



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1893 ~ A Boy from the Land of Gilead.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Today's *Bible Adventure* starts when the northern kingdom of Israel was being ruled in the 9th Century BC by King Ahab and his controlling wife, Queen Jezebel. Jezebel had brought pagan Baal idol worship into Israel from her home country, and raised up a company of prophets for Baal and another for worshipping Baal's fertility goddess, Asherah. These made-up gods and goddesses were assigned duties for helping the people in replacement of God, the living Holy One of Israel. Baal in Israel was worshipped as the Canaanite god responsible for sending rain, thunder, lightning and dew.

In 1st Kings, Chapter 17 of the Bible, God called a young man from Gilead to be a prophet for Him and sent him to visit Ahab with a message. The man was known as Elijah the Tishbite, because he'd grown up in the town of Tishbe in Gilead, a mountainous region east of the Jordan River.

Today, it's situated in modern-day Jordan.

Today's drama starts with two Israelites talking about how things have changed in Israel and how important it was not to be overheard saying anything about the Lord God.

No background information about Elijah is given in the Bible to help us place his family or tribe. Most times in the Bible, we're told who a person's father and grandfather were. Elijah's name in Hebrew means "My God is the Lord." Once called by God to be His prophet, Elijah travelled across the Jordan River and visited King Ahab in his palace in Samaria. He delivered a message from God to the king: "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."

This coming disastrous drought was a divine punishment given to Ahab and the Israelites because they'd broken God's covenant and turned to worship false gods. Ahab might have thought that Baal was lord of the rain clouds and dew but Elijah said that this drought would be a sign of God's power over all false gods and their false prophets.

At the time Elijah visited Ahab, there were very few prophets of God living in Israel, and Elijah was now in great danger. Jezebel was actively killing off the Lord's prophets and now that he'd spoken up, Elijah was put on her death list too. So the Lord told Elijah to go into hiding, back in Gilead beside the Cherith Brook that ran only a short distance from his home town. God promised Elijah that He would send ravens, which are a type of black crow, to bring him food each day. Elijah obeyed God and lived by the brook, receiving bread and meat each morning and evening, and drinking from the brook until it dried up as the drought deepened.

When Elijah's water supply ran out, God sent him outside Israel to the seaside city of Zarephath, in Jezebel's home country of Phoenicia (which is now modern-day Lebanon), to be cared for by a widow who, with her son, was close to starvation. How interesting it is that God sent Elijah to hide in a place only about 19 kilometres south of Jezebel's home city of Sidon!

Elijah obeyed God. As soon as he reached the city gate of Zarephath, Elijah saw a widow gathering sticks to make a fire. He called out to her to bring him a drink of water, and as she went to obey him, he asked her also for some bread. She told him that she didn't have any bread, only a small amount of flour and oil, which she had planned to cook for herself and her son before dying of starvation. Elijah told her to make a small cake of bread for him first.

We might think that Elijah was being selfish when he tested the widow by asking for his food first. Elijah knew that God would provide the means for fulfilling that demand. God never demands anything from us without also giving us the resources to meet such a demand. But to test our faith and obedience, God often makes the demand first and only afterward, shows us how we can meet it.

Such was the case of the widow of Zarephath: because the widow obeyed Elijah when she had nearly nothing left, God promised that as long as the drought lasted, her jar of flour and jar of oil would never become empty. Through this miracle, God wanted to teach the widow, and us too, not to trust in the provisions that we have, but in the Provider of provisions, which is God Himself. The widow did as Elijah had told her because she believed Elijah's word and acted upon it, even at the risk of her own and her son's lives. While the rest of the people of Sidon and Israel were experiencing a harsh drought-induced famine, this non-Israelite woman was fed by Israel's God. She was learning to place her faith in God while at the same time, God's own people continued to reject Him!

The Lord Jesus verified this account of the widow of Zarephath's faith in Luke, Chapter 4. Jesus had returned to His home town of Nazareth and while at the synagogue, He read a Scripture passage from Isaiah, Chapter 49, proclaiming that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to do a particular ministry on behalf of His Father God. When the people wanted Jesus to perform miracles to prove that He was the Son of God, He told them that no prophet of God is accepted in his own country. When Jesus cited that God had used a believing non-Israelite to care for Elijah over all the Israelites, the people became very angry and they tried to throw Him over a cliff. They firmly believed that they were far more important than non-Jews to God and that God wasn't interested in anyone in the world but them.

Sometime later, the son of the widow in Zarephath became ill. He grew worse and worse, and died. Naturally, the widow was very upset. She thought that Elijah's presence in her house had drawn God's attention to some sin that she had committed and God was punishing her for it by taking her son. Elijah was also upset by the situation. He carried the lifeless body of the boy up into his own room and cried out to the Lord. Elijah asked the Lord if He had brought this tragedy to the widow by killing her son. Elijah prayed to God to let the soul of the child come back into his body. After praying three times, God answered Elijah's prayers and He granted life again to the child.

Elijah gave the boy back to his mother. When she saw that her son was alive, her faith was strengthened and she was overjoyed. She fully understood then that the One True God of Israel had sent Elijah to her. God showed the widow that He was unlike all the other pagan gods that the general community worshipped – it was He who held the keys to life and death. Before this, the widow and those living around her thought that suffering and death were the direct results of sin. Although this is often the case of course, God showed that this isn't always the case. God showed that He was real by listening to Elijah, and desired that Elijah seek Him in faith through ongoing prayer.

What else can we learn about God from all this? God is all-knowing. His ability to know things is astounding! With the billions of stars and planets in the sky, God made only one to be able to support life. There are over 200 elements that have to be just right here on earth or else life couldn't be supported here. If even one of those elements was a little bit larger or smaller than what they are, life couldn't exist at all on this planet. Nothing God does is by chance or fits in the category of "near enough is good enough."

God knows all about each one of us too, for each of us is His creation. The Lord Jesus, who is God's Son, stated in Matthew, Chapter 10 that His Father in heaven knows how many hairs are on each of our heads. If you're thinking that when you comb your hair, a few strands out of the 100,000 or so you have fall out, be assured – God keeps an up-to-date count. God even knows what we're thinking. In Psalm 139, it says: "You (Lord) know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away." In Psalm 44, the Bible also says that God knows the secrets of every heart.

Does this observation of your mind by a holy God trouble you or create fear? There's nothing private from God; not even the darkness can hide us from God's knowledge and view. Most of the time, we sin in our minds before we go out and perform the sin that we have thought about. The Bible says that when God disciplines you for doing something wrong, don't despise His correction. In Proverbs, Chapter 3, it says: "For the Lord corrects those He loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights."

Why would the Israelites agree to bow down to a person-carved idol that they knew In most societies of the world, it's estimated that at least 90% of people want to be followers and not leaders. Followers trust their leaders to tell them what to do and they'll usually will do it. In the case of Jezebel, the people had an extra incentive of not wanting to be killed for disobeying her rules. But God doesn't want us to live our lives without thinking things through, because God holds us personally responsible for the decisions that we make in life. How can we know for sure that God, whom we cannot see, is with us?

When the time was right in God's plan, God did send His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world to show His love for helpless sinners everywhere, like us. If we humbly commit our lives to Jesus and repent from our sinful ways, Jesus promises that He will be our constant companion and never leave us. He will also give us the Holy Spirit to dwell within us for the rest of our days as a guarantee of God's ownership of our lives, and a marvellous inheritance that God is keeping in heaven for all believers to receive one day soon.

Idolatry is more than just worshipping wooden statues or burning incense to unseen ancestral spirits. Anything, anything at all that comes between us and our relationship with God through Christ is an idol. God is a jealous God and He tolerates no rivals. We must cast down and remove, in Christ's power and Name, all things the Holy Spirit reveals to us in our lives which are offensive to Him and need purifying. There are three New Testament Scriptures which say that every person must give an account to God about what they did while living on earth. Yes, all of our sins confessed to Jesus are gone, because He paid for them on the cross for us. But for believers, there are rewards to be distributed after our works have been tried and tested to see what value they were for God's kingdom.

In Psalm 40, Verse 4, it says: "How blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD and does not seek help from the proud or from liars!"

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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