

Elijah was a mighty man of God – in some respects the greatest of all the prophets since Moses until the appearance of John the Baptist (**Matthew 11:11**). Although he lived 3000 years ago and his period of ministry was comparatively short, he is by no means a forgotten character (see **Malachi 4:5; Matthew 11:14; 27:47; Luke 1:17; John 1:21**). As we study his life and ministry the Holy Spirit will teach us valuable lessons which will enable us to live for and serve the Lord more effectively.

**1 Kings 17:2: “And the word of the Lord came to him:”**

- Grammatical Usage: “**word**” or in the Hebrew, “dabar” meaning, “commandments, prophecy and words of help”; “**Lord**” or “Yhvh” (Yahweh) meaning, “I am”.
- Literal Interpretation: And the command of help of the true, living “I am” came to him.
- Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word, God continually uses His Word. The announcement to Ahab that there would be no rain (**1 Kings 17:1**) was a terrible one for Elijah to have to make. Yet he had prayed that it might not rain (**James 5:17**). Some might ask: Was this not a cruel prayer? Did Elijah not realize the suffering and loss of life that would ensue? The answer is that Elijah was only praying for God to honor His own word (**Deuteronomy 11:16-17**). More terrible than the judgment itself would be for God not to do what He had said. Thus Elijah, knowing God’s mind, prayed for a fulfilling of His word, and spoke boldly to Ahab. The Lord then graciously sent him away to a quiet place to experience **Psalms 91:1** to the full (and indeed, the whole psalm). This story of Elijah revolves around two God-given commands:
  - “**Go, HIDE thyself...**” - the private aspect of his life and service; the going in (**John 10:9**); the prayer ministry (**Acts 6:4**).
  - “**Go, SHOW thyself...**” – the public aspect of his service; the going out (**John 10:9**); the preaching ministry (**Acts 6:4**).

Why did God send him to Cherith? First: to guard him when the time of reaction set in, as it almost always does after a time of ordeal or special service. Second: to prepare him for further service. He would learn still more about dependence upon God, complete trust in Him, patience and humility. Third: because in a time of spiritual apostasy God always withdraws His prophets (**Psalms 74:7-9; Isaiah 30:20; Amos 8:11-12**). Thus Elijah was to be one of God’s hidden ones. Why? **Psalms 83:3**. Now notice from **1 Kings 17:2-6**:

1. THE VOICE THAT HE HEARD

**V. 2.** How we need to hear God’s voice (**Matthew 4:4**). Elijah clearly lived in such close communion that when the Lord spoke at once he heard. Notice too that “**the word of the Lord came to Elijah**”, bringing explicit instructions. There was no striving; as Elijah walked with the Lord His plan and purpose were clearly revealed (**Psalms 37:23; Proverbs 3:5-6; 16:3**). How God spoke we are not told, but we do know He speaks His word (**Psalms 119:105**), by a deep peace in our hearts concerning the way forward

(**Colossians 3:15**), by circumstances and open doors (**Revelation 3:8**), etc. The instructions to Elijah in **v. 3** were clear, precise, demanding action. Elijah was left in no doubt as to what God wanted him to do.

## 2. THE PROMISE THAT HE RECEIVED

**V. 4.** With God's command will come His promise – always.

- The promise was certain – it shall be.
- It was sufficient – God's supply always is.
- It was conditional. God says, "If you will..., I will..."; or, "I will...if you..." The important word in **v. 4** is the word "**there**". "**Elijah, if you want the water and the food you must go there – into the place of My choice.**" Are you there, in the place of God's will? For there is the place of God's provision (**Psalms 23:1; 34:10; Luke 22:35; Philippians 4:19**). Elijah was determined to get there – **v. 5**.

## 3. THE OBEDIENCE THAT HE SHOWED

So he did what the Lord had told him (**v. 5**). There is nothing so precious to the Lord as our obedience. What about our love? Well, look up **John 14:15**. Elijah's obedience was (1) active – he went...he did...; (2) instant; (3) complete – "...according to the word of the Lord"; (4) unquestioning. There is no record that he questioned how ravens could bring food or how a brook could keep running in time of drought. He fully obeyed (**John 2:5; Acts 9:6**).

## 4. THE SUPPLY THAT HE ENJOYED

- The SOURCE was God Himself (**v. 4**). He is sovereign; He controls nature.
- The METHOD was miraculous. The brook kept running, and the ravens were God's errand-boys!
- The REGULARITY was consistent. "**Morning and evening**" – without fail!
- The VARIETY showed God's grace. "**Bread and meat...**"
- The SUFFICIENCY – there was enough until God's purpose was fulfilled.

God is still the same! He can still employ anything or anyone to meet the needs of His people, and He will never fail those whose trust is in Him, those who are there.

## 5. THE TESTING THAT HE EXPERIENCED

The words "**sometime later**" (**v. 7**) mean literally, "**at the end of days**"; that is, when God's purpose has been fulfilled. When God's purpose was fulfilled "**the brook dried up**", but God remained! Has your brook dried up? Has your health failed? Have your loved ones been taken...your finances become low? Why has this happened? Does God not care? Of course He does!

- He is leading us ON. He is working to a program in your life and mine.
- He wants us to have sympathy for OTHERS. Elijah must feel for the people who were starving (**2 Corinthians 1:4**).
- He wants us to TRUST Him. This is why He allows the brooks to dry up – so that we shall find our all in HIM and lean, not on His gifts and provision, but on Himself.

➤ Conclusion: Here is the test: do you hear God? Are you obeying?