Scripture: Ezekiel 17

It is always good when speaking on a particular subject from scripture that the context regarding the verses used in the sermon are explained, by doing this we have clear understanding of the true message being conveyed.

In this sermon I will be referring to other chapters in1Kings as this will give to us an understanding of the truth behind each point that I will make. It is always important to have a good understanding of the Bible, also to have an overview of the truths it states concerning the overall condition of the world and of society in general.

In 1Kings 17 verse 1 we are introduced to a man name Elijah who was a prophet of the Lord. He is referred to as a Tishbite, there is no record of him before this, so we are introduced to an unknown man who was a prophet, who was suddenly projected into the limelight because God gave him a word to convey to Ahab the King. His prophetic declaration which was, *"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" 1Kings* 17 v 1. We must see now the reason for such a prophetic word. It was because of.

1. The State and Sin of the Nation.

To understand this, we must go back to 1King 12 where we read of certain Kings who did evil in the site of the Lord. One king referred to is Jeroboam, of all the Kings who did evil in the site of the Lord this man was worse than any, because he made Israel to sin.

As a King he ignored the Ten Commandments committing evil acts at two of the most important places in Israel, Bethel and Dan let's read 1Kings 12 v 26 to 30.

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: 27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them,

It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.

This is reminiscent of the time when Moses came down from meeting with the Lord on Mount Sini, and Arron and made the Golden calf for the people to worship Exodus 32 v 4 & 8.

The fact the matter is, King Jeroboam involved Israel in what he did, so the people jointly committed evil and rebellion against the Lord. Following this Jeroboam is mentioned as the .King who made Israel to sin. His sin affected the whole nation of Israel.

When Adam sinned, his sin affected everyone born into the world, so sin was passed on from generation to generation, his sin affected the world, Jeroboam sin affected the whole nation of Israel. Sin does two things; it separates people from God and it contaminates the people. Drop a spot of blue ink into a glass of clear water and you will soon see it is dissipated through the whole glass of water until all of it turns blue.

2. The rebellion of Jeroboam affected the Nation.

After three years the time had now arrived for Elijah to reveal himself to Ahab, whilst Ahab went one way to seek water and Obadiah the prophet another, Elijah shows himself to Obadiah he tells the prophet “tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here”.
There was some reaction from Obadiah who had hidden one hundred prophets by fifty in a cave, Jezebel had killed some of the Lords prophets, so Obadiah preserved the hundred prophets.

Elijah assures Obadiah that he will show himself to Ahab. When Elijah shows himself to Ahab 1Kings 18 v 17 & 18 says “And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubled Israel? 18 And he answered, I have

not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim"

Elijah then throws down a challenge to Ahab and we are faced with.

The Scene at Carmel.

1Kings 18 v 19 "Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table"

He confronts the people and says how long halt you between two opinions. Today is the day of decision, this is going to be the day when the true God of Israel shows himself to be the only true and living God.

The prophets of Baal build an altar put on it their sacrifice, they called on Baal, but it was all to no avail, there was no answer to their call to Baal, no fire, nothing. Elijah taunted them, perhaps he gone away on business, or having a sleep, they call morning to evening but no fire fell from Baal.

Now it was Elijah's turn, he orders the rebuilding of the altar, prepares the sacrifice, orders a trench to be dug around the altar then fill it with water, when he finished he called upon the Lord, and the Lord heard and answered by sending fire down on the altar.

The prophets of Baal were destroyed. They had had no rain for three, now was the time for it to pour down. Elijah goes to prayer. The next thing to consider is.

3. The Size of the cloud.

1 Kings18 v 41 "And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain."

Elijah went to a Carmel got down on his knees put his hard in his hand and prayed, Elijah was persistent in prayer. He sends his servants to look across the sea and then report back what he sees but he sees nothing, Elijah continues his knees in prayer, sending his

servant again and then report back what he sees six times he reports back all he sees is blue sky, Elijah was persistent, and sent him a seventh time. This time when he returned, he reported he had seen a cloud the size of a man's hand.

Reporting back, he says to Elijah he said I see a cloud the size of a man's hand. Elijah's persistence in prayer paid off. He never gave up praying for rain until he got an answer, when the servant said he saw a cloud the size of a man's hand, Elijah knew his prayer had been answered.

1Kings 18 v 44 "And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there arises a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not."

4. The Sound from heaven.

The Sound from heaven became a reality as the clouds began to fill the sky above Elijah.

1Kings 18 v 44 to 19 v 1, "And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there arises a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, go up, say unto Ahab, prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword."

Elijah heard the sound of abundance of rain before he felt the substance. Elijah was a very fit man! He outran Ahab, teaching the city before Ahab did.