

Our God Provides

1 Kings 17:1-24

1 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." 2 Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3 "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 4 And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. 7 And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." 11 And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 12 So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, 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." 13 And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'" 15 So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah. 17 Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. 18 So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?" 19 And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. 20 Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" 21 And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." 22 Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. 23 And 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 lives!" 24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "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."

Who is this Elijah?

The record goes along talking about the kings and what they were doing and with the introduction of Ahab the son of Omri and Jezebel the daughter of the Sidonian king.

Elijah was an extraordinary prophet for extra ordinary times.

The first king of Israel, Jereboam, set up golden calves and caused the people to worship idols.

But Ahab sets up the god Baal as the primary God to be worshiped. Baal was the god of fertility, bring the rain for the crops.

So the real God shows up in the person of Elijah and tells the royal couple that there will be no rain unless Elijah calls for it. And then he disappears just a suddenly as he came.

God could not allow the rain. It was His rain on His land. Baal was just a false substitute inspired by Satan to deceive the people and rob God of the glory God was due.

God had promised to bless Israel if they would honor and worship only Yahweh. He also had promised to withhold His blessings if they did not.

That is partly what our story is about today. God calls Elijah to pronounce judgment on Israel because they have turned to other gods and have given them the credit of blessing that God sends our way. So God will withhold those blessings to show that the false gods have no control over the realm of God.

- I. Even though there is no fire in our lesson today Elijah is commonly called the prophet of fire.
 - A. We know almost nothing about him.
 1. We know nothing of his family.
 2. We know little of his home town, no one is sure where it was.
 3. He just suddenly appears in Israel's history.
 - B. Samuel was the first modern prophet.
 1. He had raised up a school of prophets.
 2. He trained them and gave them leadership.
 3. Elijah may be part of the product of those early efforts.
 4. We know that both Elijah and Elisha have a group around them known as the sons of the prophets.
 5. These seem to be a group mentored by Elijah at this time.
 - C. Elijah is unpredictable.
 1. He often suddenly appears and disappears.
 2. Of all the prophets he is the only one who is prophesied to return to earth.
 - a. Mal 4:5-6 5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 6 And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the

children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

- b. Isaiah spoke of his return.
- c. Isa 40:3 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. NKJV

II. The announcement.

- A. There would be no rain until Elijah called for it.
 - 1. I am sure that he was not taken seriously at first.
 - 2. They trusted in Baal not in this God of Elijah.
 - 3. Just like the ancient Egyptians who trusted in their false gods they were going to find out the LORD alone is God.
- B. Immediately after this Elijah is told to go away to the wilderness.

III. God supplies the needs of His people.

- A. At the brook.
 - 1. Here the water from the brook sustains Elijah while the country begins to experience the predicted drought.
 - 2. The ravens bring bread and meat, morning and evening.
 - a. This seems unlikely as ravens are considered unclean in the law of Moses.
 - b. It think this just goes to show how God can provide any way He chooses.
- B. In Zarephath
 - 1. Here God sends Elijah out of Israel and to the homeland of Jezebel.
 - 2. God sends him to a starving widow with a son who also must be provided for by her.
 - 3. They only have enough food for one last meal and then they plan to die.
 - 4. But when Elijah arrives he asks her to bring him a little cake made first.
 - 5. She does this and the miracle happens.
 - 6. The grain is still the same.
 - a. She didn't suddenly have a bin full of flour.
 - b. She didn't suddenly have the best flour.

- c. She had just enough flour for only one more meal.
- 7. The oil remains the same.
 - a. There was enough until the famine would end.
 - b. God has not promised to give us a super abundance, but He gives us enough for the day.
 - c. Give us this day our daily bread.
 - d. We asked the lifeguards if they wanted paid at the end of each day.
 - e. In the Old Testament you could not withhold a workers pay but must pay them every evening.
 - f. You paid them every evening because he did not have a pantry full of food.
 - g. He did not have a big account or a credit card.
- C. When we have an abundance we have to try harder to depend upon God.
 - 1. We often depend up the things of this world.
 - 2. We forget who it is that blesses.
 - 3. We do not worship the creation but the God who made the creation.

The people were following Baal, not Jehovah, and the Lord could not send the promised rain and still be faithful to His covenant. God always keeps His covenant, whether to bless the people for their obedience or to discipline them for their sins.

Bible Exposition Commentary - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Responsible (1 Kings).

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 - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Responsible (1 Kings).

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; Isa. 55:10)

Bible Exposition Commentary - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Responsible (1 Kings).

Jezebel had challenged the existence of the living God. God's answer to Baal worship was his mighty prophet, Elijah (my God is Jahweh or Jehovah) the Tishbite.

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary.

Baal is a god of lightning and storm, and responsible for the fertility of the land. By withholding rain, Yahweh is demonstrating the power of his kingship in the very area of nature over which Baal is thought to have jurisdiction. Announcing this beforehand to Ahab is the means by which Yahweh's kingship and power are being portrayed. If Baal is the provider of rain and Yahweh announces that he will withhold it, the contest is on.

Bible Background Commentary - The IVP Bible Background Commentary – Old Testament.

Dramatically, without any introduction, Elijah leaps into the arena. He and the royal couple had apparently never met. Without preface or introduction, he appeared before Ahab and Jezebel in Samaria and with startling bravado abruptly announced the drought. No personal credentials. No reasons for the drought. No conditions for mercy. He delivered his message and just as suddenly disappeared.

Dilday, R., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1987). 1, 2 Kings (Vol. 9, p. 187). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc.