

Third Presbyterian Church
Midweek Bible Study
1st Kings 17
When Your Brook Dries up

1 Kings 17:1-24 (NIV)

¹ 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." ² Then the word of the

LORD came to Elijah: ³ "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan.

⁴ You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there." ⁵ So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. 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 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him: ⁹ "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." ¹⁰ So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there

gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?"

¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread." ¹² "As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread--only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it--and die."

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.

¹⁴ For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.'"

Questions

1. God spoke to Elijah to speak a destructive prophecy into the life of King Ahab (a notoriously bloody king). The Lord will use us to speak truth into the lives of both believers and non-believers.
 - A. How can you ensure you are speaking a truth of God in love and not destroying the person receiving said truth?
 - B. Give example of how you have been used to give a truth and when you have been on the receiving end of a truth, either from a specific person or through another means (sermon, bible study etc.).
2. Have conversation to substantiate the truth **"God does not send you somewhere and does not protect and provide for you."**
3. Ravens are prey animals not known for nurturing.
 - A. What does this say about God, that ravens are used to provide resources to Elijah?

- B. Give example of God using an unusual/unlikely means or person to provide resources to you?
What was your reaction/testimony of this unusual/unlikely provision?
4. God provided Elijah water for 2 years in a drought. Give testimony about how God has taken care of you in a situation of “drought” where others may not have but you did.
 5. We live in such a time and place of plenty and over indulgence daily. An extraordinary amount of faith was being exercised by Elijah to live with just enough for each day and no more for two years by the brook.
 - A. How does knowing this change the way you look at the number of resources you consume daily?
 - B. What do you think would have to change in your life for you to live for two years on just enough to make it to tomorrow as Elijah did? How would living like this change your faith in God and relationship with God?
 6. Although the place by the brook that God let Elijah to was a place of resources, it was always meant to be temporary. Too often we get comfortable with a temporary place God has us and God has to dry up our “brook” in order to get us to move.
 - A. Share a time when you got too comfortable in a place and you know God dried up your brook in order to get you to move to a place where you could be greatly used by God.
 - B. When we become comfortable and complacent, our work for the Lord and our faith in the Lord starts to wean. How can we prevent becoming complacent in a place of plenty?
 7. There are times when we get so used to the provision that we lose sight of the provider
 - A. Explain in your own words what this means.
 - B. What does our life look like when we lose sight of the provider?
 - C. How can we prevent this scenario from happening in our lives?
 8. What step of faith do you need to take for God at this time in your life?
 9. Share your main takeaways from the lesson/sermon for this week.

A. The Drought Predicted by Elijah: Judgment Due to Idolatry and False Worship, 17:1-24

(17:1-24) Introduction: false worship and idolatry have swept the earth, capturing the hearts and minds of multiplied millions of people. This is most tragic, for false worship and idolatry expose our ignorance and blindness and doom us to destruction. They declare that we would rather follow something false—something created by man's imagination—than follow the only living and true God. Rejecting the living and true God has catastrophic results, leaving us to face the severe crises of life all alone, crises such as...

- sickness or life-threatening illnesses
- crippling or disabling diseases
- physical handicaps or disabilities
- severe depression or other mental problems
- the loss of friends or loved ones
- loneliness or rejection
- a lack of purpose or meaning in life
- bankruptcy or other financial difficulties

- separation or divorce
- serious accidents or disasters
- death, hell, and the judgment to come

False worship and idolatry are grossly misleading. They lull a person into a false sense of security, when in reality they doom a person to the judgment of God. Therefore, no greater danger confronts a person than that of false worship and idolatry.

These two terrible threats are the subject of the present passage of Scripture. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had become engrossed in wickedness, idolatry, and false worship. They became so engrossed that the people turned completely away from the Lord to the worship of the false god Baal. This particular false god was thought to be the god of fertility, the god of rain and sunshine and light—all the ingredients that caused the crops to grow and the hands of man to produce and bear fruit upon this earth. In these dark days of the Northern Kingdom, God sent forth a prophet to prove that the Lord—not the false god Baal—was the only living and true God. The Lord alone was the God the people should be worshipping and following. The prophet was Elijah, one of the greatest prophets who ever lived. And this is the first mention of Elijah in Scripture. He is seen here shining forth as a light in the midst of a dark, corrupt society. This is: *The Drought Predicted by Elijah: Judgment Due to Idolatry and False Worship, 17:1-24.*

1. Elijah predicted the drought and famine: proof that the Lord is the only living and true God—not Baal (falsely thought to be the god of rain) (v.1).

2. Elijah was fed and protected by God: proof that the Lord alone—not Baal—is the Provider and Protector of His people (vv.2-16).

3. Elijah was used by God to raise the widow's son: proof that the Lord alone—not Baal—has the power to sustain life and raise the dead (vv.17-24).

1. (17:1) God, Proof of— God, Fact— Baal, Weakness of— Drought, Caused by— Famine, Caused by— Elijah, Prophecies of: suddenly, dramatically, Elijah appeared before King Ahab, predicting a drought and famine upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Obviously, for some years the Lord had been preparing Elijah to prove one truth to all Israel: that the Lord (Jehovah-Yahweh) is the only living and true God. In fact, Elijah's very name means "the Lord (Yahweh) is my God." It was his God-given mission to proclaim the message that his name declared: "The Lord is God, He and He alone." His message was to stand against Baal, the false god that most of Israel was now worshipping. Baal was thought to be the god of fertility, the god who controlled the rain and the dew, the crops and the harvest of the fields, and gave man the strength to work and produce with his hands.

Appearing out of nowhere, Elijah abruptly confronted King Ahab to pronounce this terrifying drought upon the land of Israel. There would be a drought—neither dew nor rain—for the next few years unless he personally gave the word and reversed the drought. Of course, he was speaking under instruction from the Lord, knowing that the power to hold the rain back and to restart the rains rested solely in the hands of God Himself. But Elijah was the instrument through whom God was working; therefore, the drought was to begin at the word of Elijah and end at his word some years later. Note also that Elijah left Ahab just as quickly as he had appeared.

Just who Elijah was is not known, other than the simple statement that he was from Tishbe, which was located in Gilead, the northern section of East Jordan. No other facts are known about this prophet of God who was to become one of the greatest prophets ever to serve the Lord. For years, Elijah had apparently been observing the wicked lives of the Israelites. Their idolatry and false worship were a constant affront, an offense thrust in the face of God. At some point he became broken before the Lord over the terrible evil of the Israelites. And God moved upon his heart, giving him the mission of proving to the people that the Lord Himself was the only living and true God.

Armed with the mission of God and the promise of God's presence, Elijah marched to the capital of Samaria to confront the evil King Ahab. Abruptly, dramatically, he burst into the royal court, standing face-to-face with Ahab. He declared the message of God: "The Lord God of Israel lives. And because He lives, there will be neither dew nor rain for several years to come."

God had previously predicted that the land would suffer drought and famine if the people rejected Him and turned to idolatry and false worship (Leviticus 26:18-20; Deut. 11:16-17; 28:23-24). Through the drought, the Lord would prove that He, not Baal, was the true God. He and He alone controlled the rain and fruitfulness of the earth.

Thought 1. If the drought and famine prophesied by Elijah actually took place, this would be strong evidence that the Lord is the only living and true God. As seen in the following Scripture, a severe drought and famine did take place.

The Lord (Jehovah, Yahweh) is the only living and true God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He and He alone controls the weather. In fact, He controls all the laws that govern the very existence of the universe and all life throughout the universe, visible or invisible, physical or spiritual.

No matter how much we may deny or question God's existence, or exalt ourselves and science as the ultimate reality of the universe, God does exist. The Lord (Jehovah, Yahweh) is the only living and true God. We are the work of His hands. Denying God's existence does not void God, does not make Him cease to exist. Truth is truth, and God *is* truth. As truth, He is living and longing for all of us to join Him after our sojourn here upon this earth. One of the great proclamations of the Holy Bible is this one truth: the Lord is the only living and true God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

"But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:63-64).

"And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein" (Acts 14:15).

"For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thes. 1:9-10).

2. (17:2-16) Provision, Source, God— Protector, Source, God— God, Proof of, His Provision and Protection— Provision, of God— Protection, of God— Elijah, Provision and Protection of:

Elijah was miraculously fed and protected by God during the years of the drought and famine. Apparently while Ahab was in a state of shock from the appearance and pronouncement by the rugged prophet, Elijah abruptly walked out before he could be arrested. Either immediately or soon thereafter, the Lord instructed Elijah to flee from the king in case Ahab sought retaliation or revenge, in particular after the drought began. Moreover, the prophet needed to be out of Ahab's reach, for the king would be putting undue pressure upon Elijah to stop the drought. Scripture dramatically describes how God protected and provided for His dear prophet.

1. God instructed Elijah to hide out in the Kerith Ravine, which was east of the Jordan River (1 Kings 17:2-4). Evidently this was one of the narrow gorges that had a brook running through it from which Elijah would have a plentiful supply of water. In addition, the hideout would give Elijah seclusion and safety from Ahab's frantic search for him. Note God's wonderful promise of supernatural provision: He had personally ordered the ravens to provide food for His dear servant.

2. In obedience Elijah did just as God instructed, and God provided for His dear servant in the wilderness (1 Kings 17:5-6). Elijah witnessed the power of God as the ravens brought him bread and meat twice a day, morning and evening. And he drank fresh water from the flowing brook. Despite being all alone and being hunted down by the king, Elijah's needs were being met by the Lord Himself. God's dear servant was being protected and provided for day by day.

3. However, God's provision was not only supplied in the wilderness but also in the city through the help of a widow (1 Kings 17:7-16). Eventually the brook dried up, and the Lord instructed Elijah to go and stay in the city of Zarephath near Sidon. There he would meet a widow whom the Lord had already instructed to supply food for him (1 Kings 17:8-9). Immediately, Elijah obeyed the Lord and made the trip (1 Kings 17:10). When he entered the city gate, he saw a widow gathering sticks. Elijah decided to test the woman to see if she was the widow appointed by God. He asked her for a drink of water and, as she was going to get the water, he called out and asked her to please bring him a piece of bread as well (1 Kings 17:10-11).

Turning back toward Elijah, the widow responded by sharing her desperate situation: she was poverty-stricken, having no food whatsoever, only a little flour and oil. In fact, she had been gathering the sticks to cook her last meager supplies, expecting to starve to death along with her son after they had eaten this final small meal.

Hearing the desperate plight of the widow, Elijah challenged her to trust the Lord for His provision (1 Kings 17:13-14). He told her to go home and bake the bread, but to give him the first part. She could then make bread for herself and her son, for the Lord would replenish the flour and oil miraculously. He would provide for all three of them until the day that it rained (1 Kings 17:14). Note this was a promise based on the authority of God's Word, for Elijah declared that this is what the Lord Himself had promised. Would the widow believe the Word of the Lord? Would she make the bread first of all for Elijah?

The widow did believe the promise. She obeyed the prophet of God, doing exactly what Elijah had instructed her to do. And the result was astounding: the Lord miraculously provided food every day for the woman and her family and, of course, for Elijah the prophet. The flour and oil never ran dry, just as the Lord had promised through His faithful prophet.

Thought 1. Two of the greatest promises in God's Holy Word concern His *provision* and *protection*. God protects and provides for His dear people. But there is a condition: we must trust and obey God's Word. Just as the widow trusted and obeyed the Lord, so we too must trust and obey Him. If we truly believe the Lord and His

promises, He will meet our every need. No genuine believer will have his needs unmet nor lack the necessities of life, not unless the Lord is using the experience to strengthen the believer or to take him on home to heaven with Him.

If we seek the Lord and His righteousness first, He promises to provide food, clothing, and shelter for His dear people. He also promises to protect us through all the trials and difficulties of this life, through all the hardships and misfortunes, the temptations and seductions. Note that His protection is not *from* the hardships or trials but *through* them. As believers, we will endure most of the same misfortunes and temptations as unbelievers—and even some that unbelievers will not experience—but God will be with us every step of the way. He will hold our hands, hold us up, and even carry us when needed. This is the clear promise of God's Holy Word.

1) God promises to provide for His dear people, supplying and meeting their every need.

"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

"And God *is* able to make all grace [supplies, provision] abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

"And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee" (Exodus 23:25).

2) God promised to protect His dear people, delivering them through all trials and temptations.

"But there shall not an hair of your head perish" (Luke 21:18).

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*" (John 17:11).

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*" (1 Cor. 10:13).

3. (17:17-24) Life, Source of— Resurrection, Source of— Dead, Raised, by the Lord— Widow of Zarephath, Son Raised from the Dead— Elijah, Miracles of: Elijah was used by God to raise back to life the widow's son who had died. This miracle is striking proof that the Lord alone—not the false god Baal—has the power to sustain life and to raise the dead. Scripture dramatically paints the scene of this spectacular miracle.

1. Some unknown illness gripped the widow's son, and he died. Sensing guilt, the widow accused Elijah of causing the death of her son. She mistakenly felt that she was being chastised because of some sin in her life and that the holy presence of the prophet had exposed her sin. Thus Elijah's presence was causing God's chastisement to fall upon her son.

2. But wonderfully and miraculously, the widow's son was to be raised from the dead, raised as proof that the Lord alone—not the false god Baal—has the power over the fruitfulness of life. The Lord alone sustains life and has the power to raise the dead ([1 Kings 17:19-23](#)). In response to the widow's accusations, Elijah simply took the child in his arms and carried him up to his own room, laying him on the bed. Puzzled by the child's death, Elijah lifted up his voice in prayer, crying out to the Lord and asking why He had allowed the child to die.

After crying out and expressing his puzzlement, Elijah stretched himself over the boy three times. He cried out in prayer each time, asking God to let the boy's soul, his life return to him ([1 Kings 17:21](#)).

Immediately, Elijah witnessed the astounding power of the Lord ([1 Kings 17:22](#)). The boy's soul, his life returned to the body, and the boy revived. Picking up the child, Elijah carried him to his mother with the wonderful, amazing news: "Your son lives" ([1 Kings 17:23](#)).

3. Taking the child into her arms, no doubt weeping, the widow made a confession of faith declaring three proven truths:

⇒ God is the Author of life, a fact that she had just witnessed.

⇒ Elijah was truly a man of God.

⇒ The Lord's Word is true.

Thought 1. God has the power to raise the dead just as He has the power to create life and the process or law by which every child is born into the world. Whatever processes are involved in the formation of a child from inception to birth—the laws that create life—have been established by God Himself. Life in all its complexity and mystery is given its power by the law of God alone. God holds the power to create life, to take life, and to raise the dead back to life.

Out in the future, a day of resurrection is coming, a day when every human being will be raised from the dead. No matter what the most minuscule particle of human life is, and no matter where the various parts of the human body are scattered through war or disease, these fine particles will be called back together to reform the human body of every individual who has ever lived and died. Even as God created the world by beginning with the most minute particles, so He will revive the most minute particles and reform every human being. And we will all stand before Him in the final judgment of the universe.

After the resurrection, a new heavens and earth will be remade and reformed, so that all the believers of all generations will have the most perfect world imaginable in which to live. This will be the glorious, climactic day of human history when the Lord Jesus will raise the dead to confront Him in judgment. Then He will separate the sheep from the goats, with the sheep being given the glorious privilege of living with Him eternally in the new heavens and earth. But the goats will be doomed to spend eternity in hell, separated from God forever.

Whatever we do in this life, we must make absolutely sure that we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, that we believe His wonderful promises just as the widow believed. For if we believe, the Lord will raise us from the dead to the resurrection of life, to live eternally in the wonderful, glorious presence of God Himself. This is the astounding promise of God's Holy Word:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:24-29).

Thought 2. God has proven His power to raise the dead several times throughout Scripture:

1) He raised the son of the widow who lived in Zarephath.

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

2) He raised the son of the Shunammite woman.

"Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes" (2 Kings 4:35).

3) A dead man was restored to life by touching Elisha's bones.

"And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of *men*; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet" (2 Kings 13:21).

4) The daughter of Jairus was raised from the dead by Christ.

"But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose" (Matthew 9:25; see also Mark 5:42).

5) A number of believers who had already died were raised at the time of the Lord's crucifixion.

"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose" (Matthew 27:52).

6) The son of the widow of Nain was raised from the dead by Christ.

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother" (Luke 7:15).

7) Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was raised from the dead.

"And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:44).

8) A widow named Dorcas was raised from the dead through the ministry of Peter.

"But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up" (Acts 9:40).

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 Kings.