

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

1 August 2010

Page 1

Lesson 28: "After the Fire a Still Small Voice" (1 Kings 17–19)

Introduction



Elder Thomas S. Monson:

"Born in poverty but nurtured in faith, [José García] prepared for a mission call. I was present the day his recommendation was received. There appeared the statement: 'Brother García will serve at great sacrifice to his family, for he is the means of much of the family support. He has but one possession—a treasured stamp collection—which he is willing to sell, if necessary, to help finance his mission.'

"President [Spencer W.] Kimball listened attentively as this statement was read to him, and then he responded: 'Have him sell his stamp collection. Such sacrifice will be to him a blessing.'"

Think about how you would react if you were asked to give up all your possessions to serve the Lord. Elder Thomas continues:

"Then, with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face, this loving prophet said, 'Each month at Church headquarters we receive thousands of letters from all parts of the world. See that we save these stamps and provide them to José at the conclusion of his mission. He will have, without cost, the finest stamp collection of any young man in Mexico'" (Ensign, Nov. 1978, 56).

When we put the things of God first in our lives, the rewards we receive are far greater than anything we may have to sacrifice along the way. This lesson tells about two people—Elijah and the widow of Zarephath—who received great blessings because they were willing to follow God even when it was difficult to do so.

Lesson Highlights

- Elijah seals up the heavens, is miraculously sustained, and raises a widow's son from the dead.
- Elijah challenges the priests of Baal and opens the heavens for rain.
- Elijah is comforted by the Holy Ghost and instructed to continue in God's work.

A study of this lesson will help encourage us to put God first in our lives and to find guidance and comfort in the words of the living prophet and the whisperings of the Holy Ghost.

Next Week

#29 "He Took Up ... the Mantle of Elijah" (2 Kings 2; 5–6)

Elijah seals up the heavens, is miraculously sustained, and raises a widow's son from the dead. (1 Kings 17)



Elijah the Prophet

So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord.

—1 Kings 17:5



Elijah and the Priests of Baal
David Green

Because of the wickedness of Ahab and his people, Elijah declared, “There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word” (1 Kings 17:1). Elijah was able to make such a declaration because he had the sealing power. After Elijah declared that no rain would fall, the Lord commanded him to flee.

1 Kings 17:2-5 - Elijah responded to the Lord’s command as Elder **Gordon B. Hinckley** explained: *“I draw strength from a simple statement made concerning the Prophet Elijah, who warned King Ahab of drought and famine to come upon the land. But Ahab scoffed. And the Lord told Elijah to go and hide himself by the brook Cherith, that there he should drink of the brook, and that he would be fed by the ravens. And the scripture records a simple and wonderful statement: ‘So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord.’ (1 Kings 17:5). There was no arguing. There was no excusing. There was no equivocating. Elijah simply ‘went and did according unto the word of the Lord.’ And he was saved from the terrible calamities that befell those who scoffed and argued and questioned”* (Ensign, Dec. 1971, 123-24).

1 Kings 17:4, 6 - Elijah survived in the wilderness by being fed by ravens who responded to the Lord’s commands. If we do his will, the Lord will sustain us physically and spiritually.

1 Kings 17:7-13 - The Lord prepared a widow to help Elijah after the brook in the wilderness dried up. In this life, the Lord often helps those in need through the service of other people.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said: *“I know we can each do something, however small that act may seem to be. We can pay an honest tithe and give our fast and freewill offerings. ... And we can watch for other ways to help. To worthy causes and needy people, we can give time if we don’t have money, and we can give love when our time runs out. We can share the loaves we have and trust God that the cruse of oil will not fail”*

(Ensign, May 1996, 31).

1 Kings 17:10-11 - The widow responded without hesitation to Elijah’s request for some water to drink.

1 Kings 17:11-14 - When the widow answered Elijah’s request for food, she explained that she and her son were down to their last meal.

1 Kings 17:13-15 - Elijah promised her that she should do as asked and not fear. She did as instructed.

Elder Holland said that the widow’s response when Elijah asked her for food was an *“expression of faith—as great, under these circumstances, as any I know in the scriptures. ... Perhaps uncertain what the cost of her faith would be ... , she first took*

her small loaf to Elijah, obviously trusting that if there were not enough bread left over, at least she and her son would have died in an act of pure charity” (Ensign, May 1996, 29).

God commanded the widow to feed Elijah when she had so little because it gave her an opportunity to be rewarded for her faith and charitable heart.

1 Kings 17:16 - The widow received an abundance of meal for her obedience in a difficult situation.

We are blessed when we put God first and do what he asks, as **President Ezra Taft Benson** taught: *“When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities. ... May God bless us to put [him] first and, as a result, reap peace in this life and eternal life with a fulness of joy in the life to come”* (Ensign, May 1988, 4, 6).

1 Kings 17:17-22 - Elijah prayed for the boy’s life when the widow’s son became sick and died. His prayer was answered and a priesthood miracle occurred.

Elijah challenges the priests of Baal and opens the heavens for rain. (1 Kings 18)

In the third year of the famine, the Lord commanded Elijah, “Go [show] thyself to Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth” (1 Kings 18:1).

1 Kings 18:17 - Ahab reacted with scorn when he saw

Elijah because he blamed Elijah for the famine.

1 Kings 18:18 - The real cause of the famine was Ahab’s rejection of the true God and his idol worship.

1 Kings 18:19-20 - As Elijah had requested, Ahab gath-

ered all of Israel and 850 false priests at Mount Carmel. When the people gathered to hear Elijah speak, he asked them, “How long halt ye between two opinions?” (1 Kings 18:21).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: *“The stirring words of various prophets ... urge us to choose, to decide, and not to halt. ... Elijah’s message has tremendous relevancy today, for all must finally choose between the gods of this world and the God of eternity”* (That My Family Should Partake [1974], 22).

Elijah is comforted by the Holy Ghost and instructed to continue in God’s work. (1 Kings 19)

Angry about Elijah’s victory over the priests of Baal, Jezebel sought to kill him. Elijah fled into the wilderness and cried to the Lord, saying, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life” (1 Kings 19:4). The Lord blessed Elijah by sending an angel with food and water. We need to note that even prophets can experience despair and need the comfort and guidance that only God can provide.

1 Kings 19:10, 14 - Despite the people’s response to God’s spectacular display of power, Elijah felt that he was the only Israelite left who worshiped the true God.

1 Kings 19:4, 8. Elijah prayed and fasted to gain peace. If we feel discouraged, depressed, or despairing, we too can find comfort in prayer and fasting.

1 Kings 19:9-13 - God comforted Elijah on Mount Horeb by communicating through the “still small voice” of the Holy Ghost rather than through loud and spectacular displays of power.

Conclusion

We will be comforted and guided as we put God first and heed the whisperings of the Holy Ghost.

1 Kings 18:36-37 - Elijah’s purpose in challenging the priests of Baal was to give the people a chance to turn back to God after witnessing his power.

1 Kings 18:38-39 - The people reacted with fear to the Lord’s display of power and acknowledged Him.

When a news reporter asked **President Hinckley** how he communicates with God, the prophet responded, *“I think the best way I could describe the process is to liken it to the experience of Elijah as set forth in the book of First Kings. Elijah spoke to the Lord, and there was a wind, a great wind, and the Lord was not in the wind. And there was an earthquake, and the Lord was not in the earthquake. And there was a fire, and the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire a still, small voice, which I describe as the whisperings of the Spirit”* (Ensign, Nov. 1996, 51).

President Ezra Taft Benson taught: *“Do you take time to listen to the promptings of the Spirit? Answers to prayer come most often by a still voice and are discerned by our deepest, innermost feelings. I tell you that you can know the will of God concerning yourselves if you will take the time to pray and to listen”* (Ensign, Nov. 1977, 32).

Besides being the Comforter, the Holy Ghost is also a teacher.

1 Kings 18:45 – The people were blessed with rain for acknowledging the Lord and his power.

1 Kings 19:15-16 - The Lord—through the Holy Ghost—instructed Elijah to go and use his priesthood powers in the Lord’s service. Serving the Lord can help us when we are discouraged.

1 Kings 19:18 - One way the Lord comforted Elijah was by telling him that there were still many Israelites who had not adopted the worship of Baal.

For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.

—2 Nephi 32:5

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- What experiences have you had when the Lord has sustained you physically or spiritually?
- How have you seen the Lord help those in need through the service of other people?
- In what ways are we blessed when we put God first, doing what he asks even when it is difficult?
- How has your life been blessed through the power of the priesthood?
- How can we more fully acknowledge the Lord and his power?
- What influences do you have around you that help you know you are not alone? What can you do to help others when they feel alone?