Elijah/Elisha: Daring Dudes in Dark Days Pastor Rick Baker

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**Surviving a Resource’s Stress Test**

1 Kings 17:8-24

When the brook dries up, the flour pot is almost empty, the cooking oil is down to the drags, and a life-threatening illness lands in the family...

*These dark days are* ***a showdown between the materialist’s replacement god, and the true and living God,*** *between those who live on “bread” alone and those who do not live by bread alone, between those who imagine religions that support material desires and those whose desire is satiated in the Infinite alone.*

But it is abundantly clear that God has to work to get us there... *“You have not because you do not ask, and when you do ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your own pleasures (hedomai)” (Jas. 4:2-3).*

*“...****the brook dried up*** *because there had been no rain...”*

**Two Lessons Loom Large through the story of the Widow of Zarephath**

Israel, God’s people, decided to pin their hopes for economic prosperity on a foreign god-Baal. Its specialty was rain and accompanying fertility.

1. **The Bankruptcy of Materialism**—faith in the limited/finite/created is absurd.

* Humans value bodies over souls—"which gods bless my wants, desires, preferences?”
* Materialism is the worship of the material, created things.
* Materialism is the religion of the natural man and “the Market is God” (Prof. Harvey Cox, Harvard Div. School)

*We have been baited by material temptations since the Garden. It is the opposition side to serving God.*

*So, Israel chasing after Baal is not a shock; what is shocking is sticking with it into chronic insecurity culminating in soul bankruptcy.*

1. **The Riches of Robust Faith**—faith in the life-giving Infinite God.

There was a Gentile woman in the heart of Baal paganism who believed in the living God of Israel (12)

* Material can’t help you when material is your problem—**God actually can help** you when God has caused material to be the problem.

*“Leave here” (3)—the Exodus playbook*

*“Go at once” (9)*

*“I have commanded a widow...to supply food...” (9)*

“If YOU try to save your life, you will lose it.” (Jesus, Matt. 16:25)

* Those relying on material must stockpile for any semblance of security—**God doesn’t need** a stockpile, and we only need sufficient.

“Don’t be afraid” (13)

“...will not be used up...will not run dry until...” (14)

Insecure accumulation versus sufficiency tempts people into the arms of different gods even while claiming allegiance to the true God.

* Material things can’t personally respond to anything—**God can hear** the cries of your heart.

“Then he cried out to the LORD...The LORD heard Elijah’s cry...” (20,22)

*“Where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the* ***Maker*** *of heaven and earth!” (Ps. 121:1-2)*

* Material can’t secure anything and certainly can’t reward allegiance beyond its on limitations—**God rewards** faithful allegiance with His limitless resources.

“...there was food every day...” (15)

“Look, your son is alive!” (23)

Faith, not in the provisions, but in the Provider and an indomitable conviction that the Lord is the God of the living and the dead, of plenty and famine, of rain and drought, of Jew and Gentile.

“Now I know... that **the word of the LORD**... is the truth” and Baal is not. Materialism is a religion of broken promises.