

You Are Not Done Yet

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History of Tennis

Throughout the 12th and 13th centuries in Europe, the religious people of the day would often build place themselves places to pray and study. These were the 'Bible schools' of their day. Men, typically of wealthy families, would go to these monasteries and devote their time to the church. The architecture of these buildings was almost always the same, with a set of walkways covered by a sloped roof that went all the way around a central courtyard. The courtyard provided a place where men could meet when they weren't in church to socialize or read as they saw fit.

Around the same time, there was a group of Muslims living in Libya, Morocco, and Spain called the "Moors." These Moors brought to Europe a game that involved hitting a ball across a rope that was stretched between two posts. Players in the game would hit the ball using their hand and try to get it over the rope. The player on the other side of the rope would return the ball and so forth until the ball touched the group. Because it would sometimes hurt your hand hitting the ball over and over, players began to wrap their hands with strips of cloth called, "ruqatwas" from which we get the modern word, "racket."

Over time, the game was modified to local tastes and customs. For example, it was sometimes hard to determine whether a ball had gone over the rope or simply travelled underneath the rope. To prevent arguments, the rope was replaced with a net.

As the game travelled East towards France, it began to pick up French names. Each player begins with zero points using the French word, "l'oeuf" which means "egg" but is today pronounced "love." As each player scores a point, they keep track by referencing the quarter hour marks on the church clocks: 15, 30, and 45. Before a player served the ball, he would shout to his opponent "get ready" or "here it comes." The old French word for "here it comes" is "tenitz" which is where we get the modern name for this game, "tennis."

As the game became more popular across France, the monks found that the game was ideally suited to played inside the open courtyard at the center of the monastery. That's why the game of tennis is played on a "court." Lastly, the monks made one last change to the scoring of the game. The scoring used to be 'egg', 15, 30, 45, and match, but the monks, being religious folks, preferred to use a good Biblical number instead, so they changed the 45-point marker to 40 after the 40 days of Noah's flood, Moses was on Mt. Sinai for 40 days, and Jesus was in the desert for 40 days. After all these changes, the monks in France finally settled on a game called "tennis" that used balls, rackets, nets, courts, and score was kept as love, 15, 30, 40, and match.

The game became wildly popular in France and much of Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries. Since the monasteries all over Europe were filled with unmarried men, those monasteries soon became filled with men completely preoccupied with sports. Many letters were written to the Pope in Rome complaining about the foul language that filled the monasteries coming from the young men playing Tennis all the time.

What started to cause a problem for the Church wasn't the language, but the fact that the game distracted the young men from their main tasks of prayer and study. In fact, the game was so popular there were many monasteries in Europe that were commissioned by the church that were never completed. The men would come into a town, level the ground, lay out the monastery, and even install

the posts for the courtyard, but then immediately abandon their work and just begin playing tennis in the courtyard of the unfinished monastery.

These men were assigned a task: to build a monastery where men could pray and study the Word of God. Instead, they left the work they were assigned unfinished...

Leisure of Manasseh

In the book of Deuteronomy, chapter three, there's a story about the tribe of Manasseh before Israel entered the Promised Land. The Israelites were on the east side of the Jordan River when the King of Og came out to attack them, but the Israelites defeated them.

Deuteronomy 3:3-4 (KJV)

3 So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. **4** And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

This land got a lot of rainfall; it had lots of pastures and was perfect for raising cattle. It seemed like such a waste to let this piece of land go to their enemies. In fact, Ezekiel used the cattle of Bashan as a type of very strong and hearty cattle:

Ezekiel 39:18 (KJV) Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

The Bible talks about the oak trees that grow in Bashan being the strongest and best for making boat oars out of. The cattle of Bashan are big, strong, and tasty. It's a rich a desirable land with only one problem: it's on the wrong side of the river from the Promised Land.

Nevertheless, Moses gave a portion of the land of Og to the tribe of Mannaseh:

Deuteronomy 3:13 (KJV) And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants.

Manasseh got an allocation of land on both the east and west side of the Jordan river. So, the tribe of Manasseh was split into 2 halves: half the tribe was outside the Promised Land and the other half was inside the Promised Land. The tribe of Manasseh got a double portion of land because they were considered the first born.

Deuteronomy 21:17 (KJV) But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

Genesis 48:20-22 (KJV)

20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. **22** Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

The first-born gets a double portion of the inheritance, and Israel intentionally goes out of order and makes the younger of Joseph's sons, Manasseh, receive a double portion of the Promised Land. So, when Moses grants Manasseh two allocations of land, he's fulfilling the prophecy and the will of Israel towards Manasseh.

So, forevermore Manasseh will be split: half the tribe living in the Promised Land, and the other half living outside the Promised Land. But remember, at this point in history, the Israelites still haven't captured the Promised Land. They're technically wandering in the desert without a home.

Manasseh has a place to live, but most of the other tribes don't have anything.

It would have been easy for Manasseh to give up at that point and take it easy. They could have simply said to their brethren, "Thanks for helping us get this far.

Good luck storming Jericho!" They could have got busy raising cattle and oak trees on their new land, but they were not done yet. Moses say to Manasseh:

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Moses made it clear to Manasseh: you're not done yet. There's still a Promised Land to capture. You're not allowed to stop here and get on with your life. You're not allowed to sit back and raise cattle while your brothers spill their blood on the battlefield. You need to get everyone who can carry a sword and get ready for the battles that have yet to be waged.

Fire of Elijah

In 1 Kings chapter 18, there's the story of Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah challenges the prophets to see which group can get their God to answer with fire from heaven. Baal was a storm god and was often depicted in idols with a lightning bolt in his hand. As the god of thunder and lightning, one would think it'd be easy for him to use that lightning to light the fire on the altar.

Elijah had two bulls prepared: one for Baal and one for Jehovah. The prophets of Baal went first and spent all day praying and chanting to their god. They spent all day chanting, "Baal, hear us." All the while, Elijah taunts them:

1 Kings 18:27-29 (KJV)

27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. **28** And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. **29** And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied

until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

So, after the prophets of Baal are exhausted from their rituals, they finally give up without ever receiving an answer from their god. That's when Elijah steps up for his turn. Elijah has the people clean off the old altar. Then he has them dig a trench around the altar. Then he has them bring in 12 barrels of water and fill the trench. (Keep in mind this was during a drought.) After all that, Elijah says a very simple prayer:

1 Kings 18:36-37 (KJV)

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. **37** Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

That's it. A simple prayer that asks God to let the people know that He is God and Elijah is his prophet. He never asks for fire. He doesn't ask for the musicians and the singers to come up and lead the congregation in some upbeat songs. He doesn't need a building program or a laser light show. All Elijah asks for is that God would show the people evidence that Elijah is acting on God's behalf.

1 Kings 18:38 (KJV) Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

God answered Elijah's prayer in the most dramatic way possible. God brought fire down from heaven that consumes the sacrifice, the wood, the stones in the altar itself, and even the water that was in the trench around the altar. Elijah asked God for a sign and the place exploded; literally.

It'd be easy to assume that this is the height of Elijah's ministerial career. It would be easy to assume that Elijah did the job that he was put on earth to do: to create the greatest pyrotechnics show that any church service has ever had. Elijah could understandably retire from the ministry at this point; how could he ever top that?

But God has something in store for Elijah. In the next chapter, God sends an angel to feed Elijah some food. Then the angel tells Elijah to walk for 40 days until he reaches Mount Horeb. Elijah gets to Horeb and lies down in a cave where God asks him a strange question:

1 Kings 19:9 (KJV) And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

God told Elijah to go to Horeb, and when he got there, God asked, “What are you doing here?” Elijah tries to tell God that he’s been working for God, but he’s the only one left; no one is listening to him. In other words, Elijah says to God, “I’m done with the work you had me do. I tried, but I failed. There’s no one left who will listen to me. You need to find someone else.” But God answers to Elijah, “You’re not done yet.” God has Elijah go outside so he can get an object lesson.

1 Kings 19:11-12 (KJV)

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: **12** And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

The Lord wasn’t in the fire. Remember that God answering Elijah by fire was the defining miracle of Elijah’s ministry up to that point. Even today, if you ask someone what they know about Elijah, you’ll probably get an answer like, “He was the guy who God answered with fire.” And yet just after God answered Elijah with fire, he takes him into the desert and says, “I’m not in the fire.”

You expect me to answer you with wind just like I was in the wind that moved upon the waters at creation, but I’m not in the wind. You expect me to answer you with breaking rocks like I did when I brought down the walls of Jericho, but I’m not in the broken rocks. You expect me to be the fire that came down from heaven and burned up the sacrifice in front of the prophets of Baal, but I don’t speak to you with fire. You expect me to come into your life like a whirlwind every time you have a problem.

You think that if I'm not making wives out of ribs or smashing cities to pieces or burning up stone altars with lightning that I have forgotten you? I speak to you with a still, small voice. I speak to you and you speak to others. I tell you what to do and you make sure it gets done.

For the second time in this exchange, God asks Elijah, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Why are you here in Horeb? Do you think that just because you called fire from heaven that your job is done? You are not done yet, Elijah.

After that, Elijah's role changed. He goes on to anoint two kings. He trains Elisha as his replacement. He gets carried away in a chariot of fire and a whirlwind. Elijah thought that he was finished with the work that God had set for him, but little did he know what was in store.

Conclusion

You may be here today and feel that God is done with you. The Lord wants to tell you that you are not done yet. He still has plenty of harvest out in the field. Or maybe you feel like you haven't seen much spark lately. There has been no fire falling from heaven on your life lately. Maybe you feel that since there are no walls falling then God must not be working in your life any more. To you God says, "I'm not in the wind, nor the rocks, nor the fire; I am that still small voice in side you and I need you to make sure my will gets done."

What are you doing here, Elijah? You are not finished yet.