

1 KINGS 17:20-24 -- ELIJAH PRAYS; THE WIDOW'S SON IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD!

1Ki 17:20-24 Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" [21] And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." [22] Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. [23] And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!" [24] Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth."

The Biblical Setting:

- In the last part of chapter 16, we are told of the wicked King Ahab – *1Ki 16:30 Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him.* He married Jezebel and in *1Ki 16:33 And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.*
- Under instruction from the Lord, Elijah told Ahab, because of his wickedness there would be a drought in Israel and no rain or dew, “*except at my word*”.
- The Lord preserved Elijah through the drought, first at the Brook Cherith, fed by ravens. Then he was miraculously fed in Zarapheth, which belongs to Sidon, by a widow.
- Now here we have this widow having her son die. It was as a thorn in the flesh, lest she should be lifted up above measure with the favors that were done her and the honors that were put upon her. **She was nurse to a great prophet, was employed to sustain him, and had strong reason to think the Lord would do her good; yet now she loses her child.**
- We must **not think it strange if we meet with very sharp afflictions, even when we are in the way of duty,** and of eminent service to God. She, herself, was nursed by miracle, and kept a good house without charge or care, by a distinguishing blessing from heaven; and in the midst of all this satisfaction she was thus afflicted.
- When we have the clearest manifestations of God's favor and good-will towards us, even then we must prepare for the rebukes of Providence. Our mountain never stands so strong but it may be moved, and therefore, in this world, **we must always rejoice with trembling.**

ELIJAH'S PRAYER IN REVIVING THE WIDOW'S SON FROM THE DEAD!

1Ki 17:20 Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?"

- *He cried out* - A prayer full of powerful arguments. You are the Lord, that can revive the child: and my God; and therefore will not, deny me. He pleads his interest in the Lord, and makes use of it as an argument with Him to hear his prayer; he observes the character and condition of the woman, a widow, such as the Lord has a compassionate regard for; and he urges the kindness of her to him, with whom he had sojourned so long; and seems to represent the case as an additional evil or affliction to him, as well as to the widow.

1Ki 17:21 And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him."

- *Come back to him* - By which it is evident, that the soul was gone out of his body, this was a great request; but Elijah was encouraged to make it; by his zeal for God's honor, and by the experience which he had of his prevailing power with God in prayer. *and cried out to the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray, let this child's soul come into him again:* which shows that the child was really dead; and a proof this that the soul dies not with the body, but exists in a separate state without it.

1Ki 17:22 Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.

- *Came back to him* - This plainly supposes the existence of the soul in a state of separation, and consequently its immortality: probably **God might design by this miracle to give an evidence hereof, for the encouragement of His suffering people.** *And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah,.... In prayer, and answered it: and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived;* this is the first instance of anyone being raised from the dead;

1Ki 17:23 And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

- *And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out from the upper room into the house,....* Being come to life, he took it off of the bed in his bedchamber, and brought it down to the lower part of the house, where the woman was: *and gave him to his mother: and Elijah said, see, your son lives!;* which no doubt was to her great surprise, and was a wonderful instance of divine power and goodness, and to which the apostle may have respect, Heb 11:35 *Women received their dead raised to life again.*

1Ki 17:24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth."

- The good woman hereupon cries out, Now I know that you are a man of God; though she knew it before, by the increase of her meal, yet the death of her child she took so unkindly that she began to question it (a good man surely would not serve her so); but now she was abundantly satisfied that he had both the power and goodness of a man of God, and will never doubt of it again, but give up herself to the direction of his word and the worship of the God of Israel. Thus the death of the child (like that of Lazarus, *Joh 11:4*) was for the glory of God and the honor of His prophet.

SUMMARY:

- **Note that at times of great blessings, afflictions/thorns in the flesh can come, lest we be lifted up in pride. Consider the timing of the death of the widow's son. Are we prepared?**
- **Note the power of prayer** - Jas 5:17-18 *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. [18] And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*
- **Note the address** - *"O LORD my God"*
- **Note the teaching of the separation of the soul from the body, in death** – vs. 21-22 *"I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." [22] Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. Cf. 2 Cor. 5*
- **Note the death of the child and his being revived from the dead was for the glory of God and the honor of His prophet.** Cf. John 11:4

WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS - Sovereign Grace

*When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.*

*See from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.*