

Elijah – Prophet of Confrontation #8
Elijah and the Death Warrant
1Ki 19:1-8

Introduction:

1. The triumph on Mt. Carmel was a great victory for Jehovah and Elijah but the devil does not give up quickly or easily
2. Soon after arriving in Jezreel, Elijah receives word that a decree has been issued and he will be dead in a day
3. We may win occasional battles, but the war goes on and we must not lay down our armor till the war is over
4. Elijah was a heroic prophet but just remember that he was a man with like passions as us - [James 5:16](#)
5. Here we see that he suffered discouragement, despondency and depression
6. These kinds of feelings were not uncommon in successful men of God
 - a. Moses was once so discouraged that he asked God to take his life
 - b. Jonah - after the great revival in Nineveh - did the very same thing
 - c. Paul despaired of life at a certain point in his ministry - 2Cor 1:8
 - d. So it is not surprising that Elijah would hit rock bottom here
7. I'm glad that this chapter is in God's Word
 - a. When God paints the portraits of his men and women, he paints themwarts and all
 - b. He doesn't ignore their weaknesses or hide their frailties

I. The Persecution of Elijah – vs 1-2

A. Instigator of the Persecution – vs 1

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

1. Ahab gave Jezebel the news of the day, but he slanted it so that he emphasized the killing of the prophets of Baal
2. He probably didn't mention the fire from heaven from God
3. He reported the info to her to stir up her evil nature to go after Elijah
4. Ahab was too spineless to do anything, but he knew if he could get Jezebel stirred up nothing would stop her
5. We see Ahab's hardness here
6. We see the hatred of Ahab here - He still hated God's man

B. Inflictor of the Persecution – vs 2

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.

1. Some think this was just a bluff to scare Elijah
 - a) *Why did she sent a messenger not an executioner?*
 - b) *It would be too dangerous to kill Elijah since the new followers of Jehovah would overthrow the kingdom*
 - c) *She only wants to scare him away so he won't oppose Baal worship anymore*
2. There is no indication in Scripture that Jezebel was bluffing
 - a) *Bluffing was not characteristic of Jezebel - a butcher not a bluffer*
 - b) *Jezebel had no reason to think that Elijah would run at her threat*
 - c) *Elijah was known for boldness – he would not be easily bluffed*
 - d) *She blundered in sending a messenger and not an executioner*

C. Incentive of the Persecution – vs 2

1. Why should Elijah be so vehemently attacked?
 - a) *Was he a curse to the nation?*
 - b) *Was he a peril to the nation?*
2. Elijah should have been honored instead of harassed
3. Evil is ever persecutes good and the greater the good the greater the attack by evil
4. This explains why Christianity is often attacked even though the lifestyle is so noble and beneficial

II. The Pessimism of Elijah – vs 3-4

- When Elijah heard that Jezebel was out to kill him he became depressed and despondent
- He always showed great faith and has not been discouraged and so we are surprised to see him depressed

A. Cause of the Pessimism – vs 3

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.

1. Problem of Physical Exhaustion
 - a) *When he arrived at Jezreel, Elijah had to be exhausted*
 - b) *He had defeated the prophets of Baal*
 - c) *He had little food or water that day*
 - d) *He ran 20 miles to beat Ahab to Jerusalem*
 - e) *He had been public enemy #1 for three years*
 - f) *Physical exhaustion takes it's toll on mental outlook*

2. Problem of Extended Emotions
 - a) *Our emotional reservoir, once drained does not fill up quickly*
 - b) *For every emotional high, there is a let down*
 - c) *Elijah's emotions are expended and depression came*
3. Problem of Fleshly Pride – vs 4
 - a) *Under the juniper tree, Elijah commented that he was no better than his fathers*
 - b) *This reveals that he had thought he was better than they*
 - c) *The danger of pride is present after a great performance like that of Elijah*
 - d) *Pride often makes us think that we are what we aren't and when we are brought down, we can go pretty low*
4. Problem of Misdirected Vision – vs 3
 - a) *Elijah was looking in the wrong direction and at the wrong thing*
 - b) *Peter walked on the water and took his eyes off the Lord*
 - c) *We must keep focused on the Lord*
5. Elijah separated himself from a strengthening relationship
 - a) *He left his servant and went alone into the wilderness*
 - b) *Discouraged people are often lonely people and lonely people are often discouraged people*
 - c) *Elijah needed a friend or companion who could have pumped some encouragement, strength or encouragement into him*
 - d) *That courage transfusion would have kept him strong*
6. Elijah was caught in the backwash of a great victory
 - a) *Vulnerable moments often come after great victories*
 - b) *Especially if that victory was a great mountain top experience with God*
7. Elijah got lost in self-pity
 - a) *Self-pity is a pathetic emotion – it creates a “victim mentality”*
 - b) *It will lie to you - it will exaggerate*

B. Conduct of the Pessimism – vs 3-4

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.

1. His Location
 - a) *He left Jezreel and went to Beersheba*
 - b) *That is 100 miles and then a day into the wilderness*
 - c) *We see that Elijah greatly overreacted to the threat*
 - d) *Some criticize Elijah for leaving Jezreel with no message from God*
 - (1) *We don't need a message from God in everything we do*
 - (2) *We have God's word to guide our lives*
 - (3) *If a drunk swerves over into your lane you don't have to pray about whether to get out of his way*

2. His Evaluation
 - a) *Elijah already commented that he was not better than his fathers*
 - b) *When we are depressed we tend to evaluate things improperly*
 - c) *His accomplishments for God were many and mighty yet he figured he had failed*
3. His Supplication
 - a) *He requested that he might die – gave up – threw in the towel*
 - b) *Depression affects the way we pray*
 - c) *He flees 100 miles to avoid death and then prays for death – it doesn't make sense*

C. Consequences of the Pessimism – vs 4

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.

1. It slowed down movement back to Jehovah
 - a) *Elijah was the leader of the movement back to Jehovah and when the leader is gone the movement suffers*
 - b) *The return to Jehovah did not stop, but the momentum did*
2. It discouraged the converts of Jehovah
 - a) *Imagine the thoughts of those who killed the prophets of Baal and had turned to Jehovah*
 - b) *Think of that poor servant – he had served Elijah well but now must fend for himself in the wilderness*
3. It delighted the opposition to Jehovah – Jezebel was not upset
 - a) *With him gone she could operate freely*
 - b) *When we sit down under the juniper tree we help the enemy*

III. The Preservation of Elijah – vs 5-8

A. The Miracle of God – vs 5

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.

1. The Supplying of the Food
 - a) *For the 3rd time in 3.5 yrs Elijah was fed by a miracle*
 - b) *Food and water supplied here by an angel*
 - c) *The caterers are improving – ravens, widow, angel*
2. The Strengthening by the Food
 - a) *Not only was the supplying of the food a miracle, but the strengthening of the food was too*
 - b) *Elijah was able to go 40 days in the strength of that food*

B. The Messenger of God – vs 7

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.

1. The Identity of the Messenger
 - a) *This angel is called the angel of the Lord*
 - b) *This was a theophany – appearance of God on earth*
 - c) *Those who serve the Master will not be forsaken by Him in hard times*
2. The Instructions of the Messenger
 - a) *“Arise and eat”- the food was provided by a miracle but we still have to eat it*
 - b) *“The journey is too great for thee” – it would be a 40 day trip so Elijah needed divine strength which could only come from divine provisions*

C. The Mercy of God

1. The Refusing
 - a) *God's mercy is seen in that He refused to grant the foolish request of Elijah to die*
 - b) *Some of our requests are like Elijah's and they are prayed out of God's will*
 - c) *In mercy, he refuses to answer our prayer*
2. The Touching
 - a) *Twice we are told that the angel touched Elijah – v 5,7*
 - b) *God could have had the angel smack Elijah up side the head*
3. The Visiting
 - a) *The angel not only visited Elijah once, but returned a 2nd time*
 - b) *That is mercy, once ought to be enough*
 - c) *Let us respond more quickly to His visits.*