

ELIJAH'S MISCALCULATION

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Kings 19:13-18**. From Roy H. Enoch (04-23-1995).
- B. Thesis: To give encouragement to God's people.
- C. Elijah is one of the most unique, colorful and significant characters in Bible history.
 - 1. Much of the end of 1Kings and the beginning of 2Kings is devoted to describing his work.
 - 2. The OT closes with a prediction of his coming (Mal. 4:5-6).
Jesus said that "Elijah" was John the Baptist (Mt. 11:14).
 - 3. Elijah appeared with Moses as Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James and John on the mountain (Mt. 17:1-13).
 - 4. He did not die a natural death, but was taken into the sky in a whirlwind (2Kgs. 2:11).
(Not into the "heaven" that was God's throne, Jn. 3:13.)
- D. Some of God's greatest servants have had their moments of weakness.
 - 1. Noah and Lot got drunk.
 - 2. David committed adultery.
 - 3. Solomon, with all of his wisdom, let his wives lead his heart away from God into idolatry.
 - 4. Elijah became afraid of Jezebel, fled and hid in deep depression.
- E. Three lessons from Elijah's fear and flight:
 - 1. Elijah lived in a difficult time.
 - 2. Elijah's calculation: He thought that he was the only one...
 - 3. We have the same kind of problems today.

I. ELIJAH LIVED IN A DIFFICULT TIME.

- A. He lived in a dangerous age politically.
 - 1. An evil and selfish king ruled.
 - a. His name was Ahab.
 - b. He had a wife named Jezebel who was even more evil.
 - c. Her name came to be synonymous w/ evil. Rev. 2:20
 - 2. Ahab was more wicked than all kings of Israel who had preceded him (1Kgs 16:33).
 - 3. Politics and religion have always been closely associated.
 - a. Tom Holland quotes a Princeton University Professor who wrote in a book: ADAM, EVE, AND THE SERPENT:
"...I'm not trying to reduce religion to politics. All I mean to say is that they go together."
 - b. People's religious values are expressed in their laws.
- B. Elijah's time was not only dangerous politically, but religiously.
 - 1. Jezebel had tried to kill all of God's prophets.
 - 2. Obadiah had hidden 100 prophets in two caves and fed them.
 - 3. God had Elijah confront the false prophets at Mt. Carmel.
 - a. The account (1Kgs 18).
 - b. Elijah told Ahab to assemble Israel (1Kgs 18:19).
 - c. When the God of Israel answered Elijah's prayer w/fire, Elijah commanded that they not let the prophets of Baal escape, and killed them all (1Kgs. 18:38-40).
 - d. When Jezebel heard it, she vowed to do the same to Elijah (1Kgs. 19:2).

II. ELIJAH'S CALCULATION: HE THOUGHT HE WAS THE ONLY ONE...

- A. When Elijah received Jezebel's message, "he ran for his life." v. 3
 - 1. He and his servant went to Beersheba.
 - a. That was about 100 miles from Jezreel where Jezebel was.
 - b. He left his servant there and went a day's journey into the wilderness.

- c. An angel fed him and he traveled for forty days on that food, all the way to Horeb or Sinai: another 200 miles.
 - 2. At Sinai he went into a cave (1Kgs. 19:9).
 - 3. Most commentators suggest that he was afraid and despondent; Keil-Delitzsch suggest that he was going there to see what further work God had for him.
 - 4. We do know that he is ALONE in the cave.
 - a. One of the worse things that can happen to a people-oriented person is to be alone.
 - b. Loneliness can affect one's analytical ability.
- B. Elijah gives the Lord his assessment of his situation (1Kgs. 19:14).
 - 1. He thought, "I am the only one left who wants to do right."
 - 2. He had forgotten Obadiah and the 100 prophets he had saved (1Kgs. 18:3-4).
 - 3. God gives a classic cure for depression.
 - a. "Go..." Get busy with specific tasks (1Kgs. 19:15-17).
 - b. "You are not alone" (1Kgs. 19:18).
 - 4. Elijah's calculation that he was the only one faithful to God is wrong by 6,999. (We assume that Elijah was one of the 7,000.)

III. WE HAVE THE SAME KIND OF PROBLEMS TODAY.

- A. We are sometimes tempted today to have "Elijah's pessimism."
 - 1. Nationally we have a great focus on murder, crime, immorality, divorce, greed, drug addiction, etc.
 - 2. In the church there are many who focus on problems of not getting along with brethren, apathy, indifference, compromise w/the world and religious error.
 - 3. Modern mass media seems to focus on the sordid and glorify all kinds of sins and ridicule those who are religious.
 - 4. It is popular to point to undisciplined teen-agers and conclude that all young people are hopeless.
- B. But we need to look at the other side.
 - 1. Our young people do not fit that image and give us hope.
 - 2. The church today does have the "7,000" who are faithful. They are represented by Jesus as the "ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Lk. 15:7).
 - 3. When there is a crisis, both sides are demonstrated.
 - a. Some are looting and rioting.
 - b. Others are helping and sharing with those in need.
 - 4. In the field of education, there is often discouragement with the watering down of academic standards and lack of moral standards being taught.
 - a. Yet there are many godly teachers who care, and students with high moral standards who still show good examples.
 - b. There is still a significant resistance to the immoral trends--much more than the media and entertainment industry realizes.
 - 5. There is much to give hope in the youth of the nation as well as in the church.
 - a. Not all young people have been swayed by the materialism of parents who put work and things before the children.
 - b. Not all young people have been taken in by the lust, greed and rebellion that is glorified in movies and TV.
 - c. Many young people do not buy the subjectivism and entertainment in worship emphasized by denominationalism.
 - d. Many young people do have faith in the Bible as God's word.
 - 6. There is hope in the church.

- a. We spoke recently about the "graying America" and increase in the percentage of our population who are seniors.
- b. This is a stabilizing influence in the church as well as in society, as they usually have firmer moral convictions.

CONCLUSION.

- A. It is easy to see why Elijah felt that he was alone in his dedication to the Lord and to His worship.
- B. We may be tempted today to have the same pessimism and feel alone.
- C. The Lord's instructions of various jobs that Elijah needed to attend to gives us an example of how to handle the same depression today.
- D. Let us look for good examples and faithful lives to give us hope and strength.
- E. The Lord's people are most often called to exhort and to encourage each other.