

than God on the termination of their sojourn here (cf. John 21:20-22).

- 3) Projected to self. Elijah apparently forgot about the sheep of Israel and could only think of his own "soul." How different with the man whose name is synonymous with pain (Job 2:10).

Elijah and God

1. Answered PRAYER.

Thank God that all of our prayers are not given an affirmative reply. God allowed His servant to live on! Here He said "no" to a foolish prayer. The principle is that He knows the need of every heart (cf. Psa. 106:15).

2. Dispatched MESSENGER.

Angels are ministering spirits for the children of God (Heb. 1:14). Jacob knew their ministry (Gen. 32:1) and so did our Lord (Matt. 4:11). Elijah had experienced the ravens and the widow, but here his need rose to a new level and God sent a heavenly servant. Twice he touched Elijah and persisted until the end of his mission.

3. Provided FOOD.

Since God would not allow Elijah to die, He had to feed him in the wilderness! So fresh cake (literally round bread cake) and water were provided. Hot stones (so "coal") were miraculously there.

4. Renewed STRENGTH.

Elijah's strength was not equal to the task, but God's was (2 Cor. 12:9, 10). The infusion of help lasted the extent of the test, which is the significance of the 40 days and nights (wilderness journey of Israel).

Conclusion No one really is concerned about depression just so it leads to Horeb, the mount of God! How precious, therefore, to read that this is where Elijah finally came. It was back to the Word of God for it was there God spoke to Israel (Deut 4:10-15). Oh, beloved, whatever your deep experience, get back in His strength to the unchangeable Word! Amen.

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES ON ELIJAH

"What Doest Thou Here, Elijah?"

1 Kings 19:1-8

Introduction

1. Have you ever found yourself in the grip of despair? Have you ever been discouraged, depressed, or despondent? Have you ever wished to die? If in any of these questions you find an affirmative answer, then listen carefully! Elijah had the same experience.

2. From the mountain top of victory (18:1-46), Elijah moved right down into the valley of depression (19:1-18). One would not have believed that such a faithful man would suffer in this manner, but he did! It demonstrates his utter identity with us (James 5:17).

3. All men experience similar moods since there is a universality about our components as men. The child of God, however, has the added ingredient of a relationship with Him. This is what makes life meaningful and more than tolerable. It brings into life's stream of events the love and grace of an infinite God. He meets our needs to the uttermost! Hallelujah. Look at the Scriptural facts:

Elijah and Men

1. The DECLARATION of Ahab v. 1.

Ahab reported to his wife Jezebel what had taken place between himself and Elijah. Jezebel was notoriously wicked (21:25).

a. He reported what Elijah had done. The verb "told" is the root meaning to "declare, manifest." The facts could have been concealed, but Ahab published them. One cannot help but gather that what Ahab reported was entirely stanted against Elijah. It is doubtful if he shared with his wife the glory of God's mantle upon the prophet! One verse in the N.T. gives the key to what believers should think and report (Phil. 4:8).

b. He reported how Elijah had done. In today's world this charge against Elijah would be headline news. Elijah had punished the false prophets

of Baal with divine justice! The standard of dealings with these prophets was the Word of God (Deut. 18:20). The word "sword" adds a tinge of vengeance to the voice of Ahab. But Elijah had performed the will of God and was right in God's sight. Nonetheless, Jezebel must hear.

2. The REACTION of Jezebel. v. 2.

The connective "then" in English is the simple "waw consecutive" of the Hebrew. It merely conveys an order of events. Note:

a. Her person. Ironically, the name "Jezebel" means "chaste" and is represented by the English name "Isabelle." Everything in the Bible speaks of her antipathy to the will of God and His prophets. Jehu drove his chariot over her and dogs devoured her flesh (2 Kings 9). What really pressed her spirit against Elijah was her diabolical attachment to Baal worship. It drove her to madness toward the Lord God of Israel.

b. Her purpose. One intent filled the breast of this evil personage. It was to avenge the death of the prophets of her own false religion. She vowed to do this within 24 hours. Jezebel refused to acknowledge that Elijah had saved the nation from starvation and that the God of Israel had demonstrated His might on Carmel. She would forfeit Him to follow the Phoenician sun-god! She scoffed at the revival fires which had been kindled at Carmel.

3. The DEJECTION of Elijah. v. 3.

Here is the nub of the entire incident. One would have expected a firm resistance in the Name of the Strong One of Israel, but poor Elijah in his frail flesh crumbles and fails. Mark his steps of unbelief:

a. His vision. What one sees affects one's action. Although the word "that" is not in the original, it must be included to indicate that Elijah was looking at what Jezebel said rather than at the events of Carmel! He saw his circum-

stances and not his God (cf. Num. 13:33 with Josh. 2:24). God give us vision which includes the Almighty!

b. His action. Consistent with what he saw, Elijah takes a series of downward moves:

1) He arose.

2) He went. The reason for this physical departure is "for his life." It's as if suddenly the care of his being is taken from God and assumed by himself!

3) He came. Elijah never stopped until he arrived in the Negev. From Jezreel (18:46) to Beersheba is about 100 miles. He ran right out of the Northern tribal area through the Southern and on into the wilderness of Sinai. He was completely controlled by his circumstances.

4) He left. Elijah's insistence upon total seclusion for safety is remarkable (19:14). Whatever modern psychologists would make of Elijah and his escapade is not the issue, though that is all most see here. But the issue is that Elijah had in practice renounced his boldness in the Lord. That boldness was linked with genuine confidence in the power of God.

5) He sat down. The juniper tree is a broom or multi-branched bush which was common in Sinai. Had Elijah visited the juniper tree in Jezreel area one would not have sensed his flagrant depression, but to run 100 miles over several days and to lie down and sleep under one--that is the height of depression!

c. His petition.

1) Directed to God. "O Lord" is more than an ejaculation. Linked with "take away" there is a suggestion here that Elijah really knew his times belonged to God (Psa. 31:15; Rom. 8:28, 29).

2) Related to life. The issue with Elijah was one of death or life. He felt it was time to die. He had had "enough!" How many have reached that point and feel they have more information