

# “ELIJAH”

**Text:** “And Elijah requested for himself that he might die, and said, it is enough now O Lord, take away my life” (I Kings 19:4)

**Subject:** How To Survive Your Disappointments

## **Introduction** **(Background of Elijah)**

- A. Saul, David and Solomon have ruled Israel for 120 years of growth and splendor.
- B. After Solomon’s death, his son took action which divided his nation.
- C. His son, which was greedy for power and wealth, had an arch rival in the north. (Jeroboam)
- D. Jeroboam was the first of nineteen wicked kings to rule before Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.:

### **The 7 Kings Leading Up To Elijah’s Appearance**

- #1. **Jeroboam** (931-910 B.C.) His 21 year reign was marked by idolatry, deception, murder and pagan worship.
- #2. **Nadab** (910-909 B.C.) His two year reign was a carbon copy of his father, Jeroboam.
- #3. **Baasha** (909-886 B.C.) His 24 year reign was marked by his murdering of everyone in the household of Jeroboam.
- #4. **Elah** (886-885 B.C.) His 2 year reign was ended as he was murdered while drunk at Tirzah.
- #5. **Zimri** (885 B.C.) His 7 day reign was cut off as Omri invaded Tirzah, and Zimri set fire to the King’s house and he burned with the structure.
- #6. **Omri** (885-874 B.C.) His 9 year reign saw him build a new capital in Samaria to rule from; his ungodly rule ended with his son (Ahab) taking over his throne.
- #7. **Ahab** (874-853 B.C.) His 21 year evil reign was marked by the following:
  - A. Ahab married Jezebel (an unlawful marriage according to the Mosaic Law).
  - B. Ahab accepted Jezebel’s god (Baal was the deity of the Canaanite pantheon which was supposed to have controlled both rain and fertility.)
  - C. Ahab worshipped this pagan god Baal and constructed a “Hose of Baal” in Samaria.
  - D. Ahab’s wickedness was greater than all of his predecessors. (I Kings 16:33)

### **(In The Midst Of Ahab’s Reign, Elijah Emerges)**

#### **I. Elijah’s Name**

Elijah’s name is a combination of three Hebrew words which mean, “My God is power” or “Jehovah is my strength”.

**Fact:** Elijah knew that God was his strength!

**Fact:** Elijah knew that God was his source!

#### **II. Elijah’s Land**

- A. Elijah was born around 900 B.C. in the remote village of Tishbe.
- B. Tishbe was located in the mountains of Gilead (east of the Jordan River).
- C. Elijah was from a people group that lived in the rugged, open air, coarse environment.

#### **III. Elijah’s Praying**

- A. Based on Deuteronomy 11:13-17 Elijah prayed that it would not rain (and for 3 ½ years, no rain).
- B. Elijah prayed again that it would rain (and it rained).

“Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months”.

(James 5:17)

#### **IV. Elijah’s Boldness**

(Pg. 1 of 5)

**Fact:** Elijah dared to stand before Ahab and pronounce the judgment of God upon him.

**Fact:** Elijah told Ahab that there would be no dew nor rain for “years” (I Kings 17:1)

**Fact:** Elijah was in danger, for Jezebel sought the life of every prophet of God.

**Question:** Where do we find courage to stand for truth as Elijah did?

**Answer:** By knowing what Elijah knew:

#1. **That God is a living God** “As the Lord God of Israel liveth” (17:1)

#2. **That we stand in God’s presence always** (17:1)

“Before whom I stand”

### **Never Forget**

“The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe” (Prov. 29:25)

## V. **Elijah’s Disappointments**

Having stood before Ahab and his wicked wife, and announcing the upcoming catastrophe (of drought), Elijah will now go through God’s boot-camp of training. It is here and now that God will reveal to Elijah (and us) some powerful truths that will shape us, mold us and prepare us for future service. The following lessons will help us “survive” with “joy” in those seasons of disappointment:

### **(Elijah’s Four Great Disappointments)**

#### #1. **The water dries up (in Cherith)**

“And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook...and it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up”. (I Kings 17: 4, 7)

**Fact:** Following Elijah’s pronouncement of drought, God commands Elijah to turn eastward and hide by the brook Cherith. (v. 3)

**Fact:** Elijah obeys and lives by the brook for perhaps months and even years.

**Fact:** God provides the bread, meat and water for Elijah as promised.

### **(Then Disappointment #1: (“The Brook Dried Up”))**

**Question:** Why did God allow the water to stop?

**Answer:** To enlarge the capacity of Elijah’s ministry:

1. Elijah would wonder if God had forgotten him.
2. Elijah was tempted to leave Cherith before his time.
3. Elijah would learn to depend on God (not God’s supply).
4. Elijah was learning how to respond to the unexpected.
5. Elijah was learning to take “one day at a time”.

**Question:** What did Elijah learn in Cherith?

**Answer:** Lessons that encourage us all:

- #1. That disappointments will occur even when we are in the perfect will of God. (Elijah was where God told him to be)
- #2. That God knows where we are (even out in the wilderness away from the limelight).
- #3. That testing must come in preparation for future ministry (God knew what was about to happen in Zarephath).
- #4. That God’s will and plan for us, will never be revealed all at once (God gave Elijah grace for the day in Cherith, and no instructions for Zarephath).
- #5. That God is aware of the things we cannot understand, (He knows what He is doing and His way is perfect – Psalm 18:30)

#### #2. **The widow’s son dies (in Zarephath)**

“Arise, get thee to Zarephath, and a widow woman will sustain thee there...and it came to pass that the son of the woman fell sick and there was no breath left in him. And she said, O thou man of God, art Thou come unto me to slay my son?” (Vs, 9, 17 & 18)

**Fact:** Zarephath was 100 miles from Cherith.

**Fact:** The word “Zarephath” means “refining” or “a smelting furnace”.

**Fact:** God said Elijah would be provided for by a poverty stricken widow in his next location.

**Fact:** Elijah would have to believe God in the midst of a famine.

**Fact:** Elijah and the widow would see God miraculously supply the meal and oil. (17:16)

### (Then Disappointment #2: (“The Widow’s Son Dies”))

**Question:** Why did the widow lash out and blame Elijah for her son’s death? (v. 18)

**Answer:** Because she was frazzled from caring day and night for her feverished son.

**Question:** How did Elijah respond to this great disappointment, death and criticism?

**Answer:** He did what we must do:

◆ **Elijah demonstrated a calm response:**

“Give me your son” (v. 19)

◆ **Elijah demonstrated a life of prayer:**

“O Lord, have you also brought this calamity to the widow?” (v. 20)

◆ **Elijah demonstrated unwavering faith:**

“O Lord, let this child’s soul come into him again” (v. 21)

**Question:** What did Elijah learn in Zarephath?

**Answer:** Lessons we must learn as well:

- #1. That when we are finished in one place (Cherith), God has another place already prepared. (Zarephath)
- #2. That God can use the weak and the foolish things to give supernatural provision for His work.
- #3. That a life of prayer (in secret ahead of time) is the only way to be prepared for unexpected emergencies.
- #4. That some things demand that we pray more than once (17:21).

### #3. **The wait for rain (in Carmel)**

“And Elijah said unto Ahab, get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain...and Elijah cast himself down upon the earth...and said to his servant, go up now, look toward the sea, and he went up and looked, and said, there is nothing”. (I Kings 18:41-43)

**Fact:** Three and a half years went by before word came again to Elijah that the end of the famine was in sight (18:1)

**Fact:** Elijah had been obedient to God:

- A. He went to Cherith as commanded.
- B. He went to Zarephath as commanded.
- C. He will now go to Ahab as commanded (18:1).

**Fact:** Elijah charges Ahab with rebellion (18:18).

**Fact:** Elijah challenges Israel and sees the fire fall on Mount Carmel (18:38).

**Fact:** The great controversy between Baal and God has now ended (God proves that He is God and none other).

### (Then Disappointment #3: (“The Wait For Rain”))

**Question:** Why did Elijah go to Ahab in (18:1)?

**Answer:** Because God told Elijah that it will rain (18:1).

**Question:** What did Elijah's servant say when Elijah said go look for the rain?

**Answer:** "There is nothing, I see no rain at all" (v. 43).

**Question:** "What did Elijah learn while waiting for the promised rain?"

**Answer:** Lessons we must learn as well:

### (That Effective Prayer Includes)

- #1. **Separation from the crowd** (v. 42A)  
(Elijah withdrew to a place of solitude)
- #2. **Humility before God** (v. 42B)  
(Elijah's posture reflects an attitude void of pride)
- #3. **Faith in God's promise** (v. 43)  
(Elijah sent his servant off to look for the coming rain clouds)
- #4. **Perseverance to endure** (v. 43B)  
(Elijah sent the servant back seven times; Elijah refused to be detoured while waiting)

### ("And It Came To Pass That There Was A Great Rain" (18:45))

#### Remember:

When we are put "**on hold**" and have to "**wait**", we must resist every temptation to give up, retreat or doubt God's promises! (When you cannot trace God's **hand**, you can always trust His **heart**).

#### #4. **The weariness of mind (in Beersheba)**

"It is enough now O Lord, take away my life". (I Kings 19:4)

**Fact:** Elijah (after the miracles of fire and rain on Mount Carmel) outruns Ahab's chariot for 18 miles (to the city of Jezreel).

**Fact:** Ahab then went home and told his wife what just happened on Mount Carmel.

**Fact:** The queen then sends a message to Elijah, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time". (19:2)

**Fact:** Elijah, now facing the threat of death from wicked Jezebel, runs for his life.

**Fact:** Elijah loses all hope of seeing Israel return to God; thus, life has lost all attractiveness to God's servant.

- A. Elijah was led by God to Cherith.
- B. Elijah was led by God to Zarephath.
- C. Elijah was led by God to Ahab.
- D. But God did not lead Elijah to run, hide and pray this suicidal prayer!

### (Disappointment #4: ("Weariness Of Mind") (Elijah's Discouragement Of Soul))

- #1. He traveled 85 miles on foot to be on the southern border of Judah. (19:3)
- #2. He took another day's journey into the wilderness. (19:4)
- #3. He felt that his labors were fruitless and requested that he might die. (19:4)
- #4. He reached the ultimate in stress and exhaustion, and while all alone he simply feels like giving up. (19:4)

**Question:** What did Elijah learn about God while in pits of despair?

**Answer:** What we must remember as well:

- #1. That God will never give us more than we are able to bear (I Corinthians 10:13).
- #2. That God will never abandon us in those seasons of loneliness and despair. (Matt. 28:20)
- #3. That God will never reveal to us His complete long range plans; only one step at a time (Psalm 37:23)
- #4. That God will finish what He begins in us (Philippians 1:6).

**Elijah Learned:**

**“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5)**

**Yes...**

- #1. God watched Elijah as he slept.
- #2. God sent an angel to minister to a need.
- #3. God provided the rest and food Elijah needed.
- #4. God sustained His servant at his lowest point.

#1. **Are you in Cherith?**

(Has an unexpected disappointment come to you in the perfect will of God?)

#2. **Are you in Zarephath?**

(Have you been the recipient of undue rebuke and criticism?)

#3. **Are you in Carmel?**

(Have you or your plans been put on hold?)

#4. **Are you in Beersheba?**

(Have you lost hope that what God has put in your heart, He will fulfill?)

**Then Remember:**

#1. **When in Cherith (and the unexpected arises:)**

- A. “All things work together for good to them that love the Lord” (Romans 8:28)
- B. “As for God, His way is perfect” (Psalm 18:30)

#2. **When in Zarephath (and misunderstood:)**

- A. “The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:14)
- B. “Love keeps no score of wrongdoing” (I Corinthians 13:5)

#3. **When in Carmel (and put “on hold”):**

- A. “My times are in Thy Hand” (Psalm 31:15)
- B. “He makes all things beautiful in His time” (Ecclesiastics 3:11)

#4. **When in Beersheba (and your hope is fading:)**

- A. “Though the vision tarry, wait for it, for it will surely come and not be overdue one single day” (Habakkuk 2:3)
- B. “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:4)

**AMEN!**  
Bill Kirk, Pastor