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God in the Silence

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- [Genesis 12:1](#)
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Awesome. The more I study the ancient faith of Israel, and when I say the ancient faith, because it's an old faith, right? I mean, our God is an old God. He's the oldest God, right? He has no age. But through a man by the name of Abraham, God revealed himself. And of course, we know the offspring of Abraham was Israel. And Israel worshiped God in the time

period of the late Bronze Age, early Iron Age. And the more I study about how they worshiped our God, the more I'm intrigued, the more I realize that, guys, if the ancient faith of Israel, if it was revealed today like it was then, it would probably be unrecognizable. Culturally, socially, and the passion that they had behind their faith would be something that the church and Hebrew roots and all believers would have never seen before. They would probably count it as a type of overzealous ritualistic cult, and I love that. Because that's the faith of my God. That's the faith of my ancestors. And so I want to talk a little bit about a man named Abraham.

Now, I know you guys are like, oh, Abraham again. Abraham's a big guy, right? He's our father, Father Abraham. Now, Abraham is described as a general Semitic. He's from Semitic stock known as Aramaean. Anybody ever read that word? He's an Aramean. What does that mean? Right? Father Abraham. Arameans, they were from what is modern-day Syria, northern Syria. Thank you. Pardon me. Now, Abraham came from a family, and his family, his entire family, worshipped other gods. His brothers, his sisters, his father. His father probably taught him to worship other gods. There's actually a traditional story. Now, we don't know this for a fact. It's a Jewish tradition, but it tells about how Abraham's father, Abraham's tradition was an idol maker, or he had a store and he sold idols. He sold something called household gods, and that's something that we're going to talk about a little bit later. It's personal gods. How many of you know that they used to have personal gods back then? And so his father sold these idols, and one day Abraham, when his father was away, the story goes something like this. His father came back and all of the idols were destroyed. Right? Because Abraham was in charge that day where his father left. And it looked like someone had taken an axe to all of these idols, you know, because they used to make them out of wood, right? And then if they were really nice, they'd overlay them with silver and gold. That's what Jeremiah 10 speaks about, right? And when his father walked into a shop, all of his idols were destroyed. And what in the world? Abraham, what have you done? And Abraham's sitting in the corner. I didn't do it. Look at the last idol over there. He's the one holding the axe. Little idol holding the axe. Right? He couldn't have done this. He's just an idol. And Abraham looks at him and says, exactly, Father. It's just an idol. These things are not real. And so that's a traditional story. That's no biblical account. It's probably completely false, but I like it because it shows the zeal behind Abraham and why God chose him because Abraham knew the one true God. And so we know in Joshua 24, 2 and in 14 that Abraham's family did worship other gods. Genesis 12, 1 says, Remember this? Remember when Abraham's family, actually, do I have that in the next slide? It's okay. So Abraham's family actually came. They lived in a town called Ur. Everybody say Ur, right? That's that sound you make when you get really agitated, Ur, right? And so Abraham's family lived in a town called Ur, and they moved, and we'll go over the map. They moved all around until they finally settled in an area, and Abraham's father, Terah, he died, right? And right after Abraham's father died, Genesis 12 begins and it says, So you have this deity, right, from Abraham's point of view, the one true God, speaking to him. All of a sudden, he's mourning the death of his father. And this God comes and says, hey, Abraham, you know I'm the one true God. Yes, Lord. I'm Yahweh. And Abraham, and I want you to leave your father's house, everything. Leave your family. Leave your households. Leave your country. Leave everything behind and follow me. Didn't that happen somewhere else in the Bible? So God says this to Abram, and Abram says, basically, okay, I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing, and I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you will I curse, and all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you. So Abram left as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. See, Lot was his nephew. And Abram was 75 years old when he set out from Haran. And so here's

a map, and I just want to do a little bit of geography here of the ancient world. You see, here's ancient Israel, which was known, called Canaan, right? We have Egypt down here, you know, that's where Pharaoh was in the video, the Sinai Peninsula. You have the land of Edom over here, and all the way over here, you have the central of Babylon, and just south of that, in lower Mesopotamia, you have Ur. This is where Abraham's family was from. But scripture tells us that Abraham's family moved and they traveled all the way up to Haran. And then God told Abraham, listen, I want you to leave Haran. I want you to leave everywhere that you've just planted down with your family and go south. And so he traveled south to Shechem, which is right outside of Jerusalem. So Abraham's journey went up and down and all around the land of Canaan, all because a voice spoke to him. I'll bet Abraham's family thought he was in a cult. I don't know. But around this time, this is the point of this teaching, and this is what I want to talk about. Everybody worshipped gods in the Near East. Everybody worshipped something, okay? Now, how many of you know that there was a hierarchy of deities, of gods, in the Near East? On the top, you had state gods. These were patron gods, patron deities. Like El was, the bull god, if you will. El was in Canaan, or Madoc in Mesopotamia, which became the patron god of Babylon. These were the top gods, if you will, Zeus, the Zeus of the Greek world. The top patron gods. These were state deities. And below them, you may have some lesser gods, deities. In Mesopotamia, there was a god known as either Sirius or Sirius, I can't remember, and he was the god of beer. And these were lesser gods. They were important, but they were lesser on the list. These could be known as city gods or community gods. How would you like the god of beer to be over your community? And then you had personal or family gods. These were household deities. You see, patron gods were big. How many of you guys know that in the Near East, people didn't think their gods were omnipresent, if that helps. Try to get that mentality. People didn't believe that their god was omnipresent. And so wherever their god's temple was, that was where they went to meet their god. So the Zeus of Marduk, or the temple of Marduk, you would have to travel all the way to Babylon to worship him and petition. If you're part of the laity on the outskirts of town, he's not going to listen to me. You have all the city going there, the kings and the priests sending requests to this patron god. And the laity, the lay people, didn't really feel obligated to worship their patron gods, the state gods, their high gods. You guys still with me? I know I'm going out in left field. I'll bring it back, I promise. People didn't really worship their great, great gods because they didn't feel a need to because they didn't feel like they even were noticed by these gods. They're too big, right? And they're already filling the requests of the kings and the priests and How is this guy ever going to listen to me? And so a strange thing happened. Within families and tribes, small cities, they started developing personal deities or family gods, the god of our family, the god of our household. Now these gods were unlike their patron gods. These gods were viewed, and guys, just so you know, I know you already know this, I don't believe in these gods. This is just history, okay? Personal gods were actually interested in the interest of an individual, right? So if I was a pagan and I had a personal god or a family deity, that deity would have an interest in me, unlike my patron god to the whole kingdom. He would have an interest in my well-being. He would be with me in my journeys, and I would worship it, or my family would worship it, and I would respect him or I would view him as an actual part of my family, like a sibling. That's how closeness and casual I would be with this household deity. Household deities would sustain a relationship with the members of the small family, right? Here's a quote from John Walton, a great writer on Near Eastern theology and commentary. So this is from the ancient Near Eastern thought and the Old Testament. While the state religion, right, the patron gods, would be focused primarily on the

gods connected to the major temples in the city, and particularly the patron god of the city, most families would feel that they had little access to those great gods. Likewise, those gods would not likely be concerned about them or even hear their requests. This created a sense of non-obligation to directly worship their state gods. The common people would turn to their household or personal gods for direct relationship needs, requests, and worship. I never knew that. I never knew that. And the reason why I'm building this up is because what kind of God is Yahweh? Well... You want to speak about household gods? We see this when Laban had gone to shear his sheep. Rachel stole her father's household gods. Remember that? Right before she got on the bandwagon with Jacob and head out of town, right? Escaped Laban's house. Genesis 31. Household gods. In Hebrew, the word is teraphim, and we're not going to go into all the different avenues of that, but they were household gods. You guys remember Jacob in Genesis 35? Remember? Remember? Then God said to Jacob, go up to Bethel, settle there and build an altar to God who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau. And Jacob said to his household, to all of you who were with him, get rid of your foreign gods you have with you right now. See, Jacob's fixing to face something, a great fear that he was really scared of. And he looks back at his townspeople, his family. Guys, it's time to put those gods that are with you away. Put them away. Jacob's family. household idols household God's these personal got ever anyone ever ever believe in in guardian angels at one point maybe still do I don't know but that sense of you know I have this guardian angel with me the way it's portrayed on television you have this guardian angel with me all the time and he's always has my best interest this is what the idea the personal God was this family got the really only cared about you and your family no one else wasn't a great great great big God but he could help you that's why I find this interesting because in a time period where there are many many many great gods and patron gods and abraham's father possibly owned a shop that sold household items and larger there is a god that came to abram the lord yahweh said hey if you leave your people leave your town i will be with you if you follow me in the desert I will be with you, and I will bless you, and I will look out for your interests, and I will have a relationship with you, and I will have a relationship with your seed on after you, and I will build them up to create a nation, and whoever blesses them, I will bless, and whoever curses them, I will curse. Who else was worshiping Yahweh right then? Remember, this is right after the incident with the Tower of Babel. Not right after. Generations later, of course. Tower of Babel scattered. People forgot who their God was. People who forgot who Yahweh was. And Yahweh makes an entrance back to Abraham. I submit to you as a household deity, as a family deity, as someone who had cares for the interests of Abraham and his household, someone who was going to look out for Abraham, someone who required Abraham to worship him only, but I will be with you. I will have a relationship with you. We will know each other. I will be with you always. What's interesting about a household deity, and I know some of you may be thinking, gosh, Matt, that's really belittling God a little bit, right? I mean, you're going to bring him down to this little household deity? No, I'm saying this is how he's presenting himself to Abram. And so with a family god, a family deity in the Near East, this deity would be in covenant with you and your family. So Yahweh makes this covenant with Abram in Genesis 12 and also Genesis 15, but when Abraham has Isaac, Yahweh renews the promise that he made to Abraham with Isaac. Why? Family. Then after Isaac, Jacob comes out, right? And Yahweh makes the covenant. He renews it again. Listen, because I was the God of Abraham and I'm the God of your family, I'm renewing my covenant with you now. Who else did God renew the covenant with outside of Abraham's family? The Mesopotamians? No. The Hittites? No. Egyptians? You ever wonder why our God is called the

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Because he's the God of our family. That's why. Some places in scripture, when people are dialoguing with Hebrews, or holding a conversation with the Hebrews, they'll say, you're God, the God of Abraham. You're God. I love that, because I'm reading this. Because family gods don't leave their family. Family gods stay with their family. They're a part of the family, because they have a covenant with the family. And the reason why I started this out telling you, if you've ever had a week where you feel like you're distanced from God, That can't happen if God is truly in covenant with the family that you're in stock with, the family of Abraham. It cannot happen. The God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. The God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The list continues. You guys know all these verses. All through Exodus, say to the Israelites, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham. 1 Kings, O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. The God of Abraham. Yahweh was a family God. His status. That's how he revealed himself, even in the New Testament. Then Egypt happens. Remember what Yahweh said? We spoke about this last week. Yahweh said to Abram, said, listen, your people is going to become a great nation, but they're going to be a land that's not their own, and they're going to be slaves, and they're going to be oppressed, and then they're going to cry out to me, and then guess what? I'm going to bring them out. And we know the story of Egypt. This is why we do Passover, is because Yahweh fulfilled that promise. We had Israel multiplying, this incubator of Egypt. Israel is multiplying within this land, and God begins to systematically show just how big a simple family God can be by destroying every major patron and lesser deity of Egypt. Knock them out. Bam, bam, bam. And you know the story. Yahweh pulls Israel out of Egypt by the strength of his right hand, and then they go to a mountain. Remember the mountain? Mount Sinai, Mount Horeb. What takes place on that mountain? So there's something that happens when someone becomes a king. It's called an enthronement ceremony. And we see a lot of examples in this in scripture. An enthronement ceremony will basically, it will be a huge ceremony, be very ritualistic, it's awesome. It's a very formal event where maybe the king would be coming up and the people would be declaring why he is our king now. Maybe this king was a general that won lots of battles. Maybe he destroyed the enemies of the people. Maybe he saved the people in some way and that is why we are now going to allow him to be our king and we are going to worship him. Remember this? God says, I will make you a nation. When he's speaking to Abraham, Abram at the time in Genesis 12. When God came out of Egypt, that's when he changed his status. His status changed from a simple family household God to a national deity, a national God. Why? Because now he had a nation to rule over. You with me? These are the patterns that we see. Remember the pledge that Israel gave to Yahweh? They're speaking, and they say, the Lord shall reign forever and ever. People saying this, the Lord shall reign forever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. These are the declaration of Israel that they're declaring to Yahweh. They're making Yahweh their king, by the way, at Mount Sinai, if you didn't realize that. They're setting him up to rule over them because now they're a kingdom. Now they're a nation. They're no longer oppressed. They're no longer slaves. They come out and now they need to appoint a king. And Yahweh's response, this is beautiful. You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bear you on eagle's wings. Love that. And brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me among all people. For all the earth is mine. But you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, the holy nation. You will be a light to every nation. When

people look at you, they're going to know, wow, their patron God, the patron God of Israel, is their family God. Something unheard of. And so, if now enthroned Yahweh, I'm getting excited here. My clicker stops working. Can you hit the right arrow? The one that's highlighted. I need you to click the one to the right of it. These are technical difficulties. Ah, cut off. These verses, David says, You guys know David was zealous for Yah? He was extremely zealous for Yah. So much, though, that Psalms 96 and 97 are known as enthronement psalms. Almost David is rewriting the accounts of why Yahweh is king, right? And look at this, it speaks, and say among the heathen that the Lord reigns. Everyone's heard that, the Lord reigns, right? Psalms 97.1, the Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice. Let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. And we always read that, and okay, the Lord reigns. But see, in Hebrew, it says Yahweh malach, and that's where we get the translation of the Lord reigns. But many scholars argue that it could be read, because malach is king, Lord malach. It could be read that Yahweh has become king, because it's an enthronement psalm. Yahweh has become king. Let the nations rejoice. This is why I wanted to tell you all of that. This. Because even though Yahweh is declaring himself and he's made his status known as a patron deity now, and a patron god is something that gives to the people. He rules over the people almost like a king, but see in this case it was a king, right? But see most of the time with national gods and patron gods, there's a disconnect between the people because you know, A God can only get so big before the people disconnect from him, right? You ever feel like that? I'll be honest. Sometimes I feel like God is so great that I'm not even noticed. I serve him. I love him. I pray to him. I petition. But I don't really expect an answer back to my prayers. I do. I've felt that way before. I'm just, I'm doing what I need to do and I'm honoring God, but I don't expect him to notice me. And it's really cool. It's scary when he does. A personal story I'll share with you another day. When the father notices you and you don't expect it, you get really scared. He noticed me. The king noticed me. There's a reason why he told all of the children of Israel to wear the tzitzit. Do you know why? Because we have reliefs and stills from Babylon, from Assyria, of kings and the elites and priests wearing tassels. Pagan nations, right? Because it was a status of being elite. The blue, very expensive. If you order it from Israel, it's very expensive. 20 bucks for four blue strands. It's even more expensive in the Near East. And only when you walked into a town and you had tassels on, it was kind of like the Rolex, you know? That's right. I'm an elite of my people. What does God say? Everybody is an elite in my kingdom. Everybody is important in my kingdom. There are no classes in my kingdom. Everybody will be equal. Can you imagine the kingdom of priests? walking into a nation and everybody has tassels on. You wouldn't know what to think. Everybody got tassels. Hapshekel tax. Everybody pays the same. Why? Because everybody is equal. I love that because you see in Mesopotamia, only the king and maybe the priest, and maybe, you know, if you were really rich and you paid a lot of money to the priesthood, you were the only ones that would be noticed by their patron national God. Everyone else wasn't. But in Israel, everybody's an elite. Everybody has a stake in God's kingdom. and I love that. At this point, guys, this is unheard of, that throughout Scripture, throughout the narrative, Yahweh continues to have characteristics as a personal family God to his people, speaks to them, gives them comfort, wants a relationship with them, but he's a national deity. He's the God of Israel now. So Scripture says the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. No, he is our family God. He is the head of our household. Does that make sense? Kind of, sort of. There was, um, conflict that arose at times in the Near East regarding gods. You guys remember the Holy War series that we had? Maybe a couple of you. Holy War was something that was not fought between people. It was fought between gods. And so the idea was that if we're going to attack another nation, right,

it's really going to be our gods fighting the opposing deities of the other nation in heaven. And their victories in heaven are going to reflect on the battlefield, right? That's why that song, *Our God is Greater*, is so cool when I hear it, because we know there's a battle coming at the end, and I think that's the song we're going to be singing, conquering. I love it. And so the idea is that deities would fight. There would always be challenges. Now, you know what happened.

Everyone was righteous. Israel was all in, right? They're all in. We want to be part of the covenant. They go into the promised land. Okay, we've got to remember how to do Passover again. A couple of us need to be circumcised near the sign of the covenant. Do all that. But for the most part, we had a pretty zealous nation. And then every man did what was right in his own eyes. And then there was kind of like a revelation again. And people were close to God again. And you had King David ruling the kingdom of Israel with justice and righteousness. And then you had Solomon. And then, bloop! Solomon's boy messed it all up, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, you know, the whole incident where Israel splits. And Israel pretty much goes downhill from there into sin. Do you guys remember who Israel appointed as their patron god in opposition to Yahweh? I got it on the board, Baal. Baal was the storm god of Canaan. He was always represented, if you see an image of him, he's always represented with a hand held high, typically with a big club, sometimes without a club, but he had a club in his right hand. Remember, right hand is a sign of power. And the club, what's a club make if you bang it against the ground? He was the storm god, that was thunder. And so he'd have a club always raised with his right hand. This is why God's always like, with the right hand, the strength of my right hand, I will pull you out. Yeshua sits at the right hand of the Father. All strength, judgment, power, authority at the right hand of the Father. And so you have Baal. And we have a situation that took place. Do you guys remember I'm fixing to talk about the situation of the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel? You know the situation with Elijah? And we know who wins? Do you know why at the end Elijah killed all 450 prophets of Baal? Do you know why? There was a woman by the name of Jezebel. Now Jezebel was the wife to Ahab. Ahab was the seventh king of Israel, the northern tribes. Pagan as all get out. Jezebel and Ahab worshipped Baal. They turned their back on Yahweh and appointed Baal as the national god of Israel. Jezebel started to kill and slay and massacre all of the prophets of Yahweh. And she did this. Mass execution of any prophets. That's what caused the battle. I call it a battle at Mount Carmel. And so 1 Kings 17 through 19, you follow along. We know Jezebel slaughtered the prophets of Yahweh. And right after this, Elijah sent word to Ahab. And he met up with Ahab. And he said, Ahab, listen. I want you to send all 450 prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel. You guys want to see who's better between my God, the one true God of Israel, and At this point, Elijah's like the only prophet left, by the way. Talk about boldness. If you were the only believer in Yeshua left on the world, in the world, in the entire world, there's people in Syria right now that are facing this exact situation. If you are the only believer left in Yeshua in the world, because everyone else has been killed, where's your boldness level going to be? Elijah rides out to meet Ahab. Listen, by the way, your wife's a jerk, but listen. I want you to send all 450 prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel. If you want to end this, we're going to end this now. I'm going to show you who is greater between these two deities, right? And not just any prophets of Baal because there's a lot of prophets. I want you to send the 450 prophets of Baal that sit and eat and dine. Remember how we talked about dining, right? That dine at Jezebel's table. Those prophets you send to the mountain and I'll meet them there. Very specific. So we know what happens. The challenge takes place in 1 Kings 18, 22. Then Elijah said unto the people, I, even I, remain a prophet of the Lord Yahweh, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks and let them choose one bullock for

themselves. They get to pick it. Which side of the coin do you want to toss? That's basically what was happening. Let them therefore give two bulls and let them choose one for themselves and cut it into pieces and lay it on wood and put no fire under it. And I will dress the other bull and I'll put it in the wood and I will put no fire on it. And then call you on the name of your gods and I will call on the name of the Lord. And the God that answers by fire lets him be God. And all the people said, yeah, that's well spoken. That sounds like a deal. Do you see the situation? We have all the people of Israel watching. There's an audience, by the way. 450 prophets of all, right? They're probably all dressed up, got their cloaks on, probably looking pretty slick. One guy on the other end. One guy, Elijah, the last one left. I don't know. I'd be scared. I'd be scared. You know, you ever pray for something and you have faith the Lord will do it, but, oh, I hope he doesn't. Hope he doesn't pull a stunt, you know, like I hope he doesn't have another plan where he just wants to, you know. All right, guys, we're going to set up two altars. I'm the only one left. All the other prophets have been killed. I might doubt. I might doubt that y'all is going to show up. I'll say it. I might be a little lean, but everyone else died. Why is he going to show up for me? We know what happens. The prophets prayed to Baal all morning long until noon. Oh, light the fire. Come on, ball, light my fire. I know, it was horrible. Horrible. And after they exhausted their energy, Elijah steps out. Now, Elijah seems very bold here. He starts mocking them, right? Did I have it on here? Yeah, when it came to pass at the time of the offer, nope, nope, nope. So Elijah starts mocking them. He starts telling them, hey, guys, why don't you scream louder? You know, maybe ball's sleeping. What a jerk. What a jerk. Come on, guys. Why don't you cut yourselves like you do? You know, like cut yourself and scream. And maybe he was just focused on something else. And if you scream loud enough, you'll get his attention and he'll send a little spark down and, you know. And so the people do that and they're cutting themselves and they're bleeding all over there. Please light the fire. Finally, they're all bleeding. They're worn out. The time of the evening sacrifice, the prophet came near and said, Yahweh, God of Abraham, God of Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. So you remember what he did. He went and he said, okay, guys. He built up an altar with 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel, and he tells the prophets of all, listen, bring big old buckets of water over and douse them on the sacrifice, on the offering. Douse them on the altar. Draw a trench around it. So they fill it up and do it again. You know, prophets are bloody or hurting. Do it a third time. Soak this sucker. Elijah knows he's going to die if something doesn't happen, so he's just soaking. It's going to be big. And then he prays, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel. Why Israel? That's the family. Let it be known this day that you are the family God, regardless of how we have turned our backs on you. Hear me, O Yahweh, hear me, that this people may know that you are Yahweh Elohim and that you will turn their heart back again. Then the fire of Yahweh fell. It's a pretty big victory. That was awesome. It says, nothing left of the altar. Rocks, the water, gone. That's when Elijah tells Israel, he says, hey, get all these props of the veil. We're going to take them down to the valley down here. And he formally executed every one of them. Every one of them. Huge, huge, huge victory for Yahweh. Not like he needed it. Huge victory for Elijah. I mean, don't get me wrong, all glory to God, but you know Elijah. That's right. Only one left. Still got it. So he puts to death all of the prophets of all, and then this happens. You see Jezebel, this woman, finds out about it. She's just a woman. She's the queen, but she's just... Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah saying, so let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not your life as the life of the one of them by tomorrow this time. Talking about the prophets he had just killed. She threatened to kill Elijah. No big deal, right? I mean, seriously, if you were Elijah and this just happened... I'd be

on a high, man. Killed all 450 of them, got a big old sword, got the heads off. Victory in Yahweh, fire from heaven. Only one left, the anointing, fearless. Jezebel sends a message, a message to him. He gets an email. Let's just put it in today. Email from Jezebel. I'm going to kill you before tomorrow, just like you killed my prophets. I'd laugh. Probably you would too. I would think that. Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. Now I understand being under the wrath of a vengeful woman is possibly a very, very scary thing. Men, hence. Being under the wrath of a vengeful woman is a big, big deal. I mean, that's scary. But come on. Elijah ran for his life. It says, I have had enough, Yahweh. Oh my, I deny. He said, take my life. I am no better than my ancestors. Then he lay down under a bush and fell asleep. Life ever got so hard for you, so distressed, so anxious that you just fall asleep? It's called like the getaway sleep or something like that. It's an actual thing. Like when you get so overwhelmed that you just fall asleep, you just can't. Seriously, it's legit. Elijah, praying to God just to take his life. Then he landed the tree and fell asleep. All at once, an angel touched him and said, get up and eat. Did Elijah have a lack of courage? We say yes sometimes. And so what do we do when we have a lack of courage? We pray for courage. God, give me courage. I submit to you that Elijah did not have a lack of courage. He just displayed this huge amount of courage. Scripture actually says in 2 Timothy 1.7, for the spirit God gave us, the spirit that is in every one of you, as long as you're a believer in Yeshua, right? That's the seal of the salvation that you have. The spirit that is in every one of you does not make us timid. As a believer in Yeshua, you cannot not have courage according to Scripture. You got courage. What did God do? If you were God, would you have just struck him dead? Oh, God, just let me die. God sent an angel, woke him up, said, hey, eat. Looks over, bread, over hot coals, bottle of water. This strengthened Elijah. How gracious is our God that even though we have courage, sometimes it gets malnourished. Sometimes we don't put it to use. Sometimes we forget we have it. How gracious is our God that in times of need and malnourishment of our courage, he sustains you when you cry out. See, I wonder if we've been doing it all wrong with praying for courage. God, please give me courage. I wonder if that's not the right prayer. I wonder if the right prayer is, Father, sustain me. Show me how to nourish the courage that your spirit has within me so that I can continue to walk. And Elijah was strengthened, and he traveled 40 days and 40 nights. We don't have a lack of the gift of courage, but our courage has to be fed to function in full strength. Honestly believe that. Deuteronomy 8.3 says something very interesting. He humbled you, causing you to hunger, and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors ate, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, but that every word that comes out of the mouth of the Father... This is something Yeshua repeated in Matthew 4.4 when he was speaking with the adversary. I wonder sometimes that if our courage is within us and it's ready to go, but it's weak because we're not feeding it like we should be. We're not feeding it every single day when we wake up, when we go to sleep. We're not feeding it when we fall on our knees to ask the Father, Father, what do you have for me today? How can I serve you in your kingdom? Sometimes we forget that this is more than just a book, guys. Sometimes we forget that this is better than bread. This is what sustains you. This is what feeds your courage. This is what makes you a warrior as bold as Elijah. See, Elijah was still a little upset. He was strengthened, but he was still a little upset. And so he went to Mount Sinai, to Horeb, Mount Horeb. Went back to Horeb, the mountain of God. Climbed into a cage, a cave. Might as well have been a cage. Do you guys realize what happened after that? He was still kind of down. And he goes into a cave, and the first thing that God asks him, the first thing that Yahweh asks him after he gets to this cave, what are you doing here? I always come into, what are you doing here? It's a great question because

sometimes I wake up in the morning and I wonder that. What are we doing? What should we be doing? Elijah is in need of hearing from the Father. He's been strengthened, right? His courage is a little restored, but he just wants to hear from the Father. God, God says, get out of the cave. Get out of the cave. Where do you go when you're depressed? Lock yourself in your room, shut the windows. Get out of the cave, Elijah. Walk to the entrance to the cave outside, and I'll show you. I'll be there. So he walks out, and you guys remember what happened? The wind came. It says the wind came, and it shattered the rocks in the mountains. My courage might dip a little bit. Oh, feed me more. Nourish me. I am not in the wind. The Lord is not in the wind. Then an earthquake came. I've never been in an earthquake. I've never been in an earthquake. But I can't imagine what an earthquake of God's presence would be. But, God, the Lord is not in an earthquake. Fire came, but God is not in the fire. 1 Kings 19, 12, it says that Elijah heard God in a still, small voice. Rashi, commentary, kol demah dakah is the Hebrew for still, small voice, if you will. And Rashi has a commentary, and I have the note here. It says, the voice from silence. or the silence that you can hear? Is your courage malnourished? And if it is, do you know how to nourish it? If you're wanting to hear from the Father, and you're looking in the wind, and you're looking in the earthquake, and you're looking in the fire, Father, where are you in my time of need? He spoke to Elijah in a still small voice. Do you know why he spoke to Elijah in a still small voice? Because he was close. Because he was close. sometimes we forget how close our God is to us. Even when we don't even realize it, and even when we get distracted with our life and we feel like we're all alone in a cave, we feel like we're all alone because Jezebel's chasing us, we feel like we're all alone and God has no interest in us. No, that is not our God. Those are the gods of the nations. The gods of the nations have no interest for their people. The God of Israel, the God of Isaac, the God of Abraham, Yahweh, he is our family God. He is close. Galatians 3.29 is awesome. Awesome verse. He goes, are you guys talking to people about the cool things of our God after you leave here on Saturdays? And I'm not talking about Facebook. I'm talking about the people that you walk with every single day, the people that you meet at work. Are you sharing with them the awesomeness of your God and what he's done for your life? That's what Yeshua told us to do, to be messengers at times. we feel like we're so distant from God that it'll take an earthquake or fire or wind shattering rocks for us to hear from God. But he never left. He's so close you can hear him in the silence. That's huge, guys. That's huge. Guys, I'd like to invite you, if you're here today and you're far from God, You feel far from God. If you're here today and you think that you're out in the desert, in the wilderness, and you're sitting under a tree and you're saying, God, I can't handle this anymore. Do you guys realize how much courage it takes to be a believer? Do you guys realize how much courage it takes to get married? It's a big scary thing. It took a lot of courage to say, I do, to come into a relationship with someone else. It takes a lot of courage to sustain that relationship with your bride and your husband. Do you guys realize how much courage it takes to have children? I can only imagine. It takes a lot. to make that commitment for the rest of your life? You're a warrior. Do you realize how much courage it takes to leave that job? How much courage it takes to go to that interview for that new job? Do you realize how much courage it takes to walk in this life? You are not without courage, for the Father is close and the Spirit is near. I would invite you to meet me afterwards. We're about to dismiss. Come up. I'd like to pray with you. I'd like you to pray with me. Because that's where the point of this fellowship is, guys. The point of a fellowship is not to come and to learn teachings. Teachings are great. Teachings don't change the world. Actions do. Fellowships are formed so that we can lean on each other and support each other. Fellowships are formed so that we can encourage each other in the faith

and the walk, so that we can sit under the tree with our brothers and sisters when they're in the wilderness and say, hey, listen to the silence. You were never left alone. If that's you, please come up and see me. We actually have a prayer team here waiting for you to support you because that's what we do as a fellowship.

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