



Handout for week of 11/5/18 Mark 12:38-44 & 1 Kgs. 17: 10-16

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1 Kgs. 17: 1 Kgs. 17: 10 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: 'Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.' 11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said: 'Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand.' 12 And she said: 'As HaShem thy G-d liveth, I have not a cake, only a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse; and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.' 13 And Elijah said unto her: 'Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make

me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and for thy son. 14 For thus saith HaShem, the G-d of Israel: The jar of meal shall not be spent, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that HaShem sendeth rain upon the land.' 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah; and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. 16 The jar of meal was not spent, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of HaShem, which He spoke by Elijah.

COMMENTARY: [Under King Ahab](#)

Elijah the Tishbite, from the region of Gilead, was one of the two men in the Hebrew Scriptures who did not die but was taken by God; the other was Enoch (Genesis 5:24 Elijah prophesied during the reign of King Ahab of Israel. He performed his first miracles in the town of Zarephath, near Sidon, in the house of a poor widow, where he converted a handful of meal and a little oil into an endless supply and brought back to life the dead child of the widow.

Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, was a Phoenician princess, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon. She exerted a strong influence over the king, who granted her unlimited administrative authority. She introduced in Israel the Phoenician pagan cult of the god Baal, a development that was bitterly opposed by the prophet Elijah. Not only did Ahab tolerate the foreign cult introduced by his wife but he also cooperated with her by building a temple for Baal in Samaria and erecting a sacred post.

Elijah told the king that God would withhold rain to punish him and left the country. There was a severe food shortage in Samaria, which lasted three years. In the third year of the famine, King Ahab talked with Obadiah, the governor of the royal palace, and said that they should both travel through the land--the king in one direction, and the palace governor in another--searching for places where there was enough grass to feed the horses and the mules.

Obadiah was a God-fearing man, who had risked his life by protecting 100 prophets of the Lord from Jezebel's murderous persecution and hiding them in a cave. He met Elijah on the road and was told by the prophet to tell the king that he was back in Israel. Obadiah, although afraid that Ahab would kill him for bringing news of Elijah, informed the king that the prophet had returned to the kingdom. Ahab went to meet Elijah. When he saw him, he accused the prophet of being a troublemaker.

Elijah retorted that Ahab and his father, Omri, were the real troublemakers, because they had forsaken the true God and worshiped the idols of Baal. Elijah requested an encounter with the prophets of Baal, who were under Queen Jezebel's protection and who ate at her table. King Ahab consented. Elijah confronted 450 priests of Baal at Mount Carmel and challenged them to prove who was the true God, the Lord or Baal, by having fire from heaven come down and consume the sacrifice.

The priests of Baal prayed for hours without any results, while Elijah mocked them. Then it was Elijah's turn to pray to God. Fire came down on the altar and consumed the sacrifice. Elijah told the people to seize and kill the priests of Baal.

The drought, which had lasted three years, broke in a great storm. Ahab drove back to his capital in his chariot through the heavy rain, with the prophet Elijah running in front of the king all the way to Jezreel. Ahab told Jezebel that Elijah had killed her prophets. The queen was furious and sent a messenger to Elijah, threatening to kill him. (Click on link above for more on Elijah)