

*If you could build a small package, something small enough to carry in your coat pocket, a machine which would instantly start and stop, in which you could instantly reverse yourself or go forward, which would require no batteries or other energy sources, and which would provide you with full information on an entire civilization, what would you have? A book! (Isaac Asimov)*

But if that book is the Bible! We have endless resources for living, for we have the Word of God. We can say with the widow, **Now I know that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.** We are not to be superstitious about Bible reading. There is no magic in the Bible or in the mechanical reading of the Bible. The written Word points to the Living Word. It says, “Go to Jesus.” If we do not go to the Jesus to whom it points, we miss the whole purpose of Bible reading.

*There was no gymnasium on the seminary campus. The students played basketball in a nearby public school. The janitor, an old black man with white hair, would wait patiently until the seminarians had finished playing, sitting there reading his Bible. One day one of the students asked him, “What are you reading?” The man did not simply reply, “The Bible.” Instead he answered, “The Book of Revelation.” Surprised the student asked, “The Book of Revelation? Do you understand it?” “Oh yes,” said the old man, “I understand it.” “You understand the Book of Revelation! What does it mean?” Very quietly that old janitor answered, “It means that Jesus is gonna win.”*

God’s endless resources bring us to faith and bring faith to maturity. Ask and you shall receive. Ask and you will see God’s salvation and be filled with the light of the Divine glory.

## CONCLUSION

A little boy called Oliver Twist once asked for more food. He did not get it, even though he did not only want it but *needed* it. Elijah needed protection – and got it. He needed support – and got it. He and the widow and her family needed and discovered God’s endless resources; they discovered *life*. Can I have some more? Yes. Jesus said, **I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly.**

## CAN I HAVE SOME MORE?

**1 Kings 17:1-24**

### INTRODUCTION

*A man came down from the North Carolina mountains. He was all dressed up and carrying his Bible. A friend saw him and asked, “Elias, what’s happening? Where are you going all dressed up like that?” Elias said, “I’ve been hearing about New Orleans. I hear that there is a lot of free-runnin’ liquor and a lot of gamblin’ and a lot of real naughty shows.” The friend looked him over and said, “But Elias, why are you carrying your Bible?” And Elias replied, “Well, if it’s as good as they say it is, I might stay over until Sunday.”*

For some, the danger is they think they can keep God and their faith just for Sunday. Others look for a god who will let them do just what they want and make no demands on the way they live. This was the situation in Israel when Ahab was king, Jezebel was queen. God sent a man who would be one of the greatest of all the prophets – Elijah – who had some stern words for the king and the nation.

### RESOURCES TO PROTECT

If ever a prophet needed protecting, that was Elijah. He has burst upon the scene at a time of apostasy. King Ahab of Israel, influenced by his foreign queen was leading the country away from God to the worship of Baal. Israel had broken its covenant relationship with the Lord. Confronting the king, Elijah announces that God is going to withhold dew and rain for the next several years. The drought had already been going on for six months when Elijah confronted Ahab. It was no idle threat. But Ahab was a strong king. He was an able soldier. His marriage to Jezebel, whose father was king of Tyre, had given him a strong ally. We are not told Ahab’s reaction, but presumably he could have ordered Elijah’s death for insurrection. Once Elijah’s message was delivered, God sent him away, where the king could not find him.

*1 Kin 17:3* <sup>3</sup>“Go from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan.

East of the Jordan is the land of Gilead, Elijah’s home territory. There in one of the wild ravines the prophet is safe. There is still water in the wadi and God is going to supply bread and meat. Elijah went away to the wadi Cherith in obedience to the **word of the Lord**. Elijah’s safety depended on his obedience to God’s word. Christ is the Word made flesh. He calls us to be his friends, but he asks us to obey him. **You are my friends if you do what I command you.**

At the wadi Cherith, Elijah has water to drink and God sends ravens with bread and meat to feed his prophet. According to the law, ravens

were unclean birds. Here we see the freedom and sovereignty of God. To protect and look after his servant God will do all that is necessary. He will even use creatures that are ritually unclean to bring about his purposes. Elijah is safe. Even if Ahab had discovered where he was he would have thought that no-one could survive in such a hostile region. God would protect another prophet, Jonah – in the belly of a fish. He would protect Daniel in a lions' den. Economic crises, threat to liberty, spiritual apostasy; in them all God is still Sovereign. Do you think he will fail you who are faithful?

## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT.

**There shall be neither dew nor rain these years.** Eventually the water in the stream dried up. Under Ahab and Jezebel the nation had turned to serving the god Baal. Baal was the storm god who brings rain: water to sustain life on earth. When there is drought, it was believed that death had been victorious and that Baal is dead. Then the water in the wadi dried up. It was a way of saying that what you think Baal provides has ended. The bread and the meat brought by the ravens continues. Elijah would not have believed that he water was provided by Baal and neither must we. There was a drought. Water was becoming scarce. God continues to look after his prophet. He sends him to Zarephath, a town in Sidon, north of Israel. **I have commanded a widow there to feed you.** The Sovereign God is still at work. He acts even beyond the borders of Israel, using a Gentile, a worshipper of foreign gods. Jesus refers to this in his sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth. There were many poor widows in Israel, but Elijah was sent to none of them, but to a foreign land and a foreign woman.

For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of our mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind. (*F W Faber*)

Arriving at the city gate, Elijah sees the widow gathering wood to make a fire and cook her last meal. He asks her for a drink of water. As she is turning to go he adds that he would like her to bring him something to eat. She tells him she has little enough for herself and her son. Elijah says she is to go and make her meal, but make a little loaf of bread for him first.

*1 Kin 17:14* <sup>14</sup>For thus says the LORD the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the LORD sends rain on the earth.”

And so it was. Elijah stayed with her and he, the widow and her son always had enough food. The Sovereign God is free to act beyond the

borders of Israel, even through Gentile worshippers of foreign gods. Although not a believer in the Lord God of Israel she is the recipient of God's provision. It must have been a great comfort to the woman and a strengthening of Elijah's faith in God's providence. God who can direct ravens to bring food in a desolate wadi can also create faith in the widow's heart. God's provision is available to all who believe whether Jew or Gentile.

*Shortly after Dallas Theological Seminary was founded in 1924, it almost came to the point of bankruptcy. The creditors met with the president to pray that God would provide. In that prayer meeting was a man by the name of Harry Ironside. When it was his turn to pray, he prayed, "Lord, we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are Thine. Please sell some of them and send us the money." While they were praying, a Texan came into the business office and said, "I just sold a herd of cattle in Ft. Worth. I've been trying to make a business deal but it fell through, and I feel compelled to give the money to the seminary. I don't know if you need it or not, but here's the check!" The secretary took the check and, knowing how critical things were financially, went quietly into the room where the prayer meeting was being held. She gave the check to the president who recognized the name of the cattleman in Ft. Worth, and turning to Dr. Ironside said, "Harry, God sold the cattle!"*

Jesus provided health and healing for lepers who did not even say, 'thank you,' except a Samaritan; for the servant of a Roman centurion who did not feel worthy even to let Jesus come under his roof; for a Jewish girl whose father was a ruler of the synagogue. Jesus provided the best wine ever tasted for wedding guests who had already had too much to drink. God's universal love reaches beyond the boundaries of nationality, ethnicity, and even religious affiliation.

## ENDLESS RESOURCES.

After a while the widow's son died. It seems she felt guilty and blamed Elijah. **"What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!"** We do not know what her sin was. Elijah does not ask her or even mention it. He takes the boy to his room and prays and prays. **"O LORD my God, let this child's life come into him again."** God hears and answers his servant. God does not only provide material benefits, water, bread and meat, and food for the duration of the drought. He is the God of Life. Jesus said, **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.** Elijah returned the living boy to his mother. She is convinced. Elijah really is a man of God and all that he says are the words of God and she knows them to be true.