



GOD OF FIRE & RAIN

—THE STORY OF—
ELIJAH & GOD

3



YES, NO & MAYBE

1. As a child, I got into a lot more trouble than the people sitting near me.
2. God has disciplined me for some of my sins in tangible ways.
3. I would struggle with my faith if one of my children died.
4. One of the benefits of having a relationship with God is you're more likely to receive a miracle.
5. God lets bad things happen so that He can show who He is.

DIG DEEPER

◊ Growing up, what were you told about how God punishes and corrects those who were not living a godly lifestyle?

› **READ 1 Kings 17:17-24** (NIV)

17 Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. 18 She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

19 "Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. 20 Then he cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" 21 Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

22 The Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. 23 Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."

» **17 "He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing."** - The tie between a mother and an only son is, perhaps, the closest and tenderest of all blood relationships; and it has been remarked that it is peculiarly strong and sacred in the East. "The only son of his mother and she was a widow" (Luke 7:12): who does not feel the pathos of these words? And the tie would be all the stronger in this case because they had suffered together; because he had been given back to her from the jaws of death (ver. 12).

• Why do you think that God allows sickness and death to come upon people who are following His guidance?

DIG DEEPER... CONTINUED

» **18 ...remind me of my sin and kill my son?** - She thought her son had died as punishment for her guilt. The guilt she referred to was most likely due to her previous worship of Baal, which she had presumably ceased since Elijah came to stay with her. She believed, as often in Old Testament thought, that death and sickness must be punishment for some hidden sin now brought 'to the light' (NEB, Ps. 19:13; John 9:1).

• How have church members promoted the thought that sickness and death come from God's wrath toward those who are doing sinful things? Does that fit God's character?

» **19 upper room** - The boy was small enough to be carried in his mother's arms. Many homes in Palestine at that time had guest rooms built on their roofs. It was in one such upper room that Elijah was staying. The fact that the widow's house had an upper room, in accordance with the mode of building in Elijah's time and the custom of giving the 'alliyeh to the guest were the same as now; This also shows that this poor widow was not originally among the poorest classes (who have no 'alliyeh), but that her extreme destitution was owing to the famine.

» **20 have you brought tragedy...?** - The meaning is, "You, Oh Lord my God, according to Your grace and righteousness, can not possibly leave the son of this widow in death." Such confident belief carries within itself the certainty of being heard. The prophet therefore proceeds at once to action, to restore the boy to life.

• It is interesting how comfortable Elijah felt to question God and His actions or inactions in this matter. Is it acceptable for us to question God today about similar matters?

» **22 the boy's life returned to him** - This is the first recorded instance in Scripture of restoration to life of one who had died and now had a chance to continue living on this earth, and it wasn't performed for a Jew, but for a pagan.

« What does it say about God that the first resurrection of this kind was performed for someone outside of the chosen Israelites?

» **24 "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."** - This incident showed the widow and others that the power of the Lord as the true God contrasted greatly with the impotency of Baal. Though she knew it before, by the increase of her flour and oil, 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, Jn. 11:4) was for the glory of God and the honor of his prophet.

« We often discuss why God does NOT perform miracles all the time, but what can you see are the consistent reasons why He DOES perform miracles from time to time?

« What does this say about His character?



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MY PRAYER...

1. What things have I avoided questioning God about?
2. How have I allowed God to bring or not bring miracles into my home?
3. What new aspect of God's character does He want me to know?