

Elijah

stops the rain



Colour me!



1 Kings 17:1-16

After the death of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel divided into two parts: Northern and Southern. One after the other, bad kings came to power. One of them was King Ahab who was quite evil and brought idol worship back. God had to call certain faithful people called prophets to stand up to these kings and to speak of God to the people. Elijah was a prophet.

Elijah was a prophet from Tishbe in Gilead. One day he went to King Ahab and said, "I'm a servant of the living Lord, the God of Israel. And I swear in his name that it won't rain until I say so. There won't even be any dew on the ground."

Later, the Lord said to Elijah, "Leave and go across the River Jordan so you can hide near Cherith Brook. You can drink water from the brook, and eat the food I've told the ravens to bring you." Elijah obeyed the Lord and went to live near Cherith Brook. Ravens brought him bread and meat twice a day, and he drank water from the brook. But after a while, it dried up because there was no rain.

The Lord told Elijah, "Go to the town of Zarephath in Sidon and live there. I've told a widow in that town to give you food." When Elijah came near the town gate of Zarephath, he saw a widow gathering sticks for a fire. "Would you please bring me a cup of water?" he asked. As she left to get it, he asked, "Would you also please bring me a piece of bread?" The widow answered, "In the name of the living Lord your God, I swear that I don't have any bread. All I have is a handful of flour and a little olive oil. I'm on my way home now with these few sticks to cook what I have for my son and me. After that, we will starve to death." Elijah said, "Everything will be fine. Do what you said. Go home and prepare something for yourself and your son. But first, please make a small piece of bread and bring it to me. The Lord God of Israel has promised that your jar of flour won't run out and your bottle of oil won't dry up before he sends rain for the crops."

The widow went home and did exactly what Elijah had told her. She and Elijah and her family had enough food for a long time. The Lord kept the promise that his prophet Elijah had made, and she did not run out of flour or oil.

Commentary

Things went from bad to worse for God's people, particularly those in the northern kingdom of Israel. King Ahab came to the throne after a series of short-lived reigns by his predecessors, all of whom had abandoned their faith in the one true God and turned to worship man-made gods. King Ahab was no different, and in particular he is remembered for marrying a non-Jew called Jezebel, who reintroduced the worship of a local god called Baal. God had warned all these kings through various prophets, but each had ignored him.

Now Ahab is confronted by Elijah, whose prediction of a long drought is the beginning of many years of tense dealings between the two men. God miraculously provides Elijah with food and drink in the desert, and also through the kindness of a widow in Jezebel's own home country, ironically, Elijah finds a safe haven from Ahab. The widow's hospitality is rewarded by a miracle when her oil and flour containers never hit empty for as long as Elijah stays with her. Notice the contrast between Jezebel from Sidon, who suffers from the drought, and the poor widow from Sidon, whom God looks after.

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Questions

- ▶ How difficult do you think it was for Elijah to give God's message to the king?
- ▶ Why did so many kings of Israel turn away from worshipping God? God had warned them again and again, so why didn't they listen?
- ▶ Why is it so easy to forget God when things are going well?
- ▶ God looked after Elijah while he was in hiding. How have you experienced God's help and protection in tough times?



Visual aid

Fill a small jar with oil and another with flour. Imagine what it would be like if this was all you had left to feed yourself and your family for several days.



Activity idea

Make some bread together following a simple recipe. Use flour, water and a little oil and then roll out the dough. As you do, talk about what it must be like to live on very little and not know where your next meal is coming from.



Prayer idea

Make a list together of the times you use water for washing, cooking, flushing the toilet, cleaning your teeth, drinking and so on. Many parts of the world suffer from drought. Find out about a part of the world where there is drought at the moment and, using your own prayers or prayer ideas online, pray for the people who are suffering.

Key verse

The Lord God of Israel has promised that your jar of flour won't run out and your bottle of oil won't dry up before he sends rain for the crops' (1 Kings 17:14).

New Testament story link

Acts 11:27-30: Read about how the church in Antioch responded to news that there would be a famine affecting many people.

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