

1 Kings 17

The Struggle for Israel's Soul

Lesson 12

The center section of Kings provides the focal point of the books. 1 Kings 16:23 through 2 Kings 13:25 cover almost a century of political history. During that time, the writer not only emphasized the kings but also the prophetic ministry of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Together, these two men of God hold in check the evil kings of Israel and the pagan religious systems they used to draw God's people away from Him.

Elijah and the Ravens

1. Elijah, the greatest prophet since Moses, appeared in scripture unannounced. We have no prior knowledge of this powerful man of God until his confrontation with King Ahab. Where was Elijah's home? (1 Kings 17:1a)
2. When he came into King Ahab's presence who did Elijah say he served? (vs. 1b)
3. After setting the record straight, Elijah brought a message to Ahab. What did he say? (vs. 1c)
4. After delivering his brief message, Elijah left the palace at Samaria. Somewhere along the way God spoke to Elijah and gave him specific and detailed instructions. Where was Elijah to go and what was he to do? (vs. 2-4)
5. Why do you think God told Elijah to go there?
6. Elijah did as the Lord said. How and what did the Lord use to provide for Elijah? (vs. 5, 6)

The Widow at Zerephath

7. "Sometime later, the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land." God spoke to Elijah again giving more specific instructions. Where was Elijah to go next? (vs. 7-9)
8. Elijah obeyed the Lord and went where he had been directed. Who was at the town gate when he arrived? (vs. 10)

9. Stop at this point and reflect upon the situation. What are the facts as we know them?

Verse	Fact Given
1	
7	
9	
10	

10. Who else was from Sidon? (1 Kings 16:30, 31)
11. One more fact, if this widow was from Sidon, what would we assume her religious beliefs to be? (1 Kings 16:31)
12. Elijah made a request of this woman. What did he ask for? (vs. 10, 11)
13. She answered him by taking an oath in whose name? (vs. 12a)
14. Please comment on what that says to you about her.
15. She laid out the facts of her current situation and what she anticipated her future to be. Please explain the situation as she saw it. (vs. 12)
16. Knowing the facts, Elijah gave her a challenge that required both faith and action. What was the challenge? (vs. 13, 14)
17. What was her answer to his challenge? (vs. 15a)
18. And what was God's answer to what we'd call her "stepping out in faith"? (vs. 15b, 16)

19. Sometime later her son died. Who did she blame for his death and why? (vs. 17, 18)

20. Elijah was deeply moved by the death and interceded with the Lord on her behalf. What does that tell you about Elijah's relationship with God?

21. How did he go about intercession? (vs.19-21)

22. What was God's answer to Elijah's unusual request? (vs. 22)

Try to put yourself at the scene. The widow was in deep sorrow and in mourning. Life was already bitterly hard but there had still been hope because she had a son. Without a son, there was no future and no hope for her. She reacted as many do-- by blaming God (and Elijah) for her sorrow and loss. Culturally she would have been in a torn black dress with ashes on her head. She would have been expressing her sorrow by rocking back and forth and wailing out loud. She eventually realized that Elijah had returned from his upper room. Maybe she expected words of consolation or comfort. She certainly dared not hope her son would be brought back to life. That had never been done!

23. Imagine the scene as Elijah presented to her the boy and said, "*Look, your son is alive!*" What was her amazed response? (vs. 24)

24. What lessons do you think the widow learned that day?

25. What do you think Elijah learned that day?

26. What can you learn from this story of the widow, Elijah and God?