

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 8 (February 19-25, 2017)

The material we will study this week comes from the life of Elijah. These are some of my favorite Scriptures to use during revivals. I omitted printed texts to allow more room for commentary. (Reprinted and updated from week 26, 2013)

Sunday, February 19 (read 1 Kings 17:1-6)

Elijah prophesies during the reign of the evil King Ahab who is married to the even more evil Queen Jezebel. God tells his prophet to inform Ahab that there would be no rain or dew for the next few years (v. 1). Because he is obedient to the message he has received from God, Elijah hears the word of the Lord informing him that he is to be cared for in a special place prepared for him (v. 2-3). (I have seen this area in Israel. It is a tiny oasis in the midst of a barren valley prepared by God for this special occasion.) The provisions will not be steak and baked potatoes, but rather **garbage** brought to him morning and evening by the crows (v. 4-6). More than likely, the crows set the food on a rock while they drink from the brook. This does not line up to many modern messages promising air-conditioned doghouses and condominiums, but it does line up to Philippians 4:19.

Monday, February 20 (read 1 Kings 17:7-11)

Most Christians spend their entire journey on this earth surviving instead of **thriving**. Seldom do we move to another stage in our spiritual lives until “the brook dries up” where we are living (v. 7). God commands Elijah to leave his comfort zone where bread, meat and water have been supplied and go to Zaraphath of Sidon. This is the home country of Jezebel, for goodness sakes! Would he have obeyed if the brook had not dried up? More importantly, would you have followed God to your next assignment unless something happened to “dry up the brook” of your comfort zone? God has gone ahead of His prophet and commanded a poor widow to provide for His chosen man. Elijah knows this because he hears, believes and trusts the Word of God (v. 8-9). By God’s foreknowledge and guidance, Elijah meets the chosen woman as he arrives in Zaraphath and requests some water and bread (v. 10-11). We will follow this wonderful example of God’s constant provisions in tomorrow’s study.

Tuesday, February 21 (read 1 Kings 17:12-16)

Most of us have no trouble dipping into the “community wells” such as food banks and clothes closets when a stranger is in need. We often falter, however, when the needs of the stranger cause us to take inventory of our **personal supply** (v. 12). The requested bread will take away the last hope the widow has to provide for her son (v. 12). Elijah uses one of the 365 expressions of “Don’t be afraid” in God’s Word to reassure her that the Lord will supply all her needs (v. 13-14; see also Philippians 4:19). This pagan widow lady obeys God’s Word through Elijah and finds out that His promises are true and personal (v. 15-16). Have you discovered the same truth? If not, begin today to claim and pray His promises found in His Word. Examples to get you started can be found on our website (2020visionministries.org) under the heading “Praying God’s Promises.”

Wednesday, February 22 (read 1 Kings 17:17-24)

Many people do not understand that those who serve God will still experience troubles and heartaches (see John 16:33). They do not realize that God uses these “bumps in the road” to bring us closer to Him. The widow lady has seen the miracle of God concerning her flour and oil, but she is not ready to trust Him with the life of her son (v. 17-18). Elijah takes the dead child to his room and lays him on the bed (v. 19). Then he calls out in prayer to the God he serves. He follows this by performing the first artificial respiration while he cries out to the Lord (v. 20-21). God works the miracle and Elijah has the joy of presenting the child back to his mother (v. 22-23). Why does God allow heartaches? The first three words in v. 24 will answer the question: “**Now I know.**” Each event that our Lord allows is intended for the purpose of bringing us to those three words! Are you allowing Him to bring you into total trust of His Word?

Thursday, February 23 (read 1 Kings 18:1-15)

In the third year of the drought, God sends Elijah back to Ahab to announce an upcoming rainstorm (v. 1-2). The story then shifts to Ahab’s servant, Obadiah, who is a secret worshiper of the true God (v. 2-6). Elijah meets Obadiah and commands the king’s servant to inform his boss that the prophet of God wants to meet with him (v. 7-8). Obadiah protests, thinking the Spirit of God may call Elijah away before he returns with Ahab, and the king would take his anger out on him (v. 9-12). Then Obadiah says, “Haven’t you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the Lord” (v. 13)? The Bible says, “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips” (Proverbs 27:2). Many good deeds go unrewarded by God because the doer seeks his own glory (see Matthew 6:1-4). We will follow the story tomorrow.

Friday, February 24 (read 1 Kings 18:16-21)

Ahab follows Obadiah to the designated place and promptly blames the nation’s troubles on Elijah (v. 16-17). God’s man points out that the **real** reason for this disaster is the worship of false gods and goddesses led by Ahab and Jezebel (v. 18). Elijah then commands the godless king to a showdown on Mount Carmel. He wants all the false prophets of Baal and Asherah to come to the mountain to prove once and for all which God is real (v. 19). Are you thinking, “What does that have to do with modern day America?” Thanks for asking! The characteristics of Baal worship combined with Asherah worship include the following: 1) sexual permissiveness, 2) sexual perversion, 3) greed, 4) violence, and 5) strong female leadership and weak male leadership. Are these prevalent in our country? Is it time for another showdown?

Saturday, February 25 (read 1 Kings 18:20-21)

When the people and the false prophets arrive at Mount Carmel, Elijah asks them a vital question: “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him” (v. 20-21). The non-response at the end of v. 21 is exactly what I am seeing in today’s world: “But the people said nothing.” When will we leave our politically correct status and take a stand for the one true God? We are coming to a crossroads in our country (see Jeremiah 6:16). Are you willing to stand up for Jesus and His Word? I encourage you to read Matthew 10:32-33 before answering that question. We will complete this study in week 9.