

# Elijah the Tishbite

— His prayer, the ravens and a destitute widow (Chapter 17)



Laindon 9<sup>th</sup> August 2017

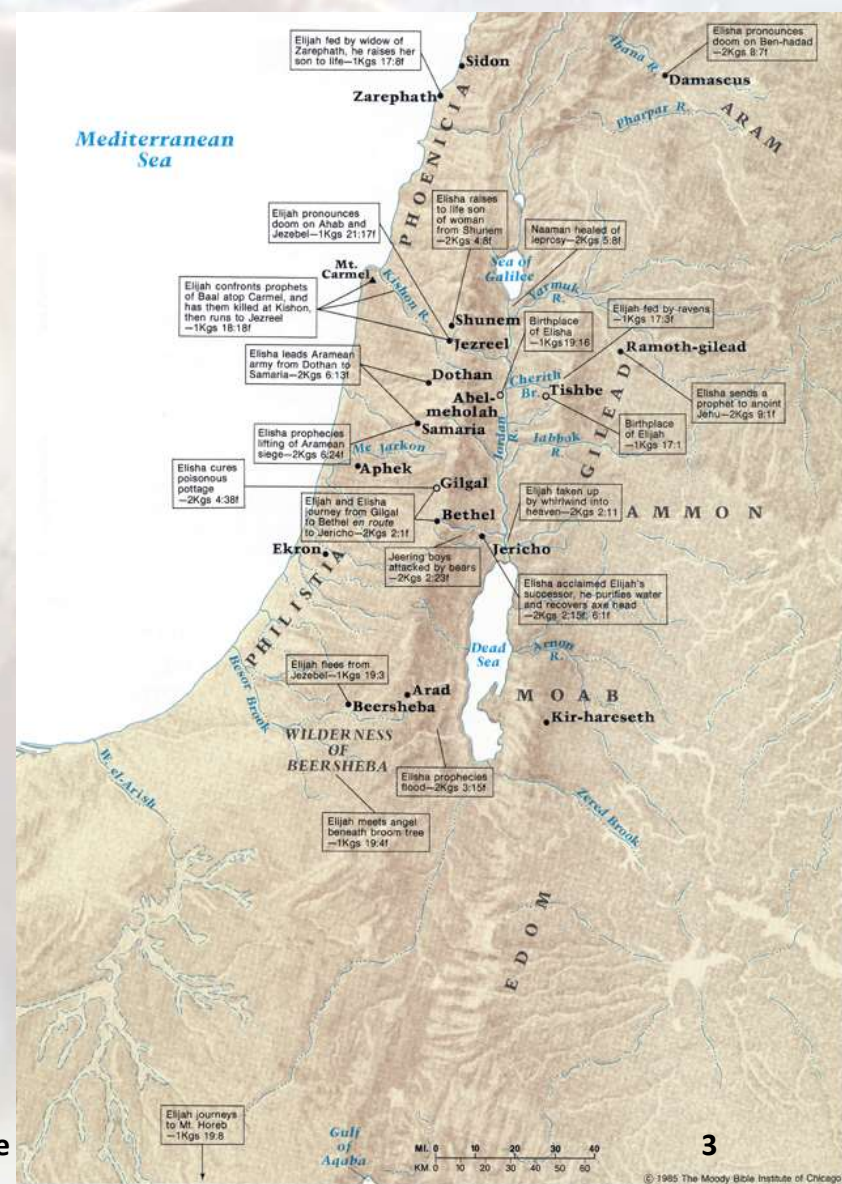
# Elijah the Tishbite

- His prayer, the ravens and a destitute widow (1 Kings 17)
- The prophets of Baal (18)
- Fleeing to and events at Horeb (19)
- Naboth's vineyard (21)
- Messenger from Samaria, ascension (2 Kings 1 & 2)

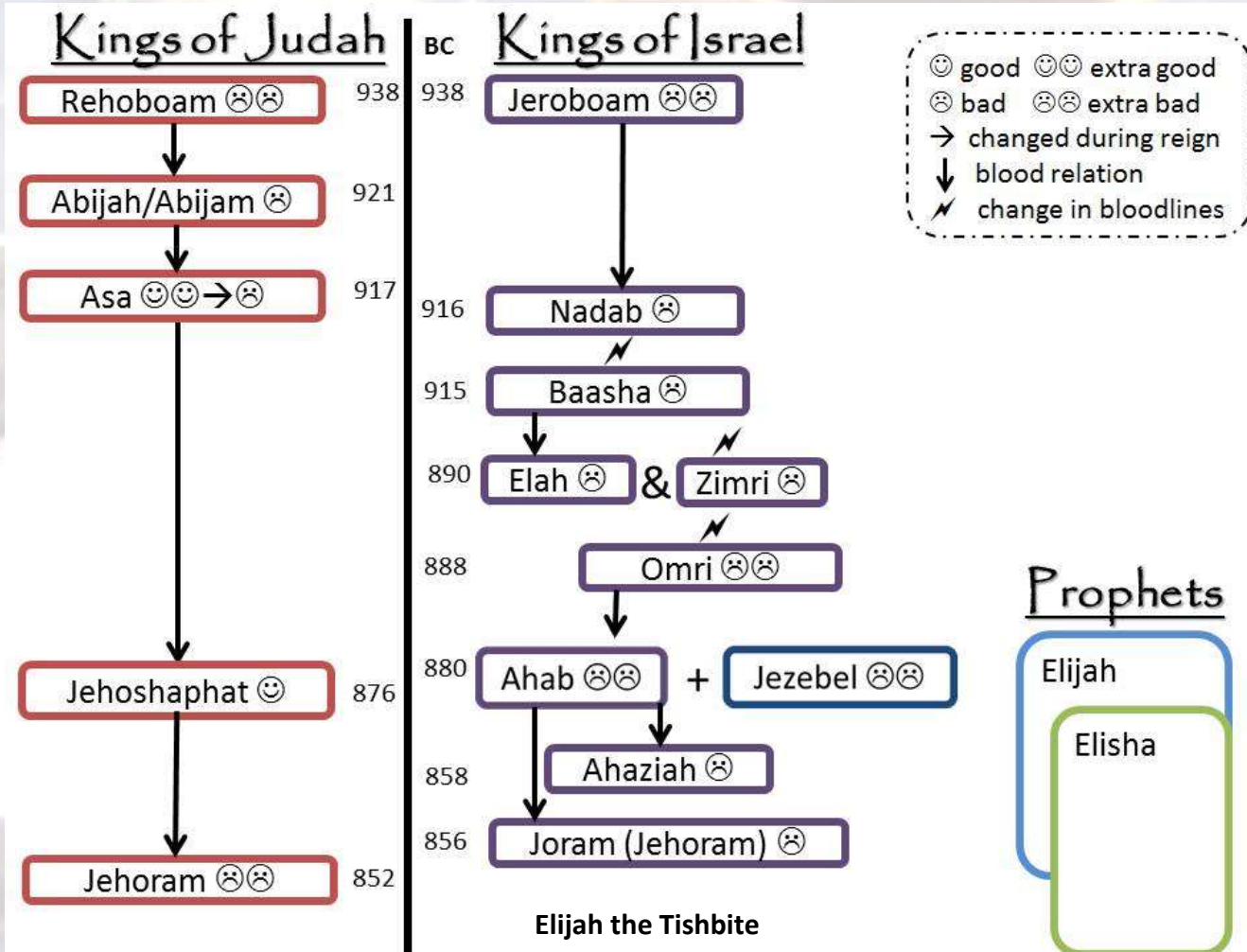
# Elijah's travels



Elijah the Tishbite



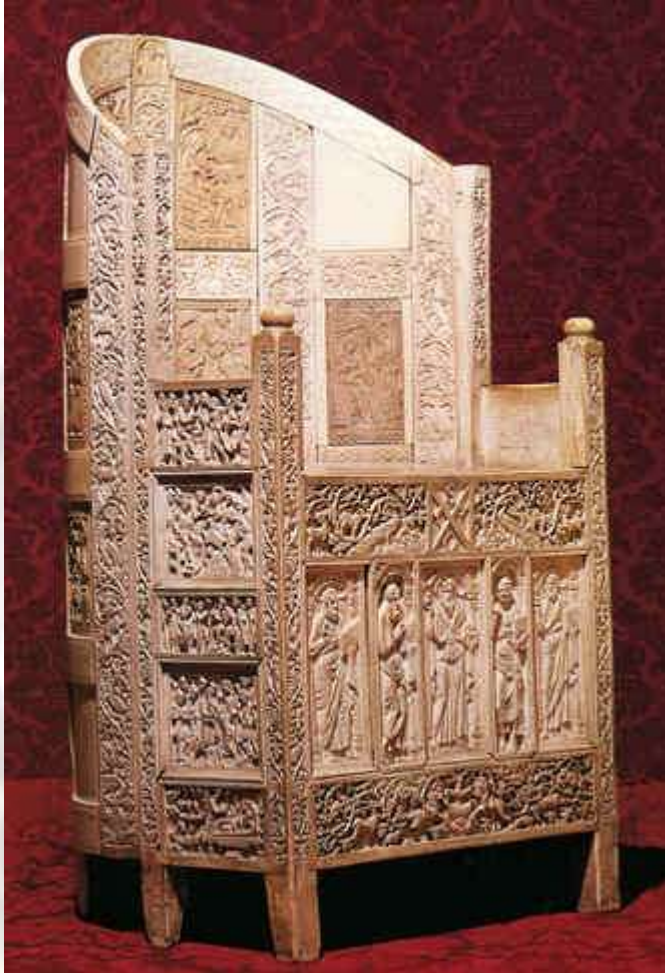
# Kings of Israel & Judah



# The state of things in Israel at this time

- **Ahab the Son of Omri was King of Israel (the northern kingdom)**
- **“And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him” 1 Kings 16:31.**
- **“...and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.” 1 Kings 16:33**

# Also a time of great material prosperity



**“Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?” 1 Kings 22:39**

# Elijah bursts in upon the scene

- “And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” 1 Kings 17:1
- “Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the LORD's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.” Deuteronomy 11:16-17

**“Elias [*Elijah*] was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.”**

**James 5:17**



# Withholding the rain was also a spiritual figure

- **“I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.” Hosea 14:5-6**
- **“He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.” Psalm 72:6-7**

# Elijah is commanded to hide himself

**“And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.” 1 Kings 17:2-7**

**Elijah was fed by ravens**



# God's choice of ravens

- “And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.” Genesis 8:7
- “And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among  
“Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?” Luke 12:24  
cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat. Job 38:12
- “But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it [*the land laid waste*]; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.” Isaiah 34:11

# God's preparation of Elijah for his next task

- Ravens were unclean even as the Gentiles were
- Parallels with Peter's vision and Cornelius (Acts 10:9-20)
- Also a broader parallel with John the Baptist (cf Luke 3:1-2 with Elijah and also Matthew 3:4 with 2 Kings 1:8)
- Both Elijah and John's mission was to bring light to Israel when it dwelt in darkness, to turn Israel back to the Lord

# Elijah's next mission

- “And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.” 1 Kings 17:8-9
- “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” James 1:27

# The journey

- Extreme drought
- Over 100 miles
- Zidon the territory of Jezebel
- Centre of Baal worship
- The Zidonians were Gentiles



Elijah the Tishbite

# Elijah's journey to Zarephath





# Zarephath on the Mediterranean Sea



# The city of Zarephath



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# Elijah arrives in Zarephath

**“Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” 1 Kings 17:9-12 (cf Jesus & Syrophenician woman)**

# He gives the widow instruction

**“And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.” 1 Kings 17:13-16**

# The widow's son dies

- “And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?” 1 Kings 17:17-18
- Her consciousness of her sin was echoed by Peter when he said to Jesus: “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord”

# The widow's son is raised to life

**“And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.”**

**1 Kings 17:19-24**

# The widow's allegory

- The widow's response to Elijah's request was immediate
- She was then put under utmost test as Elijah asked for her last morsel of meal
- She faced death but was prepared to give up this life
- Elijah asked to be served first; the children came before the Gentile (cf Syrophenician woman)
- The woman trusted in Elijah's word, as the word of God
- She was conscious of her past sins
- She received her son in the likeness of resurrection (cf Jesus)
- So she came to a faithful and full understanding of the God of Israel

# Elijah's experience

- **Elijah's total dependence on God (a widow, a Gentile, from Zidon)**
- **He was hidden away as Israel came to realise the meaning of the drought that had been brought upon them**
- **As Jesus taught: "But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow." Luke 4:25-26**



# Elijah's mission an antitype of John's

**“And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Luke 1:16-17**

**“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” Romans 11:2-5**

# So Elijah will come again in the last days

- “And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.” Mark 9:11-13
- “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:5-6