

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Aug. 26

### MONDAY

The army declared Omri to be the new king, but he was not the choice of all Israel. Half the people wanted Tibni to be king. They ended up fighting each other and Tibni was killed in the battle. So Omri became the king of Israel. He reigned 12 years.

#### **READ: I Kings 16:21-27**

Newly crowned King Omri buys a hilltop and builds a city - naming it Samaria. "So," you say with a surprised expression, "that's where Samaria originated!" It is but what a pathetic heritage: Omri's supporters had to kill first Zimri and all his supporters and forces, and then Tobni and his supporters in order to get to the throne. His path to Kingship was marked out in bloodshed, and he out-did all those who went before him when it came to evil. God wants us to out-do others, but by the way we love one another. If you have a competitive bone in your body, and one is enough, just stop trying to out-do others those other ways. Stay away from evil and love the brethren!

### TUESDAY

Omri died and his son Ahab became the new king of Israel. He would reign for 22 years and would be more evil than all the kings before him. He committed the very sins for which Jeroboam and others had been punished.

#### **READ: I Kings 16:28-34**

He married Jezebel. She was named after the god Baal, and she served and worshipped him. She was a Sidonian, a people known for their debauched lifestyle. Yet Ahab, in open defiance of all that God had made known concerning what He permitted and what He forbade in marriage - Ahab went ahead and married her. "How depraved is the human heart?" you ask. Just look at Ahab as exhibit #1. We are exhibit #2. Left alone, we would be much like exhibit #1, but God did not leave us alone! He chose us, set His love upon us, and changed us from the inside out! "How astounding is the grace of God?" you ask. Just look again at exhibit #2.

### WEDNESDAY

Elijah comes out of nowhere to stand before King Ahab and declare that a drought is coming. Then he headed across the Jordan River to hide from the king. God promised to feed Elijah by sending ravens.

#### **READ: I Kings 17:1-5**

Elijah's story is a perfect contrast to the story of the kings who were appointed to be spiritual leaders of Israel. We read that Elijah did what God told him to do - *he did according to the Word of God*, the KJV puts it. That could not be said of Ahab or Omri or Zimri or Bassha or Jeroboam or any other person we've come across lately. It's so simple, yet plain. God said it and Elijah did it. "There's going to be a drought, Elijah, so I want you to go far out into the desert. I want you to be far away from people who might help you, and I want you to stay there till I say otherwise." "I'm on my way, Lord," Elijah answered. And he did what God had said.

### THURSDAY

We are only reading three verses today, but what a set of verses! Ravens did what no raven would ever do naturally: they delivered pieces of food to Elijah every morning and every night. It was room service without the tip! And then one day, Elijah's source of drinking water dried up. The drought came home.

#### **READ: I Kings 17:6-8**

It's no fun when the water stops. Not when you're depending on it; not when it's the difference between life and death; not when you were so certain that God was providing it for you; not when you were so confident that his provision would continue. Have you ever had a brook dry up in your life? Aren't you glad that there's a verse 8! *The Word of the Lord came to Him*, it says. The drought caught Elijah's full attention; his throat was parched and his heart was ready to receive what God had for him. He was thirsty in more ways than one, and eager for what God had for him as far as instructions. That's one reason God sometimes allows brooks to dry up in our lives, as well. He is catching our attention for something greater.

### FRIDAY

God commands Elijah to go to a widow's house and, at the same time, unknown to Elijah, commanded the widow to care for him when he shows up. When he arrives, she is in the middle of making a last meal with the little food that remained.

#### **READ: I Kings 17:9-12**

God's care and provision comes to us in varied shapes and forms. Here, God provision for Elijah is a widow's last meal. Not what he expected, you can be sure. Isn't trusting God truly a great adventure at times! He cares and He provides and we are never perfectly sure how He's going to do that, and are sometimes slow to even recognize it for what it is. But what it is this: the care and provision that God alone can give, and give perfectly! Can we do better than to trust God? Why would we ever look elsewhere for provision or care? Who is like unto our God?

### SATURDAY

Elijah tells the widow not to worry about the food running out, but to make him a meal with the little food which remained. She did so and miraculously, God provided for her and her son thru the days of the drought.

#### **READ: I Kings 17:13-16**

At first reading, Elijah seems a bit selfish - asking for his meal first. But the key to understanding these verses is the little phrase, "*for thus sayeth the Lord.*" Evidently, God had commanded Elijah regarding what to do and what to say. In other words, this is not the story of a hungry prophet weaseling the last meal from a poor, unsuspecting widow. Rather, it is the story of God building up faith in a prophet and in a widow. It's really two stories which intersect at the dinner table! Amazing the places we see God at work if we just look! Like in our own lives, for example.