

Leader guide

In this lesson:

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 16:19-17:27

CORE VIRTUE: JOY

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20): I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

TAKE HOME TRUTH

God takes care of his remnant people even in the middle of judgment on the whole nation.

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Our Faithful King



OVERVIEW

Most of our heroes look great from a distance but disappoint us up close. Not so with Elijah. He is one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. If you are looking for heroes, Elijah needs to be on your list. Elijah is one of only two men in recorded history who never saw death (the other being Enoch).

Elijah enters the pages of Scripture during a dark time in Israel. The worship of the false god, Baal, has replaced the worship of Yahweh. This time of great apostasy did not happen overnight. As we have seen, the Northern Kingdom of Israel has been on a steep descent into idolatry since the days of its first king, Jeroboam. All these years of false worship, however, are about to give birth to a time of great apostasy with the rise of King Ahab.

It is at this time that Elijah enters. To get Israel's attention, he announces a 3-1/2 year drought that will weaken and devastate the land and its people. While he is clearly on God's mission, his announcement begins a time of great persecu-

tion for God’s people. Prophets like Elijah become hunted and hated men as the full force of Ahab’s government seeks to find them and kill them.

In the midst of this great persecution, God cares for and provides for His prophet.

As we will see this week, it is in times of national trial and spiritual darkness that God’s people can shine the brightest. We cannot know when God will call on you and me to take a stand as Elijah did, but when He does, we can be confident that He will be with us and strengthen us through His generous and abundant grace.

MEMORY VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

James 5:17-18 - Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

INTRODUCTION

What are some necessities God provides for us every day that we might overlook?

How does God’s provision for us shape our character and faith?

Looking back at your notes from this week’s sermon, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

Make sure you ask this question this week. It gives people the opportunity to discuss questions or issues that come up beyond the written questions. People’s responses can often lead into one of the questions in the “Digging Deeper” section. Also, some weeks this question will result in a lot of discussion, other weeks, not so much.

READ THE TEXT

It’s a dark time in Israel as King Ahab and Queen Jezebel make the worship of Baal the national religion. God’s prophets are hunted, persecuted, and killed. Into this darkness enters Elijah the Tishbite. To get Ahab and Jezebel’s attention, Elijah prays for drought, and it stops raining. For 3-1/2 years Israel will suffer starvation and death because of the drought, but God provides for His prophet through two unlikely channels—birds of prey, ravens, and a dirt-poor gentile widow. Read 1 Kings 16:29-17.

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DIGGING DEEPER

In this section, feel free to develop your own questions to help guide your group's discussion. Below are some suggestions. Remember, if you are hearing from everyone in your group, chances are you won't have to time to discuss every question. You may start with one that catches your attention so you don't run out of time. For example, it's not odd to start with Question #6, then go to Question #5 and if you have time come back to Question #4.

What is the context and what is happening in 1 Kings 17?

Since the death of Solomon in 1 Kings 11, and the division of the kingdom in 1 Kings 12, we have witnessed the steep descent of the Northern Kingdom of Israel into apostasy and the more gradual decline of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

The kings of Israel have followed in the footsteps of the first king, Jeroboam, who led Israel into idolatry. It seems with each successive king the nation falls deeper and deeper into apostasy and sin.

This week, we are introduced to the first "power couple" of the Old Testament, a couple so evil in their nature and wicked in their acts that they have become the picture of apostasy in Scripture. This week, we meet King Ahab of Israel and Queen Jezebel.

In its introduction of King Ahab, the Bible observes that his reign was so wicked, he made sins of Jeroboam seem trivial (1 Kings 16:31). That's quite a statement.

Who was Jezebel?

If Netflix had existed in the 8th Century B.C., Jezebel's life story would have made for a hit series. Jezebel was a princess, the daughter of the King of the Sidonians. Like many daughters of kings, Jezebel was wed in marriage to Ahab, the son of Omri, king of Israel.

This was a smart political move. As we will see in the next few chapters of 1 Kings, the great foreign threat to the region was the rise of Aram, also known as Syria. (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?) Sidon was located to the north of Israel along the Mediterranean coast, and today is known as Lebanon. Sidon was home of the Phoenicians, one of the great city-states of ancient history.

Both Sidon and Israel share borders with the Syrians, who were growing in military power and threatened the region. An alliance between Sidon and Israel was the smart political move to make.

As we have repeatedly seen throughout the history of the Divided Kingdom, marriages for political reasons proved to be spiritually destructive for the nation of Israel. In no other case is this truer than in the unfortunate marriage of King Ahab of Israel and Queen Jezebel.

Jezebel's name likely came from the cultic cry, "Where is Baal?" Ironically, her name also had a humorous ring when said in Hebrew. The Hebrew word "zebel" means "dung."

Queen Jezebel was nothing to be laughed at, however; her well-earned reputation was as one of the vilest, cruel women of the Bible. Her name became synonymous with evil.

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when His people worship idols, it is often described in terms of harlotry and adultery.

Few gods seemed to bring the wrath of Yahweh more than the Canaanite god, Baal. Baal was the “storm god” or the “god of rain” and was often associated with fertility and the production of life-sustaining crops and livestock. Baal worship was often expressed in very sexual means, and both male and female temple prostitutes were heavily employed wherever Baal was worshipped.

While Israel was often tempted with Baal worship when foreigners entered the land, the worship of Baal had never taken root in Israel...until the reign of Ahab and Jezebel.

The King and Queen were so committed to the worship of Baal that they established Baal worship as the national religion of Israel, outlawed the worship of Yahweh and hunted down, persecuted, and murdered the prophets of Yahweh (1 Kings 19:10).

This is the beginning of a very dark time in Israel for God’s people that would last for 22 long years.

Who is Elijah?

In the darkest hour of this spiritual night, God sends a prophet, Elijah the Tishbite. Elijah’s name means in Hebrew, “My God is Jehovah!” With this declaration, Elijah bursts onto the pages of history like a beacon of light and hope in a dark place.

Imagine this: just the mention of Elijah’s name (My God is Jehovah) caused Queen Jezebel to cringe in anger and hatred for this man and his God.

We don’t know a lot about Elijah’s background or his homeland, but given the evidence we do have, Chuck Swindoll paints the following picture of the prophet:

We know very little about Tishbeh, not even its exact location. However, the text does indicate that it was in Gilead, which was in the northern Transjordan area—that is, on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Given this clue, historians have pieced a few details together with the help of the archaeologists’ spade.

*Gilead was a place of solitude and outdoor life, a place where people would likely have been rugged, tanned from the sun, muscular and leathery. It was never a place of polish, sophistication, and diplomacy. It was an austere land, and one senses that Elijah’s appearance was in keeping with that. His manner might have bordered on coarse and crude, rough and rugged—not unlike many of the great fiery characters God has introduced at certain times to an unsuspecting world. These characters may not win many friends, but one thing is certain: They cannot be ignored. Prophets are always like that. [Charles R. Swindoll, *Elijah: A Man Who Stood with God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008).]*

Elijah’s confidence and style remind me of another young man who stood against Baal worship at a previous time in Israel’s history.

Numbers 25 records the sorry story of Israel’s brief flirtation with Baal. As the people camped in an Acacia Grove, the women of Moab came for a

visit. This led the men of Israel to “commit harlotry with the women of Moab” (v. 1). This led to sacrifices and worship, and soon the people were eating their food and bowing down to their god-Baal.

This aroused the anger of the Lord against Israel. Suddenly, a plague began to breakout among the people, and Israelites were dropping dead from the plague. As Moses and the leaders went to the tabernacle to intercede with the Lord, one Israelite man brought a woman right in front of the tabernacle and in front of Moses and began to have sex with her. It was a brazen sign of disrespect and rebellion.

One of the young men present, Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was so insulted by the scene that he took a spear and walked up to the couple having sex and ran the spear right through both the man and the women.

Immediately, the plague stopped, but not before killing 24,000 people.

The Lord spoke to Moses and honored Phinehas for his zeal an expressed great appreciation for being so zealous for the Lord His God.

This is the kind of zeal Elijah had for His God. He was determined to bring Israel and its wicked king and queen to their knees.

Define idolatry. What does idolatry look like in America today?

In simple terms, idolatry is when anything takes priority in our heart before the Lord Our God. In Israel, idolatry was bowing down and worshipping false gods, in this week’s example, Baal. As we have seen in the example of Jeroboam, his idol worship was in addition to his worship of Yahweh, by using the two golden calves as symbols of Yahweh. In our example this week, Ahab and Jezebel completely reject Yahweh and worship Baal.

What does idolatry look like in America today?

King Solomon summarized history well when he noted,

*That which has been is what will be,
That which is done is what will be done,
And there is nothing new under the sun.
— Ecclesiastes 1:9*

Idolatry looks different today than it did in Elijah’s time, but it is still just as deadly to God’s people. We struggle with idolatry just like Israel struggled with idolatry. There is nothing new under the sun.

We don’t worship an idol named Baal, but instead, we worship three idols that the Apostle Paul identified with the last days in 2 Timothy 3:

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 2 Timothy 3:1–5 (NKJV)

As David Reagan notes in his book, *God’s Prophetic Voices to America*,

The love of self is Humanism. The love of money is Materialism, and the love of pleasure is Hedonism. These three go hand-in-hand.

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Whenever Humanism is your religion, your god will be money and your lifestyle will be given over to the pursuit of pleasure. [Reagan, David. God's Prophetic Voices to America (Kindle Locations 371-373). Lamb & Lion Ministries. Kindle Edition.]

Remember how Ahab and Jezebel made Baal worship the national religion of Israel? The same has happened over the last 75 years in America. Only instead of Ahab and Jezebel, America has been led astray by men like Horace Mann and John Dewey, often referred to as "the fathers of modern education," and Paul Kurtz, often considered to be "the father of modern Secular Humanism."

Side Note: Was America ever a Christian nation?

There is a lot of debate today whether or not America was ever a "Christian nation." In my definition, this does not mean that every American was/is a Christian, but was the nation founded upon biblical principles and governed by biblical principles and morality? The answer to this is an unequivocal yes.

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court stated the following during a Washington prayer breakfast in 1954:

I believe no one can read the history of our country without realizing that the Good Book and the spirit of the Saviour have from the beginning been our guiding geniuses.

Whether we look to the first Charter of Virginia...or to the Charter of Massachusetts Bay...or to the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut... the same objective is present: a Christian land governed by Christian principles...

I believe the entire Bill of Rights came into being because of the knowledge our forefathers had of the Bible and their express belief in it...I like to believe we are living today in the spirit of the Christian religion. I like also to believe that as long as we do so no great harm can come to our country. [Ibid.]

Many of us are too young to remember the America before the 1960s. This would be the America our parents and grandparents grew up in. Imagine a time when stores and business were prohibited from operating on Sunday because it was the Lord's day. Imagine public school classrooms that start every day with prayer and Bible reading. Imagine a generation of students who stand as a sign of respect and, with right hand over their heart, start of every day by citing the following:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Was this a perfect time in America? Of course not. Any quick glance of our history will show America had many faults, with extreme racism at the top of the list. Still, this was a time when America strived to build upon a foundation rooted in Western Civilization that has been uniquely molded by biblical principles.

For an in-depth look at the social revolution that transitioned America from essentially a Christian nation to a Secular Humanist nation, read, "[The Rise of Cultural Marxism in America](#)," a paper I wrote in partial fulfillment of my Master of Arts in Apologetics.

What is the national religion of America today?

Lest you think Secular Humanism is not the national religion of America, consider the words of John Dunphy who wrote "A Religion for A New Age" for The Humanist magazine:

I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. There teachers must embody the same selfless dedication of the most rabid fundamentalist preacher, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level — preschool, daycare, or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new — the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never-realized Christian ideal of "love thy neighbor" will finally be achieved .

This article was published in 1983.

In a sermon preached in New Orleans in 1944, Peter Marshall, chaplain of the United States Senate, drew comparisons between America and Israel at the time of Elijah:

Materialism had a god, and his name was Baal. He offered to his devotees the things that human instincts crave. He was a god of the flesh. His priests encouraged the people to follow their natural inclinations. It was worship in indulgence, expressed in lust, and adored in self-ishness. It had no inhibitions at all. It said, "Look after number one, be yourself, be natural." Self-expression and natural instincts were its program. A good time for everyone according to the flesh was its goal. No wonder it grew in popularity. [Ibid.]

Who are the "Elijah-like" voices calling America to repentance today?

In God's Prophetic Voices to America, a book I highly recommend, David Reagan identifies 13 prophetic voices he believes God has used and is using to call America to repentance. Some of these prophetic voices include:

- **Francis Schaeffer** (1912-1984), American theologian and philosopher who stood in strong opposition to theological modernism, philosophical humanism, and political pragmatism, trends which Schaeffer argued were being adopted by the American church. At the end of his life, Schaeffer was so disgusted with the Evangelical Movement that he declared he would no longer refer to himself as an Evangelical. Instead, he called himself "a Bible-believing Christian."
- **Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn** (1918-2008), Nobel Prize-winning Russian novelist, historian, and writer best known for The Gulag Archipelago (1973). During a 20-year exile in America from 1974-1994, Solzhenitsyn became an outspoken critic of what he described as an increasing spiritual void of the West being led by pop culture. In a 1983 speech he titled, "Godlessness: The First Step Toward the Gulag," Solzhenitsyn reminded Americans, "if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some sixty-million people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened.

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

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- **Donald Wildmon** (1938-), the founder of the American Family Association, and a voice calling for decency in American media since the mid-1970s. He has been a strong opponent of pornography. Recognizing the moral disaster America was flirting with as pornography and indecency spread through the media, Wildmon prophesied, "Years ago a simple Jewish tentmaker spoke these words, 'Whatsoever a man sows, that will he also reap.' That truth is as valid for a nation as it is for an individual. The truth of the words of Paul of Tarsus is evident in our country today. For more than a generation now our society has been sowing seeds which are today bringing forth their fruit. Truth can be rejected, but it cannot be avoided."
- **Erwin Lutzer** (1941-), former pastor of The Moody Church in Chicago, author, and speaker. Born in Canada of German-speaking immigrant parents, Lutzer has had a long interest in Nazi Germany and how a nation like Germany so steeped in Christianity could fall so terribly far so terribly fast. For much of his ministry, Lutzer has been warning America that it is ripe for a similar peaceful transition from freedom to totalitarianism. All the pieces are in place, and Lutzer believes it will just take a spark, which, he believes will be an overwhelming economic collapse. Lutzer notes, "the dollar has become America's god, and the true God of this universe is a jealous God who delights in destroying false gods."
- **Albert Mohler, Jr.** (1959 -), president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, author, and speaker. Few recognize that the Southern Baptist Convention is the only major American denomination to turn back from theological liberalism. This "resurgence" was led by faithful pastors like W. A. Criswell, Adrian Rogers, Paul Pressler, and Paige Patterson. One of the young voices to emerge from the SBC's Conservative Resurgence was Albert Mohler. Today, Mohler speaks with an increasingly prophetic voice through his daily podcast, "The Briefing." With the voice of a common man and the intellect of a brilliant theologian, Mohler touches on some of the most controversial issues facing America today. For example, in response to the recent book and movie series, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Mohler observed, "Christians believe the radical truth that nothing good can be ugly, that nothing untrue can be beautiful, and that everything beautiful and true is also good. Therefore, any attempt to declare beauty at the expense of goodness and truth is at the heart of the problem of pornography."
- **Franklin Graham** (1952 -), president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse, author, evangelist, and speaker. One of the most-often heard criticisms of Franklin Graham today is this: "why can't he be like his father, Billy Graham." Billy Graham was a beloved and gifted evangelist. Franklin is perhaps one of the more hated men in America today. Do a simple Google search of Franklin Graham and, after the precursory links to Graham's ministries, you will find page after page of articles in major US publications condemning Franklin Graham for his statements and his stands. The difference is simple: Billy Graham was an effective evangelist, but not a prophet; Franklin is a prophet. Franklin Graham is called a bigot, racist, hate-filled, arrogant, and any other name the media can think up. In describing the differences between his father and himself, Franklin notes that his father ministered in a Christian nation whereas he now ministers in a nation that has jettisoned its Christian heritage.

This is just a partial list of prophetic voices calling America to repentance. As we see in the final example of Franklin Graham, many of these men are hated by the world for there stand. Unfortunately, even within the church,

many of these men are shunned for being hateful, bigoted, and racist. Keep in mind, however, that prophets are hated. Elijah was called “the troubler of Israel,” and Jesus was seen as a blasphemous traitor.

What are some simple lessons we can learn from this introduction to Elijah and his prophetic ministry?

- 1. Dark times enable God's people to shine even brighter.** This was a dark time in Israel's history, but Elijah's message cut through the darkness. The same is true for us today. Watch the news, and you will see that many view this as a dark time in America. God is looking for “Elijah-like” men and women today who are unafraid to speak truth to a country that does not want to hear the truth but is in desperate need for truth and the hope that can only be found in Jesus Christ and His gospel.
- 2. God's ways are often unexpected and unpredicted.** God used a three-and-a-half year drought to get Israel's attention. In Acts, God brought Gentiles into the church. In the 16th century, God used an unknown Catholic Priest named Martin Luther to bring reform to the church. In America today, God can use you and me to stand in the gap as prophetic voices. Where has God placed you today? Who is in your circle of influence? To whom can you be a voice of truth? By faith, expected the unexpected.
- 3. We are not alone in this battle.** Even though we can often feel alone, Jesus has promised He will be with us (Matthew 28:20). Just as God showed His special care for Elijah during his confrontation with Ahab and Jezebel, so our Lord is with us today as we seek to represent him as Ambassadors to a secular world. Trust in Him.

I'm Trusting in You, Lord
By Donna Carline

Psalm 62:8
Trust in him at all times; ye people,
pour out your heart before him:
God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Chorus:
I'm trusting You, Lord
I'm trusting You.
You've been so faithful,
You've been so true.

You've never failed me
Like I've failed you.
I'm trusting You, Lord
I'm trusting You.

Verse 1:
I was imprisoned
But You came to me
You removed the chains
set me free

This cup of sorrow
I'll drink no more
I'm overflowing
With Your great joy.

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Verse 2:
I cannot question
The way that You lead.
I know that You, Lord
Are all I need.

Each day I'm learning
I'm leaning on You, precious Lord.
Yes I'm learning
To trust You Lord.

BECOMING A HOUSE OF PRAYER

“Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices; Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” – Isaiah 56:7.

Prayer Focus for the Week of April 8

Close by reminding your group that sometimes God calls us to step out in faith as we trust His ability to provide for our needs and provide for the needs of others through us. Pray together that God would help your group to remain obedient to Him so that your faith and generosity will reveal His power in your lives.

NEXT STEPS

Questions to consider as you continue to reflect on what you learned this week:

- **Take Action:** Do you know someone who is in need within our community? How could God use you like the widow woman to be a conduit of His blessing and provision during a time of need?
- **Take Courage:** We can trust in the Lord during times of trials and personal need. God takes care of his remnant people even in the middle of judgment on the whole nation.

Work to memorize this week's memory verse: James 5:17-18 - Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

This week's Core Practice is Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20): I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Remember to use the Daily Bible Reading plan as part of your walk with Christ, taking the time to reflect on each passage and what it means for your lives.

1 Kings 16:29-17

16:30 Ahab's wickedness consisted of perpetuating all the sins of Je-roboam; he even considered them trivial.

16:31 Also, Ahab married a pagan princess, Jezebel, who zealously tried to promote her depraved cult as the exclusive religion of Israel. Jezebel's father, Ethbaal, was king of the Sidonians (Phoenicians), with his capital in Tyre. He was a priest of Ashtaroath or Astarte, who, having murdered Philetes, king of Tyre, ascended the throne of that kingdom, being the eighth king since Hiram.

Jezebel was the wicked daughter of this regicide and idol priest—and, on her marriage with Ahab, never rested till she had got all the forms of her native Tyrian worship introduced into her adopted country. Evidently, Ahab was not forced to marry Jezebel; his choice to marry her is something for which the text held him responsible.

16:32 Ahab built a temple for Baal in the capital of Israel and constructed an altar for Baal in it.

17:1 Elijah was not merely the prophet of this drought—in the sense of prayer, he was the cause of the drought. He prayed and it happened. James 5:17-18 makes this clear: 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 land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

17:3 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.

17:4 The escape to the Brook Cherith was for more than protection. It was also to train Elijah in dependence upon the LORD. In a season of drought, he had to trust that God could keep this brook flowing. He also had to accept food from the ravens, which were unclean animals.

17:6 Elijah obeyed the LORD, who miraculously provided for him as He had promised. God directed ravens, birds that normally neglect their own young (cf. Job 38:41), to bring bread and meat faithfully to Elijah every morning and evening. 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.

17:7 "Why does God let them dry? He wants to teach us not to trust in His gifts but in Himself. He wants to drain us of self, as He drained the apostles by ten days of waiting before Pentecost. He wants to loosen our roots ere He removes us to some other sphere of service and education. He wants to put in stronger contrast the rive of throne-water that never dries." (Meyer)

17:9 We should also remember that this was the general region that the wicked queen Jezebel was from. "Elijah was visiting enemy territory and showing the power of God in an area where Baal was worshipped, though ineffective through drought." (Wiseman)

17:10 Indeed a widow was there gathering sticks: This showed that she was a poor woman, gathering meager scraps for firewood. Elijah perhaps thought that God would lead him to an unusual rich widow, but God led him to a poor Gentile widow.

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17:11 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. "This was certainly putting the widow's faith to an extraordinary trial: to take and give to a stranger, of whom she knew nothing, the small pittance requisite to keep her child from perishing, was too much to be expected." (Clarke)

17:14 Elijah calmed her fears of himself, her hunger, and her imminent death. He asked her to feed him first and then use what was left to feed herself and her son. Then he gave her a promise on the authority of the word of God: she would have food until the drought ended.

17:16 Her obedient response demonstrated her faith in the word of the LORD. The Lord honored her faith by fulfilling His promise miraculously. This miracle of God's continually supplying flour and olive oil was another polemic (protest) against Baal, just as was the drought. Baal-worshippers believed he was a fertility god, giving rain to make crops grow. But he could not overcome the drought to make wheat and olive trees grow. Only the true God could provide flour and oil in a drought!

17:18 Some time later (cf. v. 7)—again the exact time is not given—tragedy befell Elijah's hostess. The woman who owned the house was the widow. Her young son fell ill and finally stopped breathing. (Some Bible critics say the boy was only unconscious, not dead, and that his restoration was therefore not a miracle. However, verses 18, 20, 22-23 make it clear that he had actually died.)

17:21 Often in cases of miraculous restoration and healing, God's servant placed his hand on the afflicted one to indicate that the power of God in him was passing to the needy individual (e.g., Mt 8:3). In this instance Elijah out of heartfelt concern stretched himself out placing the whole body of the lad in contact with his own. Three times Elijah did this, praying each time that God would restore the boy's life. Persistence in prayer is a fundamental requisite for obtaining one's petitions (cf. Mt 7:78; Lk 11:5-13). It proved effective in this case.

17:22 God miraculously restored the boy's life. This is the first recorded instance in Scripture of restoration to life of one who had died.

17:24 This miracle proved to the woman that Elijah was indeed a man of God and that the word of the LORD that Elijah claimed to speak was indeed the truth. This incident showed the widow and others that the power of the Lord as the true God contrasted greatly with the impotency of Baal. The fact that this was done to a Gentile is a key theme in Jesus' sermon at Capernaum, for which they tried to throw Him off a cliff (Lk 4:26-29)15:24 Perhaps because of Asa's poor health his godly son Jehoshaphat reigned as co-regent with him during the last three years of his life (873-870 B.C.). When Asa died, Ahab (874-853 B.C.) was reigning in Israel.

COMING DATES THIS SPRING

05/13/2018 - Mother's Day

05/25/2018 - Lighthouse Semester Ends

05/27/2018 - Summer Break Begins

09/09/2018 - Lighthouse Fall Semester Begins