

I. INTRODUCTION

Whenever we meet economic difficulties or social unrest, many people (including devoted Christians) suffer feelings of insecurity. Let us discuss these feelings openly today, and study a passage which will help us cope with such feelings.

BACKGROUND: *The nation of Israel, with Ahab as king, had departed from the true God to worship Baal. The people who worshipped the true God were persecuted by Ahab and his foreign wife Jezebel. To teach them a lesson, God stopped the rain and dew for three years, which naturally caused a famine.*

II. BIBLE READING

1 Kings 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word." 2 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: 3 "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. 4 You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there." 5 So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. 7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the LORD came to him: 9 "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" 11 As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread." 12 "As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread— only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it— and die." 13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.'" 15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah. (NIV)

III. DISCUSSION

A. Elijah Fed By Ravens (vv. 1-6)

1. What declaration did Elijah make to King Ahab? (v. 1) If this is true, upon whom will the lives of all soon depend?
2. Once the drought and resultant famine begin, Ahab will make diligent search for Elijah (see 18:10). Put yourself in Elijah's position. Will you be scared that Ahab might harm you? Will you worry about where to find food and water for yourself?
3. By stopping the rain and dew for three years, what was God trying to show Ahab and the people?
4. What provision did God make to keep His servant hidden for the next two years? (vv. 2-6)

B. Elijah Fed By The Widow (vv. 7-16)

1. What happened to the brook? (v. 7) Imagine yourself to be Elijah. How would you have felt as you come to the brook each day and find the water receding by the day.
2. When did God send Elijah his next set of instructions? What did He tell Elijah to do? (v. 9) If you were Elijah, having seen the brook dry up and God sends you to a widow to feed you, how would you have reacted? How did Elijah respond? (v. 10)
3. Some people may feel that they cannot identify with Elijah in this and the previous section, because Elijah was a great prophet and they are but “ordinary Christians”. But surely they can identify with the widow. If you were the widow, how would you have felt when Elijah made the request in v.13? What were the factors that made it difficult for the widow to comply with request? However, in spite of all these difficulties, she obeyed. Why?
4. If you were in her situation, would you have obeyed? Why or why or not? How is this a reflection of how well you know the real God? If a person really knows God, not just in his mind but experiencing Him in his life, he will naturally trust God. Cite examples from the relationship between an earthly father and child to show that this is true.
5. What happened when the widow followed Elijah’s instructions? (vv. 15, 16) Do you think the widow’s faith was increased upon seeing the miracle? What lesson can we learn from her?
6. Notice that the Lord did not promise her affluence (that is, suddenly fill up the jar of flour to overflowing) but that she and her loved one will *not starve*. In other words, her basic needs will be met, day-by-day. What other promises of our Lord can you recall from the Bible that reinforces this?

Reflection: How secure do I feel?

IV. CONCLUSION

Our God is a mighty God. He has promised that He will take care of our basic needs. If we truly have faith in Him and obey, He will carry us through.