

words are found in the Pentateuch (Gen.2:7) in relation to the creative act of God.

e. With success. Faith is always honored by God. If one does not see its results, he will eventually. Mark these steps:

- 1) With the Lord. The Lord heard Elijah's prayer and raised the boy (James 5:15).
- 2) With the boy. The word "soul" is the same used by Elijah. Hence the boy lived again (better than "revived").
- 3) With the mother. The child was returned to her. This was a natural move, but it was also for a purpose that she might "see" what God had wrought. Would to God we could "see" today that He is able to do the impossible.

4. The PRODUCTION of faith. v.24.

Believers must never leave the impression that God is a petty puppet who responds to the whims of His creatures. God does respond to faith. But even this is all of grace. What came of this incident? Hearken to the text:

- a. Recognition of Elijah. Earlier the widow had referred to Elijah as a "man of God." (v.18). Now she is fully persuaded of it (John 3:2; Job 42:2).
- b. Designation of truth. A true prophet actually spoke the Word of God. This was one of the tests of presumptuous men over the true servant of God (Deut.18:20-22). The Word of God in the mouth of the prophet is true revelation!

CONCLUSION Does God act in our events of life? The answer is affirmative. Right where you are now is within His purpose. If you are unsaved, let Him save you. If you are in doubt, let Him relieve you of your questions. If you are in sore affliction, take note of His design in that affliction. Amen.

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES ON ELIJAH

"Raising the Dead"

I Kings 17:17-24

Introduction

1. Every event in the life of a child of God is ordered of the Lord (Rom.8:28). He controls all things by the might of His sovereign power. Hence, it was God Who brought Elijah to Zarephath (v.9) and this involved him in the experiences of a chosen widow (v.16).

2. The text does not state how long Elijah was with the widow, but presumably a considerable period of time. Finally, a move was made by God in the affairs of Elijah so that his quiet stay with the widow changed (v.17). Tests of all sorts are the common lot of the believer (I Cor.10:13; Phil. 1:29; Heb.12:6-11).

3. The only answer to life's experiences is faith in the absolute pure providence of a living God. Check out some of these aspects of faith as demonstrated in this incident:

1. The EXAMINATION of faith. v. 17.

a. Its suddenness. Here is an account which seems to be moving so as to conclude with "and so they lived happily ever after. . . ." The Hebrew was connective, however, continues the account on an apparently sad note. A dramatic change of events takes place. Unless one accepts that all lies in His hands, life will be too full of sudden changes (Psa. 31:15).

b. Its severeness. Death had been on the mind of the widow--until Elijah came (v.12). He brought hope and life. In a terse manner, the Bible reports:

- 1) The boy was sick.
- 2) The boy was severely sick.
- 3) The boy was so sick he died!

Here is calamity of the severest nature. The Bible concludes rightly (Mark 8:36). What the widow had feared for all, she experienced with her son.

c. Its purposefulness. It's seven words and only four in Hebrew: "After these things . . ."
Theism alone makes life liveable. Blind fatalism was not a part of this account (I Kings 12:24). All moved according to His purpose and permission (Rom.8:28; I Pet.1:7; 4:12).

2. The PROSTRATION of faith. v. 18.

To the events of the death, the widow responded quickly:

a. With agitation. The first recorded response of the widow is in the form of a question. It seems she actually posed a question to the prophet in the sense of "Does God really care for me?" "How can a loving God have fed me and my son to bring this to pass?" She had found an inconsistency in her view of God! The first to feel the impact of her collapse of faith in a perfect God is His servant the prophet Elijah. Preachers are often the focus of intense questioning about the Lord!

b. With conviction. The second response of the widow concerned her personal relation with God. She became conscious of sin. The word of "sin" here is wretchedness or distress. She conceived of the matter as a judgment from God upon her imperfection. The last part of the verse seems to support this. The Hifil form of the verb is causative in force and in effect blames the coming of Elijah for her son's death. This widow, like most of us, must learn that trials often are pedagogical and not punitive.

3. The OPERATION of faith. vv.19, 20.

Whereas the widow questioned God, Elijah was drawn to God. The sun which hardens clay also melts wax! See how Elijah responded:

a. With peace. Here is an illustration of David's dictum (Psa.119:165). Elijah acknowledged God's principle in trial (Psa.119:75). He calmly

accepted the reality of the events. What a lesson for all of us!

b. With trust. Elijah was as much in the dark as the widow. All he knew was that the boy had died, but he was prepared to trust God's wise and loving purpose in it all. To trust is not an admission of intellectual suicide, but of utmost confidence in a faithful God Who has infinite perfection in all His ways.

c. With purpose. There is no trace of a breakup in Elijah's emotional balance. He was controlled by Him "before whom" he stood (v.1). It was as natural for him to turn to God as it is for some to lose their mental balance! Mark what he did in the light of God's purpose:

1) With the woman. The imperative mode is employed to command the woman to give the stricken boy to the prophet. No options were allowed.

2) With the boy. Repeatedly the third person singular is employed (v.19): Elijah took him, carried him, and laid him. There was no circumvention of the situation and need.

3) With the Lord. The trial led Elijah to his knees. Oh, how he prayed. He prayed to a faithful God (LORD), to a powerful God (God), and to a personal God (my God). The word Elijah used here for "sin" is that of "moral infractions." It differs from the one earlier (v.18). It is interesting that Elijah includes in his prayer the fact that his sojourn is with the widow. This also was part of God's plan and should in fact altar the matter of the boy's death and the response to his prayer. What faith and what an appeal.

Here is a faith that works.

d. With confidence. Elijah lived in harmony with the Lord (v.1) and obeyed His Word (v.5). He asked God to do the impossible. His use of the word "soul" shows there was a true death for the term differs from "breath" (v.17). Both