

1 Kings 17: The Emergence of Elijah

Elijah Confronts Ahab (verses 1-6)

1. The name Elijah means “The Lord is my God”. He was a prophet sent by God to the Northern Kingdom to oppose Baal worship and those who participated in such worship. He was from Tishbe in Gilead, which was in the northern Transjordan area, an area settled by the tribes of Gad and Manasseh. Elijah foreshadowed a figure from the New Testament—the forerunner of the Messiah. Who was this? See Luke 1:13-17.

Luke 1:13-17 ¹³ But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

Baal was a god of rain and fertility. Worshipping Baal was an attempt to attract his attention so that he would provide the rain needed for crops. This worship included cult prostitution and, occasionally, child sacrifice. By worshipping Baal, the people of Israel were denying their God—the God who loved and provided for them.

2. Read 1 Kings 16:30-33. What does this say about the spiritual condition of the Northern Kingdom of Israel at this time?
3. Even with all of their evil behavior, God still loved Ahab and the people of Israel. How did God show that love?
4. Elijah brought a message to King Ahab in verse 1
 - a. Who does Elijah serve?
 - b. What is about to happen (and what does that say about Baal)?
5. Why and where did Elijah go into hiding?

6. How did God provide for Elijah—and how was this a miraculous occurrence?

The Widow of Zarephath (verses 7-16)

The water in the brook eventually dried up and God sent Elijah to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon. This area was ruled by Ethbaal, the father of Jezebel!

7. God has somehow commanded a widow to feed Elijah (verse 8). According to verse 12, what is the state of the widow's faith life at this time?
8. How did the following show their trust in God?
 - a. Elijah:

 - b. The widow:
9. This is the story of a miraculous feeding. What are some other stories of miraculous feedings from both the Old Testament and the New Testament?
10. Jesus had one trip to the region of Tyre and Sidon. What similarities are there between the two women in the stories? See Mark 7:24-30.

Mark 7:24-30 ²⁴ And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. ²⁵ But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. ²⁶ Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ And he said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸ But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹ And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰ And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

"God miraculously provided for this non-Israelite who, in an act of faith in the Lord's word, had laid her life on the line. He gave her "manna" from heaven even while he was withholding food from his unfaithful people in the promised land." – NIV Study Bible

The Widow's Son (verses 17-24)

11. What conclusion does the widow make after the death of her son (see verse 18)?

12. There is a connection between sin and death, as the widow states.

a. Why is this so?

b. What does Romans 6:23 tell us about this situation

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

13. What reason might there be for the death of the widow's son? See John 9:1-3.

John 9:1-3 *As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."*

In this ancient society, a son is the only hope for a widow. Now her son is dead. Even Elijah wonders why God has brought tragedy upon this woman who has helped him. And then Elijah boldly asks God to do something that has NEVER been done before in Scripture—to raise someone from the dead.

14. How does the raising to life of the widow's son...

a. Increase the faith of Elijah?

b. Increase the faith of the widow?

"The miracle provided further proof that the word of God spoken by Elijah was the truth. Here was proof that God would also keep his other promises, that God would send a Savior who would defeat Satan... Elijah could announce, "Look, your son is alive." God's spokesmen in the New Testament can announce something greater. They can tell others, "Look, God's Son is alive! His death was a payment for sin. His resurrection proves that even death has lost its sting." – People's Bible Commentary

Resources:

- NIV and ESV Study Bibles
- LifeLight—1 and 2 Kings: Leaders Guide and Study Guide (CPH)
- 1 & 2 Kings—God's Word for Today (CPH)
- People's Bible Commentary: Kings