

## **WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE.**

### **(1 Kings 17: 1/7)**

- V1. Elijah's announcement is not only a declaration of the coming drought, but actually a declaration of war.
- V2. The words spoken by the unknown Elijah are surely the words of the Lord.
- V3. Elijah is instructed to leave a place where he is obvious to a place where he cannot be seen.
- V4. Miraculous provision is promised in an unlikely location.
- V5. Elijah, contrary to rational thinking, is obedient.
- V6. Needs are provided daily (this exercise in Elijah's life is not completed until three and a half years have passed – **James 5:17**)
- V7. The seeming disaster and discomfort is actually exactly what God had said would occur. Nothing has, in fact, gone wrong.

### **LESSONS TO LEARN:**

God who gives can also choose to take away. We think his gifts are ours to keep. He has not turned against us when they are taken away. Our ways are not always his ways.

- 1) The dried up brook can be a direct result of our own prayers. As Elijah watched the drying up brook he must have realised his earnest prayer that it would not rain was being answered!
- 2) We must be as willing to be hidden as to be out in front. We cannot give unless we have previously taken in. Many people do not like to be hidden, but there is value in that hidden time. God is still active shaping our characters and preparing us.
- 3) God's direction always includes adequate provision. God's ways of providing often surprise, but are always better.
- 4) We are to trust God one day at a time. Elijah did not know the next step until he had taken the first. Elijah had just what he needed. **'Give us this day our daily bread'** has always been the tenet to live by.

#### Finally.

A drying brook is often a sign of God's pleasure, not his disappointment with us.

Elijah had done nothing to earn God's discipline.

The 'wilderness experience' of Cherith was not a punishment but a protection from the evil King.

Elijah could not stay at Cherith forever; God had work for him to do.

Always be content (**Philippians 4:11**), but always have eyes open for what God wants you to do next.

If you feel you are sitting by a drying brook, remember how tenderly God dealt with Elijah. One of the most difficult commands is to hear and obey, to be alone, to stop your 'busyness', to be not so obvious. This is an essential part of becoming a mature man or woman, blessed by God.

The 'wilderness experiences' of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Elijah, Paul and, of course, Jesus himself, are some of the most inspiring and encouraging stories of the Bible. (**Luke 4:1/21**)

His lovingkindness never fails (**Psalms 100:5**).

Deane Clee,

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