



## *Correspondent's Corner*

### **Elijah, a Prophet for a Time Not Unlike Ours**

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The Old Testament prophet Elijah enters the narrative of the Bible in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings chapter 17. The historical setting for Elijah is around 910 b. c. The political setting is when Israel is

divided into the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. These two divisions of Israel do not get along too well to say the least. James 5:17-18 gives us some insight into the character of Elijah. James writes that Elijah was a lot like us in that he had concerns and feelings about things he cared about in life. His communion with God was reflected in his prayer life. James writes also that Elijah prayed earnestly and God withheld the necessary rains for Israel's crops to grow and then after three and one half years he prayed again and it rained and the earth brought forth its fruit. Jesus in Luke 4:24-26 speaks of Elijah in the days of 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17:1-24. Jesus spoke to those of the city of Nazareth, where he grew up, that "no prophet is accepted in his own country". The city of Nazareth was about to try and throw Jesus over a cliff. Jesus mentioned that Elijah had prayed that the rains would be withheld from Israel and as a result there was a great famine throughout the whole land.

Jesus also spoke of the widow that Elijah stayed with part of the time of the famine and that her needs were met in a miraculous way. So we go back to the portion in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17. We read that Elijah spoke to Ahab the king of the Northern tribes of Israel. Elijah had obviously been a man of much fervent prayer about the condition of Israel in the sight of God. When Elijah came before Ahab he told him, "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

At this point God tells Elijah to go hide by a brook named Cherith and Elijah obeyed God. God also told Elijah that he should drink from the brook and God promised that the ravens would feed him there. So that is what happened to sustain Elijah for some time. The scriptures say that the ravens brought Elijah bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening. We read that eventually the brook dried up because there was no rain in the land.

Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah again and directed him to go to Zarephath where a widow would sustain him. So Elijah went to Zarephath and found the widow that would sustain him through the famine. When he found the widow she was about to prepare the last meal for she and her son as her food supply was almost gone. Elijah asked the widow for a little food but she said that she didn't have enough for someone else. She did eventually

prepare what she had and shared it with Elijah but God had miraculously replaced the food and that went on for the duration of the famine and their needs were met.

During the famine the widow's son died and Elijah took him to his room and brought the son back to her alive. These were amazing things that God did but the God of the Bible is not limited to what we see as possibilities.

The work of Jesus on the cross is the single most amazing work that has been done. The scriptures tell us that God laid on him the iniquity of us all while Jesus was suffering on the cross in the darkness. We have no idea of the depths of his suffering for our sins. Peter in his 1<sup>st</sup> letter gave us these words "For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:18. We have been going through a "famine like" time but God's love for us has not changed. May we find strength and help from God and draw strength from him.

Sincerely, *John Eggers*

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