A Summary of the Bible

In the beginning, the all-powerful, personal God created the universe. This God created human beings in His image to live joyfully in His presence, in humble submission to His gracious authority. But all of us have rebelled against God and, in consequence, must suffer the punishment of our rebellion: physical death and the wrath of God.

Thankfully, God initiated a rescue plan, which began with His choosing the nation of Israel to display His glory in a fallen world. The Bible describes how God acted mightily on Israel’s behalf, rescuing His people from slavery and then giving them His holy law. But God’s people—like all of us—failed to rightly reflect the glory of God.

Then, in the fullness of time, in the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself came to renew the world and restore His people. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law given to Israel. Though innocent, He suffered the consequences of human rebellion by His death on a cross. But three days later, God raised Him from the dead.

Now the church of Jesus Christ has been commissioned by God to take the news of Christ’s work to the world. Empowered by God’s Spirit, the church calls all people everywhere to repent of sin and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. Repentance and faith restores our relationship with God and results in a life of ongoing transformation.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to this earth as the conquering King. Only those who live in repentant faith in Christ will escape God’s judgment and live joyfully in God’s presence for all eternity. God’s message is the same to all of us: repent and believe, before it is too late. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.
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### Cover Art Explanation

1. Ravens provided Elijah with bread, and meat, as he hid from King Ahab (Unit 13, Session 1)
2. Elijah’s face-off with the prophets of Baal resulted in the Lord sending fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice and the altar itself, demonstrating the Lord is the one true God (Unit 13, Session 2)
3. The fire is also representative of the Lord’s spiritual forces, specifically chariots and horses of fire, witnessed at Elijah’s departure from earth and present for Elisha’s protection (Unit 13, Sessions 3–4)
4. Dry bones in the valley from Ezekiel’s vision (Unit 15, Session 6)
The prophetic books of the Old Testament can be confusing, both to the newcomer to the Bible and the longtime reader. Where do these prophets fit in the overall narrative of Israel and Judah? What messages did they communicate? What was God doing in and through their work? The benefit of this volume of The Gospel Project is that it gives you a glimpse of the prophets right at the point their message was going forth to God’s people. We can ask questions of God with Habakkuk, look forward to the coming Suffering Servant with Isaiah, stand amazed at the stunning picture of relentless love in Hosea, and learn something of God’s extravagant love with Jonah.

As you work through the sessions in this volume, keep an eye on all the different ways God reveals Himself and communicates His messages of judgment and grace. Fall to your knees in awe, and then stand up and boldly proclaim the love of this great God, who inspired the prophets to deliver His word.
Tony Merida (unit 13, sessions 1-4) is Pastor for Preaching and Vision of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. Tony has an extensive itinerant ministry and has written several books, including The Christ-Centered Expositor and eight volumes in the Christ-Centered Exposition commentary series. He is happily married to Kimberly, and they have five adopted children.

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Unit 13, Session 1

The Pictures of God’s Authority

Summary and Goal
During the time when the nation of Israel was divided politically into two nations, Judah and Israel, these nations were also divided spiritually, worshiping idols instead of the one true God. So the Lord raised up prophets to speak His truth to His people and to call them to repentance. One such prophet was Elijah, whose name meant “My God is Yahweh.” He spoke on behalf of God, performed miracles in God’s power, confronted rebellious kings, and challenged the people to worship only the Lord. Though he was a human being like us, he performed many great wonders and provided the template for the one who would precede the coming Messiah, to whom he also pointed through his faithful and miraculous ministry.

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

Background Passage: 1 Kings 17

Session in a Sentence
God’s miracles reveal He is the one true God.

Christ Connection
The miracles Elijah performed revealed that he was a prophet of the one true God and that the Lord’s words were true. In a greater way, the miracles Jesus performed revealed that He is the Son of God, the true Word of God (John 20:30-31).

Missional Application
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.
Group Time

Introduction

READ: Share the author’s comparison on page 11 in the Daily Discipleship Guide (DDG) between Happy Meals® and the miracles recorded in the Bible.

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?

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What beliefs and doctrines are affected when a person rejects the validity of miracles in the Bible? (potentially God’s existence; God’s omnipotence; God’s immanence and involvement in His creation; the inerrancy and trustworthiness of Scripture; the power of the gospel to save sinners through faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection)

SAY: If we don’t take the miracle stories of the Bible as being historically accurate, then by extension we cannot take the Gospels’ record of Jesus’ ministry as historically accurate either. Jesus Himself understood the Old Testament stories as truthful accounts, not fictional morality tales. In fact, He believed the miracles of the Old Testament prophets pointed forward to His own ministry, miracles, sacrifice, and redemption.

SUMMARIZE: In this session, we will examine the beginning of the prophet Elijah’s ministry. He spoke on behalf of God, performed miracles in God’s power, confronted rebellious kings, and challenged the people to worship only the Lord. Though he was a human being like us, he performed many great wonders and pointed to the coming Messiah through his faithful and miraculous ministry.

For session-by-session training videos, please visit MinistryGrid.com/GospelProject. For additional teaching options and other resources, please visit GospelProject.com/additional-resources.
Point 1: God provides in unusual ways (1 Kings 17:1-4).

READ 1 Kings 17:1-4 (DDG p. 12).

1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from the Gilead settlers, said to Ahab, “As the LORD God of Israel lives, in whose presence I stand, there will be no dew or rain during these years except by my command!”

2 Then the word of the LORD came to him: 3 “Leave here, turn eastward, and hide at the Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan. 4 You are to drink from the wadi. I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.”

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 12) to set the political and spiritual context for the drought that God would send on Israel through the word of Elijah.

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.

- The curse of a drought made sense in light of the people’s idolatry. God’s people were to trust God alone for rain. If they turned to another god, then Yahweh would withhold rain. This specific judgment was very fitting since Baal was supposed to give rain. Notice also that not only would it not rain, neither would there be any dew. No one could claim “bad luck” or a “bad break.” No rain and no dew demonstrated God’s sovereign judgment.

Commentary: Elijah’s ministry occupies a number of chapters in the Kings narrative (1 Kings 17–19, 21; 2 Kings 1–2). Like Moses, who later appeared with Elijah at Jesus’ transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-3), Elijah challenged a national leader, lived on God’s provision, and felt the burden of leadership. Like John the Baptist, with whom Elijah is associated in the New Testament (Matt. 11:7-15; Luke 1:13-17), Elijah called people to repentance and was a forerunner to Messiah (Mal. 3:1-3; 4:5). Elijah points us to Jesus, who would perform greater works than Elijah (cf. Luke 7–9), for Jesus has all authority. Finally, Elijah was just like us ( Jas. 5:17); therefore, he can teach us important lessons about how to pray and to trust in God’s provision.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What are some similarities between Elijah’s context and the present context of your culture? (idolatry is rampant, though not necessarily in the form of statues; the state sponsors wickedness and sin; the culture believes it can live independently of God; God continues to raise up voices in the culture to speak His truth)
EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 12) to highlight the unusual ways God provided for the needs of Elijah during the famine. Apply this daily provision of God to the lives of your group members.

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.

• God is sovereign not only over the rain but over all of creation as well (see Ps. 104). God was sovereign over the ravens, ceremonially unclean creatures (Lev. 11:13-15) that were used for God’s purposes of sustaining the prophet’s life during the famine.

Application: All of this should encourage us. You can trust in God to provide for your daily needs (Matt. 6:25-34). He might not supply you with the finest of meats every day, and He might not provide in such a miraculous way as He did with Elijah, but God always provides.

Application: No doubt the false prophets of Baal, supported by Ahab and Jezebel, ate better than Elijah did (1 Kings 18:19), but God still provided for him. This is a good lesson: Even the prophet was suffering from this famine; the man of God was not immune to suffering along with his people. In fact, his source of water dried up on account of the drought (17:7). But he had the presence of God and the provision of God, and that was enough. We who receive such daily bread should be grateful and content people. Paul put it this way: “If we have food and clothing, we will be content with these” (1 Tim. 6:8).

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

How have you seen God provide for your daily necessities, especially in a difficult season of life? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

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.”

—Billy Graham (1918-2018)
**Point 2: God provides in miraculous ways (1 Kings 17:10-16).**

**READ** 1 Kings 17:10-16 (DDG p. 13).

10 So Elijah got up and went to Zarephath. When he arrived at the city gate, there was a widow gathering wood. Elijah called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup and let me drink.” 11 As she went to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand.”

12 But she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I don't have anything baked—only a handful of flour in the jar and a bit of oil in the jug. Just now, I am gathering a couple of sticks in order to go prepare it for myself and my son so we can eat it and die.”

13 Then Elijah said to her, “Don't be afraid; go and do as you have said. But first make me a small loaf from it and bring it out to me. Afterward, you may make some for yourself and your son, for this is what the LORD God of Israel says, 'The flour jar will not become empty and the oil jug will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the surface of the land.'”

15 So she proceeded to do according to the word of Elijah. Then the woman, Elijah, and her household ate for many days. 16 The flour jar did not become empty, and the oil jug did not run dry, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through Elijah.

**PACK ITEM 2: THE DIVIDED KINGDOM MAP:** Use the map to show the location of Zarephath outside of Israel, and use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 13) to explain the significance of Elijah’s being sent by God to a widow in Zarephath for his provision. Then emphasize the widow’s meager supplies and her hopelessness.

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).

- Even though the widow wasn’t an Israelite, she knew who the Lord was (1 Kings 17:12). Still, she told Elijah that all she had to eat on was a handful of flour and a little bit of oil, which she was planning on using for a last meal before she and her son died. Not exactly the best time to show up for dinner! Yet this was the person God sent Elijah to for provision. The Lord must have had a plan in this arrangement.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

How does Elijah’s presence in Zarephath compare to the Christian’s life on earth? (Christians currently live in a world dominated by sin and idolatry; no matter where we are, the Lord is God over all; the Lord moves in the hearts of people to prepare them to hear His Word through His people; believers are strangers and sojourners on this earth)
EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 13) to point out the widow’s faith in God’s miraculous provision. Then highlight how this scene demonstrated God’s compassion and grace.

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!

We should marvel not only at God’s provision but also at God’s compassion and grace.

- We see God’s compassion in the fact that God cared for this poor widow when it seems no one else did. Throughout Scripture we find God’s concern for the vulnerable, including the fatherless and the widow (see Ps. 68:5).

- We also marvel at God’s grace as He reached out to and blessed an outsider. God is not a tribal deity but the Lord over the nations. Jesus referred to this widow in Luke 4:24-26. In response to Jesus’ hometown rejecting Him (4:22,28-30), Jesus used this story of the widow of Zarephath, an outsider, as a warning to the local insiders, the Jews, who were listening to Him. The most unexpected people often find saving grace in the most unexpected places. God graciously provides daily bread to satisfy our physical hunger, and He has provided the bread of life in Jesus, who satisfies our spiritual hunger. Let us, beggars all, tell other beggars where to find the Bread of life.

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 13).

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

Essential Doctrine “Miracles”: A miracle is an event in which God makes an exception to the natural order of things, or supersedes natural laws, for the purpose of demonstrating His glory and/or validating His message. Miracles are recorded throughout Scripture; miraculous signs and wonders were oftentimes evident when a prophet or an apostle was speaking God’s message to the people. Because we believe God to be all-powerful and personally involved in this world, we believe He can and does perform miracles.
**Point 3: God provides through His servant (1 Kings 17:17-24).**

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 17:17-24 (DDG p. 14).

17 After this, the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. His illness got worse until he stopped breathing. 18 She said to Elijah, “Man of God, why are you here? Have you come to call attention to my iniquity so that my son is put to death?” 19 But Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.” So he took him from her arms, brought him up to the upstairs room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. 20 Then he cried out to the Lord and said, “Lord my God, have you also brought tragedy on the widow I am staying with by killing her son?” 21 Then he stretched himself out over the boy three times. He cried out to the Lord and said, “Lord my God, please let this boy’s life come into him again!” 22 So the Lord listened to Elijah, and the boy’s life came into him again, and he lived. 23 Then Elijah took the boy, brought him down from the upstairs room into the house, and gave him to his mother. Elijah said, “Look, your son is alive.” 24 Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know you are a man of God and the Lord’s word from your mouth is true.”

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 14) to comment on the nature of Elijah’s prayer for the widow’s son. Apply this to the prayer life of your group members, noting why we can pray in faith—we know who God is, the true and living God who raises the dead.

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).

- Baal wasn’t the only false god worshiped in this particular setting. Mot, the god of death, was also adored. Elijah was not only in Baal’s territory, he was also in Mot’s territory. Here we see that God alone reigns over life and death. Because our God is the true and living God, we too can have a dynamic prayer life. Like Elijah, we must learn to pour out our hearts to God in difficult times.

**INSTRUCT:** Ask group members to use the scale in their DDG (p. 14) to consider their initial response to trials and suffering.

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

- Fearful Panic
- Faithful Prayer

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EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 14) to highlight how this story of resurrection provides hope for believers and foreshadows the power of God in the resurrection of Jesus.

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.

• Luke 7:11-17 contains strong echoes of this scene in 1 Kings. In this passage, Jesus brings another son of a widow back to life. However, there is one great difference: Elijah cried out for God’s help in prayer. Jesus simply said the words: “Young man, I tell you, get up!” (Luke 7:14). Elijah was great, but Jesus is greater.

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 14).

Christ as Prophet: As one of His offices, Jesus fulfills the role of prophet: He alone is the ultimate teacher and has the words of eternal life. Jesus is also God’s ultimate revelation of Himself, the very Word of God.

Essential Doctrine “Christ as Prophet”: As one of His offices, Jesus fulfills the role of prophet: He alone is the ultimate teacher and has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). Jesus is also God’s ultimate revelation of Himself, the very Word of God (John 1:1).

SAY: God’s power to raise the dead was demonstrated once for all in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:54-57). Now God gives life to spiritually dead people by grace through faith (Eph. 2:1-10), and believers await the glorious final resurrection when the dead in Christ will rise (1 Thess. 4:16-18). Jesus has made the grave like a bed, death like sleep, and the resurrection like waking to a fresh new morning.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

Why should the promise of spiritual and physical resurrection in Christ inspire us to pray and act with great faith? (we know God is all-powerful and He will accomplish His purposes; we know God’s Word is true and He will keep all of His promises to His people; the sting of death is temporary and fading away until it is no more at the final resurrection; God can raise dead hearts to life through faith in Christ, so we proclaim the gospel of Jesus in faith that people will hear and believe and be saved)
**My Mission**

**EXPLAIN:** First Kings 17 challenges us because of the faith and prayer life of Elijah, who boldly proclaimed God’s word and experienced God’s extraordinary provision. Elijah’s life and ministry also prepared God’s people for the greater Prophet to come, the Lord Jesus. Jesus lived on every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:1-4). He too cared for the widow and raised the dead (Luke 7:11-17; see also John 11). Jesus’ prayers were also effectual (John 17). But more than Elijah, Jesus never sinned, and He died taking the judgment for sin upon Himself in the place of those who deserved it. Furthermore, He was raised from the dead and is now interceding for us with the Father (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). This is the gospel of Jesus we proclaim to the world.

**READ** the following misional application statement in the DDG (p. 15), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

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.”

—John Bunyan (1628-1688)

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Father, You are the Creator and Sustainer of all things. You provide for us through ordinary and miraculous means. Through Your Son, Jesus, the ultimate Prophet, You have revealed Yourself most fully as the one true God who has brought salvation to the world. Help us by Your Spirit, like Elijah, to proclaim boldly Your message to those around us. Amen.

**INSTRUCT:** As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the Daily Study devotions in their DDG (pp. 16-18), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use Encourage One Another (p. 19) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.
Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Daily Study devotions in the DDG (pp. 16-18) will help group members get into God’s Word and study it for themselves. Encourage One Another (p. 19) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 16-18) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.

- Share the following idea from the devotion for Day 1 as a part of point 1 in the session: 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.

Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God’s Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- Day 3: “God chose Elijah out of obscurity in order to confront apostasy. God loves to use ‘nobodies’ from ‘nowhere’ places.”

- Day 5: “There is hope beyond the grave for every grieving believer: God raises the dead. Everyone needs to be raised up by the resurrection power of God.”

Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God’s Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member’s DDG (p. 19) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using The Gospel Project in their groups.

- Encourage group members to consider how God can use them, like Elijah, in order to change the lives of individuals and families for the good and forever.

- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.
## Additional Commentary

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

“Like most of the other prophets mentioned in this book, Elijah simply appears, without any introduction. He must, however, have already been well known in Israel at the time he appeared to announce the judgment of God for the sins of Ahab and Israel (17:1). The judgment was that there would be no rain or dew for some years as a punishment for the sins mentioned in the previous verses. Elijah must not be thought of as similar to African rainmakers. Stopping or making rain was not his main work. Rather, as a true prophet, Elijah could see or hear what the Lord was planning to do. James says that the rains stopped because the prophet prayed in faith (Jas. 5:17-18). The closing words of Elijah’s prophecy, Except at my word left some hope that if the king and the people repented, the situation might change. But they did not, and Elijah had to leave and settle east of the Jordan River (17:2-3). By doing this he escaped death with the other prophets (see 18:4; 19:10) and had a supply of water from the Brook Kerith, which continued to flow for some time despite drought. The Lord took charge of meeting his need for food (17:4-6).”

“Most of Elijah’s ministry focused on combating belief in Baal and trying to bring Israel’s leaders and people back to exclusive faith in God. In Elijah’s initial confrontation with Ahab, Elijah prophesied God would withhold rain and dew for the next several years. God intended the extended drought to underscore Baal’s inability to free himself from death and provide for people’s needs and to demonstrate His (God’s) living reality and power (17:1). While Ahab blamed the drought on Elijah, Elijah explained the drought as God’s punishment for Ahab and Jezebel leading the Israelites to worship Baal (18:17-18).”

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

“We now see that the drought has gripped even Baal the rain-giver’s home country. Elijah meets a widow and asks for just a little water and bread, but all she has is a handful of flour, and a little oil (17:10-12). The quantities are so minimal that a few sticks will suffice to cook her food. This is the plight of a woman who is otherwise well-off enough to have a house with an extra guestroom on the first floor. The verbs are ironically paired—eat ... and die. This is more like a funeral meal than one for sustenance ... Elijah’s prophetic authority now begins to emerge, and the story portrays it in two ways. First, with the command-compliance motif, Elijah directs the widow (17:13) and she obeys, even against the parental instinct to first attend to her son. As the Lord was to Elijah in the first episode, so Elijah is to the widow in the second episode. Secondly, while Elijah was the passive recipient of divine provision before, now he is an active collaborator with God. He speaks the oracle of God to make the miraculous provision possible (17:14). As in the first episode, obedience is rewarded and the promise fulfilled (17:15-16).”
“Zarephath was located in Phoenicia, the heart and home of Baal worship and Jezebel’s home. The story of Elijah and the widow demonstrates the Lord’s sovereignty over Phoenicia as well as His grace and mercy even to Phoenician idolaters.”

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

“That no breath [Hb neshamah, ‘spirit, soul,’ referring to a person’s life] remained in him is an expression for death and cannot be used to argue for some explanation of the boy’s condition other than that he died. With a mother’s anguish she blamed Elijah for killing her son as punishment for her own guilt (Hb ‘awon, ‘iniquity,’ often expressing the ‘punishment or consequences’ thereof). Elijah’s prayer reflected genuine grief and compassion for this single mother. He gave her orders once again to hand him her son. The significance of Elijah’s particular actions accompanying his prayer is uncertain. However, the text does state that: He was not magically transferring his life to the boy or the boy’s sickness to himself; He did plead specifically with Yahweh as the only God who could return the boy’s life … to him. When he presented the boy to his mother, he did not take credit for the miracle but merely announced, ‘Look, your son is alive.’ The woman’s next words reveal that the miracle validated Elijah’s ministry as a spokesman for God (cp. John 3:2; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:4).”

“Elijah stretches himself on the child, thereby seemingly transferring life from himself to the sick one. Regardless of the method used, the important fact is that God raises the boy from the dead. The child revives because Yahweh hears Elijah’s plea, not because of the prophet’s prowess. Yahweh is God, not Baal, not Elijah. Still, the miracle helps the woman know that Elijah is a man who represents and is sent by the Lord. She understands that the same God who provided the oil has provided life for her son. Baal may be dead, but Yahweh is not, nor is her son … Death cannot thwart Yahweh’s purposes.”

**References**

## WHAT'S NEXT?

### Fall 2018  *In the Beginning*
- Creation and the Fall (Genesis; Job)
- God Establishes a Covenant People (Genesis)
- God Grows His Covenant People (Genesis)

### Winter 2018-19  *Out of Egypt*
- God Redeems His People (Genesis; Exodus)
- God Provides for His People (Exodus)
- God Receives Worship from His People (Exodus; Leviticus)

### Spring 2019  *Into the Promised Land*
- God Guides His People (Numbers; Deuteronomy)
- God Gives His People a Home (Joshua)
- God Delivers His People ( Judges; Ruth)

### Summer 2019  *A Kingdom Provided*
- God Provides a King (1 Samuel)
- God Provides a Godly King (1–2 Samuel; Psalms)
- God Provides a Wise King (1 Kings; Ecclesiastes)

### Fall 2019  *A Nation Divided*
- God Speaks to His People (1–2 Kings)
- God Judges the Sin of His People (2 Kings; Prophets)
- God Shows Mercy to His People (2 Chronicles; Prophets)

### Winter 2019-20  *A People Restored*
- God Sustains His People (Daniel)
- God Restores His People (Ezra; Prophets)
- God Prepares His People (Nehemiah; Esther; Malachi)

### Spring 2020  *Jesus the Messiah*
- Jesus Comes into the World (Luke)
- Jesus Begins His Ministry (Gospels)
- Jesus Among the People (Gospels)

### Summer 2020  *Jesus the Servant*
- Jesus the Healer (Gospels)
- Jesus the Teacher (Gospels)
- Jesus the Miracle-Worker (Gospels)

### Fall 2020  *Jesus the Savior*
- Jesus and the Kingdom (Gospels)
- Jesus the Savior (Gospels)
- Jesus the Risen King (Gospels)

### Winter 2020-21  *The Mission Begins*
- The Holy Spirit Comes (Acts; Epistles)
- Fundamentals of the Faith (Acts; Epistles)
- New Life in Christ (Acts; Epistles)

### Spring 2021  *The Church United*
- Living Like Jesus (Acts; Hebrews)
- The Sent Church (Acts; Epistles)
- Don’t Forget (Acts; Epistles)

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- Facing Adversity (Acts; Epistles)
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