

Theme: In a fallen world we will ever be plagued with storms, trials, and sorrows. With the power and promise of the Word of God our hearts can be *still* in the midst of it all.

Background: From the heights of Mt. Carmel to the flight into the wilderness.

Introduction: Why do we judge Elijah so harshly for this departure?

I. Into the Text

A. A translation issue (3)

1. The traditional Hebrew text
 - First word of verse 3 – “And/then he saw,” or “When he saw”
2. A few Hebrew texts
 - First word – “And/then he was afraid (that)”
3. Which was original? More likely “When he saw”

B. The contextual issue

1. Chapter 18 – The LORD, he is GOD!
2. Ahab reports to Jezebel
 - She responds, “So what!”
3. What Elijah “sees”
 - a. God’s undeniable work is flatly denied
 - b. Ahab is not “in charge”
 - c. Repentance is not forthcoming – which means “judgment” was

IMPLICATION: It isn’t *fear* that drives Elijah, it’s despair. If correct, it isn’t about a whining prophet, but about a broken servant/vessel. Let’s see if the passage/story bears this out.

II. Into the Wilderness – The Road to Discovery

A. To Beersheba and beyond

1. Out of Jezebel’s reach
 - Safe from Jezebel in Judah; why all the way to Beersheba?
2. In the wilderness (4)
 - a. Alone
 - b. No plans for the futureNOTE: He doesn’t see God’s hand yet.
3. Angelic assistance (5,6)
 - a. Angel #1 – Eat! And sleep
 - b. Angel #2 – The angel of the Lord
 - Another meal! But no sleep
 - Strengthened for the journey
 - Taken through the wilderness

B. To Horeb

1. To the Mount of God – Moses’ mountain (Exodus 3:1; 17:6,33)
2. 40 days to remember
3. 40 days to reflect
4. 40 days to prepare

NOTE: Elijah was *not* preparing himself for a meeting; God was preparing him to meet the Lord.

III. Into the Word (9-14)

A. The word comes to Elijah

1. Not an angel this time – The word of the Lord comes
2. The question – What are you doing here?

NOTE: If the Lord has not *brought* Elijah to Horeb purposely – then the question is...

- a. An accusation

NOTE: If God has brought him here intentionally this may likely be...

- b. An *Invitation* – The refrain from Psalms 42 & 43

3. Elijah speaks (10)

- a. First question: Complaint or declaration?

- 1) If it's about Elijah? Complaint.
- 2) If it's about the Lord? Declaration!

NOTE: He didn't flee because he was afraid; he was broken.

- b. Second question: What's missing?

- Assurance! That the covenantal grace of God will triumph.

B. God answers Elijah (11-13)

1. In a display of his power

- a. In nature

- b. God is behind it – but not “in” it

Contrast – God's presence is not in the works of nature – but *is* present....

2. In “a voice” – What comes to Elijah isn't an indistinct “sound”, but the “voice.”

NOTE: Same word in 12 and 13. (Remember 9?)

3. With his presence (Isaiah 55:11)

C. Elijah finds rest (13)

IV. Into the Fray

A. The invitation

1. The same question (13b)

2. The same answer (14)

- But You are God! And I will rest in you

B. The commission (15-17)

1. Judgment on the house of Israel

NOTE: God agrees with Elijah's assessment

2. God's instruments are selected

3. Elijah's words will now be words of judgment!

C. With assurance (18)

1. You have my word!

2. You are not alone

V. Hope for the Broken

- A. God uses “broken” servants

- B. Miracles don't convict – the Word does!

- C. Take courage, God is building his church