

STORY

Elijah in the Wilderness - I Kings 19

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Lord, all of us are weak in so many ways. As your people, we are challenged on every hand and need Your wisdom, encouragement and strength every day. As a teacher of Your lambs, give me Your Spirit that I may help to prepare them to live in a world of sin. They need to know that in the midst of the struggles of life You will never let them down but will be with them always even unto the end of the world. Help us all to remember Your words, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mat. 5:10)

VOCABULARY

Beersheba - about 50 miles SW of Jerusalem

Broom tree - a type of juniper

Mt. Horeb / Mt. Sinai - Approx. 250 miles south of Jerusalem

OUTER AIM

Elijah is depressed by the unbelief of the people of Israel.

INNER AIM

God's kingdom will endure regardless of the unbelief of man.

BACKGROUND (*Rupprecht Bible History References Vol. I, pp. 352 - 356*)

Elijah was emotionally spent. For years he had preached, admonished, exhorted and rebuked the people of Israel in the Northern Kingdom. Yet, the constant slide toward make-believe gods of the surrounding nations continued. The teachings of this man-made religion appealed to their reason and their sinful flesh. God had made one last, clear and irrefutable testimony through the prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel. As a result for a short time, the people acknowledged the LORD God as the one true God and carried out the instruction of Elijah to execute the false prophets. This was in accord with the law of God. (Cf. Deut. 13:5; 12: 29 - 32)

This may seem extremely harsh. Yet, we must remember that the preservation of the promise of redemption in the Messiah was intricately connected with the nation of Israel. The LORD God was fighting for our life! At stake was nothing less than our life with God for time and for eternity.

As we recall from the previous lesson, Satan never quits. In the New Testament era our Lord nowhere instructs us to exterminate false prophets. The Messiah has come. His kingdom has been established in the Christ. Yet, the struggle goes on. This war against Satan and his followers is well described in Ephesians 6:10 -18.

STUDENT PRAYER

Lord God, before me stands the future. There are many unknowns, but I do know who holds the future. I pray that You will fill me with Your Spirit that I may face my tomorrow with a confident expectation. Help me to remember that You are always first in my life. Help me to confess Your name before all by word and action regardless of the consequences. I know that You will never let me down but will bless me. In Your holy name I pray. Amen



PRESENTATION

Answers to introductory questions.

Answers will vary

Real people have actually seen God, Moses, Adam and Eve, Elijah, disciples.

Yes.

Because He is God and he is all-powerful.

Let each student pick one of the choices. (If there is time ask them why they picked their answer.)

Write this outer aim on the chalkboard after the introductory remarks.

God came to Elijah to tell him that he was acting in a wrong way.

Activity One - Answer the following questions by telling the answer from the lesson. The answers are in italics.

1. Why did Elijah leave to go into the wilderness? *He was getting away from Jezebel who was going to kill him.*
2. Why was Elijah so sad? *He thought he was the only believer left in Israel.*
3. Was he the only one left? *No, there were 7,000 people that believed in God.*
4. Who came to tell Elijah to eat? *An angel.*
5. What was special about the food that Elijah ate? *God blessed it so after he ate it he didn't have to eat for 40 days.*
6. What did God have pass in front of Elijah? *A windstorm, an earthquake, a fire, and a still small voice.*
7. Which one was God in? *The still small voice.*
8. Why do think God was in the still small voice and not the powerful things? *God used it to show that His power is the Gospel. (Ask this follow up question if they can't figure this last one out.)*
9. What does God use to come to us? *He uses His Word the Gospel.*
10. What is in God's Word that is so important for us? *We learn about Jesus and how He saved us from our sins. This is the Gospel message.*

Elijah had done the Lord's work faithfully. That is all the Lord asked him to do. Yet, in his assessment his labors were in vain. Jezebel had threatened to take his life "tomorrow about this time." Besides that, the children of Israel had forsaken the LORD and had given themselves to the worship of Baal.

Elijah had fled to Beersheba and went a day's journey into the wilderness. There he prayed that the LORD would take him from this world. But the LORD had something He wished for Elijah to do first. The LORD watched over him as he slept under a broom tree. The angel of the LORD prepared food on a fire and provided water. He was being prepared for the 200-mile trip to Horeb, "the mountain of God."

There in a cave the LORD came to Elijah with a very simple question: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah explained, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your

covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.” (Vs. 10) Yet, the LORD had a very important lesson to teach Elijah, His faithful servant in a very graphic way.

First, there was the strong wind that broke rocks into pieces. The LORD was not in the wind.

Secondly, there was an earthquake violently shaking the ground. The LORD was not in the earthquake.

Thirdly, there was a consuming fire. The LORD was not in the fire. Finally, Elijah heard “a still small voice.” He covered his face in reverent awe and went out to hear the LORD ask again, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” What was Elijah to learn from this?

Ask the children to give their thoughts regarding this rather graphic display of God’s power and gentleness. How might one compare the wind, the earthquake and the fire? How do they differ from the “still small voice?” What was the purpose of asking for the second time, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

Compare the condemning nature of the Law with the gentle loving nature of the Gospel. Had Elijah become so disturbed by the unfaithfulness of the people of Israel that he no longer could function in his ministry in a fashion pleasing to God? Is that why God asked His servant to answer that simple question, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” If Elijah would answer that question after examining his heart, he would find an answer to his inner turmoil.

APPLICATION

All God’s people need to recognize that He who rescued us from the slime pit of sin and washed us clean in the blood of Jesus has one primary purpose for us, His purchased people, namely, “that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (I Peter 2:9) All of us wish to be successful in our endeavors in life. So also, we hope and pray for a positive response when we are engaged in the labors of our Lord’s kingdom. Yet, our success or failure is not determined by a hoped-for positive response. Our Lord wishes for us to realize that, as we work with Him and for Him He has given us a special duty. He has not asked much of us. He has simply invited us to share the blessings in Christ, which He has given to us. The only way we can fail is if we refuse to give His love to others. Our success is simply in the doing of it.

Our Lord never asks us to build His church. He has reserved that for Himself. “I will build my Church,” says the Lord. (Matt. 16:18) It appears Elijah lost sight of this all-important truth. As a result, he became extremely depressed and stopped sharing God’s Word with others. That was not good. The Lord also warned His disciples when they were filled with excitement because their work was producing positive results. The Savior cautioned, “Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 19:20) The fact that their names were written in heaven would be a constant, solid basis for rejoicing regardless of the reaction of their hearers to the Gospel. The kingdom labors will have many ups and downs, but our basis for rejoicing must remain constant and sure. Praise the Lord!

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Luke 10:20 - "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

I Peter 2:9 - "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Matthew 5:10 - "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Ephesians 6:10-11 - "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

HYMN CHOICES

All Praise To God, Who Reigns Above - TLH #19

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God - TLH #262

Soldiers Of The Cross, Arise - TLH #501

How Firm A Foundation, Ye Saints Of The Lord - TLH #427