INTRODUCTION:

By the 9th century BCE, the Kingdom of Israel, once united under King Solomon, was divided into the northern Kingdom of Israel and southern Kingdom of Judah, which retained the historic seat of government and focus of the Israelite religion at the Temple in Jerusalem.

All of the kings of Israel from Jeroboam to Omri made policies that were contrary to the laws of Moses,

• They intended to turn religious focus away from Jerusalem:
• Encouraged the building of local temple altars for sacrifices,
• Appointing priests from outside the family of the Levites,
• Allowed or encouraged temples dedicated to the Canaanite god, Baal. (Baal was the local nature deity responsible for rain, thunder, lightning, and dew.)

I Kings 16:29-33 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

King Omri achieved security for Northern Israel with a marriage alliance between his son Ahab and Princess Jezebel,

• She was a priestess of Baal and the daughter of the king of Sidon in Phoenicia.
• These solutions brought security and economic prosperity to Israel for a time,
• But did not bring peace with the Israelite prophets, who were interested in a strict interpretation of and obedience of Mosaic law.

King, Ahab made these matters worse.

• Ahab allowed the worship of a foreign god within the king’s palace,
• Building a temple for Baal
• And allowing Jezebel to bring a large number of priests and prophets of Baal and Asherah into the country.
It is in this context, or background, that Elijah appears in 1 Kings 17:1 as Elijah "The Tishbite."

- No introduction is given to this man who was one of the greatest prophets in the Bible.
- Nothing is known of his origins or background—similar to Melchizedek.
- His name, Elijah, "Yahweh is God," may be a name applied to him because of his challenge to Baal worship.
- Even the title of "the Tishbite" is problematic, as there is no reference from that period to a town or village of Tishbe.
- He didn't come from a family of prophets.
- There is no indication that he had connections that would have granted him an audience with Ahab, the king of Israel;
- He just went boldly to the king and pronounced that there would be years of catastrophic drought so severe that not even dew will fall.
- This was in contrast to Israel’s worship of Baal, their deity whom, they said, was responsible for rain, thunder, lightning, and dew. He warns Ahab that there will be, because Ahab and his queen stand at the end of a line of kings of Israel who are said to have "done evil in the sight of the Lord."

DIRECTION FROM THE LORD – INSTRUCTION

1 Kings 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.”

James 5:16-18 and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Jesus Lk. 4:25 in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land;

Who did this man think he was? What gave him such authority, confidence and boldness?

- The answer is that he had a relationship with God, heard from Him and had faith in Him. That's what put him in control.
- Any person with a true knowledge of God and faith in Him has the authority to be in control if they will just exercise their authority.
• James said that *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours*. James 5:16-18

• Elijah had the courage to step out in the supernatural because he had a relationship with God.

Each true believer has a connection with God.

• We can know God’s nature, hear from Him and trust Him and boldly speak out His truths.

• If Elijah had not been bold enough to speak out before the drought, when it did occur, Ahab would not have associated it with a judgment from God.

• It would have been easy to dismiss it as just one of those things that happens.

• Since Elijah prophesied the drought before it came to pass, there was no doubt that God was the author of this drought and that Elijah was the instrument He used to bring it to pass.

The Lord has a perfect plan for each one of us. As Jeremiah 29:11 says, "*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*"

• God has a plan, and He is faithful to reveal that plan to all who seek Him, but more often than not, we play it too safe.

• We have dreams and goals from God, but we are afraid to make more than token steps toward them because of what it may cost us.

• The faint-hearted never become anyone's hero. It's risky to do what God lays on your heart.

A PLACE CALLED “THERE”

God knew that Elijah's obedience to Him put Elijah's life in jeopardy, so in verses 2-4, God spoke to Elijah again.

Verse 2-4 *Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.’”*

• Being obedient to God puts us in a position to receive His supernatural supply.

• Isa. 1:19 *If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land*

• Phil. 1:6 . . . *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it . . .*

• One of the reasons so few people experience supernatural provision is because they aren't doing what God has told them to do.

• There is no need for God to supply our needs when we are not expecting or doing anything that requires more than what *we can produce*. 
The Wilderness: Why, then, did God have him flee to the wilderness? Surely there would be cities in which Elijah could be safe. I think God was preparing him for greater things:

- First, in the wilderness he was safe from the temptation to intercede with God on behalf of a pleading people. This would harden him to do what needed to be done later.
- He also needed to learn God’s providence. The ravens brought him no stockpile; he learned to live from one meal to the next.
- I suspect he also learned the difference between necessity and desire. The prophets of Baal probably dined in higher style than Elijah. Elijah was fed as befits a servant of God, not in luxury but in necessity.

This is the real point of this story. God is shaping the man Elijah to do great things, and he is doing so by adversity. It is interesting how this part of the story ends: the brook dries up. Elijah could probably see this coming, but note that the brook dries up before God tells him what to do. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof – and one test leads to another.

One of the great lessons to learn from Elijah's life is that God didn't send Elijah's provision directly to him; He sent the provision to where He told Elijah to go. The blessing was "THERE".

- In verse 4, God said he had commanded the ravens to feed him "THERE". "THERE" was beside the brook Cherith.
- If he would have stayed where he was, he may have starved, not because God wasn't faithful to provide, but because he wasn't "THERE".
- The ravens were already in transit with Elijah's first meal when the Lord spoke to him. Verse four says, "I HAVE commanded" (emphasis mine). The bread and meat would have been deposited at the brook Cherith regardless of whether Elijah appeared.
- Unless Elijah obeyed, he wouldn't have benefited from God's faithfulness and provision

WE HAVE TO BE WHERE GOD WANTS US TO BE TO RECEIVE WHAT HE HAS FOR US

Verses 5-6 So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.

- How do you think Elijah knew the exact place to hide along the brook Cherith?
  - What if he had chosen one place and the Lord had the ravens deliver the food to another place?
  - It is most probable that when Elijah got to the brook Cherith, he found the bread and meat waiting for him. That's how he knew he was in the right place.
I'm convinced that the great love that God has for us always causes Him to supply all our needs.

It's obvious that we don't always receive those provisions, not because God isn't faithful to give, but because we aren't "THERE".

There is a place called "THERE" for all of us, where we act in obedience to what the Lord has called us to do.
   o That's where God's supernatural supply is.
   o The supply is always "THERE", whether we are or not.

Let's talk about the place “THERE” where our provisions are—our financial prosperity.
   o Jesus has told all of us to give and then it shall be given unto us. Luke 6:38
      Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.
   o Until we give, we aren't "THERE" where the promised blessings are.
   o Many Christians are asking for God's help in their finances. His supply is always"THERE".
   o If we don't give, we won't receive. This is not because God hasn't made provision but because we aren't willing to go to that place called "THERE", where we trust God with our finances.

“THERE” involves the amount (tithe), to whom He says to give, and the timing of when to give.
   o “THERE” involves our giving our tithe.
   o It also involves giving WHEN we are prompted to help someone.

THAT PLACE CALLED “THERE” IS NOT A FIXED PLACE.

God's way of providing for Elijah changed.
   o In verse 7, the Scriptures say And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.
   o That, in itself, didn't mean that it was time for Elijah to move. The ravens were still bringing the bread and meat each day, but Elijah needed water too.

BUT, ELIJAH DIDN’T MOVE UNTIL THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO HIM

Notice that Elijah didn't do anything until the word of the Lord came to him again.
   o Verse 8-9. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”
- We must keep doing what the Lord last told us to do until new instructions come, regardless of our circumstances.

- Sometimes we think we have no choice but to move, even if we haven't heard a word from God.

- After all, didn't Elijah have to leave when the brook dried up? No, he didn't.
  - God had already brought water out of a rock for Moses and all the nation of Israel (Ex. 17:6).
  - God had quenched Samson's thirst by making water come out of the jawbone of an ass (Judg. 15:14-19).
  - God could have given Elijah a supernatural provision of water right there.
  - Circumstances may have caused Elijah to look for an answer, but he didn't move until the word of the Lord came to him.

- The word "THERE" is mentioned twice in verse 9. God wanted Elijah to minister to a widow, so He moved Elijah's "THERE" to where the widow woman was. 9 “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”

**GOD BLESSES OTHERS AS HE BLESSES US**

- Elijah didn't just go "THERE" for himself. He, unknowingly went "THERE" for the widow.
  - He could have found water other places, but he didn’t! He went where the Lord told him to go.
  - Jesus spoke of this woman in Luke 4:25-26 and said that Elijah was specifically sent to this widow. Jesus said, “But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.”

**THE WOMAN ALSO HAD TO BE “THERE” IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME TO RECEIVE HER MIRACLE.**

- Verse 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.”
  - She could have been at home depressed and complaining.
  - She could have said "What's the use; we're going to die," but she didn't.
  - She was "THERE", gathering sticks to prepare and eat her last meal. She was doing what she could.
• Miracles don't come to those who are withdrawn, sulking, and disbelieving.
  o Gathering sticks doesn't sound very important, but if she had been sitting at home in depression, she wouldn't have encountered Elijah and her miracle.
  o We need to use whatever faith we have, even if it is small. This woman was "THERE", doing what she could.
• This woman's response to Elijah's first question gives us some insight into her character. He asked her for a drink of water, and she immediately went to get it for him.
  o How many of us would let a stranger impose on us for a drink of water on a good day? This wasn't a good day for this widow.
  o This looked like it was going to be this woman's and her son's last day on earth, and she was still willing to do for others what she could.
  o This woman was a giver. No doubt, that is partly why the Lord chose her over all the other widows who needed help in this drought.

THIS WOMAN TRUSTED GOD
• Then Elijah asked her for something to eat.
  o Verse 11, And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”
    o She was going to get the water for Elijah without a word of complaint.
    o No doubt, she thought about the dire straits she was in, but she didn't voice it at that time.
• When Elijah asked for bread, she, then, said something.
  o Verse 12, So she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”
• Elijah, then, gave her a word from God. And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.’”
• Remember, Jesus said Elijah was sent to this woman (Luke 4:26). She wasn't just picked at random. Something about her had caught God’s attention!
  o “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” 1 Peter 3:12
IT’S HARD TO RECEIVE GOD’S WORD THROUGH A PERSON

- It's one thing to get a word directly from God, but it's another thing to receive that word through a person, even if they are a minister, or sometimes, especially if they are a minister.
  - There is always the possibility of self-serving being on the part of the person delivering the word which makes it suspect.
  - It actually takes more faith to hear from God through another person than to receive the word yourself.

- Elijah's word was definitely suspect.
  - He wanted to take this little widow woman's last bite of food.
  - She was starving to death, and Elijah told her to fix something for him first.
  - What! I can see the headlines in the Tyre and Sidon Gazette now: "Prophet asks for starving widow's last morsel of food!"
  - But Elijah wasn't asking for himself. Elijah could have eaten at the local restaurant. He could have stayed in the best hotel. He wasn't asking this for himself but for the woman. This woman needed to trust God and get out on the limb of faith. Her limb of faith was believing the word of God through the prophet, that her food would be multiplied.

TRUST BROUGHT RELIEF

Verse 15 So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days.

- She "went away and did " (verse 15) just as Elijah "went and did" what God told him to do (verse 5).
- The results of her faith were that she, her son, and Elijah ate of that food for over three years.

LIVING BY FAITH—DAILY

- The meal and the oil didn't multiply all at once to produce a three-year supply, but every morning, there was just a tiny bit of oil and meal left in the vessels. Each day this woman acted in faith to make their daily bread.
- This was a great miracle, but most of us wouldn't have liked it. We don't want to receive our provision on a daily basis.
  - We want to believe God for a windfall so we can put the extra in the bank and feel secure, but God told us to pray for our daily bread (Matt. 6:11).
  - The just have to live by faith — we don't just visit “THERE” occasionally. It needs to be a daily walk.
GOD DOES MORE THAN WE ASK

Ephesians 3:20 *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,*

The benefits of this woman believing God and His prophet went far beyond just food.

I Kings 17:17-24  *Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elijah, “What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?” And he said to her, “Give me your son.” So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. Then he cried out to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?” And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him.” Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, “See, your son lives!” Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth.”*

- After Elijah had been there a while, the widow’s son died, and she placed a demand on Elijah to do something.
  - Elijah raised her son from the dead.
  - This had never happened before.
  - This was a greater miracle than the oil and meal being multiplied,
  - But none of it would have happened if this woman had not maintained a relationship with God by believing and obeying Him.

THERE ARE OTHER GREAT LESSONS FROM ELIJAH'S LIFE.

- 1 Kings 18:38 Elijah called fire down from heaven and caused a great revival in the nation of Israel.
- Yet in just a matter of hours, Elijah was so depressed that he was asking God to kill him. In these lessons, we will learn why many times our greatest victories are followed by our greatest failures.
- In 1 Kings, chapter 19, God told Elijah to do three things; however, Elijah only did one of those three things—yet he was a man who didn't die but was taken up into heaven by God in a whirlwind.
  - There are some wonderful lessons to learn about how the Lord has never called on anyone who was already qualified to work for Him, yet through their faith in Him great things have been accomplished.
Eph. 1:3 KJV  *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

God blesses us with many spiritual blessings, which are heavenly in their nature. These are all found “IN CHRIST”.

**I AM: “THERE”, “IN CHRIST”**

**I AM ACCEPTED...**

*John 1:12* I am God's child.

*John 15:15* As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ.

*Romans 5:1* I have been justified.

*1 Corinthians 6:17* I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit.

*1 Corinthians 6:19-20* I have been bought with a price and I belong to God.

*1 Cor. 12:27* I am a member of Christ's body.

*Ephesians 1:3-8* I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child.

*Colossians 1:13-14* I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.

*Col. 2:9-10* I am complete in Christ.

*Hebrews 4:14-16* I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ.

**I AM SECURE...**

*Romans 8:1-2* I am free from condemnation.

*Romans 8:28* I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances.

*Romans 8:31-39* I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I cannot be separated from the love of God.

*2 Corinthians 1:21-22* I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.

*Col. 3:1-4* I am hidden with Christ in God.

*Philippians 1:6* I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me.

*Philippians 3:20* I am a citizen of heaven.

*2 Timothy 1:7* I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind.

*1 John 5:18* I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

**I AM SIGNIFICANT...**

*John 15:5* I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life.

*John 15:16* I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.

*1 Corinthians 3:16* I am God's temple.

*2 Corinthians 5:17-21* I am a minister of reconciliation for God.

*Ephesians 2:6* I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm.

*Ephesians 2:10* I am God's workmanship.

*Ephesians 3:12* I may approach God with freedom and confidence.

*Philippians 4:13* I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.