

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Newsletter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. ([2 Peter 1:12 KJV](#))

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## Cave Dwellers

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Over the years I have heard several people speak of being in a “cave” spiritually. Usually, these were people that had a prophetic inclination in their lives and were convinced that God had called them in this manner but that people didn't receive their words or, in some cases, didn't receive them. After a period of time trying to get people to accept them or their words and failing to achieve acceptance, they invariably withdraw spiritual contact with others and begin to live their lives in the “cave” hidden from the world. Is this a proper thing to do? What is the real reason that you are in the cave? What is the purpose of the cave? What should be accomplished while you are in the cave? To answer these questions, let's look at three scriptural scenarios where people became “cave dwellers”.

The first cave dwelling scenario concerns Lot. The Angels had told him to get out of Sodom and flee to the mountains. Lot was afraid to go to the mountains so he asked the Angels about God sparing a small town called Zoar so that he could go there. They agreed and Lot went to Zoar. However, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he was afraid to continue to stay in Zoar.

Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, he and his two daughters. ([Gen 19:30](#))

Even though Lot had requested of the Angels for Zoar to be spared so that he could go and stay there, he ended up in the mountains anyway because he was too scared to stay in his requested place. He must have been really afraid in Zoar because earlier he was convinced that he couldn't survive in the mountains. So, fear drove Lot to dwell in a cave.

The question is why did he not go to a different town, especially, since he feared that he couldn't fair well in the mountains? Although the scriptures don't say, apparently it was obvious to others that he was associated with Sodom and Gomorrah either by appearance, behavior, or reputation. This may have caused the people of Zoar to believe that God's judgment would fall on them too if Lot was allowed to live among them. Rather than renounce all that was of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot fled instead and became a cave dweller.

The cave time was not used to seek God or change. Instead, his daughters got Lot drunk and committed incest with their father. Their offspring became the fathers of the Moabites and the Ammonites, who became problems for the children of Israel in the Promised Land.

The key points with Lot becoming a cave dweller are these:

1. Although rescued from Sodom and Gomorrah, he was “tainted” by association.
2. Instead of seeking God and changing, he fled because of fear for his life.
3. He indulged himself while in the cave leaving a heritage that became enemies of the people of God.

The second cave dwelling scenario concerns David. Although he had been chosen and anointed king by Samuel, he had not been publicly recognized. His reputation and exploits were becoming an irritation for Saul, the recognized king, and Saul wanted to see David gone. David fled from Saul and after a series of stops seeking a safe place, he ended up in a cave.

So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's household heard *of it*, they went down there to him. (1Sa 22:1)

Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him. (1Sa 22:2)

David had a hope and a vision for the future and a reputation to match. Others began to seek him out. First were those closest to him who had been present when Samuel had anointed him king. Then came others who had nothing to lose but hoped to join themselves to David's vision.

David didn't remain hidden in the cave, but used it as a stronghold and, at the Word of the Lord, would go forth with his men and attack the enemies of God. He did this while still avoiding confrontation with Saul. During this time, David took refuge and rest in another cave.

He came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there *was* a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave. (1Sa 24:3)

When Saul stopped to relieve himself, it appeared to all that God had delivered Saul into David's hand because this was a perfect opportunity to kill him. However, David knew that kings are raised up or put down by God's hand and not his. He did not take the opportunity to promote himself, but instead waited on God's timing for his promotion. Of course, we all know the rest of the story.

Key points from David's cave dwelling experience are these:

1. David was in a cave as a direct result of the calling of God on his life. He was “hidden” from the general public because it was not God's time for him to be revealed as the new king. However, those with understanding came to him.
2. David used the time in the cave to seek God and respond to what God said to him through the prophets.
3. David left the cave to do the jobs that the Lord assigned him, only using the cave as a protective stronghold.
4. David learned to humble himself under the mighty hand of God and not promote himself even if it was in his power to do so.

The third cave dwelling scenario concerns Elijah. He had accomplished what the Lord had said about the drought, called fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifice, killed 450 prophets of Baal, prayed earnestly for rain, and outran the king and his entourage to Jezreel. Then he gets word from Jezebel that she has sworn that he would be dead by the next day.

Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." (1Ki 19:2)

And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. (1Ki 19:3)

After all that had occurred, why was Elijah so afraid that he fled? One reason is probably because of what had occurred. A constant emotional high like I am sure Elijah experienced in the prior days leaves one emotionally drained and humanly weak and vulnerable. Fear overtook him before he realized it. So, all that he could do was go with it. This was a major disappointment for Elijah.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers." (1Ki 19:4)

Elijah's mental state is revealed by the phrase "for I am not better than my fathers". Apparently, before this, in his heart, he must have considered himself better than his fathers. After all, he was God's man of power for the hour. His failure to stand up to Jezebel's threat and his human response of fear for his life left him dejected, disappointed, and hopeless. He wasn't what he thought he was. He had to face the fact that he was just as human as his fathers.

God sent Angels to provide sustenance for him. They did not chastise nor condemn him in any way. They simply baked him cakes that would strengthen him for his journey. Elijah then went to the mountain of the Lord to become a cave dweller.

Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1Ki 19:9)

Even when we take up residence in a cave that is a part of the mountain of the Lord, the first question that God asks is "what are you doing here?". A cave is not a valid residence for a man of God.

Elijah's response reveals his discouragement. In essence, he says that he put the Lord and His work ahead of everything and had been faithful to do it; but, nobody cares. Now, it's all finished, he is the only one left, so he is ready to die and get it over with.

The Lord provides some excitement (earthquake, fire) that would stimulate his emotions if they had not been totally depleted. However, with his emotions out of the way, he was able to hear the still, small voice, or as the NASB says "the sound of a gentle blowing" and Elijah comes to the front of the cave to be asked by the Lord, again, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah answers with the same words that he answered previously.

God tells him that it is not over. He still has three major jobs for him to do—anooint two kings and anooint and prepare his successor, and, by the way there are 7000 more besides you so you are not alone. So, Elijah left the cave to do what the Lord had told him to do.

The key points to Elijah's cave dwelling experience are these:

1. Elijah was in the cave as a direct result of his in-ability to live up to a self-imposed standard that was humanly impossible.
2. Elijah's discouragement and dejection told him that his life was over, he couldn't do anything else for the Lord.
3. Nobody cared; he was alone; his life had no significance.
4. Emotionally stimulating activity didn't interest him, only the gentle voice of the Lord renewing his purpose and direction.

Putting these three scenarios together we see that there are three reasons that we become a cave dweller.

1. Our worldly lifestyle has become offensive as with Lot and we withdraw to a cave rather than change.
2. The call of God on us is so powerful, yet, unfulfilled as with David that a cave becomes a refuge and fortress for us as we learn to humble ourselves under God's hand and wait on His timing.
3. Or, as with Elijah, we hide ourselves in a cave because we are discouraged that we a human after all and dejected that nobody cares about us or the Lord. The cave becomes a meeting place with the Lord to renew purpose and direction.

We need to remember that our enemy seeks to kill, steal, and destroy. The two areas that he focuses on to do this are our *identity* and our *destiny*. It is in the events leading up to and including the cave that establishes and clarifies our identity (who we are in the Lord) and it is our interaction with the Lord while in the cave that clarifies and renews our destiny (His purpose for us).

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