

## *Elijah, the Tishbite* *1 Kings 17:1-16*

INTRO:

Elijah is a man who needed no introduction. He leaps on to the page with a shocking prophecy. The focus here is the word of God. God had threatened it in the Law, now He would send a devastating drought and famine in the land of Israel. Elijah spoke the words and God carried them out. As the passage moves on Elijah would be hidden by the Cherith and then be sent to a foreign country to be protected while the judgment came. Let us consider the account and see if we can't find a blessing here.

*I. The Prophet (v. 1)*

*II. The Provision (v. 2-16)*

*I. The Prophet (v. 1)*

**1 Kings 17:1** *“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.’”*

A. It is amazing how abruptly Yahweh thrusts Himself in the picture when it looked like Baal had won. No introduction, just the bare bones. Elijah the prophet announces the judgment to Ahab. How did Elijah get an audience with the king? How did Ahab receive what Elijah said?

B. Elijah lands the first blows in the war between Yahweh and Baal. Elijah's name was *“God is Yahweh.”*

C. The judgment Elijah announced was already promised in the Old Testament. In **Deuteronomy 28:24**, God promises drought and famine upon Israel if they will not obey Him.

*“The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.”*

D. While the judgment was understandable, it also was a direct attack on the wheel house of Baal. Baal was the god of fertility. Rain storms were supposed to be his domain. They had to please Baal or their crops would fail and they would lose everything.

Having stated his Message, Elijah departs. How did Ahab let him depart?

*II. The Provision (v. 2-16)*

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**1 Kings 17:3-4** *“Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”*

A. While God could have protected Elijah out in the open, He chose to send him first to hide by the brook Cherith. Why did God do this? It may have been His will that like his fellow countrymen Elijah needed to experience some of the judgment God would bring. Probably the main reason God did this was to underline again the importance of His Word. What was Elijah’s guarantee that he would be provided for at the Cherith? Only that the LORD said He would provide.

B. God kept His Word, but Elijah needed to be in the place God sent him to get the provision. Sometimes, when God provides it is not in the most comfortable and convenient ways. I don’t think I would like living on a diet brought by ravens. Nor would I want to be alone in a wilderness with nothing to do but pray and wait.

C. Finally, the brook dries up.

**1 Kings 17:8-10a** *“Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.’ So he arose and went to Zarephath.”*

This was no easy instruction. Zarephath was in the territory of Jezebel’s daddy. This was where Baal was supreme. Of all the places on planet earth this was the least likely place to find someone who was loyal to Yahweh the God of Israel. Yet, God commanded, so Elijah went. This took spiritual guts.

D. Not only did Elijah go, he went with the craziest instructions which were sure to make any widow run from him.

**1 Kings 17:10-12** *“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.’ And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, ‘Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.’ 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.’”*

This widow answers citing Elijah’s God. Is it possible someone who at least knows of Yahweh in this idolatrous land? She is clearly desperate, hungry, and without hope. Yet when Elijah answers she hears and believes.

**E. 1 Kings 17:13-16** *“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. 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.’ So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. 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.”*

This hard request was probably the test that the LORD had given to Elijah to find the widow who was commanded to take care of him.

F. Incredibly, she believed and obeyed. This was putting everything on the word of the God of Israel not Baal. She believed. Elijah also knew that what God said, God would do. So, each day she used the flour and oil only to discover that God replenished the flour and the oil every morning. How did Elijah and the widow live? Every day they had to rely on the promise of God.

G. We also have to do this for our eternity. We cannot see what lies ahead. We can only trust fully that the God who said He would bring us home through the blood of His Son would do exactly what He promised.

How about us? How much are we willing to invest in the promise of God? This widow willing invested everything she had in the God of a stranger. Perhaps she knew this God before hand, but whether or not she did, she invested everything in Him.