

Chapter Twenty Three – Elijah and the Widow

Unfortunately, Jeroboam became a bad king. Instead of serving God faithfully, he broke his commandments and led his people to worship idols. Almost all the kings who ruled after him followed his bad example and the Kingdom of Israel became worse and worse. God sent them prophets, to teach them and bring them back to him.

Prophets were the men chosen by God to speak his message to his people. Through dreams and visions, God spoke with and through them. Even though they gave hope to the people that a Messiah would come and save them in the future, it was tough to fulfill their missions as they had to speak against the evil lives of the people and ask them to repent. The people did not welcome this kind of message because they were addicted to their sinful lives and they had their own false gods.

The greatest of the prophets was Elijah who lived in the reign of King Ahab. King Ahab was one of the worst kings. He ruled for twenty-two years in Samaria. He had married a pagan queen, named Jezebel who was very wicked. She killed all the prophets of God. She built a temple for her god Baal and chose 450 prophets to serve in it. So God sent Elijah to King Ahab to tell him, "Because of your wickedness and that of your wife, Jezebel, no more rain will fall until the day that I shall order." From that day and for over three years, no rain fell.

Slowly all the streams and wells were drying up. Elijah, who had been living near a stream, had to look for another place to get water. Then God told him to leave Israel and go to the pagan country of Zarephath. When he arrived there, he was very thirsty and hungry. He met a poor widow gathering some firewood to cook a meal. He went up to her and asked her for a cup of water. As she was going back to get it, he said, "Will you please also bring some bread for me as I am very hungry."

She turned and said, "I have just a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a bottle. With this firewood, I am going to cook my last meal for myself and my son. After that we will die."

But Elijah answered, "Make some bread for me first and then for yourself and your son. From now on, until the rain comes, your jar will always be filled with flour and the bottle with oil." She believed him and did as she was told. From that day on, she always had enough to eat.

Then one day the widow's son got sick and died. She was so heartbroken that she questioned Elijah if God had sent him to punish her for sinning. Elijah took the boy in his arms and prayed to God, "Lord, this woman has been kind to me and has taken good care of me. Please do not take the life of her child. Kindly let this child come back to life." God answered his prayer and the child started breathing again. The widow was amazed at this and was now certain that Elijah was a messenger of God.



Elijah brings the widow's son back to life

Questions:

1. What were the missions of the prophets?
2. Why did God choose the prophets to talk to the people?
3. Why did the people not want to listen to the prophets?
4. Why was the widow convinced that she and her son would die?
5. In what ways was Elijah kind to the poor widow?
6. How is it possible that some people today still suffer from hunger?