

ELIJAH'S FLIGHT FROM JEZEBEL

BIBLE TEXT : I Kings 19:1-18.

LESSON 298 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me" (Psalm 7:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Kings 19:1-18

¹ And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

² Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

³ And when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant there.

⁴ 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 away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers.

⁵ And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise *and* eat.

⁶ And he looked, and, behold, *there was* a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

⁷ And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee.

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.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Report

Ahab told Jezebel what had happened on Mount Carmel. We do not read that Ahab said what God had done but he told her what Elijah had done. Ahab reported that Elijah had "slain all the prophets with the sword." Ahab referred to them as "all the prophets" as if they were the only prophets, and as if they were worthy of the honour due true prophets. The 450 prophets of Baal were false. They had led the people away from true worship. They should have been slain, according to the Law: "And that prophet, . . . shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, . . . to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in" (Deuteronomy 13:5).

Ahab did not harm Elijah but he told evil Jezebel who he knew would try to punish Elijah. Was he not responsible for arousing Jezebel's anger to persecute Elijah? Some children might not steal but they encourage others to do it; some children might not tell an untruth but they tell other children to do it; and so they must share in the guilt. The report that Ahab gave stirred this wicked woman against God and God's Prophet just as some reports today can cause people to fight against God and do wrong. May we realize that the report concerning the Lord, which we give others may stir them either to seek God or to doubt Him! David prayed that the words of his mouth would be acceptable in the Lord's sight (**Psalm 19:14** ¹⁴ *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*).

A Threat

Jezebel was disturbed and she vowed to get revenge. She must have known that her god, Baal, was defeated. Yet she would neither admit that she was wrong in her worship nor would she stop the persecution of God's prophets. Jezebel sent a message to Elijah, threatening to take his life within 24 hours as he had taken the lives of her false prophets. This threatening of Jezebel was a trial for Elijah. He had won a great victory by the help of the Lord on Mount Carmel. Many times after such victories are won, great trials follow.

One might think that Elijah should have exercised his faith after God had answered his prayers to send fire and to send rain. One might expect Elijah to remember that God had been with others when their lives were threatened. The enemy of Moses and the Children of Israel had said that he would destroy them (**Exodus 15:9** ⁹ *The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.*), but God went to their rescue and made a way of escape. Saul was so jealous that he tried to kill David (**1 Samuel 18:10-11** ¹⁰ *And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand.* ¹¹ *And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice.*). God helped David to avoid Saul, and David was spared.

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?

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.

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.

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:

Prayer

Perhaps Elijah remembered that God had told him to go away when Ahab had been looking for him (**1 Kings 17:3** ³ *Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.*). The threat of evil Jezebel put fear in Elijah's heart and he "went for his life." Apparently without praying, Elijah fled and hid himself.

Elijah should have prayed and asked God what to do. As we study this lesson we shall learn that it was not God's will for Elijah to flee. The Lord had work for Elijah, and that work was not in a cave on the mountain. If Elijah had prayed, God would have shown Elijah what to do. God can take away the discouragement if we trust Him. Let us learn a lesson from Elijah's life — always to pray. Sometimes God wants His people to speak. At other times He wants them to keep silent. In order to know what God's will is, let us remember to pray. When in doubt, always pray and ask God to guide. The Psalmist said, "This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Psalm 48:14).

In the Wilderness

Elijah went a long distance from Jezreel where Jezebel lived. He fled to Beer-sheba, many miles to the south, in the land of Judah. From there he went a day's journey into the wilderness. As Elijah sat under a juniper tree, he was not very happy, because he was not in the place where God wanted him. He decided that he would like to die. He had fled so that Jezebel would not take his life, and now he wanted to die.

Ministering Angels

The Lord knew where Elijah was, and that he needed help. The Lord sent an angel with food for Elijah. He ate the cake that was baked on the coals. He drank the water from the cruse. In the strength of this food Elijah continued his journey in the wilderness for forty days. Can you name two other ways by which the Lord sent food to Elijah? (**1 Kings 17:6** ⁶ *And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.* **1 Kings 17:13-16** ¹³ *And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.* ¹⁴ *For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.* ¹⁵ *And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.* ¹⁶ *And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.*)

God often sends His angels to help His people. The Lord sent an angel to help Moses and the Children of Israel when they were fleeing from the land of Egypt (**Exodus 14:19** ¹⁹ *And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:* **Exodus 23:20** ²⁰ *Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared*). The Lord sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths when Daniel was put in their den (**Daniel 6:22** ²² *My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.*). An angel delivered Peter and the other disciples from prison (**Acts 12:7** ⁷ *And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.* **Acts 5:19** ¹⁹ *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,).* Angels ministered to

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.

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

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.

Jesus when He was in the wilderness (**Mark 1:13** ¹³ **And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.**). When the beggar Lazarus died, he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom (**Luke 16:22** ²² **And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;**). We may not always see the angels, but God sends them to help His people (**Hebrews 1:14** ¹⁴ **Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?**). In the Psalms we read, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Psalm 91:11, 12).

In A Cave

Elijah fled to Horeb, or Mount Sinai, "the mount of God." There he took shelter in a cave. Elijah was all alone; he had nothing to do, and he could not have been very happy. He had been discouraged by Jezebel. Her message had frightened him to flee. His work for the Lord was hindered, and he felt sorry for himself. As Elijah hid in the cave, there was a storm. A great wind was so strong as to break rocks in pieces. Then an earthquake shook the place where Elijah hid. Next a fire broke out. Then came a still small Voice, and Elijah knew that the Lord was speaking.

Moses

The Children of Israel and Moses had a similar experience when the Lord gave them the Ten Commandments. The people went out of their camp to meet God. The whole mountain was covered with smoke "because the LORD descended upon it in fire" (Exodus 19:18). There was an earthquake so great that the whole mountain shook. Then a trumpet sounded loud and long. Moses spoke to God, and the Voice of God called Moses to go up the mountain to meet Him. When the Children of Israel saw the lightning and the smoke covering the mountain, when they heard the thunder and the trumpet, they were afraid and moved back. But "Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was" (Exodus 20:21). As God talked to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments, "the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai" (Exodus 24:16). The Children of Israel watched from a distance, but Moses was there with God.

A Still Small Voice

Although Elijah was hidden from Jezebel, he was not hidden from God. The Lord knew where Elijah was, just as He knows the place of each one of His children. On another occasion, the Lord said: "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? . . . Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (Jeremiah 23:24). David said that wherever he would go, the Lord was here: "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:9, 10). Wherever we go, the Lord is there to talk to us, to help, and to encourage us.

After the noise of the storm, the rumbling of the earthquake, and the crackling of the fire, Elijah heard the still small Voice of God. Elijah knew that the Voice was that of God. He stood reverently before the Lord, to listen.

Other people have heard the still small Voice of God, too, but some have not recognized that the Lord was speaking. When the Lord called Samuel by name, he did not know that the Lord called him until Eli told him that God was calling his name. (See Lesson 200.) The Lord spoke to Saul as he was travelling to Damascus. Saul heard the Lord say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4). The men with Saul were speechless when they heard the Voice

and saw no man, but Saul found out that God was talking to him. Florence L. Crawford, the founder of the Apostolic Faith work, heard the still small Voice of God saying, "Daughter, give me thine heart" as she was dancing in a ballroom. God has talked to others by quoting portions of Scripture to them. The Voice of God has warned others through their conscience. Perhaps the Lord has talked to you in a still small Voice. Maybe you have been so busy that you did not listen or did not even know that the Lord was talking to you.

Given Work to Do

Elijah knew that God was speaking. He stood before the Lord to hear His message just as Moses had stood before the Lord when he was called to deliver the Children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Moses had come to this same place, "to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." When he turned aside to see the burning bush and to hear the Voice of God (**Exodus 3:1-4** ¹ **Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.** ² **And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.** ³ **And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.** ⁴ **And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.**).

Elijah heard God say, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" In answer Elijah began to make excuses and try to explain why he was hiding in a cave. He said that the Children of Israel had permitted other true prophets of the Lord to be slain and Jezebel had threatened to take his life, so he fled. The Lord told Elijah that there were still 7000 in Israel who were true to God and were not worshipping Baal.

The Lord had work for Elijah to do. Elijah was given order to be busy instead of hiding. Three things God asked Elijah to do: to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, to anoint Jehu to be king over Israel, and to anoint Elisha to be the Prophet to take Elijah's place. Elijah could not do this while he was in a cave. After he had talked with the Lord, he was no longer discouraged. When Elijah was busy and in the place where he could work for God, the discouragement was gone.

The Lord has work for His people today. He is not pleased to have them hiding or even sitting back doing nothing. He is not pleased to have them discouraged. Remember, when the Children of Israel became discouraged in the way, they murmured and sinned by speaking against God and against Moses (**Numbers 21:4-7** ⁴ **And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.** ⁵ **And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.** ⁶ **And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.** ⁷ **Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.** **And Moses prayed for the people.**).

In punishment, fiery serpents were sent among them, and many of the Children of Israel died. (See Lesson 108.)

God is pleased when His people are busy for Him. He is pleased to have His people pray for guidance in all things and at all times. Jesus is our example. When Jesus was a child, He said, "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49). When Jesus was a young

man, He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). God's people have the opportunity now to work for Him, and to be true followers of the Lord. He has said, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

QUESTIONS

1. What report did Ahab give Jezebel?
2. What did Jezebel threaten to do to Elijah?
3. What cause Elijah to flee into the wilderness?
4. How did the angel of the Lord help Elijah?
5. Where did Elijah find shelter?
6. How did God speak to Elijah?
7. Who else had heard the Voice of God in like manner?
8. What did God say to Elijah?
9. Why was Elijah discouraged?
10. What work did the Lord have for Elijah to do?