

ELIJAH IN THE CAVE

Introduction

- 1) **Elijah** the prophet was triumphant over the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs. 18)
 - a) God was victorious and vindicated against the false god Baal and its prophets (vv. 39-40)
 - b) The divine punishment of drought against Israel ends (vv. 41-46)
- 2) But, the forces of evil remained a real and dangerous threat against Elijah and faithful Israel
 - a) Even the best and strongest of God's people will face difficult and fearful times
 - b) Must always be watchful, take courage, stand firm, and not grow weary or intimidated
- 3) Let us observe and learn from Elijah *in the cave* – **1 Kings 19**

I) Jezebel's Threat against Elijah (vv. 1-2)

- A) Ahab tells Jezebel about what had happened, and the execution of the Baal prophets
 - 1) Ahab should have rebuked her error and restrained her anger, but Jezebel was the greater power and influence for evil (18:19; 21:7, 25)
- B) Jezebel threatens to murder Elijah within 24 hours (not an empty threat – 18:4, 13)
 - 1) Evil deals with setbacks not by reforming itself, but by becoming more evil (2 Tim. 3:13)

II) Elijah Runs for His Life (vv. 3-8)

- A) Elijah runs for his life to Beersheba, and then a day's journey into the wilderness
 - 1) Prays for his own death – fearful, depressed, and intimidated (opposite of ch. 18)
- B) God provides food and water for him; eats again before embarking on a demanding journey
 - 1) Went forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb [Sinai], the mountain of God
 - 2) Spends a great deal of time running away from his problems – what is this accomplishing?
 - a) Problems and dangers are rarely solved by hiding from them out of fear or frustration

III) Elijah in the Cave (vv. 9-14)

- A) Spends a night in a cave – Lord inquires as to what Elijah is doing there
- B) Elijah explains that though he has been very zealous for God in the face of the wickedness around him, he is now alone (cp. 18:22) and his life is in danger
 - 1) Elijah is depressed, frustrated, and lonely – believes (wrongly) that his work is finished
 - a) Depression and fear causes us to think we are worthless; lose focus on our purpose

IV) God to Elijah: "Go!" (vv. 15-21)

- A) Elijah's moment of self-pity is over – time to get back to work!
 - 1) Anoint Hazael as king over Syria (2 Kgs. 8:7-15), anoint Jehu as king over Israel (2 Kgs. 9:1-6), and anoint Elisha as prophet in his place (1 Kgs. 19:19-21)
 - a) Time of judgment on evil has come (swords of Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha)
 - 2) No matter our personal situation, the plan and work of God continues
 - 3) Cannot rest on laurels, pull back in fear or frustration – must keep working
 - 4) Not fear evil's power – God brings judgment (1 Kgs. 21:23; 2 Kgs. 9:30-37 death of Jezebel)
- B) God had reserved a remnant of *seven thousand* in Israel who had not bowed to nor kissed the Baal – Elijah not alone!
 - 1) "Reserved" (Heb. *sha'ar*) – remain, be left over; that which remains or has survived
 - 2) God always has a remnant of faithful people who will not compromise/give in to an evil society that upholds false religions, worldliness, materialism, and sensuality (1 Pet. 5:8-9)
 - 3) God has a spiritual remnant today in Christ according to the election of grace (Rom. 11:1-5)

Conclusion

There will be times when we will feel like running away and hiding in a cave, but we must take courage and continue to carry on the Lord's work. Satan is always working to deceive and destroy – we must remain steadfast and immovable in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). Are you ready to accomplish the good works of the Lord (Eph. 2:10)?