

ELIJAH INSTRUCTED AND ENCOURAGED - R3414

1. Where is Mount Horeb? What parallel does Br Russell draw between Elijah's discouragement and the feelings of the brethren in Br Russell's day? Do you think that parallel feeling still exists today? (Par 1,2)
2. What is the "lesson that Elijah got", and what is the parallel lesson for the saints? What was symbolized by the wind, earthquake and fire? Tie in Zephaniah 3:8 (Par 3,4)
3. Zephaniah 3:9 - What is the "pure language"? When and how will it be "turned to the people"? (Par 4,5)
4. How does Psalm 46:1-11 illustrate the same lessons as 1Kings 19 and Zephaniah 3? (Par 6,7)
5. What did Elijah do after he "learned the lesson"? What is the parallel to the Church Class today? How does the Golden text fit in? (Par 8-10)

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I KINGS 19:9-18 SEPTEMBER 4, 1904

Golden Text: Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Genesis 26:24

1. ON Mount Horeb, Mount Sinai, is a cave called the cave of Moses, and it was toward this apparently that Elijah bent his steps, still heart-sore and discouraged, as he fled from Jezebel. It was here that the Lord appeared to him inquiring why he was there. His answer was that he was there because of his zeal for the Lord, because he was discouraged that the true worship in Israel had been set aside, that his reformation work had apparently been a failure, and, after all the miracles that the Lord had wrought through him, the people were seeking his life. In answer the Lord gave him illustrations of different ways of accomplishing results: First he caused a fierce wind to tear the mountains and break the rocks, but Elijah recognized that the wind was not the Lord but a manifestation of his power. Then an earthquake came, shaking the foundations of the mountains; but similarly the earthquake was not the Lord but merely a part of his power. Then came a fire; but the fire was not the Lord. Then a still small voice, and this voice, when Elijah heard it, he recognized as being the Lord, and in humility and fear he covered his face.

NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT

2. The antitypical Elijah, the saints, as they look about them and see the world in general in idolatry, and even the Lord's professed people largely given up to the worship of fashion and the idolatry of wealth and fame, are very apt to feel discouraged--to feel as Elijah did, that they

are quite alone. They are very apt to wonder why God seems so indifferent to the matter which so greatly concerns them. Why does he not overthrow all the altars of Baal? Why does he not overthrow Mammon? Why does he not bring in by his supreme power the great Kingdom of righteousness, which he has taught us as his people to expect? Why should we be more jealous for the Lord than he seems to be for his own name and cause? We need a lesson such as Elijah got, and we are getting that lesson.

3. We are learning that while God could have spoken to the world with force and power, as represented by the wind and earthquake and the fire, yet all of these would not have expressed to the world the Lord's real character. To know the Lord they must be permitted to hear the still small voice--the voice of truth, the voice of love, the voice of wisdom. Moreover, we see that the Lord is about to bring upon the world of mankind just such experiences as might be symbolized by these matters displayed to Elijah. The strong winds of war are to be let loose upon the world--indeed quite probably they are already being let loose. The effect will be the rending and tearing of earth, society, the nations. Then will follow a great earthquake, symbolical--a revolution--referred to in Revelation as so mighty an earthquake as had never before been known amongst men. Rev. 16:18. It will be a revolution which will affect all the governments of the world, socially,

politically, financially and ecclesiastically. Following this will come the fire--symbolical fire that will symbolically consume the earth, consume society. "The elements [society] shall melt with fervent heat, the earth [society] also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Such is the symbolical description given by the Apostle Peter.

4. The same symbol of fire is used by the Prophet Zephaniah and is located at the end of this age in the words, "Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, that I may pour upon them my indignation, even my fierce anger: for the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." The very next sentence shows us that the fire of God's jealousy is a symbolical fire, and other Scriptures show us that it is anarchy that is thus figuratively brought to our attention; for it is to be followed by a time of blessing as the Prophet says, "Then [following the fire -- the anarchy] will I turn unto the people a pure language, and they shall all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." Zeph. 3:9

5. This "pure language" or pure message of God's Word, which the Prophet shows as following the fire of anarchy, is the still small voice of our lesson. Elijah recognized this to be the power of God for bringing blessings and fulfilling his promises to the seed of Abraham, and through it to all the families of the earth in due time. And so the Lord's people today, as the antitypical Elijah class, are learning that God will do his great work through the still small voice of the Truth in due time, and that the due

time for it will not be until the storm, the earthquake and the fire shall have passed. "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isa. 26:9.

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

6. These same thoughts are brought to our attention in the 46th Psalm, in which the Lord, through the Prophet David, sets forth a picture of the time of trouble which belongs to the day of the Lord into which we have already entered--the day of trouble which will prepare the world for the great day of blessing, the Millennial day. In this Psalm the Lord represents the earth being moved, the mountains being carried to the midst of the sea, its waters roaring, its mountains shaking, etc. These things picture the commotions that are about to take place in the social, political and religious systems of the world. The Lord's people, the Elijah class, are represented in the Psalm as not fearing these things, because they constitute the Lord's holy city or holy Kingdom. Then in verses 6 to 10 the Lord gives an interpretation of the shaking and melting mountains, etc., as signifying the raging of the people, anarchy, the unsettling of the kingdoms, the melting or disintegration of society. As a result there will be great desolations in the earth: as another result all wars are to cease unto the ends of the earth, and then (vs. 10) comes the message which will be enforced throughout the Millennial age, "Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

7. This command, Be still, corresponds to the still small voice which Elijah heard--to what we as the antitypical Elijah are now

hearing from the Word of God, namely, that not by earthly might nor by earthly power will the Lord establish his rule, but that in the coming time his King shall reign in Zion and execute judgments in the earth, rewarding the righteous and punishing the evil doer, with the result that all shall come to a knowledge of the Lord from the least to the greatest; that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea; and with the further result that the Spirit of the Lord shall be poured upon all flesh, as the mouth of the Lord has promised. This is the glorious message which the Prophet declares results from the great atonement sacrifice made by our Lord; his statement is that the Lord gave himself a ransom for all--"to be testified in due time." 1Tim. 2:6.

8. After Elijah learned this lesson respecting the Lord's methods of bringing about the blessing, he was quite ready to follow the divine direction and to return to the land of Israel to make ready for (1) his own departure; (2) to appoint Elisha his successor as prophet and to instruct him for the service; (3) to outline the changes soon to come in the governments of Israel and Syria. He was further consoled and doubtless surprised by the Lord's declaration that he had yet 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal nor kissed the image--which was the custom. Similarly the Elijah class has been encouraged of the Lord by an unfolding of the divine Word, that the blessings and reformation of the world will all come about in God's due time and manner--through the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. Similarly the Elijah class has come to understand that there is an important work yet to be accomplished by

it in the world: that there are thousands in the nominal systems who are not in sympathy with the errors there taught, who are merely confused and blinded by the misrepresentation of the divine character.

BE OF GOOD COURAGE

9. Elijah returned to the land of Israel, and apparently paid no attention whatever thereafter to Jezebel and her threats, but prosecuted a work of arousing true faith in the true God and obedience to his Law. He not only called Elisha, as directed of the Lord, but following out further directions or the spirit of the directions, he re-established what were called "schools of the prophets"--gatherings of young men desirous of studying the Law and appreciating the divine will. Thus we see that the awakening at Mount Carmel, witnessed by the heads of all the ten tribes of Israel, bore its fruit--that idolatry was at a discount thereafter, that Jezebel and Ahab evidently did not have it in their power to oppose or destroy these schools of the prophets, and, in general, the reformation work which Elijah was prosecuting. He is supposed to have continued this reformation work for some ten years or more after his return from Mount Sinai before he was taken up in the whirlwind.

10. The Golden Text of the lesson fits well to the antitypical Elijah class. These should realize that one with the Lord is a majority, and should not fear the words nor the deeds of humanity so long as they can realize themselves the Lord's servants, cooperating, serving, active in the line of his direction. The message to these is, "Fear not their fear, nor be afraid;" "Let not

your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Christ"--the Head of the body--and trust to his guidance and overruling according to his promise, which assures us that all things shall work together for good to them that love him. Why should we fear? What should we fear? "If God be for us who can prevail against us?" True, evil doers do seem to prevail at times--do really prevail against us--as, for instance, the Jewish Sanhedrin prevailed against our Lord to his crucifixion; but such prevailing is only seemingly against us. In reality, as the Apostle declares, it is working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. We are to view matters from this standpoint, and to rejoice in whatever tribulation divine wisdom may see fit to permit to come against us, anxious only that our union and relationship with the Lord may be maintained.