

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Sep. 17

MONDAY

For a second time, an angel strengthen Elijah, and he arose and ate! Fortified by God's provision, he traveled 40 days and nights thru the Sinai desert towards the holy mount (where God gave the Ten Commandments). Once there, he speaks of 1) how active he has been for the Lord; 2) how evil the people have proven to be; and 3) how alone and forsaken he is now.

READ: I Kings 19:7-10

As Elijah evaluates his present predicament, things look harsh: the same people who have thrown down the altars of the lord and slain His prophets now seek to kill him. (Elijah's thinking primarily of Jezebel and her gang, of course) The thinking process is correct - because of the past, this will be the future - but he's focused on the wrong person. He should be saying that about God! Because God has protected me and provided for me in the past, He will surely do that for me in the days to come. He has proven Himself to be the faithful God! Look past the circumstances, Elijah, and lift up your eyes unto the hills from whence cometh your help! Lift up your eyes to God.

TUESDAY

God passed by Elijah and spoke. And there is a great wind, an earthquake, and a fire, but God did not speak in those ways. Rather, He came to Elijah with just a whisper: a still, small voice. Elijah heard God's whisper and he went out of the cave where he had been hiding to hear God more clearly.

READ: I Kings 19:11-13

"A still, small voice" is what the King James says. Not the thundering and glorious blast one might expect to hear from God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth. The point is that God's ways are not our ways. Elijah needed to learn that and so do we. God is working out His master plan in His own way. If that plan includes the threatening opposition of a queen (or perhaps, the disappointment of children who will not follow the Lord), well, so be it. I will let God be God. I'll let Him whisper if He so chooses. And I'll listen carefully!

WEDNESDAY

Elijah repeats his tale of woe. God responds by giving him instructions: he is to go to Assyria and proclaim Hazael king; and he is to go to Israel and proclaim Jehu king, and to anoint Elisha to be the prophet

to take his place. God explains those three choices, and then informs Elijah that his claim that he is all alone is following God is un-true: there are 7000 others who do so.

READ: I Kings 19:14-18

God's explanation to Elijah of why He's sending him to Assyria and then to Israel, to anoint two kings and a prophet is astounding! Not the explanation itself as much as the fact that He explains at all! God does not need to explain Himself to man. He told Job that: "I don't owe you an explanation, Job. Does the Creator need to explain to his creation what or how or why?" But here, in this case, God does explain. What a gracious God we have! *His love*

has no limits, His grace as no measure, His power has no boundaries known unto men! But out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth and giveth and giveth again! That's how the hymn writer put it, and that's what Elijah experienced. And that's my story and yours today!

THURSDAY

Encouraged by the news that 7000 others have also remained faithful to God, Elijah rejoins society where he meets Elisha. As Elijah walks past him, he throws his cloak over his shoulder, a gesture indicating that he is inviting him to be his disciple. Elisha accepts the invitation, and after burning his bridges behind him (or, in this case, his oxen), he follows Elijah.

READ: I Kings 19:19-21

The last words we read here about Elisha are enlightening: *he ministered unto Elijah*. That summarizes the relationship of the prophet and the prophet-in-training. And it pictures for us a really crucial ministry that we must all have towards one another. As we learned in the story of Cain and Abel, we are in fact, our brother's keeper, and we are to find ways to minister to each other.

FRIDAY

Meanwhile, the king of Syria surrounds the city of Samaria where King Ahab is ruling. He demands that the wealth of the city be handed over to him, and Ahab agrees to that. Later on, the king of Syria changes his tune, saying that his soldiers will go house-to-house and plunder as much as they want. He says he'll send his men to do that the very next day.

READ: I Kings 20:1-6

The days are evil. The king of Syria is planning a wholesale rape of the land and the kingdom, starting with the king's own household. There seemed to be no way out of that trouble. That truly was the case because Ahab had rejected God. But my story and yours is different: the days are evil, that's true enough, but God is with us, and He will not desert us in the face of such trouble. We can move ahead with that blessed certainty, and with the hope of deliverance.

SATURDAY

When Ahab informs the citizens of the demands of the king of Syria, they exhort him to refuse. So he told the messengers that he would not meet the demands. The king of Syria, Ben-hadad, threatens to totally destroy him.

READ: I Kings 20:7-9

Ahab tells the Syrian king that he will surrender the wealth of the government and his own personal wealth, but he will not submit to the Syrian's demand that they be permitted to help themselves to anything in the kingdom. Even though Ahab was an evil king, this choice was a good one. It seems that he is trying to spare his people the brunt of Syria's attack. Here's the point: even an evil leader (Ahab) can be useful to God. Ahab was not thinking, "What is God's will?" but he did it regardless, in spite of himself. God is going to have His way in this world! You can count on that.

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