

***STUDIES
IN THE
LIFE OF
ELIJAH***

STUDIES 1 - 10

TEACHER MANUAL

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

Studies In The Life Of Elijah

Studies 1 - 10

Teacher Manual

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ELIJAH, THE MAN AND HIS MINISTRY

STUDY 1

Scripture Portions: 1 Kings 16:28-34; 1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17-18

Elijah was a mighty man of God - in some respects the greatest of all the prophets since Moses and until the advent of John the Baptist.

Matthew 11:11 - *Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

Although he lived 3,000 years ago and his period of ministry was comparatively short, he is by no means a forgotten character.

Malachi 4:5 - *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:*

Matthew 11:14 - *And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.*

Matthew 27:47 - *Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.*

Luke 1:17 - *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

John 1:21 - *And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.*

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.

Elijah's sudden appearance upon the page of scripture centres upon the tremendous announcement he made to Ahab. Compare -

1 Kings 17:1 - *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.*

James 5:17-18 - *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.*

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

However, before we look more closely at this remarkable man, let us suggest several classes of people to whom this series of studies will make a special appeal.

First, those who feel their sphere of service is hard.

If this is you, the story of Elijah should bring great encouragement.

Second, those who feel they are lone workers.

How easily such are tempted to say, as Elijah said, "I only am left!" There is encouragement here for them.

Third, those whose patience is sorely tried and who see few results.

Elijah knew all about this! The story of his patience, endurance and ultimate achievement will encourage us to 'press on'.

Fourth, those who feel there is little they can do to influence an apostate age.

There was little that Elijah could do, but how much it was.

James 5:17-18 - *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.*

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

We, likewise, have been given this weapon of All-prayer.

Fifth, those who have failed (and who has not?).

The story of Elijah contains one sad incident - **1 Kings 19** - but what help we find in it!

ELIJAH WAS A MAN JUST LIKE OURSELVES.

We tend to regard men like Elijah, Moses, Daniel, and the other Old Testament 'worthies' as men who walked on heights inaccessible to us. But who was Elijah?

James 5:17 - *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.*

Elijah was a man with a nature just like yours and mine. A man, not an angel. A man who, at one point, failed badly. A great man, yes, but essentially no different from ourselves.

2. WE ARE TOLD NOTHING ABOUT ELIJAH'S EARLY LIFE AND UP-BRINGING.

He is described as "Elijah the Tishbite.....of the inhabitants of Gilead". As his name means "God is my strength", this may indicate that he had godly parents. We can be sure, however, that God had been preparing him all through his early years.

And remember, every experience through which the Lord leads us is a preparation for the further work He has in store for us. Waiting time is never wasted time.

3. ELIJAH LIVED IN A DAY OF SPIRITUAL DECLENSION AND APOSTASY.

A succession of seven wicked kings had reigned over Israel.

Jeroboam.

1 Kings 12:28-33 - *Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.

31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

b. Nadab.

1 Kings 15:25-26 - *And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.*

26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

3. Baasha.

1 Kings 15:27-28 - *And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon.*

28 *Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.*

d. Elah, a drunkard and a murderer.

1 Kings 16:8-9 - *In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.*

9 *And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah.*

e. Zimri, guilty of treason.

1 Kings 16:20 - *Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

6. Omri.

1 Kings 16:25-26 - *But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him.*

26 *For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.*

g. Ahab, with whom must be linked his notoriously wicked wife, Jezebel.

1 Kings 16:28-33 - *So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.*

29 *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.*

30 *And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.*

31 *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.*

32 *And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.*

33 *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.*

Worship of the true God had all but ceased. Baal-worship had become the national religion. Only 7,000 Israelites remained true in heart to the Lord, and these were fearful and had hidden their testimony.

1 Kings 19:18 - *Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not*

bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

A floodtide of idolatry, superstition and evil had overwhelmed the nation. Never had God's favoured nation sunk so low spiritually and morally.

4. ELIJAH WAS COMMISSIONED BY GOD TO PERFORM SOME VERY DIFFICULT TASKS.

These included -

1. announcing the drought to Ahab.

1 Kings 17:1 - *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.*

2. *challenging Ahab and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel* - **1 Kings 18:1-41.**

- c. *declaring God's righteous judgment upon Ahab and Jezebel in the matter of Naboth's vineyard* - **1 Kings 21:1-29.**

How we need people of Elijah's courage today!

5. ELIJAH'S LIFE WAS MARKED BY COMPLETE SEPARATION FROM THE EVIL AROUND HIM.

A good motto over his life would be -

Ephesians 5:11 - *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*

And with it -

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 - *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

How could Elijah have any fellowship with the apostate leaders of Israel? His separation from the evil around him was uncompromising.

Hebrews 13:13 - *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*

6. ELIJAH'S MINISTRY WAS CHARACTERIZED BY THE SUPERNATURAL.

Consider God's might acts in and through him.

1. fed by ravens at the brook -

1 Kings 17:1-6 - *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.*

2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

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

5 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.

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

b. the widow's meal and oil replenished - 1 Kings 17:8-16.

3. her son raised - 1 Kings 17:17-23.

- d. fire from heaven -

1 Kings 18:36-38 - *And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening*

sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

5. fed by an angel -

1 Kings 19:5-7 - *And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.*

6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

f. more fire from heaven -

2 Kings 1:9-12 - *Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.*

10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

11 Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.

12 And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

7. dividing the waters of Jordan -

2 Kings 2:8 - *And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.*

h. raptured into the presence of God by a whirlwind -

2 Kings 2:11 - *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

7. ELIJAH LIVED CONSCIOUSLY IN GOD'S PRESENCE AND RELIED UPON GOD'S STRENGTH.

1 Kings 17:1 - *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.*

His God was the living God; the covenant God ("the Lord God of Israel"): the God "before whom I stand" as His servant. Compare -

1 Kings 10:8 - *Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.*

Luke 1:19 - *And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.*

Now read -

Isaiah 40:28-31 - *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

2 Timothy 4:17 - *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*

What was Elijah's secret? Was it not that, by communion and prayer, he really did know the Lord? May we emulate this great man!

Closing thought:

Daniel 11:32 - *And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.*

HIDDEN BY THE BROOK CHERITH

STUDY 2

Scripture Portions: 1 Kings 17:2-7; Psalm 34:1-10

The announcement to Ahab that there would be no rain -

1 Kings 17:1 - *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.*

was a terrible one for Elijah to have to make. Yet he had prayed that it might not rain -

James 5:17 - *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.*

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 honour His own word.

Deutonomy 11:16-17 - *Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;
17 And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.*

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 -

Psalm 91:1 - *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

to the full (and, indeed, the whole psalm).

This story of Elijah revolves around two God-given commands.

(1) **“Go, HIDE thyself.....”.**

This was the private aspect of his life and service. The going “in”-

John 10:9 - *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

the “prayer” ministry -

Acts 6:4 - *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*

(2) “Go, **SHOW** thyself....”.

This was the public aspect of his service. The going “out”-

John 10:9 - *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

the “preaching” ministry -

Acts 6:4 - *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*

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 - which all of us need to learn!

Third: because in a time of spiritual apostasy, God always withdraws His prophets.

Psalms 74:7-9 - *They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.*

8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

9 We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.

Isaiah 30:20 - *And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:*

Amos 8:11-12 - *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:*

12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.

Thus Elijah was to be one of God’s hidden ones. Compare -

Psalm 83:3 - *They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.*

Now notice from -

1 Kings 17:2-7 - *And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,
3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.
4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.
5 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.
6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.
7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.*

THE VOICE THAT HE HEARD.

1 Kings 17:1 - *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.*

How we need to hear God's voice!

Matthew 4:4 - *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

Elijah clearly lived in such close communion with Him that, when the Lord spoke, at once he heard.

Isaiah 6:8 - *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*

Notice, too, that "the word of the Lord came unto him", bringing explicit instructions. There was no striving. As Elijah walked with the Lord, His plan and purpose were clearly revealed. Compare -

Psalm 37:23 - *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 - *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Proverbs 16:3 (A.V.) - *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

How God spoke, we are not told, but we do know He speaks His word.

Psalms 119:105 - *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

by a deep peace in our hearts concerning the way forward -

Colossians 3:15 - *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

by circumstances and open doors -

Revelation 3:8 - *I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

The instructions to Elijah in -

1 Kings 17:3 - *Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.*

were clear and precise, and they demanded action. Elijah was left in no doubt as to what God wanted him to do. So it should, and may, be with us. Now notice -

THE PROMISE THAT HE RECEIVED.

1 Kings 17:4 - *And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.*

With God's command will come His promise - always.

The promise was certain - "it shall be".

It was sufficient - God's supply always is.

- c. It was conditional. God says, "If you will....., I will.....", or "I will.....if you.....". The important word in **verse 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.

Compare -

Psalm 23:1 - *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

Psalm 34:10 - *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.*

Luke 22:35 - *And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.*

Philippians 4:19 - *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Elijah was determined to get “there” -

1 Kings 17:5 - *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.*

THE OBEDIENCE THAT HE SHOWED.

“So he went” -

1 Kings 17:5 - *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.*

There is nothing so precious to the Lord as our obedience. What about our love? Well, read -

John 14:15 - *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

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 - *His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

Acts 9:6 - *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

4. THE SUPPLY THAT HE ENJOYED.

1. The SOURCE was God Himself -

1 Kings 17:14 - *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.*

2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

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

He is sovereign. He controls nature.

2. The METHOD was miraculous. The brook kept running. The ravens were God's errand boys!

c. The REGULARITY was consistent. "Morning and evening"-without fail!

4. The VARIETY showed God's grace. "Bread and flesh.....".

5. 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.

He will never fail those whose trust is in Him, those who are "there".

5. THE TESTING THAT HE EXPERIENCED.

1 Kings 17:7 - *And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.*

The words, “after a little while”, 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!

1. He is leading us ON. He is working to a program in your life and mine.
2. He wants us to have sympathy for OTHERS. Elijah must “feel” for the people who were starving.

2 Corinthians 1:4 - *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

- c. ***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 upon His gifts and provisions, but upon Himself.

*“Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all IN THEE I find.....”*

Closing Thought:

Psalm 91:1-2 - *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

IN THE WIDOW'S HOUSE AT ZAREPHATH

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: 1 Kings 17:8-16

There are three matters that constantly exercise God's people.

The **first** has to do with God's guidance. "Does God guide?", we ask. In these studies we see clearly that He does. Elijah was divinely led, one step at a time.

Psalm 37:23 - *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

The **second** matter has to do with God's discipline. Why do troubles and trials come to the Christian? Study **Deuteronomy, chapter 8**, and **Hebrews 12:3-11**. See also the answer to your questionings in the incident before us.

The **third** matter has to do with God's provision.

Genesis 22:14 - *And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*

"Jehovah-jireh" means "The Lord will provide. Will He? Does He today? This study supplies the answer to that question.

After Elijah had been at the brook Cherith for about a year, it dried up. Did that mean God had failed? No, it meant God was about to lead him on. Where to? To Zarephath, where He had commanded a widow to sustain him. Read **1 Kings 17:8-16** several times and notice -

1. THE WIDOW'S UNRELIEVED DISTRESS.

We do not know how long she had been a widow, but we are told she had one son. Probably she had been well provided for, but now she was suffering as a result of the drought. We are told that:

She had come to the end of her resources.

1 Kings 17:10 - *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.*

1 Kings 17:12 - *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.*

She was about to take her last meal with her son. Have you come to the end of your resources? Have your money, health, friends, patience, etc., all gone? Take comfort from this story and from -

Psalms 84:11-12 - *For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*

She was a believer, and yet the Lord allowed her distress.

1 Kings 17:12 - *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.*

He knew all about her extremity, as -

1 Kings 17:9 - *Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.*

assures us. But, He was working out His purpose for her as well as for Elijah. He was causing -

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

to be true of her, and also -

Psalms 138:8 - *The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.*

If you are experiencing trouble, it does not mean that the Lord has forgotten you.

She had lost hope.

1 Kings 17:12 - *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.*

She thought she was preparing her last meal before she and her son died! Why did she lose hope? Because her eyes were upon the barrel and the little cruse of oil instead of upon the Lord.

If we pin our faith to anything down here, we shall certainly lose hope and our faith will falter. But, if we put our faith in God He will never fail us.

Isaiah 41:10 - *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

2. THE PROPHET'S UNDAUNTED FAITH.

Any man of smaller faith would have faltered and failed when the brook dried up, but not Elijah! His faith was evident in that:

1. He had faith to take God at His word.

1 Kings 17:8-10 - *And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,
9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.*

10 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.

Elijah lived on the word of the Lord, as we should.

Matthew 4:4 - *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

Compare -

1 Kings 17:8 - *And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,*

1 Kings 17:14 - *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.*

1 Kings 17:16 - *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.*

When our actions are regulated by the Word of God and our lives are lived in the centre of His will, we have nothing whatsoever to fear. Elijah's faith was very strong, as was Abraham's.

Romans 4:17-21 - *(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*

18 *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*

19 *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:*

20 *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;*

21 *And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

b. He had faith to make an unusual request.

This is recorded in -

1 Kings 17:13 - *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.*

How strange that he should say to this poverty-stricken widow, "Make me thereof a little cake first"! What does this mean? It means that he was standing before her as God's representative and that he was telling her to put God first. This principle is clearly brought out in -

Matthew 6:31-34 - *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

32 *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

34 *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Note particularly **verse 33**.

When we are prepared to give God the first place, we may be quite sure that our provision is guaranteed.

3. He had faith to declare God's faithfulness.

1 Kings 17:14 - *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.*

Appearances were all against him, but Elijah had the word of the Lord upon which to rest. Faith is simply taking God at His word. Thus, he was able to tell this woman that, because God had said He would provide, He would provide. Notice the lovely word to her in -

1 Kings 17:13 - *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.*

“Fear Not.....!” The Lord says that to us over and over again! “Christian, fear not!”

3. THE LORD’S UNFAILING SUPPLY.

1 Kings 17:15-16 - *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.

From these verses we see that, as the woman obeyed the Lord, the supply was given.

Are you concerned about the matter of supply? Have you a pressing financial need and you wonder where the supply is coming from? Perhaps the Lord is leading you to set up home and you are wondering how you are going to provide?or you are wondering how you will be able to make ends meet when you can no longer work?

See what an old man said -

Psalms 37:25 - *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

Remember, God’s supplies never fail where there is faith. Compare -

Matthew 6:32 - *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

Philippians 4:19 - *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Concerning this gracious supply that the Lord made for Elijah and the woman, notice -

1. The promise of it.

1 Kings 17:9 - *Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.*

1 Kings 17:14 - *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.*

Remember that all the Lord said and did for His servant then, He is saying and waiting to do for you today.

b. The duration of it.

1 Kings 17:14 - *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.*

Notice the three important words “until the day.....”.

How long will God supply our needs? “Until the day when we shall no longer walk by faith but we shall walk by sight in His glorious presence!

3. The sufficiency of it.

1 Kings 17:15b-16 - *.....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.*

It is the story all over again of -

Philippians 4:19 - *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

God promises to meet all our need. He never gives us too much. Often He only gives us sufficient. Read -

2 Corinthians 4:16 - *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

Closing Thought:

Isaiah 25:1 - *O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.*

RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: 1 Kings 17:17-24

Now that Elijah was safely installed in her home and God was daily providing for all their needs, it would have been easy for the widow of Zarephath to think that, at last, all her troubles were over. But were they?

1 Kings 17:16 - *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.*

Then compare with -

1 Kings 17:17 - *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.*

Notice that both these people, Elijah and the widow, were believers. They were living by faith, faith in God, and faith is always tested. In other words, if we are believers, we must expect to be tested.

Philippians 1:29 - *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;*

Hebrews. 12:6-11 - *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Think how much testing the psalmist, the apostles, the early believers and the Puritans experienced.

Think how much God's people, on every hand, are experiencing today.

This whole matter of faith's testing is brought before us in the story of the death of the

widow's son and of Elijah's great prayer. This is the record of God's loving dealings with two of His people who lived at Zarephath, which, significantly, means "a place of refining".

If we are believers, men and women of faith, we are all living at Zarephath. In other words, we must expect our faith to be tested. Notice from this incident -

THE TRIAL OF FAITH.

This is indicated in -

1 Kings 17:17 - *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.*

Notice the following about this trial.

It was UNEXPECTED.

Quite unexpectedly, the child fell sick and then died. Trials and testings come just as suddenly into the lives of God's people everywhere.

It was SEVERE.

The child not only became ill, but he died. All this happened to a woman already bereaved of her husband. God's chastenings are sometimes very severe!

c. It was PURPOSEFUL.

That is, it did not just happen by chance. "Fate" was not in operation here! The Lord allowed this to happen. Notice the words in **1 Kings 17:17** - "*.....it came to pass after these things.....*" In other words, God was in it all. This thing was from Him.

1 Kings 12:24 - *Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.*

He was putting into action -

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

It all seemed very strange - but read the following -

1 Peter 4:12 - *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.*

1 Peter 1:7 - *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

All that happened was with God's loving permission and in order to fulfil His purpose. It is just the same in our lives.

THE COLLAPSE OF FAITH.

What happens when faith is tested. See what happened here -

1 Kings 17:18 - *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?*

When her child died the widow turned on Elijah and reproached him and even blamed him for her son's death. Her faith temporarily collapsed. For a short while she became an unbeliever.

God's people often react like this in times of trial and testing. They ask, "Does God care? What have I done to deserve this? Why has it happened to me?"

But notice another thing: when her faith was tested, she remembered her sin. It is a good thing when God's chastenings cause us to search our hearts and cleanse our ways.

Psalm 139:23-24 - *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Lamentations 3:40 - *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.*

God allowed the trial to fall upon the widow in order that she might be purified as gold is purified by the process of refining.

Job 23:10 - *But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

1 Peter 1:7 - *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

How different was Elijah's reaction!

Psalm 119:75 - *I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in*

faithfulness hast afflicted me.

He could not understand the reason for this sudden tragedy any more than the woman could. But see how his faith came into operation in this time of testing.

3. THE OPERATION OF FAITH.

Whereas the woman's faith collapsed, Elijah's faith went into action! It began to work.

James 2:17-20 - *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

How did it work? How does faith operate in a time of crisis?

1. It keeps calm when the blow falls.

Look at Elijah. Although he is deeply moved because of what has happened, he is trusting God in spite of it. See how gentle and calm he is under provocation.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 - *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

He did not reproach God. He was calm when the test came.

- b. It trusts God when His purpose cannot be traced.*

Elijah could not see what God was doing, but he knew it was for some wise and loving purpose. So, he was willing to trust God until He revealed it.

3. It at once relates the trial to God.

Elijah took the child, went to his room, got down before the Lord and related the whole situation to Him.

1 Kings 17:19-20 - *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.*

20 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?

What a great act of faith that was! Elijah's faith led him to the throne of grace and to the God of grace.

1 John 5:5 - *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

d. It asks God to do the humanly impossible.

1 Kings 17:21 - *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.*

Compare with -

James 5:13-15 - *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Elijah knew the mind of the Lord when He prayed thus. God does not always lead us to pray for resurrection. When our loved one is seriously ill, it may be easier to pray for healing than to trust God for bereavement.

5. It is always honoured by God, and is thus victorious.

1 Kings 17:22-23 - *And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.*

23 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.

Compare with -

Matthew 9:29 - *Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.*

Faith (not presumption) will never be disappointed. If the Lord leads you to trust Him along a certain line or about a certain matter, you will never be disappointed.

Romans 10:11 - *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

4. THE FRUIT OF FAITH.

1 Kings 17:23 - *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.*

Elijah gave the resurrected child back to his mother, as if to say, “See what God has done!” Now read -

1 Kings 17:24 - *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.*

When she saw what God had done through the channel of Elijah’s faith, her own faith was revived and restored. This is the fruit of faith.

When we trust God, many things happen! He is glorified, our own faith is strengthened, our character is purified and the genuineness of our faith is proved. Best of all, others are helped and strengthened through our trusting God in a time of crisis.

As other people look at us in times of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, profit and loss, especially in times of fierce trial, of bereavement, accident or illness, can they say of us -

1 Kings 17:24 - *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.*

Closing Thought:

Psalms 119:75 - *I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*

THE CHALLENGE ON MOUNT CARMEL

STUDY 5

Scripture Portion: 1 Kings 18:17-40

The Holy Spirit has certainly led the writer to give us a vivid and dramatic record of Elijah's great challenge on Mount Carmel. Elijah is there in the presence of Ahab, the 450 prophets of Baal, 400 prophets of the groves and a company of people from all Israel.

The question was: Is Baal the real God? Or is Jehovah the true God and is Elijah His servant?

No one present that day was left in any doubt as to the answer to these questions when "the fire of the Lord fell....."

1 Kings 18:38 - *Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*

The biblical records are actual history. In **1 Kings 18:17-40**, we read of fact, not fiction. The whole story is intensely dramatic. What a great God we have!

Perhaps the most important value of the incident, however, is that it is permanently challenging. The lessons of the incident abide. What are they?

Let us answer this question by asking: What is the greatest need in the Church today? Is it for men, money, machinery or methods? No! What did Elijah need? He needed evidence that God was alive and active so that the people would believe on Him and turn to Him. Now read -

1 Kings 18:23-24 - *Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:
24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.*

1 Kings 18:38-39 - *Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.
39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.*

He needed fire, and that is what we need today - fire, the symbol, evidence and manifestation of God's presence and power.

Compare -

Exodus 3:2 - *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*

Exodus 13:21 - *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:*

Exodus 19:18 - *And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

Leviticus 9:24 - *And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.*

1 Chronicles 21:26 - *And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.*

2 Chronicles 7:1 - *Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.*

Isaiah 4:4 - *When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.*

Luke 3:16 - *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*

Acts 2:3-4 - *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Hebrews 12:29 - *For our God is a consuming fire.*

What we need is the burning, consuming, illuminating and empowering fire of the Holy Ghost to fall upon us and upon the work that God has committed to us.

How can we obtain this fire?

1 Kings 18:38 - *Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and*

the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

What are the antecedents of this “then”? For it is clear that the fire of God only falls when all His requirements are met. When did it fall?

In answering this, we shall use an outline suggested by the late Canon Guy H. King.

IT WAS WHEN THE ALTAR WAS REPAIRED.

1 Kings 18:30 - *And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.*

The very first thing Elijah did in preparation for the coming of the fire was to repair the altar of the Lord. Idolatry and apostasy had been prevalent for so long that God’s altars had been broken down. Elijah now engaged in the work of repair. What is the significance of this for us?

Surely, that the fire of the Lord only falls (in the life, the church or the work that He has committed to us to do for Him) when the Lord is given His rightful place. Has the Lord His rightful place in your life and in all you are seeking to do in His name?

Colossians 1:18 - *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Who is upon the throne - the Lord Jesus or self? Who is first in your life - a friend, a loved one or the Lord Himself?

2. IT WAS WHEN THE SACRIFICE WAS OFFERED.

1 Kings 18:33 - *And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.*

The sacrifice was a bullock which Elijah cut up and placed, piece by piece, upon the altar. Compare -

Romans 12:1 - *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

Romans 6:13 - *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Ask yourself: How many of the pieces of my life have I really offered to the Lord upon the altar? How many of my members are yielded fully to Him “as instruments of righteousness unto God”? What about my hands, feet, eyes, ears, lips, my home, job, pleasures and friendships? Have I yielded all the “pieces” or “members” to Him?

3. IT WAS WHEN THE WATER WAS POURED.

1 Kings 18:33-35 - *And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.*

34 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

The pagan priests were notorious for their trickery in deceiving the people with false signs and lying wonders. Elijah was preparing to offset this. So, after placing the pieces of sacrifice upon the altar, he drenched both altar and sacrifice with water, not only once or twice, but three times until -

1 Kings 18:35 - *And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.*

What things do we substitute for the fire of the Lord? Are we proud of our lovely churches, organs, choirs, dazzling oratory, good collections, etc.? What are any of these without the power of Pentecost?

4. IT WAS WHEN THE PRAYER WAS MADE.

1 Kings 18:36-37 - *And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.*

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

Elijah was a man of prayer. It was the habit of his life. He did not only pray when he was in trouble.

James 5:16-18 - *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

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.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Read **1 Kings 18:36-37** several times. Notice when, where and how he prayed.

The one all-embracing condition which must be met if God's fire is to fall is - prayer, more prayer and yet more prayer. If we will really pray, sooner or later, the fire will fall - in our lives and in our work for the Lord.

4. IT WAS WHEN THE MOTIVE WAS PURGED.

It has been suggested that there is a change in Elijah's praying between **verses 36** and **37**.

In **verse 36**, Elijah prayed for the fire that all might know "that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word", but, in **verse 37** the change came. He prayed "that his people may know that Thou are the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again".

Why do we want the fire of the Lord to fall, to be empowered for service and to be filled with the Holy Ghost? Do we want it for ourselves? It is only when our motive is that God should be glorified and His Name honoured and exalted that the fire of the Lord will fall.

These are the prerequisites to Pentecost, to an outpouring of that consuming fire of the Holy Ghost. Let us pray that, throughout our land and around the world, the fire of the Lord may fall.

Closing Thought:

Isaiah 4:3-5 - *And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:*

4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

5 And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

A SOUND OF ABUNDANCE OF RAIN

STUDY 6

Scripture Portions: 2 Kings 18:41-46; James 5:16-18

When Elijah told Ahab that there was “a sound of abundance of rain”, there had, as yet, been no sound audible to the human ear. Elijah had only heard this sound by the hearing of faith. Read and compare -

Galatians 3:2 - *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Psalms 25:14 - *The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.*

Amos 3:7 - *Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.*

Acts 22:9 - *And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.*

1 Kings 18 records two prayers that Elijah prayed: one was in public - for fire -

1 Kings 18:36-37 - *And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.*

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

the other was in private - for water -

1 Kings 18:42-46 - *So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, 43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.*

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

In this study we shall look at Elijah on the mountain top, alone with God and praying for

the showers to be poured out upon the thirsty land. What kind of prayer was this prayer?

IT WAS A PRAYER OF FAITH, FOR IT RESTED UPON GOD'S OWN SURE PROMISE.

When we pray we need to make sure that our petition is founded upon the promise of God so that we are praying in accordance with His will. Without such a promise we may well demand things contrary to His will, which will therefore be presumptuous and not the prayer of faith at all.

For 3 ½ years, there had been no rain. Now Elijah goes before the Lord and asks Him to send the rain. Upon what ground did he make this prayer? - upon the ground of God's own sure promise.

1 Kings 18:1 - *And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.*

God had said to Elijah, "I will send rain.....". Now Elijah asked Him to do that which was clearly His will.

Answers to prayer are conditional upon our praying in accordance with God's will. We can know His will. Be sure of it, for He reveals it by His Word and by the Holy Spirit. Read and compare -

1 John 5:14-15 - *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Romans 8:26-27 - *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Why did Elijah need to pray for rain if it was God's will to send it? Because God had ordained it thus. Read **Ezekiel 36:24-38**, where the Lord promises to do a great many things, and then, in **verse 37**, He says that He will do them in answer to prayer.

IT WAS A PRAYER OFFERED IN THE SECRET PLACE, AWAY FROM THE NOISE AND DISTRACTIONS OF THE WORLD.

1 Kings 18:42 - *So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,*

What a relief for Elijah to get alone in the presence of God after all the noise and excitement he had experienced!

Psalm 46:10 - *Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

But there is more to note here. The Lord Jesus frequently acted upon His own words in -

Matthew 6:6 - *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

Luke 6:12 - *And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*

Prayer can accomplish so very much. How much? Ask James -

James 5:16-18 - *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
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.
18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*

IT WAS A PRAYER WHICH WAS MARKED BY DEEP REVERENCE AND SINCERE HUMILITY.

1 Kings 18:42 - *So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.*

Earlier in the chapter, we see Elijah standing amid the crowds on Carmel. Now we see him before his God, down upon the earth with his face between his knees. We need to be filled with a new realization of the majesty and holiness of God and of our own littleness and sinfulness.

Compare -

Genesis 18:27 - *And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:*

Isaiah 6:1-5 - *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.
2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face,*

and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Daniel 10:8 - *Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.*

1 Peter 5:5-6 - *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

We may come before the Lord with holy boldness -

Hebrews 4:16 - *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

But we must always come reverently and in deep humility.

IT WAS A PRAYER WHICH WAS DEFINITE AND TO THE POINT.

Zechariah 10:1 - *Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.*

This is exactly what Elijah did. He only had one petition as he came before the Lord. "Lord, send the rain! Send the rain! Send the rain!" In the Upper Room they prayed for only one thing - the coming of the promised Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:13-14 - *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

When Peter was in prison, the church prayed for only one thing - his deliverance.

Acts 12:5 - *Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

Luke 11:5 - *And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves.*

Luke 11:11-13 - *If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?*

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Definite, specific prayers bring definite, specific answers!

5. IT WAS A PRAYER WHICH WAS INTENSE, EARNEST AND FERVENT.

Notice the words “fervent” and “earnestly” in -

James 5:16-18 - *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

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.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Compare with -

Hebrews 5:7 - *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;*

Elijah’s prayer was also accompanied by fasting.

1 Kings 18:41-42 - *And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.*

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.

He could quite legitimately have joined Ahab in taking food and drink, but he did not do so.

Matthew 17:19-21 - *Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?*

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Do we know anything about fasting? Do we know what it is to sacrifice time, pleasures and legitimate things in order to “pray through” and secure God’s blessing?

6. IT WAS A PRAYER WHICH WAS ACCOMPANIED BY WATCHFULNESS.

Colossians 4:2 - *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*

Psalms 130:5-6 - *I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.*

6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

Now read -

1 Kings 18:43-45 - *And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.*

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

When we really pray in faith we should already be looking for the answer; even if time and again the reply is, “There is nothing.....”, we should go on praying and watching until the answer comes. Would his servant ever forget it? But this also reminds us of one other characteristic of Elijah’s prayer.

7. IT WAS A PRAYER WHICH PERSEVERED UNTIL THE ANSWER CAME.

Elijah said to his servant, "Go again.....again.....again.....seven times!"
George Muller prayed for 52 years for two of his friends. How such perseverance shames us! Notice, even Elijah's prayer was not answered immediately.

Compare -

Genesis 32:26 - *And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

Psalms 40:1 - *I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*

Then we read -

1 Kings 18:45a - *And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.....*

The kind of prayer which is described here and which God invites us to offer, is always answered abundantly.

1 Kings 18:45b - *.....And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.*

*Christian, seek not yet repose.
Hear thy gracious Saviour say;
Thou art in the midst of foes:
Watch and pray.*

*Watch, as if on that alone
Hung the issue of the day;
Pray, that help may be sent down:
Watch and pray.*

Closing Thought:

Mark 11:22-24 - *And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.
23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.
24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

WHAT DOES THOU HERE, ELIJAH?

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: 1 Kings 19:1-18

Our studies thus far have shown Elijah to be a man of deep devotion, unquestioning obedience and daring faith. But then there comes a chapter describing breakdown, humiliating failure and defeat - **1 Kings, chapter 19**. A sad chapter - yet, so up-to-date and applicable to our own experience. "A man just like ourselves!"

James 5:17 - *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.*

- Do you ever get discouraged, depressed and despondent?
- Do you ever find yourself in the grip of despair?
- Does fear ever possess you?
- Does doubt assail you?
- Do you ever experience loneliness and a feeling that nobody understands?
- Do you ever feel at the end of your tether?
- Do you ever go to sleep and wish you need not wake up?

1. NOTICE THE DESPERATE CONDITION IN WHICH ELIJAH FOUND HIMSELF.

He was suddenly gripped by fear and alarm.

Is this the courageous man of -

1 Kings 18:17-18 - *And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*

18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

1 Kings 18:40 - *And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.*

the same man of which -

1 Kings 19:2-3 - *Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.*

3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

speaks? Elijah - running for his life! Fear is a dreadful thing, which we have all experienced in some measure.

He was unable to bear the presence of his servant.

1 Kings 19:3 - *And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.*

This verse tells us of Elijah's self-imposed isolation. When we are over-strained, even the presence of friends and loved ones can irritate us.

He was overwhelmed with depression, despondency and despair.

1 Kings 19:4 - *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.*

Poor Elijah! - sitting under a juniper tree - at "Wit's End Corner"! Have you been like that? Are you under the juniper tree now?

Psalms 42:11 - *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

Psalms 43:5 - *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

He was presumptuous and unwise in his praying.

1 Kings 19:4 - *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.*

He felt as the psalmist did in -

Psalms 55:3-8 - *Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.*

4 My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

- 6 *And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*
7 *Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.*
8 *I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.*

e. *He was filled with self-pity.*

1 Kings 19:4 - *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.*

This is always a dangerous state to get into.

6. He had an unbalanced view of things.

1 Kings 19:10 - *And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*

1 Kings 19:14 - *And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*

1 Kings 19:18 - *Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.*

In times of overstrain and illness, everything gets out of perspective. Little problems become greatly exaggerated in our minds.

g. *He temporarily lost his faith in God.*

He still believed in God, but he could not trust Him in this emergency, so he “went to pieces”.

There is little doubt that Elijah was experiencing a nervous breakdown. We are all subject, in greater or lesser degree, to some, or all, of the above-mentioned emotions or reactions.

When one is in a normal state of health, such experiences are only very temporary. But when they persist and all come together, as with Elijah, then we are in a bad way. Is there no deliverance from these disturbing experiences which, if not checked, will lead to breakdown?

There certainly is.

It is most important that, in this “high-speed” age, we learn the secret of wise living and thus avoid the emotional upsets which result from unwise living.

2. NOTICE HOW ELIJAH GOT INTO THIS CONDITION OF DEPRESSION AND BREAKDOWN.

1. He was MENTALLY overstrained.

For 3 ½ years he had experienced terrific tension, culminating in the great victory on Mount Carmel and the slaughter of the priests - **1 Kings, chapter 18**. Is it to be wondered that he was exhausted mentally and nervously?

b. He was PHYSICALLY exhausted.

Not only had the experiences of the past years made heavy demands upon his body, but now he had just taken an 18-mile cross-country run!

3. He was SPIRITUALLY out-of-touch.

1 Kings 19:2-3 - *Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.*

3 *And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.*

Particularly notice the words, “when he saw that.....” and compare -

Matthew 14:30 - *But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.*

Elijah took his eyes off the Lord and looked at his circumstances - the threats of Jezebel.

If you want to be depressed, fearful, filled with self-pity, etc., take your eyes off the Lord and look at your circumstances, the problems of this weary world. Just take a good look at yourself!

These were the three reasons for Elijah’s collapse. He was sick mentally, physically and spiritually. These must be considered together, for the mental affects the spiritual, the physical affects the mental - and so on.

3. NOTICE HOW ELIJAH WAS DEALT WITH BY THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN

AND THE CURE THAT WAS PRESCRIBED FOR HIM THAT SET HIM
ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY.

1. Elijah was physically exhausted, so the Lord attended to the needs of his BODY.

Psalms 103:14 - *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*

God prescribed food, sleep and plenty of fresh air.

1 Kings 19:5-7 - *And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.*

6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

He gave His servant a six-weeks' holiday! It is essential that we pay attention to these three simple rules for bodily health.

- (1) nourishing food, regularly taken.
- (2) regular and sufficient sleep.
- (3) fresh air, exercise and relaxation.

b. *Elijah was mentally overstrained, so the Lord dealt with his MIND.*

His mental outlook was distorted and unbalanced. So after six weeks of rest and care, good feeding and fresh air, the Lord came to him and repeated His question -

1 Kings 19:9 - *And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?*

1 Kings 19:13 - *And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?*

His object was to cause Elijah to face realities - to face up to his fears and problems and to look them squarely in the face.

3. Elijah was out-of-touch spiritually, so the Lord dealt with his SOUL.

He gave him a wonderful vision of His power, glory and tenderness.

Compare -

1 Kings 19:11-12 - *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:
12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*

Psalms 46:10 - *Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

Elijah needed physical restoration and mental renewal, but most of all, spiritual revival. Most wonderful of all, the Lord did not accuse Elijah of his failure, but, when He restored him, He recommissioned him.

1 Kings 19:15 - *And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:*

Closing Thought:

Psalms 27:13 - *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*

THE STORY OF NABOTH'S VINEYARD

STUDY 8

Scripture Portions: 1 Kings 21:1-29; 2 Kings 9:30-37

This solemn story reveals two things of which we need to be reminded constantly, which are always true but which we so quickly forget.

First - God is sovereign, all-powerful and infinitely holy, and that He hates sin.

Romans 1:18 - *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*

Second - Man is wicked, wilful and deserving of God's wrath.

Colossians 3:5-6 - *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

As you read **1 Kings 21**, ask yourself: What does this chapter tell me about God and about men and women?

Five personalities are brought before us in this story. Notice how each of them acted in this terrible drama.

AHAB'S SELFISH DEMAND.

1 Kings 21:1-2 - *And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.*

2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

Ahab, king of Israel, was very wealthy. But all his possessions did not satisfy him. He coveted the vineyard which belonged to Naboth. He offered to exchange or buy it. To his surprise and anger, Naboth refused.

1 Kings 21:3 - *And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.*

So, what did Ahab do?

1 Kings 21:4 - *And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.*

What a picture it is. A king sulking and acting like a spoiled child!

Covetousness is a dreadful sin, yet sometimes even the Lord's people sulk when they cannot have their own way!

Poor Ahab - and poor you, if you get upset because you cannot have what you want, especially if it is not what God wants!

But let us look at -

2. NABOTH'S STEADFAST REFUSAL.

When Ahab asked for the vineyard, Naboth said, "The Lord forbid it me.....".

1 Kings 21:3 - *And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.*

Was this an unreasonable answer? No. The vineyard, part of his inherited property, had belonged to his ancestors for many generations. So, how could he sell it?

But it was not simply a matter of sentiment.

Leviticus 25:23 - *The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.*

Numbers 36:7 - *So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.*

God had expressly forbidden the sale of this property; therefore, when Ahab made his request, Naboth said "The Lord forbid it.....How can I do this thing when God has forbidden it?" So he refused to disobey God - and how great this is!

Compare -

Hebrews 11:24 - *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.*

Daniel 3:13-14 -*Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?*

Acts 4:20 - *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

Christian, are you contemplating marriage with an unbeliever? “The Lord forbid it.”

2 Corinthians 6:14 - *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

Are you seriously thinking of uniting in Christian service with those who do not believe the Bible: “The Lord forbid it.”

2 Corinthians 6:15 - *And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*

Naboth had the courage of his convictions. It was a costly business to stand up for God, truth and righteousness. It always is.

Compare -

1 King. 21:13 - *And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.*

Psalms 37:32 - *The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.*

Now notice -

3. JEZEBEL'S SINISTER PLOT.

We see this in **1 Kings 21:5-14**.

Jezebel is one of the most sinister figures in the Bible. She not only wrought great evil, but she influenced Ahab to do evil. See how she acted when she heard of Naboth's refusal. She replied with a stinging taunt.

1 Kings 21:7 - *And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.*

She resorted to forgery -

1 Kings 21:8 - *So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.*

Her action was filled with hypocrisy -

1 Kings 21:9 - *And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:*

She pressed others into perjury -

1 Kings 21:10 - *And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.*

She perpetrated the horrible act of murder -

1 Kings 21:13 - *And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.*

Thus she did away with Naboth, the righteous, God-fearing man. She gained the vineyard for Ahab, and he took possession of it.

1 Kings 21:15-16 - *And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. 16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.*

Her sinister plot succeeded, and a humble servant of God was stoned to death. Does this suggest that sinful men and women can defy God and get away with it? No!

1 Kings 21:16-17 - *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.*

17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying

No sooner had Jezebel completed her wicked scheme than “the word of the Lord came to Elijah”.

Compare -

Numbers 32:23 - *But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.*

Notice, then -

4. GOD'S SOVEREIGN ACTION.

Ahab and Jezebel had defied the Lord, but they could not get away with it, for He is sovereign in the affairs of mankind. He always has the last word. Now He acted.

Take note of this solemn record, for this God is the God with whom we all have to do and before whom all men will stand to give account of themselves.

Romans 14:12 - *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

In the world there are two groups of people: those represented by Ahab and Jezebel, and those by Naboth and Elijah. The latter group is very much in the minority.

Many, like Naboth, have been martyred for their faithfulness to the Lord. Many are suffering persecution and death because they are Christians. Is the devil winning, and is the majority group in the right? No! Compare -

Matthew 7:13-14 - *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Proverbs 4:18-19 - *But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

God will yet vindicate His people and mete out judgment to those who have rebelled against Him, rejected His word and refused to humble themselves before Him.

Revelation 20:9-15 - *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

13 *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

14 *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

15 *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Revelation 21:6-8 - *And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

7 *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

8 *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

God is merciful and slow to fulfil His word of judgment, but He will fulfil it.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 - *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

Finally, we consider Elijah himself. Notice -

5. ELIJAH'S SOLEMN TASK.

Read **1 Kings 21:17-26**.

It was a hard task for Elijah to have to pronounce Ahab's doom, and that of his posterity, and then the doom of Jezebel.

1 Kings 21:21-24 - *Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,*

22 *And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.*

23 *And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.*

24 *Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.*

What should be our message in these darkening days?

Should we tell men and women that God is love? Yes!

Should we say that He is merciful? Yes!

But above all, we must declare that God is just and holy; that He hates sin; that judgment is coming upon this world; and that, if they want to escape it, they must “flee from the wrath to come,” -

Matthew 3:7 - *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

flee to the refuge which is Christ Jesus our Lord -

Isaiah 32:2 - *And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*

The message that should be on the lips of every Christian today is -

John 3:36 - *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

not the first part but the second. Are you proclaiming that message?

Acts 20:27 - *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

In concluding this study, notice -

1 Kings 21:27-29 - *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.*

28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

and compare with -

Ezekiel 33:11 - *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

How merciful the Lord is!

Closing Thought:

2 Peter 3:9-14 - *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

THE HOME-GOING OF A SERVANT OF GOD

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 2:1-15

As believers -

Ephesians 1:13 - *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ -

1 Peter 1:18-19 - *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

we have a glorious prospect. At present we live in the body, and we “groan” -

Romans 8:23 - *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

and long for our Heavenly Home -

John 14:1-3 - *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8 - *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto

us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Psalm 23:6 - *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*

Elijah finished his earthly life by being caught up to Heaven in a whirlwind -

2 Kings 2:11 - *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

This story contains some valuable lessons for us.

THERE REALLY IS A LIFE TO COME.

There is a life beyond this life - death does not end all!. Even reason rejects the idea that man, created in the image of God, should live for a brief few years upon this earth, develop his personality and powers of intellect and then snuff out like a candle. But revelation, given to us in God's Word, makes us sure.

For the Christian, death is but the entrance into a higher, fuller, better life.

For the non-Christian, too, death does not end it all. Read the solemn words of -

Hebrews 9:27 - *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

Elijah was walking and talking with Elisha, when, suddenly "he went up by a whirlwind.....". Where to?

2 Kings 2:1 - *And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.*

2 Kings 2:11 - *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

But, hundreds of years later, Elijah appeared and talked to the Lord Jesus.

Mark. 9:2-4 - *And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured*

before them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

So Elijah was, and is, still alive.

EVERY SERVANT OF GOD, WHOEVER HE MAY BE AND HOWEVER IMPORTANT HIS WORK, MUST EVENTUALLY REST FROM HIS LABOURS.

Even Elijah came to the end of his earthly span of service. There were very few witnesses on the earth in those days. Good men were scarce, yet Elijah had to go!

We are apt only to look at the earthly service of believers and to forget that our earthly ministry is only a preparation for our service in the ages to come!

Revelation 22:3 - *And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:*

3. IN ELIJAH'S TRANSLATION, WE HAVE AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE WAY IN WHICH A GENERATION OF BELIEVERS WILL BE RAPTURED INTO HEAVEN.

2 Kings 2:11 - *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

tells us exactly what took place. He went to Heaven without dying. And there are millions of people who will go to be with the Lord without ever passing through the grave.

The two New Testament passages which deal with this are: -

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 - *Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

52 *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

53 *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

54 *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

14 *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

15 *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

16 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

17 *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

18 *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

Like Elijah, we may not die. Even if we do, as Elisha did -

2 Kings 13:20 - *And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.*

our bodies will be raised. We shall be raptured, translated, with the living, and “so shall we ever be with the Lord”.

Many today are skeptical about this revealed truth. Even the college students of Elijah’s day were skeptical about Elijah’s translation into the presence of God. Compare -

2 Kings. 2:16-18 - *And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.*

17 *And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.*

18 *And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?*

2 Peter 3:3-4 - *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*

4 *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

4. THE TIME, THE MANNER AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR HOME-GOING ARE IN THE HANDS OF OUR LOVING HEAVENLY FATHER.

Why do we emphasize this? Because Elijah, some ten years previously, had actually prayed to die.

1 Kings 19:4 - *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.*

It is a good thing that our prayers are not always answered in the way we want! They are always answered, either with God's "Yes", "No", or "Wait". When Elijah prayed to die, the answer was "No", for God had ten more years of service for him.

Have you ever prayed to die? Remember the glorious truth of the first six words of -

Psalms 31:15 - *My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.*

God's way is always best! He knows, He loves, He cares, and He always gives the very best to His children. We shall go to be "with Christ, which is far better", in God's time, not a moment before and not a moment after.

Philippians 1:23 - *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.*

5. ALTHOUGH GOD TAKES AWAY HIS SERVANTS, HIS WORK GOES ON.

Immediately Elijah laid down his mantle, Elisha took it up and carried on the work. You see:

The work we do is God's work, not ours.

This is beautifully illustrated in Elisha's smiting the waters (just as Elijah had done).

2 Kings 2:8 - *And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.*

2 Kings 2:14 - *And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.*

and seeing God work in supernatural power, so much so, the sons of the prophets exclaimed -

2 Kings 2:15 - *And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.*

Not one of us is indispensable.

We like to think we are. We say, "What would happen if I were taken?" Well, what would happen? The Lord would choose someone else to carry on His work. Indeed, He has that someone else already being prepared for the task.

6. SOMETIMES GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE CERTAIN INDICATIONS THAT THE
 END OF THEIR EARTHLY COURSE IS NEAR AT HAND.

Elijah knew that shortly the Lord would take him. Elisha also knew. So did the college students of Bethel and Jericho and those who gathered on the banks of Jordan.

2 Kings 2:3-7 - *And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.*

4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

As we grow older, we must realize that the time of our sojourning on earth is getting shorter. Also, by the law of averages, some of us who are still comparatively young and energetic, may soon have to leave this earth. Yet others among God's people know that their days are numbered because of bodily sickness or rapidly-failing powers.

7. WE SHOULD ANTICIPATE OUR HOME-GOING AND PREPARE
 ACCORDINGLY.

We must first put our whole trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His precious blood.

Ephesians 1:6-7 - *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Having done this, how should our last hours be occupied? Look at this story of Elijah for the answer.

1. It seems that he had a great desire to be alone and in solitary communion with his Lord. Three times he asked Elisha to leave him -

2 Kings 2:2-6 - *And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel.*

3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

How natural to want to be alone with his Lord! Oh, Christian -

Amos 4:12 - *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

2. He carried on with his work just in the normal day-to-day way. It seems he just went on, one step at a time, in communion with the Lord, seeking to do His will and being ready when the call should come.
3. He was determined to do all the good he could in the short time left to him. He visited the colleges and encouraged the students.

2 Kings 2:3 - *And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.*

2 Kings 2:5 - *And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.*

2 Kings 2:7 - *And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.*

What a ministry! Read **1 Timothy 1:1-13**.

- d. His faith and trust in God were as vital and as powerful at the end as at any time previously. Why, just before he went to Heaven, he took his mantle, divided Jordan, and passed over.*

2 Kings 2:8 - *And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.*

Sometimes when God's people "retire", they get slack, but not this man!

5. He longed to leave a blessing behind him.

2 Kings 2:9 - *And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.*

tells us this, the important words being, "before I be taken away from thee.....".

By God's grace, we can all leave behind us a legacy of love, of virtue and of constant Christian living.

Closing Thought:

Hebrews 6:10-12 - *For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

11 And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

WHERE IS THE LORD GOD OF ELIJAH

STUDY 10

Scripture Portions: 2 Kings 2:14-17; Luke 9:28-36

Elisha was Elijah's successor. For nine years he had understudied and worked with his master. Now Elijah had gone. One question burned in Elisha's mind as he took up Elijah's mantle and walked to the bank of Jordan.

"Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

2 Kings 2:14 - *And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.*

"Is Elijah's God with me? Is He still the same? That is the one thing that matters!"

To seek positive evidence that God was with him, Elisha struck the waters with the mantle. Immediately they were divided.

2 Kings 2:14 - *And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.*

The onlookers saw the power of God.

2 Kings 2:15 - *And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.*

God was indeed with Elisha!

What is the lesson for us?

God is still the same. His power is undiminished. His servants may die, times may change, but He remains. He is our God; with us today.

Hebrews 13:8 - *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*

1. ELIJAH'S GOD IS OUR GOD.

What does this mean in a practical sense?

It means that the Lord God who kept Elijah faithful when most of the nation had turned aside, can keep us faithful and loyal.

Throughout his ministry, he was surrounded by apostasy.

He was in contact with Ahab and Jezebel. He experienced loneliness, self-pity, and discouragement. Yet, through God's power, he was kept true to the end.

Do you wonder if you can remain true to the Lord? Remember - Elijah's God is your God and He will never fail you.

Hebrews 13:5-6 - *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

Compare with -

Philippians 1:6 - *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

2 Timothy 4:18 - *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Jude 24 - *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*

It means that the Lord God who fed Elijah, supplying his temporal needs, can supply our every need.

He sent bread and flesh when he was by the brook Cherith - **1 Kings 17:2-7.**

He sent meal and oil for the household at Zarephath - **1 Kings 17:8-16.**

Can He do that for us? Yes! **Matthew 6:25-34.**

It means that the Lord who worked miracles for and through Elijah will work miracles for and through us.

1 Kings 17:1-6 - *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.*

2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

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

5 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.

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

1 Kings 17:8-16 - *And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,*

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

10 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.

11 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.

12 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.

13 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.

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.

1 Kings 17:17-23 - *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.*

18 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?

19 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.

20 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?

21 *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.*

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

23 *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.*

1 Kings 18:36-38 - *And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.*

37 *Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.*

38 *Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*

1 Kings 19:5-7 - *And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.*

6 *And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.*

7 *And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.*

2 Kings 1:9-12 - *Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.*

10 *And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*

11 *Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.*

12 *And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*

2 Kings 2:8 - *And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.*

2 Kings 2:11 - *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

Has God altered?

No! He can and He does still perform miracles.

It means that the Lord God who answered Elijah's prayers is ready and willing to answer ours.

James 5:16-18 - *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

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.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

These verses emphasize that God answers the earnest and sincere prayer of any believing Christian. The illustration given as to the kind of prayer God will answer is of Elijah's praying that it might not rain, then praying again that it would! Does God still answer prayer like this? He does. Elijah's God is our God!

e. It means that the Lord God who was so gracious and kind to His sick, overwrought servant, will deal just as lovingly and tenderly with us.

Let us be slow to condemn Elijah. He did fail - but so do we. The same God who was so gracious and forgiving, and restored Elijah, will deal with us just as graciously.

2. ELIJAH'S GOD IS OUR GOD.

When do we especially need to be reminded of this?

1. When we have experienced the sorrow of separation and bereavement.

Elisha knew Elijah was to leave him. That did not lessen the blow when it actually happened.

When bereavement comes to us, perhaps more than at any other time, we need to experience the power, presence and sufficiency of our God. Elijah's God, the mighty, comforting God, is our God.

2. When we are about to undertake some new responsibility in service.

Elisha was now commencing his ministry as Elijah's successor. The responsibility was great. He felt his own inadequacy and insufficiency for the task - but God was the same!

The God who has so wonderfully used His servants all down the ages, is with us to bless and to use us.

c. When we are confronted by obstacles and problems which defy human solution.

Elisha faced the Jordan. Elijah had crossed it by performing a miracle. Would God do the same for him? Yes!

And the same miracle-working God will give us grace to overcome our obstacles and solve our problems.

3. When we are surrounded by infidels, skeptics and enemies of the Lord. Elisha had to face the skepticism of the sons of the prophets -

2 Kings 2:16-18 - *And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.*

17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

the mockery of the young men -

2 Kings 2:23-25 - *And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.*

24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

25 And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

He needed to know the mighty God of Elijah was on his side. Are you scoffed at and mocked because you are a Christian?

Encourage yourself that Elijah's God is your God.

e. When we need to let others see that our faith is working.

Picture Elisha smiting the waters with the mantle and asking, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" What was the reaction of the watching college students to the mighty demonstration of the power of God? Read -

2 Kings 2:15 - *And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.*

The world is waiting to see visible evidence that God is alive and active. When unbelieving and skeptical men and women see the power of God operating in the lives of His people and in His Church, then they will fall at His feet in worship and faith. That will be revival.

Closing Thought:

Psalm 48:14 - *For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.*