

Elijah – Prophet of Confrontation #9

Elijah and the Wilderness

1Ki 19:8-18

Introduction:

1. Israel spent 40 yrs in the wilderness and we see that Elijah spent 40 days traveling through the same wilderness
2. Israel was sustained by miracle food on their journey and Elijah was strengthened by miracle food for his journey
3. Elijah's trip was from Canaan to Mt. Sinai and Israel went from Mt. Sinai to Canaan

I. The Question God Asked – vs 8-10

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. 9 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?

A. Analysis of the Question

1. Occupation – “What doest thou?”
 - a) *Elijah was needlessly and shamefully brooding*
 - b) *He was deserting his post of duty*
 - c) *Many Christians could avoid problems if they would just ponder this question as they should*
 - d) *How many have wasted their heritage, their endowments, their health and their character and ended up in the pigsty like the prodigal son?*
 - e) *Are we doing what the Lord would have us do?*
2. Location – “What does thou here?”
 - a) *2nd part of the question deals with the location of Elijah*
 - b) *He was a long way from where he should have been*
 - c) *Often a craving for the world leads us to a place that we should not be*
 - d) *Anger with God and depression can put one in the wrong place*
 - e) *We need to be aware of our location, because it is easy to be located far from where we ought to be.*
 - f) *Some need to ask this question on Sunday when they aren't anywhere near the church building*
 - g) *Those who are in a modernistic, apostate church should ask this question*

B. Answer to the Question – vs 10

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

1. Elijah's condition is revealed
 - a) *Elijah missed the present tense of the question - God had not asked what Elijah had done, he asked what Elijah was doing*
 - b) *It is true that Elijah did have a tremendous past and that he had been very jealous for the Lord*
 - c) *Past performances, no matter how great don't make up for present service*
 - d) *Many Christians talk about what they used to do for the Lord*
 - e) *What are you doing now for Him?*
2. Israel's condition is revealed
 - a) *Israel had forsaken the Word of God – His covenants*
 - b) *Forsaken the worship of God – torn down altars*
 - c) *Forsaken he workers of God – killed the prophets*
 - d) *The 1st indictment is the cause of the 2nd + 3rd*

II. The Demonstration of God – vs 11-14

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. 13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? 14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

A. The Command of God – “go forth”

1. Elijah was brought back into God's service again
2. God gave Elijah a 4-fold demonstration
 - a) *A great strong wind blew through the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks – vs 11*
 - b) *A earthquake -- A fire – vs 12*
 - c) *Then a still, small voice was heard*
3. This demonstration would teach Elijah several lessons that would help in his service for God

B. Bigness Does Not Guarantee God's Presence

1. The wind, fire, earthquake were big, but God was not in them
2. This no doubt was a surprise to Elijah
 - a) *He had just gone through a drought and God was in it*
 - b) *He had seen fire from heaven and God was in it*
3. In our time, the dramatic and sensational is appealing
4. We tend to evaluate everything by size
 - a) *You can biggie size, upsize, supersize your food*
 - b) *If a church has thousands of members, many buildings, a huge budget, a network TV program we often think it must be of God since it is so big even though it may be shaky doctrinally*
 - c) *If an evangelist can fill up stadiums and coliseums and travel to foreign countries, he has great crowds, many believe that God must be in his work*
5. Bigness does not guarantee God's presence
6. God is not primarily in the business of turning heads, but He is in the business of moving hearts
7. Our emphasis should not be on what excites the flesh

C. Smallness Does Not Rule Out God's Presence

1. We often despise the small, common, ordinary
2. In spite of this, Elijah learned that the still-small voice moved him more than the earthquake, wind and fire
3. Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle at the sound of the still small voice
4. We don't have to "wow" the people with some special, unusual program to do God's work well
5. There was only one Mt. Carmel experience, one transfiguration
6. A newspaper is not made up entirely of headlines, most is small print
 - a) *The headlines may sell the newspaper*
 - b) *In the small print you learn the info*

III. Predictions of the Future – vs 15-18

A. The Predictions

1. God commissions Elijah again – "Go return..."
2. To encourage/guide Elijah, God gave Him 5 important predictions

B. The King of Syria – vs 15

15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:

1. Anoint Hazael to be king
2. 20 yrs later Hazael was used of God to chasten His people – 2 Ki 8

C. The King of Israel – vs 16

16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

1. Jehu was to be king of Israel
2. This meant the end of the house of Ahab – 2 Ki 9:7

D. The Prophet of God – vs 16

1. The prophet who would follow Elijah would be Elisha
2. God did not “bench” Elijah but Elisha would be the successor when Elijah left the earth
3. The first thing that Elijah did when he returned to Israel was to look up Elijah and extend God’s call to him

E. The Punishment of Evil – vs 17

17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazeel shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

1. We again see the truth that God does punish evil
2. The prophets of God often agonized at not seeing God punish evil

F. The People of Faith – vs 18

18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

1. This prediction revealed that not everybody was a follower of Baal
2. God claimed to have 7000 followers who had not bowed to Baal
3. We often wonder how these 7000 escaped the notice of Elijah
 - a) *Were they secret disciples?*
 - b) *Was their godliness vague and hidden requiring the eye of omniscience to see it?*
4. Let us make sure that our Christianity is not hidden from the view of those who need to see it.