

# 1 Kings 17 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[1 Kings Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

## THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

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(NOTE: Many consider Amaziah and Hezekiah as "good" kings)  
SEE ALSO:  
[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)  
[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

**1 Kings 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before Whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."**

- **Elijah:** Mt 11:14 16:14 27:47,49 Lu 1:17 4:25,26 9:30,33,54 Joh 1:21,25 Ro 11:2, Elias
- **As the LORD, the God of Israel:** 1Ki 22:14 2Ki 3:14 5:16 Isa 49:18 Mt 7:29 Lu 1:17
- **before Whom:** De 10:8 Jer 15:19 Lu 1:19 21:36 Ac 27:23
- **dew nor rain:** Lu 4:25 Jas 5:17 Rev 11:6
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 11:13-17+ (GOD'S WARNING OF DROUGHT FOR DISOBEDIENCE) "It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, 14 that **He will give the rain for your land in its season**, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. 15 "He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. 16 "Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them (**LIKE AHAB AND ISRAEL WERE DOING!**). 17 "Or **the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit**; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

Deuteronomy 28:23-24+ (CURSES PROMISED FOR DISOBEDIENCE) "The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you, iron. 24 "The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

Revelation 11:6+ (**2 WITNESSES - SOME THINK ONE WITNESS WILL BE ELIJAH**) These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

[Possible Location of Tishbe \(ESV Study Bible\)](#)  
(Click to Enlarge)

## ELIJAH'S DRAMATIC ENTRANCE AND DISMAL DROUGHT FORECAST

**Now** - This word is always worth noting as it is often used to introduce a new idea, event, or shift in thought, e.g., as when one says "Now it came to pass..." In this context Ahab is going to be introduced to a new man and new event in his kingdom! **Now** can also signify something happening at this very moment, which would also be true in this context. Elijah comes suddenly on the scene as if shot out of a cannon, like a bolt of lightning flashing across the (spiritually) dark sky in Israel! Someone has subtitled the life of Elijah "*Following God when those around us do not.*" Surely we can all identify with that scenario!

**Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead**([click map](#)), **said to Ahab - Elijah** explodes on the scene, his name meaning "The Lord is God" in effect **throwing down the gauntlet** toward Ahab and his worship of Baal! His name meaning "The Lord is God" is so apropos, for in 1Ki 18:21, 39 he will confront the people and ask is "the LORD God? In short Elijah's appearance would be a frontal assault against Ahab's belief in Baalism. **Gilead** is east of the Jordan River ([click map](#)) and is the site of a town name **Tishbe** ([Wikipedia article with location of Tishbe](#) - see possible location of Tishbe on map above). This unknown geographical site would seem to emphasize that God calls some prophets from unlikely places. Certainly God brings His man Elijah on the scene with no fanfare, but with a clear prophecy clearly calculated to counter Baalism. God draws Elijah out of obscurity to confront apostasy! Elijah is like the those God still chooses and uses (read 1Co 1:26-27+)! God loves to use nobodies. And remember, Elijah "was a man with a nature like ours." (Jas 5:17+)

**ESV Study Bible** explains that "Before this time no prophet addressed the house of Omri as Israel's earlier royal houses had been addressed (cf. 1Ki 14:7-13; 16:1-4), but now Elijah is introduced. His announcement of doom on the house of Omri will be delayed, however, until 1Ki 21:21-24. His first task is to tackle the problem of the Baal worship that Ahab has introduced into Israel in 1Ki 16:31-32, and to demonstrate beyond all doubt that Baal is no more a god in any real sense than are Jeroboam's bull calves....In Canaanite religion, **Baal had authority over rain and fertility**. The absence of rain meant the absence of Baal, who must periodically submit to the god of death Mot (during the dry season), only to be revived at a later date and once again water the earth (during the rainy season). This cyclical and polytheistic view of reality is the focus of Elijah's challenges." (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#)) (Bolding added)

**Keil** writes, "For however many prophets of Jehovah arose in the kingdom of the ten tribes from its very commencement ... no other prophet, either before or afterwards, strove and worked in the idolatrous kingdom for the honour of the Lord of Sabaoth with anything like the same mighty power of God as the prophet Elijah. And there was no other prophet whom the Lord so gloriously acknowledged by signs and wonders as Elijah"

**Warren Wiersbe** - The prophet Elijah is an important figure in the New Testament. John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17), and some of the people even thought he was the promised Elijah (John 1:21; Mal. 4:5-6; Matt. 17:10-13). Elijah

was with Moses and Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:3), and some students believe that Moses and Elijah are the two witnesses described in Rev. 11:1-14. Elijah wasn't a polished preacher like Isaiah and Jeremiah, but was more of a rough-hewn reformer who challenged the people to abandon their idols and return to the Lord. He was a courageous man who confronted Ahab personally and rebuked his sin, and he also challenged the priests of Baal to a public contest. He was not only a worker of miracles, but he also experienced miracles in his own life. These two chapters record seven different miracles that Elijah either performed or experienced. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**F B Meyer** helps us understand how much courage Elijah displayed in directly confronting this evil, capricious king "The whole land seemed apostate. Of all the thousands of Israel, only seven thousand remained who had not bowed the knee or kissed the hand to Baal. But they were paralysed with fear; and kept so still, that their very existence was unknown by Elijah in the hour of his great loneliness."

I like **John Whitcomb's** description of Elijah as a man "Like a meteor suddenly flashing across the darkened sky, Elijah appears on the scene without genealogy, without historical background, and without warning. One thunderous judgment from heaven through his lips and he disappeared without a trace . . . God permitted neither debate nor dialogue between His prophet and Ahab, the apostate king of Israel....Not that the nation had no warning at all. Centuries before, Moses had said that national apostasy would cause the rains to cease (Dt. 11:17; 28:24). And now that Jehovah had been officially repudiated (**Ed: BY BAAL WORSHIP**), His providential blessings upon this land came to an end.

**As the LORD, the God of Israel lives before Whom I stand** - (Note similar description "As the LORD of hosts lives" by Elisha - 2Ki 3:14, 5:16) Note Elijah's opening salvo is God lives! The fact that Yahweh still lives would assure everything Elijah said would transpire. Elijah affirms faith in a God Who is ever living not in a dead god like Baal who the pagans believed "died" in the heat of summer (killed by Mot) and was then raised after his sister-consort found his body and sacrificed numerous animals to restore life, which in turn assured fertility of the land for another year! How absurd! To reiterate **before Whom I stand** would add gravitas to what Elijah is preparing to prognosticate. He is essentially saying I am God's man with God's Word. **Before Whom I stand** should have made Ahab uneasy for Elijah spoke with confidence knowing what it was like to be in the Lord's presence and to commune with Him, something that wicked Ahab had never experienced.

*True ministry is initiated by God,  
which means that it is received, not achieved.*

-- Wayne Barber

**David Guzik** offers some practical insights on Elijah's self-introduction - **As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand** This statement of Elijah shows the source of his strength. It is specifically said Elijah was a man with a nature like ours (James 5:17). Yet he showed a strength greater than most of us in our life with God. We must pay attention to these indications to the source of Elijah's strength. **As the LORD God of Israel lives:** Everyone else felt that the LORD was dead, but for Elijah the LORD lived. He was the supreme reality of Elijah's life. **Before whom I stand:** He stood in the presence of Ahab, but he was conscious of the presence of someone greater than any earthly king. Gabriel himself could not choose a higher title (Luke 1:19+).

**Spurgeon** on Elijah - He leaps into the arena, like a lion from the hills. Who he was, or what he had been, we are not told. He comes in thunder, and speaks lightning. The times were fit for an Elijah, and Elijah was fit for them.

*The fear of God had driven out Elijah's fear of man,  
and thus he had the kind of spiritual boldness  
that is given only to those who linger in the presence of the living God.*

-- Philip Ryken

**James Smith - Before Whom I Stand** - Sweet is the service that is rendered in the consciousness of His presence and done as standing before Him. Elijah could speak of "the Lord God of Israel before whom I stand" (1 Kings 17:1). Abraham walked before God. Serving before Him is the remedy for the fear of man, and the secret of deliverance from dishonouring God by presenting eloquent prayers to great audiences.

**J R Miller** - Elijah defines his relation to God in the phrase, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand." He meant that he was God's messenger, always standing before God's face, ready to go instantly on His errands. He never sat down in God's presence—but always stood, girded and sandaled, ready for immediate running. Too many of us are slow in obeying. It takes us a long while to get ready to start on an errand on which God bids us go, and then we loiter or move languidly, as if scarcely half awake.

**Surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word**- Because there was a spiritual famine for the Word

(Amos 8:11), there would soon be a physical famine for want of water. Just one sentence from Elijah but it dropped like a bomb on Ahab. Yes, it as a word of judgment, but don't miss the fact that it was also a gracious word from God to turn Israel from Baal and back to following God. And it was God Who took the initiative in an attempt to draw Israel back. Elijah's prediction was a direct assault on Baal who the religious texts unearthed at Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit), described as riding upon the storm and holding lightning bolts in his hand. While the text never literally says Elijah prayed for the drought, one can infer from James 5:17 that he almost certainly did. And when we combine that with the warnings ([see above](#)) in Deuteronomy, all Elijah was doing was praying the Word of God which was the will of God, a good pattern for all saints to pray.

**THOUGHT** - God is always unwilling to leave us when we stray from Him and He always seeks to call us back. Have you strayed beloved child of God? Then take heart, that our God is the "[hound of heaven](#)" ever seeking to bring His straying sheep (Isa 53:6+) back into the fold.

What might have given Elijah such assurance? One answer is that Elijah knew the word of God especially God's warning in Deuteronomy 11:13-17+. Elijah's prophecy therefore was in line with God's word. Given the wicked, godless state of the Northern Kingdom, God made sure His prophet would be authenticated by miracles, which would leave Ahab and Israel without excuse. Elijah is predicting a drought and underscores there will be neither dew nor rain unless he says so. Keep in mind Baal was the pagan weather god (rain and fertility), so we begin to see the battle of God's truth versus the devil's lies, the truth that God controls the rain against the lie that Baal controlled the rain. Furthermore, Elijah's claim about no dew or rain would substantiate he has been given authority by God to make such an incredible claim. As discussed below, he had prayed earnestly for drought, and in some way God had answered his prayer for drought affirmatively. And as they say, the proof is in the pudding, so if after Elijah speaks there begins to be no rain for days, weeks, and months, Ahab should realize he is dealing with a true prophet of God.

**Warren Wiersbe** - The Jewish people depended on the seasonal rains for the success of their crops. If the Lord didn't send the early rain in October and November and the latter rain in March and April, there would soon be a famine in the land. But the blessing of the semiannual rains depended on the people obeying the covenant of the Lord (Deut. 11). God warned the people that their disobedience would turn the heavens into bronze and the earth into iron (Deut. 28:23-24; see Lev. 26:3-4, 18-19). The land belonged to the Lord, and if the people defiled the land with their sinful idols, the Lord wouldn't bless them. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

The phrase **except by my word** is interesting and it might sound like presumption on Elijah's part. As noted above Elijah knew God's will in Deuteronomy 11:13-17+. In addition Elijah's assurance of his weather forecast of drought is related to the fact that he had prayed earnestly and undoubtedly Yahweh had answered, so that he was not only the prophet of the drought, in one sense, he was the impetus for the drought. James explains that...

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. (James 5:17+) (Elijah served as James' example of the truth that "the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." Jas 5:16+)

**F B Meyer** paints the battle lines of Yahweh versus Baal writing "The old religion against the new; the child of nature against the effeminate child of the courts; camel's hair against soft clothing; moral strength against moral weakness."

**Tony Merida** - With Ahab's reign Baal worship was now state sponsored. Baal was known as the "rider on the clouds," the god of rain and fertility, and because of this, the god of riches. As mentioned, Ahab married Jezebel who "evangelized" for Baal. Baal's followers believed he restored life after the death of summer. In contrast to Baal, the Elijah narratives highlight that God alone gives life and death and controls fertility and infertility. The psalmist portrays Yahweh as the "rider on the clouds" who alone gives rain and provides for creation (Ps 104:3-4). If there was no rain, Baal followers believed Baal was submitting to the god of death, Mot, until a later date when Baal would be revived. So Baal was not the only god worshiped. In this polytheistic culture, people wanted a little bit of everything—a little goddess worship, a little Baal worship, a little Yahweh worship, and more. Exclusive worship of God was absent in most places. Indeed, Elijah thought he was the only real worshiper left (1 Kgs 19:10). We live in a similar time, in which people worship a little bit of everything but not the living God exclusively—a little God, a little horoscope, a little TBN, a little pop psychology, a few conspiracy theories, aliens, zombies, New Ageism, naturalism, and more. They may want God at their death, but they live every day as functional naturalists or materialists. As a result of twisted theology, immorality is normalized in our day just like in the days of Elijah. He lived in a day like ours where people call evil "good" and good "evil." (See [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings](#))

**William Barnes:** This threat was dire indeed, since rain (and dew) were crucial for Palestinian agricultural prosperity, in clear contrast to both the lands of Egypt and Mesopotamia, where great rivers were used to irrigate the land. In Palestine, the rains would generally fall during the wet winter season (early rains in late October, and the latter rains tapering off by March or April, but with much variation possible year by year); these rains were essential, especially for the cereal crops raised in this region of the Near East. The dew was crucial, too; it often falls heavily in Israel throughout the year, and it is also important for agricultural success, especially for the grapes, which ripen throughout the dry summer season (Baly 1974:44-46). (See [1-2 Kings - Page 148](#))

**C T Lacey** - The very mention of his name (ELIJAH) provokes numerous thoughts in believers' minds, e.g. a dynamic and fearsome

personality, a man of miracles, revered by the Jews and linked to the coming of the Messiah (Mal 4:5–6+). Indeed, he is mentioned in the New Testament more often than any other Old Testament character ([See note](#)). Such is the aura that surrounds him that there is a danger that he can be regarded as one who is outside the experience on any other man. However, James dismisses such thinking when he describes him as “a man subject to like passions as we are” (James 5:17), i.e. he had the same nature as other men, with the same weaknesses, feelings and experiences. ([What the Bible Teaches – 1 and 2 Kings](#))

**Bob Utley - Dew** is the most significant source of moisture in Canaan. It rains only two times during the year (i.e., planting and just before harvest). YHWH, not Ba'al the storm god, controls nature (cf. Lev. 26:19; Deut. 11:13-19; 28:23). He demonstrates this control to judge idolatry and bring His people back to faith in Him

**Dale Ralph Davis:** The rain delay will also strike a blow at the alleged prowess of Baal. However one cuts it Baal was a fertility god, a storm god, who, among other life-giving activities, sent rain to fructify the earth. In Canaanite mythology Lady Asherah thanked El for permitting Baal to have his own palace since

“Now Baal will begin the rainy season,  
the season of wadis in flood;  
and he will sound his voice in the clouds,  
flash his lightning to the earth.”

Such meteorological displays were signs of Baal's vitality. Elijah's 'no dew or rain' then constitutes a challenge to Baal. Ahab and Israel will now be able to see what sort of fertility god Baal is. If he cannot produce in the area of his expertise, in his specialty, his reputation will suffer a shattering blow. Baal's deity will shrivel as the cracks in the fields get wider. Elijah so much as says that Yahweh has decided to shut Baal's faucet off. Yahweh has decreed that Baal will pale. ([1 Kings: The Wisdom And the Folly](#))

**Wayne Barber** - Like a diamond against a backdrop of black velvet, the wickedness of Elijah's day highlights the workings of God through Elijah, and causes the full beauty of what God was doing to be seen.

**Philip Ryken** - Since Elijah was a man like us, we are called to become men and women like him. Elijah's strategy for living for God in an evil day can be summarized in three simple words: pray, obey, stay. First, Elijah prayed. To live for God in an evil day is to become a person of prayer. In 1 Kings 17 it seems as if God is doing all the talking, through Elijah, to Ahab. But the book of James offers this profound interpretation of the ministry of Elijah: “He prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth” (James 5:17). The expression James uses in Greek appears to be carried over from Hebrew. To translate more literally, “with prayer, he prayed,” or “praying, he prayed.” Thus Elijah is held up as an example for us—not as a preacher, a prophet, a miracle worker, or an athlete, although he was all these things—but as a man of prayer. James indicates that the judgment God announced to Ahab, through Elijah, was first prompted by the prayers of Elijah. So before God talked to Ahab, Elijah talked to God. Before the prophet came to the palace gates in Samaria, he was in his prayer closet in Gilead. Before he was on his feet before the king of Israel, he was on his knees before the King of kings. Elijah had been on his knees for quite some time. Careful study of the Scriptures reveals how long Elijah had been in prayer. The famine ended in the third year (1 Kings 18:1), but James says that Elijah prayed earnestly and it did not rain for three and a half years. Jesus said the same thing when he preached in Nazareth: “in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land” (Luke 4:25). By doing a little simple arithmetic, we can deduce that Elijah had been in prayer for at least six months before he went to speak with Ahab. ([1 Kings](#))

**THOUGHT** - The call to serve God often begins with a burden to pray for the Lord's work for some particular person, particular problem, or particular place. As we pray, we begin to discern God's calling. (Ryken)

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**ELIJAH - THE LORD IS GOD - 101X IN 95V** - note that 20% of all uses (20) are in 1 Kings 18!

**OLD TESTAMENT USES** - 1 Ki. 17:1; 1 Ki. 17:13; 1 Ki. 17:15; 1 Ki. 17:16; 1 Ki. 17:18; 1 Ki. 17:22; 1 Ki. 17:23; 1 Ki. 17:24; 1 Ki. 18:1; 1 Ki. 18:2; 1 Ki. 18:7; 1 Ki. 18:8; 1 Ki. 18:11; 1 Ki. 18:14; 1 Ki. 18:15; 1 Ki. 18:16; 1 Ki. 18:17; 1 Ki. 18:21; 1 Ki. 18:22; 1 Ki. 18:25; 1 Ki. 18:27; 1 Ki. 18:30; 1 Ki. 18:31; 1 Ki. 18:36; 1 Ki. 18:40; 1 Ki. 18:41; 1 Ki. 18:42; 1 Ki. 18:46; 1 Ki. 19:1; 1 Ki. 19:2; 1 Ki. 19:9; 1 Ki. 19:13; 1 Ki. 19:19; 1 Ki. 19:20; 1 Ki. 19:21; 1 Ki. 21:17; 1 Ki. 21:20; 1 Ki. 21:28; 2 Ki. 1:3; 2 Ki. 1:4; 2 Ki. 1:8; 2 Ki. 1:10; 2 Ki. 1:12; 2 Ki. 1:13; 2 Ki. 1:15; 2 Ki. 1:17; 2 Ki. 2:1; 2 Ki. 2:2; 2 Ki. 2:4; 2 Ki. 2:6; 2 Ki. 2:8; 2 Ki. 2:9; 2 Ki. 2:11; 2 Ki. 2:12; 2 Ki. 2:13; 2 Ki. 2:14; 2 Ki. 2:15; 2 Ki. 3:11; 2 Ki. 9:36; 2 Ki. 10:10; 2 Ki. 10:17; 1 Chr. 8:27; 2 Chr. 21:12; Ezr. 10:21; Ezr. 10:26; Mal. 4:5;

**NEW TESTAMENT USES** - Matt. 11:14; Matt. 16:14; Matt. 17:3; Matt. 17:4; Matt. 17:10; Matt. 17:11; Matt. 17:12; Matt. 27:47; Matt. 27:49; Mk. 6:15; Mk. 8:28; Mk. 9:4; Mk. 9:5; Mk. 9:11; Mk. 9:12; Mk. 9:13; Mk. 15:35; Mk. 15:36; Lk. 1:17; Lk. 4:25; Lk. 4:26; Lk. 9:8; Lk. 9:19; Lk. 9:30; Lk. 9:33; Jn. 1:21; Jn. 1:25; Rom. 11:2; Jas.

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**Dr Robert G Lee** preached a classic sermon [Payday, Someday](#) (live youtube video) in which he dealt with the lives of Ahab, Jezebel and Elijah. Here is an excerpt from this classic message...

I introduce to you Ahab, the vile human toad who squatted upon the throne of his nation—the worst of Israel’s kings. King Ahab had command of a nation’s wealth and a nation’s army, but he had no command of his lusts and appetites. Ahab wore rich robes ... he ate the finest food ... he lived in palaces sumptuous within and without ... yet he lived nearly all of his life under the thumb of a wicked woman—a tool in her hands....

“I introduce to you Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, King of Tyre, and wife of Ahab, the King of Israel—a king’s daughter and a king’s wife, the evil genius at once of her dynasty and her country.... Most of that which is bad in all evil women found expression through this painted viper of Israel. She had the rich endowment of nature which a good woman ought always to dedicate to the service of her day and generation. But—alas!—this idolatrous daughter of an idolatrous king of an idolatrous people engaged with her maidens in worship unto Ashtoreth—the personification of the most forbidding obscenity, uncleanness, and sensuality—... [she was a] beautiful and malicious adder coiled upon the throne of the nation.

“I introduce to you Elijah, the Tishbite, prophet of God at a time when by tens of thousands the people had forsaken God’s covenants, thrown down God’s altars, [and] slain God’s prophets with the sword.” ([Payday, Someday](#))

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**Whitfield - Our boldness for God before the world must always be the result of individual dealing with God in secret. Our victories over self, and sin, and the world, are always first fought where no eye sees but God’s....** If there be the daily work going on within us, unseen and unnoticed by any but God Himself, then we may depend upon certain victory in our conflicts before the world—then may we stand before an Ahab, and realize a living God at our side.... And if we have not these secret conflicts, well may we not have any open ones. The outward absence of conflict betrays the inward sleep of the soul.

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### **A Good Testimony - John Butler**

“Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” (1 Kings 17:1)

THE name Elijah gives us lessons from our verse today. The lessons are in the testimony Elijah’s parents were in naming their boy Elijah. The name Elijah means “Jehovah is God.” (“Eli” means God, “jah” means Jehovah). “Jehovah” is translated “LORD” in most English translations. The issue of that day was who was God? Jehovah or Baal. By naming their boy Elijah, the testimony of Elijah’s parents for Jehovah was courageous, correct, conspicuous, and continuous.

**Courageous.** Baalism was the popular worship. In fact, it was so popular that Jehovah worshipers were being imprisoned and slain. So to name one’s child Elijah was a very courageous thing to do. But if you are going to have a good testimony for the Lord, you will have to demonstrate a great deal of courage at times.

**Correct.** Elijah’s parents had their theology correct. Jehovah, not Baal, was God. You cannot have a good testimony if your doctrine is not correct. We have some popular movements today which play down the importance of doctrine. But when doctrine is not important, your testimony will lack credibility and value.

**Conspicuous.** Their testimony was conspicuous because of the presence of Elijah. You cannot conceal a growing boy. He is going to be both visible and vocal. Therefore, wherever Elijah went, people would be aware of him and reminded by his name that Jehovah was God. Our testimony for the Lord needs to be conspicuous. Do not hide it “under a bushel” (Matthew 5:15) but put it where it will be seen and heard.

**Continuous.** As long as Elijah was alive, the testimony continued. The preservation of Elijah’s life made his parents’ testimony about Jehovah continuous. All of us need a continuous testimony for the Lord. Our testimony must shine more than just on Sunday but must continue to shine every day of the week. It must never cease.

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### **OUR CHRISTIAN POSTURE**

ILLUSTRATION: Living on the farm, as my grandfather did, enabled him to choose a different way of life and to live by his own light. And his light certainly was the gospel. He wasn’t a particularly successful farmer. He worked about 160 acres and raised dairy cows and a mixture of crops. His life was centered on his faith in a way that is impossible in the city. He began every day with a family



altar, right after breakfast. My Uncle Jim, who took over the farm when my grandfather died, carried on this practice. You milked the cows before breakfast. Then, after you had your Post-Toasties and your coffee, you went into the front room—seldom used for anything else—and you sat there and you read a chapter and you talked about it and then you knelt down and you prayed for as long as he figured was necessary—a long, slow prayer, everybody kneeling, putting your face into the sofa. I remember the smells of that sofa, of other members of the family. Only after this was done would you go out, hitch up the team, and cultivate the fields.

It was very lovely to a kid. It was a way in which we were different from other people. In the country you could do that.

#### 1. SITTING BEFORE THE LORD—IN REST

Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?—2 Samuel 7:18

#### 2. STANDING BEFORE THE LORD—IN READINESS

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.—1 Kings 17:1

#### 3. SPEAKING BEFORE THE LORD—IN TESTIMONY

Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.—2 Corinthians 12:19

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**H A Ironside** - Helpful indeed are the lessons which the Holy Spirit has presented for us in the record of Elijah's life. In some respects he was the greatest of all the prophets from Moses until John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11). He appears suddenly upon the page of Scripture with his amazing declaration to King Ahab, "As the Lord ... lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word" (1 Kings 17:1). Both the message and the confidence with which it was delivered were the result of a life of prayer. He had learned how to prevail with God, and his prayer shut and opened the heavens in accordance with the will of the Lord. This is most suggestive. **Prayer does not cause God to change His mind, but the man who lives in fellowship with Him is guided to pray in accordance with His will. Such prayer is sure to be answered** (1 John 5:14–15).

We must learn to know God in secret if we would be courageous for Him in public. The three years that Elijah spent in retirement, proving God's faithfulness by the brook Cherith and in the widow's home at Zarephath, gave him a background of practical experience that was of inestimable value when he had to face Ahab and the prophets of Baal. It was because he knew God that he dared to witness for Him so boldly.

Service is good when He asks it,  
Labor is right in its place,  
But there is one thing better—  
Looking up into His face.  
—Annie Johnson Flint

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#### **Alexander Maclaren - Before Whom I Stand - The Master's "Well Done."**

The Master's approval is the servant's best wages. If we truly feel that the Lord liveth, before whom we stand, we shall want nothing else for our work but His smile, and we shall feel that the light of his face is all we need. That thought should deaden our love for outward things. How little we need to care about any payment that the world can give for anything we do. If we feel, as we ought, that we are God's servants, that will lift us clear above the low aims and desires which meet us. How little we shall care for money, for men's praise, for getting on in the world! How the things that we fever our souls by pursuing, and fret our hearts when we lose; will cease to attract! How small and vulgar the "prizes" of life, as people call them, will appear! **"The Lord liveth before whom I stand,"** should be enough for us, and instead of all these motives to action drawn from the rewards of this world, we ought to "labor that, whether present or absent, we may be well pleasing to Him."

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**Philip Ryken** - Would any of us dare to pray such a prayer today, asking God to act in judgment so that his people's hearts would turn back to him? If not, it is not because such prayers are no longer possible. The Scripture says Elijah was a man like us. If we do not pray such prayers, it may be because we are no longer men and women like Elijah. Since we live in an evil day, our prayers are as necessary as ever, and since we serve a living God, our prayers can be as effective as Elijah's prayers. May the Lord make us people of prayer, so that we may pray the way Elijah prayed: righteously, so that our prayers are undiluted by disobedience and unhindered by unconfessed sin; powerfully, so that we prevail against the tide of idolatry; effectively, so that we discern the very things that God intends to do in our day; and earnestly, so that our hearts grow strong through our persistence in prayer. ([1 Kings](#))

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**J R Miller** - "As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, **before whom I stand.**" 1 Kings 17:1

"You are the God who sees me!" Genesis 16:13.

We all stand in the presence of God. His eye is ever upon us. His face ever beams its light upon us. We all believe this, and say it often with our lips; yet many of us do not really get the truth into our heart! If we did—it would make holier people of us. We would not slight our work as now we do so often, if we were truly conscious that God is looking on us as we work!

This consciousness of the presence of God, would also give us hope and courage in darkness or danger; like Hagar, who said, "You are the God who sees me!" Some people think of the omniscience of God—as a reason for fear and terror. But to Hagar, it meant divine love and care. God had not forgotten her, nor forsaken her. She was cast out of her earthly home—but the Lord saw her and took her up.

If we are God's children, the thought of our Father's presence should always bring us comfort, assurance, and a wonderful sense of security. It is a great thing to stand before God, to be conscious of His eye upon us, and to know Him so well as not to be afraid of Him.

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1 Kings 17:1-16 17:1-16 GOD'S WAYS

"How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out." - Romans 11:33

After Elijah had experienced some especially trying times, the Lord told him to flee to Zarephath where he could find food and shelter. Imagine Elijah's surprise when he discovered that the widow who was to provide for him was extremely poor! In fact, she expected that she and her son would soon die of starvation.

How often God delights to astonish us by the wonder of His ways! Our limited understanding of Him can be likened to a fly crawling on one of the great pillars of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. What does that tiny insect know about the architect's magnificent design? It sees only the little space of stone on which it moves. The beautiful carvings and ornamental work seem like towering mountains and deep valleys that only impede progress and obscure the view.

We as Christians often see only our immediate circumstances and perceive but a glimmer of God's marvelous purpose. The obstacles that block our vision and get in the way of our plans are actually part of the beautiful designs of divine grace.

Our heavenly Father knows exactly what He is doing. Although His ways are unsearchable, He assures us that all will work out for our good if we trust Him.-- Henry G. Bosch (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God's ways and judgments baffle those

Who do not see His perfect plan;

But those who trust His saving grace,

With wonder all His actions scan!

- HGB

God may conceal the purpose of His ways, But His ways are not without purpose.

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**It Was the Best of Times?** Melvin Tinker SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 17:1–16

**INTRODUCTION:** Elijah is sent by God to lead the people to repentance.

1. The Lord's Strange Provision (vv. 1–6). God provides for Elijah by sending ravens to feed him and a brook to give him water during the drought.

2. The Lord's Surprising Place (vv. 7–12). God sends Elijah to a poor widow in Jezebel's hometown. He is in a pagan country around people who do not believe in the Lord.

3. The Lord's Sure Promise (vv. 13–16). God provides mercifully for the pagan widow and her son.

**CONCLUSION:** God is to be taken at His word. He faithfully provides for those who obey and trust Him. His mercies extend to the entire world and if we would just have faith in Him, He is willing to provide life to us.

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**Don't Despair By Joshua D. Rowe** SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 17–19



**INTRODUCTION:** Do you ever struggle to provide for your family? Do you feel as if you're the only committed believer around? Or do you sometimes doubt God? Does life get the best of you? Elijah faced similar situations, and through them we learn about God's incredible provisions.

1. **Times of Drought** (1Ki 17:1–16). Israel was facing a life-threatening drought, but God provided for both Elijah and an old widow and her family. He consistently gave them just enough to get by each day.

2. **Times of Disbelief** (1Ki 17:17–18:46). The widow's son died and she immediately doubted God, but through Elijah her son was raised. The result was faith! In the same section, Israel turned to worship Baal, but God responded through Elijah and proved His power over false gods. The result was repentance!

3. **Times of Discouragement** (1Ki 19:1–21). Elijah received a death threat and fled. He went into depression and felt abandoned. God spoke to Him, revealing that seven thousand others were true believers in Him. He then gave Elisha to him as his disciple.

**CONCLUSION:** When you struggle to make ends meet, trust God to provide each day. God knows what you are going through, and He can dispel all your doubts and reveal His great power. If you feel alone as a Christian, take comfort, for God will always have followers—even if there's only a remnant.

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## **ELIJAH, GOD'S PROPHET** 1 Kings 16:28–34; 17:1–24 - Croft Pentz

Jezebel was a wicked woman. She sought to destroy God's prophets and God's work. God chose Elijah to stand up against both Jezebel and Ahab. Elijah was willing to risk his life for God.

1. THE PROBLEM—16:28–34
2. THE PROPHET—17:1
3. THE PROVISION—17:2–16
4. THE PERSONALITY—17:17–24

Elijah allowed God to use him. He stepped out in faith, and God helped him. God longs to work through man. However, before God can use man, man must be usable!

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### **Cyril Barber outlines Elijah's life...**

The Practices of an Ungodly King (1 Kings 16:29–33)

The Ministry of Godly Prophets (1 Kings 17:1–2 Kings 2:11)

The Obedience of the Prophet (1 Kings 17:1–18:46)

- The Prediction of the Prophet (17:1)
- The Protection of the Prophet (17:2–6)
- The Preparation of the Prophet (17:7)
- The Provision for the Prophet (17:8–16)
- Digression: The Confirmation of the Word of the Prophet (17:17–24)

The Contest Between the Prophets (18:1–40)

The Prayer of the Prophet (18:41–46)

The Renewal of God's Prophet (19:1–21)

The Reproof of the King by an Unnamed Prophet (20:1–43)

The Condemnation of the King by God's Prophet (21:1–29)

The Fulfillment of the Word of the Prophets (22:1–40)

Digression: Historic Summary (22:40–53)

The Reign of an Ungodly King (2 Kings 1:1–18)

The Ascension of God's Prophet (2 Kings 2:1–11)

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### **QUESTION - [Who was Elijah in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)**

**ANSWER** - The prophet Elijah is one of the most interesting and colorful people in the Bible, and God used him during an important time in Israel's history to oppose a wicked king and bring revival to the land. Elijah's ministry marked the beginning of the end of Baal worship in Israel. Elijah's life was filled with turmoil. At times he was bold and decisive, and at other times fearful and tentative. He alternately demonstrates victory and defeat, followed by recovery. Elijah knew both the power of God and the depths of

depression.

Elijah, a prophet of God whose name means “my God is the Lord,” came from Tishbeh in Gilead, but nothing is known of his family or birth. We first meet Elijah in 1 Kings 17:1 when he suddenly appears to challenge Ahab, an evil king who ruled the northern kingdom from 874 to 853 BC. Elijah prophesies a drought to come upon the whole land as consequence for Ahab’s evil (1 Kings 17:1–7). Warned by God, Elijah hides near the brook of Cherith where he is fed by ravens. As the drought and famine in the land deepen, Elijah meets with a widow in a neighboring country, and, through her obedience to Elijah’s request, God provides food enough for Elijah, the woman, and her son. Miraculously, the widow’s barrel of flour and jar of oil never run out (1 Kings 17:8–16). The lesson for the believer is that, if we walk in fellowship with the Lord and obey Him, we will be open to His will. And when we are in God’s will, He fulfills all of our needs, and His mercy to us never runs short.

We next see Elijah as the central character in a face-off with the prophets of the false god Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:17-40). The prophets of Baal call upon their god all day long to rain fire from heaven to no avail. Then Elijah builds an altar of stones, digs a ditch around it, puts the sacrifice on the top of wood and calls for water to be poured over his sacrifice three times. Elijah calls upon God, and God sends fire down from heaven, burns the sacrifice, the wood, and the stones and licks up the water in the ditch. God proved He was more powerful than false gods. It was then that Elijah and the people killed all of the false prophets of Baal, in compliance with God’s command in Deuteronomy 13:5.

After the great victory over the false prophets, rain once again fell on the land (1 Kings 18:41-46). However, in spite of victory, Elijah entered a period of wavering faith and depression (1 Kings 19:1-18). Ahab had told his wife, Jezebel, of God’s display of power. Rather than turn to God, Jezebel vowed to kill Elijah. Hearing of this, Elijah fled to the wilderness, where he prayed for God to take his life. But God refreshed Elijah with food, drink, and sleep instead. Then Elijah took a forty-day journey to Mount Horeb. There Elijah hid in a cave, still feeling sorry for himself and even confessing his belief that he alone was left of the prophets of God. It is then that the LORD instructed Elijah to stand on the mountain as the LORD passed by. There was a great wind, an earthquake, and then fire, but God was not in any of those. Then came a still, small voice in which Elijah heard God and understood Him. God gave Elijah instructions for what to do next, including anointing Elisha to take his place as prophet and assuring Elijah that there were still 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed to Baal. Elijah obeyed God’s commands. Elisha became Elijah’s assistant for some time, and the two continued to deal with Ahab and Jezebel, as well as Ahab’s son and successor, Ahaziah. Rather than die a natural death, Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:1-11).

John the Baptist’s ministry was marked by “the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17), fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi 4:5–6. James uses Elijah as an example of prayer in James 5:17–18. He says that Elijah “was a human being, even as we are,” yet he prayed that it would not rain, and it did not. Then he prayed that it would rain, and it did. The power of prayer is in God, not in our own human nature.

As was true for Elijah, when we focus on the tumult of life in this world, we can get our eyes off of the LORD and become discouraged. God does display Himself in mighty works of power and judgment such as wind, fire, and earthquakes. But He also relates with us intimately and personally, such as in the quiet whisper. God meets our physical needs, encourages us to examine our own thoughts and behaviors, instructs us in how to proceed, and assures us that we are not alone. When we are attentive to God’s voice and walking in obedience to His Word, we can find encouragement, victory, and reward. Elijah struggled with typical human frailties, yet he was used mightily of God. It may not be through such obviously miraculous displays of might, but, if we are yielded to Him, God can use us powerfully for His kingdom purposes, too.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [1 Kings 17 The Source of Elijah's Strength](#) - F B Meyer
- [1 Kings 17 Beside the Drying Brook](#) - F B Meyer
- [1 Kings 17 Ordered to Zarephath](#) - F B Meyer
- [1 Kings 17 The Spirit and the Power of Elias](#) - F B Meyer
- [1 Kings 17 The Test of the Homelife](#) - F B Meyer

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#### **James Smith - THREE IMPORTANT POSITIONS MARK 3:3; 1 KINGS 17:1; PHIL. 4:1**

“Can your horse run fast?” was a question addressed to a boy by a gentleman as the former was holding the horse’s head in a busy London street. He replied, “No, sir; he cannot run fast, but he can stand fast”; a great quality to be admired and commended in a horse. Yes, and in men and women. For these are difficult days, and there are many temptations to turn us from the paths that are right and good.

How can we stand fast in times of trial and temptation is an important question. For our comfort, let us notice that this is not the first

position we should take. There are two prior ones, as follows:

I. **Stand Forth**" (Mark 3:3). This is the sinner's position. The man in the story here was only conscious of shortcomings, and not moral leprosy, yet he needed the healing touch of the Saviour just as much as the leper. This is a lesson all very respectable sinners should take to heart. Yet, whether conscious of moral leprosy or not, we all need the Saviour. To receive His blessed healing ministries we must take the definite step to Him, standing forth even in the midst (see marginal note), that is, a public confession of our sinnership.

II. **Stand Before** (1 Kings 17:1). This is the position of the believer. Elijah was known as the man who stood before God. This position is suggestive of fellowship as well as service. We are saved that we might, yea, should, might we not say must stand before God; that is to say, that we might enter into blessed friendship with Him, and such a friendship bearing the fruit of happy and successful service.

III. **Stand Fast** (Phil. 4:1). This is the position of the loyal friend, loyal to all the interests of the Lord. This follows naturally the other two; in fact, the prior positions fit us for this one. Oh, to be true to Him at all times under all circumstances, and at all costs!

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**Charles Swindoll - ALONE IN THE GAP Read 1 Kings 16:29–17:1 - see [Great Days with the Great Lives: Daily Insight from Great ... - Page 152](#)**

We're first introduced to him as "Elijah the Tishbite" (1 Kings 17:1). Talk about stepping out of nowhere! Elijah came out of this insignificant place—out of nowhere—to make such a significant contribution to God's plan for His people that he became one of Israel's most famous heroes. He became what we often today call a legend.

The first thing that commands our attention is Elijah's name. The Hebrew word for "God" in the Old Testament is Elohim, which is occasionally abbreviated El. The word jah is the word for "Jehovah." Thus, in Elijah's name we find the word for "God" and the word for "Jehovah." Between them is the small letter I, which in Hebrew has reference to the personal pronoun "my" or "mine." Putting the three together, then, we find that Elijah's name means "My God is Jehovah" or "The Lord is my God." No one had a reason to doubt that!

Ahab and Jezebel were in control of the northern kingdom of Israel, and Baal was the god they worshiped. But when Elijah burst on the scene, his very name proclaimed, "I have one God. His name is Jehovah. He is the One I serve, before whom I stand."

By now, the spiritual chasm between God and His people had reached its widest breadth. Elijah stood alone in that gap.

Today there are still those who stand alone in the gap, those who still strive to shake us awake. A handful of brave students at Columbine High School come immediately to mind.

Loaded guns and the threat of death couldn't silence them. I think of them as modern-day Elijahs, whom God uses to deliver a life-changing message. Men and women of courage, ready to stand and deliver. Authentic heroes.

Our Lord is still searching for people who will make a difference. Christians dare not be mediocre. We dare not dissolve into the background or blend into the neutral scenery of this world. Sometimes you have to look awfully close and talk awfully long before an individual will declare his allegiance to God . . . before you will find someone with the courage to stand alone for God. Is that what we have created today in this age of tolerance and compromise?

Elijah's life teaches us what the Lord requires.

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**Tony Merida - Elijah was like Moses**, with whom he later appeared at the transfiguration of Jesus (Matt 17:3). Like Moses, Elijah went eastward for a season after he had confronted a wrathful king (Exod 2:15; 1 Kgs 17:2–6). Moses challenged Pharaoh; Elijah challenges Ahab. Like Moses, Elijah lived on God's abundant provision of bread, meat, and water (Exod 16; 1 Kgs 17:2–6). Like Moses, Elijah goes to Mount Horeb for 40 days and 40 nights to appear before God (1 Kgs 19:8, 11). Like Moses, he needs and receives assurance of God's presence to finish his mission (Exod 33:18–23; 1 Kgs 19:13–17). And like Moses, Elijah feels the burden of the failure of the people so much that he desires death (Num 11:14–15; 1 Kgs 19:3–4). Elijah is the prophet like Moses that God raises up to preserve a remnant who won't bow down to Baal (Konkel, Exodus, 308–9). Elijah was also like John the Baptist, with whom he is associated in the New Testament (Luke 1:13–17). Jesus affirms the identity of John the Baptist as the last prophet, the messenger Elijah who was to come (Matt 11:7–15; Luke 7:24–28). Elijah didn't reappear literally as John the Baptist, for that would be something like reincarnation. But their lives and ministry were similar. They both came from obscure places, they dressed similarly (Matt 3:4; 2 Kgs 1:8), both called people to repentance, and both were forerunners to Messiah (Mal 3:1–3; 4:5). Elijah continues to play an important role in Judaism. At meals he is mentioned in prayer: "May God in his mercy send us the prophet Elijah." He is mentioned at the circumcision of children. He also gets a seat at the Passover meal (Konkel, Exodus,

310)...While Elijah holds a special place in redemptive history, James (James 5:16-18+) wants us to know that every believer, dressed in the righteousness of Jesus, pursuing likeness to Jesus, can have an effective prayer life like Elijah. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings](#))

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## The Lord Lives By Peter Grainger

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Kings 17:1–3

**INTRODUCTION:** These are very bleak days for our world, spiritually and morally, but God still works in dismal, sinful times. As Elisha declared, “The LORD God of Israel lives.”

1. The Word of the Lord Declared. “Neither dew nor rain will fall.” This was a word of confirmation (Deut. 11:13–17) and of challenge (James 1:17; Matt. 5:45; Jer. 14:22). It was also a declaration of war.

2. The Blessing of the Lord Withheld. God’s judgment is seen, not just in what He sends, but in what He withdraws, in this case rain and common grace (Rom. 1:24–28; 2 Thess. 2:6). It was also a warning to individuals and to society.

3. The Prophet of God Concealed. Verses 2–3 are a fresh word for Elijah. He was hidden—and so was the Word of God (Amos 8:11–12).

**CONCLUSION:** In a bleak age, the Lord still lives, and it is vital for us to hear to and respond to His Word (Heb. 3:7–8).

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## James Smith - ELIJAH, THE SEPARATED ONE 1 Kings 17:1

“If thou could’st trust, poor soul,  
In HIM who rules the whole,  
Thou would’st find peace and rest,  
Wisdom and sight are well, but trust is best.”

—A. PROCTOR.

Ahab, the haughty king of Israel, had taken Jezebel, the pretty but wicked Zidonian to wife. Through her influence the prophets of God are slain, and the worship of Baal is established in the land as the national religion. Only seven thousand among all the thousands of Israel remain true in heart to God, and these, through fear of the king, hid themselves and their testimony. The whole nation seems overwhelmed with this flood-tide of idolatry. But away in the village of Tishbe, among the uplands of Gilead, there is a man, perhaps a poor peasant, whose heart has become hot with indignation, and whose jealousy for the honour of Jehovah burns with holy zeal. We fancy we hear him in secret pleading with God for His own Name’s sake to rebuke the iniquity of His people and bring Israel to its knees by sending some arresting judgment upon the land (James 5:17). God answers the earnest cry of the Tishbite, and there and then chooses him to be the instrument in His hand, to turn the nation back to the worship of their Divine King. To accomplish this great work he is invested with all authority. “There shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word.” The interests and the power of God are committed to this servant, because he is wholly devoted to Him. Having been equipped with power, he goes forth to Samaria to declare the message of God in the ears of Ahab. No man will ever accomplish much for God who has not had in some respects a similar training. Note—

His Standing. “The Lord God of Israel, before whom I stand.” He stood as one—

1. **WHO BELIEVED IN GOD.** His faith gave him the victory over all fear of Ahab. Those who have set God before them will not play the coward in the presence of any earthly monarch. It was this consciousness of the presence of God that stiffened the moral backbone of Luther and John Knox. After Pentecost Peter and John were filled with the same holy boldness as Elijah (Acts 4:19, 20).

2. **ACCEPTED BY GOD.** Elijah had yielded Himself unto God that he might be a channel through which His words might come to the hearts of the ungodly, and through whom the power of God might be manifested. The Lord accepted his offer, and filled him as an earthen vessel with His divine treasure (2 Cor. 4:6, 7). He had got the victory with his God in secret, now he is rewarded openly. Many of God’s notable servants have come suddenly out of unexpected places.

3. **IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.** The whole force of Elijah’s moral and spiritual being was on the side of the God of Israel. There was a oneness of purpose between them. All idea of self-seeking was withered up by the fire of Jehovah’s presence. Those who would serve the Lord will have very unpleasant work to do if they are careful about their own personal interests and honour. The secret of courage and power in the work of Christ lies in knowing His will and delighting to do it.

4. **WHO WAITED ON GOD.** As the eye of the maid is turned to her mistress, watching for the next indication of her will, so stood the

life of Elijah before the Lord God of Israel. So may our souls wait on Him. The Moravian motto is most suggestive with the ox standing between an altar and a plough, "Ready for either." Ready for either sacrifice or service, as the Lord may appoint. But Elijah's standing before God was not in idleness, but in the fearless attitude of one whose life was a protest against the popular sin of the nation—idolatry. "Let your light so shine" (Matt. 5:16).

**5. WHO HAD THE AUTHORITY OF GOD.** He speaks as if the power of God and the resources of Heaven were at his disposal. "There shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word." The keys of Heaven had been given to him, and the treasures of dew and rain would only be poured out when he was pleased to open the door. This was a terrible and most effective weapon which God had put into the hand of His faithful servant. Those who fight the battles of the Lord are never sent to warfare on their own charges. Is not the gift of the Holy Spirit equally effective now for the carrying out of God's purposes in the reclaiming of men to the fellowship of His Son? Elijah, like Jesus Christ, spoke as one having authority, because he had the authority of God for that which he spoke. Elijah was a man "subject to like passions as we are." But have we the faith of Elijah? (Mark 9:23).

#### **Some Other Lessons.**

1. That God can easily find the man He needs.
2. That the man chosen of God is often prepared in secret.
3. That great men often come out of unexpected places. (ED: I think of [Evan Roberts](#) who God used mightily in the [great Welsh revival](#))
4. That those sent by God have always a definite mission.
5. That the secret of holy boldness is, "Standing before God."
6. That judgment is sure to overtake those who defy God.

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#### **Vance Havner - "ARE YOU THERE?" 1 Kings 17:2-4, 9, 10**

"And the word of the LORD came unto him (Elijah), saying, Get thee hence and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee THERE . . .

"Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell THERE: behold, I have commanded a widow woman THERE to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was THERE. . ." (1Kings 17:2-4, 9, 10).

DO not believe that the ravens would have fed Elijah anywhere else, nor would the widow woman have appeared anywhere else except "THERE." GOD did not say, "Elijah, ramble around as you please and I will provide for you."

"THERE" was the place of GOD's will for Elijah—the place of His Purpose, the place of His Power and the place of His Provision.

"THERE" WAS THE PLACE OF GOD'S PURPOSE. GOD has a "THERE" for you, somewhere He wants you to be, something He wants you to do. You can never be truly happy elsewhere, nor can you please GOD anywhere but "there." You may do lovely things and become a "success," but always there will be the haunting sense of having chosen life's second best.

Sir Thomas Lipton, the English sportsman, won many yachting prizes, but he never could capture the American cup. One day, showing a friend his glittering collection of trophies, he suddenly said, with a wave of the hand, "And I'd give them all for the one I didn't get!" So, however many of earth's awards and crowns we may gain, if we miss the reward of GOD's approval, the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, we shall feel at the close of our day that we would gladly give them all for the one we missed. Woodrow Wilson spoke of "being defeated by one's successes." Verily, we are cheated when we choose our own way, whatever we may attain in it, if we miss the purpose of GOD.

"THERE" is the place of blessing. When Jacob wandered from Bethel and trouble descended upon him at Shalem, GOD commanded him, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell THERE" (Gen. 35:1). Sometimes we go back to Bethel during the revival but we do not dwell there.

"THERE" is not a particular emotional experience; it is simply the place of GOD's will. David "served his own generation by the will of God" (Acts 13:36), and in so doing he proved that he was "THERE." Epaphras prayed that the saints might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of GOD" (Colossians 4:12), in other words, that they might be "THERE." Our Lord could say to the Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). He was always "THERE!"

GOD has a Cherith and a Zarephath for you. It may be across the street, it may be across the sea. Some sing, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord," but they are not willing to stay where He wants them to stay. A radio preacher tells of receiving a letter from a young lady who was sure that she could do great things for the Lord if she could move to Pittsburgh, but was sure she could do nothing in the small town where she was. It developed that she refused to work in the small tasks in her home church because

she felt too big for it. We have plenty of "Pittsburgh Christians," or eagles on hummingbird nests, always too big for where they are.

In the account of the Great Commission, we overlook the setting: "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them" (Matthew 28:16). They were in the place of the Divine appointing, therefore they received the Divine appointment. Some of us have had no commission because we are not "there," at the place of His appointing.

In the second place, "THERE" WAS THE PLACE OF GOD'S POWER. I do not believe that the miracle of the ravens and the meal barrel would have occurred anywhere but "THERE." Men wonder why they never feel GOD's power or see any evidences of His working. It is because they are out of His purpose, not in His will. We say, "What power Elijah had!" but he had no power in himself, he was simply "THERE," in the place of power. We might say, "What power that radio has!" "What power that electric light has!" But they are very frail contraptions, they are simply in the place of power, connected with the source.

When the traffic officer stops you as you drive down the street, it is not his strength that does it; you could drive over him. It is his authority that makes you halt; he represents something greater than himself. So we are nothing in ourselves, but when we are in the place of GOD's purpose we have His power, and greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.

Men have wondered at the power of George Muller. He had no power of himself; he was simply "THERE," in the place of GOD's purpose for George Muller. Hudson Taylor said he once thought GOD was looking for men strong enough to use, but he learned that GOD was looking for men weak enough to use. The lad who supplied the loaves and fishes for the feeding of the multitude would have been nonplussed if you had told him that morning that he had enough food for several thousand people. He did not know what he had until JESUS took it and broke it and blessed it and passed it around. Nor do you know what you have until you give it to the Lord.

Only when we are "THERE," in the place of His purpose, are we in the place of His power.

Samson did a great many remarkable things, but he never was much; he did not stay "THERE." He may have looked better after his haircut but he lost his strength. Too many Christians let the world give them a haircut. One day they carry off the gates of Gaza, but next day they may be in the lap of Delilah; They do not abide in CHRIST, they do not stay "THERE."

There is no place "just as good" as "THERE," the place of GOD's purpose. We try to strike bargains with the Lord, offer to do something else, seek a compromise or substitute. We work terribly hard at something that may be fine and lovely, but it is not His choice and inwardly we are rebellious. A minister brother tells of a stubborn youngster in a home who was told by his mother to sit down. He refused twice, and then she made him sit down; but he said, "Mother, I may be sitting down but I'm standing up inside!" So often do we seem to be yield to GOD and living "THERE," but there is inward rebellion. And GOD rates rebellion as a grievous thing: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (I Samuel 15:23).

Finally, "THERE" WAS THE PLACE OF GOD'S PROVISION. There would have been no bread, no flesh, no meal, for Elijah anywhere but "THERE." "Where GOD guides, He provides" is a well-worn proverb but gloriously true. Notice that GOD said, "I have commanded the ravens to feed thee THERE"; "I have commanded a widow woman THERE to sustain thee." Elijah had gone on ahead and made arrangements. Strange arrangements they were - I doubt that stranger arrangements ever were made for boarding a preacher! But the plan worked, as it always does when GOD is in it. He is responsible for our upkeep when we follow His directions, but He is not responsible for any expenses not included in His schedule.

Elijah began his interview with the widow by asking, like our Lord at the well of Samaria, for a drink of water. You will observe that when Elijah found this woman, she was engaged at a menial task, gathering sticks, but before he left she had seen the miraculous. From the menial to the miraculous! So our Lord found Peter fishing for fish and made him a fisher of men; found Matthew collecting taxes and made him a Gospel writer. If we are faithful in the least, GOD will show us much. Fetching a drink of water does not cost much, although a cup of water given in His Name shall not be unrewarded. But it does not test faith, so Elijah asked next for a morsel of bread and the first cake at that. Now it looked as though there would be only one cake, so here was a real test for the widow woman. Alas, we give GOD the crumbs, not the cake; the scraps and fragments and leftovers of time and thought and talent and money. Malachi reproved the Jews in his day who kept the good animals given them for sacrifice and gave the Lord the sick and crippled. How he might thunder at us today who give GOD the crumbs from our tables and eat the cake ourselves!

The widow woman was fearful, but Elijah reassured her: "Fear not. . . for thus saith the LORD. . ."

GOD had promised to provide and that was enough.

"In some way or other, the Lord will provide. It may not be my way, it may not be thy way, And yet in His own way, the Lord will provide."

Of course, GOD did not fill the barrel, as we Americans would demand; He simply supplied enough. He has promised to supply our needs, not our wants (Philippians 4:19). So long as we are in His will, we shall have health enough, time enough, work enough,



money enough to do what He wants done. Why should we want any more And He never asks us to do more than we can do by His grace. He may seem to ask the impossible and we may be sure that we are going to fail, but if we are willing to fail for GOD, we won't fail. Nobody ever failed who was honest with GOD.

How we do let circumstances blind us to the all sufficiency of GOD! I think of the morning when Elisha's servant must have walked out on the back porch and discovered an army sent to capture the great prophet. (In those days GOD's preachers were such troublemakers that they sent the militia after them.) The servant was horrified to see soldiers to the right of him, soldiers to the left of him, soldiers before him, soldiers everywhere. But Elisha came out calmly, and instead of bothering to look around him, he looked higher and saw angels to the right of him, angels to the left of him, angels before him, angels everywhere, for the angels of the Lord were encamping round about him who feared GOD to deliver him. No wonder Elisha could pray for this frightened servant's eyes to be opened that he might see! And we need such an eye opener today.

Yes, when we are "THERE," in the place of GOD's purpose, we are in the place of His power and provision. ARE YOU "THERE?"

A little girl in a Midwestern city came forward one night after I had preached from this text and whispered in my ear, "I'm here but I'm afraid I'm not THERE." Many of us are "here," among those present, but we are not "THERE," in the place of His choosing. We may be "THERE" the moment we resign the right to our own lives and let Him take control. Do not grow uneasy if guidance does not come in a moment. What He wants is your yielded will, and the minute you give Him that, you are "THERE," although it may be some time before He shows you just where it is geographically.

May I relate to you a chapter out of my own experience? I began to preach when I was a boy. After four years of preaching, I went away to school and in the period that followed I became unsettled in my beliefs. I felt, under modernistic and liberal influences, that I should adapt the Gospel to the modern mind, which, by the way, is not very modern and not much mind. There came a day when my ministry failed and I returned to my old country home in the hills. That winter my father died and I was left with my mother, having only a country grocery store as our support, and that was robbed and burned to the ground in the following spring! During those months the Lord spoke to my soul and led me to see that if I returned to the old Gospel and preached it, He would clear the track for me. So I renounced the "new approach" and got into the Cherith and Zarephath of GOD's will for me. First, I had to return to the church where I had preached the "new position" and give them the message GOD had given me. The way has not always been easy, but I can testify that GOD had gone before and made arrangements. I have found "THERE" to be the place of His abundant power and marvelous provision. The years since that experience have been one continued story of "meal in a barrel."

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## **John Bisagno - ELIJAH - 1 Kings 17:1; 18:32–35, 38**

### **1. Your Past Is Not Nearly as Important as God's Purpose**

J. Oswald Sanders once wrote of Elijah, "He was like a meteor that flashed across the inky blackness of Israel's spiritual night." Read the story again, and you will discover Elijah appeared on the scene like a superhero coming to the rescue. Yet we know so little about where he came from and how he came to be God's instrument to confront the powerful and wicked King Ahab. Interestingly, the writer of 1 Kings gives only his name and his town of origin. He blows into history like a tornado, without credential or reputation.

He is simply known as "Elijah the Tishbite," who was just one of the many who lived in Gilead.

In spite of an apparent lack of qualifications, God had a distinct purpose for his life. When the young evangelist began his crusades, people might have thought, "Why, this is only Billy Graham from North Carolina," but God had a mighty mission for this man as well. Far too often the longer the pedigree the shorter the dog. I would rather be simply "John Bisagno from Texas" and let God get all the glory from whatever He chooses to accomplish through my life. A call to the ministry is a call to prepare, and the importance of preparation cannot be overstated. But God always has a few models around like Billy Graham, to remind us it's still all about Him.

The story of Elijah reminds us we do not need some thrilling testimony from our past in order to be used for His glory. Many of us have a rather ordinary past, but with God we always have an extraordinary future. Don't let an average yesterday cause you to minimize your potential today and tomorrow. Elijah's lackluster past did not prevent him from stepping up to the plate when God called his name. The result was the confrontation at Mount Carmel, possibly the most powerful event in the Old Testament apart from creation and the Red Sea. What does God have in store for you? Will you be ready? Or have you convinced yourself that God could never use ordinary you? Prepare yourself for the future, focus on our resurrected Lord, and be amazed at what He will do with your life.

### **2. The Harder the Situation, the Better God Likes It**

As residents of big cities, some of us have not seen the majesty displayed nightly in the heavens for a long time. Have you ever noticed that the darker the night, the brighter the light shines, and that light always defeats darkness? I'm convinced that God loves

dark places, because in those moments His light and love can shine the brightest. Israel was a dark place in the days of Elijah, but the darkness of the hour was the perfect backdrop against which God could reveal His power.

The confrontation on Mount Carmel was not merely a battle between Elijah and the prophets of Baal; it was an opportunity for God to remind His people one more time that He alone was God, and that they must have no other. It was the spirit of God who impressed on the heart of Elijah to water the sacrifice once and again, and then again. This was no bizarre display of a presumptive prophet, but the way of the God of Israel. He is the same God who parted the Red Sea, declaring, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." He is the same God who impressed upon Gideon that a victory against thirty thousand enemies, wrought at the hand of thirty thousand Israelites, would leave no room for His glory. God worked a miracle with Gideon's three hundred men, outnumbered ten to one. When your back's against the wall and you face an impossible situation, get ready to see a miracle. When you've come to the end of your rope, go to your knees, get in the Word, and get ready to see the hand of God.

Former President George Bush talked about a "thousand points of light." It was his regular practice to give awards to people and programs that shed the light of mercy in places of dark despair. Jesus called Himself the light of the world, but He took it much further when He told His disciples, "You are the light of the world." If you find yourself living in a dark place, be encouraged, for your light may shine even more brightly, causing more people to see the Lord. If you find yourself in a difficult situation, have no fear, God loves to do the impossible. He did it on Mount Carmel and longs to do it again.

### **3. The Character of the Hero May Be Forged on the Anvil of the Ordinary**

How would you feel if someone called you a "Tishbite"? If you like to think of yourself as rough and rugged, then you probably would take great pride in being called a Tishbite. Elijah the Tishbite came from a place that would best be described as challenging; and though his presence on the stage of Israel's history was abrupt, there is no reason to believe he suddenly became at Carmel what he was not already at Gilead. The first words out of his mouth to a powerful and wicked king were, "From now on it doesn't rain unless I say so." Heroes are not born in a minute. Courage comes with holiness. The man secure in Christ and His Word is secure in himself. The acts of Moses took place over forty years of internship in the wilderness. You may be sure that God's mighty hand had been forging his backbone of steel long before.

I was having dinner in a home not long ago in which several children sat with us at the table. During the opening moments of the meal, the mother inquired about what kind of day her children had experienced. They all answered the same way: "Regular day." I understood, because quite often my own children have given me the same answer to my inquiries about their day. But I wonder if there are truly any regular days? Is God not using our education, our experience, even our ordinariness, to prepare us for what lies ahead? I'm convinced that God works through ordinary, even unlikely people, and their ordinary days, to accomplish His purpose. Next time you are tempted to describe your day as ordinary, consider whether God might be preparing you for a Mount Carmel experience.

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#### **G Campbell Morgan - And Elijah the Tishbite.—1 Kings 17.1.**

This sudden introduction of Elijah is in itself suggestive of the startling and dramatic way in which he broke in on the national life of the kingdom of Israel. To this day there are doubts as to his nationality and parentage. He came like a bolt from the blue; or, more accurately, he flamed like a lightning flash upon the prevailing darkness. His coming was the initiation of a new method in the Divine government, that of prophetic authority. There had been prophets before, but with the appearance of Elijah the office was elevated to one of supreme national importance. From that point onward the prophet was superior to the king. Presently kings arose whose hearts were set upon reform, but their work was directed by the prophets of God, through whom the Divine will was made known. The very first words of Elijah declared his authority. He affirmed that Jehovah the God of Israel lived; and he announced the fact that in the message he was about to deliver he spoke as the messenger of the enthroned Jehovah. The Divine action in thus sending Elijah was arresting. All earthly authority and protection were swept aside as being unnecessary. In simplest ways God protected His messenger, and provided for him. Thus God does break in upon human affairs, and assert Himself ever and anon, by some messenger. Men may refuse the message, and persecute the messenger; but the word he speaks is the word of Jehovah, and it is the word by which men live or die according to their response to it.

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#### **Robert Morgan - Chickens and Spiders and Dogs - Borrow [From this Verse](#)**

John Brenz, friend of Martin Luther, remembered this verse from 1 Kings while hiding from the Spanish Cavalry. Emperor Charles V repeatedly tried to assassinate him, and on one occasion Brenz barely heard of the plot in time to grab a loaf of bread and duck into his neighbor's hayloft. There he hid fourteen days. The bread was quickly gone, but the Lord sent a hen who showed up and laid an egg each day for fourteen days. In this way, Brenz was kept alive. On the fifteenth day the chicken didn't come, and the reformer wondered what he would do. But from the street below came the cries, "The cavalymen are gone at last."

In a similar way, a dog provided for the needs of another reformer, John Craig, who was arrested during the Inquisition. On the eve of his scheduled execution, Craig escaped, but while fleeing through the Italian backcountry, he ran out of food and money. Suddenly a dog approached him, a purse in its mouth. Craig tried to drive the animal away, but the dog persisted in bringing the purse to Craig. In it was enough money to take him to freedom.

Here's one more story. Robert Bruce of Scotland was running for his life, fleeing persecutors. He ducked into a small cave, and a spider immediately appeared and spun a web over the opening. Bruce's pursuers fanned across the landscape, knowing he was near. Two of them approached the cave, and one of the men started to go in. The other one stopped him, saying, "He could never have gotten in there without breaking that spider's web."

Bruce breathed this prayer, "O God, I thank Thee that in the tiny bowels of a spider you can place for me a shelter."

Ravens, chickens, dogs, spiders, and creatures great and small—as Jesus once said of a donkey, the Master has need of them.

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**Charles Swindoll - SPECIAL PEOPLE FOR SPECIAL TIMES** Read 1 Kings 16:29–17:1 see [Great Days with the Great Lives: Daily Insight from Great ... - Page 153](#)

God looks for special people at difficult times. God needed a special man to shine the light in the blackness of those days. But God didn't find him in the palace or the court. He didn't find him walking around with his head down in the school of the prophets. He didn't even find him in the homes of the ordinary people. God found him in Tishbeh, of all places. A man who would stand in the gap couldn't be suave or slick; he had to be rugged—soft-hearted with a tough hide.

God looked for somebody who had the backbone to stand alone. Someone who had the courage to say, "That's wrong!" Someone who could stand toe to toe with an idolatrous king and his wicked wife and proclaim, "God is God."

And I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. (Ezekiel 22:30)

In our culture—our schools, our offices and factories, our lunchrooms and boardrooms, our halls of ivy and our halls of justice—we need men and women of God, including young people of God. We need respected professionals, athletes, homemakers, teachers, public figures, and private citizens who will promote the things of God, who will stand alone—stand tall, stand firm, stand strong!

How's your stature? How's your integrity? Have you corrupted your principles just to stay in business? To get a good grade? To make the team? To be with the "in" crowd? To earn the next rank or promotion? Have you winked at language or behavior that a few years ago would have horrified you? Are you, right now, compromising morally because you don't want to be considered a prude?

Those who find comfort in the court of Ahab can never bring themselves to stand in the gap with Elijah.

**1 Kings 17:2 The word of the LORD came to him, saying,**

- 1Ki 12:22 1Ch 17:3 Jer 7:1 11:1 18:1 Ho 1:1,2
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GOD SPEAKS TO HIS PROPHET**

**The word of the LORD came to him, saying** - The word of the LORD is God's revelation to Elijah. Exactly how God communicated to His prophet is not stated. Clearly the phrase **the word of the LORD** is a key element in chapter 17, for it appears 5x in 24 verses (1Ki 17:2, 5, 8, 16, 24 and 1Ki 17:14 is God actually speaking the Word).

**Lacey** rightly emphasizes that "It was Elijah's personal knowledge of, and relationship with, the Lord that enabled the Lord to speak to him."....He knew the Lord and the Lord knew him. Undoubtedly, the Lord had the same confidence in Elijah that he had had in Abraham concerning the disclosure of the impending judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?... For I know him" (Gen 18:17, 19). The Lord does not reveal His will to those in whom He has no confidence. ([What the Bible Teaches – 1 and 2 Kings.](#))

**THOUGHT** - How is your communion with Jehovah? Do you ever experience His Spirit "speaking" (not literally

of course) to you through the Word as you spend time with Him in the morning? Perhaps you need to do some personal inventory as suggested by Psalm 66:18. "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear." (cf Ps 139:23-24)

**1 Kings 17:3 "Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan.**

- **hide:** 1Ki 22:25 Ps 31:20 83:3 Jer 36:19,26 Joh 8:59 Ac 17:14 Heb 11:38 Rev 12:6,14
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Possible Location of Cherith Brook \(ESV Study Bible\)](#)  
(Click to Enlarge)

## GO EAST YOUNG MAN!

**Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide** ([cathar/satar](#); Lxx - [krupto](#)) **yourself by the brook Cherith** (see map above for possible location), **which is east of the Jordan**- On the map above while the location of the brook Cherith is not known with absolute certainty, it is depicted as almost directly east of Samaria, the city which is where Elijah may have addressed Ahab. God gives Elijah 3 specific instructions. Note that there is no record of a reply from Ahab after Elijah gives him the bad news of the drought. God's sending Ahab to a relatively secluded place would have thwarted any efforts by Ahab to get rid of the troubler of Israel (1Ki 18:17) (But see Lacey's comment below).

I love **Warren Wiersbe's** comment - "Go, hide yourself!" was God's command, and three years later the command would be, "Go, show yourself!" By leaving his public ministry, Elijah created a second "drought" in the land—an absence of the Word of the Lord (cf Amos 8:11). God's Word was to the Jewish people like the rain from heaven (Dt. 32:2; Isa. 55:10): it was essential to their spiritual lives, it was refreshing, and only the Lord could give it. The silence of God's servant was a judgment from God (Ps. 74:9), for not to hear God's living Word is to forfeit life itself (Ps. 28:1). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

[David Guzik](#) points out that Elijah's walk was step by step and by faith not sight - God led Elijah one step at a time. He did not tell him to go to Cherith until he first delivered the message to Ahab. He did not tell him to go to Zarephath until the brook dried up at Cherith. God led Elijah by faith, one step at a time, and Elijah followed in faith.

**C T Lacey** - Many suggestions have been made as to why the Lord sent him there. **Firstly**, the view that it was purely for his safety and protection from the wrath of Ahab and Jezebel is perhaps somewhat simplistic in that the Lord could have protected him even if he had remained where he was. **Secondly**, it has been suggested that his withdrawal from public view was a clear signal from the Lord that He had withdrawn His word from Israel as judgment upon them. Wiersbe represents this view when he writes, "By leaving his public ministry, Elijah created a second "drought" in the land-an absence of the word of the Lord. God's word was to the Jewish people like the rain from heaven" (Deut 32:2; Is 55:10-11). **Thirdly**, Keil submits that he had "to hide himself ... until the period of punishment came to an end ... to preclude all earnest entreaties to remove the punishment". **Fourthly**, a further viewpoint is that the Lord removed him from the public spotlight to teach him humility and to mould him into a mature man of God (v. 24). Whatever the correct answer is, and it might contain elements from all these suggestions, **it is clear that the pathway to spiritual maturity is demanding; nevertheless, it has to be travelled if a servant is going to be fit for the Master's use. It calls for patience and obedience.** Not once throughout the entire chapter is Elijah heard questioning or challenging the Lord about the way He took him....He was prepared to take a step at a time by faith and never demanded to know what the Lord's next move would be. He could have said with Abraham's servant, "I being in the way, the Lord led me" (Gen 24:27). ([What the Bible Teaches – 1 and 2 Kings](#).)

**Vance Havner** - Elijah must hide himself (1 Kings 17:3) before he could show himself with power (18:1). We do not hide ourselves nowadays and when we go out to show ourselves, all that we do show is ourselves; the Spirit of God works not in us.

[David Guzik](#) has some thoughts on how Elijah's hiding by the brook Cherith might apply to our lives today - Through this, God taught Elijah the value of the *hidden* life. He had just become famous as an adversary of Ahab, so mighty that his prayers could stop the rain. At the moment of his new-found fame, God wanted Elijah to **hide** and be alone with God. "We must not be surprised, then, if sometimes our Father says: 'There, child, thou hast had enough of this hurry, and publicity, and excitement; get thee hence, and hide thyself by the brook – hide thyself in the Cherith of the sick chamber; or in the Cherith of disappointed hopes; or in the Cherith of bereavement; or in some solitude from which the crowds have ebbed away'" (Meyer).

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee!*

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**Hide** (05641) **cathar/satar** is a verb which conveys the root meaning of to hide with the added thought of protection, shelter, concealing. To hide by covering, by keep close, by concealing, by keeping secret. The first use is in Ge 4:14 where Cain discovers that because of his sin, he will be "hidden" from the presence of God, which implies a separation. In Ge 31:49. Satar again has the sense of "separation where Laban prayed "The Lord watch between me and thee (Jacob), when we are absent one from another" (Ge 31:49). Cathar/satar may also describe the attempt to hide the sin of adultery from a spouse (Nu 5:13), or unintentional hidden faults (Ps 19:12 [13], or even the concealment of information (1Sa 20:2). To "hide oneself" is to take refuge (e.g., "Doth not David hide himself with us?" 1 Sa. 23:19, In Job 3:23 = Job laments his way is hidden from God. In Isa 40:27 Israel says "My way is hidden from the LORD.) To "hide" someone is to "shelter" him from his enemy (e.g., "The Lord hid them" Jer 36:26). To hide oneself or others for the sake of protection from life-threatening situations. For example, Moses hid his face in the presence of God (Ex 3:6); David hid himself from the wrath of King Saul (1Sa 20:5, 19, 24); the prophet Elijah hid himself from King Ahab (1Kgs 17:3); Joash was hidden from Athaliah (2Kgs 11:2 2Chr 22:11 [12]); and Baruch and Jeremiah are commanded by God to hide from King Jehoiakim (Jer 36:19, 26). To hide one's sin of adultery (Nu 5:13).

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**Joseph Stowell** - Some years ago, I came across a poem by George MacDonald titled "The Hidden Life." It tells the story of an intellectually gifted young Scot who turned his back on a prestigious academic career to return to his aging father and to the family farm. There he engaged in what MacDonald called "ordinary deeds" and "simple forms of human helpfulness." His friends lamented what they saw as a waste of his talents.

Perhaps you too serve in some unnoticed place, doing nothing more than ordinary deeds. Others might think that's a waste. But God wastes nothing. Every act of love rendered for His sake is noted and has eternal rewards. Every place, no matter how small, is holy ground. Influence is more than lofty acts and words. It can be a simple matter of human helpfulness: being present, listening, understanding the need, loving, and praying. This is what turns daily duty into worship and service.

The apostle Paul challenged the Colossians: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," and "do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance" (Col. 3:17,23-24).

God takes notice and delights in using us. — David Roper

Dear Lord, may I be willing to be hidden and unknown today, yet ready to speak a word to those who are weary. May Your Spirit touch my words and make them Your words that enrich and refresh others.

The way to accomplish much for Christ is to serve Him in any way we can.

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Chief of sinners though I be,  
Christ is all in all to me;  
All my wants to Him are known,  
All my sorrows are His own;  
Safe with Him from earthly strife,  
He sustains the hidden life.  
--William McComb "Chief of Sinners"

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In light of Elijah experiencing the hidden life, here are some thoughts by James Smith on "The Christian life is the hidden life. Hidden—in what sense? In six.

I. **The Hidden Life is the SAFE Life**, for we are hidden in Christ for Salvation, as Noah and his family were hidden in the Ark (Isa. 32:2; Heb. 11:7).

II. **The Hidden Life is the JUSTIFIED Life**, for we are hidden in Christ for Justification, as the stones of the Temple were hidden by cedar wood (red wood, the emblem of the Atonement), and gold (emblem of Divine Righteousness) (1 Kings 6:18). Not a stone of the Temple was seen.

III. **The Hidden Life is the JOYFUL Life** (Isa. 42:11). Walking hurriedly along a country road to catch a train one cold, drab, gloomy morning, a burst of merry singing near the Workhouse arrested my steps. It was a robin hidden safely in a hollow tree, protected from the stormy blast, and pouring out its merry song to the Faithful Creator. Hidden ones can sing for joy.

IV. **The Hidden Life is the COMFORTABLE Life**, as the believer is hidden in Christ in the sense of the weak chick hidden safely and securely under the warm shelter of the parent bird (Matt. 23:37).

V. **The Hidden Life is the FRUITFUL Life**, for we are hidden in Christ as the corn of wheat is hidden in the earth—for fruitfulness. "How can I die to myself? It is true that it can be said of those in Christ, "Ye are dead." But the question is: How can this doctrine, which is true positionally, become an experimental fact in our individual experience? How does the corn of wheat die, but by fully surrendering to its environment. Our actual salvation began when we first surrendered to the Lord Jesus, but it will progress in

proportion to the constancy and completeness of that surrender (John 12:24).

VI. **The Hidden Life is the INVISIBLE Life**, the "I live, yet not I" life, for we are hidden in Christ as the High Priest was hidden from the sight of the worshippers when in the most Holy Place (Psa. 91:1). Said a well-known Manchester Christian engineer of a past generation: "The Holy Ghost is the only real power for service. Why have we not got this power? Because we are not willing to be made invisible by the investiture." This is a searching word. Moses could no longer be hidden by his devoted mother, because he had continued to grow. May we never grow so big that we cannot remain hidden. It is when we are little in our own eyes that we are kept out of the sight of men. The only "I's" in the Bible that wear a crown are the small ones—"I"; at the Reward Seat of Christ will you receive a crown?

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### **Donald Cantrell - Hide Thyself by the Brook Cherith**

1 Ki 17:3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

Elijah had just told Ahab that it was not going to rain at any time until he allowed it to rain. Upon making this bold announcement, God speaks to his prophet and sends him into seclusion and hiding. The place that God sent him was in the middle of a vast tough wilderness. God sent him to the brook of Cherith. The name Cherith means "cutting." It would be here that God is going to cut things out of his prophet's life. Elijah could have been a bit heady and high minded after speaking boldly to Ahab. Sitting by the brook Cherith God would cut away unwanted things from his life. I dare say that many of us need to take a journey to Cherith and allow God to do some timely cutting on our life.

1. Cherith Was a Place of Hiding
  2. Cherith Was a Place of Cutting
  3. Cherith Was a Place of Learning
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### **Vance Havner - The Lesson of Cherith: God's Provision**

Get thee hence... and hide thyself by the brook Cherith... and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 1 Kings 17:3, 4.

At Cherith Elijah learned the lesson of God's provision. But Cherith was the place of God's provision because it was the place of God's purpose. Elijah was in the place where God told him to be. The ravens had been commanded to feed him "there," not somewhere else, not just anywhere, but "there." Where God guides He provides. He is responsible for our upkeep if we follow His directions. He is not responsible for expenses not on His schedule. He does not foot the bill when we leave His itinerary.

Sometimes God's arrangements are most unusual. Commanding the birds to feed a prophet is strange procedure. And sometimes God sends us off to a brook when we think we ought to be out in the thick of things. The need is so great, the harvest so plenteous and the laborers so few that it looks like a waste of time to head for a brook. But God has His own pattern and plan, and He may want us by a mountain brook when we are all hot and bothered about getting into the heat of the battle. But it was at Cherith's brook that Elijah was made ready for Carmel's battle

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**F. Whitfield** - Not by the river, but by the brook. The river would always contain an abundant supply, but the brook might dry up at any moment. What does this teach us? God does not place His people in luxuriance here. The world's abundance might withdraw their affections from Him. He gives them not the river but the brook. The brook may be running to-day, to-morrow it may be dried up. And wherefore does God act thus! To teach us that we are not to rest in His gifts and blessings, but in Himself. This is what our hearts are always doing—resting in the gift instead of the Giver. Therefore God cannot trust us by the river for it unconsciously takes up His place in the heart. It is said of Israel, that when they were full they forgot God.

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### **James Smith - ELIJAH, THE HIDDEN ONE 1 Kings 17:2-6**

"Yet not in solitude! if Christ is near me,  
Waketh Him workers for the great employ!  
Oh, not in solitude! if souls that hear me  
Catch from my joyance the surprise of joy."  
—MYERS.

When Elijah had delivered his God-given message to the idolatrous king of Israel it would seem as if he did not know which way to turn next. Perhaps it was in answer to a prayer for guidance and protection that God said, "Get thee hence, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith." He who had slain so many of the Lord's servants was not likely to spare a man like Elijah. The servants of Christ still



find it a testing time after the delivery of some unwelcome death or life message in the Name of God. How sweet it is at such times to find the Lord Himself a refuge and a hiding-place to the troubled soul! We observe that Elijah's hiding-place was a place of—

I. **Divine Appointment.** The Lord said, "Hide thyself by the brook Cherith." How could he feel safe or satisfied hiding in a place of his own choosing or making? What a sigh of relief would escape the heart of the obedient prophet as he sought and found the God-appointed place of rest, such a feeling of relief as the sinner knows, when in obedience to God's Word he flees for refuge to that appointed place called "Calvary." It matters not where the man-slayer ran for safety, he could have no assurance of it until he ran into the God-appointed city of refuge. Are we resting where God has bid us rest, in Jesus Christ, His beloved Son?

II. **Perfect Seclusion.** He was completely hid in the secret of the Lord's presence from the pride of Ahab and the strife of Jezebel's tongue (Ps 31:20). The place of God's salvation is a place of separation and seclusion. Your life is hid with Christ in God. What an honour to belong to "Thy hidden ones" (Ps 83:3). All such hidden ones abide under the shadow of the Almighty (Ps 91:1). They are saved from the fear of man, from the slavery of fashion, and from the harassing anxieties of the ordinary worldly life. "Thou art my hiding-place" (Ps 32:7).

III. **Assuring Promise.** "Thou shalt drink of the brook: and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there" (1Ki 17:4). God never sends us a warfare on our own charges. This promise could not be separated from that hallowed place "Cherith." All the promises of God are in Christ Jesus Yea and Amen. To know that His Command had gone forth was enough to allay every doubt and fear as to all his needs being supplied. All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. We are saved by His grace and assured by His Word.

IV. **Wonderful Experience.** "The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and in the evening" (1Ki 17:6). The prophet could not have such a manifestation of the loving-kindness of God anywhere else; being in God's way He met him and blessed him. So is it at the Cross of Christ. The provision was—

1. **PLENTIFUL.** Not only had he "bread and water," but flesh also. The life of faith will always be met with His "exceeding abundance." The young lions in the full vigour of their own strength do suffer lack; but they that trust the Lord shall not want any good. At that holy place appointed by God, the Cross, there is sufficient for all.

2. **REGULAR.** "Morning and evening," as long as it was needed. He who hath begun the good work is able to carry it on. He who gave you the first mouthful of grace is able to make His grace sufficient for you all the way (Ex 16:35). In the secret place of His presence you may have "day by day your daily bread."

3. **MIRACULOUS.** Every morsel of Elijah's food while here came to him in a supernatural fashion. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The life that has been begotten by the Word of God must also grow thereby. Miracles are an everyday occurrence to the man who lives by faith in the Son of God. When Jesus asked those who had gone out in His Name, "Lacked ye anything?" they said, "Nothing" (Luke 22:35). God's ravens are everywhere, and His command is enough to make them the ministers of mercy and blessing to any of His hidden ones.

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**Streams in the Desert** - "Hide thyself by the brook Cherith." (1 Kings 17:3.)

GOD'S servants must be taught the value of the hidden life. The man who is to take a high place before his fellows must take a low place before his God. We must not be surprised if sometimes our Father says: "There, child, thou hast had enough of this hurry, and publicity, and excitement; get thee hence, and hide thyself by the brook—hide thyself in the Cherith of the sick chamber, or in the Cherith of bereavement, or in some solitude from which the crowds have ebbed away."

Happy is he who can reply, "This Thy will is also mine; I flee unto Thee to hide me. Hide me in the secret of Thy tabernacle, and beneath the covert of Thy wings"

Every saintly soul that would wield great power with men must win it in some hidden Cherith. The acquisition of spiritual power is impossible, unless we can hide ourselves from men and from ourselves in some deep gorge where we may absorb the power of the eternal God; as vegetation through long ages absorbed these qualities of sunshine, which it now gives back through burning coal.

Bishop Andrews had his Cherith, in which he spent five hours every day in prayer and devotion. John Welsh had it—who thought the day ill spent which did not witness eight or ten hours of closet communion. David Brainerd had it in the woods of North America. Christmas Evans had it in his long and lonely journeys amid the hills of Wales.

Or, passing back to the blessed age from which we date the centuries: Patmos, the seclusion of the Roman prisons, the Arabian desert, the hills and vales of Palestine, are forever memorable as the Cheriths of those who have made our modern world.

Our Lord found His Cherith at Nazareth, and in the wilderness of Judea; amid the olives of Bethany, and the solitude of Gadara.

None of us, therefore, can dispense with some Cherith where the sounds of human voices are exchanged for the waters of quietness which are fed from the throne; and where we may taste the sweets and imbibe the power of a life hidden with Christ.—Elijah, by Meyer.

#### **Related Resource:**

- [The Hidden Life](#) - Charles Orr (online book published 1908) (On Amazon, the Kindle edition has received a single 5-star rating, but it lacks an accompanying written review.)

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#### **THEOLOGY AND HYMNOLOGY** 1 Kings 17:3b - Eric Hayden

Hide thyself by the brook Cherith....

Let us go to “school.” At the end of our course we shall not receive a degree or a diploma nor will we be fitted for a profession. But we shall be ready to meet life, life with all its setbacks, buffetings, blows, and sorrows.

It is the school Elijah attended, and its name is Cherith. The precise location of the campus he attended is unknown, but it was probably east of the Jordan River in Gilead. For us this school is wherever we happen to be. In his course of study Elijah learned three important lessons, lessons we too must learn. Each of them can be summed up in the line of a well-known hymn.

#### **I. “One step enough for me”—the lesson of the steppingstone life**

“Lead, kindly Light,” wrote Newman, “lead Thou me on.” Amidst gloom and darkness, far from home, unable to see a step in front, he relied on divine guidance, step by step.

This was a hard lesson for Elijah. He had been told to go to the brook Cherith—and then it dried up before his very eyes. He must go on to Zarephath. Note that he was not told about Zarephath until Cherith had dried up; it was one step at a time. Cherith had been sufficient for the time being as he had water to drink and food brought by ravens, but if he had then known about Zarephath he would have wanted to move on before God’s time.

So God leads all His children by steppingstones, one at a time. It is not always good for us to know what lies ahead, around the corner. We know not what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future—and that is enough. “God holds the key of all unknown, and I am glad!” Cross every dangerous and difficult situation by the sturdy steppingstones God supplies.

#### **II. “Hide me, O my Saviour hide”—the lesson of the hidden life**

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul” was written by Charles Wesley.

“Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past.”

God told Elijah to “hide” himself by the brook Cherith. He was not sent there for preaching or performing miracles, but for seclusion, prayer, and meditation. That was his preparation for future service. How often in this mad, rushing world we need to get alone with God and discover the delights of the hidden life at Cherith. “Come apart,” Jesus said to His weary disciples. When we know excitement, success, frustration, and disappointment, we need to remember that our lives are hid with Christ in God. We have to hide, not hurry.

#### **III. “To trust and not to trace”—the lesson of the trustful life**

George Rawson wrote:

“My Father, it is good for me  
To trust and not to trace;  
And wait with deep humility  
For Thy revealing grace.”

How often we sing, “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus ...”—and then try to engineer things, people, and circumstances in order to make things easy and comfortable for ourselves. Suppose when Cherith began to dry up, Elijah had tried to make his own future plans. Instead, he trusted in the great God who has a plan for everyone of us. As he saw the water going down and the stones on the stream bed beginning to appear, he still sat and trusted.

Often we have to sit beside a drying brook such as a personal or family disaster or a business catastrophe. At first it appears as if God has failed us, but as we wait and trust we begin to see His hand at work, and eventually He leads out and on to Zarephath.

Elijah was “a man subject to like passions as we are” (James 5:17), and his Cherith experience brings him near to each of us. But

remember the One who is greater than Elijah who was “touched with the feeling of our infirmities ... [and] was in all points tempted like as we are” (Heb. 4:15). Jesus knows and feels our difficulties. He had His Cherith experiences (crossing the brook Kidron into the Garden of Gethsemane). Just prior to the cross He learned these same three lessons as we must learn in the school called Cherith. Hymnology and theology, poet and prophet, are in accord.

**1 Kings 17:4 “It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.”**

- **I have commanded:** 1Ki 17:9 19:5-8 Nu 20:8 Job 34:29 38:8-13,41 Ps 33:8,9 147:9 Am 9:3,4 Mt 4:4,11
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD'S UNUSUAL SERVANTS

**It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there-** God is so in control that even the unclean birds the ravens were subject to His command.

**Guzik** has an interesting note that "There is an emphasis on the word **there**. God promised that the ravens would feed Elijah as he stayed at Cherith. Of course, theoretically the ravens could feed him anywhere – but God commanded that it be at Cherith. Elijah perhaps wanted to be somewhere else, or be preaching, or doing anything else. Yet God wanted him **there** and would provide for him **there**."

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**J R Miller** - "You are to drink from the brook. I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there." 1 Kings 17:4

God is never at a loss for a way of providing for His children. The brooks of water, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the winds of heaven, the waves of the sea—all creatures belong to him, and are under His direct control. He has no trouble, therefore, in getting food to His children, wherever they may be.

Perhaps none of us ever had ravens carry our daily bread to us—but God sends it to us in other ways; and it is just as really HE who sends it, whether railroad trains carry it across a continent, or ships bring it half around the globe, or birds convey it to our windows, or it comes through hands of loving friends.

Many of us know too much for our good, these 'modern days'. We are so wise about "laws of nature" that we can account for everything on scientific grounds, and have no need for God's assistance anywhere! Consequently we forget, some of us, that God has anything to do with this world. What poor fools we are! What are the laws of nature—but God's established and common ways of doing things? If I sow wheat-seeds on a little patch of soil, and in a few months reap a harvest, and then, taking the wheat to the mill, get fine flour and have good bread on my table. Had God nothing to do with sending it to me? Did not he provide it as really, as when he sent the ravens to Elijah day by day, with food for him?

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**Spurgeon** - There was a poor man who had no bread for his family, and they were almost starving. One of his children said to him, "Father, God sent bread to Elijah by ravens."

"Ah yes," he replied, "but God does not use birds in that way now." He was a cobbler, and a short time after he spoke these words there flew into his workshop a bird, which he saw was a rare one, so he caught it and put it in a cage. A little later, a servant came in and said to him, "Have you seen such-and-such a bird?"

"Yes," he answered, "it flew into my shop, so I caught it and put it into a cage."

"It belongs to my mistress," said the maid.

"Well then, take it," he replied, and away she went. When the girl took the bird to her mistress, the lady sent her back to thank the cobbler for his care of her pet, and to give him half a sovereign. So, if the bird did not actually bring the bread and meat in its mouth, it was made the medium of feeding the hungry family although the father had doubted whether such a thing could be.

The ravens owe their own meat day by day to God's providing, and yet he employs them for the supply of his servant. So poor saints, deeply dependent on God for their humblest needs, he enables to help saints yet poorer still. His prophet shall be sustained by ravens, who, perhaps, have little ones that cry for their food. The Lord will provide. We know not how, but he has his own ways and methods.

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You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there. 1 KINGS 17:4

The prophet Elijah pronounced a drought upon the land because of the sin of Ahab and the nation of Israel. There was only one problem. Elijah had to live in the same land as Ahab:

Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word." Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there" (1 Kings 17:1-4).

God provided for Elijah in a supernatural way. The ravens brought bread in the morning and meat in the evening. His water came from the brook.

God often uses money to confirm His direction for our lives. Many times God uses a lack of provision to move us into new directions; it is often a catalyst to encourage new ideas and strategies. Many times a loss of job becomes the greatest blessing to our lives because it provides the catalyst to do things we simply would never do without taking the step to get out of our comfort zone.

Friend, if you are fully following the Lord in your life, and if you are seeking direction from Him and have no un-confessed sin in your life, there is no way He will allow you to miss His provision for you. He has 1,000 ways to get the provision you need at the time you need it. Provision follows obedience.

Today, consider that God can even send a raven to feed you if that is His plan.

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**Springs in the Valley** - I have commanded the ravens...a widow woman there. (1 Kings 17:4, 9)

We must be where God desires. Elijah spoke of himself as always standing before the Lord God of Israel. He could as distinctly stand before God when hiding beside Cherith, or sheltering in the widow's house at Zarephath, as when he stood erect on Carmel, or listened to the voice of God at Horeb.

If we are where God wants us to be, He will see the supply of our need. It is as easy for Him to feed us by the ravens as by the widow woman. As long as God says stay here, or there, be sure that He is pledged to provide for you. Though you resemble a lonely sentinel in some distant post of missionary service God will see to you. The ravens are not less amenable to His command than of old: and out of the stores of widow women He is able to supply your need as He did Elijah's at Zarephath.

When God said to Elijah, "Hide thyself by the brook Cherith," a carbon copy of the order was given to the ravens. They brought food morning and evening to the place of Divine appointment.

When Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel," He placed all the resources of heaven at the disposal of the going group.

When I was ordered toward the front in France, I got permission to remain behind ten days for letters. None came. When I reached my objective, where men were dying without a Chaplain's comfort, I found the last thirty days' post. The commanding officer said:

"In the army, the letters go where the orders read."

In the kingdom of God the blessings and equipment are found only where the orders read. Let us all go and tell the story. JOSIAH HOPKINS

It is in the path of His appointment that we shall find His Presence.

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## 1 Kings 17:1-6 GOD AND THE RAVENS

I [God] have commanded the ravens to feed thee. 1 Kings 17:4

The Associated Press carried this story under the heading "Crow Feeds Dog": "For six days a puppy, trapped in an animal snare, was kept alive by a crow. Both animals belong to a couple living at a road construction camp. After the dog disappeared recently, the pet crow stopped eating normally. It would take a bit of food in its beak, fly off and return a short time later to fetch another scrap. One day they followed it and were led to the spot where the dog lay trapped." The article then concluded, "The earliest reference to this type of thing was the feeding of Elijah by the ravens."

The provision of bread and flesh for the prophet Elijah was certainly a marvelous thing. As children of the Heavenly Father we can know something even more wonderful—God's daily supply of all our needs. In 1 Kings 17:4 the Lord said to Elijah, "I have commanded the ravens to feed thee." And the apostle Paul writing to believers at Philippi declares, "God shall supply all your need." He may not actually use birds for this purpose today, but He does have His "ravens" whereby His bountiful provisions are delivered to us.

The Lord expects us, however, to be diligent in fulfilling our responsibility as well. His Word therefore emphasizes, "... work with your hands." And the writer of Proverbs exhorts, "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread." Once we have done our part, we may rest in the assurance of the Lord's gracious supply, for He has His "ravens" in every age! (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Say not, my soul,  
"From whence shall God relieve my care?"  
Remember, Omnipotence  
Has servants everywhere!  
—Anon.

God ever has His "ravens" for the righteous, but He has no loaves for the loafer!—Bosch

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**Spurgeon** - "I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there." God has the power to make all creatures obedient to his will. These ravens never croaked out a single objection but did as they were commanded. Their instincts did not rebel, but they submitted absolutely to God's will and, I daresay, were as diligent and as happy in carrying the bread and meat to Elijah as they would have been if they had been taking it to their own young or feasting on it themselves. The whole world is obedient to God. He spoke once to the great floods of water, and up they sprang from the vast caverns where they slept, and down they dashed. And when God just whispered to them and bid them go back to their resting places, back they went, and the waters were removed from the earth. Nor were the floods of earth merely obedient, for celestial bodies have confessed his power, for Joshua made the sun and the moon stand still while the Lord's warriors struck their foes. Nor are inanimate things his only sway. The lions crouch at Daniel's feet, and the monster fish swallows but does not destroy the wayward Jonah. Nor do only great things obey him. The worm at God's command struck the root of Jonah's gourd, the locusts came on Egypt, and he sent all manner of flies and lice in all their quarters. Is it not a sad, strange thing that humans are the only creatures that refuse to obey their Creator? I know that even Judas fulfills that to which he was appointed, but so far as his will is concerned, man remains a stout rebel against God. The raven, commanded to carry bread and meat, does it; but the unbeliever commanded to believe in Christ, to repent of his sins, and to produce the fruit of repentance, refuses to do it. Oh, the stubbornness of human nature! We are worse than ravens. "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's feeding trough, but Israel does not know; my people do not understand" (Is 1:3).

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**A W Tozer** - **Dependence on God** - see [Tozer for the Christian Leader: A 365-Day Devotional - Page 21](#)

And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. —1 Kings 17:4

We can learn important lessons by considering God's disciplines in dealing with Elijah. As Elijah fled to the wilderness following his first confrontation with King Ahab, God said to him, "Elijah, go to the brook Cherith, and I will feed you there." God sent big, black buzzards—ravens, scavenger birds—each morning and evening with Elijah's meals. What humiliation! All his life Elijah had been self-sufficient. Now he waited on scavenger birds to deliver him his daily bread....

Elijah was like so many faithful preachers of the Word who are too true and too uncompromising for their congregations.

"We don't have to take that," the people protest. And they stop contributing to the church. More than one pastor knows the meaning of economic strangulation. Preach the truth, and the brook dries up! But the Lord knows how to deal with each of us in our humiliations. He takes us from truth to truth. MMG096

Lord, I commit myself anew today to never compromise the truth, even if it costs me my job. Amen.

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**C H Spurgeon** - There was a poor man who had no bread for his family, and they were almost starving. One of his children said to him, "Father, God sent bread to Elijah by ravens."

"Ah yes," he replied, "but God does not use birds in that way now." He was a cobbler, and a short time after he spoke these words there flew into his workshop a bird, which he saw was a rare one, so he caught it and put it in a cage. A little later, a servant came in

and said to him, "Have you seen such-and-such a bird?"

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"Well then, take it," he replied, and away she went. When the girl took the bird to her mistress, the lady sent her back to thank the cobbler for his care of her pet, and to give him half a sovereign. So, if the bird did not actually bring the bread and meat in its mouth, it was made the medium of feeding the hungry family although the father had doubted whether such a thing could be.

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**Spurgeon** - God is a good master, and never suffers his servants to starve. He will provide for his own, even if all the land be wasted by drought.

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily** - 1 Kings 17:4, 9 I have commanded the ravens ... a widow woman ... there.

We must be where God desires.— Elijah spoke of himself as always standing before the Lord God of Israel. He deemed himself as much a courtier in the royal palace as Gabriel (Luke 1:19). And he could as distinctly stand before God when hiding beside Cherith, or sheltering in the widow's house at Zarephath, as when he stood erect on Carmel, or listened to the voice of God at Horeb. Wherever you go, and whatever ministry you are called to undertake, glory in this, that you never go to any greater distance from God.

If we are where God wants us to be, He will see to the supply of our need. It is as easy for Him to feed us by the ravens as by the widow woman. As long as God says, Stay here, or there, be sure that He is pledged to provide for you. Though you resemble a lonely sentinel in some distant post of missionary service, God will see to you. The ravens are not less amenable to His command than of old: and out of the stores of widow women He is as able to supply your need as He did Elijah's, at Zarephath.

How often God teaches best in seclusion and solitude! It is by the murmuring brooks of nature that we have our deepest lessons. It is in the homes of the poor that we are fitted for our greatest tasks. It is beside couches where children suffer and die, that we receive those preparations of the heart which avail us when the bugle note summons us to some difficult post.

God leads through death to life.— It was needful that the child should die, that sin might be remembered and dealt with; but through Death's portal the trio entered a richer, fuller life. Fear not that gateway!

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**Charles Swindoll - A STEP AT A TIME** Read 1 Kings 17:4 [Great Days with the Great Lives: Daily Insight from Great ... - Page 159](#)

God's direction includes God's provision. God says, "Go to the brook. I will provide." Vance Havner, in his book *It Is Toward Evening*, tells the story of a group of farmers who were raising cotton in the Deep South when the devastating boll weevil invaded the crops. These men had put all of their savings, dedicated all of their fields, set all of their hopes in cotton. Then the boll weevil came. Before long, it looked as if they were headed for the poorhouse.

But farmers, being the determined and ingenious people they are, decided, "Well, we can't plant cotton, so let's plant peanuts." Amazingly, those peanuts brought them more money than they would have ever made raising cotton. When the farmers realized that what had seemed like a disaster had actually proved to be a boon, they erected a large and impressive monument to the boll weevil—a monument to the very thing they once thought would destroy them.

"Sometimes we settle into a humdrum routine as monotonous as growing cotton year after year," says Havner, himself a seasoned old saint of God at the time he wrote these words. "Then God sends the boll weevil; He jolts us out of our groove, and we must find new ways to live. Financial reverses, great bereavement, physical infirmity, loss of position—how many have been driven by trouble to be better husbandmen and to bring forth far finer fruit from their souls! The best thing that ever happened to some of us was the coming of our 'boll weevil.'"<sup>6</sup> When God directs, God provides. That's what sustained Elijah during his boot camp experience.

We have to learn to trust God one day at a time. Did you notice that God never told Elijah what the second step would be until he had taken the first step? God told His prophet to go to Ahab. When Elijah got to the palace, God told him what to say. After he said it, God told him, "Now, go to the brook." He didn't tell Elijah what was going to happen at Cherith; He just said, "Go to the brook and hide yourself." Elijah didn't know the future, but he did have God's promise: "I'll provide for you there." And God didn't tell him the



next step until the brook had dried up.

**1 Kings 17:5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan.**

- **did according:** 1Ki 19:9 Pr 3:5 Mt 16:24 Joh 15:14
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **ELIJAH'S UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE**

**So** - Term of conclusion. Elijah concludes God has spoken and that settles it for him whether he fully understands it or not!

**Warren Wiersbe** - The Lord usually leads His faithful people a step at a time as they tune their hearts to His Word. God didn't give Elijah a three-year schedule to follow. Instead, He directed his servant at each critical juncture in his journey, and Elijah obeyed by faith. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**He went and did according to the word of the LORD** - The LORD spoke and Elijah obeyed. We have previously encountered one prophet who sadly did not fully obey **the word of the LORD** and he paid for his partial obedience (disobedience) with his life (see 1Ki 13:11-32+).

**THOUGHT**- Step by step, one step of obedience after another! Elijah gives a good pattern for all God's children. Our response should be unhesitating obedience when we have **the** (clear) **word of the LORD**, whether we fully understand or not. Play Rich Mullins' great song "[Step by Step](#)." Oh God of all our steps, would You by Your Spirit and Your Word enable each soul reading this story of Elijah to learn to walk obediently in Your ways, step by step, until we take our final step into glory and Your eternal presence. In Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen.

**For** (term of explanation - what's writer explaining?) **he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan**- [See map above](#) for possible location. The main point is that Elijah is **east of the Jordan** and away from Ahab and Jezebel. Some writers think that this may have been an extended time, even as long as a year. Certainly it was more than a few days or weeks because by the time Elijah arrives at Zarephath, the drought is obviously having significant impact on the fertility of the land of Sidon.

**Donald Wiseman**: Our obedience is an essential aspect of God's protecting grace. The means God uses may be varied. Some object to the reading **ravens** ('ōrēbīm), which, even if it could be proven to be the modern name for the black**arabs** ('ārabīm—same consonants) east of Jordan, is taken by others as an 'unnecessary rationalisation'.<sup>24</sup> The bringing of 'meat' would be a luxury and the provision of food and meat morning and evening should remind the reader of God's unfailing provision (Exod. 16:8, 12).

**Philip Ryken** - True obedience has staying power. It needs to, because living for God in an evil day takes more than one act of obedience. More often it requires a long obedience in the same direction. Once Elijah arrived in the place of God's provision, he had to stay there, and so he did: He "went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan"....Notice how all of Elijah's actions correspond to the attributes of the God he served. Elijah was the kind of man he was because God is the kind of God he is. Because God is a living God, Elijah was able to pray to him. Because God always keeps his word, Elijah had a word to obey. Because God cares for his people, Elijah could stay where he was and depend on God's provision. He was a praying, obeying, staying prophet because the God he served is a living, word-keeping, caring God. (1 Kings 17:5).([1 Kings](#))

**Charles Swindoll** - Notice the wording here. He went and lived by the brook Cherith. It's one thing to take a day trip off the beaten track, to go camping for a weekend, or even to spend two or three weeks backpacking in the wilderness. Such adventures offer all the delights of being away from the cares of the real world for a time, even as you have the comfort of knowing that your lifeline to civilization is still there. It's quite another thing to live in the wilderness, alone, for an extended time. But that's exactly what Elijah did for months, possibly the better part of a year. God said, "Go there. Settle there. Live there." That's exactly what Elijah did. Would you accept such an assignment from God? Would you respond with such immediate obedience? How many of us would say nothing except, "Yes, Sir. I trust You completely. I don't need the spotlight to survive." Very few! We much prefer only comfortable and active Christianity. [Great Days with the Great Lives: Daily Insight from Great ... - Page 160](#)

**TSK** - Many learned men have raised doubts on those parts of the Inspired Word, which may, by the perverseness of their argument and the ingenuity of their surmise, be made to appear inconsistent with fact. In this case, they are not satisfied with being expressly told by God that the ravens supplied Elijah with food, while the brook gave him drink, but apparently to mystify a manifest miracle, they suggest whether these ravens might not be merchantmen, or the inhabitants of a neighbouring town. Let any unprejudiced

reader and lover of the Bible take the whole history of Elijah, and he will find that his life was almost a daily illustration of the power of God in his miraculous interpositions. Instance the supply of provision in the unwasting barrel of meal and cruse of oil, after the prophet had removed to Zarephath: the power communicated to him to raise the widow's son from death: the wonderful interposition of the Lord to prove the folly of Baal's worshippers, in sending down fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice and lick up the water, although the sacrifice had been saturated therewith, and the altar surrounded by a deep trench to prevent its running away. The prayer for rain is another instance: the sojourn in Horeb forty days and forty nights, after having eaten of the cake: the destruction of Ahaziah's messengers twice: the smiting of the waters at Jordan: the fall of the mantle on Elisha: and finally, in the closing scene of life, he was taken to glory without tasting the pains of death, the sting was taken away.

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### Donald Cantrell - He Went and Dwelt by the Brook

1 Ki 17:5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

Elijah obediently journeys to the Brook of Cherith and here he will learn to trust his God. I like to place myself in the mindset of the biblical figures. This would have been a tough situation for Elijah. He was a rough and rugged man of God, not used to having to sit in solitude and waiting. The silence and the waiting had to be so long and so loud. In waiting by the brook, God was going to teach Elijah to fully depend upon him for all of his daily needs. The birds would bring his meat to him and the brook would sustain him. All Elijah had to do was patiently sit by the brook and wait upon the Lord. I think the hardest thing for most of us to do is sit and wait.

1. The Lonely Seclusion of Elijah
2. The Lovely Sustaining of Elijah
3. The Lowly Surrender of Elijah

**1 Kings 17:6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook.**

- **the ravens:** Ex 16:35 Nu 11:23 Jdg 14:14 15:18,19 Ps 34:9,10 37:3,19 Ps 78:15,16,23,24 Isa 33:16 Jer 37:21 40:4 Hab 3:17,18 Mt 6:31-33 14:19-21 19:26 Lu 22:35 Heb 6:18 13:5,6
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CLEAN FOOD FROM UNCLEAN BIRDS

**The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook = Ravens** are unclean (Lev 11:13-15+; Deut 14:14+) but that did not compromise the kosher aspect of the bread and meat they transported to Elijah. There is a "hidden miracle" in this description because for ravens are carnivorous (more accurately omnivorous - eating animal and plant matter) and yet (in obedience to God's command) they brought the provisions without devouring them! In short, Elijah was learning to be dependent on the LORD.

**Guzik** - Every bit of food that came to Elijah came from the beak of an unclean animal. Elijah had to put away his traditional ideas of clean and unclean or he would die of starvation. Through this, God taught Elijah to emphasize the spirit of the law before the letter of the law. Charles Spurgeon drew two points of application from this event, likening the food the ravens brought to spiritual food. First, he recognized that God may bring a good word to us through an unclean vessel, spiritually unclean, like a raven. Second, that one can bring spiritual food to others and still be unclean spiritually themselves. "But see, too, how possible it is for us to carry bread and meat to God's servants, and do, some good things for his church, and yet be ravens still!" (Spurgeon). As faithfully as He provided manna for Israel in the wilderness, God provided for Elijah's needs. He came to trust more than ever in the miraculous provision of God.

**J R Miller** - God is never at a loss to find a way of providing for His children. All things are His servants. The brooks, the water, the birds, the beasts of the field, the wings of ravens, the waves of the sea—all creatures, all things, animate and inanimate, belong to Him—and are ready to serve Him at His call. Some people trouble themselves much about miracles, asking how God can interrupt the regular order of nature to do any special favor for a child of His. If we understand how completely all things are in God's hands, it will not be hard for us to believe that God can do what He will—in His own world. He cannot be the slave of His own laws. Perhaps none of us ever have been fed by ravens, as Elijah was fed beside the brook Cherith; but in other ways, no less marvelous, God

brings our daily bread to us continually.

**Spurgeon** - He had plain but sufficient fare, but what unlikely providers! Ravens are rather robbers than caterers, yet they forgot their own hunger and the cries of their young to feed the prophet. Perhaps they fetched the bread and meat out of Ahab's larder; there was very little to be found anywhere else. Well does an old writer observe, "O God! thou that providest meat for the fowls of the air, wilt make the fowls of the air provide meat for man, rather than his dependence on thee shall be disappointed: O let not our faith be wanting to thee, since thy care can never be wanting to us."

More likely to rob than to feed,  
Were ravens, who live upon prey,  
But when the Lord's people have need,  
His goodness will find out a way.

He lions and ravens can tame,  
All creatures obey his command:  
Then let me rejoice in his name,  
And leave all my cares in his hand.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - God always stays with his people. He will care for us, too, even if he has to use ravens to do it. In a sermon called "Elijah by the Brook," Al Martin tells of a cold, snowy winter night in a German village when a boy and his mother were in desperate straits. They had run out of food. The fire was out, and there was nothing left to burn to keep their cottage warm. So the mother was shocked, as they prayed, to hear her son walk across the room and fling the cottage door wide open to the cold night air.

"My son, why are you opening the door on such a cold night?" she cried out.

"It's for the ravens, Mother," the little boy simply replied. He knew the story of Elijah by the brook. He remembered how God had provided for his prophet and trusted that God would send his ravens, snow or no snow.

It so happened that the burgomaster was walking about that snowy night to see that all was well in the village. He was amazed to see an open door at the tiny home, so he went to investigate. He met the woman at the door and asked what was the matter. When she explained that she and her son were waiting for God to send his ravens, the burgomaster replied, "I will be your raven, both now and ever." (Philip Ryken [1 Kings](#) Quoted in a sermon by Albert N. Martin, from F. B. Meyer, *Elijah: And the Secret of His Power*, 25–26.)

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### **Joni Eareckson Tada - The Two Crows**

The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.—1 Kings 17:6

The morning of my trip dawned. As I got ready to leave, I couldn't shake the blues. I felt ashamed for being down—what did I have to be discouraged about? I prayed, "Lord, please brighten my spirits. Grab me by the scruff of the neck and show me your goodness."

We packed up and headed to the airport. We flew to Dallas and after our plane landed, I sat by the curb, waiting for my friend to get the van. I heard a "caw!" behind me. When I turned my wheelchair around, two ugly, big crows were sitting on the roof's ledge. They remained there for at least five minutes, looking down at me. It was so odd, I stared back at them.

As I did, God brought to mind the story of Elijah. The prophet had become depressed just one day after he performed spectacular miracles. Elijah had announced the end of a drought and was the people's best friend. Still, he had a bad case of the blues. The record shows that the Angel of the Lord touched Elijah and even agreed that "the journey is too much for you" (1 Kings 19:7). Elijah rested and had something to eat and drink. At another point God sent ravens to feed Elijah.

All the Lord's provision came to mind as I stared at those old crows. I knew God had placed them right there when I needed to be reminded that the Lord wanted to give me rest and refreshment.

The lesson of those crows and of Elijah is for all of us. The Lord gives us gentle reminders of his intimate concern over every detail of our lives. We just have to open our eyes to recognize that, yes, he may even use a couple of crows to make his point.

God, give me physical rest and spiritual food. Enable me to recognize your signs of encouragement even when they come in strange forms. (See [More Precious Than Silver: 366 Daily Devotional Readings](#))

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### **Daily Light on the Daily Path - "Give us this day our daily bread."**

I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.—His bread will be

given him; his water will be sure.—The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.—My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.—Be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

“He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna . . . that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”—Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Matt. 6:11; Ps. 37:25; Isa. 33:16; 1 Kings 17:6; Phil. 4:19; Heb. 13:5; Deut. 8:3; John 6:32–34

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### **Greg Laurie - BY THE BROOK**

The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. (1 Kings 17:6)

When the Bible says that ravens brought Elijah food, it doesn't mean they took his order, flew through the local fast food restaurant, and then delivered his meal. Ravens are scavengers. They brought little bits of meat and bread to Elijah. What's more, the water in the brook from which he drank would have been somewhat polluted. It was not an easy situation.

How easily Elijah could have said, “Well, Lord, I don't really want to be in this crummy little place. I kind of like being in front of people. I like the limelight.” But the Lord was preparing Elijah for something beyond his wildest dreams. Not long after this, Elijah would be standing on Mt. Carmel in that great showdown with the false prophets (see 1 Kings 18:20–39).

Sometimes we don't like where God has put us. We say, “Lord, I don't like this situation. I don't like where I am. I want to do something great for You. I want to make a difference in my world.” Maybe the Lord wants you to be effective right where you are. Maybe He wants you to take advantage of the opportunities in front of you and be faithful in the little things. Who knows what God has in store for you?

If God has you by some muddy little brook, so to speak, just hang in there. Be faithful, do what He has already told you, and wait on Him and on His timing. God will do something wonderful for you or with you. Just be available and open to do what He would have you to do. (See [Every Day with Jesus: Forty Years of Favorite Devotions - Page 88](#))

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James Smith - EVERYTHING OBEYS THE LORD.

1. ORBS OF LIGHT (Josh. 10:12-14). Sun stood still.
2. MIGHTY OCEAN (Matt. 8:27). “Even the winds and seas obey Him.”
3. EVIL SPIRITS (Mark 1:27). “With authority com-mandeth He even the unclean spirits.”
4. BIRDS OF AIR (1 Kings 17:4). “I have commanded the ravens to feed thee.”

Did we say “Everything?” Ah, there is one exception—man. What will be the end of the disobedient ones? Joshua 5:6 tells us, Israel “were consumed because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord.”

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### **ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS - W Harris**

“And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.”—1 Kings 17:6.

I.—The prophet was sure of sustenance, because the command to feed him was given to creatures incapable of disobedience. “I have commanded the ravens to feed thee.”

God is said to command the earth (Psa. 33:9), the heavenly bodies (Isa. 45:12), the waters of the sea (Prov. 8:29), etc., because He uses them to fulfil His will, as the engine-driver may be said to command his engine, or the electrician his battery, when they set free the power of the steam, or the electric fluid. With this great difference, that God originates the forces with which He works. In this sense He is said to have commanded the ravens to feed Elijah, thereby making sure the sustenance of the prophet, because the creatures were not moral agents.

II.—The manner in which Elijah was fed was miraculous.

1. Because the birds who ministered to him were birds of prey, and would, therefore, be inclined to eat the flesh which they brought.
2. Because they brought it to one man in particular, and they brought it at stated and regular intervals.

III.—Although the manner in which Elijah was fed was miraculous, it was in accordance with the idea of creation. Man was created “to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air” (Gen. 1:28); “all things were put under his feet” (Psa. 8:6). They were intended to be his servants, and although he has forfeited his right to rule them by refusing to acknowledge God’s right to rule him, yet, when he returns to his allegiance, he may expect in some degree, to return to his position as king of the creatures beneath him, and to be ministered to by them.

#### LESSONS

I.—Our inferiors may, in the hands of God, be greater blessings than our equals or superiors. The ravens were better friends to Elijah at this time than the king of Israel or any of his subjects.

II.—The servants of God may learn a lesson from the ravens and restrain their natural and lawful desires when, by so doing, they can serve a higher purpose.

#### SELECTED—I

I.—Notice the strange caterers for Elijah.

I know not whether it had been more miraculous to preserve him without meat, or to provide meat by such mouths. He that could have fed Elijah by angels will feed him by ravens. Thus God gives His prophet and us a proof of His absolute command over all His creatures to win our trust in all extremities.

II.—God gives orders for competency, not for wantonness.

Those of God’s family may not be curious, nor disdainful. It ill becomes them to be slaves to their palate. Yet the munificence of God will have Elijah’s table better furnished than that of his fellows in the cave of Obadiah. Doubtless, one bit from the mouth of the raven was more pleasing to Elijah than a whole tablefull of Ahab’s.

III.—It is no unusual thing with God to suffer His own children to be enwrapped in the common calamities of offenders.

The brook Cherith shall not, for Elijah’s sake, be exempt from the universal drought; he himself must feel the smart of that which he had denounced. God makes difference in the use and issue of their stripes, not in the infliction. The corn is cut down with the weeds, but to a better purpose.—Bishop Hall.

#### SELECTED—II

Notice—

I.—What a task is here for Elijah’s humility.

A lowering thing indeed for so mighty a prophet to be fed by little birds. “Consider the ravens,” said our Lord, “how much more are ye better than the fowls!” Yet Elijah was to be beholden to these fowls. He was to be boarded by them day by day, and must sit down patiently till they came to feed him.

II.—What an exhibition of the gracious care of God.

The Lord careth for His people’s bodies as well as their souls. Surely this incident teaches us that if they “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” all other necessary things shall “be added unto them.” The Lord’s poor are the Lord’s care. “Trust in the Lord, and do good; ... and verily thou shalt be fed” (Ps. 37:3).

III.—How the most unlikely instruments sometimes minister to the needs of the godly.

How unlikely were ravens to feed the prophet. Birds whose instincts would have prompted them rather to snatch his food away. So how unexpectedly at times do even the enemies of godliness promote the interests of the godly. The ravens of the world, its cruel, covetous, rapacious men, have often, one way or other, been purveyors to His church. The brethren of Joseph contributed to Joseph’s exaltation, and Haman had to hold the bridle for the man whose life he aimed at.—Adapted from A. Roberts.

**1 Kings 17:7 It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.**

- **the brook:** Isa 40:30,31 54:10
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 33:15-16 (GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE) He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, He who rejects unjust gain And shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; He who stops his ears from hearing

about bloodshed And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; 16 He will dwell on the heights, His refuge will be the impregnable rock; His bread will be given him, His water will be sure.

## THE BROOK CHERITH RUNS DRY

**It happened after a while** (Hebrew = ""And it came about at the end of days") **that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land** - Elijah begins to experience the effects of his own prophecy. And keep in mind that theoretically he could have prayed for rain to begin, but he kept the purposes of God foremost (to make a statement to apostate Israel) rather than to opt for his own well-being and even potentially his survival.

**THOUGHT** - There is an interesting lesson for us in the passage. Was Elijah in the will of God? Yes, clearly he had obeyed Yahweh's specific instructions and yet now there was no water. One can be in will of God, but that does not mean that our circumstances will be perfect. They may be times of training and growing our faith as they were for Elijah. Remember the principle that...

*The will of God will never lead us  
where the grace of God cannot keep us and care for us!*

**C T Lacey** - Elijah was not immune from the consequences of the drought for which he had called. Many saints down the centuries have known what it is for "the brook to dry up", but the Lord was still there to provide. The Lord could have sustained Elijah by the brook if He had chosen so to do; however, it was in His purposes to move His servant on. Elijah did not panic, but waited patiently for the Lord. He did not allow himself to be dictated to by circumstances, but waited for a word from the Lord before he moved. ([What the Bible Teaches – 1 and 2 Kings](#).)

**Charles Swindoll** - One morning Elijah noticed that the brook wasn't gushing over the rocks or running as freely as it had in days past. Since that single stream of water was his lifeline, he checked it carefully. Over the next few days he watched it dwindle and shrink, until it was only a trickle. Then one morning, there was no water, only wet sand. The hot winds soon siphoned even that dampness, and the sand hardened. Before long, cracks appeared in the parched bed of the brook. No more water. The brook had dried up. Does that kind of experience sound familiar to you? At one time you knew the joy of a full bank account, a booming business, an exciting, ever-expanding career, a magnificent and exciting ministry. But the brook has dried up. At one time you knew the joy of using your voice to sing the Lord's praises. Then a growth developed on your vocal chords, requiring surgery. But the surgery removed more than the growth; it also took your lovely singing voice. The brook has dried up. Your partner in life has grown indifferent and has recently asked for a divorce. There's no longer any affection and no promise of change. The brook has dried up. I've had my own times when the brook has dried up, and I've found myself wondering about the things I've believed and preached for years. What happened? Had God died? No. My vision just got a little blurry. My circumstances caused my thinking to get a little foggy. I looked up, and I couldn't see Him as clearly. To exacerbate the problem, I felt as though He wasn't hearing me. The heavens were brass. I would speak to Him and heard nothing. My brook dried up. That's what happened to John Bunyan in seventeenth-century England. He preached against the godlessness of his day, and the authorities shoved him into prison. His brook of opportunity and freedom dried up. But because Bunyan firmly believed God was still alive and at work, he turned that prison into a place of praise, service, and creativity as he began to write Pilgrim's Progress, the most famous allegory in the history of the English language. Dried-up brooks in no way cancel out God's providential plan. Often, they cause it to emerge. (See [Great Days with the Great Lives](#))

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**Spurgeon** - "After a while, the wadi dried up because there had been no rain in the land." Although Elijah was mighty in prayer and could prevail with God, yet he did not therefore escape from suffering; his prayer brought him into suffering. If there should be a drought throughout all the land, he himself must feel the pinch as well as the rest of the people. If the brooks are dried up, they will be dried up for him; and if there is no food in the land, there will be no food for him unless God will be pleased to intervene on his behalf. The highest degree of grace cannot save us from affliction; it even includes it. We may grow in grace until our faith never staggers. But the impartial hand of trial will knock at our door as well as at the door of the chief of sinners. We must still walk the path of sorrow. The child of God cannot escape the rod even though he is an Elijah. He may call down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, but no fire from heaven can consume his trouble. He must pass through it as well as the weakest and most common of God's people. Let us, therefore, settle it in our hearts to be resigned to this. If the Prince himself once went through the Valley of Humiliation, why should we murmur at following in his footsteps? God had one Son without sin but never a son without affliction. Let us not ask to be the first but be content to share the position of those whose inheritance is to be ours forever in the paradise of our God.



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## Donald Cantrell - The Brook Dried Up

1 Ki 17:7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Elijah has been enjoying his stay at the brook of Cherith. Every day the birds dropped him meat to eat and the brook supplied all the water he needed to drink. One day maybe he noticed that the brook seemed to be losing its swift current. It could be that he drove a stake into the side of the brook and measured its depth; it wouldn't have taken a lot of calculation for him to realize that this brook would soon be dry. The thing that a lot of God's children fail to realize is that the sun rises on the just and the unjust. I dare say that many of God's people do not see God deal with issues, just not at their expense. Often we will be placed in tough situations. Elijah was about to find out that God's path often goes in different directions.

1. The Enrichment of Cherith "His Liking"
2. The Education of Cherith "His Learning"
3. The End of Cherith "His Leaving"

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**Cyril Barber** - "Does Elijah's experience at Cherith hold any significance for us?" And our answer to this question must be a resounding, "Yes!" However, we may be reasonably sure that God does not want us to go off into the hills and become hermits. He has drawn us to Himself so that we may bear witness to the light (i.e., to the truth that there is salvation only in Christ through His death on the cross on our behalf).

How then does Elijah's experience at Cherith find a parallel in our lives?

Many of us believe that unless we are active all the time, we are slack in the practice of our faith. This is not so. There is a world of difference between being and doing, and that is what Elijah's experience at Cherith illustrates for us. There is always the danger that we, as with Martha in the New Testament (John 11), may cope with life's tensions and frustrations by engaging in busywork. And so we let external activity (even service for the Lord) take the place of inner reality (or fellowship with Him). And this is where Elijah's stay by the brook speaks so clearly to our needs! Emotionally healthy people, who have sufficiently gratified their basic needs for safety, a sense of belonging, love, respect, and a sense of esteem, are motivated primarily by trends toward the fulfillment of their potential.<sup>17</sup> And we, as believers in Christ, are no different. We are all at different levels on this ascending scale. For some, the need for physical and emotional security is greater than for others. In a person such as Elijah, these basic needs had been met, and he used the solitude of Cherith to quicken and deepen his Godward relationship. (See [The Books of Kings, Volume 1: The Righteousness of God- Page 481](#))

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**J R Miller** - "It came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up!" 1 Kings 17:7

That is the way this world's brooks always do. For a time they flow full; then they begin to waste away, and at last dry up altogether. This is true of all earthly joys. There is a comfort, however, in what comes after the statement made in these words. When the brook dried up, God had another place ready for his servant. "Arise, and go to Zarephath." There he found other help ready.

It must have been a sore test of Elijah's faith—to watch the stream growing less and less every day. "What shall I do when the brook is dry?" he would wonder. But we need not suppose that he ever worried about it. He knew that God was providing for him, and would have something else ready when this supply ceased. One morning there was no water running over the stones, and the prophet had to eat a dry breakfast only bread and meat; but still, I think he did not grow anxious. Then after breakfast the Lord came and told him to move.

The lesson is, that we are never to doubt God, no matter how low the supply gets. Though we have come down to the last mouthful of bread—and the last cupful of water, and still see no new provision beyond, we are to take the last morsel with thankfulness, believing that God will have something else ready in time. It will be soon enough if it is ready when we have eaten the last crust!

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## James Smith - ELIJAH, THE FAITHFUL 1 Kings 17:7–16

"Reason unstrung the harp to see  
Wherein the music dwells;  
Faith pours a hallelujah song,  
And heavenly rapture swells.  
While Reason strives to count the drops  
That lave our narrow strand,  
Faith launches o'er the mighty deep

To seek a better land.”  
—HAVERGAL.

We walk by faith, not by sight. Elijah had a long rest beside the secret brook—perhaps about twelve months. This would serve as a test both to his faith and his patience. We must learn to wait on God if we would do exploits for Him. Moses waited in the Midian desert forty years before the divine call came. But what could he have done to save Israel before that? The man who had to face the testing ordeal of Carmel must be a man approved of God. Precious faith, like precious gold, must needs pass through the refining fires. The prophet now receives another call.

**I. The Time of this Call.** “After the brook dried up” (1Ki 17:7). We may be perfectly assured of this, that when God in His providence closes one door against His servants He will open another. It will be a trying time to witness in the channel of our present comforts being gradually narrowed and the stream slowly drying up. It may be the drying up of the brook of worldly prosperity, but especially when the much-loved brook of self-confidence has dried up do we feel how utterly helpless we are. But man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.

**II. The Command Given.** “Arise, get thee to Zarephath” (1Ki 17:9). When the brook became silent then God spoke. When the mountains of our boasted strength shall depart and the hills of our carnal hopes be removed the kindness of the Lord shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of His peace be removed (Isa. 54:10). Zarephath means a smelting-house, a place of fiery trials. It was meet that the prophet of fire should pass through the refining furnace. All who would live godly must suffer persecution. Elijah’s journey of one hundred miles through a famine-stricken country would afford him ample opportunities for faith. Away from the shady brook, this must have been to him as a baptism of fire. Did not the New Testament Elijah say of Christ that He will baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire?

**III. The Promise Made.** “I have commanded a widow to sustain thee” (v. 9). Perhaps the prophet thought that she must surely be a wealthy widow that was to supply his need during the remaining time of the famine. In any case, God’s “commands to the ravens” had not failed him, neither would His Word to the widow. How the message came to this poor widow we don’t know, but doubtless this Zidonian was prepared in some way; it may have been through earnest prayer, like Cornelius (Acts 10). He is faithful that hath promised.

**IV. The Test of Circumstances.** This widow, as we suppose, with some secret God-given premonition that all her wants would be supplied, is now face to face with starvation. As far as her reason could go there was only “an handful of meal” between her and death. She went out with a heavy heart to gather fuel to cook her last meal when the crisis came (1Ki 17:10–12). Her circumstances seemed to belie the “command of God.” Abraham was similarly tried when commanded to offer up his son Isaac, the child of promise. But see, Elijah comes, looking for the wealthy widow with whom he was to lodge. He meets her gathering sticks, and when he asks “a morsel of bread” he is told that all she possesses for her and her son is “an handful of meal and a little oil.” Here, again, circumstances seem to make the Word of God of none effect. But, like Abraham, “he staggered not at the promise of God, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom. 4:20). He shows his faith in the divine promise by persisting in having the first share of the little store, and saying to the half-bewildered woman, “Fear not.” Did not our Lord ask a drink of the woman of Samaria, knowing that He had something better to give her, even that blessing which, like the widow’s meal, “shall not waste?”

**V. The Obedience of Faith.** “She went and did according to the saying of Elijah” (1Ki 17:14, 15). The prophet gave her the promise of the Lord God of Israel, that the meal in that barrel would not waste nor the cruse of oil fail until the famine would cease. She believed the Word, and took what seemed her last handful of meal, and even with a hungry soul prepared it for Elijah. She practically gave away, at God’s bidding, all that she had, and cast herself entirely upon His promise. She had neither precedent nor example for such an act and for such a hope, but she had faith in the Word and power of God. Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed.

**VI. The Fulfilment of Promise.** “The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the Word of the Lord” (1Ki 17:16). Thus for a full year (1Ki 17:15, margin) did they eat bread, day by day, that was miraculously given them. Truly theirs was a life of faith on the promise of God. If the meal was always at the bottom of the barrel, yet was it never wanting. They who trust Him wholly will find Him wholly true. “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” (John 11:40).

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**George H. Morrison** - Some time later the brook dried up. —1 Kings 17:7

The failure of the waters was meant, first, to deepen the prophet [Elijah’s] sense of kinship.<sup>6</sup> He was drawn into a new communion with Israel in the very hour that Cherith ceased to flow. There had been no rain, and the whole land was parched—and all the time, in the little vale of Cherith, the coolness and murmuring of the stream. It was very comfortable, and it was very happy, but it is not

thus that Jehovah makes his prophets. What people have got to suffer they must suffer. What people have to endure they must endure. And so, that he might be a brother among brothers and feel his kinship with his suffering nation, some time later the brook dried up.

That is still the secret of the failing brook—not because God is angry; it is because our Father wants us to be a family. One touch of nature makes us all akin, even if it is only a touch of common thirst, and there is many a brook that the Almighty dries so that we may cease from our pride and realize our kinship. There is no sympathy so deep and strong as the sympathy that springs out of a common suffering. Exclude a person from what others have to bear and you exclude him or her from the family heritage.

There are things, then, that it is hard to lose, but in God's sight it may be good to lose them. We grow more loving, more sympathetic, and more kind; life is fuller and richer and warmer than it once was. We were very superior and exclusive once, and the common people were odiously common—but some time later the brook dried up. (from [Wings of the Morning - online](#))

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**George H. Morrison - Some time later the brook dried up.**—1 Kings 17:7

Elijah was taught by this event that in certain matters God makes no exceptions.<sup>7</sup> God has his chosen ones, but whatever they are chosen for, it is not to escape the heritage of tears. Now to be a prophet was a lofty calling. Therefore it was reasonable to expect that [Elijah] would have a little special care and would be guarded, as the favorite of God, from some of the ills that flesh is heir to. I have no doubt that Elijah had such thoughts. I believe indeed that they never wholly left him. God, when he dried up the waters of the Cherith, was teaching him how false it was to count on any exception as his right. Elijah had to learn that though he was God's messenger, he was not going to escape the common lot. Called with a heavenly calling in Christ Jesus, he had to suffer some things like the vilest reprobate.

Now that is a lesson we do well to learn, that in certain matters there are no exceptions. I had a visit from a friend the other day who was brokenhearted in unexpected grief. A little rivulet of life had made his meadow beautiful, when suddenly its music was no more. And "Oh," he said to me, "if I had been wicked—if I had been a rebel against God, I might have understood it, but it is hard to be dealt with thus when I have striven to serve him and tried to be true to him in home and business."

At the heart of his so bitter grief there was a thought that is common to us all. My friend was like Elijah at his stream, saying, "I am a prophet and it can never dry." And one of the hardest lessons we must learn is that the name and nature of our God is love, yet for the person who trusts and serves him best, there is to be no exception from the scourge. (from [Wings of the Morning - online](#))

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**George H. Morrison - Some time later the brook dried up.**—1 Kings 17:7

The deepest lesson of the story is that the ceasing of the prophet's brook was the beginning of larger views of God.

There is a faith that runs through the green fields of childhood, making everything it laps on fresh and beautiful. Yet while some never lose that faith, living in its gladness until the end, for most of us, some time later the brook dries up. There may be moral causes at the back of that. A vast deal of doubt runs down to moral grounds. But if we are earnest and truthful and if we trust and pray, there is nothing to sigh for in the failing brook. For the God whom we find again through many a struggle and the faith that we make ours by many a battle and the things that we wrestle for until break of day—although we may go limping ever after—these are our own for time and for eternity, and neither life nor death can take them from us.

And then there are the blessings we enjoy—our health, our prosperity, the love of those who love us. There are many people who never lose these blessings, moving beside still waters to the end. But there are others with whom it is not so. They have suffered terribly or had sharp and sore reverses. There was a day when they had everything they wanted, but it came to pass some time later that the brook dried up. I will not comfort them by any platitudes. I will only ask them, Has not God been nearer—has not religion been more to them since then? And if it has taken the failing of the stream to cast them utterly on the arm of God, if they have risen from an empty brook to drink of an ocean that is ever full—perhaps it was not in anger but in love that the waters ceased to be musical at Cherith. (from [Wings of the Morning - online](#))

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**Streams in the Desert** - "It came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land." (1 Kings 17:7.)

WEEK after week, with unflinching and steadfast spirit, Elijah watched that dwindling brook; often tempted to stagger through unbelief, but refusing to allow his circumstances to come between himself and God. Unbelief sees God through circumstances, as we sometimes see the sun shorn of his rays through smoky air; but faith puts God between itself and circumstances, and looks at them through Him. And so the dwindling brook became a silver thread; and the silver thread stood presently in pools at the foot of the largest boulders; and the pools shrank. The birds fled; the wild creatures of field and forest came no more to drink; the brook

was dry. Only then to his patient and unwavering spirit, “the word of the Lord came, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath.”

Most of us would have gotten anxious and worn with planning long before that. We should have ceased our songs as soon as the streamlet caroled less musically over its rocky bed; and with harps swinging on the willows, we should have paced to and fro upon the withering grass, lost in pensive thought. And probably, long ere the brook was dry, we should have devised some plan, and asking God’s blessing on it, would have started off elsewhere.

God often does extricate us, because His mercy endureth forever; but if we had only waited first to see the unfolding of His plans, we should never have found ourselves landed in such an inextricable labyrinth; and we should never have been compelled to retrace our steps with so many tears of shame. Wait, patiently wait!—F. B. Meyer.

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### **Faith Amid Famine** By Rev. Todd M. Kinde

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:7–24, especially v. 24 Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth. (NKJV)

Introduction: This morning we are going to be learning quite an object lesson through a bin of flour and a jar of oil. I realize that talking about flour, oil, bread, and food can make your mouth water. I hope today we all came into this building hungry—at least spiritually hungry. Do you have a financial problem? Are your relationships hurting? Do you need a fresh encounter with the Lord? Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35 NKJV).

1. A Parchedness of Faith (1 Ki 17:7–9). The Word of the Lord came to Elijah instructing him to go to the town of Zarephath where a widow would supply him with food. The drought was an object lesson of the dryness of the nation’s relationship with God (cf. Amos 8 and Ps. 42). Now that the brook had run dry, the Lord placed Elijah in Zarephath, a suburb of the capital city where the wicked Jezebel’s father was king!

2. A Preview of Faith (1 Ki 17:10–15a). In Zarephath, Elijah found a certain widow. Elijah asked for a flask of water. He tested her willingness and obedience. When she agreed, Elijah added a request for bread. She told Elijah she had only enough for her and her son to have a last meal before starvation. Most of us would have reacted harshly, but this woman said, “As surely as the Lord your God lives ...” She knew Yahweh was the Living God, but He was not her God (“your God lives”). The gentle hand of God was leading her into progressive faith. Elijah said, “Can I have a drink? Can I have a slice of bread? Make me a pancake.” As we respond to God’s Word with trusting obedience in each step, so He will lead us to greater understanding of Himself and the blessing of His promise of salvation.

3. A Provision of Faith (1 Ki 17:15b, 16). It’s safe to assume that neither the flour jar nor the oil jug were large. At the end of each day, her jug and jar looked to be just as nearly empty as they did that first evening when she met Elijah. God gave her and Elijah only their daily bread (Matt. 6:11). Faith is progressive, not a one-time commitment. Elijah and the widow did not respond with faith just once and then receive a warehouse full of flour and oil. At the end of each day, they had to acknowledge their complete dependence upon the Lord and trust Him for enough grace for the next day (see Lam. 3:22, 23).

4. A Prayer of Faith (1 Ki 17:17–23). We don’t know how long this way of life continued, but some time later the son of the woman became ill and died. Then her faith was tested in a new dimension. The woman faced death yet again, saying to Elijah, “What have I to do with you, Oman of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?” (v. 18). Did not God promise life when He gave the promise of food? On the basis of the promise of God’s Word, Elijah prayed to the Lord to revive the boy. We should pray with such awareness of the Word of the Lord that our prayers are built on the foundation of God’s promises.

5. A Profession of Faith (1 Ki 17:24). The woman’s response was a deeper and more personal profession of faith in the one true living God. She understood that there was more to this than simply the death of her son’s body. It had to do with her sinfulness and spiritual death. Her confession is seen in verse 24. She comprehends the truth. God’s Word can be trusted beyond doubt. You can trust the Word of the Lord for all your needs in life and death.

**Conclusion:** We don’t live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3). Do not seek to satisfy the longing of your soul with bread, but trust the Lord of life who gives living water and the Bread of Life. Cling to the Cross of Christ. Through it you have the forgiveness of sin and the promise of life eternal. May we say, “Now we know that the Word of the Lord is the truth” and make that truth into a living faith. (From Preacher’s Sourcebook 2005)

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### **When Momma Ain’t Happy** Pastor Al Detter Scripture: 1 Kings 17:7–24, especially from verse 24

... by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth.

Introduction: Little cute creatures called babies make some ladies mothers. When you look at little babies, you could almost get the idea that being a mother is the easiest, happiest, most exciting job in the world. The truth is—being a mother may be the most demanding, self-sacrificing, draining, unrelenting, and thankless job in the world. No one can deny the joys that motherhood brings to a woman. But there are a lot of difficult times that come with being a mom, some downright unhappy moments. Let me introduce you to a mother who wasn't too happy. She is known as "the widow of Zarephath."

**1. What Makes Momma Unhappy** (vv. 8–18). God's judgment had fallen upon Israel due to their idolatry. Elijah was God's prophet during this time and had proclaimed God's judgment, which was evidenced by a great famine in the land. Amidst this context, we find a mother from whom we can learn a great deal. What makes mothers unhappy?

A. Loss of Her Spouse (vv. 9–10). We learn that this woman in Zarephath was a widow, with whom Elijah was to stay during the famine.

B. Loss of Her Support (v. 12). Elijah asked for a tiny bit of bread, but the widow had nothing left to offer. In fact, she was planning a last meal for her son and herself, having accepted the coming of death. God provided food to keep them alive, but one final blow awaited this unhappy mother.

C. Loss of Her Son (vv. 17–18). After all the hardship endured, this mother saw her son get sick and die.

**2. What Makes Momma Happy** (vv. 19–24). Elijah takes the widow's son and begs the Lord to resurrect the boy. After three times of intense and physical prayer, the boy was raised to life! Notice the response of the woman when she experienced not only a restoration of happiness, but a confirmation that God was responsible and sovereign over her circumstances: "... by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth" (v. 24).

**3. Lessons for Momma (and all of us) When We're Unhappy.** This text has some important application to all of us today when we experience unhappy circumstances:

A. Life Has a Way of Disturbing Our Happiness. Like the widow, I wonder how many unhappy mothers are here today. Perhaps you've lost a spouse or a child. Maybe you're not a mother, but you are intensely unhappy with life. We have to remember that trials will come, but if we endure, God will strengthen and reward us (James 1:2–8).

B. God Is at Work in Ways We May Not Know or Understand. The widow had no idea a prophet would save her life and her son's when he came to her. No matter what life may look like, we have to remember God is at work:

(1) Crafting Change in Us. God allows things to break into our lives that disturb us, but He will remake us!

(2) Preparing a Connection Between People. Elijah and the widow were living separate lives, but God ordained that they be brought together to teach them both about Himself.

(3) Empowering Us to Make a Contribution. The widow provided food for Elijah and Elijah saved the life of the widow's son! Everyone involved in trials can make a contribution to the Lord's work: a little flour saved a prophet's life!

C. Obey God Despite the Circumstances. It seemed foolish for Elijah to stay with a non-Jewish widow, but he obeyed as did she. No matter what we think is best, we must obey the Lord.

D. Don't Blame God for the Losses We Experience. When her son died, the widow immediately blamed Elijah. Elijah had nothing to do with his death. Jesus tells us that we will encounter problems in life (John 16:33).

E. God Is Faithful Regardless of the Circumstances. When the widow's son was resurrected, she was as happy as could be! How many of you are dealing with a wayward child or a divorce? God can turn things around!

**Conclusion:** Momma can't be at her peak if she's always happy—and neither can the rest of us. It's in the midst of life's searing circumstances that we make our deepest connection with God. Hang on to the lessons we spoke about today and let them be anchors for your soul. (From Preacher's Sourcebook 2008)

**1 Kings 17:8 Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying,**

- **the word:** 1Ki 17:2 Ge 22:14 Isa 41:17 Heb 13:6
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## IN THE MIDST OF THE TRIAL GOD SPEAKS TO ELIJAH

**Then** (time phrase marking progression) **the word of the LORD came to him, saying**- It is interesting that even though faced by a "no water" situation, Elijah does not grumble like the children of Israel did in the wilderness (Exodus 17:1-7+).

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### Spurgeon - [The Widow of Sarepta \(full sermon\)](#)

'And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.' 1 Kings 17:8-9

There are some who say, 'If I am to be saved I shall be saved.' Did they ever hear of a certain Ludovic, an Italian philosopher, who had imbibed the idea of predestination to the exclusion of every other truth? He could see nothing but fate and thought religious activity useless. A physician, a godly man, who attended him during his sickness, desiring to convince him of his error, said to him as he stood by his bedside, 'I shall not send you any medicine; I shall not attend to you; in fact, I shall not call any more, because if you are to live you will live, and if you are to die you will die; therefore, it is of no use my attending to you.' He went his way, but in the watches of the night Ludovic, who had been the slave of a notion, turned it over and saw the folly of it; he saw that there were other truths besides predestination and he acted like a sane man. As God accomplishes the healing of the sick by the use of medicines, he usually accomplishes also the saving of souls by the means of grace; and as I, not knowing whether I am elected to be healed or not, yet go to the physician, so I, not knowing whether I am elect to be saved or not, yet will go to Jesus as he bids me go, and put my trust in him, and I hope I shall be accepted in him. Dear hearer, do not trifle away your soul by thrusting your head into doctrinal difficulties. Do not be a fool any more, but go to Jesus as you are and put your trust in him, and you will not find this knotty point a terror to you; it will indeed become like butter in a lordly dish to you; it will be to you savoury meat.

1 Kings 17:9 "**Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.**"

- **Zarephath:** Ob 1:20 Lu 4:26,
- **which belongs:** Mt 15:21,22
- **widow:** 1Ki 17:4 Jdg 7:2,4 Ro 4:17-21 2Co 4:7
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Luke 4:25-26+ (**THIS DECLARATION BY JESUS INCENSED THE JEWS TO SEEK TO STONE HIM**) "But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; 26 and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.

## ELIJAH COMMANDED TO GO INTO THE "CRUCIBE"

**Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there** - Note God does give option 1 or option 2, but gives two command to **Arise, go to Zarephath**. This destination is of no small import to Elijah for several reasons. **Zarephath** in **Sidon** was on the coast was a journey of about 100 miles (so this was a very long journey in a time of drought!) Furthermore it was a Gentile city which would be a challenge to Elijah. It is no accident that **Sidon** was the home country of Jezebel (1Ki 16:31) and was the heart of Baal worship. As we discover in subsequent passages **Sidon** was also suffering from the divine drought that afflicted Israel for their worship of Baal.

*When God sends us, we must obey and leave the rest to Him,  
for we don't live on man's explanations—we live on God's promises.*

-- Warren Wiersbe

The name **Zarephath** (derived from tsaraph = to refine or test) means "smelting, smelting place, refinery." Elijah would be going to a



place that would test and refine his faith. God was sending him into the CRUCIBLE to refine his faith in preparation for the coming battle with spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. Elijah knew it was enemy territory, so this would be another test of Elijah's trust in God's Word. Guzik adds that "God kept transplanting Elijah: From home to Jezreel to Cherith to Zarephath. This transplanting made him stronger and stronger."

**THOUGHT** - Do you feel you are in the will of God and yet still find yourself in a "Zarephath-like" place today? Remember James' command "**Consider** ([hegeomai](#) in [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (Jas 1:2-4+) Play this oldie but goodie (sing it as your prayer) [Refiner's Fire](#). God's refining fire brings all the impurities to the surface so that they can be skimmed off, leaving greater purity.

*The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design,  
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.*  
-- George Keith (How Firm a Foundation)

**Behold**, ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)) - God is seeking to get Elijah's full attention to the next somewhat enigmatic statement.

**I have commanded a widow there to provide for you** - This is notable because widows in the ancient world were often extremely poor. So first Yahweh commanded unclean birds to provide for Elijah and now He commands an "unclean" (Gentile) woman to provide, a woman who is likely poor. God's ways are simply higher than our ways beloved (Isa 55:8-9)! Elijah's faith was being stretched!

**Henry Morris** points out that "The Lord Jesus used this event as an illustration of God's concern for Gentiles and of the strange rejection of God by many of His own people of Israel." (Luke 4:25-26+)

**Watchman Nee** ([see caveat](#)) - "Because of our proneness to look at the bucket and forget the fountain, God has frequently to change His means of supply to keep our eyes fixed on the source."

**Warren Wiersbe** on the widow of Zarephath - The fact that the woman had been instructed by the Lord (v. 9) isn't proof that she was a believer in the God of Israel, for the Lord gave orders to a pagan king like Cyrus (2 Chron. 36:22) and even called him his "shepherd" (Isa. 44:28). The widow spoke of Jehovah as "the Lord your God" (v. 12, italics mine), for she could easily discern that the stranger speaking to her was a Jew; but even this isn't evidence she was a believer. It's probable that Elijah remained with her for two years (18:1), and during that time, the widow and her son surely turned from the worship of idols and put their faith in the true and living God. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Philip Ryken** - Sidon was Jezebel's stomping grounds; Zarephath was on Baal's home turf. The town contained all the brazen idolatry, unholy sacrifices, and temple prostitution that went along with Baal worship. Thus God was commanding Elijah to go down into the cesspool of sin, and not just to go there, but also to "dwell there" (1 Kings 17:9). ([1 Kings](#))

**Spurgeon** - When one door shuts, another opens. God is not confined to one method of supplying his servants. It was wonderful that Elijah was fed by ravens; it was a new wonder to find him fed by a poor widow, and she a foreigner.

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**Behold** ([02009](#)) [hinneh](#) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) [Hinneh](#) generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so [hinneh](#) is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! [Hinneh](#) is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). The first use of [hinneh](#) in Ge 1:29 and second in Ge 1:31 - "And God saw all that He had made, and **behold**, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day."

**Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

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**QUESTION** - [What is the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath](#)

**ANSWER** - [First Kings 17](#) introduces the [prophet Elijah](#) and gives the account of his dealings with a widow from Zarephath. The

chapter notes that the Lord was withholding rain from Israel (verse 1). The drought was in judgment of the nation's rampant idolatry, led by the royal couple [Ahab and Jezebel](#). In verse 8, the Lord commanded Elijah to go to Zarephath, a town outside of Israel, where a widow would provide food for him. He obeyed, finding a woman gathering sticks. He said to her, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink," and, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand" (verses 10–11).

The widow, however, was in great need herself. She responded, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die" (verse 12). She expected the meal she was about to fix to be the last for her family. She had no other prospect than to die of starvation.

Elijah's answer was surely a [test of her faith](#). He told her that she was to make some food for him, anyway, using the last of her ingredients for him. He added a promise: "For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth'" (1 Kings 17:14). The widow's faith was evident in her obedience. And God was faithful to His promise: "She and he and her household ate for many days. The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah" (verses 15–16). The widow's food supply was supernaturally extended, as promised.

Elijah stayed there for some time, living in an upper room of the widow's house. The woman's son later died of an illness and, in her anger and grief, she blamed Elijah for his death—she assumed God was judging her for her sin (1 Kings 17:17–18). But Elijah cried out to God: "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!" (verse 21), and the child was restored to life. When the woman saw this, she said, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth" (verse 24).

This account is also mentioned in the New Testament. Early in His ministry, Jesus was speaking in the synagogue of His hometown, Nazareth. He said, "In truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow" (Luke 4:25–26). Jesus' point was that no prophet is accepted in his hometown. Just as Elijah found more faith outside of Israel than within it, Jesus found little faith in His boyhood home. As if to prove His point, the people of Nazareth grew enraged and attempted to throw Jesus off a cliff (Luke 4:29).

The account of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath offers many insights. First, God often uses unlikely people and sources to accomplish His purposes. Second, God's mercy extends to all people, both Jews and Gentiles, and the Sidonian widow was blessed for her faith (see Acts 10:34–35). Third, God requires faith (Hebrews 11:6). The widow's miracle only came *after* she prepared a meal for Elijah—an [act of sincere faith](#) on her part.

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the significance of the city of Sidon in the Bible](#) - Excerpt - The wicked Queen Jezebel was a Sidonian who married King Ahab caused Israel much trouble (1 Kings 16:31). The city of Zarephath, near Sidon, was where a widow took care of Elijah, and the Lord provided oil and flour for her through the famine; later, the widow's son became ill, and Elijah raised him from the dead (1 Kings 17:8–24).

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#### Donald Cantrell - There

1 Ki 17:9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

Upon being told to leave Cherith, God instructs Elijah towards his new place, the city of Zarephath. The instructions are twofold, he is to dwell in there and woman has been instructed to sustain him there. The key to this passage is God is "there" and if we want to be in his will, we must find our "there." It should be a goal of each one of us to operate in the will of God. This can be achieved if we locate where our there is. We cannot live selfishly or haphazardly and find our there. God often leads us from place to place. It is on us to be sensitive to his leading; we must have ears that hear. God is now about to expand the faith of his man.

1. Elijah's Place of Progression
2. Elijah's Person of Desperation
3. Elijah's Promise of Multiplication

#### There"

1 Ki 17:4—And it shall be, [that] thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

1 Ki 17:9—Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which [belongeth] to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

1 Ki 17:10—So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman [was] there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

In this passage and these verses we find a word that could be overlooked and ignored were it not the nudging of the Spirit. The Spirit often times sets off a spiritual alarm, stop, look, be careful, you are about to overlook something needful. The little word that I want to focus on is “there”. In this passage it is used no less than four times, the ravens will feed you there, arise and go to Zarephath and dwell there, a widow will sustain you there, the widow was found “there”. I can imagine that you are asking what the importance of this little word, there?

The Lord commanded the prophet to go to the brook, there is where he would be taken care of by the Lord, when the brook dried up the Lord commanded the prophet to move yet again, when he moved over there, there is where the Lord would continue sustaining his prophet. As he arose and went and got to Zarephath, he found the widow woman there, there was where he found the abiding presence and abundant blessings of his God.

As we go from day to day, we must always find out where our there is, we must realize that often our “there” is subject to change!!! It may be here today, somewhere else next year, another place in the future. The most important place that you and I need to be is the place that God has chosen as our “there”.

1. There Is Where He Abides Personally
2. There Is Where He Provides Powerfully
3. There Is Where He Confides Privately
4. There Is Where He Presides Pointedly

I wonder if we understand the importance of fervently finding, faithfully filling the place of our there. As we find our there, we will find that in this place dwells all of the fullness, all of the fellowship of our Christian joy. Lord please guide me to where my there is:

**1 Kings 17:10 So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, “Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink.”**

- **Please get me a little water:** Ge 21:15 24:17 Joh 4:7 2Co 11:27 Heb 11:37
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ELIJAH OBEYS AND GOES TO SIDON

**So** - Term of conclusion. Once again we see Elijah come to a conclusion that God said it and that settles it. A good rule of thumb (life)!



**Click to Enlarge**

**He arose and went to Zarephath** - Elijah had suddenly appeared on the scene and now disappears as quickly as he came (but he will return in 3 years in 1Ki 18)! Elijah manifests unhesitating obedience again. He does not question God or complain or grumble.

**And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks** - How Elijah knew this woman was THE woman who was the widow God had commanded to help him we can only surmise that God had given him a "stick sign," but we cannot be dogmatic.

**Spurgeon** - “You learn this from the fact that she had not even firewood. Now, there was no reason why she should not have had that even in time of famine of bread, for there was no famine of wood, unless she had been extremely poor.”...He did not question the command, but obeyed it; this is the walk of faith.

**Guzik** - God told Elijah (1 Kings 17:9) that He *commanded* a widow to feed the prophet. Yet this woman seemed unaware of the

command. This shows how God's unseen hand often works.

**Spurgeon** - "She does not appear to have been at all aware that she was to feed a prophet. She went out that morning to gather sticks, not to meet a guest. She was thinking about feeding her son and herself upon the last cake; certainly she had no idea of sustaining a man of God out of that all but empty barrel of meal. Yet the Lord, who never lieth, spoke a solemn truth when he said, 'I have commanded a widow woman there.' He had so operated upon her mind that he had prepared her to obey the command when it did come by the lip of his servant the prophet"

**And he called to her and said, "Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink-** Elijah's action here is clear manifestation of his faith in the truth of God's word that this was the widow who was to help him. After walking from the dry Brook Cherith, his first need was water.

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**F W Krummacher** - Let it be equally said of you to whatever duty the Lord may call you away, "He arose and went!" Be the way ever so laborious or dangerous, still arise, like Elijah, and go. Go cheerfully, in faith, keeping your heart quietly dependent on the Lord, and in the end you will assuredly behold and sing of His goodness. Though tossed on a sea of troubles, you may anchor on the firm foundation of God, which standeth sure. You have for your security His exceeding great and precious promises, and may say with the psalmist, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God!"

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**J H Jowett - THE HANDFUL OF MEAL** 1 Kings 17:8-16.

WHAT marvellous "coincidences" are prepared by Providential grace! The poor widow is unconsciously ordained to entertain the prophet! The ravens will be guided to the brook Cherith! "I have commanded them to feed thee there." Our road is full of surprises. We see the frowning, precipitous hill, and we fear it, but when we arrive at its base we find a refreshing spring! The Lord of the way had gone before the pilgrim. "I go to prepare ... for you."

But how strange that a widow with only "a handful of meal" should be "commanded" to offer hospitality! It is once again "the impossible" which is set before us. It would have been a dull commonplace to have fed the prophet from the overflowing larder of the rich man's palace. But to work from an almost empty cupboard! That is the surprising way of the Lord. He delights to hang great weights on apparently slender wires, to have great events turn on seeming trifles, and to make poverty the minister of "the indescribable riches of Christ."

The poor widow sacrificed her "handful of meal," and received an unfailing supply. And this, too, is the way of the Lord.

"Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee,  
Repaid a thousand fold will be."

**1 Kings 17:11 As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand."**

- **as she was going:** Ge 24:18,19 Mt 10:42 25:35-40 Heb 13:2
- **a piece of bread:** 1Ki 17:9 18:4 Ge 18:5
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **ELIJAH MAKES A SECOND SECOND REQUEST FOR BREAD**

**As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand-** Again his request for bread reflects his belief that God had said this widow would provide.

**Guzik** - Elijah boldly put this request in faith. Common sense and circumstances told him that the widow would not give so generously to a Jewish stranger, but faith made him ask. God indeed chose this woman, but He chose her for more than a miracle. He chose her for *service*.

**Spurgeon** - "The choice of this woman, while it brought such blessedness to her, involved service. She was not elected merely to be saved in the famine, but to feed the prophet. She must be a woman of faith; she must make the little cake first, and afterwards she shall have the multiplication of the meal and of the oil. So the grace of God does not choose men to sleep and wake up in heaven, nor choose them to live in sin and find themselves absolved at the last; nor choose them to be idle and go about their own

worldly business, and yet to win a reward at the last for which they never toiled. Ah, no! The sovereign electing grace of God chooses us to repentance, to faith, and afterwards to holiness of living, to Christian service, to zeal, to devotion”

**1 Kings 17:12 But she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.”**

- **As the LORD:** 1Ki 17:1 1Sa 14:39,45 20:3,21 25:26 26:10 2Sa 15:21 Jer 4:2 5:2
- **but an handful:** 2Ki 4:2-7 Mt 15:33,34
- **that we may eat it:** Ge 21:16 Jer 14:18 La 4:9 Eze 12:18,19 Joe 1:15,16
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE WIDOW'S LITTLE WOULD SOON BE A LOT

**But** - Term of contrast.

**She said, “As the LORD your God lives-** This manner of address shows she recognizes Elijah as Jewish. It also shows she had some awareness or understanding of Yahweh even in the pagan land of Sidon. And she somehow recognizes Yahweh as Elijah's God. Her statement also indicates God was *Elijah's* God and not her own.

**Ryrie** feels that the widow's "oath shows that she worshiped the God of Israel. God sent Elijah to a Gentile widow to rebuke the apostasy of Israel (Luke 4:24-26)."

**I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die** - She was not just a poor widow, but she was desperately poor! I might have said "God look who you are sending me to!" To be sure, the widow's response may have challenged his faith, but Elijah was up for the challenge. The God of providence of course (it's easy for us to see now) was behind the scenes orchestrating the acts of this dramatic play. He was preparing both the widow and the prophet for evidence of His supernatural provision in what otherwise were dire, dismal circumstances. There is a principle here and it is that...

*Our extremity is  
His opportunity.*

**1 Kings 17:13 Then Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son.**

BGT 1 Kings 17:13 κα ε πεν πρ ς α τ ν Ηλιου θ ρσει ε σελθε κα πο ησον κατ τ μ σου λλ πο ησον μο κε θεν γκρυφ αν μικρ ν ν πρ τοις κα ξε σεις μοι σαυτ δ κα το ς τ κνοις σου ποι σεις π σχ του

LXE 1 Kings 17:13 And Eliu said to her, Be of good courage, go in and do according to thy word: but make me thereof a little cake, and thou shalt bring it out to me first, and thou shalt make some for thyself and thy children last.

NET 1 Kings 17:13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go and do as you planned. But first make a small cake for me and bring it to me; then make something for yourself and your son.

CSB 1 Kings 17:13 Then Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid; go and do as you have said. But first make me a small loaf from it and bring it out to me. Afterward, you may make some for yourself and your son,

ESV 1 Kings 17:13 And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son.

NIV 1 Kings 17:13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son.

NLT 1 Kings 17:13 But Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid! Go ahead and do just what you've said, but make a

little bread for me first. Then use what's left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son.

NRS 1 Kings 17:13 Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son.

NJB 1 Kings 17:13 But Elijah said to her, 'Do not be afraid, go and do as you have said; but first make a little scone of it for me and bring it to me, and then make some for yourself and for your son.

NAB 1 Kings 17:13 "Do not be afraid," Elijah said to her. "Go and do as you propose. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son.

- **Do not fear:** Ex 14:13 2Ki 6:16 2Ch 20:17 Isa 41:10,13 Mt 28:5 Ac 27:24
- **make:** Ge 22:1,2 Jdg 7:5-7 Mt 19:21,22 Heb 11:17 1Pe 1:7
- **first:** Pr 3:9 Mal 3:10 Mt 6:33 10:37
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ELIJAH'S FAITH IN ACTION

**Then Elijah said to her,** “**Do not fear** - Elijah prefaces his commands with calming words for her distraught spirit. In the Septuagint Elijah gives her a command “**Be of good courage.**”

**Go, do as you have said** - Elijah gives two commands to the widow.

**but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me**- Elijah adds an "order" for bread to the widow's already scanty menu. Surely she was confused by this instruction but there is no record that she balks or complains.

*She was to exercise obedient faith first, and then her needs would be supplied. Many try to reverse this order*

-- Spurgeon

**and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son** - So feed the stranger first and then your family. Elijah in making this statement clearly believes there will be sufficient provision for all three. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.

**Spurgeon:** God indeed chose this woman, but He chose her for more than a miracle. He chose her for service. “The choice of this woman, while it brought such blessedness to her, involved service. She was not elected merely to be saved in the famine, but to feed the prophet. She must be a woman of faith; she must make the little cake first, and afterwards she shall have the multiplication of the meal and of the oil. So the grace of God does not choose men to sleep and wake up in heaven, nor choose them to live in sin and find themselves absolved at the last; nor choose them to be idle and go about their own worldly business, and yet to win a reward at the last for which they never toiled. Ah, no! The sovereign electing grace of God chooses us to repentance, to faith, and afterwards to holiness of living, to Christian service, to zeal, to devotion.”

**1 Kings 17:14** “**For thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth.’”**

- **thus says:** 2Ki 3:16 7:1 9:6
- **The bowl of flour:** 1Ki 17:4 2Ki 4:2-7,42-44 Mt 14:17-20 15:36-38
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD PROMISES PROVISION FOR THE DROUGHT

**For** - Term of explanation. The widow surely had questions and Elijah provides an explanation to her unspoken questions.

**thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth** - Yahweh has communicated to His prophet that the widow's meager provision would be a sufficient supply signifying Yahweh's miraculous intervention is the widow's otherwise dismal state. Here again we see in this divine provision the confrontation of the All Sufficient God versus the absolute inadequacy of the false god of Baal to provide for his worshipers.



*Elijah's present faith was fortified  
by God's past faithfulness.*

**C T Lacey** - Having already seen the ravens arrive every morning and evening for a year with bread and meat, Elijah was confident that the Lord could easily sustain him, the woman, and her son with a handful of meal and a cruse of oil for two further years. It was not that they would be multiplied, but that they would not fail. To her credit she obeyed. ([What the Bible Teaches – 1 and 2 Kings](#).)

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### 1 Kings 17:14 **Dwindling Resources**

The barrel of meal shall not be used up, neither shall the cruse of oil fail. 1 Kings 17:14

At some point in life most of us face the problem of dwindling resources. The story of the widow of Zarephath should encourage us to trust the Lord to supply our needs at all times.

H. A. Ironside told of a Christian widow who lived in Scotland. With several "bairns" in the home, it was extremely difficult for her to provide food and clothing for her household. Through it all, she lived close to the Lord and lovingly taught her children to put their confidence in Him. The day finally came when the purse was empty and the pantry depleted. Only a handful of flour remained in the big barrel. The mother reached down into the container to scrape up the last bit in order to make some bread for her hungry little ones. As she bent over the barrel, her faith began to waver and she could hold back the tears no longer. Her little son Robbie heard her sobs and began tugging at her dress till she lifted her head and looked into his questioning eyes. In his Scottish dialect he asked, "Mither, what are ye weepin' about? Dinna God hear ye scrapin' the bottom o' the barrel, Mither?" Ironside said, "In a moment her failing faith reasserted itself. Ah yes, God did hear. All else might be gone but He remained, and His Word declared that her every need would be supplied." -P.R.V. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

**1 Kings 17:15 So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days.**

- **did according:** Ge 6:22 12:4 22:3 2Ch 20:20 Mt 15:28 Mk 12:43 Joh 11:40 Ro 4:19,20 Heb 11:7,8,17
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Genesis 6:22+ Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did. (THIS IS OUR PATTERN TO FOLLOW DAILY - GOD'S COMMANDS OBEYED WITHOUT HESITATION).

### **THE SIDONIAN WIDOW BELIEVES ELIJAH'S WORD**

**So** - Term of conclusion. The Sidonian widow acts on Elijah's promise from God.

[Gotquestions](#) has an interesting thought writing "The widow's miracle only came *after* she prepared a meal for Elijah—an [act of sincere faith](#) on her part."

**She went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days** - The widow's obedient actions demonstrate an element of faith in God's Word spoken through Elijah. Her obedience was richly rewarded by God's grace. God always rewards our obedience in one way or another. The length of time signified by **for** (many) **days** is not stated, just that the provisions were sufficient.

I like **Dale Ralph Davis'** comment - And don't forget that there was something continuous about this miracle (vv. 15b–16). It's not as though there were suddenly several twenty-five pound bags of meal slouching against the wall of the widow's kitchen. Instead it was a quiet daily drama of the jar and the jug. When she went to the cupboard on Monday there was enough meal in the jar and still some oil in the jug for that day. And so it went on through the weeks. Every morning was a fresh episode of the faithfulness of Yahweh to his promise. He had not said 'the jar of meal will overflow' but only that it 'will never come to an end.'

**Spurgeon** - "Why did not God give her a granary full of meal at once, and a vat full of oil instantly? I will tell you. It was not merely because of God's intent to try her, but there was wisdom here. Suppose he had given her a granary full of meal, how much of it would have been left by the next day? I question whether any would have remained, for in days of famine men are sharp of scent,

and it would soon have been noised about the city, 'The old widow woman who lives in such-and-such a street, has a great store of food.' Why, they would have caused a riot, and robbed the house, and perhaps, have killed the woman and her son. She would have been despoiled of her treasure, and in four and twenty hours the barrel of meal would have been as empty as it was at first, and the cruse of oil would have been spilled upon the ground."

**Philip Ryken** - This was daily bread demanding daily faith in the providence of God. Every day that Elijah stayed in Zarephath, the widow went to her barrel of flour and her jar of oil and had just enough to make bread for one more day. **(ILLUSTRATION)** The Dutch Christian Corrie ten Boom had a similar experience in the German concentration camp at Ravensbrook. Corrie and her sister Betsie were captured by the Nazis for hiding Jews during World War II. Betsie became ill during their long imprisonment. Here is how Corrie describes giving her sister life-preserving vitamins:

Another strange thing was happening. The bottle was continuing to produce drops. It scarcely seemed possible, so small a bottle, so many doses a day. Now, in addition to Betsie, a dozen others on our pier were taking it.

My instinct was always to hoard it—Betsie was growing so very weak! But the others were ill as well. It was hard to say no to eyes that burned with fever, hands that shook with chill. I tried to save it for the very weakest—but even these soon numbered fifteen, twenty, twenty-five....

And still, every time I tilted the little bottle, a drop appeared at the tip of the glass stopper. It just couldn't be! I held it up to the light, trying to see how much was left, but the dark brown glass was too thick to see through.

"There was a woman in the Bible," Betsie said, "whose oil jar was never empty." She turned to it in the Book of Kings, the story of the poor widow of Zarephath....

It was one thing to believe that such things were possible thousands of years ago, another to have it happen now, to us, this very day. And yet it happened this day, and the next, and the next, until an awed little group of spectators stood around watching the drops fall onto the daily rations of bread.

Many nights I lay awake in the shower of straw dust from the mattress above, trying to fathom the marvel of supply lavished upon us. "Maybe," I whispered to Betsie, "only a molecule or two really gets through that little pinhole—and then in the air it expands!"

I heard her soft laughter in the dark. "Don't try too hard to explain it, Corrie. Just accept it as a surprise from a Father who loves you."

Then Corrie writes about the day that another prisoner brought some treasure back to the barracks: a piece of newspaper, a slice of bread, and a small sack of vitamins! "Back at the bunk I took the bottle from the straw. 'We'll finish the drops first,' I decided. But that night, no matter how long I held it upside down, or how hard I shook it, not another drop appeared." (BORROW [Corrie ten Boom, The Hiding Place PAGE 184](#))

Corrie ten Boom was encountering the same God that Elijah knew. Ravensbrook turned out to be aptly named, for there the ten Booms experienced the same providential care that Elijah received at his "raven's brook," and afterward. Elijah had enough to drink from the Brook Cherith—every day—until he licked the very last drop from the riverbed. Then the Lord sent him to the widow's home in Zarephath, where he had enough to eat—every day—until the day rain fell on the earth again.

This is the same God we serve today—the God who gives his servants daily bread. The Lord provides what we need every day. He gives us more than enough to survive and thrive. Therefore, we can offer the same testimony as the psalmist: "Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack!" (Ps. 34:9). ([1 Kings](#))

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**J R Miller** - "So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat from her supply of flour and oil for many days." 1 Kings 17:15

That is, she took the handful of flour she had and the little oil, and made a cake for her hungry guest first, and then for herself and her son. Then she found that there was as much meal and oil left—as she had before.

There are several things to commend in this woman. One is her faith. She believed what was told her, and acted on it. It is when we do God's commandments, that he blesses us. His promises are conditional, depending upon the fulfillment of our part. Had this woman not believed and obeyed, the wonderful two or three years miracle in her house, would not have been wrought. The woman's unselfish generosity must also be commended. She had enough only for a meal for herself and son—but she fed the stranger first. Had she prepared a meal for herself and son, and left the hungry prophet unfed, there would have been no miracle of increase. We must be ready to share our little with others who need, if we would have the blessing on ourselves.

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**J R Miller** - "So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat from her supply of flour and oil for many days." 1 Kings 17:15

Had not the prophet come to the widow's door, she and her household would probably have perished in the famine. Or had the woman refused the prophet's request, saying, "I cannot spare anything for a stranger; charity begins at home, and I must look first after my own," she and her son would have starved before the rain fell. The meal wasted not, because she shared it with another.

The lesson is plain. There is a withholding that tends to poverty; there is a giving that enriches. The way to make sure of spiritual blessing is—to seek to be a blessing. If your love is growing cold, help someone, and it will become warm again. We cannot afford to shut our doors in the face of those whom God sends to us for sympathy and for the ministries of love. Such serving brings to us blessings which we must not miss.

**1 Kings 17:16 The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through Elijah.**

- **The bowl of flour** Mt 9:28-30 19:26 Lu 1:37,45 Joh 4:50,51
- **according:** 1Ki 13:5
- **spoke through Elijah** 1Ki 16:12
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GOD'S PROMISE FULFILLED**

**The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through Elijah** - Elijah's confidence that the flour and oil would last was based on God's Word to him. God's Word once again is proven true and reliable for provisions did not cease. It is as if every day was a miracle and thus a testimony to the widow (and Elijah) of God's faithfulness.

**THOUGHT** - Is God's holy Word your "daily bread," the Source of your confidence and hope (hope sure, not hope so)? It can be if you go to His Word daily as a beggar seeking bread, in this case the bread of life. And beloved, you can be sure this bread will never run out, for the Word of God abides forever. Ps 119:89 says "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven."

**Henry Morris** points out that "This miracle of the never-diminishing supply of food was a miracle of creation, superseding the normally impregnable physical law of conservation of matter. It was also significant in its application to a Gentile woman rather than to an Israelite. This widow of Sidon believed in the true God, and her faith was greatly rewarded while the people of Israel had defected to Baal. The Lord Jesus Himself cited her example (Lu 4:25,26)."

**J R Miller** - Thus the lesson went on all the while—each day faith had to be exercised, for the next day's supply. God wants us to learn to live by the day. Our Lord teaches us to pray, "Give us this day—our daily bread." Enough for the day—is all we are to ask for. If we have only one day's provision, and are doing our duty faithfully; we may trust God for tomorrow's food—and it will come when tomorrow comes.

**Spurgeon** - Thus shall our little always be enough. We shall often scrape the bottom of the barrel, but there will always be a handful left. It may be that we shall never have much in hand, but this is no evil, for then our provision will never grow stale, but come to us fresh from our heavenly Father's hand

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**F B Meyer** - God never leaves us in His debt. He takes care to pay for His entertainment, royally and divinely. He uses Peter's fishing smack, and gives it back, nearly submerged by the weight of the fish which He had driven into the nets. He sits down with His friends to a country marriage-feast, and pays for their simple fare by jars brimming with water turned to wine. He uses the five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but He fills the lad with an ample meal. He sends His prophet to lodge with a widow, and provides meal and oil for him and her for many days

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C H Spurgeon - [The Inexhaustible Barrel \(full sermon\)](#) --or [listen to this sermon](#)

"And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah." 1 Kings 17:16

If God saves us, it will be a trying matter. All the way to heaven, we shall only get there by the skin of our teeth. We shall not go to heaven sailing along with sails swelling in the breeze, like sea birds with their fair white wings, but we shall proceed with sails torn to

ribbons, with masts creaking, and the ship's pumps at work both by night and day. We shall reach the city at the shutting of the gate, but not an hour before. O believer, thy Lord will bring thee safe to the end of thy pilgrimage; but mark, thou wilt never have one particle of strength to waste in wantonness upon the road. There will be enough to get thee up the hill Difficulty, but only enough then by climbing on your hands and knees. You will have strength enough to fight Apollyon, but when the battle is over your arm will have no strength remaining. Your trials will be so many, that if you had only one trial more, it would be like the last straw that breaks the camel's back. But, nevertheless, though God's love should thus try you all the journey through, your faith will bear the trying, for while God dashes you down to the earth with one hand in providence, he will lift you up with the other in grace. You will have consolation and affliction weighed out in equal degree, ounce for ounce, and grain for grain; you will be like the Israelite in the wilderness, if you gather much manna, you will have nothing over; while blessed be God, if you gather little you shall have no lack. You shall have daily grace for daily trials.

Here are some more quotes from this sermon

Be ye then confident, when ye hear of wars, and rumours of wars. Let no agitation distress you. Whatsoever cometh upon the earth, you, beneath the broad wings of Jehovah, shall be secure. Stay yourself upon his promise; rest ye in his faithfulness, and bid defiance to the blackest future, for there is nothing in it direful for you.

I propose to take the case of the poor widow of Sarepta as an illustration of divine love, as it manifests itself to man; and I shall have three things for you to notice. First, the object of divine love; secondly, the singular methods of divine love; and, then, in the third place, the undying faithfulness of divine love—"The barrel of meal did not waste, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord."

Our Saviour himself teaches us when he says, "I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow." Here was divine sovereignty. When God would make choice of a woman it was not one of his own favoured race of Israel, but a poor benighted heathen, sprung from a race who of old had been doomed to be utterly cut off. Here was electing love in one of its sovereign manifestations.

But because he chooses to take the base things of this world, the things that are despised, and the things that are not; because he takes these things to bring to nought the things that are, therefore is God hated of men

None can guess the reasons of divine election. This great act is as mysterious as it is gracious. Throughout Scripture we are continually startled with resplendent instances of unlimited sovereignty, and the case of this widow is one among the many. Electing love passes by the thousands of widows that dwelt in God's own land, and it journeys beyond the borders of Canaan, to cherish and preserve a heathen woman of Sarepta. Some men hate the doctrine of divine sovereignty; but those who are called by grace love it, for they feel, if it had not been for sovereignty they never would have been saved. Ah, if we are now his people, what was there in any of us to merit the esteem of God? How is it that some of us are converted, while our companions in sin are left to persevere in their godless career? How is it that some of us who were once drunkards, swearers, and the like, are now sitting here to praise the God of Israel this day?

Ah, my dear friends, this is just where sovereign grace finds us all—in the depth of poverty and misery. I do not mean, of course, temporal poverty, but I mean spiritual distress. So long as we have a full barrel of our own merits, God will have nothing to do with us. So long as the cruse of oil is full to overflowing, we shall never taste the mercy of God. For God will not fill us until we are emptied of self.

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## Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

See the faithfulness of divine love. You observe that this woman had daily necessities. She had herself and her son to feed in a time of famine; and now, in addition, the prophet Elijah was to be fed too. But though the need was threefold, yet the supply of meal wasted not, for she had a constant supply. Each day she made calls upon the barrel, but yet each day it remained the same. You, dear reader, have daily necessities, and because they come so frequently, you are apt to fear that the barrel of meal will one day be empty, and the cruse of oil will fail you. Rest assured that, according to the Word of God, this shall not be the case. Each day, though it bring its trouble, shall bring its help; and though you should live to outnumber the years of Methuselah, and though your needs should be as many as the sands of the seashore, yet shall God's grace and mercy last through all your necessities, and you shall never know a real lack. For three long years, in this widow's days, the heavens never saw a cloud, and the stars never wept a holy tear of dew upon the wicked earth: famine, and desolation, and death, made the land a howling wilderness, but this woman never was hungry, but always joyful in abundance. So shall it be with you. You shall see the sinner's hope perish, for he trusts his native strength; you shall see the proud Pharisee's confidence totter, for he builds his hope upon the sand; you shall see even your

own schemes blasted and withered, but you yourself shall find that your place of defence shall be the munition of rocks: "Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure." Better have God for your guardian, than the Bank of England for your possession. You might spend the wealth of the Indies, but the infinite riches of God you can never exhaust.

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## THE INCREASE OF THE WIDOW'S BARREL OF MEAL AND CRUSE OF OIL - W. Harris

"And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which He spake by Elijah."—1 Kings 17:16.

I.—There are laws in God's universe by which bread can be given to the eater without multiplying the seed of the sower.

The ordinary laws in operation in the world for the supply of food are those by which increase is made to depend upon growth through life. Whatever sustains human life grows, by reason of indwelling life, and is multiplied by reproduction. But in the narrative before us we have the revelation of a method of increasing food without growth. God may have as many ways of producing bread, as He has kinds of bread-stuffs. As minerals are added to from without, so God can add to vegetables in the same manner when He pleases.

II.—Human faith is needed to bring into operation the law by which miracles are wrought.

The ordinary wonders of creation connected with growth are wrought without the co-operation of human faith. The sun shines upon the infidel's corn-field as effectively as upon the Christian's, and the ungodly man partakes of the bountiful gifts of God's ordinary providence as well as the holiest man. But the operation of extraordinary laws demand certain conditions of mind on the part of man. In the case before us, the faith of the prophet is shown in his confident declaration, "Thus saith the Lord;" and that of the widow in her obedience to His command (verse 13).

III.—Self-denial springing from faith in God, will bring Divine interposition and an increase of blessing.

The widow of Zarephath denied herself the gratification of appetite when she was doubtless suffering from want of food; more than that, she delayed to appease the hunger of her son and made a cake first for God's prophet. Her self-denial in the matter of her son was of the same kind as that of Abraham, although not in the same degree. She was willing to make her child's life of secondary consideration when God so commanded, and, like Abraham, she received a most abundant reward. God will be under obligation to no man. "A cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple" (Matt. 10:42) shall in "no wise lose its reward." If we give unto Him, He will give us back "good measure and running over."

### LESSONS

I.—God may send His servants where His and their enemies have most power, in order to manifest His power to preserve them. Zarephath was a city of Zidon, the native home of Jezebel (ch. 16:31), Elijah's bitterest enemy. She possessed power there, doubtless, and could probably have compassed his death there more easily than in the land of Israel. Yet he dwelt there peacefully for "many days," or "a full year."

II.—The most unlikely people may be used by God to help our need. There must have been many people both in Israel and Zidon who possessed abundant means to help Elijah, but his help came through a poor widow on the brink of starvation.

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform."

III.—We must use what we have in order to receive the increase which God intends we shall have. The seed-corn must be used if we are to receive the increase, the little strength of the man recovering from sickness must be used in order to obtain more; the knowledge of things human or divine must be brought into exercise that more may be acquired, as certainly as the Zidonian widow must use every day the meal and oil needed for the sustenance of herself and her household if they were to increase. "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury" (Matt. 25:27).

### SELECTED—I

I.—How hard precepts doth God lay where He intends bounty.

We are wont to put hard questions to scholars whom we would promote to higher forms. If God had not meant the widow's preservation He would not have required of her to see her last morsels go down another's throat. In all achievements the difficulty of the enterprise makes way for the glory of the actor.

II.—Giving, not getting, not saving, is the way to abundance.

Who can fear want by a merciful liberality, when he sees the Sareptan had famished if she had not given, and by giving, abounded?

—Adapted from Bishop Hall.

## SELECTED—II

I.—In regions most unexpected those may be found who know God.

In a heathen land Elijah finds in a poor widow what he had sought in vain in Israel: faith in the living God.

II.—When the need is greatest, then is God nearest.

On the very day when the widow comes to her last supplies, her distress comes to an end, and she has thenceforth her daily bread.

III.—The same God who spoke the promise by Elijah has promised us, that so long as the earth lasts, seed-time and harvest shall not cease (Gen. 8:22).

We are astonished at the little miracle at Sarepta, but we pass over with indifference the large miracle which is repeated year by year for the whole world.—Lange's Commentary.

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**Spurgeon - The flour jar did not become empty, and the oil jug did not run dry, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through Elijah.**” In the midst of wrath, God remembers mercy. Divine love is rendered conspicuous when it shines in the midst of judgments. God had sent an all-consuming famine on the lands of Israel and Sidon. The two peoples had provoked the Most High, the one by renouncing him and the other by sending their queen Jezebel to teach idolatry in Israel. God therefore determined to withhold both dew and rain from the polluted lands. But while he did this, he took care that his own chosen ones would be secure. If all the brooks are dry, yet there will be one reserved for Elijah. And if that should fail, God will still preserve for him a place of sustenance. And God had not simply one Elijah, but he had a remnant according to the election of grace, who were hidden by fifties in a cave. Though the whole land was subject to famine, these in the cave were fed even from Ahab's table—by his faithful, God-fearing steward, Obadiah. Come what may, God's people are safe. If the world is to be burned with fire, among the ashes there will not be found the relics of a saint. And if God cannot save his people under heaven, he will save them in heaven.

**1 Kings 17:17 Now it came about after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him.**

- **the son of the woman:** Ge 22:1,2 2Ki 4:18-20 Zec 12:10 Joh 11:3,4,14 Jas 1:2-4,12 1Pe 1:7 4:12
- **there was no breath left in him:** Job 12:10 34:14 Ps 104:29 Da 5:23 Jas 2:26
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## WIDOW'S SON EXPIRES

**Now it came about after these things** - What things? The provision of supplies for days just as God had promised through Elijah. Of course things just don't "come about" by accident but by the sovereign will of God. Once again we see that He is behind the scenes orchestrating the events in this drama.

**that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him** - God is in control of life and death and it follows that his death was allowed by God. The mother knew her son was not just unconscious but was definitely dead, which sets the stage for the miracle.

**David Guzik** points out that "The death of the son was a double blow to the widow. Not only did she suffer as any mother who loses a child, but she also suffered as one who lost her only hope for the future. The expectation was that her son would grow and provide for her in her old age. Now that expectation was shattered."

**Warren Wiersbe:** This is the first recorded instance in Scripture of the resurrection of a dead person. The evidence seems clear that the widow's son actually died and didn't just faint or go into a temporary swoon. He stopped breathing (v. 17) and his spirit left his body (vv. 21-22). According to James 2:26, when he spirit leaves a body, the person is dead. The great distress of both the mother and the prophet would suggest that the boy was dead, and both of them used the word "slay" with reference to the event (vv. 18 and 20, KJV). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Bob Utley - no breath left in him**" This is the ancient's belief that "breath" showed life; no breath (BDB 675), no life. This is not the word *ruah* (BDB 924) but a SYNONYM. Notice in v. 22 the child's *nephesh* returns to him. For *nephesh* (BDB 659) see notes online at Gen. 35:18 and Lev. 17:11. The widow and Elijah are tested. Another crisis gives YHWH the opportunity to show He is in control of death! When the Bible speaks on this subject, we must clarify three types of YHWH's power over death.



1. Enoch and Elijah are taken to heaven without death.
2. The son and many others are restored to physical life but they will die again in the future (i.e., resurrection).
3. Jesus was resurrected, which means a new spiritual/physical existence (i.e., no more death). Jesus is the only one so far (cf. 1 Corinthians 15).

This resurrection would have been related to the myth of *Ba'al's* death and rising (i.e., winter-spring). *Ba'al* had no power over death (as he had no power over rain) but YHWH did!

### James Smith - ELIJAH, THE REVIVER 1 Kings 17:17–24

“Whene’er a noble deed is wrought,  
 Whene’er is spoken a noble thought,  
 Our hearts, in glad surprise,  
 To higher levels rise.  
 The tidal wave of deeper souls  
 Into our inmost being rolls,  
 And lifts us unawares  
 Out of all meaner cares.”

—LONGFELLOW.

There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, but unto none of them was he sent, but unto this widow in a city of Sidon. Why did our Lord refer to this at the time He did (Luke 4:25) if it were not just to show them that salvation is through the grace of God, delighting to lift up the despised among men, and the unworthy in the sight of God. It was a marvellous work the God of Israel had wrought for this poor lonely widow, not only in supplying her daily need, but in raising her son from the dead. Truly might she sing, “Oh! to grace, how great a debtor!” What hath the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men taught us? (Titus 2:11, 12). Now we see in this highly favoured home—

I. **A Severe Trial.** “The son of the woman fell sick, and there was no breath left in him” (1Ki 17:17). The light of her eyes, the joy of her heart, and the hope of her future life has been suddenly cut off. She sits with the dead boy “in her bosom” (1Ki 17:19), but the natural warmth even of a mother’s heart is utterly unavailing to bring back to these vacant eyes the light of a living soul. No more can we, by the strength of natural affection, nurse back to life those of our loved ones who are dead in their sins. “Without Me ye can do nothing.”

II. **A Bitter Complaint.** “She said, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance?” (1Ki 17:18). The death of the child had awakened within her some sad memories of the past. What this sin was we cannot positively say. It may have been connected with the birth of the child. Anyway, her soul was deeply moved. The presence of the “man of God,” the manifestation of the power and goodness of God in the daily multiplying of the handful of meal, and this vivid remembrance of her own sin filled her soul with the deepest anguish. It is an awful sight to see one’s sinfulness in the light of the great goodness of God. When Simon Peter saw it, he cried, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8). It is infinitely worse to remember one’s sins, like the rich man, where there is no “man of God” to help, or message of hope for a self-ruined soul (Luke 16:25).

III. **A Gracious Request.** He said unto her, “Give me thy son” (1Ki 17:19). Although the sharp words of the afflicted and sin-wounded woman must have deeply stung the sensitive heart of the “man of God,” yet he betrays no impatience. He utters no complaint, but with the tenderness of a father, and with the faith of a Heaven-born giant, he says, “Give me thy son,” and he took the dead boy “out of her bosom.” Oh, man of God, what canst thou do with the dead? A MAN OF GOD will always act differently from an ordinary mundane mortal, by facing difficulties that seem unsurmountable and tasks that are impossible with men.

IV. **A Place of Blessing.** “He carried him up into a loft where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed” (1Ki 17:19). The loft must have been a very humble place in appearance, but to this prophet, priest, and prince it was the “Holy of holies,” the audience chamber of the Prince of Life and Glory. The little window of this “closet” looked right into the throne-room of the Eternal. Blessed is that man whose “closet” is filled with the warmth of the breath of God. “When ye pray, enter into thy closet and shut the door. Thy Father seeth in secret” (Matt. 6:6).

V. **A Prevailing Prayer.** “The Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again” (1Ki 17:21, 22). In asking that the “child’s soul might come into him again,” he was surely asking a great thing. But men who claim to “stand before God” must expect great things from God. The life of faith cannot be limited to the natural, and circumscribed by precedent. Above what we ask or think, God is able to do. But not only did he ask, he also “stretched himself upon the child three times.” With the faith of his heart

he gave also the whole warmth of his physical body. His body, soul, and spirit were all consecrated to this great work of reviving. There are many who pray for reviving who would not stretch their little finger to lift a soul out of the ditch of sin. In "stretching himself" he gave himself wholly to the work. When Paul wished to recover Eutychus he embraced him (Acts 20:10). There be many who stretch themselves without the prayer of faith, but it is as vain as when Samson "shook himself" without the power of the Holy Spirit (Judges 16:20).

**VI. A God-honouring Confession.** When Elijah had brought down the child and delivered him unto his mother, she said, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the Word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth" (1Ki 17: 24). The miracle in the barrel did not convince her like the miracle in her son. The overwhelming evidence of the truthfulness of the "Word of the Lord" is, that by it souls pass from death unto life (Jn 5:24), born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word (1Pe 1:23). The death and reviving of her son was the means in the hand of God of bringing her into the knowledge and love of God; so out of our deepest trials there may come our highest blessings, and when they do come let us honestly and joyfully confess them.

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### THE RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON - W Harris

And it came to pass, after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick, and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him," etc.—1 Kings 17:17–24.

I.—In the miracle which God had wrought to sustain life, the prophet saw the pledge that He would restore life. "Give me thy son" (v. 19).

Elijah, the widow, and her son, had been kept alive by a continual miracle, therefore the prophet had reason to hope that the life which had been so wonderfully maintained would be given back. The great things that God has done, may be made a ground of expectation of greater things that He will do.

II.—It needed faith to create the expectation, because from the human standpoint, it needs a greater exercise of power to restore life than to sustain it.

One spark in the grate gives a little fire upon which to work, and by care and skill may become the nucleus of a large fire. So in the increase of the widow's oil and meal; a little of each was left, and the miracle consisted in the increase. But in the widow's son "there was no breath left," the last spark of life had gone out, and the miracle needed was one of re-creation.

III.—The faith of the prophet manifested itself in earnest prayer and symbolic action. "He cried unto the Lord," "He stretched himself upon the child" (verses 20, 21).

These acts indicate his earnest desire for the child's restoration.

### LESSONS

I.—A spiritual relationship may have more influence to help us than a natural one. The relation of Elijah to the widow was a moral one. But he could help her when those related to her by blood were powerless. She herself was more nearly related to her child than any one else, yet she could not bring him back to life.

II.—Special blessings are connected with special persons. There was no other man in Israel at this time whose prayer would have brought the dead to life. God has, in all ages of the world, connected special blessings with special individuals.

III.—Prayer is the great means by which special blessings are obtained.

IV.—To prayer must be added the use of those means which seem most adapted to attain the end. The prophet brought his own warm living body into contact with the dead body of the child. It was the only means within his reach, and though useless in itself, was acceptable to God.

### SELECTED

I.—We can never hold ourselves secure from evils.

The dearth overcome, the mother looks hopefully on her only son, promising herself much joy in his life and prosperity, when sickness comes and does that which the famine had but threatened.

II.—The greatest prophet of God must content himself with so much of God's counsel as He will please to reveal.

Elijah had not been premonished of the sudden death of this child; he who knew the remote affairs of the world, might not know what God would do within his own roof.

III.—What miracle is impossible to faithful prayers?

There cannot be more difference betwixt Elijah's devotion and ours, than between supernatural and ordinary acts; if he therefore obtained miraculous favours by his prayers, do we doubt of those which are within the sphere of nature and use.

IV.—The mercy of God is fain to provide new helps for our infirmities as well as new trials of our faith.

What the widow's meal and oil had assured her of, the death of her son made her doubt, and now her faith revived with his resurrection.—Adapted from Bishop Hall.

Here is—

I.—The forming of a branch that bore fruit.

The widow was a person of real piety; but then as it would seem, like Lydia, or Cornelius in the first instance, she was acquainted with God in a partial and superficial manner. Probably her religious feelings were more natural than spiritual. Two invisible guests break in upon her; the Lord and the Spirit. The one inflicts the blow, the other expounds it. The one slays her son, the other makes her sensible of the reason why. Hence her language to Elijah.

II.—Its bearing more fruit.

"Now I know that thou art a man of God," etc. By this renewed testimony to Elijah's prophetic mission she became unquestionably assured of the Divine truth and his word, and stood henceforth upon other ground. From being a devout person she became a daughter of Abraham's faith.—Adapted from Krummacher.

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1 Kings 17:17-24 Where Our Fears Live

By Randy Kilgore

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. —Psalm 56:3

Twelve years into our marriage, my wife and I were discouraged by the emotional roller-coaster of hopes raised and dashed in attempting to have children. A friend tried to "explain" God's thinking. "Maybe God knows you'd be a bad father," he said. He knew that my mother had struggled with a terrible temper.

Then, Christmas 1988, we learned we were expecting our first child! But now I had this nagging fear of failure.

The following August, Kathryn joined our family. As nurses and doctors tended to my wife, Kathryn cried on the warming tray. I offered my hand to comfort her, and her tiny fingers wrapped around my finger. In that instant, the Holy Spirit swept through me, assuring me of what I had only recently doubted—that I would show love to this little one!

The widow of Zarephath also had doubts. Her son had been struck with a lethal illness. In her despair she cried out, "Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?" (1 Kings 17:18). But God had other plans!

We serve a God who is mightier than the struggles we inherit and who is full of the desire to forgive, love, and heal the brokenness that rises up between us and Him. God is present in the places where our fears live.

Father, make Yourself known to us in our weakest moments and in our greatest fears. Teach us to receive Your love in a way that enables us to show

it to others, especially those closest to us. Love swims against the current of life's false fears.

Insight Today's text demonstrates persistence in prayer. Elijah was a prophet who performed many miracles at the word of the Lord. This story relates how a young boy was restored to life through Elijah's pleading prayers. God honored Elijah's persistence and performed a miracle. The text says that the Lord listened to him after he had prayed three times (v.22). (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

**1 Kings 17:18 So she said to Elijah, "What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!"**

KJV 1 Kings 17:18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

BGT 1 Kings 17:18 κα ε πεν πρ ς Ηλιου τ μο κα σο νθρωπε το θεο ε σ λθες πρ ς με το να μν σαι τ ς δικ ας μου κα θανατ σαι τ υ ν μου

LXE 1 Kings 17:18 And she said to Eliu, What have I to do with thee, O man of God? hast thou come in to me to bring my sins to remembrance, and to slay my son?

NET 1 Kings 17:18 She asked Elijah, "Why, prophet, have you come to me to confront me with my sin and kill my son?"

CSB 1 Kings 17:18 She said to Elijah, "Man of God, what do we have in common? Have you come to remind me of my guilt and to kill my son?"

ESV 1 Kings 17:18 And she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!"

NIV 1 Kings 17:18 She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

NLT 1 Kings 17:18 Then she said to Elijah, "O man of God, what have you done to me? Have you come here to point out my sins and kill my son?"

NRS 1 Kings 17:18 She then said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!"

- **What do I have to do with you** 2Sa 16:10 19:22 2Ki 3:13 2Ch 35:21 Lu 4:34 5:8 8:28 Joh 2:4
- **O man of God** 1Ki 13:1
- **You have come to me:** 1Ki 18:9 Ge 42:21,22 50:15,17 1Sa 16:4 Job 13:23,26 Eze 21:23,24 Mk 5:7,15-17 6:16
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## WIDOW QUESTIONS ELIJAH'S INTENTIONS

**So she said to Elijah, "What do I have to do with you, O man of God?"**- At least she recognizes him as a **man of God**.

**THOUGHT** - Do people know that you are a **man (woman) of God**? They should!

**You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death-** KJV = "art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" The widow believes her son's death is the result of her sin and the Elijah is the immediate instrument responsible for her son's death.

**Philip Ryken** writes "Elijah has worn out his welcome. The widow does not like God's message, so she blames God's messenger. Although her complaint is really with God, Elijah is his representative on the scene, so she directs her anger at him, as people often do in times of trial. What the widow says to God's prophet reveals that she has some consciousness of sin, and of God's determination to punish it....The widow had a guilty conscience, and thus she saw the death of her son as God's punishment for her sins. At this point the widow started to do the kinds of things that people often do when they have a guilty conscience. She should have repented for her sins and asked God to forgive her. Instead, she shifted the blame from herself to Elijah and tried to get as far away from God as possible. ([1 Kings](#))

**Spurgeon** - We are all too apt to mistake the grounds of our afflictions, and to blame second causes. The child had been preserved from starving by the prophet, how then could the woman blame him for his death? Sorrow makes us hasty. Elijah knew this, and was very tender towards her.

**Bob Utley** - "**to bring my iniquity to remembrance**" It is common to view one's circumstances as revealing God's attitude toward that person. But this is not biblical. We are all sinners and deserve judgment but YHWH deals with us in mercy (i.e., Ps. 103:8-14). We all live in a fallen world! However, God has chosen to be in it with us.

The widow's words remind us of the words of Jesus' disciples when they "asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" (John 9:2+)

**Keil** comments, "In this half-heathenish belief there spoke at the same time a mind susceptible to divine truth and conscious of its sin, to which the Lord could not refuse His aid ... the death of this widow's son was not sent as a punishment for particular sins, but was intended as a medium for the manifestation of the works of God in her (Jn 9:3), in order that she might learn that the Lord was not only the God of the Jews, but the God of the Gentiles also (Rom 3:29)".

**1 Kings 17:19 He said to her, "Give me your son." Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed.**

- **upper room:** 2Ki 4:10,21,32 Ac 9:37
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ELIJAH'S UPPER ROOM RESPONSE

**He said to her, “Give me your son.” Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed** - The widow was clutching the lifeless body to her bosom in great grief. This must have puzzled the widow that Elijah wanted her lifeless son. But apparently (and fortunately) she does not question Elijah nor does she refuse his request.

**Swindoll** - Do you know what really impresses me here? It's the silence of Elijah. Somehow he knows that nothing he can say at this moment will satisfy this grieving mother. No words from him can soothe her stricken spirit. So he does not argue with her. He does not rebuke her. He does not try to reason with her. He doesn't remind her of all she owes him or of how ashamed she should be for blaming him. He simply asks her to place her burden in his arms.

**Patterson on upper room** - Refers to a temporary shelter or room on the roof, accessible from outside the house. Such structures are common in the Near East. This arrangement would allow the widow not only her needed privacy but would safeguard her reputation”

**1 Kings 17:20 He called to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?”**

- **he called:** 1Ki 18:36,37 Ex 17:4 1Sa 7:8,9 2Ki 19:4,15 Ps 99:6 Mt 21:22 Jas 5:15-18
- **hast thou also:** Ge 18:23-25 Jos 7:8,9 Ps 73:13,14 Jer 12:1
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE PROPHET'S CRY CONCERNING THE CALAMITY

**He called** (Lxx - **anaboao** = cry aloud for help, shout *verb Jesus used when He cried out from the Cross* Mt 27:46 from **aná** = emphatic, again + **boao** = cry out cry out loud) **to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die** - It is interesting that Elijah takes the corpse to his bed however from the way he asks his question it is not clear he knows what is about to happen to the boy. With this statement Elijah recognizes God is in control of life and death, but it still shows that Elijah did not understand the Lord's purposes any more than the widow did.

**THOUGHT-** Note that it is not inappropriate to ask God questions in prayer, but ask in faith.

Elijah's question reminds us of James' words "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **But he must ask in faith without any doubting**, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (James 1:5-8+) Clearly Elijah was not a double minded man as the next verse shows!

*God tests before prayer is answered.*  
-- Donald Wiseman

**1 Kings 17:21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him.”**

- **stretched himself:** 2Ki 4:33-35 Ac 10:10
- **O Lord my God:** Ac 9:40 Heb 11:19
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ELIJAH INTERCEDES FOR CHILD'S LIFE

**Then he stretched himself upon the child three times** - The literal Hebrew is "*measured himself.*" Why 3 times? The text does not answer this question. Some propose this foreshadows Christ's resurrection after 3 days.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Elijah didn't stretch himself out on the boy's dead body in hopes he could transfer his life to the lad, for he knew that only God can impart life to the dead. Certainly his posture indicated total identification with the boy and his need, and this is an important factor when we intercede for others. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**And called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him-** It seems that Elijah has received no response to his previous comments regarding the calamity. However, he knows God is over life and death and therefore is undeterred in interceding for the life of the child. This is a good example of James 5:16b which teaches that "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

**Matthew Poole** - "A prayer full of powerful arguments. Thou art *the Lord*, that canst revive the child; and *my God*, and therefore wilt not, do not, deny me. She is *a widow*; add not affliction to the afflicted; deprive her not of the great support and staff of her age. She hath given me kind entertainment; let her not fare the worse for her kindness to a prophet, whereby wicked men will take occasion to reproach both her and religion"

One is reminded of Abraham in Hebrews 11:19 "He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type."

**A. W. Pink's** spiritual lessons from Elijah's prayer: First, Elijah's retiring to his own private chamber, that he might be alone with God. Second, his fervency: he "cried unto the Lord"—no mere lip-service was this. Third, his reliance upon his own personal interest in the Lord, avowing his covenant relationship: "O Lord, my God." Fourth, his encouraging himself in God's attributes: here, the Divine sovereignty and supremacy—"hast Thou also brought evil upon the widow." Fifth, his earnestness and importunity: evidenced by his "stretching himself upon the child" no less than three times. Sixth, his appeal to God's tender mercy: "the widow with whom I sojourn." Finally, the definiteness of his petition: "Let this child's soul come into him again." (Scroll down to paragraph beginning with "But it is not sufficient for us to cry, "Lord, teach us to pray" in Pink's [Life of Elijah](#))

**Ryken** adds "These are all valuable lessons. But perhaps the most outstanding virtue of Elijah's prayer is that he prayed in faith. Bear in mind that the prophet was praying for something he had never experienced before. In fact, this is the first resuscitation recorded in all of Scripture. In all likelihood, therefore, it is the first return from death in the history of the human race. Elijah had no miraculous example upon which to base his prayer. Yet because he knew the power of God, the great prophet prayed with resurrection faith." Even Elijah's posture for prayer demonstrated his faith. According to the Levitical laws, it was unlawful and impure for a holy man to touch a corpse (see Lev. 22:4)...Anyone who believes in the resurrection can pray with the faith of Elijah. Remember that Elijah is a man just like us. Remember, too, that God has raised Jesus Christ from the grave with the power of everlasting life. On the basis of that saving resurrection we should be bold in asking God for the vision to pray for spiritual blessings beyond anything we have ever experienced before ([1 Kings](#))

**1 Kings 17:22 The LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived.**

- **he revived:** De 32:39 1Sa 2:6 2Ki 13:21 Lu 8:54 Joh 5:28,29 11:43 Ac 20:12 Ro 14:9 Rev 11:11
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## YAHWEH ANSWERS WITH REVIVING OF THE CHILD

**The LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived-** Here we have the first recorded resurrection from the dead in the Bible.

**Henry Morris** - This is the first of eight instances recorded in the Bible when a dead person was miraculously restored to life, and the departed soul returned to its body. One was accomplished through Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-36), one at Elisha's tomb (2 Kings 13:21), one each through Peter and Paul (Acts 9:40; 20:9-12), and three through Christ (Matthew 9:18-25; Luke 7:12-15; John 11:43,44). These were all "resuscitations," of course, and each of these people eventually died again. The first true resurrection was that of Christ Himself (1 Corinthians 15:20), who could say after His resurrection: "I am alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18). Accompanying and following His resurrection was that of "many" (perhaps all) of the Old Testament "saints" (Matthew 27:52,53).



**1 Kings 17:23 Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother; and Elijah said, "See, your son is alive."**

- **your son is alive:** 2Ki 4:36-37 Lu 7:15 Ac 9:41 Heb 11:35
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Kings 4:36-37 He called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Take up your son." 37 Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son and went out.

Luke 7:15+ The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Acts 9:41+ And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

### ELIJAH'S PRESENTATION OF SON BACK TO WIDOW

**Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother; and Elijah said, "See, your son is alive** - Elijah is almost "matter of fact" about the miracle of her son being in effect raised from the dead. This was not a temporary swoon but a real death, for in 1Ki 21-22 Elijah asked God to let the child's life return and God answered affirmatively.

**C T Lacey** has an interesting comment - He now knew the Lord not only as One who sustains life, but who also gives life. It was vital preparation prior to his battles with the lifeless gods of the pagan world that had infiltrated the northern kingdom of Israel. His opening words at the commencement of the chapter were, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth" (v. 1), and his closing words were, "See, thy son liveth" (v. 23). The living God is the God who is able to give life. It would also have encouraged him to realise that if God could raise a child, He could also raise the nation to renewed spiritual life. Israel was to discover this in measure on Mount Carmel in ch. 18, but they will experience it fully in a coming day (Rom 11:15, 26-27). ([What the Bible Teaches – 1 and 2 Kings.](#))

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**QUESTION** - [How many people were raised from the dead in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Bible records several accounts of people being raised from the dead. Every time a person is raised from the dead, it is a stupendous miracle, showing that the God who is Himself the Source of Life has the ability to give life to whom He will—even after death. The following people were raised from the dead in the Bible:

**The widow of Zarephath's son** (1 Kings 17:17-24). Elijah the prophet raised the [widow of Zarephath's](#) son from the dead. Elijah was staying in an upper room of the widow's house during a severe drought in the land. While he was there, the widow's son became ill and died. In her grief, the woman brought the body of her son to Elijah with the assumption that his presence in her household had brought about the death of her boy as a judgment on her past sin. Elijah took the dead boy from her arms, went to the upper room, and prayed, "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!" (verse 21). Elijah stretched himself out on the boy three times as he prayed, and "the Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived" (verse 22). The prophet brought the boy to his mother, who was filled with faith in the power of God through Elijah: "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth" (verse 24).

**The Shunammite woman's son** (2 Kings 4:18-37). The prophet Elisha raised the [Shunammite woman's](#) son from the dead. Elisha regularly stayed in Shunem in an upper room prepared for him by this woman and her husband. One day, while Elisha was at Mount Carmel, the couple's young son died. The woman carried the body of her son to Elisha's room and laid it on the bed (verse 21). Then, without even telling her husband the news, she departed for Carmel to find Elisha (verses 22-25). When she found Elisha, she pleaded with him to come to Shunem. Elisha sent his servant, Gehazi, ahead of them with instructions to lay Elisha's staff on the boy's face (verse 31). As soon as Elisha and the Shunammite woman arrived back home, Elisha went to the upper room, shut the door, and prayed. Then he stretched out on top of the boy's body, and the body began to warm (verse 34). Elisha arose, walked about the room, and stretched himself out on the body again. The boy then sneezed seven times and awoke from death (verse 35). Elisha then delivered the boy, alive again, to his grateful mother (verses 36-37).

**The man raised out of Elisha's grave** (2 Kings 13:20–21). Elisha is connected with another miracle that occurred after his death. Sometime after Elisha had died and was buried, some men were burying another body in the same area. The grave diggers saw a band of Moabite raiders approaching, and, rather than risk an encounter with the Moabites, they threw the man's body into Elisha's grave. Scripture records that, "when the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet" (verse 21).

**The widow of Nain's son** (Luke 7:11–17). This is the first person Jesus raised from the dead. As the Lord approached the town of Nain, He met a funeral procession leaving the city. In the coffin was a young man, the only son of a widow. When Jesus saw the procession, "his heart went out to [the woman] and he said, 'Don't cry'" (verse 13). Jesus came close and touched the coffin and spoke to the dead man: "Young man, I say to you, get up!" (verse 14). Obeying the divine order, "the dead man sat up and began to talk" (verse 15). The mourning was turned to awe and praise: "God has come to help his people," the people said (verse 16).

**Jairus' daughter** (Luke 8:40–56). Jesus also showed His power over death by raising the young daughter of [Jairus](#), a synagogue leader. The Lord was surrounded by crowds when Jairus came to Him, begging Him to visit his house and heal his dying twelve-year-old daughter (Luke 8:41–42). Jesus began to follow Jarius home, but on the way a member of Jarius' household approached them with the sad news that Jairus' daughter had died. Jesus turned to Jarius with words of hope: "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed" (Luke 8:50). Upon arriving at Jarius' house, Jesus took the girl's parents, Peter, James, and John and entered the room where the body lay. There, "he took her by the hand and said, 'My child, get up!' Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up" (Luke 8:54–55). Jesus and His disciples then left the girl, alive and well, with her astonished parents.

**Lazarus of Bethany** ([John 11](#)). The third person that Jesus raised from the dead was His friend [Lazarus](#). Word had come to Jesus that Lazarus was ill, but Jesus did not go to Bethany to heal him. Instead, He told His disciples, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (John 11:4). A couple days later, Jesus told His disciples that Lazarus had died, but He promised a miracle: "I am going there to wake him up" (John 11:11). When Jesus reached Bethany, four days after Lazarus' death, Lazarus' grieving sisters both greeted Jesus with the same words: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21, 32). Jesus, speaking to Martha, promised to raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11:23) and proclaimed Himself to be "[the resurrection and the life](#)" (John 11:25). Jesus asked to see the grave. When He got to the place, He commanded the stone to be rolled away from the tomb (verse 39), and He prayed (John 11:41–42) and "called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'" (John 11:43). Just as Jesus had promised, "the dead man came out" (John 11:44). The result of this miracle was that God was glorified and "many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him" (John 11:45). Others, however, refused to believe in Jesus and plotted to destroy both Jesus and Lazarus (John 11:53; 12:10).

**Various saints in Jerusalem** (Matthew 27:50–53). The Bible mentions some people who were [raised from the dead en masse](#) at the time of the death of Christ. When Jesus died, "the earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open" (Matthew 27:51–52). Those open tombs remained open until the third day. At that time, "the bodies of many holy people . . . were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people" (Matthew 27:52–53). On the day that Jesus was raised to life, these saints were also raised and became witnesses in Jerusalem of the life that only Jesus can give.

**Tabitha** (Acts 9:36–43). Tabitha, whose Greek name was [Dorcas](#), was a believer who lived in the coastal city of Joppa. Her return to life was performed by the apostle Peter. Dorcas was known for "always doing good and helping the poor" (Acts 9:36). When she died, the believers in Joppa were filled with sadness. They laid the body in an upper room and sent for Peter, who was in the nearby town of Lydda (Acts 9:37–38). Peter came at once and met with the disciples in Joppa, who showed him the clothing that Dorcas had made for the widows there (Acts 9:39). Peter sent them all out of the room and prayed. Then "turning toward the dead woman, he said, 'Tabitha, get up.' She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet" (Acts 9:40–41). The overjoyed believers received their friend, and the news spread quickly throughout the city. "Many people believed in the Lord" as a result (Acts 9:42).

**Eutychus** (Acts 20:7–12). Eutychus was a young man who lived (and died and lived again) in Troas. He was raised from the dead by the apostle Paul. The believers in Troas were gathered in an upper room to hear the apostle speak. Since Paul was leaving town the next day, he spoke late into the night. One of his audience members was [Eutychus](#), who sat in a window and, unfortunately, fell asleep. Eutychus slipped out of the window and fell three stories to his death (Acts 20:9). Paul went down and "threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him" (Acts 20:10). Eutychus came back to life, went upstairs, and ate a meal with the others. When the meeting finally broke up at daylight, "the people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted" (Acts 20:12).

**Jesus** (Mark 16:1–8). Of course, any list of people raised from the dead must include Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection are the focal point of Scripture and the most important events in the history of the world. The [resurrection of Jesus](#) is notably different from other events in which people rose from the dead: Jesus' resurrection is the first permanent return to life; everyone else who had been raised to life died again. Lazarus died twice; Jesus rose, nevermore to die. In this way, Jesus is "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Jesus' resurrection justifies us (Romans 4:25) and ensures our eternal life: "Because I live,

you also will live" (John 14:19).

**1 Kings 17:24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth."**

- **Now I know:** Joh 2:11 3:2 4:42-48 11:15,42 15:24 16:30
- **the word:** Ec 12:10 1Th 2:13 1Jn 2:21
- [1 Kings 17 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **WIDOW AFFIRMS GOD'S WORD IN GOD'S PROPHET**

**Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth."** - The reviving of her son was seen as evidence that Elijah was truly a **man of God** and that he was truly a prophet of God. This was tantamount to a confession in the God of Israel, for she had not only seen Him sustain their lives for 2 years but now seen that He also imparts life to the dead!

**Philip Ryken** writes " Now the widow knows! Now she believes! Now she trusts! It was not until the woman held her living, breathing son in her arms that she came to a firm conviction of the truth of God. The widow of Zarephath shows how faith in the living God is grounded in the factuality of the resurrection. Belief in the resurrection of the body is not just for super-Christians; it is the foundation for true faith. Resurrection is the proof of the promise of God. ([1 Kings](#))

**R. D. Patterson:** God's purpose was now evident. Her sin was not at issue (cf. John 9:3), but the testing had come in order that her newly found faith might be brought to settled maturity. Yahweh ("the Lord") was not only the God of the Jews (v. 24) but of all those who believe (cf. Rom 3:29); he was not only the God of the living but the God of resurrection (cf. Luke 20:38; John 11:25-26).

**THE PHRASE "MAN OF GOD"** - 78X IN 73V - Deut. 33:1; Jos. 14:6; Jdg. 13:6; Jdg. 13:8; 1 Sam. 2:27; 1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Sam. 9:7; 1 Sam. 9:8; 1 Sam. 9:10; 1 Ki. 12:22; 1 Ki. 13:1; 1 Ki. 13:4; 1 Ki. 13:5; 1 Ki. 13:6; 1 Ki. 13:7; 1 Ki. 13:8; 1 Ki. 13:11; 1 Ki. 13:12; 1 Ki. 13:14; 1 Ki. 13:21; 1 Ki. 13:26; 1 Ki. 13:29; 1 Ki. 13:31; 1 Ki. 17:18; 1 Ki. 17:24; 1 Ki. 20:28; 2 Ki. 1:9; 2 Ki. 1:10; 2 Ki. 1:11; 2 Ki. 1:12; 2 Ki. 1:13; 2 Ki. 4:7; 2 Ki. 4:9; 2 Ki. 4:16; 2 Ki. 4:21; 2 Ki. 4:22; 2 Ki. 4:25; 2 Ki. 4:27; 2 Ki. 4:40; 2 Ki. 4:42; 2 Ki. 5:8; 2 Ki. 5:14; 2 Ki. 5:15; 2 Ki. 5:20; 2 Ki. 6:6; 2 Ki. 6:9; 2 Ki. 6:10; 2 Ki. 6:15; 2 Ki. 7:2; 2 Ki. 7:17; 2 Ki. 7:18; 2 Ki. 7:19; 2 Ki. 8:2; 2 Ki. 8:4; 2 Ki. 8:7; 2 Ki. 8:8; 2 Ki. 8:11; 2 Ki. 13:19; 2 Ki. 23:16; 2 Ki. 23:17; 1 Chr. 23:14; 2 Chr. 8:14; 2 Chr. 11:2; 2 Chr. 25:7; 2 Chr. 25:9; 2 Chr. 30:16; Ezr. 3:2; Neh. 12:24; Neh. 12:36; Ps. 90:1; Jer. 35:4; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17

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**QUESTION - [What does it mean to be a man of God? | GotQuestions.org](#) [WATCH VIDEO](#)**

**ANSWER** - Man of God" is the description given to a man that follows God in every way, who obeys His commands with joy, who does not live for the things of this life but for the things of eternity, who willingly serves his God in giving freely of all his resources yet gladly suffers as a consequence of his faith. Perhaps Micah 6:8 sums up the man of God in one neat verse: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

The man of God does not swindle or defraud his employer by turning up late for work or spending an hour on the internet during work hours; he doesn't gossip or slander; he keeps his mind and heart pure by guarding his eyes and ears from the filth of the world; he is the spiritual leader of his family. He does everything opposite to what the world does or approves of; he goes "against the grain" of society because he knows these things displease God; he considers those who are "disadvantaged" or those rejected by society, those who are lonely or despairing; he is a listener to other people's problems and does not judge.

Most of all, the man of God understands that when our Lord commanded him to "be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), he is only able to accomplish that because God enables him to be "holy and blameless in his sight" (Ephesians 1:4) through His power and the indwelling of His Spirit. On our own, we are incapable of holiness and perfection, but through Christ who strengthens us, we can "do all things" (Philippians 4:13). The man of God knows that his new nature is that of the righteousness of Christ which was exchanged for our sinful nature at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 3:9). The final result is that he walks humbly with his God, knowing that he must rely solely upon Him to be able to live to the full and persevere to the end.

Perhaps the Christian today is lacking in these qualities, but this is what simple religion is all about—the simple religion that is yet sufficient to please God: helping those in distress and keeping oneself from being polluted by the world (James 1:23). We can have

an awareness of all biblical doctrines, we can know all the theological terms, we may be able to translate the Bible from the original Greek and so on, but the principle of Micah 6:8 is the principle that the man of God must follow: act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.