

Preparing for a New Year

I. The Premise --- receiving from God & maintaining your breakthrough are 2 different perspectives

1 Kings 18:36-39 (NIV)

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command.³⁷ Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."³⁸ Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.³⁹ When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord--he is God! The Lord--he is God!"

1 Kings 19:1-10 (NIV)

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done --- ²So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

³ **Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.** When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there,⁴ while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."⁵ Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat."⁶ He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

⁷ The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you."⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the Lord came to him: "**What are you doing here, Elijah?**"¹⁰ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

A. We live in midst of spiritual conflict

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

B. Intent not required for all consequences

1 Corinthians 6:9 (NIV)

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Colossians 1:9-14 (NIV)

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. . . .¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and **brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves**,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

C. Wisdom is required

Proverbs 4:5-8 (NIV)

⁵ Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them.⁶ Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you.⁷ **Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.**

⁸ Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you.

II. The Nature of Our Opponent ---

A. Ultimate Objective --- **destruction**

John 10:10 (NIV)

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

B. Immediate goal -disruption/delay/distract

Daniel 10:12-13 (NIV)

Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.¹³ But **the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.** Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

III. God's Perspective---very valuable

Luke 12:24 (NIV)

Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. **And how much more valuable you are than birds!**

Luke 17:1-3 (NIV)

Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come.² It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.³ So watch yourselves.

IV. Lessons Learned

A. Be Prepared: triumph precedes challenge

Acts 4:8-9 (NASB)

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people,⁹ **if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man,** as to how this man has been made well,

B. Establish your victories

Joshua 4:6-7 (NIV)

to serve as a sign among you. In the future, **when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?'**⁷ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. **These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.**"

C. Learn about worship, praise & thanksgiving

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the many ways you have intervened on my behalf. In your great mercy you have provided hope and purpose to my journey. Give me wisdom to lead an overcoming life. May your power be made evident in all I do. Give me eyes to see and ears to listen. I rejoice in my Lord and my redeemer. In Jesus' name, amen.