

# The Book of 1 Kings



## Part 8 3 more studies in 1 Kings

## Introduction

The two books, 1 & 2 Kings, in the Hebrew Old Testament were one book. It was divided by the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) translators. They summarized these books as follows: I The Reign of Solomon; II Division of the Kingdom, and Parallel History of the Two Kingdoms; III Subsequent History of Judah to the Captivity.

1 Kings opens with the Hebrew nation in its glory. 2 Kings closes with the nation in ruin. Together they cover a period of about 400 years, from 1000-600 BC.

## Author

The author is not known. A Jewish tradition says it was Jeremiah. Whoever the author is, he makes frequent reference to state annals and other historical records existent in his day, such as: “The book of the acts of Solomon”; “The book of chronicles of the Kings of Judah”; and “The book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel” (1 Kings 11:41; 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 27 etc.).

## Brief Outline of 1 & 2 Kings

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. The last days of David and Solomon’s Accession     | 1 Kings 1:1 – 1 Kings 2:46   |
| 2. The reign of Solomon                               | 1 Kings 3:1 – 1 Kings 11:43  |
| 3. History of the Divided Kingdom                     | 1 Kings 12:1 – 2 Kings 10:36 |
| 4. History of Judah & Israel to fall of North Kingdom | 2 Kings 11:1 – 2 Kings 17:41 |
| 5. History of Judah to the fall of Jerusalem          | 2 Kings 18:1 – 2 Kings 25:30 |

## Alternative Outline of 1 & 2 Kings

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The Golden Age   | 1 Kings 1-11          |
| 2. The Torn Kingdom | 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17 |
| 3. The Last Days    | 2 Kings 18-25         |

## Please Note the following:

1. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
2. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP.**

## Study 1 – God sustains His prophet Elijah

1 Kings 17:2-16

*(Sermon on 18-Sep – Paul)*

**Before we begin: Remind yourself what message the prophet Elijah delivered in chapter 17 verse 1. To whom was the message delivered and why?**

*In 1 Kings 17:1 the prophet Elijah delivers this message to King Ahab (and Jezebel)- As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word*

*It is a reminder to King Ahab, who Elijah serves (the Lord, God of Israel) as opposed to King Ahab and Jezebel who worship Baal and Asherah who the one true God is; and it's a rebuke to Ahab and Jezebel that they may believe Baal and Asherah control the weather; but in fact, the Lord, God of Israel is in control.*

*It's also a rebuke to Ahab for rebuilding Jericho and ignoring God's Word that came through Joshua saying that Jericho should never be rebuilt.*

### Read 1 Kings 17:2-3

1. Why do you think the Lord sends Elijah away [there may be more than one answer here]
  - a. *The drought announced by Elijah was a great threat to Israel; therefore, Elijah's life is in danger, so God sent him away for his own safety.*
  - b. *If we read on to 1 Kings 18:4, we see Jezebel is killing off the Lord's prophets, so again, God sends Elijah away to protect him until the time is right for Elijah to act.*
  - c. *God often prepares His people for service; sending Elijah away is to prepare him for the task ahead*
  - d. *Elijah in v1 has just announced there will be no rain except by God's word; so, the absence of Elijah from the scene; is symbolic of the absence of God's Word. Just as there is to be drought in the land; there is to a drought in God's Word too. God's silence is often seen as a judgment (see 1 Samuel 28:6, 15; Psalm 74:9; Amos 8:11-12)*

2. Where is Elijah sent? [See map in appendix 1] Is this significant?

*Elijah is sent to Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan (see red oval on map). This is outside of Israel, and therefore Gentile country; and also, away from the promised drought for the time being; although the brook will dry up later. It's also a time to be alone with God.*

*Kerith means "cutting off" and is symbolic with Elijah being "cut-off" from Israel as God prepares him for his task.*

### Read 1 Kings 17:4-9

3. What provision is there for Elijah in verse 4?

*Elijah has water from the brook and God commands ravens to supply him food; as well as safety.*

4. What provision is there for Elijah in verse 6? Does that remind you of anything? (cf. Exodus 16:1-8)

*The ravens brought Elijah bread and meat in the morning and evening. It should remind us of God's provision of daily manna and quail to the Israelites when they were in the wilderness.*

5. Is the choice of ravens interesting? (cf. Leviticus 11:13-15ff; Deuteronomy 14:11-14ff) Ravens are declared unclean in Leviticus 11:15 and Deut 14:14. But God's ways are not our ways? What sort of meat would ravens bring? Probably better not to ask, and just eat what God provides! Ravens were renowned for not even feeding their own young (Job 38:41; Psalm 147:9).

*Charles Spurgeon drew two points of application from this event, likening the food the ravens brought to spiritual food. First, he recognized that God may bring a good word to us through an unclean vessel, spiritually unclean, like a raven. Second, that one can bring spiritual food to others and still be unclean spiritually themselves. "But see, too, how possible it is for us to carry bread and meat to God's servants, and do, some good things for his church, and yet be ravens still!" (Spurgeon).*

6. What happens in verse 7?

*Eventually the brook dries up because there was a drought in the land.*

7. Where does God send Elijah in verse 9? [See map in appendix 1] Is this significant?

*God sends Elijah to Zarephath in Sidon. See blue oval on the map. Again, this is Gentile country. Where God has already primed a widow to supply Elijah with food.*

*Note: it's also the region where the wicked Jezebel is from! A region controlled by her father. And the region which originally worshipped the god Baal, which is the reason Elijah has been sent!*

8. Verse 9 tells us a widow is to supply Elijah with food? Is this surprising?

*Very surprising! How can a widow who undoubtedly be poor and unable to sustain herself with food let alone Elijah.*

9. **Ponder:** Why do you think the Lord wants to preserve Elijah?

*Because the Lord has a specific task for Elijah to do and he hasn't done it yet!*

### **Read 1 Kings 17:10-16**

10. What does Elijah ask the widow for in verse 10? Does this remind you of anything? (cf. John 4:1-7ff)

*Elijah asks the widow, who was gathering sticks, for some water in jar, so he can have a drink. This should remind us of the time Jesus (a Jew) asks a Samaritan (non-Jew) for water. Here a non-Jewish widow is asked for water.*

11. What does Elijah ask the widow for in verse 11? Is this a bit rich – especially given v12?  
*Elijah also asks for a piece of bread. It is a bit rich when we read that the widow has no bread and has enough flour and olive oil, to make her final meal before her life comes to an end!*

12. What does the widow's statement in verse 12 tell you about her situation?  
*The widow and her son are in a dire situation with only enough ingredients to make one final meal before they die with starvation!*

13. How does Elijah reassure the widow in verse 13?  
*Elijah reassures the widow by saying "don't be afraid; go home and do as I say – and make a small loaf for me and bring it to me."*

14. What explanation does Elijah offer in verse 14?  
*Elijah explains that "the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the Lord sends rain on the land'". In other words, the widow will have food until the rain returns to the land.*

15. What's impressive about the widow in verse 15?  
*She trusted Elijah's word and had faith in him.*  
*i. "You learn this from the fact that she had not even firewood. Now, there was no reason why she should not have had that even in time of famine of bread, for there was no famine of wood, unless she had been extremely poor." (Spurgeon)*

*ii. God told Elijah (1 Kings 17:9) that He commanded a widow to feed the prophet. Yet this woman seemed unaware of the command. This shows how God's unseen hand often works. "She does not appear to have been at all aware that she was to feed a prophet. She went out that morning to gather sticks, not to meet a guest. She was thinking about feeding her son and herself upon the last cake; certainly, she had no idea of sustaining a man of God out of that all but empty barrel of meal. Yet the Lord, who never lieth, spoke a solemn truth when he said, 'I have commanded a widow woman there.' He had so operated upon her mind that he had prepared her to obey the command when it did come by the lip of his servant the prophet" (Spurgeon).*

16. What fulfilment of Elijah's words is found in verse 16?  
*There was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family (v15) because the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry.*  
*"Why did not God give her a granary full of meal at once, and a vat full of oil instantly? I will tell you. It was not merely because of God's intent to try her, but there was wisdom here. Suppose he had given her a granary full of meal, how much of it would have been left by the next day? I question whether any would have remained, for in days of famine men are sharp of*

scent, and it would soon have been noised about the city, 'The old widow woman who lives in such-and-such a street, has a great store of food.' Why, they would have caused a riot, and robbed the house, and perhaps, have killed the woman and her son. She would have been despoiled of her treasure, and in four and twenty hours the barrel of meal would have been as empty as it was at first, and the cruse of oil would have been spilled upon the ground."  
(Spurgeon)

### Read Luke 4:24-30

17. How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 17:2-16?

*There were plenty of widows in Israel who could have helped the prophet Elijah, but God directed Elijah to none of them, instead He sent the widow in Gentile land. In doing so, God was bypassing Israel; in conferring His favour on this gentile widow and removing His favour from Israel. Elijah's journey to Zarephath was a judgment upon Israel, because they had descended to such blatant rejection of God. The folks in Nazareth in Jesus' time (in Luke 4) were quick to follow Jesus' logic and could see that Jesus' point was the people of Nazareth were doing exactly the same as Israel in Ahab's time – and as such would be bypassed. Instead of repenting though, the people of Nazareth sought to throw Jesus off a cliff. But Jesus walked "through" them!*

### Read Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 7:24-30

18. How do these passages relate to 1 Kings 17:2-16?

*The Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman in the passage is from the same region [Tyre and Sidon] as the widow of Zarephath. Again, this is Gentile territory and she is a Gentile woman.*

*The woman has faith in God's servant, Jesus, just as the widow had in Elijah.*

*Jesus alludes to His mission to the lost sheep of Israel – and the sheep of Israel were certainly lost in Elijah's time.*

*Even though, there were obstacles in the way for the woman in the story (her being a Gentile woman) as there were for the widow (down to her last bit of flour and oil); both the woman and the widow showed great faith; and were commended for it. And they are in the Bible as an example of great faith for us!*

*This passage from Matthew/Mark also shows Jesus' willingness to go to the Gentiles when the Jews rejected Him; just as the Jews rejected God's Word in Elijah's day; and God bypassed the Jews and sent Elijah to a Gentile widow!*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of 1 Kings 17:2-16?

*God's Word cannot be mocked, what God says will happen will happen*

*God's Word produces faith (Hebrews 11:1)*



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways does this passage point to Jesus, if at all?

- a. *Jesus dealt with a Gentile woman at the well (John 4) just as Elijah deals with a Gentile woman. In both cases, they ask for water!*
- b. *God sustained His Son, Jesus (through angels) when tempted in the wilderness by the devil (Matthew 4:1-11); just as God sustained Elijah in the wilderness.*
- c. *The bypassing of Israel and going to the Gentiles occurs in both Elijah and Jesus' ministries. Showing salvation is available to all who care to accept God's Word and His Son.*
- d. *The bread sustained Elijah and the widow and her family; just as Jesus "the bread of life" sustains us into eternal life.*

**How does this passage apply to your life?**

- a. *We might think that it's impossible for God's Word to be absent in our land, when we live an age of technology; smart phones and tablets with Bibles on; but it's one thing having access to God's Word; and another thing when we actually read it; believe it; follow it and apply it to our lives.*
- b. *Alone time with God is important; a time to recharge and be refreshed by God. God's timing in what He has planned for us is everything.*
- c. *God provides our daily needs. God wants us to be trained in daily dependence upon Him.*
- d. *God's ways are not like our ways – and we are not to question God's methods (even if He uses unclean ravens and a poor widow/single mum). Nothing is impossible for God!*
- e. *God led Elijah by faith, one step at a time, and Elijah followed in faith. God will do the same for us.*
- f. *Be obedient and faithful, like Elijah, even if God's leading and commands seem strange! Even if ravens are used; even if the brook dries up; even if sent to a Gentile widow!*
- g. *Have faith like the widow of Zarephath.*
- h. *God's word is always fulfilled.*
- i. *We reject God and His Word and His Son – at our peril. As Romans 11:11 states - because of their [Israel/Jews] transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. A sobering thought, if we go on despising God's Word; God may withdraw His light and allow us to walk in the darkness that we seem to prefer!*

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

*1 King 17:14*

**Finish in prayer:** Thanking God for His daily provision. Asking God to help us have faith like the widow of Zarephath and the Syrophenician woman.

**Study 2 – Dare we trust God?****1 Kings 17:17-24*****(Sermon on 25-Sep – Matt Farrington)*****Before we begin: Remind yourself where Elijah was sent in the last study and to whom?**

*Elijah was sent to the widow of Zarephath, as a judgment on Israel. Plenty of widows (and other citizens) in Israel could have sustained Elijah; but God sent Elijah to Gentile land, to the region of Sidon; to the very place where Baal worship began. God works in mysterious ways; as this poor widow had not much flour and olive oil; yet miraculous she will not only provide Elijah with food but she and her son will be fed by a never-ending supply of flour/oil until the prophesied drought is over. The drought is symbolic of a drought in God's Word until, Elijah's ministry begins. In the meantime, God has further plans for Elijah and the widow, as we will see in the next part of the story...*

**Read 1 Kings 17:17-24**

1. What happens to the widow's son in verse 17?

*The son of the widow became ill – he grew worse – and stopped breathing.*

2. What accusation and assumption does the woman make against Elijah in verse 18?

*The widow thought perhaps Elijah had something against her; or that Elijah had come to remind her of her sinfulness and punish her by killing her son! The widow indirectly blamed Elijah, but more directly she blamed herself and her unnamed sin; perhaps her guilty memory of that unnamed sin coming to the surface once more!*

*The death of the son was a double blow to the widow. Not only did she suffer as any mother who loses a child, but she also suffered as one who lost her only hope for the future. The expectation was that her son would grow and provide for her in her old age. Now that expectation was shattered.*

3. What action does Elijah take in verse 19?

*He took the widow's son from her, carried him upstairs where he was staying and laid him on the bed. Apparently, this upper room could be accessed from outside, so Elijah did not have to enter into the widow's quarters on a daily basis; thus, protecting the woman's reputation also.*

4. What form does Elijah's prayer take in verse 20

*He cried out to the Lord in desperation and accusingly suggesting God had brought tragedy on the widow causing her son to die! Elijah knew God had sent him to the widow in the first place and so he laid the tragedy on God and asked him to fix it!*

5. What action does Elijah take in verse 21a?

*He stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord. An unusual technique but Elijah acted in great faith, trusting God would help.*

6. What form does Elijah's prayer take in verse 21b?

*Then he pleaded with the Lord to let the boy's life return to him.*

7. How does the Lord answer Elijah's prayer in verse 22?

*God answered and life returned to the boy, as Elijah had requested\*

8. What action does Elijah take in verse 23?

*He picked up the boy and returned him to his mother saying "look, your son is alive!"*

9. What conclusion does the woman make in verse 24? (cf. John 16:30)

*The widow then confirmed that Elijah was a man of God and that God's word given through Elijah was indeed true!*

### **Read Mark 5:21-24; 35-43**

10. How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 17:17-24?

*The synagogue leader, Jairus' little daughter, dies. Jesus raised the girl back to life.*

*This is a similar sign to the sign of Elijah raising the widow's son.*

*A sign that ultimately points to Jesus' resurrection.*

### **Read Luke 7:11-17**

11. How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 17:17-24?

*Jesus raises a widow's son in the town of Nain.*

*The people (v16) praised God and said "A great prophet has appeared among us" and "God has come to help His people". They were perhaps reminded of the story of Elijah!*

*This is a similar sign to the sign of Elijah raising the widow's son.*

*A sign that ultimately points to Jesus' resurrection.*

### **Read John 11:1-44**

12. How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 17:17-24?

*This miracle is more than a resuscitation. Jesus raises Lazarus back to life after 4 days in the tomb (v17).*

*Jesus claim in vv25-26 that HE is the resurrection and the life; shows that He has the POWER of GOD, to raise people from the dead.*

*In the Elijah story, Elijah prays for God to raise the widow's son back to life; whereas in John 11 – Jesus is doing the raising.*

*All this is pointing to Jesus' resurrection and ultimately our resurrection (1 Corinthians 15)*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **1 Kings 17:17-24**?

*God has the power over death itself*

*Dare we trust God in all things!*



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways does this passage point to Jesus, if at all?

*Raising the widow's son to life is a sign of things to come – Jairus' daughter raised by Jesus – the widow of Nain's son raised by Jesus – Lazarus raised by Jesus – Jesus Himself raised to life 3 days later and ultimately us being raised to eternal life.*

*The difference – the widow's son in Elijah's day; Jairus' daughter, the widow of Nain's son and Lazarus; would all die again. When we are raised to life – it is for eternity!*

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. *When things seem to be going a long swimmingly (like God providing a never-ending supply of flour and oil) and then all of a sudden, tragedy strikes (the widow's son dies) are we to blame God. Isn't Job right – the Lord gives and the Lord takes away (Job 1:21). **Isn't the giver of grace allowed to be the withholder of grace also?***
- b. *When bad things happen, we can tend to blame our sin as the widow did. But according to John 9:3 – God doesn't work like that. There is not always a one-to-one correlation between sin and punishment (tragedy). Remember, God works through tragedy and blessings. **God both sustains and bewilders, both delights and devastates. God's Word is honest; it hides nothing but warns clearly that God both blesses and baffles his servants because His ways are not our ways!***
- c. *We can **learn how to pray from Elijah**. He picks up the widow's distress in v18 and turns it into a prayer and pleads her case for her. **It is good for us to put ourselves in someone else's shoes when praying.***
- d. ***We don't have to give a solution to the person coming to us with a concern; we have a throne to approach in prayer!** God reduces His servants to weakness, so that they come to Him and not rely on themselves! As James 5:13 – Is anyone among you in trouble? Let him pray.*
- e. ***The Word of God gives life.** By this miracle, God shows He's not like the Canaanite gods, He has power over the D-Word. When faced by Mot the god of death and the underworld in Canaanite mythology, will the Lord God have to bow down to death or will He be able to overcome it. **The answer from 1 Kings 17 is God emphatically has power over death itself!***
- f. *In the face of God's perplexing, seemingly absurd (use of ravens and widows and a little flour/oil) and contradictory ways, He will show Himself faithful to His people at the end of their trial. As Moses reminded the Israelites in Deut 8:16 - He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you **so that in the end it might go well with you.***

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

*V24 - 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."*

**Finish in prayer:** Thanking Jesus that He is the Living One; He is alive forever and He holds the keys of death and Hades (Revelation 1:18)

**Study 3– Will the real God stand up!**

**1 Kings 18:1-40**  
*(Sermon on 2-Oct – Paul)*

**Before we begin: Remind yourself what happened in 1 Kings 17:1 and why?**

**Read 1 Kings 18:1-15**

1. How long has the drought introduced in 1 Kings 17:1 been going on?
2. What does the Lord tell Elijah to do?
3. What was the famine like in Samaria?
4. Compare what Obadiah and Jezebel are doing in verses 3 and 4.
5. What plan does Ahab come up with and what is Obadiah to do?
6. What does Elijah tell Obadiah to do in their chance meeting on the road?
7. What is Obadiah's response to Elijah in verses 9 to 14?
8. What promise does Elijah make in verse 15?

**Read 1 Kings 18:16-40**

9. What accusations do Ahab and Elijah swap in verses 17 and 18?

10. What does Elijah tell Ahab to do in verse 19? [see map in appendix 1] Is it surprising that there are so many false prophets?

11. What does Ahab do in verse 20?

12. How does Elijah challenge the people? (cf. Matthew 6:24) How do they respond?

13. What challenge does Elijah set up in verses 22 to 24?

14. The prophets of Baal take the challenge first in verses 25 to 29? How successful are they? How does Elijah taunt them?

15. How does Elijah set up to take the challenge in verses 30 to 35? And how does Elijah make the challenge more difficult? Why?

16. What's impressive about Elijah's prayer in verses 36 to 37?

17. How does God answer Elijah's prayer in verse 38?

18. How do the people respond in verse 39?

19. What happens to the prophets of Baal?

20. **Ponder:** Are Elijah's actions in verse 40 an act of vindictiveness or something else? (See Deuteronomy 13)

**Read John 1:1-14**

21. How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 18:1-40?

**Read James 5:17-18**

22. How does this passage relate to 1 Kings 18:1-40?

What's the **BIG IDEA** of 1 Kings 18:1-40?

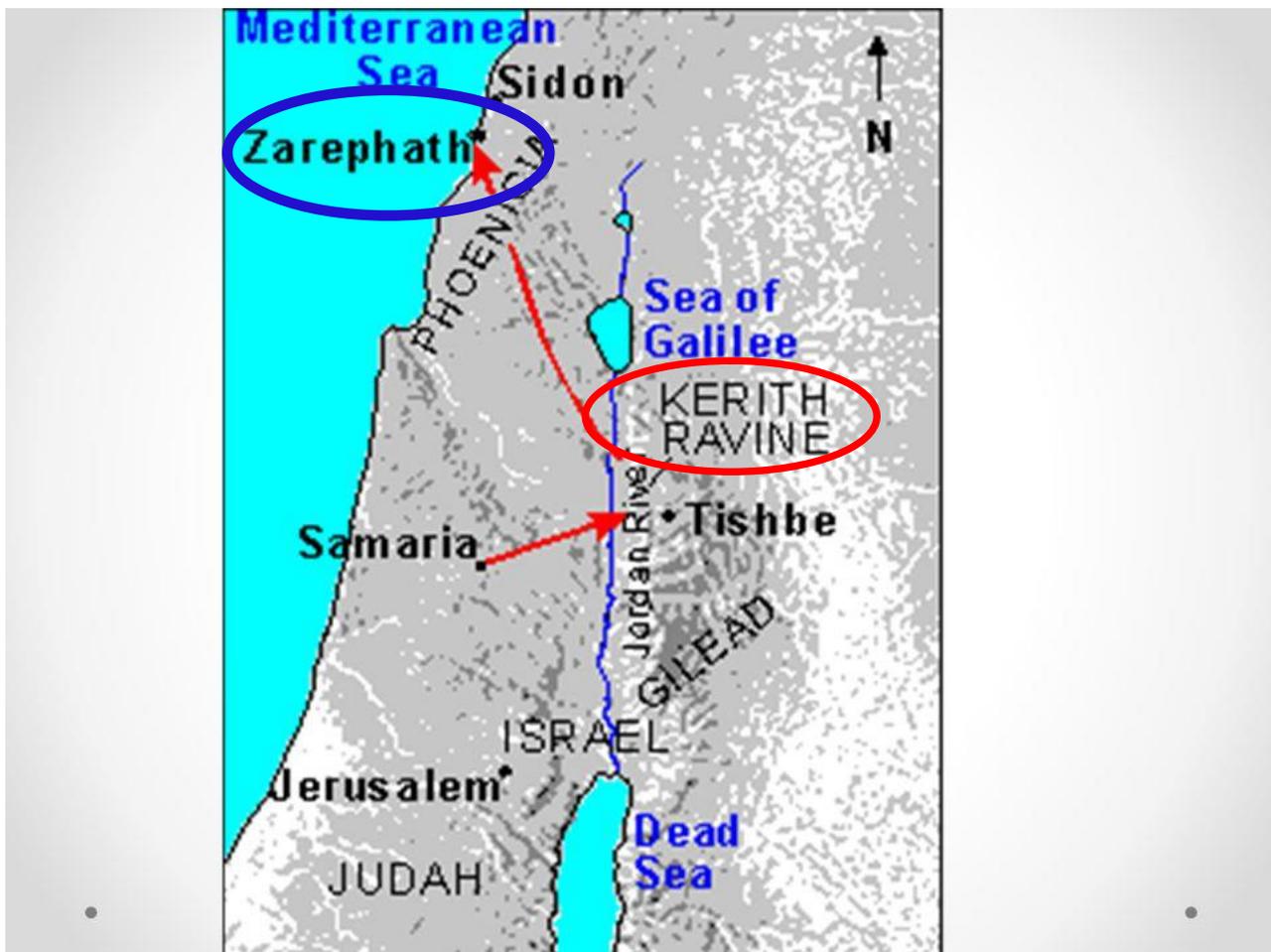
 If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways does this passage point to Jesus, if at all?

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**Finish in prayer:** Ask God to help us to be faithful in prayer like Elijah. Thank you that the Lord God, YHWH, is the one true God, and in His grace and mercy, He chose to send His Son to step into time and place, "the word made flesh and dwelling amongst us". Thank you, Jesus!

Appendix 1 – Map



**Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke  
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**Resources:**

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

1 and 2 Kings (Donald J. Wiseman – Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)

1 Kings – The Wisdom and the Folly (Dale Ralph Davis)

Halley's Bible Handbook – New Revised Edition (Henry H. Halley)

**Notes/Prayer Points**