

1 KINGS 19:4 -- ELIJAH ESCAPES FROM JEZEBEL- A LAPSE OF FAITH – DOES MY MINISTRY, MY LIFE REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

1Ki 19:4 “But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

The Biblical Setting:

- Chapter 18 begins with Elijah presenting himself to Ahab, to which God had promised that rain would come and the drought would be ended.
- Elijah exposed the folly and sin of Baal worship and went about bringing the nation back to the true worship of Jehovah. Elijah was not out only to reform the people; he wanted to revive them too.
- First, he repaired the altar which the people had permitted to fall down. -- the first step toward blessing — repairing the personal altar of devotion, the family altar, the altar of sacrifice, and communion with God.
- By using twelve stones, Elijah reminded the people of their unity, because for many years the nation had been divided.
- To make it impossible for anyone to ignite the fire, Elijah had four barrels of water emptied on the wood and sacrifice three times, which would mean twelve barrels of water.
- The prophet **prayed a simple prayer of faith**, and the fire of God consumed the wood, the sacrifice, the water, and the altar.
- After the great victory of God consuming the wood, sacrifice and the altar, Elijah slew the 450 prophets of Baal.
- He then prayer for rain seven times and much rain came.
- It seems Elijah might have thought that after such a great demonstration of the power of Almighty God that the nation would turn from Baal and that even Ahab would be transformed.
- But Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done. He didn't mention anything about it being the power of God or that the reason for the drought and the problems of Israel were all due to its idolatry in worshipping Baal and other false gods.
- When the messenger reached Elijah and gave him Jezebel's message that tomorrow about this time, Elijah's life would be taken by Jezebel, Elijah fled.

ELIJAH CRIES OUT - 1Ki 19:4 “But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came

- Elijah did not feel himself safe until he was beyond the territory of Judah, for Ahab might demand him of Jehoshaphat 1Ki 18:10, with whom he was on terms of close alliance 1Ki 22:4. He, therefore, proceeds southward into the desert, simply to be out of the reach of his enemies.

and sat down under a broom tree.

- **A broom tree** - The tree here mentioned is not the juniper but a species of broom, called “rethem” by the Arabs, which abounds in the Sinaitic peninsula. It grows to such a size as to afford shade and protection, both in heat and storm, to travelers.

And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life,

- Like Moses and Jonah. The prophet's depression here reached its lowest point. He was still suffering from the reaction of overstrained feeling; he was weary with nights and days of travel; he was faint with the sun's heat; he was exhausted for want of food; he was for the first time alone - alone in the awful solitude and silence of the great white desert. Such solitude might brace the soul in certain moods; but in others it must utterly overwhelm and crush. Thus the prophet at length gave way completely - made his prayer that he might die - and, exhausted sank, to sleep.

for I am no better than my fathers!"

- How exhausted Elijah must have been – fatigue makes cowards out of us all! The tremendous outpour of emotions and the draining of strength during the experiences on Mt. Carmel. Then he slew 450 prophets of Baal and maybe another 200 helpers of the prophets. He then prayed seven times for rain. If that weren't

enough He ran 17 miles from Mt. Carmel to Jezreel alongside Ahab's chariot and fled all the way to Beersheba and then on to Mt. Horeb. It's a total of about 200 miles from Mt. Carmel to Mt. Horeb (Sinai).

- "I am a mere weak man, no better nor stronger than they who have gone before me, no more able to revolutionize the world than they." We see Elijah totally given over to fear. Thinking that although he had been zealous for God and had tried so hard to see the nation turn away from Baal and turn back to the Lord. His efforts were a total failure and that he might as well just die.
- We later see that God tells him to get up and come out of the cave in which he was hiding. God demonstrated to him that He was not in the wind, the earthquake or in the fire, but in the still, small voice. God gave Elijah more work to do and told him that he was not the only faithful one left, but that there were 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal.
- James tells us that Elijah was a man like us. Although he was used mightily, he was weak and fragile as each of us are.

SUMMARY:

- Note how our strength, in all situations, must come from the Lord.
- How quickly that we can go from the top of the mountain all the way down into the valley of the fear of man!
- Elijah, fearing for his life, because of what the messenger had said, ran all the way down into Judah. Then still fearing that that wasn't far enough went all the way to Mt. Horeb. Just think for running/walking 200 miles.
- Totally exhausted and believing his ministry was a total failure, he cries out, take my life, I'm the only prophet left and they're about to kill me!
- But God! After demonstrating to Elijah that He wasn't in the powerful things of the wind, the earthquake or the fire, but in the still small voice, told Elijah, "Go Out" of the cave. Go back up north. I've got more work for you to do!!
- What a lesson this is for us! Fear God! Not man! Rely on His strength!

NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD

1. *There is a place of quiet rest, Near to the heart of God;
A place where sin cannot molest, Near to the heart of God.*
 - *Refrain:*
*O Jesus, blest Redeemer, Sent from the heart of God;
Hold us, who wait before Thee, Near to the heart of God.*
2. *There is a place of comfort sweet, Near to the heart of God;
A place where we our Savior meet, Near to the heart of God. (Refrain)*
3. *There is a place of full release, Near to the heart of God;
A place where all is joy and peace, Near to the heart of God.*