

APPENDIX 2

Theophany on Horeb – 1 Kings 19

In 1 Kings 19 we read about the journey of Elijah to Mount Horeb where he hears the still small voice of the Lord. This second trek happens immediately after the heavens are sealed and unsealed in 1 Kings 17-18. As we will examine in this appendix, Elijah's second journey (1 Kings 19) duplicates many of the same events which transpired in his first (to Zarephath). However, two unique center-points force us to consider deeply (in the "stillness" of our minds) about how the two pivotal central events are similar – how each reveals the character of God and enhances what we know about the other. Below is a chronological comparison of Elijah's two journeys.

1 Kings 17-18

With King Ahab

Travel – to brook

Fed by ravens

Travel north – outside Israel

Zarephath – smelting fire

Widow about to die

Travel south – to Carmel

450 prophets of Baal

Hand as token

Two Bulls sacrificed

1 Kings 19

With King Ahab

Travel - to juniper tree

Fed by angel

Travel south – outside Israel

Horeb – God not in fire

Elijah wants to die

Travel north – to Abelmeholah

7000 who don't worship Baal

Mantle as token

Two Oxen Sacrificed

Elijah's second trip takes longer to complete because the distances traveled were much farther (for instance, its 290 miles from Beersheva to Horeb). However, the sequence for each journey is largely the same, with too many similarities to be coincidence, placing interpretive emphasis on the structure and not just the particulars of the events, expressing larger universal concepts by using arrangement. In the book *The Temple Pattern*, I outline the seven-part endowment pattern in Elijah's first trip, which is the same pattern for 1 Kings 19, presented below:

A With king

B Elijah fed bread and water by angel – tokens of sacrifice

C 40 days with no food in dessert *telestial*

E Horeb – fire of still small voice *terrestrial*

C' 40 days return to anoint Elisha *celestial*

B' Elisha sacrifices oxen – token of consecration

A' New king to be anointed

In the first part (telestial), Elijah is turned inward, concerned only about himself and his fear of Jezebel. On Horeb (terrestrial) a divine voice changes Elijah's outlook, whereafter he is commissioned to care for others (anointing them) on the final leg of his journey (celestial).

• **B,B' Two Tokens of Christ's sacrifice**

B – As 1 Kings 19 begins, the people of Israel have just seen fire poured from the heaven consuming the sacrifice and the altar,

followed by the first rain in three years. Based on this visual, they declare that Jehovah is God and slay the prophets of Baal. When Jezebel finds out, she threatens to kill Elijah, whereupon he flees, traveling to Beersheva, the far southern end of Israel. Elijah then leaves Israel, going a day's journey into the desert, resting under a juniper tree. An angel feeds him bread and water for two days, informing him that he will need to be strengthened for his 40 day journey to Mt Horeb. Of course, throughout the record of the bible, the bread and wine (or water) are a token of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice (his flesh and blood). Located at the onset of Elijah's journey, it coincides with the first symbolic death in the temple endowment. From it (the modern endowment) we know that we receive a priesthood (1st Aaronic) and the garment as preparation before entering the telestial world. Our garment, like the bread and water, is a reminder or token of Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain to provide a covering for Adam and Eve.

B' – Its parallel in Elijah's journey is the sacrifice of the two oxen, by Elisha. Coinciding with the modern endowment, the slaying of the oxen represents the veil – which, according to Heb 9:10, symbolizes Jesus' sacrifice (a marker of physical death). As well as sacrificing his oxen, Elisha burns all of his plowing equipment, indicating his total consecration to follow the Lord. This points to the modern temple endowment and the law given before we come to the veil.

• C, C' – The Telestial and Celestial Parallels

C – We are not given a lot of information about Elijah's 40 days in the barren wilderness, except that he was without food. This is type of the telestial world, where there is little spiritual nourishment. As well, 40 is a number in the Bible which signifies testing, like Moses

and the Israelites who spent 40 years in the wilderness. Also, the fact that it took him 40 days to reach Mt Horeb indicates that Elijah did not make maximum use of his time, perhaps getting lost and wandering off course. Elijah should have been able to complete the 290 mile journey in 20 days, traveling at a relatively slow pace of 20 miles per day.

C” – The Celestial parallel is reflected in the high commission that Elijah is given, to return to Israel and anoint two kings and a prophet. Moreover, Elijah is told by the Lord that there are yet 7,000 believers in Israel, signifying the fruitfulness of the still small voice, who spoke to each of them just as it spoke to Elijah on Horeb. Combining their individual modest fiery spiritual experience, they collectively represent a large and powerful flame, akin to the one which was poured out on Carmel, capable of defeating the idolatry of Baal. The “anointing” of Elisha as the new prophet is apropos, echoing the anointing of the Spirit and its fruits (also born by those the 7000 anointed with its power) – the spiritual opposite of the telestial desert. Because 7000 is a multiple of 7, it is symbolic of a group that is perfect, whole, or complete, celestialized through the Spirit.

- **Apex – D, The still small voice**

Elijah goes to a cave on Horeb where the Lord speaks, asking what he is doing there. Elijah responds that, “I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” The Lord passes by the cave and Elijah “sees” a strong wind which rends the mountains, followed

by an earthquake, and then a fire. We are told that the Lord was in none of these impressive events, but rather in the still small voice which followed. Upon hearing it, Elijah wraps his head in his mantle, signifying that he is now operating without his physical eyesight, which is how spiritual knowledge is given. In the middle of Nephi's journey to the tree of life, there is also a question from the Lord. Asked if he knew the meaning of the tree of life, Nephi finds the answer within, whispered to his heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, that it is the love of God, "most desirable and joyous to the soul." God's question to Elijah is designed to do the same thing, turn Elijah inward, to where his answer is found. The list of fears Elijah catalogues for the Lord is remedied by the same answer that Nephi received – the love of God, spoken to the heart by the still small voice. Elijah responds to it (coming to the front of the cave) because that (God's love) is what, in his heart of hearts, he journeyed to find. A renewal and assurance that he had often felt before. It is not hard to imagine that the Lord asked the prodigal son (Luke 15) the same question when he was at his lowest in a far country, "what are you doing here?" In his terrestrial moment, the prodigal "came to himself" (rebirth), remembered his father's love, and resolved to return to serve his father.

"What are you doing" is a pivotal and life-changing question that the Lord wants everyone to deeply ponder. During the silence of such introspection, He can speak to our hearts, cast out our fears (in Elijah's case Jezebel) with his love. This divine reassurance cuts through the noise of the world, allowing us to hear His plan for our lives, which in Elijah's case was a celestial commission to return and anoint prophets and kings who will judge Israel (also happens at the end of man's journey).

- **Two Journeys – Two Theophanies**

So how is the center point of 1 Kings 19 analogous to the apex of his first journey in 1 Kings 17-18, when Elijah visited Zarephath and performed mighty miracles? For help, consider its (1 Ki 17-18) chiastic endowment iteration.

With king

Heavens sealed – no rain

Cherith – fed by unclean ravens *telestial*

Zarephath – widow’s bread and water *terrestrial*

Carmel – Baal defeated with fire *celestial*

Heavens unsealed – rain

With king

Zarephath is where Elijah encountered the widow, which in Israel was the least (smallest) in society,ⁱ correlating to the still small voice at Horeb, both diminutive yet powerful. In addition, like Horeb (the site of Moses’ fiery bush), Zarephath in Hebrew means refining fire, where precious metal was purified. This connects to the events in Horeb because the Hebrew word for “small” (in still small voice) is *daq*, from the verb *daqaq*, which was used primarily to describe a refining process of beating something into very small pieces, especially threshing grain.ⁱⁱ For instance, it is used in

Deuteronomy 9:21 to describe how Aaron's golden calf was refined with fire, reducing it to a powder. "And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and **burnt it with fire**, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small (*daq*) as dust." In both centers, truth is distilled (purified) to a transformative realization of God's love, spoken at the deepest levels of the heart. In Zarephath there was a miraculous cruse of oil which didn't fail, and a son that was raised from the dead, resulting in the penetrating knowledge and assurance of God's love, manifested in the converted widow's departing declaration that "Jehovah is God," known to her not because of the miracles she has "seen," but by the spiritual voice which witnessed to her of God's love.

- **More on the Mantle**

In most ways, the mantle transferred from Elijah to Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21) symbolizes prophetic authority. However, there are elements, learned earlier on Horeb, which broaden our understanding. As discussed, when Elijah covers his eyes with the mantle, it demonstrates that he is using spiritually sight, as opposed to the powerful manifestations that he "saw" at first. In Hebrews 11 we read about faith, that it is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence **of things not seen.**" Successive verses in Hebrews 11 illustrate this concept through the lives of several biblical characters – Moses who parted the red sea at night, Isaac who in blindness passed the blessing to Jacob (not Esau), or Abraham who obediently travels to an "unseen" land. (One of my other favorites is Gideon's

300 who broke their lamps in darkness while in the midst of the Midianite army.) The reason that Elijah was fearful, and could not feel God's love, was because he had lost the faith required to hear God's voice. Without faith we hear only our fears, but to hear God, we must have faith.

Elijah had "seen" so much, yet he was struggling to "endure to the end," a principle discussed by the Father in 2 Nephi 31. Like all who have "entered into the path," Elijah needed to be recreated (enter in again) after his fall (wandering off the path), through an endowment process which the Father also outlined in 2 Ne 31, the Doctrine of Christ – the faith to repent (telestial), be renewed in His love (terrestrial), then having his Spirit to always to be there (celestial) to produce good works. Elijah's second journey effectively guides the reader through this enduing-to-the-end process, the ever-repeating pattern of renewal and creation.

So, if Elijah's Horeb experience also serves to reawaken his faith, the mantle is also a token of that underlying gospel principle. This speaks to the heart of every prophet's overall purpose – to gather spiritual Israel by establishing and maintaining a believer's faith in the Lord, so that they can feel the joy of His love (hear and follow His voice). However, as the story of Elijah illustrates, gathered Israel will falter (have doubts and fear), including her prophets; but the path to renewal is the same path that brings us to belief in the first place.

All of which helps explain Elijah's surprising method for calling Elisha as the next prophet – without a word (in silence) "casting his mantle upon him," as well as Elisha's response (1 Ki 19:19), to follow without needing an explanation (no audible word). For sure, there is voice speaking within Elisha, which he follows

in faith. When Elijah finally does speak, he seemingly dissuades Elisha, saying, “Go back, what have I **done** to thee?” This question about “doing” draws us back to Horeb and the question that the Lord asked Elijah, “What are you **doing** here?” In both cases, the inquiry is designed to cause introspection – discerning by the still small voice. Obviously, Elisha’s faith is deep, because he kisses his parents goodbye and sacrifices his oxen, the source of physical livelihood (worth a lot anciently), along with his implements for plowing. Burning the ships, so the speak, there is no going back for Elisha – his life is consecrated to the Lord who speaks to his mind and heart.

- **A Modern Prophet Like Elijah**

President M Russell Nelson has been forthcoming in explaining how he receives instruction to guide the faithful. Some accounts sound similar to Elijah’s still small voice on Horeb, or the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11. From an article in the Church News, we read how President Nelson receives revelation in the darkness:

“After marrying President Nelson in 2006, Sister Nelson had, on numerous occasions, witnessed him receive revelation from the Lord during the night, especially as general conference approached. But after he was ordained as the Lord’s prophet, the revelation came with frequency and intensity. “My husband is trying to get every bit of instruction that he can,” she said. ⁱⁱⁱ

From a 2018 CNN interview we find more details,

“When the messages come during the dark of night, Russell M. Nelson reaches for his lighted pen and takes dictation from the Lord. “OK dear, it’s happening,” the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints tells his wife, Wendy Nelson. “I just remain quiet and soon he’s sitting up at the side of the bed, writing,” she said in a recent church video. Sometimes the spirit prompts the prophet’s wife to leave the bed, though she’d rather sleep. One such morning, Wendy Nelson told Mormon leaders, her husband emerged from the bedroom waving a yellow notebook. “Wendy, you won’t believe what’s been happening for two hours,” she recalled Russell Nelson saying. “The Lord has given me detailed instructions on a process I am to follow.” Nelson’s nighttime messages have “increased exponentially,” his wife said, since last year when the 94-year-old took the helm of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, widely known as the Mormon church. “One of the things the Spirit has repeatedly impressed upon my mind since my new calling as President of the Church,” Nelson said, “is how willing the Lord is to reveal His mind and will.”^{iv}

It wouldn’t be too farfetched to also compare the way that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon to Elijah’s experience on Horeb, which included covering his eyes with a hat, much like Elijah covered his eyes with a mantle in order to hear the Lord’s voice. Operating in darkness is the biblical way of signifying that one is exercising faith. In fact, as a priest entered into the ancient temple, the Light would steadily decrease until he

entered to most holy place, which was completely dark – symbolic of the need for ever greater faith in order to enter the Lord’s presence. For this reason, in 1 Kings 8, after building the temple, Solomon reflects, “The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness,” symbolically expressing that only those with faith, eschewing physical eyesight, will be able to truly “see” him. As we are told in Hebrews 11:6, without faith it is impossible to please God, let alone, enter into His presence.

* The first principles and ordinances of the gospel are dynamic, not static. Baptism at age 8 is a first-time ensample of how the principles are going to repeat throughout a child’s life; an initial rite of passage into the mystery of holiness, which is a recurring process. Elijah’s second journey serves as a prime illustration for this, a doubter with the need for restoration, and my guess is that it was just one of many times that he had to return to the fundamentals of faith, repentance, taking His name (revealed anew), and having the Spirit always. This appendix compared Elijah’s first two structured journeys. There is a third and final travel which also follows the creation\endowment outline. Like the first two, it centers on a fiery and transformative event – Elijah going to heaven in a chariot of fire. Combining their hinge-points, these large rhetorical structures emphasis and celebrate the plan of salvation. The first journey’s center serves as the telestial (Elijah converts a lost gentile widow), the second as terrestrial (Elijah of covenant Israel reconverted), and the final journey, in 2 Kings 2, is the celestial, when Elijah comes into the presence of the Lord, in a chariot of fire. That appendix is forthcoming.

ⁱ “The Torah lumps widows with orphans and strangers as the disenfranchised members of society to whom special kindness must be shown. The situation of a widow without children was especially dire, for she had no one to care for her and provide material support.” My Jewish Learning, Levirate Marriage and Halitzah, Ancient customs involving a childless widow, Ronald L. Eisenberg, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/levirate-marriage-and-halitzah/>, Jan 25 2021

ⁱⁱ<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?StrongS=H1854&t=NKJV>, Jan 25 2021

ⁱⁱⁱ “Sister Wendy Nelson Shares Her Personal Witness of President Nelson’s Prophetic Calling and Ministry,” Contributed By Sarah Jane Weaver, Church News editor, 15 Mar 2019

^{iv} “Why the ‘Mormon’ church changed its name. (It’s about revelation, not rebranding.)” Daniel Burke, CNN Religion Editor, Sun March 24, 2019