminder of God's historical faithfulness. God's prescription involves addressing both physical needs and spiritual perspective.
- **What is the significance of Elijah's journey to Horeb (Mount Sinai)?**
- The journey back to Horeb is a symbolic return to the origin of Israel's covenant with God. It represents a need to revisit foundational commitments and rediscover the significance of that covenant. In a time when the worship of Yahweh is threatened by Baal, returning to the place where the covenant was established reinforces the commitment to Yahweh as the true God of Israel. The journey emphasizes the importance of remembering God's past faithfulness as a means of navigating present challenges.

- **What is the meaning behind God's question, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" and Elijah's response?**
- God's question, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" is a multifaceted inquiry. It may challenge Elijah's motives for being at Horeb, or, perhaps, offer an opportunity for Elijah to learn and regain perspective. Elijah, however, avoids directly answering the question and instead expresses his zealousness for Yahweh, his perception of Israel's apostasy, and his sense of isolation ("I am the only one left"). This response reveals Elijah's self-pity and how he is focused on his own struggles rather than God's broader plan.
- **What is the significance of the wind, earthquake, and fire, and the subsequent "sound of nothing" (stillness) in God's revelation to Elijah?**
- The wind, earthquake, and fire represent powerful, dramatic displays of God's power, which were not the way God chose to communicate. God's revelation in the "sound of nothing" or "total stillness" emphasizes that God is not confined to spectacular, worldly phenomena. It highlights the importance of quietness and attentiveness to hear God's voice, which often comes in unexpected ways. This aligns with the idea that God cannot be captured or fully represented by anything in the world, but rather reveals Himself through His word and quiet communication.
- **What new tasks does God give Elijah after his experience at Horeb?**
- God commissions Elijah to anoint Hazael as king over Aram, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as his prophetic successor. These tasks represent a renewed sense of purpose and a strategy for addressing the spiritual and political corruption in the region. The anointing of these individuals signals a shift in leadership and a divine plan to bring judgment and restoration to Israel.

- **How does the anointing of Elisha as Elijah's successor highlight the themes of discipleship and obedience?**
- Elijah's anointing of Elisha underscores the importance of succession, discipleship, and obedience. Elijah's willingness to pass the mantle to Elisha demonstrates self-denial and commitment to God's larger plan. Elisha's immediate response, sacrificing his livelihood and following Elijah, exemplifies true discipleship. This act echoes Jesus' call to His disciples to leave everything and follow Him, signifying complete dedication and a willingness to walk in God's footsteps. The themes of discipleship, following, and sacrifice are central to understanding the relationship between Elijah and Elisha.
- **What does God's statement "Yet I still have seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal" reveal about the situation in Israel and Elijah's perspective?**
- This statement challenges Elijah's perception of complete isolation and the idea that he is the only faithful one left. God reveals that there is a remnant of believers in Israel who have remained true to Him despite the widespread idolatry. This revelation provides encouragement to Elijah and underscores that God is still at work, even when it seems like all hope is lost. It emphasizes that God's faithfulness extends beyond individual experiences and encompasses a larger community of believers.