

Week 8 Elijah the Prophet.

Wednesday Bible Study

Elisha, The God of the Hills and Valleys 1 Kings 19:19-20:43

1. The Call of Elisha 1 Kings 19:19-21

Elisha's name means My God is Salvation, very similar to Joshua which means God is Salvation. Interestingly Elisha served Elijah in a similar manner as Joshua did unto Moses, as his servant (assistant) and successor.

For Elijah to throw his cloak on him indicated God's calling the man to the ministry and the transmission of Elijah's mission and ability.

Elisha asks for permission to say goodbye to his family. Elijah grants permission, "What have I done to you is an idiom meaning, "What have I done to stop you?" or "Do as you please."

That Elisha burns the plow and slaughters his animals indicates his walking away from his old life. He has a new purpose. It's a clear break. With God you must be all in or all out! Interestingly, Jesus has the same request made of Him, yet he refuses to wait for the one who wants to follow. (Luke 9:57-62). Simply, Elijah's schedule allowed him to wait— Jesus' did not. In addition, the challenge by Jesus was to reveal a person who makes excuses for not following. Elisha was not making an excuse— Elijah and come to him— not the other way around. By the way— Such observances as Elisha has carried out and that we see throughout the Bible are important. The mark a point in history. These kinds of things are not valued by many in our disposable, electronic, special effects age. (1 Sam 7:12)

2. The God of the Hills and Valleys. 1 Kings 20:22-28

The Ancient peoples believed that the "gods" were territorial. The Aramean advisors fell back on this belief when Ben-Hadad's armies were defeated by the Israelites.

But we read that the LORD GOD of Israel is not limited in such ways. He is the God of the Hills and Valleys. (Verse 28) I believe that this is literal geographically and metaphorically. As we travel through life his is LORD over all of the seasons of our lives— the ups and downs. Our God is the God of all. He is not limited in anyway. (Psalm 139:7-12)

3. Ahab's Compromise and Disobedience. 1 Kings 20:41-43

Sadly and exhaustingly Ahab continues his compromising ways. He spares and enters into a treaty with Ben-Hadad. Why? Because in all of this he only sees himself. He does not honor God in his heart so it comes out in his actions. With God there is no middle road position. (1 Kings 18:21; Joshua 1:7-9).

Let us not miss the striking contrast between these lives. Elijah and Elisha are sold out for the LORD God of Israel. Ahab, King of Israel is a compromiser with the people and God's around him. He is enjoying the grace of God while abusing the grace of God. In the end we will see the fruit of their lives displayed. Ahab will be killed in his chariot while in battle— Elijah will depart on a chariot of fire.

