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This second study under the theme “Practicing Our Faith” in the Smyth-Helwys Formations series centers on hospitality, in the latter part of the passage. In the various cultures of the ancient world hospitality was defined differently and practiced differently. In most cases, those differences were not only varying perspectives in both the OT and the NT world, but also they would stand in great contrast to varying patterns of hospitality in the modern world. All of this to say, that hospitality practices are very much defined by each particular culture. Yet, one can glean from the text of the Bible religious principles of hospitality that transcend time and need to be applied to every situation in any given cultural setting. Seeking to understand some of these from the early period of Israelite history is one goal of this study.

V.H. Kooy (“Hospitality,” *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) provides a helpful overview of the Biblical practices:

[φιλοξενία] (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; I Clem. 1:2; 10:7; 11:1; 12:1; Herm. Mand. 8:10; cf. I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8; I Pet. 4:9). Entertainment of a stranger (sojourner) as a guest; recognized as a sacred duty throughout the Mediterranean world, and more heartily and stringently kept than many a written law. While the word does not appear in the OT, the custom is evidenced, particularly in the patriarchal stories (Gen. 18:1-8; 19:1-11; 24:14-61; cf. Judg. 19:10-25). In the NT the practice provides the background for many of the details in the life of Jesus and the early Christian community. See also GUEST; SOJOURNER.

**1. Among the Hebrews.** The main practices stem from nomadic life, when public inns were a rarity and every stranger a potential enemy. Hospitality was discharged more from fear and for protection than from generosity. One might even entertain the deity or his messengers (cf. Gen. 18:1-8; 19:1, 3; Heb. 13:2). Moreover, the host never knew when he himself would be dependent on others. The guest was treated with respect and honor and was provided with provender for his animals, water for his feet, rest, and a sumptuous feast. He enjoyed protection, even if he were an enemy, for three days and thirty-six hours after eating with the host (the time sustained by his food). Hospitality was to the Bedouin what almsgiving was to the later Jews--an expression of righteousness. A traveler entering a city would come to the open place, and there, unless a breach of etiquette occurred, someone would invite him to his home and grant him the customary graces (Gen. 19:1-3; Judg. 19:15-21).



**2. Among the Christians.** The NT describes Jesus as dependent on hospitality for his daily care and lodging (Matt. 8:20; 9:10; Mark 7:24; 14:3; Luke 7:36; 8:3; 9:52; 10:38; 14:1; 19:5; John 12:2). He assumed hospitality in the sending forth of the apostles (Matt. 10:5-15; Mark 6:7-11; Luke 9:2-5; 10:4-11). And it accounts to a considerable degree for the extensive journeys of the early Christian missionaries (cf. Acts 16:15; 18:27; III John 5-6), and the retention of the "living voice" of the gospel. Christians, in their travels, would seek out Christian brethren, partly for protection but mainly to share fellowship and worship. Churches shared their gospel tradition, the collection (possibly in the form of eucharistic elements; cf. Just. Apol. 1.67), their homes (Adrs 16:15; 18:27; Herm. Sim. 8:10; Arist. Apol. 15:7), and provided labor for those desiring to settle in their midst (Did. 12). On hearing of poverty, they contributed to the necessity of the saints (Rom. 15:26-27; II Cor. 9:1-2; cf. Phil. 4:10, 14-18). Hospitality was the chief bond which brought the churches a sense of unity. The Roman church, as the church of the imperial capital, came to supremacy partly through its constant concern for Christians everywhere.

Certainly such a practice was bound to be abused by idlers and pretenders. Precautions early were taken to test the genuineness of a Christian traveler and to forestall his becoming a burden to the Christian community (cf. I John 4:1; II John 7-11; Did. 11-12).

With some background understanding of hospitality, the episode of the widow's hospitality to the prophet Elijah in our study will certainly have more meaning.

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## I Context

As is always the case, both historical and literary context are important to understanding the meaning of the scripture text itself. We will draw upon [previous studies](#) in Samuel and Kings, especially [1 Kings 18:20-40](#), for relevant aspects of this material.

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### a Historical

Regarding the **external history** of 1 Kings, John William Wevers, in "First Kings," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (iPreach) has a helpful summary:

The books of Kings were originally one book, the last of the Former Prophets. In fact the 4 books of the Former Prophets (i.e. Josh., Judg., Sam., Kings) were composed as a single history of Israel from Joshua's conquest of Palestine down to the Exile, and its division into various books was probably only for convenience. The division of Kings into 2 was introduced by the LXX but was not accepted in Hebrew until the text was printed.

The Deuteronomistic history perspective dominates the writing viewpoint as Wevers explains,

The D historian wrote history from the point of view of the D Code. Central to its cultic demands was a purified cult at a single national sanctuary, viz. the Jerusalem temple. Before the building of the temple the historian expresses no criticism of Solomon's sacrifices at Gibeon (I 3) — though even here he has Solomon return to Jerusalem to stand before the ark and offer sacrifices at the end of the story. Once the temple is standing, however, he condemns out of hand all pre-D shrines outside Jerusalem and holds worship at such places to be illegitimate. He judges every succeeding reign by its fidelity to the cult of the central sanctuary.

The origin of First and Second Kings is rather complex and parts are clouded in mystery as J.E. Goldengay ("Kings, Books of," *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed) describes:

The last event to which Kings refers is the exiled

king Jehoiachin's release from prison in Babylon in 561 (2 Ki. 25:27), and clearly the books in their final form must come from after this time. There may be elsewhere hints of even later situations: notably, the dating of the building of the Temple (1 Ki. 6:1) perhaps reflects a chronological scheme which places that event midway between the Exodus and the rebuilding of the Temple after the Exile.

The main composition of the work is to be dated earlier, however. This may have been in the early years of the Exile (P. R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, OTL, 1968, ch. 5). Alternatively, it may have been after the release of Jehoiachin in 561 (R. K. Harrison, *IOT*, 1970, pp. 730f., following M. Noth). Another view dates the 'first edition' of Kings in the reign of Josiah (J. Gray, *I and II Kings*<sup>2</sup>, OTL, 1970). But while much of the material in Kings dates from long before the Exile, and some reflects its pre-exilic perspective, the evidence for an actual 'first edition' of Kings in the reign of Josiah, or for a pre-Deuteronomistic earlier version of the history, is scant.

Any pre- or post-exilic work on the books must have taken place in Palestine. Work during the exilic period itself might have taken place in Babylon or Palestine (the arguments for each location are discussed by Ackroyd, pp. 65-68, and by E. W. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah*, 1970, pp. 117-122).

We do not know the name of the author(s) of Kings, though the group which was responsible for the work is often described as the 'Deuteronomists'. This description reflects the view that Kings is not merely the last part of the story begun in Genesis; it is more

specifically the last part of the 'Deuteronomistic history', which begins with the book of Deuteronomy. On this view, the story from Joshua to Kings, known in the Hebrew Bible as the 'Former Prophets', has been written or edited as a whole to show how principles declared in Deuteronomy worked out in Israel's history from the conquest, via the period of the judges and the united monarchy, to the Exile. The view usually presupposes a belief that Deuteronomy itself was written in the late pre-exilic period, though it need not involve this. It is to be noted, however, that the emphases of the Deuteronomic law by no means coincide with those of Kings. On the one side, the humanitarian, social and moral concerns of Deuteronomy are not reflected in Kings. Conversely, while Deuteronomy stresses the central sanctuary (though without referring explicitly to Jerusalem) and refers to the monarchy (though without ascribing to it the theological significance it receives in Judah), these do not have the paramount importance they receive in Kings.

Regarding the *internal history* of our passage, let's begin with a summary of the life of [Elijah](#) in order to better understand the setting of chapter 17. Of the many that I've looked at in preparation for this study, that done by Mark W. Chavalas in "[Elijah](#)" [[Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#) (*Bible Study Tools*)] is very helpful:

**Old Testament.** Elijah of Tishbe was a lone figure from the remote part of Gilead east of the Jordan. One of the better known characters in the Old Testament, he also made an impact on later Judaism and on the New Testament writers. A contemporary of the Israelite kings Ahab and Ahaziah (874-852 b.c.), Elijah represented a class of prophets who were normally not associated with any sanctuary or prophetic guild (but see 2 Kings 2:3-7). He challenged Ahab, whose policies were designed to replace the Israelite idea of kingship with the ancient Near Eastern concept of monarchy and royal law. Elijah defended Yahweh's sovereignty over history and justice, as well as over false gods (1 Kings 17-18).

The stories of Elijah (known as the Elijah cycle) dominate much of the latter half of 1 Kings (17-19, 21) and the early chapters of 2 Kings (1-2). The chronological order of the cycle is uncertain, making the course of Elijah's life obscure. The cycle was incorporated into the theological history of Israel and Judah, without which our knowledge for the reign of Ahab would be almost unknown. It contained six separate narratives that included several anecdotal stories about Elijah's life that may have circulated independently among his disciples in the northern kingdom. All but the last were concerned with the clash of Baal and Yahweh. Elijah appeared to vindicate the distinctive character of the people of God when

their identification was threatened by Ahab's liberal policies. He also answered Jehoshaphat's question (2 Kings 3:11) and sent a letter to Jehoram (2 Chron 21:12-15).

Elijah appeared on the scene without warning, introduction, or genealogy (1 Kings 17:1) to deliver an oracle to Ahab announcing a drought, presumably a punishment for defection to the Baal cult. Afterward, he returned to Zarephath where he was miraculously sustained (1 Kings 17:17-24). God then chose a Gentile believer (the Phoenician woman of Zarephath) to shame his people and to rebuke Jezebel, Ahab's Phoenician queen, showing that there was a Yahwistic believer in her own country. The unfailing water supply shows that God — not the king — was the dispenser of the water of life. Chrysostom said that Elijah learned compassion in the house of the widow so he could be sent to his own people. Yahweh did not just intervene at critical times in the affairs of people, but was now accessible to believers in the ordinary affairs of life (1 Kings 17:12).

Three years later there was a break in the drought and Elijah was successful in ending Baal worship at Carmel. The Baal priests were not completely destroyed; they actually continued on past the end of the Ahab dynasty, until the time of Athaliah of Judah (who was related to Ahab's royal house). Elijah helped Israel understand that Yahweh guided the fortunes of the nations; even the Baal cult was under his control. Yahweh, not Baal, had the power of life and death, and was the giver of rain and good things. The Carmel story showed a reminiscence of the change of political and religious sovereignty from Tyre to Israel. Israel was not truly syncretistic; Baal or Yahweh would be king, but not both (1 Kings 18:21). Ahab was not wholly Baalist; his family bore Yahwistic names, and he consulted with Yahweh after the encounter with Elijah (1 Kings 20:13-15, 22, 28). The Tyrian cult of Baal Melqart may have been a pseudo-monotheistic movement that precipitated this struggle. Israel now saw the mediation of God's will in history and the interpretation of his divine will.

Elijah's success was merely temporary; he fled to Mount Horeb (although this may not be in chronological order) to escape Jezebel's wrath (1 Kings 19). Here, the small voice of God was in direct opposition to the noisy and primitive sounds of the Canaanite deities, which pointed toward a more spiritual and transcendent concept of Yahweh. The theophany in 1 Kings 19 is similar to Exodus 33:19, and like the story of the widow, may show that God is to be found in the daily affairs of humans, rather than in supernatural phenomena.

Like Amos in a later period, Elijah showed an astute social concern, emerging as a leader with strong ethical ideals (1 Kings 21). The Naboth incident shows a social dimension in the clash between Israelite law

and Canaanite kingship. By appropriating Naboth's land as crown property, Ahab was out of his jurisdiction. Inalienable land in Israel was in principle hereditary, although Yahweh was the true owner. In this position, God demanded the rule of law and justice, and watched over ethical and legal morals. Elijah, whom Ahab saw as a blood avenger (v. 20), is introduced with dramatic suddenness only at the end of this section, confronting Ahab for taking possession of the vineyard. The king was indicted for infringing on two of the ten commandments that were recognized as the basis for society: murder and forcible appropriation, both capital offenses. The curse concerning Ahab was not literally executed on him, however, but on his successor. This may have been because of his repentance, but probably was due to the Hebrew idea of the extended self, taking for granted the cohesion of life and liability between generations. Ahab's dynasty ended because of the Naboth incident, not because of the Baal struggle. Later, Elijah protested Ahaziah's appeal to Baal-Zebub, the local god of Ekron (2 Kings 1:9-15; Josephus called this god "the lord of the flies," as did the Ras Shamra texts). Elijah was here described as a hairy man with a shaggy cloak, evidently the insignia of a prophet (2 Kings 1:8).



The translation of Elijah into heaven occurs in an anecdotal section concerned mainly with Elisha (2 Kings 2:1-12). Elijah was associated with the prophetic guilds in Bethel, Gilgal, and Jericho. He did not bequeath his staff to Elisha, but his cloak, which had a spiritual not a magical power. Elisha desired a double portion of Elijah's spirit, a stipulation in Hebrew

law whereby the eldest son received his share and was equipped as the true successor to his father. The whirlwind and sudden disappearance of Elijah, with the addition of a theophany, emphasize God's presence in the incident.

In later Old Testament prophetic tradition, Elijah was associated with the day of the Lord (Mal 4:5-6), and was soon to be sent by God on the behalf of the people. He was described as similar to the messenger in Malachi 3:1 (which also may have been an allusion to Elijah, since both prepared the way for Yahweh). The purpose of Elijah's coming was either to pacify family quarrels (Mal 2:10-16), culminating in a new social order, or to restore the covenant relationship.

**Later Jewish Tradition.** Elijah was prominently featured in popular legend and theological discussion of eschatological expectation during the intertestamental period. The reason for this may be his enigmatic rapture in 2 Ki 2:11 (the reward for his zeal for the law, according to 1 Macc 2:58, which fostered the idea of his sinlessness), and the prophecy of his return in Malachi, which nurtured the idea of him becoming a messianic figure from the heavenly kingdom who came to purify the priesthood. He was said to be an intercessor for Israel in heaven, a heavenly scribe who recorded the Acts of men, and who had an eternal existence (Ecclus 48:1-14).

**New Testament.** The New Testament, which mentions the prophet nearly thirty times, shows the influence of the late Jewish tradition of Elijah being the forerunner of the Messiah. The expectation of Elijah's return occurs frequently in the Gospels (Matt 17:10; Mark 9:11). Many were convinced that either Jesus (Matt 16:14; Mark 6:15; 8:28; Luke 9:8, 19) or John the Baptist (John 1:21,25) were the expected prophet. Although John denied that he was Elijah, he wore the prophet's style of clothing (a mantle of camel's hair and a leather girdle Matt 3:4; Mark 1:6). Moreover, Jesus said that John went forth as Elijah in spirit; he was thus the symbolic fulfillment of the prophet's mission (Matt 11:14; Mark 8:28; Luke 1:17). Although the tradition that Moses and Elijah would appear together in the last days was not to be found in rabbinic Judaism, both of these Old Testament characters were present and spoke at the transfiguration of Jesus, testifying to the importance of the impending events as eschatological (Matt 17:3-4; Mark 9:4-5; Luke 9:30, 33). Some have seen the two as representing the Law and the Prophets, which were now both considered to be subservient to Christ.

Jesus' prayer on the cross with the opening words of Psalm 22:1, "Eli, Eli" (My God, My God) was either misunderstood or willfully misinterpreted as a petition for help to Elijah (Matt 27:46-49; Mark 15:34-36). Jewish lore identified Elijah as a helper in time of need, and since Elijah did not come, Jesus' petition was considered a failure. The church, however, did not

accept this figure of Elijah; only Christ himself would be called on in stressful times.

Various events of Elijah's life are alluded to in the New Testament. James uses Elijah as a powerful example of a supplicant (5:17), relying on Jewish tradition, which credited Elijah with a reputation for prayer (although this is not specifically mentioned in 1 Kings 17-18). He also describes the passage of time of the drought in 1 Kings 18:1 as three and a half years (cf. Luke 4:25; Rev 11:6). James attempts to refute the Jewish tradition of the sinlessness and eternal nature of the prophet by stating that Elijah was a man "just like us." His prayers were effective because he was righteous.

Jesus used the story of God sending Elijah to the widow of Zarephath to show that the Gentiles were not to be excluded from salvation (Luke 4:25-26). Later church tradition takes the two witnesses of Revelation to be modeled after Moses and Elijah (Rev 11:3-6). They were given the power to shut up the heavens and to bring the fire of judgment like Elijah in 1 Kings 17-18 (cf. Mal 4:5; Ecclus 48:1-14). In a similar vein, Jesus rebuked the sons of Zebedee for wondering whether they should call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan village (Luke 9:54).

Paul uses the rabbinic model of Elijah and the idea of the remnant of Israel in Romans 11:2-5 (see 1 Kings 19:10-18). Just as Elijah became aware that a remnant of true believers still existed in Israel, Paul understands that there was still a sacred remnant of Jews who were elected by grace.

Inside chapter seventeen, **spatial markers** begin with Elijah from Gilead as he confronts Ahab (v. 1) [see #1. on map]. Probably, although not certain, this event with Ahab took place in Samaria, Ahab's capital. From there he goes to the Wadi Cherith, east of the Jordan (v. 5) [see #2. on map], which was near his home of Tishbe. Next, he travels to Zarephath in Sidon (v. 10) [see #3. on map].

**Gilead** [#1 on map] is a region in the central part of the Land of Promise on the east side of the Jordan River, and has a mixed history, as is described in the *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* article:

Region east of the Jordan River. Generally used to designate the territory occupied by all the Transjordanian Israelite tribes (Jgs 20:1; 2 Kgs 10:33; Jer 50:19; Zec 10:10). Specifically, Gilead is the area of the Trans-jordan lying between the Yarmuk and Arnon Rivers and divided by the Jabbok River.

The so-called Dome of Gilead is an extension of the central hill country of Judah, rising to heights of more than 3,000 feet (914.4 meters) above the Jordan Valley. The valleys and hills were well watered by numerous rivers and tributaries, making flatter portions of the countryside well suited for agriculture, especially

olive trees, grapevines, and grains (cf. Jer 8:22; 46:11; Hos 2:8). The densely forested and rugged hills were sometimes compared to those of Lebanon (Jer 22:6; Zec 10:10) made the land a refuge for those in flight, since the terrain prohibited ready pursuit by enemies (cf. Gn 31:21; 1 Sm 13:7).

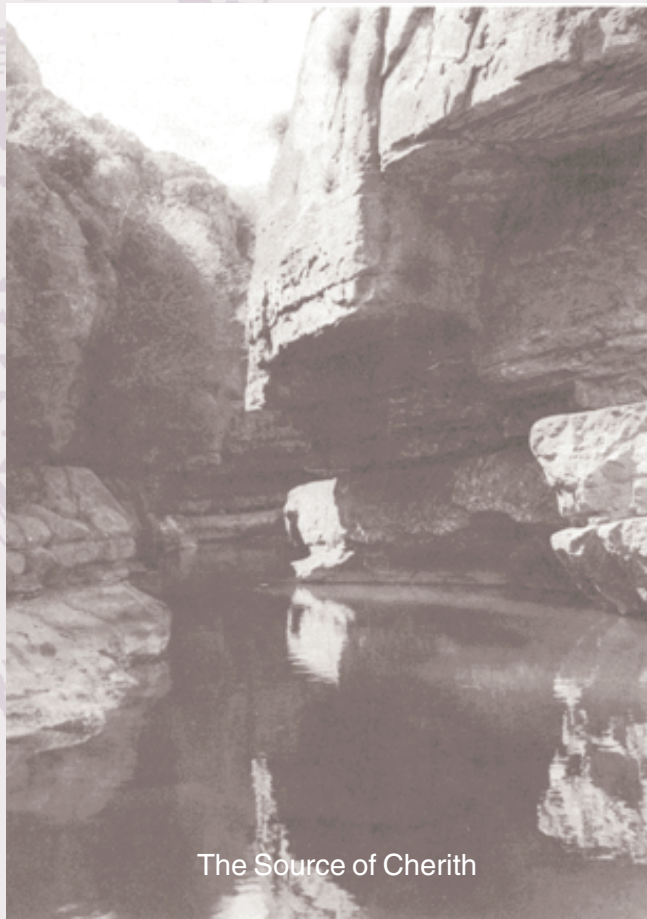
Originally the region of Gilead was allotted to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (Nm 32). The period of the judges saw Israelite security there assailed by the Midianites and Amalekites, only to be checked by the military exploits of Gideon (Jgs 6–7). Half a century later, Jephthah was recalled from his banishment to rescue Gilead from oppressive Ammonite rule (chs 10–11). During the united monarchy, Saul delivered Jabesh-gilead from Ammonite dominance (1 Sm 11:1–11; 31:8–13; 2 Sm 2:1–7). Abner installed Ishbosheth as a rival to David in Gilead (2 Sm 2:8–9). David conquered the Ammonites controlling Gilead as he extended the borders of Israel (8:11–12; 10:1–19). He fled there for refuge in the face of Absalom's rebellion (chs 15–17) and was finally restored to the throne when Absalom was slain in the forest of Ephraim (chs 18–19). Gilead remained a battleground during the divided monarchy, as first the Israelites warred with the Syrians (Arameans; 1 Kgs 20:23–43; 22:1–4, 29–40; 2 Kgs 13:22; Am 1:3) and then with the Assyrians, who wrested the territory from Pekah in 733 B.C. and deported the Israelite population, thus severing Gilead's tie to the northern kingdom (2 Kgs 15:27–31).

The **Wadi Cherith** [#2 on map] was a small stream on the east side of the Jordan where the ravens fed Elijah during the three year drought while the prophet hid from King Ahab. It was also located in Gilead.

**Zarephath** [#3 on map] was, according to Thomas McClellan in the *Harper's Bible Dictionary*,

a port city on the Phoenician coast at modern Sarafand, eight miles south of Sidon and fourteen miles north of Tyre. Phoenician and Hellenistic remains were found at Ras el-Qantara, a promontory overlooking what was a northern harbor and possibly a southern one. Hellenistic, Roman, and later remains cover a wider area along the coast, including a small Roman harbor used from the first to sixth centuries A.D. The modern village of Sarafand is centered some distance inland as are Phoenician rock-cut tombs discovered by villagers.

Occupied from 1600 B.C. onward, Zarephath was most important during the Phoenician period. In the ninth century B.C. the prophet Elijah received the hospitality of a poor widow of Zarephath and miraculously replenished her depleted grain and revived her dying son (1 Kings 17:8–24). Centuries later Jesus referred to Elijah's visit (Luke 4:25–27) and by the fourth century A.D. Christian pilgrims stopped there on their way to the Holy Land. A prosperous town and a church to St. Elijah were mentioned in the sixth century, but by the thirteenth century A.D. only eight houses remained standing.



The Source of Cherith

The **time markers** in chapter seventeen begins with a prediction of **years of drought** (v. 2), which according to 18:1 lasted for three years. [James 5:17](#) and [Lk. 4:25](#), reflecting later Jewish interpretation, indicates that the drought lasted 3 1/2 years. Elijah spent “**a while**” in Wadi Cherith during this drought being fed by the ravens. But when the stream dried up, God instructed him to go to Zarephath where he remained during most of the remainder of the drought. He returned to Samaria “**during the third year of the drought**” (18:1) to announce the end of the drought to King Ahab. This led to the confrontation on Mt. Carmel between Elijah and the

prophets of Baal. Thus our story covers about three years, during this time of drought.

## b. Literary

The literary context of this narrative in chapter seventeen stands as a part of the Elijah stories in 1/

2 Kings. James M. Eiford, "The Books of Kings," *The Old Testament Writings* (iPreach) has a helpful outline that helps us see the context of chapter seventeen better:

- I. Solomon Becomes King 1 Kings 1—2
- II. Stories About Solomon and His Reign 1 Kings 3—11  
*The Building and Dedication of the Temple 1 Kings 6—8*
- III. The Division of the United Monarchy 1 Kings 12
- IV. The History of Israel and Judah as Separate States 1 Kings 13—2 Kings 25
  - A. **The Elijah Stories 1 Kings 17—19, 21; 2 Kings 1—2**
  - B. The Jehu Rebellion 2 Kings 9—10
  - C. The Fall of Israel 2 Kings 17
  - D. The Reforms of Hezekiah in Judah 2 Kings 18—20
  - E. The Evil Reign of Manasseh 2 Kings 21
  - F. The Reforms of Josiah 2 Kings 22—23
  - G. The Fall of Judah 2 Kings 24—25

The interpretative and theological importance of this **literary setting** of the Elijah / Elisha cycle of

stories in is underscored by Iain W. Provan ("1 - 2 Kings comments," *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 3rd ed., p. 521 Heb Bible):

The major theme of chs 12-16 has been that God is in control of history, rather than kings or the other gods whom the kings worship. Everything comes to pass just as the prophets say. The Elijah and Elisha cycles, placed at the center of 1-2 Kings, further establish this perspective. In chs 17-18 in particular, the most sinful of Israel's kings, Ahab, is forced to reckon with the most powerful of prophetic interventions, in the person of Elijah. These chapters make clear that Baal is no more a god in any real sense than Jeroboam's calves are. The divinely ordained drought (17.1) provides the context for showing that it is the Lord, and not Baal, who controls both life and death, both fertility and infertility.

The **literary genre** of the material in chapter seventeen is that of episodic narratives. Three such episodes, with the third one possibly being split into two separate episodes, also provides a clue as to the **literary structure** of chapter seventeen.

## II. Message

The three episodes are governed by the time and spatial markers and can be divided into three or possibly four "scenes" using narrative critical analysis: **First** is the confrontation with Ahab in Samaria where the drought is announced to the king (v. 1). **Second** is the time spent in Wadi Cherith during the early part of the drought (vv. 2-7). **Third**, is the time spent with the widow in Zarephath during the remaining time of the drought (vv. 8-24). Only two events during the two plus years there are recalled: the initial encounter with the miraculous provision of food (vv. 8-16), and secondly the raising of the widow's son sometime afterward (vv. 17-24).

In our study, we will follow a threefold division of the material with the last scene subdivided into the two episodes.

### a. Confrontation, v. 1

#### LXX

<sup>LXX</sup> 1 Kings 17:1 καὶ εἶπεν Ἡλίου ὁ προφήτης ὁ Θεοβίτης ἐκ Θεσβων τῆς Γαλααδ πρὸς Ἀχααβ ζῆ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ ᾧ παρέστην ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ εἰ ἔσται τὰ ἔτη ταῦτα ὁρόσος καὶ ὑετὸς ὅτι εἰ μὴ διὰ στόματος λόγου μου

#### NASB

1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

#### NRSV

1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

#### NLT

1 Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, "As surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives — the God whom I worship and serve — there will be no dew or rain during the next few years unless I give the word!"

#### Notes:

This first scene opens the section on the severe drought that God mandated as punishment of Ahab's idolatry. It also begins the cycle of Elijah narratives.

In so far as the scripture text is concerned, Elijah appears out of nowhere without prior warning.

The text does not directly identify him as a prophet. This we learn from his message and the events connected to it. He is simply identified as "the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead." These id references are geographical in nature. He is a native of Tishbe, which was

located in Gilead. The Hebrew Massoretic Text (MT) and the Greek Septuagint (LXX) differ in their readings at this point, as Ralph Sockman (*OT Library, iPreach*) notes:

The older scholars follow the M.T., of which the natural interpretation is that Elijah came from Tishbe in Naphtali (cf. Tob. 1:2), but that he had settled among the Gileadites east of the Jordan. Modern scholars are unanimous in following the LXX, which reads different vowels (*mittishbê* for *mittôshabhê*), and says that Elijah was a Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead. It is more than likely that this latter interpretation is right. The word תושב ("sojourner," "settler") is late, the only other case out of a total of fourteen where it is not certainly postexilic being Ps. 39:12, and that reference may be postexilic also.

To be sure, the precise location of Tishbe is unknown. The identifying reference here, "in Gilead," merely places it on the east side of the Jordan river between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. This rugged, mountainous region was lightly settled at this time, and thus produced a rugged, survivalist people. This mountainous region was dotted with small streams feeding into either the Jordan or one of its eastern tributaries such as the Yarmuck, the Jabbock rivers etc.

Elijah's message was directed to King [Ahab](#), who ruled over the northern kingdom from 869 to 850 BCE. Under the strong influence of his Phoenician wife [Jezebel](#), Ahab had pushed the northern kingdom toward the worship of the Phoenician god of rain and storm, [Baal](#)., as [1 Kings 16:29-32](#) indicates:



29 In the thirty-eighth year of King Asa of Judah, Ahab son of Omri began to reign over Israel; Ahab son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. 30 Ahab son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him. 31 And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, he took as his wife Jezebel daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. 32 He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria.

Thus Elijah's message was intended as a direct

challenge to this pagan god that Ahab had brought into the northern kingdom.

The wording of Elijah's message to Ahab is a solemn oath with powerful undertones, as Choon-Leong Seow (*New Interpreters Bible, iPreach*) describes:

His first utterance is an oath in the name of the Lord: "As the LORD the God of Israel lives . . ." (v. 2). Although this oath formula is quite common in the Hebrew Bible, its usage in this context is particularly

suggestive, for the issue at hand is the Lord as the source of life. The formula is especially poignant inasmuch as it is addressed to Ahab, who, we learned in 16:31-33, has married Jezebel, a devotee of the Canaanite god Baal, and has built an altar and a temple for Baal in Samaria, thus provoking the anger of "the LORD, the God of Israel." In Canaanite religion, Baal the storm god is the one who brings rain and, thus, the possibility of life on earth.

When there is drought, it is presumed that death (which is deified in Canaanite mythology) has been victorious and that Baal is dead. Conversely, when there is rain, it is presumed that Baal is alive and that death has been defeated:

Let the heavens rain oil,

The wadis run with honey

Then I will know that Mightiest B[aal] lives,

The Prince, Lord of the earth is alive.

Elijah's message to Ahab is that Baal is a non-existent god and the true God has been provoked by Ahab's sinfulness as a leader. God will both punish Ahab and the nation as well as demonstrate that He reigns over the weather, not Baal. Thus the years of drought are signaled and the struggle between God and Baal will be climaxed in chapter eighteen with the contest on Mt. Carmel, Baal's homebase. There God's superiority to Baal is dramatically demonstrated. But the nation is going to have to go through several years of severe famine and drought in order to prove that Baal doesn't exist. The following episodes about Elijah will highlight God's provision and protection of the prophet during this time of hardship. Elijah will spend the time pretty much outside the northern kingdom on both the east and west sides. When he moves to Zarephath, he will actually move into the territory where Baal was most worshiped. Ironically, God provides for his prophet in



Baal's backyard, when Baal can't provide for those who worship him.

The final proviso, "except by my word," makes a powerful claim for the prophet. His reputation and authority are put on the line. But this statement was made under the authority given to Elijah by God. Elijah would pray for rain only at God's command, as 18:1 makes abundantly clear. The prophet did not possess arbitrary power to do as he pleased. Rather, he stood as God's servant merely following his instructions from God.

What is the connection of this to us today? The simplest and most often sought application will be to link it to the morality of our governmental leaders and our society. But I seriously question the legitimacy of such a link, for a number of reasons.

The most serious flaw in this is the assumption that the citizens of the United States are a covenant people with God on similar level to the ancient Israelites. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing in scripture nor in history can be brought forth as evidence for such a parallel. The US is not a Christian nation and never has been. The use of the word "God" in the US constitution etc. when studied in its original context was understood in the broadest sense of the term so that it could include a variety of

religious beliefs all the way from biblical Christianity to philosophical agnosticism for whom "God" meant the impersonal Force that held creation together. The vagueness was intentionally inserted.

A more legitimate connecting link is to see the devastating impact that immorality by political leaders will have on the morality of that society. The paganism of the Canaanite deity Baal was devastating on Israelite society. When streams of paganism flow unchecked into a society -- and are sanctioned by governmental leaders -- the impact will be tremendous. On US society, on European society, on Brazilian society, on Iraqi society et als. What especially disgusts the one true God of this universe -- I suspect more than anything -- is that when those who name Him as their God in that society contribute to this moral degradation of society. This whether they be just citizens or whether they are political leaders. Jesus taught us to be salt and light to our world, not the shovelers of manure. As [Matt. 5:13-16](#) underscore, God holds believers highly accountable for how well we function as salt and light.

Thus when Elijah pronounced God's wrath on the northern kingdom and on Ahab, the message is more to us as His people today, than just to our immoral society.



## b. Ravens at Wadi Cherith, vv. 2-7

### LXX

καὶ ἐγένετο ῥῆμα κυρίου πρὸς Ἡλίου ὁπορεύου ἐντεῦθεν κατὰ ἀνατολὰς καὶ κρύβηθι ἐν τῷ χειμάρρῳ Χορραθ τοῦ ἐπὶ προσώπου τοῦ Ἰορδάνου ὅτι καὶ ἔσται ἐκ τοῦ χειμάρρου πίεσαι ὕδωρ καὶ τοῖς κόραξιν ἐντελοῦμαι διατρέφειν σε ἐκεῖ ὅτι καὶ ἐποίησεν Ἡλίου κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐν τῷ χειμάρρῳ Χορραθ ἐπὶ προσώπου τοῦ Ἰορδάνου ὅτι καὶ οἱ κόρακες ἔφερον αὐτῷ ἄρτους τὸ πρωὶ καὶ κρέα τὸ δείλης καὶ ἐκ τοῦ χειμάρρου ἔπινεν ὕδωρ ὅτι καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ ἡμέρας καὶ ἐξηράνθη ὁ χειμάρρους ὅτι οὐκ ἐγένετο τὸς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς



### NASB

2 The word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3 "Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook. 7 It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

### NRSV

2 The word of the Lord came to him, saying, 3 "Go from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 You shall drink from the wadi, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the Lord; he went and lived by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the wadi. 7 But after a while the wadi dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

### NLT

2 Then the LORD said to Elijah, 3 "Go to the east and hide by Kerith Brook at a place east of where it enters the Jordan River. 4 Drink from the brook and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to bring you food." 5 So Elijah did as the LORD had told him and camped beside Kerith Brook. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat each morning and evening, and he drank from the brook. 7 But after a while the brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in the land.

## Notes:

One of the important discourse markers signaling a shift of scene is the phrase, “the word of the Lord came to ...” This is used to introduce the major Elijah narratives also in 17:8, 18:1, 18:31, 19:9, 21:17, and 21:28. Interestingly, the beginning (17:1) and ending (21:18) of the Elijah cycle references the prophet as Elijah the Tishbite.

God instructed the prophet to go to the Wadi Cherith in order to hide from Ahab as well as to receive provision during the drought. Different renderings of this location will surface in English translations as is reflected in the above three translations: “the brook Cherith” (NASB), “the Wadi Cherith” (NRSV), and “Kerith Brook” (NLT). Since the reference only surfaces in verses 2 and 5 of our passage, it is one of those obscure locations in the Bible. All that is said is that it was “east of the Jordan.” The word “Wadi” does mean brook and suggests a small stream that would flow when rain was plentiful but quickly dry up with the lack of rain. Thus the estimation on the above map is but an educated guess as to its approximate location. The important thing is that it provided Elijah a shelter and hiding place during the early days of the drought.

Elijah’s food was supplied twice daily by ravens, a scavenger bird which is a part of the crow family. His water came from the brook. Nothing is said about his shelter. It may have been a cave, a tent or something else. To be sure, the Hebrew word translated generally as “raven” can also be translated as “Arab” or as “merchant” with a slight change of vocalization of the Hebrew word. A century ago in interpretative history, this approach was fairly popular, but few today would argue against translating it as “raven.” Had I have been Elijah, I probably would have preferred meat and bread from Arabs over against that rounded up by ravens. But that misses the point of the story. The narrative indicates that after a short period of time the brook dried up and presented Elijah with another crisis.

The narrative intends to make the point that God took care of Elijah using extraordinary means that wouldn’t normally have been available to the prophet. Elijah was hidden from Ahab, and especially from Jezebel’s efforts to exterminate the prophets of God (18:4). God made certain that the prophet had plenty to eat and drink. The daily dependency on the ravens underscored Elijah’s dependency on God to take care of him. The provisions were not a first class suite in the Hilton, but they were adequate.



One would want to note that miracle stories like this one with deity using nature to take care of his servants were fairly widespread in the ancient world, as J.A. Montgomery (*ICC*) observes:

Comparison has long been made with similar tales, classical and otherwise, of such feedings by animals, by Grotius, Keil, Gunkel in his *Elias*, 68, nn. 7–9, most recently by Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the O.T.*, pt. 3, ch. 14, noting the part played by the raven in ancient lore.

This doesn’t cast doubt on this narrative, but does remind us that the ancient world much more readily understood supernatural activity in the world around them, than we tend to do.

What is the connection of all this to us today? First, this episode surfaces at the outset of the series of stories about Elijah. In the Elijah cycle the presence of the miraculous plays a significant role in recounting the ministry of this prophet. We have seen God intervene in extraordinary fashion before in instances such as the burning bush call of Moses, the parting of the waters at the Sea of Reeds etc. But with Elijah the miraculous takes on a somewhat different tone. We will see this in the ministries of both Elijah and Elisha, but then diminish in the prophetic ministry from Amos - Isaiah onward.

Some stumble over the supernatural way that Elijah was taken care of according to the text. But that is to miss the point of the narrative. The deeper meaning is simply that God took care of His prophet in order to preserve and prepare him for much more difficult times that lay ahead. Our God controls the world that He has created and can utilize any aspect of it for His purposes. In this case, He used scavenger birds to supply His prophet with food.

How does that apply to us? We should be cautious about a one-to-one connection. God doesn’t automatically keep His people from danger and hunger, just because they belong to Him. Around our

world today, thousands of Christians perish monthly from starvation, especially in places like Sudan. What He does do is stand with His people providing strength and help as they experience severe hardship. Often that sense of God's sustaining presence is what enables His people to endure and if not then death ceases to be the horrible enemy since Heaven is on the other side of the door for the people of God.

What this text does underscore is that God works His purposes through every conceivable circumstance. He wanted a confrontational witness to His

justice and holiness to the sinful king Ahab. Elijah was given that role, and God protected him in order to carry out His plans for the northern kingdom. In that we can find comfort. God still has plans for believers and for the various societies around the world. He is at work in every country using His people to bear witness to the life-saving gospel message. We need simply to be open and available to our Lord to contribute to that objective both in our society and in other parts of the world -- as He leads.

### c. A Widow at Zarephath, vv. 8-24

#### LXX

<sup>8</sup> καὶ ἐγένετο ῥῆμα κυρίου πρὸς Ἡλίου <sup>9</sup> ἀνάστηθι καὶ πορεύου εἰς Σαρεπτα τῆς Σιδωνίας ἰδοὺ ἐντέταλμαι ἐκεῖ γυναικὶ χήρᾳ τοῦ διατρέφειν σε <sup>10</sup> καὶ ἀνέστη καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Σαρεπτα εἰς τὸν πυλῶνα τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐκεῖ γυνὴ χήρα συνέλεγεν ξύλα καὶ ἐβόησεν ὀπίσω αὐτῆς Ἡλίου καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ λαβὲ δὴ μοι ὀλίγον ὕδωρ εἰς ἄγγος καὶ πίομαι <sup>11</sup> καὶ ἐπορεύθη λαβεῖν καὶ ἐβόησεν ὀπίσω αὐτῆς Ἡλίου καὶ εἶπεν λήμψη δὴ μοι ψωμὸν ἄρτου ἐν τῇ χειρὶ σου <sup>12</sup> καὶ εἶπεν ἡ γυνὴ ὦ κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰ ἔστιν μοι ἐγκρυφίας ἀλλ' ἡ ὅσον δρᾶξ ἀλεύρου ἐν τῇ ὑδρίᾳ καὶ ὀλίγον ἔλαιον ἐν τῷ καψάκῃ καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ συλλέγω δύο ξυλάρια καὶ εἰσελεύσομαι καὶ ποιήσω αὐτὸ ἑμαυτῇ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις μου καὶ φαγόμεθα καὶ ἀποθανούμεθα <sup>13</sup> καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτήν Ἡλίου θάρσει εἰσελθε καὶ ποιήσον κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου ἀλλὰ ποιήσον ἑμοὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐγκρυφίαν μικρὸν ἐν πρώτοις καὶ ἐξοίσεις μοι σαυτῇ δὲ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις σου ποιήσεις ἐπ' ἑσχάτου <sup>14</sup> ὅτι τὰδε λέγει κύριος ὁ ὑδρία τοῦ ἀλεύρου οὐκ ἐκλείψει καὶ ὁ καψάκης τοῦ ἐλαίου οὐκ ἐλαττονήσει ἕως ἡμέρας τοῦ δοῦναι κύριον τὸν ὑετὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς <sup>15</sup>

#### NASB

8 Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, "Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink." 11 As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand." 12 But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." 13 Then Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son. 14 "For thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth.' " 15 So

#### NRSV

8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 "Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you." 10 So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink." 11 As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 12 But she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." 13 Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth." 15 She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many

#### NLT

8 Then the LORD said to Elijah, 9 "Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. There is a widow there who will feed you. I have given her my instructions." 10 So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, "Would you please bring me a cup of water?" 11 As she was going to get it, he called to her, "Bring me a bite of bread, too." 12 But she said, "I swear by the LORD your God that I don't have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die." 13 But Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid! Go ahead and cook that 'last meal,' but bake me a little loaf of bread first. Afterward there will still be enough food for you and your son. 14 For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be plenty of flour and oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again!" 15 So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat from her

καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἡ γυνὴ καὶ  
ἐποίησεν καὶ ἴσθιεν αὐτὴ  
καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς  
<sup>16</sup> καὶ ἡ ὕδρια τοῦ ἀλεύρου  
οὐκ ἐξέλιπεν καὶ ὁ καψάκης  
τοῦ ἐλαίου οὐκ ἐλαττονώθη  
κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ὃ  
ἐλάλησεν ἐν χειρὶ Ἠλίου

<sup>17</sup> καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ ταῦτα  
καὶ ἠρρώσθησεν ὁ υἱὸς τῆς  
γυναίκος τῆς κυρίας τοῦ  
οἴκου καὶ ἦν ἡ ἀρρωστία  
αὐτοῦ κραταία σφόδρα ἕως  
οὐ οὐχ ὑπελείφθη ἐν αὐτῷ  
πνεῦμα <sup>18</sup> καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς  
Ἠλίου τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ  
ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσηλθες  
πρὸς με τοῦ ἀναμνησάσαι τὰς  
ἀδικίας μου καὶ θανατώσαι  
τὸν υἱόν μου <sup>19</sup> καὶ εἶπεν  
Ἠλίου πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα δὸς  
μοι τὸν υἱόν σου καὶ ἔλαβεν  
αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ κόλπου αὐτῆς  
καὶ ἀνήνεγκεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ  
ὑπερῶν ἐν ᾧ αὐτὸς ἐκάθητο  
ἐκεῖ καὶ ἐκοίμισεν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ  
τῆς κλίνης αὐτοῦ <sup>20</sup> καὶ  
ἀνεβόησεν Ἠλίου καὶ εἶπεν  
οἶμμοι κύριε ὁ μάρτυς τῆς  
χήρας μεθ' ἧς ἐγὼ κατοικῶ  
μετ' αὐτῆς σὺ κεκάκωκας τοῦ  
θανατώσαι τὸν υἱόν αὐτῆς <sup>21</sup>  
καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν τῷ παιδαρίῳ  
τρὶς καὶ ἐπεκαλέσατο τὸν  
κύριον καὶ εἶπεν κύριε ὁ  
θεός μου ἐπιστραφήτω δὴ ἡ  
ψυχὴ τοῦ παιδαρίου τούτου  
εἰς αὐτόν <sup>22</sup> καὶ ἐγένετο  
οὕτως καὶ ἀνεβόησεν τὸ  
παιδάριον <sup>23</sup> καὶ κατηγάγεν  
αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑπερῶου εἰς  
τὸν οἶκον καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτόν  
τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν  
Ἠλίου βλέπε ζῇ ὁ υἱός  
σου <sup>24</sup> καὶ εἶπεν ἡ γυνὴ  
πρὸς Ἠλίου ἰδοὺ ἔγνωκα ὅτι  
ἄνθρωπος θεοῦ εἶ σὺ καὶ  
ῥῆμα κυρίου ἐν στόματί σου  
ἀληθινόν

she went and did according to  
to the word of Elijah, and  
she and he and her house-  
hold ate for *many* days. 16  
The bowl of flour was not ex-  
hausted nor did the jar of oil  
become empty, according to  
the word of the LORD which  
He spoke through Elijah.

17 Now it came about  
after these things that the  
son of the woman, the mis-  
tress of the house, became  
sick; and his sickness was  
so severe that there was no  
breath left in him. 18 So she  
said to Elijah, "What do I  
have to do with you, O man  
of God? You have come to  
me to bring my iniquity to  
remembrance and to put my  
son to death!" 19 He said to  
her, "Give me your son." Then  
he took him from her  
bosom and carried him up  
to the upper room where he  
was living, and laid him on  
his own bed. 20 He called  
to the LORD and said, "O  
LORD my God, have You  
also brought calamity to the  
widow with whom I am stay-  
ing, by causing her son to  
die?" 21 Then he stretched  
himself upon the child three  
times, and called to the  
LORD and said, "O LORD  
my God, I pray You, let this  
child's life return to him." 22  
The LORD heard the voice  
of Elijah, and the life of the  
child returned to him and he  
revived. 23 Elijah took the  
child and brought him down  
from the upper room into the  
house and gave him to his  
mother; and Elijah said,  
"See, your son is alive." 24  
Then the woman said to Eli-  
jah, "Now I know that you  
are a man of God and that  
the word of the LORD in your  
mouth is truth."

days. 16 The jar of meal was  
not emptied, neither did the  
jug of oil fail, according to  
the word of the Lord that he  
spoke by Elijah.

17 After this the son of  
the woman, the mistress of  
the house, became ill; his  
illness was so severe that  
there was no breath left in  
him. 18 She then said to  
Elijah, "What have you  
against me, O man of God?  
You have come to me to  
bring my sin to remem-  
brance, and to cause the  
death of my son!" 19 But he  
said to her, "Give me your  
son." He took him from her  
bosom, carried him up into  
the upper chamber where he  
was lodging, and laid him on  
his own bed. 20 He cried out  
to the Lord, "O Lord my  
God, have you brought ca-  
lamity even upon the widow  
with whom I am staying, by  
killing her son?" 21 Then he  
stretched himself upon the  
child three times, and cried  
out to the Lord, "O Lord my  
God, let this child's life come  
into him again." 22 The Lord  
listened to the voice of Eli-  
jah; the life of the child came  
into him again, and he re-  
vived. 23 Elijah took the  
child, brought him down from  
the upper chamber into the  
house, and gave him to his  
mother; then Elijah said,  
"See, your son is alive." 24  
So the woman said to Eli-  
jah, "Now I know that you  
are a man of God, and that  
the word of the Lord in your  
mouth is truth."

supply of flour and oil for  
many days. 16 For no mat-  
ter how much they used,  
there was always enough left  
in the containers, just as the  
LORD had promised through  
Elijah.

17 Some time later, the  
woman's son became sick.  
He grew worse and worse,  
and finally he died. 18 She  
then said to Elijah, "O man  
of God, what have you done  
to me? Have you come here  
to punish my sins by killing  
my son?" 19 But Elijah re-  
plied, "Give me your son."  
And he took the boy's body  
from her, carried him up to  
the upper room, where he  
lived, and laid the body on  
his bed. 20 Then Elijah cried  
out to the LORD, "O LORD  
my God, why have you  
brought tragedy on this  
widow who has opened her  
home to me, causing her  
son to die?" 21 And he  
stretched himself out over  
the child three times and  
cried out to the LORD, "O  
LORD my God, please let  
this child's life return to  
him." 22 The LORD heard  
Elijah's prayer, and the life  
of the child returned, and he  
came back to life! 23 Then  
Elijah brought him down from  
the upper room and gave him  
to his mother. "Look, your  
son is alive!" he said. 24  
Then the woman told Elijah,  
"Now I know for sure that  
you are a man of God, and  
that the LORD truly speaks  
through you."

## Notes:

These verses contain two separate episodes  
connected to Elijah's stay at the widow's home in  
Zarephath: one at the beginning and one toward the

end of the almost three year stay. Both stories con-  
tinue the emphasis on miraculous intervention by  
God in protection of his prophet.

This section is introduced by the discourse  
marker, "[the word of the Lord came to him...](#)" signaling a  
new topic (17:8). God's instructions are for Elijah to  
go diagonally across the region of the northern king-  
dom where Ahab controlled to the Phoenician coastal

city of Zarephath. Located almost half way between Tire and Sidon, it possessed several symbols for Elijah. First, just like the Wadi Cerith it lay outside the region where Ahab and Jezebel were persecuting and killing God's prophets. It was wasn't Israelite territory. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, it was in the region where Baal worship was strongest. Thus, Elijah in one sense was taking God's battle against Baal right into Baal's "backyard." If God could protect His prophet in Baal's territory, and not just in Israelite territory, then God's superiority to Baal was dramatically demonstrated. Plus, this would prove that God was not limited to the land of the Israelites. Most pagan deities of that time were considered to be regional gods who functioned only inside prescribed boundaries established by the ethnic group etc. that worshiped them. Many Israelites in both the northern and southern kingdoms of that day were tending to view God as the God of the Israelites only and His power being limited to the Land of Promise. This movement of Elijah to outside that territory would be a dramatic rejection of such a view.

The first episode, vv. 8-16, sets up Elijah's stay with a widow in the town of Zarephath. Choon Leong Seow (*New Interpreter's Bible*, iPreach) introduces us to this widow:

Elijah is ordered by the Lord to go to the city of Zarephath ("Sarepta" in the Greek), a Phoenician commercial capital known for its exporting of various goods, including wine, grain, and oil. Yet, this city in Baal's territory is ironically in dire straits because of a drought. Just as the Lord ordained the ravens to feed Elijah, so also the Lord now ordains a widow to feed him. Although she apparently does not know it, this Sidonian woman is to be used by the Lord for salvific purposes. In this she stands in contrast to the other Sidonian woman, Jezebel, the Sidonian princess whom Ahab married (16:31) and who would be a champion for Baal in Israel. Again, it is ironic that the Lord would have a Phoenician, presumably a worshiper of Baal, to feed Elijah. Not only that, but she is a widow, which in ancient Near Eastern cultures means that she is probably destitute. In the OT, widows are typically associated with the neediest elements of society, the orphans and the poor (Job 24:3-4; 31:16-17; Isa 10:2; Zech 7:10). Yet, it is this widow in a land devastated by drought who is to feed Elijah, and it is to her that he turns for sustenance. She who has such scarce means is instrumental in God's plan to provide for others (cf. Mark 12:41-44).

Richard D. Nelson (*Interpretation*, iPreach) provides a helpful summation of this narrative:

The reader and Elijah know that this woman has been commanded by God to feed him, but she gives

no hint of this herself. She is presented as a most inadequate source of support, scraping together a few sticks near the city gate. Elijah's roundabout request, almost painfully polite, underlines her inadequacy and builds tension. Caught between the demands of ancient hospitality and the harsh reality of famine, she reacts with an oath and fatalistic resignation. Verse 12 brings into view the jar and the cruse, important factors in the coming resolution, and her son, a link to the next story. After she gathers a couple of sticks, the inevitable course of her fate is predicted in a brusque chain of Hebrew narrative verbs: I will go, I will prepare it, we will eat it, then we will die. The language of minimalism—a little water, a morsel of bread, a handful of meal, a little oil, two sticks, a little cake—provides a sharp contrast to the rich meals brought by the ravens and to the dependable sufficiency of verses 14-16.

Elijah's "fear not" is a common prelude to God's saving action (2 Kings 6:16). "Faith tests" are not uncommon in miracle stories (cf. 2 Kings 5:10-14), and the woman's goodness and faith pass muster. In a sense this story is an improved, moralizing edition of 2 Kings 4:1-7. There is a distinct didactic, hortatory flavor. As Elijah's word is done by the widow (vv. 13a, 15a), so God's word is done (vv. 14, 16b). The word in question (v. 14) is close to being a magic formula or incantation (cf. 2 Kings 4:43), with God referred to only in the third person. The miracle itself is undramatic, the result emphasized by repetition. The meal continues to suffice; the level of oil in the cruse does not go down. The Lord God who lives (v. 12) grants life in the midst of death.

The second episode, vv. 17-24, is more dramatic in that it involves raising a son back to life. When the widow's son dies, she blames Elijah who then questions God's wisdom in bringing him to this woman's house. The episode challenges many ancient misunderstandings about the divine. The woman figures that her sinfulness has been uncovered by the presence of a divine man in her home. The death of her son is a punishment for her sinfulness. The episode challenges both of these false assumptions.

When Elijah takes the lifeless body of her son to the upper chamber where he was staying, he challenges God that his presence has caused this tragedy. But in an unexplained action he stretches himself over the lifeless body and prays for God to restore life, which God does. The son is then presented to his mother alive and she confesses confidence in Elijah's claim to being a man of God who speaks God's truth.

By this story we are reminded that God controls life and death. For those willing to obey God there is life, but for a rebellious Ahab there will be death.

**LXX**

<sup>LXT</sup> 1 Kings 17:1 καὶ εἶπεν Ἡλίου ὁ προφήτης ὁ Θεοβίτης ἐκ Θεσβων τῆς Γαλααδ πρὸς Ἀχααβ ζῆ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ ᾧ παρέστην ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ εἰ ἔσται τὰ ἔτη ταῦτα δρόσος καὶ ὑετὸς ὅτι εἰ μὴ διὰ στόματος λόγου μου <sup>2</sup> καὶ ἐγένετο ῥῆμα κυρίου πρὸς Ἡλίου <sup>3</sup> πορεύου ἐντεῦθεν κατὰ ἀνατολὰς καὶ κρύβηθι ἐν τῷ χειμάρρῳ Χορραθ τοῦ ἐπὶ προσώπου τοῦ Ἰορδάνου <sup>4</sup> καὶ ἔσται ἐκ τοῦ χειμάρρου πίεσαι ὕδωρ καὶ τοῖς κόραξιν ἐντελοῦμαι διατρέφειν σε ἐκεῖ <sup>5</sup> καὶ ἐποίησεν Ἡλίου κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐν τῷ χειμάρρῳ Χορραθ ἐπὶ προσώπου τοῦ Ἰορδάνου <sup>6</sup> καὶ οἱ κόρακες ἔφερον αὐτῷ ἄρτους τὸ πρωὶ καὶ κρέα τὸ δεῖλης καὶ ἐκ τοῦ χειμάρρου ἔπινεν ὕδωρ <sup>7</sup> καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ ἡμέρας καὶ ἐξηράνθη ὁ χειμάρρους ὅτι οὐκ ἐγένετο ὑετὸς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς <sup>8</sup> καὶ ἐγένετο ῥῆμα κυρίου πρὸς Ἡλίου <sup>9</sup> ἀνάστηθι καὶ πορεύου εἰς Σαρεπτα τῆς Σιδωνίας ἰδοὺ ἐντέταλμαι ἐκεῖ γυναικὶ χήρᾳ τοῦ διατρέφειν σε <sup>10</sup> καὶ ἀνέστη καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Σαρεπτα εἰς τὸν πυλῶνα τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐκεῖ γυνὴ χήρα συνέλεγεν ξύλα καὶ ἐβόησεν ὀπίσω αὐτῆς Ἡλίου καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ λαβὲ δὴ μοι ὀλίγον ὕδωρ εἰς ἄγγος καὶ πίομαι <sup>11</sup> καὶ ἐπορεύθη λαβεῖν καὶ ἐβόησεν ὀπίσω αὐτῆς Ἡλίου καὶ εἶπεν λήμψη δὴ μοι ψωμὸν ἄρτου ἐν τῇ χειρὶ σου <sup>12</sup> καὶ εἶπεν ἡ γυνὴ ζῆ κύριος ὁ θεὸς σου εἰ ἔστιν μοι ἐγκρυφίας ἀλλ' ἡ ὅσον δρᾶξ ἀλεύρου ἐν τῇ ὑδρίᾳ καὶ ὀλίγον ἔλαιον ἐν τῷ καψάκῃ καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ συλλέγω δύο ξυλάρια καὶ εἰσελεύσομαι καὶ ποιήσω

**NASB**

1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 2 The word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3 "Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 "It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook. 7 It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, "Please get

**NRSV**

1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 2 The word of the Lord came to him, saying, 3 "Go from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 You shall drink from the wadi, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the Lord; he went and lived by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the wadi. 7 But after a while the wadi dried up, because there was no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 "Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you." 10 So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink." 11 As she was going to bring it, he called

**NLT**

1 Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, "As surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives – the God whom I worship and serve – there will be no dew or rain during the next few years unless I give the word!" 2 Then the LORD said to Elijah, 3 "Go to the east and hide by Kerith Brook at a place east of where it enters the Jordan River. 4 Drink from the brook and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to bring you food." 5 So Elijah did as the LORD had told him and camped beside Kerith Brook. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat each morning and evening, and he drank from the brook. 7 But after a while the brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in the land. 8 Then the LORD said to Elijah, 9 "Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. There is a widow there who will feed you. I have given her my instructions." 10 So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, "Would you please bring me a cup of water?" 11 As she was going to get it, he called to her, "Bring me a bite of bread, too." 12 But she said, "I swear by the

αὐτὸ ἐμαυτῇ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις μου καὶ φαγόμεθα καὶ ἀποθανούμεθα <sup>13</sup> καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὴν Ἡλίου θάρσει εἰσελθε καὶ ποιήσον κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου ἀλλὰ ποιήσον ἐμοὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐγκρυφίαν μικρὸν ἐν πρώτοις καὶ ἐξοίσεις μοι σαυτῇ δὲ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις σου ποιήσεις ἐπ' ἐσχάτου <sup>14</sup> ὅτι τάδε λέγει κύριος ἡ ὑδρία τοῦ ἀλεῦρου οὐκ ἐκλείψει καὶ ὁ καψάκης τοῦ ἐλαίου οὐκ ἐλαττονήσκει ἕως ἡμέρας τοῦ δοῦναι κύριον τὸν ὑετὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς <sup>15</sup> καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἡ γυνὴ καὶ ἐποίησεν καὶ ἴσθιεν αὐτὴ καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς <sup>16</sup> καὶ ἡ ὑδρία τοῦ ἀλεῦρου οὐκ ἐξέλειπεν καὶ ὁ καψάκης τοῦ ἐλαίου οὐκ ἐλαττονώθη κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ὃ ἐλάλησεν ἐν χειρὶ Ἡλίου

<sup>17</sup> καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡρρώστησεν ὁ υἱὸς τῆς γυναικὸς τῆς κυρίας τοῦ οἴκου καὶ ἦν ἡ ἀρρωστία αὐτοῦ κραταῖα σφόδρα ἕως οὗ οὐχ ὑπελείφθη ἐν αὐτῷ πνεῦμα <sup>18</sup> καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς Ἡλίου τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσηλθες πρὸς με τοῦ ἀναμνησάμεναι τὰς ἀδικίας μου καὶ θανατῶσαι τὸν υἱόν μου <sup>19</sup> καὶ εἶπεν Ἡλίου πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα δός μοι τὸν υἱόν σου καὶ ἔλαβεν αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ κόλπου αὐτῆς καὶ ἀνήνεγκεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ ὑπερῶν ἐν ᾧ αὐτὸς ἐκάθητο ἐκεῖ καὶ ἐκοίμισεν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης αὐτοῦ <sup>20</sup> καὶ ἀνεβόησεν Ἡλίου καὶ εἶπεν οἴμμοι κύριε ὁ μάρτυς τῆς χήρας μεθ' ἧς ἐγὼ κατοικῶ μετ' αὐτῆς σὺ κεκάκωκας τοῦ θανατῶσαι τὸν υἱόν αὐτῆς <sup>21</sup> καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν τῷ παιδαρίῳ τρις καὶ ἐπεκατέσαστο τὸν κύριον καὶ εἶπεν κύριε ὁ θεός μου ἐπιστραφήτω δὴ ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ παιδαρίου τούτου εἰς αὐτόν <sup>22</sup> καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως καὶ ἀνεβόησεν τὸ παιδάριον <sup>23</sup> καὶ κατηγάγεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑπερῶου εἰς

me a little water in a jar, that I may drink." 11 As she was going to get *it*, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand." 12 But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." 13 Then Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring *it* out to me, and afterward you may make *one* for yourself and for your son. 14 "For thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth.' " 15 So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for *many* days. 16 The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through Elijah.

17 Now it came about after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. 18 So she said to Elijah, "What

to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 12 But she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." 13 Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth." 15 She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. 16 The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

17 After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. 18 She then said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!" 19 But he said to her, "Give me your son." He took him

LORD your God that I don't have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die." 13 But Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid! Go ahead and cook that 'last meal,' but bake me a little loaf of bread first. Afterward there will still be enough food for you and your son. 14 For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be plenty of flour and oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again!" 15 So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat from her supply of flour and oil for many days. 16 For no matter how much they used, there was always enough left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.

17 Some time later, the woman's son became sick. He grew worse and worse, and finally he died. 18 She then said to Elijah, "O man of God, what have you done to me? Have you come here to punish my sins by killing my son?" 19 But Elijah replied, "Give me your son." And he took the boy's body from her,

τὸν οἶκον καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν  
τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν  
Ἡλίου βλέπε ζῇ ὁ υἱός  
σου <sup>24</sup> καὶ εἶπεν ἡ γυνὴ  
πρὸς Ἡλίου ἰδοὺ ἔγνωκα ὅτι  
ἄνθρωπος θεοῦ εἶ σὺ καὶ  
ῥῆμα κυρίου ἐν στόματί σου  
ἀληθινόν

do I have to do with you,  
O man of God? You have  
come to me to bring my  
iniquity to remembrance  
and to put my son to  
death!" 19 He said to her,  
"Give me your son." Then  
he took him from her bo-  
som and carried him up  
to the upper room where  
he was living, and laid  
him on his own bed. 20  
He called to the LORD  
and said, "O LORD my  
God, have You also  
brought calamity to the  
widow with whom I am  
staying, by causing her  
son to die?" 21 Then he  
stretched himself upon  
the child three times, and  
called to the LORD and  
said, "O LORD my God,  
I pray You, let this child's  
life return to him." 22 The  
LORD heard the voice of  
Elijah, and the life of the  
child returned to him and  
he revived. 23 Elijah took  
the child and brought him  
down from the upper  
room into the house and  
gave him to his mother;  
and Elijah said, "See,  
your son is alive." 24  
Then the woman said to  
Elijah, "Now I know that  
you are a man of God and  
that the word of the  
LORD in your mouth is  
truth."

from her bosom, carried  
him up into the upper  
chamber where he was  
lodging, and laid him on  
his own bed. 20 He cried  
out to the Lord, "O Lord  
my God, have you  
brought calamity even  
upon the widow with  
whom I am staying, by  
killing her son?" 21 Then  
he stretched himself  
upon the child three  
times, and cried out to  
the Lord, "O Lord my  
God, let this child's life  
come into him again." 22  
The Lord listened to the  
voice of Elijah; the life of  
the child came into him  
again, and he revived. 23  
Elijah took the child,  
brought him down from  
the upper chamber into  
the house, and gave him  
to his mother; then Elijah  
said, "See, your son is  
alive." 24 So the woman  
said to Elijah, "Now I  
know that you are a man  
of God, and that the word  
of the Lord in your mouth  
is truth."

carried him up to the up-  
per room, where he lived,  
and laid the body on his  
bed. 20 Then Elijah cried  
out to the LORD, "O  
LORD my God, why  
have you brought tragedy  
on this widow who has  
opened her home to me,  
causing her son to die?"  
21 And he stretched him-  
self out over the child  
three times and cried out  
to the LORD, "O LORD  
my God, please let this  
child's life return to him."  
22 The LORD heard  
Elijah's prayer, and the  
life of the child returned,  
and he came back to life!  
23 Then Elijah brought  
him down from the upper  
room and gave him to his  
mother. "Look, your son  
is alive!" he said. 24  
Then the woman told Eli-  
jah, "Now I know for sure  
that you are a man of  
God, and that the LORD  
truly speaks through  
you."

## Hebrew Text

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַתְּשִׁבִי מִתְּשִׁבִי גִלְעָד<sup>WTT 1 Kings 17:1</sup>  
אֶל־אֲחָאֵב חִי־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עֲמַדְתִּי לִפְנֵי  
אִם־יִהְיֶה הַשָּׁנִים הָאֵלֶּה טַל וּמָטָר כִּי אִם־לִפִּי דְבָרִי ס  
וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר<sup>2</sup>  
לֵךְ מִזֶּה וּפְנִית לָךְ קֶדְמָה וְנִסְתַּרְתָּ בְּנַחַל פְּרִית אֲשֶׁר  
עַל־פְּנֵי הַיַּרְדֵּן  
וְהָיָה מִהֵנַחַל תִּשְׁתָּה וְאֶת־הָעֹרֵבִים צִוִּיתִי לְכַלְכֶּלְךָ שֵׁם<sup>4</sup>  
וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיַּעַשׂ כְּדִבַּר יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּשֶׁב בְּנַחַל פְּרִית אֲשֶׁר  
עַל־פְּנֵי הַיַּרְדֵּן  
וְהָעֹרֵבִים מִבִּיָּאִים לוֹ לֶחֶם וּבָשָׂר בִּבְקָר וּלְחֶם וּבָשָׂר<sup>6</sup>  
בְּעֹרֵב וּמִן־הֵנַחַל יִשְׁתָּה  
וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים וַיִּבֶשׂ הַנָּחַל כִּי לֹא־הָיָה גֶשֶׁם בָּאָרֶץ ס  
וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר<sup>8</sup>  
קוּם לֵךְ צִרְפָּתָה אֲשֶׁר לְצִידוֹן וַיִּשְׁבֹּת שָׁם הִנֵּה צִוִּיתִי שֵׁם  
אִשָּׁה אֱלֹמֶנָה לְכַלְכֶּלְךָ  
וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ צִרְפָּתָה וַיָּבֹא אֶל־פֶּתַח הָעִיר וְהִנֵּה־שָׁם אִשָּׁה  
אֱלֹמֶנָה מְקַשֶּׁשֶׁת עֵצִים וַיִּקְרָא אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא לִי  
מֵעֵט־מִים בְּכִלִּי וְאַשְׁתָּה  
וַתֵּלֶךְ לִקְחַת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר לִקְחִי־נָא לִי פֶתֶל־לֶחֶם  
בִּידְךָ<sup>11</sup>  
וַתֹּאמֶר חִי־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אִם־יִשְׁלִי מֵעוּג כִּי אִם־מָלֵא  
כַּף־קֶמַח בְּכֹר וּמֵעֵט־שֶׁמֶן בְּצִפְחַת וְהִנֵּנִי מְקַשֶּׁשֶׁת שָׁנִים  
עֵצִים וּבֹאתִי וַעֲשִׂיתִיהוּ לִי וּלְבָנִי וְאֶכְלָנָהּ וּמִתְּנוּ  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אֵלֶיהָ אֶל־תִּירָאִי בְּאִי עָשִׂי כְּדַבְּרֶךָ אֲךָ  
עָשִׂי־לִי מִשֵּׁם עֲגָה קִטְנָה בְּרֹאשְׁנָהּ וְהוֹצֵאתִי לִי וְלֶךְ וּלְבָנְךָ  
תַּעֲשִׂי בְּאַחֲרֹנָהּ ס  
כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּד הִקְמַח לֹא תִכְלֶה  
וּצִפְחַת הַשֶּׁמֶן לֹא תִחַסֵּר עַד יוֹם (תַּתֵּן) [תַּתֵּן] יְהוָה גֶּשֶׁם  
עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה  
וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתַּעֲשֶׂה כְּדִבַּר אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַתֹּאכַל (הוֹאִדָּהּ־יֵא)<sup>15</sup>

[הַיְאֹדְהוּא] וּבֵיתָה יָמִים

<sup>16</sup> כִּדְּ הַקֶּמַח לֹא כָלָתָה וְצַפְחַת הַשֶּׁמֶן לֹא חָסַר כְּדָבָר

יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד אֱלִיהֶו פ

<sup>17</sup> וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה חָלָה בֶן־הָאִשָּׁה בַּעֲלַת הַבַּיִת

וַיְהִי חֲלִיוֹ חֲזָק מְאֹד עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִוְתְּרָה־בּו נְשָׁמָה

<sup>18</sup> וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל־אֱלִיהֶו מִה־לִּי וּלְךָ אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים בָּאתָ אֵלַי

לְהִזְכִּיר אֶת־עֲוֹנִי וּלְהַמִּית אֶת־בְּנִי

<sup>19</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֶיהָ תִּנִּי־לִי אֶת־בְּנֶךָ וַיִּקְחֵהוּ מִחִיקָה וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ

אֶל־הָעֵלִיָּה אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יֹשֵׁב שָׁם וַיִּשְׁכְּבֵהוּ עַל־מִטָּתוֹ

<sup>20</sup> וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָגֶם עַל־הָאֱלֹמָנָה

אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי מִתְגֹּדֵד עִמָּה הִרְעוֹתָ לְהַמִּית אֶת־בְּנָהּ

<sup>21</sup> וַיִּתְּמֹדֶד עַל־הַיֶּלֶד שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי תֵשֵׁב נָא נַפְש־הַיֶּלֶד הַזֶּה עַל־קִרְבּוֹ

<sup>22</sup> וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה בְּקוֹל אֱלִיהֶו וַתֵּשֵׁב נַפְש־הַיֶּלֶד עַל־קִרְבּוֹ

וַיְחִי

<sup>23</sup> וַיִּקַּח אֱלִיהֶו אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וַיִּרְדֵּהוּ מִן־הָעֵלִיָּה הַבַּיִתָּה וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ

לְאִמּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלִיהֶו רְאֵי חֵי בְנֶךָ

<sup>24</sup> וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־אֱלִיהֶו עֲתָה זֶה יִדְעָתִי כִּי אִישׁ

אֱלֹהִים אַתָּה וַדְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּפִיךָ אָמֵת פ

