**Elijah fed by the Ravens**

**I Kings 17:1-6**

In those dark times God raised up a light, the prophet Elijah. Reared in rugged Gilead, Elijah was a rugged individualist, a man of stern character and countenance zealous for the Lord. Elijah sought Ahab and delivered the Lord’s pronouncement. In contrast to those who were not gods, whose idols Ahab ignorantly worshiped, the living Lord, who was truly Israel’s God, would withhold both dew and rain for the next several years.

Already the drought had lain on the land some six months (cf. Luke 4:25; James 5:17 with 1 Kings 18:1); now the reason for it all was to be revealed to Israel’s apostate leadership. The message was clear: Israel had broken the pledge of its covenantal relationship with God (Deut 11:16-17; 28:23-24; cf. Lev 26:19; 1 Kings 8:35). Therefore God was demonstrating his concern for both his people’s infidelity and their folly in trusting in false fertility gods like Baal. No rain! There would not even be dew until God’s authentic messenger would give the word! Unknown to Ahab, Elijah had agonized over the sin of his people and had prayed to the Lord for corrective measures to be levied on his people. Accordingly Elijah was God’s logical choice” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, I Kings 17:1).

1 And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As* the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

“It is clear that a succession of prophets was raised up by God, both in faithful Judah and in idolatrous Israel, to witness of Him before the people of both countries, and leave them without excuse if they forsook His worship. At this time, when a grosser and more deadly idolatry than had been practiced before was introduced into Israel by the authority of Ahab, and the total apostasy of the ten tribes was consequently imminent, two prophets of unusual vigour and force of character, endowed with miraculous powers of an extraordinary kind, were successively raised up, that the wickedness of the kings might be boldly met and combated, and, if possible, a remnant of faithful men preserved in the land.

“Drought was one of the punishments threatened by the Law, if Israel forsook Yahweh and turned after other gods”

(Barnes’ Notes, wwwbiblehub.com).

2 And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, 3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan.

“2-6To impress the message and its deep spiritual implications further on Ahab and all Israel, God sent Elijah into seclusion. Not only would Ahab’s frantic search for the prophet be thwarted, but Elijah’s very absence would be living testimony of a divine displeasure. Moreover, Elijah himself had much to learn, and the time of solitude would furnish needed moments of divine instruction.

Obeying God’s directions implicitly, Elijah walked the fifteen miles from Jezreel eastward to the Jordan River (v.5). There in Kerith, one of the Jordan’s many narrow gorges, Elijah took up his residence. Alone and relying solely on divine provision, Elijah was nourished by the available water of Kerith and by ravens sent from God” (Expositors Bible Commentary,

I Kings 17: 2-6).

“*Hide thyself by the brook Cherith —*A brook, no doubt, well known to Elijah: both it and the valley through which it runs, are near the river Jordan. By sending him to this remote and retired place, where he was to lie concealed, so that neither friends nor foes might know where he was, God rescued him from the fury of Ahab and Jezebel, who, he knew, would seek to destroy him. That Ahab did not seize him immediately upon hearing the forementioned prediction and warning, must be ascribed to God’s overruling providence” (Benson Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

**“**The rendering gives a fair representation of what was commanded, but the word rendered ‘brook’ is  *nahal*, which is really a torrent-bed, a deep ravine down which in rainy times a strong stream flowed, but which at others was nearly if not entirely dry. Such would make a good hiding-place. The situation of Cherith has not been identified” (Cambridge Bible, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“Cherith [The word means **separation**, a name which may possibly indicate that it was extremely secluded, or it may have been a boundary line of some sort” (Pulpit Commentary, www.biblehub.com). Some scholars believe it to be the Wadi Qelt near Jericho.

4 And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

**“RAVEN**

A large, strong, black bird (2 ft.) in length with a large 7.6 cm. (3 in.) beak. The raven (Heb. *ʿōrēḇ;* Gk. *kōrax*) is widely distributed throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. It feeds on birds and small animals, as well as seeds, berries, and fruits. It is also partially a carrion eater and was designated as an unclean bird probably because of this fact and the wide variety of its diet (Lev. 11:15; Deut. 14:14). Palestine has eight different species of ravens). These birds are particularly loud with their caws.

Noah sent out a raven to find dry land because of its strength of long flight and ability to feed on many different sources (Gen. 8:7).

Ravens fed Elijah when he was hiding from Ahab (1 Kgs. 17:4-6). This would have been contrary to the pattern of the raven, which usually took care of itself even to the neglect of its young (Job 38:41; Ps. 147:9).

Jesus taught that God’s care of the raven was an indication of God’s greater value of human beings (Luke 12:24)” (from Eerdman’s Bible Dictionary)

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

“The ravens were appointed to bring him meat, and did so. Let those who have but from hand to mouth, learn to live upon Providence, and trust it for the bread of the day, in the day. God could have sent angels to minister to him; but he chose to show that he can serve his own purposes by the meanest creatures, as effectually as by the mightiest. Elijah seems to have continued thus above a year. The natural supply of water, which came by common providence, failed; but the miraculous supply of food, made sure to him by promise, failed not” (Matthew Henry Abridged Commentary).

Ravens were thought to be the lowest of the fowls of the air, the most unworthy. When Jesus tells his disciples to “consider the ravens, they toil not neither do they spin”, he was showing that even the lowest of birds were taken care of by the Father. Now, Elijah’s great need is supplied by the ravens, what would look like the most insignificant of birds, is providing for the prophet in the lonely wilderness.