



THE GOD WHO IS NEAR

1 Kings 19:1-18 |

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RELATED SCRIPTURES

Exodus 13: 21-22 | Isaiah 63:7-14 | Acts 2:38-39 | John 14:16-17

SUMMARY

We see throughout Scripture various times that God “comes down” to meet with people. God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day in the Garden; he talked with and made world-altering promises to Abraham; he comes to Jacob first through a dream and then a wrestling match. Again and again God comes down to our level. Sometimes it is with the purpose of blessing as seen with the previous examples. Sometimes in judgment as with the people of Babel who tried to make a name for themselves, build their spiraling stairway to heaven, and attain the security and significance which every human heart craves.

Our passages today direct us to God’s answer to the Babel-ish cravings of our own hearts. In the story of Elijah we find God answering our longing for God’s presence to meet us in the wilderness at our lowest point. In the story of Moses and Israel we find the wilderness is a place where God meets his people with a steady, guiding presence through the pillar of fire and cloud.

Each of us faces despair in our lives like Elijah. Sometimes we need a Snickers and a nap, but at all times we need God to meet us with his presence. Each of us faces the temptation to encamp our hearts around other pillars that promise warmth and guidance only to betray us out in the barren wastes. Our God promises to be with us, that he will never leave us alone or betray us. He will guide us all the way home (Hebrews 11:39-40) to that better country. The only question is: Will we let him lead us? Will we build our lives around him?

GROUP QUESTIONS

- Read through the story of Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-18) and Moses (Exodus 13:21-22). What stands out to you? Why do you suppose God put these stories in Scripture?
- If Isaiah 59:2 is true, then we don’t deserve nearness with God. And yet, through Christ, God comes down to be near to us and allows us to come near to him. Do you feel near to God right now? How do the stories of Elijah and Moses encourage you with God’s nearness to you?
- If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of these portions of Scripture, what is that thing?