

# ELIJAH AND THE BARREL OF MEAL

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : I Kings 16:29-34; 17:1-24.

LESSON 1296 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD" (I Kings 17:16)..

## [BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

### **1 Kings 16:29-34**

<sup>29</sup> And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

<sup>30</sup> And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.

<sup>31</sup> And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

<sup>32</sup> And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

<sup>33</sup> And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

<sup>34</sup> In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

### **1 Kings 17:1-24**

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

<sup>3</sup> Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan.

## [BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

### [NOTES:](#)

#### **Memory Verse:**

#### **Sin and the Sinner**

In the Book of Genesis we read that the wickedness of man was so great upon the earth that it repented the Lord that He had made man. He said, "I will destroy man whom I have created" (Genesis 6:7). We remember studying about the Flood that destroyed all people except Noah and his family. God's heart is still grieved at sin, and someday He will again send destruction upon sinners. In today's lesson we learn that King Ahab "did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him" (I Kings 16:33).

God's faithful Prophet Elijah, about whom we shall learn a great deal, became concerned about the sin and idol-worship in Israel. Fearing not the face of man, one day he announced to the king: "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" (I Kings 17:1). Sin must be put down, and Elijah was willing to suffer, if necessary, in order to cause people to turn to God.

#### **Rain Withheld**

How thankful we are for fearless men of God who take their stand for the right! Moses stretched his rod over the sea, and the waters were divided (**Exodus 14:21** <sup>21</sup> **And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.**); another man, Joshua, gave a command to the sun and the moon, and they stood still. Elijah gave the word, and all rain and even dew was stopped. He knew that God would withhold the rain. But his faith was to be tested. Drought always brought food shortage, and a famine in the land of Israel would affect him, also. Can you trust God, Elijah?

God was right there to tell him where to go, now that things were drying up and food was becoming scarce. The wicked king was searching for Elijah. "**You** are to blame for all this drought," no doubt the king said.

Elijah fared very well, safely hidden away from the king, as he drank water from a sparkling brook, and ate bread and meat, which were brought him by the ravens every morning and evening. We are sure it was God who directed the ravens where to get the food. But wait, there are still trying days ahead. The water in the brook becomes less and less, until one day there is not even a trickle. Now you have done it, Elijah! Your word has withheld the rain; now your water supply is gone. What now, Elijah?

#### **The Widow and Her Son**

We do not believe Elijah became discouraged, as he waited for orders from the Lord. Perhaps his throat became parched as he

<sup>4</sup> And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

<sup>7</sup> And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

<sup>8</sup> And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

<sup>9</sup> Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days.

<sup>16</sup> *And* the barrel of meal wasted not,

looked longingly at the creek bed, now so very, very dry. Just in time came the voice of God to him, "Arise, get thee to Zerephath, . . . and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee" (I Kings 17:9).

"What manner of man is this! for he commandeth . . . and they obey him" (Luke 8:25). The ravens obeyed God's command; the widow obeyed His command. The winds and water, the whole earth, the sea and sky, the animals, too, obey the voice of Him. Only sinners refuse to obey His commands!

The long, weary journey to Zarephath, possibly about 100 miles, meant trusting God every mile of the way. After all, he was a man who became hungry and thirsty as we do today (**James 5:17** *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.*). But as he entered the city, there was the widow gathering sticks. Tired and thirsty from the journey, and no doubt almost starved, Elijah said to her, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." As she went, he called to her again and said, "Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand."

### Obedience Rewarded

Water she had, but her food was almost gone. She told him she had only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse, which she was planning to prepare for herself and son, "that we may eat, it and die." Then Elijah spoke those two encouraging words, which are found so often in the Bible. In Genesis 15:1, we read, "Fear not"; in Revelation 1:17, "Fear not." Many times in the Bible we read, "Fear not." How thankful we are for those words! Don't you think the heart of the poor widow rejoiced at those welcome words?

She hurried to obey Elijah. First she made a cake and brought it to him; then a cake for herself and her son. If one thinks of others first, the blessing of the Lord is sure to follow. And it truly did follow this widow, for she and her whole house had plenty to eat a long, long time. There was meal in the barrel and oil in the cruse until the famine was ended (**1 Kings 17:14-16** *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. 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. 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.*). Don't you suppose the little boy stood and watched his mother as she took meal from the barrel, wondering from where it came? and don't you believe the mother told her boy that God was adding to it because she had been kind to His Prophet?

### Another Test

Then one day the little boy became sick, and died. The poor mother had lost her husband, and now her son, too. It almost seemed that the Lord had turned against the widow, but this was only a means of proving to her that Elijah was truly a man of God. At once she went to Elijah for help. He took the child and carried him up to his own room and laid him upon his bed. This was another test for Elijah's faith, but God had been faithful to him; he had eaten the bread and flesh sent by ravens; he had drunk

neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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?

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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?

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> 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.

water from the brook; he had eaten at the widow's table.

Alone in his room he prayed earnestly unto God for the child. Again God heard his prayer in this hour of need and restored the child to life. "See, thy son liveth," he said as he brought the boy to his mother. "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" (I Kings 17:24). She had thought he was a man of God when the meal and the oil increased, but now she knew that Elijah truly was a man of God. Her eyes of faith could see beyond the man unto the God whom he served. Surely He had sent him to her, for we read that there were many other widows in Israel in those days, when great famine was in the land, but unto none of them was Elijah sent (**Luke 4:25** <sup>25</sup> **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;**). God knew that this woman, almost ready to die, would obey Elijah's command. God saw the unselfishness of her heart, the gratitude and love she would show unto Elijah. He knew that she would believe in the miracles performed by the man of God. And she did.

### Trusting God

A woman testified in a service that she had never as yet had the privilege of going hungry for the Gospel. If we were put to the test as Elijah was or as the widow of Zarephath, could we trust God? Jesus said, "Consider the ravens: . . . God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" "Consider the lilies . . . If then God so clothe the grass, . . . how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Luke 12:24, 27, 28). There we have promises for food and clothing. We are also told: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30); "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:31). In Psalm 147:9, we read, "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." If God is thoughtful of the ravens, how much more will He supply the needs of the widow and fatherless, (**Psalm 146:9** <sup>9</sup> **The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.**) and all of us. Can we trust Him in hard places?

### QUESTIONS

1. Where was Elijah told to go and hide?
2. What kind of birds brought him food?
3. Find another passage of Scripture that speaks of these birds.
4. Where was Elijah sent when the brook dried up?
5. What was his first request of the widow? His second?
6. How long did Elijah say the meal and the oil would last?
7. Tell what happened when the widow's son died.
8. Why do you think Elijah was sent to this particular widow?