

1Kings 17:1 ¶ 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.*

In this chapter we are introduced to Elijah the Tishbite of Gilead, one of the great prophets of God in Old Testament scripture. Unlike most of the primary players in scripture, we are told nothing of his parentage.

Elijah = Yahweh is my God

Elijah delivered a message from the LORD God of Israel to Ahab. He told Ahab that as sure as the LORD lives, there would not be dew or rain in the years ahead except as he commanded (implied as commanded by the LORD).

The book of James tells us that this drought was actually in answer to Elijah's prayer.

James 5:17 "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain...."

He must have been very grieved over the spiritual state of his people and hoped the drought would cause them to repent and turn back to the LORD.

The IVP Commentary provides further insight: "In the Canaanite material available from ancient literature (particularly the information provided by the Ugaritic tablets), 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."

1Kings 17:2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

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

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

1Kings 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.

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

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

The LORD then told Elijah to go east and hide by the brook Cherith near the Jordan river. The brook would provide water for Elijah, and the LORD had commanded the ravens to feed him. Elijah did as God commanded. The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and evening, and he drank from the brook. After a while, the brook dried up since there had been no rain in the land.

Notice that Elijah doesn't question what the LORD tells him to do; he just obeys. The fact that He provided food for Elijah by "commanding the ravens" to feed him is a statement of His authority and power over His creation.

1Kings 17:8 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,
1Kings 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.
1Kings 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.
1Kings 17:11 And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

The LORD spoke to Elijah again and told him to go to Zarephath, a city of Sidon, Jezebel's homeland. There was a widow woman there that the LORD had commanded to provide for him. Did God actually speak to this woman? No. He knew, however, that she would do as the prophet asked.

Again, Elijah obeyed the LORD's command without question. When he reached the gate of the city, the widow woman was there gathering sticks. He called out and asked her for a drink of water. As she left to get it, he called out again and asked her to bring him a bit of bread also.

It stands out to me that though this woman is resigned to dying for lack of food (see next verse), she is still willing to help a foreigner who needs a drink of water.

1Kings 17:12 And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

The woman explained that she had nothing but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil. She was actually gathering two sticks so that she could go and prepare it as a last meal for her and her son. She expected that they both would die of hunger after that.

It's interesting that the woman answered Elijah by referencing the LORD "thy" God that lives. She recognized Elijah as an Israelite. She declared that as surely as Elijah's God lived so was what she was about to say the truth. Did she use that statement because Elijah believed in God or because she did? Her response (in the following verses) to Elijah's message and his request testified to having faith or at least wanting to believe.

1Kings 17:13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.
1Kings 17:14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall

not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

Elijah told her not to be afraid. He told her to go and do as she had planned, but asked her to make him a little cake first; then she could make something for her and her son. He then told her that the LORD God of Israel had declared that her barrel of meal and supply of oil would not go empty until the day that the LORD sent rain once again.

Both Luke and James tell us that the drought lasted for 3.5 years.

Luke 4:25 "But 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...."

James 5:17 "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months."

1Kings 17:15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days.

1Kings 17:16 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.

The woman did as Elijah said; she acted in faith, and they were sustained for a long time. She never ran out of meal or oil, just as the LORD had declared through Elijah.

1Kings 17:17 ¶ 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.

1Kings 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?

There came a time when the woman's son became sick and died. In her grief, she blamed Elijah. She thought the man of God was punishing her for some past sin. It seems that she was carrying a burden of guilt for that sin.

1Kings 17:19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

1Kings 17:20 And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

1Kings 17:21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

Elijah took the boy from his mother and carried him up to the loft where he stayed and placed the boy on his own bed. He then called out to the LORD and basically asked God why this had happened to the woman's son. Then Elijah stretched himself out upon the child three times asking the LORD to restore the child to life.

I liked the NIV Commentary's observation regarding why: "God's purpose was now evident. The widow's sin was not at issue, but the testing had come so that her newly found faith might be brought to settled maturity. The Lord was not only the God of the Jews but of all those who believe; he was not only the God of the living but the God of resurrection."

The IVP Commentary adds insight on Elijah's actions: "In Mesopotamian incantation literature the touching of part to part is a means by which demons exercise power over their intended victims—it is the idiom of possession....By imitating the procedure believed to be used by demons, the prophet is able, through the power of Yahweh (notice the prayer), to drive the demons out and restore the boy's life."

"let this child's soul come into him again" – This is a statement that testifies to the truth that we are more than just a physical body; we are spiritual beings that are housed in flesh.

1Kings 17:22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

1Kings 17:23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

1Kings 17:24 And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

The LORD answered Elijah's prayers and restored the child to life. Elijah took the child down to his mother and showed her that he was alive. The woman told Elijah that she now knew that he was a man of God (the one true God) that spoke the truth as the LORD commanded.

This is the first instance in scripture of a miracle of resurrection from the dead.