

## Unit 13

# God Speaks to His People

## *1–2 Kings*

### Memory Verse

**“Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.”**

**-1 Kings 18:37**

# The Pictures of God's Authority

**SESSION IN A SENTENCE:** God's miracles reveal He is the one true God.

**BACKGROUND PASSAGE:** 1 Kings 17

When my kids were younger, they often wanted to eat at McDonald's® because they wanted a Happy Meal®. They enjoyed the food, but they loved the cheap toy inside even more. Now, however, my kids are older, and they never ask me to pull into McDonald's for a Happy Meal. Now they want steak! They have grown up. The Happy Meal days are gone.

Some people today look at the miracles in the Bible like Happy Meals – to be cherished as children but not as adults. The skeptics believe you should grow up and see these biblical stories as fictional. But should we discard the miracle stories of Scripture?



What beliefs and doctrines are affected when a person rejects the validity of miracles in the Bible?

# Group Time

## Point 1: God provides in unusual ways (1 Kings 17:1-4).

<sup>1</sup>Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”<sup>2</sup> And the word of the Lord came to him:<sup>3</sup> “Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan.”<sup>4</sup> You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”

During the reign of Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, the Northern Kingdom of Israel practiced idolatry to a level not seen before (1 Kings 16:29-33). The worship of Baal, the false god of rain and fertility, was state-sponsored and modeled by the king and queen. So God raised up the prophet Elijah to minister in this dark time. Elijah boldly confronted the king and proclaimed a drought, which was actually a promise fulfilled (see Deut. 11:16-17; 28:14-15, 23-24). God was punishing His people for their pagan idolatry.



What are some similarities between Elijah’s context and the present context of your culture?

At the Lord’s command, Elijah fled to the east after his initial confrontation with Ahab. Seeking protection from the wicked king, he went to an inhospitable area by the Jordan River, where he drank from a brook and was fed by ravens (1 Kings 17:5-6). Elijah was on the “wilderness meal plan”; bread and meat were provided by the ravens every morning and evening (see Ex. 16:8, 12-13). His needs were provided on a daily basis.



How have you seen God provide for your daily necessities, especially in a difficult season of life?



### Voices from Church History

“We can be certain that God will give us the strength and resources we need to live through any situation in life that He ordains. The will of God will never take us where the grace of God cannot sustain us.”<sup>1</sup>

—Billy Graham (1918–2018)

## Point 2: God provides in miraculous ways (1 Kings 17:10-16).

<sup>10</sup> So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink."<sup>11</sup> And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."<sup>12</sup> And she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now 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."<sup>13</sup> And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son."<sup>14</sup> For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth."<sup>15</sup> And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days.<sup>16</sup> The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

After the brook dried up, Elijah went to the Phoenician town of Zarephath, which was Baal's territory. Here God promised to use an unnamed widow to provide for Elijah (vv. 8-9). Not only could Baal not bring rain on the land and stop the drought, but Yahweh's provision for His prophet extended right into Baal's home turf. God had "prepared a table for Elijah in the presence of his enemies" (see Ps. 23:5).



How does Elijah's presence in Zarephath compare to the Christian's life on earth?

Elijah tested the widow's faith and asked her to provide for him first, then for herself and her son. He assured her there would be enough for her and her son and that her flour and oil would be sufficient to get them through the drought. The widow trusted Elijah, acted accordingly, and God provided. Elijah's word was confirmed through this miracle. Imagine this scene: Every day the widow went over to her little barrel of flour and small jar of oil, and every day, there was enough to bake bread for one more day!

**Miracles:** A miracle is an event in which God makes an \_\_\_\_\_ to the natural order of things, or supersedes natural laws, for the purpose of demonstrating His \_\_\_\_\_ and/or validating His \_\_\_\_\_.



### Point 3: God provides through His servant (1 Kings 17:17-24).

<sup>17</sup> After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. <sup>18</sup> And she said to 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!" <sup>19</sup> And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. <sup>20</sup> And he cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" <sup>21</sup> Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again." <sup>22</sup> And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. <sup>23</sup> And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives." <sup>24</sup> And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."

Elijah took the dead boy and cried out to God. With full honesty, praying in faith and desperation, he took his anxieties and concerns to God. The Lord heard the prayer of this righteous man (Jas. 5:16) and brought the child back to life (Heb. 11:32-35).

When you face a trial, what is your first instinct?



Fearful Panic

Faithful Prayer

Receiving her son back alive, the widow affirmed her trust in the prophet Elijah's word and confessed her faith in God. Stories of death surround us, but there is hope beyond the grave for every grieving believer: God raises the dead. In this Old Testament story of provision and faith, God gives us a little sign of His resurrection power that would later be put on full display in Jesus' resurrection from the dead, never to die again.

**Christ as Prophet:** Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the role of prophet: He alone is the ultimate \_\_\_\_\_ and has the words of eternal life. Jesus is also God's ultimate \_\_\_\_\_ of Himself, the very Word of God.



Why should the promise of spiritual and physical resurrection in Christ inspire us to pray and act with great faith?

# My Mission

Because we have come to know Jesus as the Word of God and have been forgiven and transformed by Him, we declare God's Word to those around us with faith and boldness so that God may move others from death to life.

- **What will you pray for in the name of Christ that reflects His power and His grace?**
- **About what should your group join together more in prayer?**
- **For whom will you be praying to share the gospel of Jesus with them?**



## Voices from Church History

"In all your prayers forget not to thank the Lord for his mercies. When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words, than thy words without a heart. Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer ... Pray often; for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan." <sup>2</sup>

—John Bunyan (1628-1688)

## Notes

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# Daily Study

## Day 1: Read 1 Kings 15:1-34

Some of the kings in 1-2 Kings had commendable traits, though none were flawless, and many were a total mess. What keeps certain portions of 1-2 Kings from being depressing is this: God was preserving a remnant so that the ultimate Son of David would come and reign forever. God was preserving “a lamp before me in Jerusalem” (1 Kings 11:36; 15:4).

The writer gave quick facts about many kings, such as: 1) the king’s identity; 2) the length of his reign; 3) his relationship to the king in Judah or Israel; 4) the identity of the king’s mother (in the case of Judah’s kings); 5) occasionally an explanation of the divine point of view; 6) a statement of death; and 7) recommendations for further study.

We meet Judah’s King Abijam in 15:1-8. He was not completely devoted to the Lord as David had been. But his son, Asa, Judah’s next king, sought the Lord for the majority of his life (vv. 9-24).

Only Hezekiah and Josiah receive higher praise than Asa. Sadly, Asa fell later in life due to unbelief (2 Chron. 16). Then we read of Israel’s King Nadab, who did evil in the sight of the Lord (1 Kings 15:25-32). He continued in the sins of his father before being killed and replaced by another bad king, Baasha (vv. 28-30).

We need a better king, and praise God we have one – the Lord Jesus!



What are some lessons to glean from the lives of the kings in 1 Kings 15?

### Voices from the Church

“Because we know God and because we fear God, we can trust God. There is only one God, and He is our Father. He most clearly reveals Himself in His Word, so it is there that we must turn to learn more about Him and grow in fearing Him.”<sup>3</sup>

–Trillia Newbell

## Day 2: Read 1 Kings 16:1-34

This chapter highlights the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It also shows us our need for and the trustworthiness of God's Word. We meet the prophet Jehu, who brought a word against Baasha. Baasha acted like Jeroboam, leading the people to sin against the Lord with their false worship, and consequently, he shared Jeroboam's fate (16:2-4). Then his son, Elah, got drunk and was assassinated by Zimri, who went on to kill the rest of Baasha's house (vv. 8-14). This fulfilled Jehu's prophecy against Baasha (vv. 3,12). Zimri only reigned for seven days (v. 15). Omri then reigned for twelve years (v. 23). He established Samaria as the new capital city of the Northern Kingdom. It remained Israel's capital until Assyria plundered it in 722 BC.

Finally, we meet the evil king Ahab. He reigned for twenty-two years (v. 29). He married Jezebel, a daughter of the king of the Sidonians. She was a Baal worshiper, and she had hundreds of prophets for Baal. She also killed God's prophets (18:4,13). Following the heart of his wife, Ahab also served Baal, the first Israelite king to do so. It was into this context that God sent His prophet Elijah to proclaim His word.



What are some of the consequences of sin, whether yours or others', that you have experienced?

## Day 3: Read 1 Kings 17:1-7

Evil king after evil king, and then — “Boom!” — we meet Elijah the prophet. He was a settler from the wild, forested area east of the Jordan in Gilead.

God chose this man from the middle of nowhere. Unlike the kings, we don't know who his family was, and we don't know anything about his childhood. God chose him out of obscurity in order to confront apostasy. God loves to use “nobodies” from “nowhere” places.

The chapter begins with Elijah proclaiming a message to King Ahab (17:1). Picture the awkward sight of a wild man entering the presence of the king. But because Elijah knew the living God, he was able to stand fearlessly before Ahab. Because he knew the living God, he could also trust God for his daily provision (vv. 2-7). Elijah had great faith because he had a great God.



What steps can you take this week to elevate your understanding and trust of God?



## Day 4: Read 1 Kings 17:8-16

In this passage, God provided for His prophet through a widow at Zarephath. She had nothing to offer but a handful of flour and a bit of oil, but God multiplied these meager supplies. Elijah promised the widow that if she would bake him a cake before feeding herself and her son that the flour jar would not be empty and the oil would not run out. She submitted to Elijah's word, and her household ate for days. This all took place according to the word of God (17:8,14,15,16).

Observe God's sovereignty and grace. God chose this widow to provide for Elijah. God told Elijah, "I have commanded a widow there to feed you" (v.9). But we don't read that God ever spoke directly to the widow. Even though she may not have heard this news from a prophet beforehand, God proclaimed it to be so because He is the only sovereign. He works in the hearts of the mighty and in the hearts of the lowly to accomplish His purposes.



How might this passage address the times when you are anxious, afraid, or overwhelmed by the cares of this life?

## Day 5: Read 1 Kings 17:17-24

A third miracle – and a more dramatic one – took place next in 1 Kings 17. The widow's son became ill and died (v. 17), but God raised him from the dead through the ministry of Elijah. We're reminded of the reality and pain of death in this story. Stories of death are all around us. At any moment, a loved one could take his or her last breath. Like in this story, just when things seem to be working out wonderfully, death can take someone. In this case, it was a precious child.

But there is hope beyond the grave for every grieving believer: *God raises the dead*. God gives us a little sign of his resurrection power in this Old Testament story.

We should look forward to the resurrection when Christ comes again. Yet in the present, we should ask God to do what only He can do – raise spiritually dead people to life (Eph. 2:4-5). This young boy eventually died again. What everyone needs is to be raised up forever by the resurrection power of God through faith in His Son, Jesus.



How might this story inspire you to pray more fervently?

# Encourage One Another

*Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.*

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- God provides in unusual ways (1 Kings 17:1-4).
- God provides in miraculous ways (1 Kings 17:10-16).
- God provides through His servant (1 Kings 17:17-24).



How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?



Why are miracles not only a demonstration of God's power but also of His care for His creatures, namely, His people?



How can the miracles that God performed through Elijah inform how we serve and bless those around us, both inside and outside of the church?

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## UNIT 13

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## A Nation Divided

After Kings David and Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel was split in two as a judgment of Solomon's idolatry—the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. In spite of the idolatry that often marked both kingdoms, God continued to speak to His people through the words of His prophets and the signs of His power.

Though God's people continued to rebel against Him, He pursued them with an ever-faithful love. God offers mercy to those who repent, but rebellion cannot be ignored. God would be faithful to His word and exile His people from their land for their sin.

God demonstrated His commitment to His people over and over again and called people to turn from their sin and back to Him, waiting with open arms. But in the end, the people's hearts refused the God who had made them. So in His mercy and faithfulness, even in the midst of His judgment for sin, the Lord promised that one day new hearts and new life would come to humanity—a promise fulfilled by faith in Jesus Christ.

### What's Next?

#### WINTER 2019-20

##### Volume 6: A People Restored

*God Sustains His People (Daniel)*

*God Restores His People (Ezra; Prophets)*

*God Prepares His People (Neh.; Esth.; Mal.)*

#### SPRING 2020

##### Volume 7: Jesus the Messiah

*Jesus Comes into the World (Luke)*

*Jesus Begins His Ministry (Gospels)*

*Jesus Among the People (Gospels)*

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