

## Simply One Page-What's Up With Elijah?

This piece was created from my own reflections and vision. I used ChatGPT as a tool to help shape the text from my original concepts and structure. The final form is the result of thoughtful revision motivated by my one page intent. Mike Haddorff 2619

There's a part of the Elijah story we love and a part we don't quite know what to do with.

You know the scene, Mount Carmel, Elijah versus the prophets of Baal, a public showdown, fire from heaven. God answers Elijah's prayer in dramatic fashion, consuming the sacrifice, the altar, even the water in the trench. The crowd gasps. God wins.

And then Elijah orders the prophets of Baal seized and killed. All of them. And this is usually where we clap. Way to go, Elijah. You got the bad guys. God is smiling. We smile too.

But instead of an affirming wink this scene should give us pause. Real people die violently at the hands of someone who has just been publicly vindicated by God. There is no way to sanitize what just happened. No metaphor softens it. No theological maneuver turns it "spiritual." God Almighty does not get a checkmark in His win column.

What Elijah is doing on Carmel is a clear demonstration of what Jesus will later call the kingdom of this world. It's power overcoming power. Truth enforced by a bigger club. Victory achieved through elimination. This is how the world settles things and, if we're honest, it's how a great deal of Christian expression has functioned ever since.

We cheer because it looks decisive, strong, effective, a yea God moment.

But Jesus will later say plainly, "My kingdom is not of this world." His way does not look like power defeating power, but power refusing to become violent. Not winning by force, but exposing force for what it is. Not killing enemies, but absorbing hostility without passing it on.

Elijah hasn't got that yet. On Carmel, he is bold, sincere, courageous and running almost entirely on certainty and adrenaline. He is convinced he's right, convinced God is with him, convinced this is what faithfulness looks like. And in a narrow sense, it works. Baal is exposed. The people confess the Lord as God.

But Elijah himself isn't transformed. Almost immediately afterward, he collapses, afraid, exhausted, running for his life, convinced he's alone, despairing enough to ask God to take his life. The prophet who just called down fire from heaven is suddenly empty.

And that's when something crucial happens. God does not meet Elijah again in fire. Or wind. Or earthquake. God meets him in a still, small voice. And that moment marks the beginning of maturity.

Looking back, Mount Carmel feels less like Elijah at his best and more like Elijah at his loudest. It's the energy of a younger faith, passionate, sincere, deeply convinced, but still operating out of its own strength and its own understanding of power.

I grieve how often I see that same posture today. There is real desire for God. Real hunger for truth. But it's tangled up with fear, ego, and the need to win. God-talk becomes fuel for domination. Conviction becomes justification. And Jesus is declared "victorious" in ways that look nothing like Jesus.

What's needed isn't more Mount Carmels. It's more quiet mountains. Because true transformation rarely comes through spectacle. It comes when we finally stop shouting long enough to listen.