

## Spiritual Victory in Hard Times

### The Story of Elijah

#### 1 Kings 17:1 (Hard Times)

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."

#### The hard times were from the Lord

1 Kings 18:36

"LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word."

James 5:17-18

<sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

#### The Lord knew what He was going to do, but did it through Elijah's prayers

#### 1 Kings 17:2-6 (The Lord's People are not generally spared in hard times)

<sup>2</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>3</sup> "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. <sup>4</sup> And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook

#### Elijah didn't resist the program, He was part of it...

(Just like the Lord Jesus shared in the misery that sin brought on the earth).

Isaiah 53:3-4

<sup>3</sup> And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. <sup>4</sup> Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...

If we are part of God's family, His agenda becomes the family agenda and our agenda.

2 Corinthians 2:15-16 (Paul said)

<sup>15</sup> For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.

#### 1 Kings 17:7-10

<sup>7</sup> And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. <sup>8</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>9</sup> "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

"Yah, Lord, a rich widow. Now that's got possibilities!"

#### 1 Kings 17:9-12

<sup>10</sup> 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." <sup>11</sup> And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

<sup>12</sup> 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."

"How's this woman going to provide anything me? Wrong widow, Lord?"

"Nope! Here's what to tell her..."

### 1 Kings 17:13-16

<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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.'"

<sup>15</sup> So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. <sup>16</sup> The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

### 1 Kings 17:17-18

<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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?"

**(Don't puzzle too hard on whether that's a specific sin or her sin in general).**

#### 1 Corinthians 10:13

God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

**"Isn't it about time to pray for rain, Lord?"**

**"Hang in there Elijah. I'll let you know when it's time for rain."**

### 1 Kings 17:19-20 ( )

<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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?"

**Sometimes it seems like the Lord allows more than we think we should have to bear.**

### 1 Kings 21:24 (Talk about faith! No previous resurrections from the dead are recorded in the Bible)

<sup>21</sup> 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." <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.

<sup>23</sup> 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!"

<sup>24</sup> 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."

**Well, Duh! The drought and the unending supply of flour and oil weren't convincing?**

### 1 Kings 18:1 (Time for Rain)

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth."

### 1 Kings 18:2-6 (The Severity of the Famine)

<sup>2</sup> So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria. <sup>3</sup> And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. <sup>4</sup> For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) <sup>5</sup> And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock." <sup>6</sup> So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

### **1 Kings 18:7-16 (How Effectively the Lord Hid Elisha)**

<sup>7</sup> Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is that you, my lord Elijah?"

<sup>8</sup> And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'"

<sup>9</sup> So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me?" <sup>10</sup> As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. <sup>11</sup> And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here!"' <sup>12</sup> And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. <sup>13</sup> Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? <sup>14</sup> And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here." He will kill me!"

<sup>15</sup> Then Elijah said, "As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today."

<sup>16</sup> So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

### **1 Kings 18:17-19 (Boldness in the Lord)**

<sup>17</sup> Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"

<sup>18</sup> And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. <sup>19</sup> Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

### **1 Kings 18:20 (The Lord is in Control)**

<sup>20</sup> So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

#### **Proverbs 21:1**

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD,  
Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

### **1 Kings 18:20-24 (Elijah proposes a contest)**

<sup>21</sup> And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

<sup>22</sup> Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. <sup>23</sup> Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. <sup>24</sup> Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

### **1 Kings 18:25-29 (The Failure of Idolatry)**

<sup>25</sup> Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it."

<sup>26</sup> So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

<sup>27</sup> And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." <sup>28</sup> So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. <sup>29</sup> And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

### **1 Kings 18:30-35 (Avoiding Claims of Fraud)**

<sup>30</sup> Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. <sup>31</sup> And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." <sup>32</sup> Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. <sup>33</sup> And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." <sup>34</sup> Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. <sup>35</sup> So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

### **1 Kings 18:36-40 (The Lord Proves Himself)**

<sup>36</sup> And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word." <sup>37</sup> Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."

<sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. <sup>39</sup> Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!"

<sup>40</sup> And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

### **1 Kings 18:41-46 (Prayer and Rain)**

<sup>41</sup> Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." <sup>42</sup> So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, <sup>43</sup> and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea."

So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."

<sup>44</sup> Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'"

<sup>45</sup> Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup> Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

### **1 Kings 19:1-2 (Jezebel's Threat)**

<sup>1</sup> And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup> Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." <sup>3</sup> And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

### **1 Kings 19:4-8 (Elijah's Discouragement and the Lord's Help)**

<sup>4</sup> But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

<sup>5</sup> Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." <sup>6</sup> Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. <sup>7</sup> And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." <sup>8</sup> So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

**Mt. Horeb is Mt. Sinai, The place where Moses got the ten commandments. It is also where he went to see the Glory of the Lord.**

### Exodus 33:18-23

<sup>18</sup> And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

<sup>19</sup> Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." <sup>20</sup> But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." <sup>21</sup> And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. <sup>22</sup> So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. <sup>23</sup> Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

### 1 Kings 19:9-14 (Elijah's Meeting with the Lord)

<sup>9</sup> And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; **(Does this remind you of Moses "Cleft in the rock?)"**

and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

<sup>10</sup> So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

<sup>11</sup> Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; <sup>12</sup> and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

<sup>13</sup> So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" **(God put His hand over Moses so He wouldn't die)**

<sup>14</sup> And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

### 1 Kings 19:9-13 (A Few final Assignments)

<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. <sup>16</sup> Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. <sup>17</sup> It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.

### 1 Kings 19:14 (A gentle Rebuke)

<sup>18</sup> Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

### 2 Kings 2:10-11 The Home-going of Elijah

<sup>11</sup> Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

**He didn't get his request to die. He was taken to heaven alive in the Lord's personal limousine. What a reward for this faithful servant of the Lord who handled hard times so well!**

### Do you want to be a victorious Christian in hard times?

**1 Don't fight hard times, Participate in them. Be a helper rather than a complainer.**

**2 Depend on the Lord for your care**

**3 Minister eternal life to the spiritually dead**

**4 Reprove unrighteousness rather than fighting it**

**5 Use the hard times to show everyone that the Lord is God**

**6 Wait patiently on the Lord for the hard times to pass Walk on the water (Matthew 14:22-33)**