



Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

7350 Granbury Rd.

Fort Worth, TX 76123

ELIJAH, THE MAN AND HIS MINISTRY

Lesson #1

Overall lesson #51

(Scripture Portions: 1 Kings 16: 28-34; 17:1; James 5: 17-18)

Elijah was a mighty man of God- in some respects the greatest of all the prophets since Moses and until the advent of John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11). Although he lived 3000 years ago and his period of ministry was comparatively short, he is by no means a forgotten character ☞- look up Malachi 4:5; Matthew 11:14; 27:47; Luke 1:17; John 1:21. As we study his life and ministry the Holy Spirit will teach us valuable lessons which will enable us to live for and serve the Lord more effectively.

Elijah's sudden appearance upon the page of scripture centers upon the tremendous announcement he made to Ahab ☞- read 1 Kings 17:1, and compare James 5:17-18. However, before we look more

closely at this remarkable man, let us suggest several classes of people to whom this series of studies will make a special appeal.

First, those who feel their sphere of service is hard. If this is you, the story of Elijah should bring great encouragement.

Second, those who feel they are lone workers. How easily such are tempted to say, as Elijah said, "I am the only one left!" There is encouragement here for them.

Third, those whose patience is sorely tried and who see few results. Elijah knew all about this! The story of his patience, endurance and ultimate achievement will encourage us to press on.

Fourth, those who feel there is little they can do to influence an apostate age. There was little that Elijah could do, but how much it was - James 5:17-18! We, likewise, have been given this weapon of believing prayer.

Fifth, those who have failed (and who has not?). The story of Elijah contains one sad incident (1 Kings 19), but what help we find in it!

1. ELIJAH WAS A MAN JUST LIKE OURSELVES

We tend to regard men like Elijah, Moses, Daniel and the other O.T. 'worthies' as men who walked on heights inaccessible to us. But who was Elijah? James 5:17 tells us: a man with a nature just like yours and mine. A man, not an angel; a man who at one point failed badly. A great man, yes, but essentially no different from ourselves.

2. WE ARE TOLD NOTHING ABOUT ELIJAH'S EARLY LIFE AND UPBRINGING

He is described as Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead², and as his name means God is my strength, this may indicate that he had godly parents. We can be sure; however, that God had been preparing him all through his early years. And remember, every experience through which the Lord leads us is a preparation for the further work He has in store for us. Waiting time is never wasted time.

3. ELIJAH LIVED IN A DAY OF SPIRITUAL DECLENSION AND APOSTASY

A succession of seven wicked kings had reigned over Israel: (1) Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:28-33); (2) Nadab (15:25-26); (3) Baasha (15:27-28); (4) Elah, a drunkard and a murderer (16:8-9); (5) Zimri, guilty of treason (16:20); (6) Omri (16:25-26); and (7) Ahab (16:28-33), with whom must be linked his notoriously wicked wife Jezebel. Worship of the true God had all but ceased; Baal-worship had become the national religion. Only 7000 Israelites remained true in heart to the Lord, and these were fearful and had hidden their testimony (1 Kings 19:18). A floodtide of idolatry, superstition and evil had overwhelmed the nation; never had God's favored nation sunk so low spiritually and morally.

4. ELIJAH WAS COMMISSIONED BY GOD TO PERFORM SOME VERY DIFFICULT TASKS

These included: (1) announcing the drought to Ahab (17:1); (2) challenging Ahab and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (18:1-41); (3) declaring God's righteous judgment upon Ahab and Jezebel in the matter of Naboth's vineyard (21:1-29). How we need people of Elijah's courage today!

5. ELIJAH'S LIFE WAS MARKED BY COMPLETE SEPARATION FROM THE EVIL AROUND HIM

A good motto over his life would be Ephesians 5:11 (and with it 2 Corinthians 6:14-16). How could Elijah have any fellowship with the apostate leaders of Israel? His separation from the evil around him was uncompromising ☞- look up Hebrews 13:13.

6. ELIJAH'S MINISTRY WAS CHARACTERISED BY THE SUPERNATURAL

Consider God's mighty acts in and through him: (1) fed by ravens at the brook (17:1-6); (2) the widow's meal and oil replenished (17:8-16); (3) her son raised (17:17-23); (4) fire from heaven (18:36-38); (5) fed by an angel (19:5-7); (6) more fire from heaven (2 Kings 1:9-12); (7) dividing the waters of Jordan (2 Kings 2:8); (8) raptured into the presence of God by a whirlwind (2:11).

7. ELIJAH LIVED CONSCIOUSLY IN GOD'S PRESENCE AND RELIED UPON HIS STRENGTH

See 1 Kings 17:1: his God was the living God; the covenant God (the Lord God of Israel); the God "whom I serve" (as His servant- compare 1 Kings 10:8 and Luke 1:19). Now look up Isaiah 40:28-31 and 2 Timothy 4:17.

What was Elijah's secret? Was it not that by communion and prayer he really did know the Lord? May we emulate this great man!

Closing Thought: Daniel 11:32.

Application/Activity

If you created a prayer list from last week's activities, spend the week starting each day praying through that list however you deem appropriate. Pray for everyone on your list each day or simply pick one or two and say an extended prayer for each of them on any given day. If you weren't present last week, create a prayer list for the month of June. Then, as stated above, spend the week praying through that list. Start each day in prayer. Feel free to end each day in prayer and throw in any amount of prayers throughout your day. You can never pray enough!!!