

A JUNIPER TREE DAY

While visiting Main Street Baptist in Christiansburg, VA., Dr. Timothy Hight preached a wonderful sermon on the Juniper Tree Day. The seed for this bible lesson came from this sermon.

Elijah went from king of Mt. Carmel to a cave dweller of Mt. Horeb. In between these two mountain experiences was the Juniper Tree Day. This represents a continual decline in his spiritual life.

The moral of the Juniper Tree Day could be – “things may get worst before they get better” or “just when you hope things won’t get worst, they do!”

We will study our passage on the Juniper Tree Day by the following four homiletical points.

- Fame and misfortune (19:1-2)
- Fear and melancholy (19:3-4)
- Faithfulness and message (19:5-7)
- Fretting and malcontent (19:8-14)

1. Fame and misfortune were associated with the success at Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18) (19:1-2).

- **Elijah’s fame** was because he ran with the plan of God at Mt. Carmel (faith cycle). Principle: the believer doesn’t live today off from yesterday’s faith victories except as a reminder that God is an Almighty God.
- **Elijah’s misfortune** was because he ran from the plan of God as it related to Jezebel.

Jezebel swore to make Elijah’s life 450 times more miserable or may the gods do it to her. She threatened him with verbal intimidation. It was a threat of tomorrow (Prov.27:1). “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed, and do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled.” (1 Pet.3:14)

She used the same tactics that Goliath used successfully against Israel until David showed up (1 Sam.17). The roaring lion tactic – “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (1 Pet.5:8)

She took the offensive against Elijah and Elijah ran from the fight (2 Tim.4: 7) fight the good fight of faith. How could this great spiritual warrior ignore the doctrinal principle that the fight is our but the battle is the Lords (2 Chron.20: 15)? He had just won a great victory because of it (Ps.140: 7) the Lord shield me in the day of battle).

2. Fear and melancholy was associated with the Juniper Tree Day (19:3-4).

Elijah has run outside the temporary reach of Jezebel (1-day journey). He is tired of the load of the Lord’s work. He is burned out with service in the Lord’s army. He is depressed and weary of life and suicidal as he rests under the Juniper Tree. He feels that he is so alone that even God has not been there for him.

He is running when no one is pursuing. “The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion.” (Prov.28:1)

Jezebel won the battle without needing to follow through with the threat (without firing a shot).

Elijah forfeited the fight, thus no opponent; thus Jezebel is the declared winner.

Cosmic fear neutralized the faith cycle. Elijah has volitionally shut down the faith cycle in his life. He could have chosen to stand and fight but he chose to leave and flee (Ex.14: 13-14; **Deut.31: 6-8**; Ps.56: 4)
Why has Elijah become his worst enemy?

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Isa.41: 10) (Ps.118: 5-9)

3. **Faithfulness of God and message of life were given to Elijah in his darkest hour under the Juniper Tree (19:5-7).**

Two commands were given to Elijah related to life and living - “Arise (qum/ kal impv) and eat (akal/ kal impv), because the **journey** is too great.” (19:7) It took a command to get Elijah to get up and live!

Principle 1: Elijah is thinking last meal and God is thinking first meal.

Principle 2: As long as you are alive, God wants you to participate in His plan.

Principle 3: the believer’s faith failure doesn’t hinder the success of the plan of God only his participation in it.

Principle 4: the believer’s faith failure doesn’t stop God from providing logistical grace to him (1 Cor.1: 9).

Principle 5: Logistical grace is determined by the character and merit of God and not the believer (Phil.4: 19).

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Phil.4:6) **WHAT DID ELIJAH PRAY FOR IN I Kings 19:4?** Aren’t you glad that God answers our prayer on the basis of His good and acceptable and perfect will (1 John 5:14-15; Rom.12:2)?

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.” (2 Cor.4:8-9)

4. **Fretting and malcontent will occur after a forty-day journey to Mt Horeb, the mountain of God (19:8-14).**

Elijah was feeling sorrow for himself so he went a day’s journey to the Juniper tree. God said if you are going to run away, let run 40 days and nights further to the Mt. of God!

Elijah is full of self-pity and chronic anxiety. He is pre-occupied with self-induced misery (pity party). He has found it difficult if not impossible to be thankful to God for logistical grace.

At Mt. Horeb, Elijah becomes a cave dweller.

Pay special attention to God’s first direct question and Elijah’s answer (19:9-10) (qana / piel infin and piel impf.) zealous. Principle: your human problems are not greater than God’s grace solutions (Ps.37:25).

Pay attention to God’s four-part bible lesson (19:11-12). Elijah security was outside the cave. It was faith in God (Ps.56: 4). Did Elijah cycle the bible lesson?

Pay attention to God’s second direct question and Elijah’s answer (19:13-14). His attitude - this is what I get for serving God. Does this sound like the older brother of (Luke15: 29-31)? Apparently God just doesn’t understand or care about my needs and problems.

WHAT OMCD PROBLEM MUST HE PUT OFF?

(19:10,14) Resentful and tired of serving alone - is it a true or false belief? Read (19:18; 2 Cor.2: 11)

WHAT NMDV MUST HE PUT ON?

(Ps.37: 7; 55:22; 68:19; 1 John 5:4; Rom.8: 37; 2 Chron.20: 15)