

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Kings: The Kings Of Israel And Judah From Solomon To The Babylonian Captivity

II. The Divided Kingdom, 1 Kings 12:1-22:53

P. Avoiding Burnout By Holding To God's Viewpoint

(1 Kings 19:1-4 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Emotional or physical exhaustion due to stress, the condition known as burnout, threatens many people today:

(1) Research by Willis Towers Watson shows that one in three workers believes their job impacts negatively on their mental wellbeing! (Sandra Henke, "The Employee Burnout Conundrum," social.hays.com)

(2) Many caregivers are threatened by burnout: "Surveys show that more than two-thirds . . . suffer job-related difficulties" as "(t)hey cut back on hours, take unpaid time off, retire early or receive a warning about performance or attendance," J. Crosby, "Caregivers take on second shift in aging America," Republican-American, 6/15/2018, p. 1C.

(3) The issue of burnout is so big, the nationally known Mayo Clinic posted on its web site the article, "Job burnout: How to spot it and take action" (mayoclinic.org) that names these causes of burnout: lack of control of one's schedule or workload; unclear job expectations; dysfunctional dynamics in the workplace; mismatch of values between employer and company; poor job fit; extremes of activity; lack of social support and work-life imbalances.

(4) This threat affects us locally: almost every Sunday, someone in our Church family tells me of an issue or issues they have recently faced that reflect at least one of the causes of burnout given in the Mayo Clinic report above!

Need: *So, we ask, "If we face the threat of burnout in some realm, how does God direct that we AVOID it?!"*

I. When king Ahab told his pagan wife Jezebel about Elijah's deeds at Mount Carmel and how he had slain her pagan prophets, she threatened Elijah, so he fled for his life, suffering burnout, 1 Kings 19:1-4.

II. Regrettably, Elijah's burnout resulted from his partly succumbing to Jezebel's errant viewpoint:

A. Ahab had told Jezebel **ALL** that Elijah had done at Mount Carmel, but she *overlooked* the *proof* of God's superiority over Baal in the miracles in Elijah's Mount Carmel deeds and *instead focused* on his slaying of her pagan prophets, what left her infuriated at Elijah so that she threatened his life, 1 Kings 19:1-2:

1. The sign of the definite object, '*et*', introduces the phrase, "all that Elijah had done" **and** the phrase, "and how he had killed" **and** the phrase, "all the prophets," so **each** of these phrases **definitely** comprised the **contents** of Ahab's report to Jezebel, v. 1; Kittel, Bib. Heb. p. 546f; G. K. C., Heb. Gram., 1970, p. 365.
2. This means that **though** Ahab *definitely* told Jezebel about **ALL** of Elijah's Mount Carmel deeds, the uses of '*et*' on the news of his *definitely* ('*et*') **killing definitely** ('*et*') the **prophets** got *her greatest* attention!
3. Thus, to threaten Elijah, Jezebel *had* to (a) *overlook* the part of Ahab's report on God's Mount Carmel *miracles* through Elijah that *proved God* to be *true* and *Baal false* and that *sanctioned* Elijah's *killing* the *false prophets* to heed *Deuteronomy 13:1-5* (b) to *focus instead* on *Elijah's killing her pagan prophets!*

B. When Jezebel in furious revenge then threatened to kill Elijah, for him to react by fleeing and suffering burnout, Elijah *himself had* to have *partly succumbed* to Jezebel's viewpoint of *overlooking* the Mount Carmel miracles so that he relied on **just himself** to face the humanly influential, vindictive Jezebel!

III. Yet, THROUGHOUT the past, prolonged drought, GOD had REPEATEDLY PROVED to ELIJAH that there was NO NEED for him to SUCCUMB to Jezebel's VIEWPOINT presented in her THREAT:

- A. Reflecting her viewpoint, Jezebel's threat had two *assumptions*: (1) She *assumed* that **she** as king Ahab's wife would be **able to kill Elijah** (2) as **backed** by her *oath* taken in the **name of her pagan gods**, 1 Kings 19:2.
- B. Yet, God's dealings with Elijah all during the previous drought had given him the insight to realize that *both of these assumptions were false*, that he might *use* this realization to *resist succumbing* to Jezebel's *viewpoint*:
1. At wadi Cherith, God had already exposed as false both assumptions in Jezebel's threat, 1 Kings 17:1-6:
 - a. God had Elijah *successfully* hide from Ahab by wadi Cherith, what would also involve hiding him from Jezebel, 1 Kings 17:1-4a. Elijah's safety from Ahab and Jezebel's murderous efforts was **God's** concern!
 - b. God had also consistently brought food for Elijah by ravens that often failed to feed their own young, showing God to be the Sovereign Creator of ravens unlike Baal who, during a drought, was thought by his followers to be dead; 1 Kings 17:4b-6; Z. P. E. B., v. One, p. 432-433; B. K. C., O. T., p. 522-524.
 2. At Zarephath, God had already exposed as false both assumptions in Jezebel's threat, 1 Kings 17:7-24:
 - a. The Lord had sent Elijah to Zarephath, a town in Jezebel's own homeland, and even **there** He had kept him safe from Ahab and Jezebel while feeding him with food by a widow, 1 Kings 17:7-16; *Ibid.*, p. 524.

- b. Amid Baal's alleged "death" during the famine, God had used Elijah to raise the widow's son from the dead, proof of God's superiority as true Creator God over a false, "dead" Baal, 1 Kings 17:17-24.
3. At Mount Carmel, God had already exposed as false both assumptions in Jezebel's threat, 1 K. 18:17-46:
 - a. After God had burned up Elijah's entire sacrificial presentation so the people shouted that God was the true Creator, Elijah had been aided by the people to capture the 850 false prophets (1 Kings 18:19, 40a) so he could execute them unopposed and unharmed by king Ahab or his wife Jezebel, 1 Kings 18:40b.
 - b. At Mount Carmel, Baal's alleged "home turf" (Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 526), God had (i) defeated Baal by burning up the sacrifice, the wood, the altar stones, the dirt dug out of the trench and the water that filled the trench involving Elijah's sacrifice while Baal had failed to do anything with his sacrifice (1 Kings 18:23-38), (ii) God had answered Elijah's prayer made on Baal's Mount Carmel "home turf" to end the drought when Baal was thought to be dead and (1 Kings 18:42-45) (iii) God had equipped Elijah to outrun horses for 25 miles when Baal was allegedly held captive in the underworld of "death" (1 Kings 18:46).
4. ***God had thus long proved that Jezebel and her gods were powerless before Him, so Elijah was to rely on God to rescue him from Jezebel so he could afford not to succumb to her errant viewpoint in her threat.***

Lesson: *By letting himself be influenced by Jezebel's willful overlooking of God's past works and Word that had led to her threatening his life, Elijah similarly overlooked God's past works and Word that had meant God would protect him from her, so he fell prey to fearing Jezebel's threat and thus fled for his life, suffering burnout.*

Application: *If facing circumstances that threaten us with burnout, (1) may we trust in Christ for salvation from sin to become a child of God equipped for His blessing, John 3:16; Romans 8:32. (2) Then, to AVOID burnout, (a) may we claim God's promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that He will not let us face any trial that He knows we in our maturity level in Him cannot overcome in His power, and (b) APPLY God's PAST SCRIPTURAL LESSONS as our WAY to THINK, (c) doing so in His power (Gal. 5:16) (d) while REJECTING EXTRABIBLICAL views.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) Some years ago, I received a request for help from a university student who had grown up in our Church but who was having trouble handling the teaching she was getting in the university that promoted evolution.

I loaned her a copy of the March-May 1997 issue of Creation Ex Nihilo, the former name for the Answers In Genesis magazine, and it reported on artwork by ancient American Indians that depict dinosaurs, what evolutionists say is not possible since dinosaurs allegedly died out 60 million years before the first man lived, Ibid., p. 22. (a) On page 21 is the photo of an artifact from "an academic at a secular Peruvian university as an authentic Inca or Pre-Inca engraving" found in the Nazca desert plains that on one side has an engraving that is deeply encrusted with desert sand and has a film of oxidation over it, indicating its great age, and it is a picture of a triceratops! (Ibid., p. 21-23) (b) The article also notes that Fran Barnes who "despises creationists" writes, "'There is a petroglyph in National Bridges National Monument that bears a startling resemblance to a dinosaur, specifically a Brontosaurus, with a long tail and neck, small head and all.'" (Ibid., p. 23) [The Brontosaurus is now known more correctly as Apatosaurus, Ibid.] (c) The article also reports that Barnes, "a recognized authority on rock art of the American South-West, writes, 'In the San Rafael Swell, there is a pictograph that looks very much like a pterosaur, a Cretaceous flying reptile,'" Ibid. The article adds, (d) "It is intriguing to note that not far away from this site, the University of Ohio quarried a fossil pterosaur," Ibid., citing Owen McClenahan, Utah's Scenic San Rafael, 1986. (e) This article, "Messages on Stone" by Dennis L. Swift, concludes, "Such messages left by ancient artists (and we have only shown a small sample here of the many reported from around the world) testify to the reliability of the biblical record, and the bankruptcy of the idea of evolution and long ages of 'prehistory.'" (Ibid.)

This evidence in favor of Biblical creation helped lead the university student to have peace of mind! When she chose to pay attention to evidences for creation, God provided the information she needed to avoid burnout!

(2) Last Sunday after our worship service, one of our members told me that a young adult he knows who has struggled for years with questions and insecurities over issues of faith has just concluded that he needs to spend less time reading writings outside of the Bible that leave him troubled and more time studying Scripture itself!

I fully agree: Paul repeatedly told pastor Timothy to watch what he did with his ***attention***, that he keep attentive to Scripture that he might deliver both himself and his congregation from apostasy (1 Timothy 1:4a; 4:13, 16). We need to realize how vulnerable we all are to succumbing to what we mentally expose ourselves that we choose to focus on God's Word as to how we should even think. We will avoid not only apostasy, but also burnout!

May we trust in Christ to be saved. May we heed Scripture's view versus other views to avoid burnout.