

LESSON 5. Times Of Trouble

1 Kings 19

MEMORY VERSE: “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

Have you ever been discouraged? Not the kind of discouragement when your team gets beat by a rival team; or when you get a “B” on a test instead of an expected “A.” Nor the kind of disappointment you have when Mom says you can’t go skating because you didn’t clean your room as you had promised.

I mean really “down in the mouth” because of some major event in your life! Perhaps it was because a close friend was killed in a car accident, or severely injured by a drunk driver. Maybe it was the loss of your home and all your possessions in a tornado. Maybe you had to move to a new city because your dad was promoted, and the few young people you had met were sullen and unfriendly. It could have been when you were diagnosed with a major health problem that was going to require treatment for a long period of time. Or, perhaps it was just some other event that changed your life suddenly or dramatically.

Discouraging wasn’t it. If we live very long on earth, most will find there will be several of these very difficult times in our lives. Things don’t always turn out like we want them, or even as we expect them to end. Sickness, accidents, unexpected losses of important possessions, even deaths are a part of life. We must learn to deal with discouraging events and disappointments. Some never do, and they go through life bitter and angry over everything they encounter.

GOD UNDERSTANDS

God understands disappointments. The people He sent His Son to save rejected Him, and nailed Him to a cross! Remember? Jesus understands disappointments too. He lived on earth as a child, teen and young man, and He knows every trial and temptation that we have (Hebrews 4:15). Speaking for the Father, Jesus said for us not to be too concerned about the things of this life. He tells us to be concerned about doing God’s will, and God will see that we have a beautiful and eternal home in heaven (Matthew 6:25-34; 7:21).

No matter how many friends desert us, how hard our jobs may be, how poor we are, nor what people may do to harm us, Jesus has promised never to forsake us - if we obey Him (Hebrews 13:5, 6). The psalmist wrote, “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?” (Psalm 118:6). One thing is certain in this life: we can always trust God to do what He has said!

But, if we want God to be on our side, then we must strive to be on His side. That means we must keep His commandments (Luke 6:46). How do we know what Jesus has commanded? God does not speak to us in person as He did to Elijah. Yet, everything we need to know is in the Bible. When we read the Bible, God speaks to us through the words which were inspired by His Holy Spirit. We don’t get faith by God sending it down on us, as He did fire on Elijah’s sacrifice. Read Romans 10:17 to see how we do get faith!

ELIJAH WAS DISCOURAGED

God sent Elijah from Beersheba to the mount of God, or Horeb. There Elijah began living in a cave. Elijah was discouraged. God spoke to him in the cave and asked, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9). God knew why Elijah was there, but He wanted Elijah to admit it. Elijah said the children of Israel had forsaken God's covenant, torn down His altars and killed His prophets. He had been jealous for God, Elijah said, but the Israelites had refused to repent. Elijah told God, "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10). Elijah had a bad case of self pity!



Elijah stood on the mount as God sent first a strong wind, then an earthquake and a fire before him.

God told Elijah to go stand on the mountain. God sent a strong wind before him that was so powerful, it broke rocks. Then God sent an earthquake before Elijah. Then He sent a fire. God sent these forces of nature for Elijah to see, but God was not in the wind, earthquake or the fire. Nor did He speak to Elijah from these. Instead, He spoke to Elijah in a still small voice. God was telling Elijah that He doesn't always use the methods that man expects to accomplish His purposes. He wanted Elijah to know He was still in control of events on the earth, and at times used ways man did not anticipate - such as a still small voice. When he heard the voice, Elijah wrapped his mantle about his face and went back to the cave entrance. (God doesn't speak to man today in a still small voice, but through His powerful Word in the Bible!)

Again God asked Elijah what he was doing there. Elijah repeated his reasons for being discouraged, telling God again that he was the only one left to serve the Lord. Elijah was wrong. God told him that there were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed to Baal, nor kissed the idol. Though Elijah thought he was all alone in serving the one true God, he learned there were seven thousand others just like him! How easy it becomes to get discouraged when one doesn't know all the facts!

GOD HAD WORK FOR ELIJAH

God told Elijah there were some things He wanted him to do. First he was to go to Damascus and anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. Then he was to anoint Jehu, the son of Nimshi, as the king over Israel. Finally, God told Elijah to anoint Elisha, the son of Shaphat, as his successor.

God sent Elijah through the wilderness to Damascus in Syria. On his way, Elijah met Elisha plowing in a field following a yoke of oxen. Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha, signifying that he was to take Elijah's place as God's prophet. Elisha was ready to follow Elijah, but asked if he could kiss his mother and father goodbye. Elijah waited as Elisha prepared a feast for the people. Elisha then left his home and farm to go with Elijah and become God's prophet. What a great tribute to Elisha that he would leave behind his farm and his family to serve the Lord!

God was not finished with Elijah. There were still more things he had to do before he left the earth - in a most unusual way. We will discuss that in Lesson 9.

WHERE?

- _____ 1. Where did God send Elijah that took him forty days and nights to get there?
- _____ 2. Where did Elijah lodge after he reached his destination in No. 1 above?
- _____ 3. Where did God tell Elijah to stand to see the strong wind, earthquake and fire?
- _____ 4. Where was Elijah told to go to anoint Hazael to be king of Syria?
- _____ 5. In what nation did God say there were 7000 that had not bowed to Baal?
- _____ 6. Where did Elijah cast his mantle?
- _____ 7. Where did Elisha ask to go before he followed Elijah?

TRUE OR FALSE

- _____ 1. Elijah became discouraged that the people in Israel had not turned back to God.
- _____ 2. God spoke to Elijah through an earthquake, wind and fire.
- _____ 3. Elijah complained that he was the only one left who served God.
- _____ 4. Elijah dwelt in a cave while on mount Horeb.
- _____ 5. Elijah was told to anoint Elisha as a prophet to take his place.
- _____ 6. Elisha must have been a farmer as he was plowing a field with a yoke of oxen.
- _____ 7. Elisha prepared a feast for the people before he left.
- _____ 8. Elijah was to anoint Jehu as the king of Judah.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

1. "Take no _____ for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your _____, what ye shall put on" (Matthew 6:25).
2. "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my _____, and I will not _____ what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6).
3. "So then _____ cometh by _____ and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).
4. "[F]or the children of Israel have _____ thy covenant, _____ down thine altars, and slain thy _____ with the sword" (1 Kings 19:10).
5. "And behold, there came a _____ unto him, and said, What _____ thou here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:13).

POINTS TO PONDER

1. Why did Elijah become discouraged?
2. Did Elijah know all the facts about who was serving God?
3. Do we sometimes become discouraged over things that are not very important?
4. By what method does God speak to us today?