

File No. 71

I KINGS 16:29 — 17:7; 18:4

ELIJAH SAYS: 'NO RAIN UNTIL I SAY!'

(SBS Bk 3 Story No. 7)

Story Notes

The scene was set for the arrogance of Ahab, king of northern Israel, who took Jeroboam's sin to greater lengths. He strengthened his position politically through a marriage alliance with Phoenicia, weakening himself by embracing and promoting the false worship of his wife. As a further indication of the arrogance of the times, Hiel ignored the prophecy against the rebuilding of Jericho, and the death of the builder's sons did not register with the North as to the danger they were in. However, far from God being far away, the scene is set for one of the greatest of Israel's prophets.

Chapter 17:1–7

The God of Israel still lived. Elijah stood before him and knew the purpose and heart of God for his people. From seemingly nowhere, God had sent another man like Moses who knew the heart of God and was called and empowered to participate in God's jealous care that his name be honoured. Elijah asked for one of the curses predicted by Moses (Deut. 28:23–24) to come, and to remain until his further word. James tells us that such effective and fervent prayer can accomplish much (James 5:16–18). What James had in mind was the healing of the sick and restoration of sinners, so, we suppose that that is what Elijah had in mind. How could God's people be so ignorant of their Lord? Would they turn from their idols and be healed?

Revelation tells us that two witnesses prophesied for three and a half years (42 months or 1260 days) with power to stop rain during that time (Rev. 11:1–13). They are a picture of the church that participates in the prophetic ministry of Christ to the world. John the Baptist had come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17), but every person who holds the testimony of Jesus is greater than John. It is the high calling of all who believe in Christ to share in the jealous love of God for the world. Our prayers for the world are to be shaped by God wanting his Son to be known.

As famine spread, Elijah went to the river as directed by God, and there, was fed by birds.

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