

The Most Important Question of Your Life...

If you died tonight, do you KNOW if you'd go to heaven?

The Easy Steps to KNOW for Sure:

== A == Acknowledge you are a sinner
ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
Romans 3:23

== B == Believe the shed Blood of Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved.
The wages of sin is death* but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23

== C == Confess to God you know you are a sinner and call upon Him to come into your heart.
For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Romans 10:13



Roadkill Eaterers

#1

God's Provision and Our Preparation for Service

But we really need to do something more than just believe. I think a better word is receive or invite Jesus into our hearts. He comes in to stay forevermore that we might have everlasting life.

by
James Curtis

On to the next chapter in book 2 #224 >>

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neat if we had a scrapbook like that? Wouldn't it be great if we were mentioned like the widow's son?

It's interesting, but we do have exactly that. It's already prepared for us. We don't have to put any more pictures or printing in it. They are easily attainable. You can spend anywhere from \$1.50 to \$100 for these scrapbooks. What scrapbook am I talking about? God's Word! God's inspired Word.

Well, this is just a story involving the widow's son. I don't know if it actually happened like this, but it could have. The important thing to see is what he did with the scrapbook and what we can do with ours. We are mentioned in it. We surely are!

A verse that we have heard for many years - John 3:16:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Whosoever? I can put my name in there. So can you. As you are sharing your scrapbook with your neighbors or with the people you work with, you can put their names in there, too. Whosoever! Share your scrapbook with somebody today -

"For God so loved the world, ...that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." But, greater than not perishing, we "shall have everlasting life."

Some people believe that everlasting life begins after we die - when we are in heaven. But, that's not so. Everlasting life, with its promises, its peace and purpose, begins the moment that we put our names in that verse - *"that whosoever believeth in Him."*

Introduction

WHAT TO DO NEXT... SHOULD I WATCH OR RUN!

This book is about watching and running.
Maybe a more dressed up word would be "SERVICE".

Elijah stood before a king in obedience to God and started a chain of events unequalled by any man before or since. Elijah the man was faced with the same pressures, victories, defeats, and questioning moments, you and I have. He wasn't treated special by God, just treated with love and expectations by a special God -The One and Only True God, We might add.

Let the life of Elijah speak to your heart, as you hold this book. See that one day, you and I will give an account to this loving King of Glory, how we've put into service, the talents, miracles, challenges, and promises He's put into your life and mine.

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stands right in front of the chairman. He gets his face real close to his and says,

**"You tell me that one more time - you died?
You don't look like you died!
You look alive and well! You're right here."**

The chairman of the board explains to him that because his mom was faithful with what she had, there were a couple miracles performed in their home. But, the greater miracle was that I had died and God, through Elijah, brought me back to life.

The chairman then went on to quickly show and remind the men of the provisions that God had made in the life of this famous prophet, Elijah.

1. God provided food for him through animals - the ravens.
2. God provided him food through his mother.
3. God provided food through the miracle of the meal and oil that never ran out.

As we are quietly leaving the conference room, we hear the chairman of the board, who happens to be the widow's son, telling about all the other miraculous things that God did in Elijah's life. Closing the door behind us, we seek a quiet place away from the hustle and bustle of the other workers.

Reviewing the scrapbook, we think about that young man, the widow's son, grown up and became the chairman of the board of an important company that is struggling to stay alive. As we think about that scrapbook, we see the testimony that young man had with his fellow workers. Wouldn't it be

diversion, he suggests that maybe now would be a good time for him to take them through this scrapbook.

Since everyone is discouraged and has nothing better to do, they all agree. Why not? He opens up the scrapbook and holds it out where each man can clearly see each page. Very quickly each man on the board realizes that the scrapbook is primarily centered on one person - one famous person. In fact, when they got to looking at it, the scrapbook was about the man we have been learning about - Elijah.

He points to the first sketch. They see large, black birds. The chairman relates the events that happened as Elijah shared them with him. He tells how ravens fed Elijah. Then, in the next couple of sketches, the chairman points to a figure of a lady and says, "That's my mom." Down here are little morsels of meal that we had left. He explains how Elijah the prophet had come to their home. Even though they were about to eat their last meal and die, the prophet has said to feed him first.

The next picture is of two containers - one a barrel and the other a cruse. The chairman explained about the miraculous provisions God had performed right in their own home. As he talked on, the men seemed a little bit troubled by all of this. They really weren't getting the picture.

Then the chairman said, "Right down here in this picture, is a person lying down. That's me. That's when I died! He then goes on to another picture.

One of the vice presidents at the table said,

'Wait a minute!

What did you say about that other picture?

You died?"

The chairman said, "Yes, I died." Immediately, the man gets up, quickly moves to the head of the table and

Table of Contents

Book 1 #223

SERVE NEVERTHELESS

GONE TO THE DOGS
THE LAW AND COVERED BRIDGES
ROADKILL CATERING

HOW MY SERVICE AFFECTS OTHERS

YOU BLEW IT AGAIN, GOD!
CHERRY HILL CHARIOT WORKS

Book 2 #224

GOD PREPARES YOU AND I FOR SERVICE

THE INSIDE MAN
SHOWDOWN AT SUN UP
PARTNER LANGUAGE

RESULTS OF SERVICE

THE FORK THAT KILLS
APPLES FROM A CHERRY TREE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

SERVICE WITH HEART AND FEET

Cover image by Neil Fifer Narrabeen, NSW Jun2003

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The board members are about to meet and you get to sit in. Shortly, the different vice presidents of the various departments walk in, papers in hand. Each takes a seat. Then a very distinguished gentleman walks in and sits at the head of the table. The meeting begins with various discussions and pieces of leftover business.

Then the chairman of this conference asks each man who is seated at the table to relate the status of the company in relation to their department. The sales manager paints a very dismal view of the status of the company. Sales are way down. It seems pretty hopeless. The marketing manager is also in a difficult fix because he doesn't have any cash flow that he can use to present the products to the public like he wants to. It's in bad shape.

The accounting manager confirms what the other two have said. There's no money coming in so they can't afford to step out into new marketing areas like they want. Each of the men presents a very "doomed" view of the company. The company is almost dead. What really makes it rough is there seems to be no new ideas. They have no answers to the problem of saving the company.

The chairman of the board explains that he understands what each man has said. He concurs with them. Then, for a little bit of distraction to relax them, he suggests a way that they might be able to deal with this terrible situation in each of their own hearts individually.

The chairman pulls out what looks like a scrapbook. He opens it and turns the pages. He explains to the men, as he goes through the pages, that so many times in the past, when he has been in a hopeless situation and really doesn't see any way out, he gets out this old scrapbook and thumbs through its pages. He looks at the sketches and relives the circumstances and events that are tied up in these pages. For a

but products of the land - the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil. More than that, the God of Elijah, the One True God in heaven, is able to give new birth to those who have been faithful to Him. She knows that to be true, because it happened in her own house.

No one in the entire world knows the name of this widow. We may never know. But, won't it be exciting when we get to heaven and fellowship with all of those who have trusted in Him.

We can hear the account of these neighbors sharing with this widow woman. With tears in her eyes, she'll explain how God uses all He's created to provide for those obedient to him. What an exciting testimony!

Would you share that testimony with someone who quite likely thinks 'things are out of control' or 'God can't keep track of things'?

1. He provides in a manner showing He has been in control all along.
2. Then, He delivers us TO something better, not just OUT OF a situation.

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5 - CHERRY HILL CHARIOT WORKS

As you walk in, you see a large conference table with chairs all around it. On the walls are charts and graphs with mysterious lines going up and down and all over. On the wall at the head of the table is a picture of a strong, sleek and durable chariot. Welcome to the Cherry Hill Chariot Works!

1 - Gone To The Dogs

Picture in your mind if you will the most devious, cunning, most despicable person you can remember... Now try even harder. Let's say this person is a man that's lower than a snake's belly. The typical Simon Legree that would throw his own mother out in the cold... No that's not good - I mean BAD enough... This scum of a man would throw a baby out in the cold, if he wanted to. We hear ourselves saying,

**WHAT'S THIS WORLD COMING TO? or
DOESN'T ANYONE HAVE CONTROL OF THINGS
AROUND HERE, ANYMORE? or
WHAT A MESS WE HAVE HERE!**

Some time ago, I'd begun reading a book written by a well-known evangelist. The first three chapters spoke of the condition of this world. Now, I know it's easy to get a gruesome picture of this rotten world by just reading a couple of pages in today's newspaper, or listening to the news for five minutes. But this book told about the corruption in organizations that I had believed were all-out eradicators of crime and corruption!

The book spoke of police and law enforcement agencies, even churches that had succumbed to Satan's ways. I decided right then and there, that if I didn't have anything better to look forward to, than living in this rotten world, I would then and there, set about to commit suicide. (More about this later..)

If you searched for a book that could be purchased for your own, giving instances in history, of the depths of

degradation that man can stoop to, you'd be quite surprised to find it to be the self-same book that is well recognized as the best book on the subject of true love.... almost seems like a paradox doesn't it? Well, you guessed it.... the Bible, God's Holy Word gives us the most accurate picture of man's efforts to be led by Satan's influences.

In the first chapters of Genesis, scarcely has God created His crowning glory of all His creation - man and woman, when we're told of Satan and shown his tactics. I believe the most despicable word in our language happens to be the first word used to describe Satan; the word 'subtle'. Reading through the Bible, filled with love and forgiveness, you are also made aware of the myriad of ways man has found to sink. Once before, God decided He had enough, and began the events leading to the flood. The Bible says in Genesis 6:5:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Be sure to notice the word '*continually*'. Now you'd think this was the absolute bottom, right? Well, what we've just covered isn't the half of it!

Of all the pagan god worship before and during the reign of King Ahab, none was worse than that of Molech, "The Protecting Father" image. This most abhorrent worship was culminated in the burning of children, by fire. And we thought the burning alive; in the womb with chemicals and giving it the official name of Abortion was something new... Stick with me, it gets worse yet. In the 11th book of the Bible the words say:

"And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?"

Even Elijah is saying the same thing. "God, why do You repay good with evil?" But, in verses 21-24, God instructs Elijah and he continues to obey:

"And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the Word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."

What a fascinating thing to happen! When she gets together with her friends and shares the news of the day, she'll be able to tell about a man who required of her to feed him first, even when she had very little food. She can tell how God blessed her. The neighbors will really be interested in hearing about that, won't they? In fact, when it comes to providing food, she can relate the events that Elijah encountered with the ravens. What stories to tell! What a witness of God's sustaining power!!

But, as she is relating to her friends, a seriousness, a solemnness in her tone of voice explains to them that yes, the God of Elijah is able to sustain life by commanding the animals to obey. He is able to sustain life not only by animals,

"For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the Word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah."

Isn't that fantastic! - a blessing, a miracle of this nature right in your own house! Now that was a lesson she could never have gotten in a Sunday school class. It's truth that still applies down through the ages. You take care of God's man first, as God leads, and trust Him for the necessary provisions. He not only provides, but also provides until the end of the curse.

Now we read further into the life of this poor widow in verses 17-18:

"And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?"

It looks as if we go from one hopeless situation to another. This woman has obeyed God's command and showed proper tithing principles. A miracle is done to the cruse of oil and the barrel of meal. But, look how she is repaid! Her son has died. "God, why do You do these things? Why do You repay people who are faithfully serving You, sustaining your men and messengers, with the death of loved ones? Verses 19-20 say:

"And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him."

This reference in I Kings 16:30, describes the mode of operation of King Ahab, a principle person in the life of Elijah. Before we introduce Elijah, we've got to add, possibly the worst part of all the ingredients depicted in the following chapters of Elijah's life.... Ahab's wife, Jezebel.

Of all the rotten things that Ahab did, the worst, was the choice he made for a wife. Read in verse 31:

"And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Eth-baal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him."

Unger's Bible Dictionary describes her as:

"A woman in who, with the reckless and licentious habits of an oriental queen, were united the sternness and fiercest qualities inherent in the Phoenician people. The wild license of her life, the magical fascination of her arts or of her character, became a proverb in the nation (II King's 9:22)" (Note: licentious means without measure)

We've spent some time, now, to paint a picture of the world into which Elijah was to live and work. With the little we've touched on, we could easily become discouraged and, even worse; cite many reasons why we think God isn't maintaining control of all He has created....

As you and I look at our present world around us, we easily wonder 'What's this world coming to?'

You undoubtedly have heard the phrase 'the patience of Job'... Maybe it's time we considered the patience of

God... If we were studying the life of Job, we'd see that Job's patience was of God. Anyhow. Is it possible that our impatience and our hasty evaluations of circumstances move us to think that God isn't on His throne and in control?

We look at the leadership on the job or in the classroom, or for that matter, in many lukewarm churches and sometimes have to force feelings of fear and uncertainty back down where they've come from. Can it be God gives us time to use our eyes and ears, and brain, to see His ways are best, and His love and forgiveness are without equal? The intent of these humble words on printed page, are meant to remind us all of the God that

Is ALWAYS IN CONTROL of His Plan
NEVER FORGETS US or our needs,
LOVES US more than we can imagine.

In the following chapters, we'll see how God proves these three concepts.

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2 - THE LAW AND COVERED BRIDGES

Many events in the life of Elijah are BEYOND BELIEF. But all these happenings are tied together, as are the events that happen in your life, by rules, no let's say "Laws", we'll discover in this chapter.

There's no doubt, you'd love to spend a leisurely day next to a secluded stream not far from my home. Probably the first visit you'd go solo. Way off to the right begins the brook in your field of view. Down through the pasture then a lazy bend toward where you're sitting, across in front continuing left and disappear behind a knoll.

out. She can't feed me. She has just enough food for one meal for herself and her son. Then they will starve to death."

How'd you like to go out on visitation to a home where you're to have a meal? You sit down at the table and realize that the family is almost out of food. How would you feel? Tough situation, isn't it? Does it look like God is still in control?

I suppose Elijah felt bad about the widow woman being commanded to feed him, when all she had was enough for her and her son. But, he decided to go ahead with God's directions. In verse 13, it says:

"And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son."

I love Elijah's statement. His first words to the stressed out mother are 'Fear not'. The backbone of Christianity is turning our FEARS into FAITH in God's word and His will. As we really focus our will on God's direction, we'll often see a hint of God's provision and plan. The hint is in the last portion of Elijah's statement. '...and after make for thee and for thy son.' This tells me that in obedience by faith, she is STILL going to be able to feed herself and son. Neat huh?

That's interesting! She only has a little bit left. But, what she has, she dedicates to God's servant first. Where have I heard that before? In Matthew 6:33 we read:

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

That's good tithing, isn't it? We dedicate to God first and then depend upon Him to make the rest do, as He so leads. Let's see if that's what happens in verses 14-16:

God." God says, "I want you to go THERE and when you go THERE, I will be with you THERE." That takes faith, doesn't it? It takes action too.

But friend, as we trust Christ as our Savior and step out on faith, doing His Will; isn't it a joy to know wherever we are, He will be with us THERE?

In verse 4 of chapter 17, we see the word THERE used also. It took faith in God for Elijah to go to the brook Cherith and depend on the ravens to feed him... THERE.

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4 - YOU BLEW IT AGAIN, GOD!

Read in I Kings 17, verses 10-12 of Elijah's obedience:

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

Oh no! Elijah thinks to himself: "God, You provided for me at the brook Cherith with water and had the ravens bring me food. Then the brook dried up. So, I supposed You were taking care of things. You commanded this widow to take care of me now, but God, you blew it! It just won't work

Your ears tell you birds are enjoying the soft breeze as you move your legs to an uncramped position, just knowing your eyes, ears, and nose are about to have a feast. Something odd becomes apparent as you take a deep sigh of relief for the third time or is it the fourth time? Oh! Who cares?

Though not noticed at first, you've chosen an area of contrasts; over here looks almost the opposite as over there. Watch. See over there to the right, where the stream makes its bend? Now on the far side of our stream is an earthen wall that rises some fifty feet straight up to a cornfield on top.

As you reposition again so as to use a shady tree as a backrest, your eyes feast themselves on all the layers of shale rock that climb most of the fifty feet. Hey! Your eyes say, "This place has character!" You'd jump up in a minute and pick out a piece of shale for a souvenir, if it wasn't for that very large dead tree limb just barely lodged between two others, hanging just above your prospective souvenir stone.

More to the left, the layered wall drops down enough that the gentle afternoon sun finds you and stages its ever-popular diamond dance. Your heart stakes its claim that this is YOUR SPOT, now and forever. Heaven help the person that tries to put a super highway thru here.

The stream that started on the right, from a run-of-the-mill pasture and along the shale wall as a quiet unnoticeable flow in front of you, moves off to the left over round shaped stones. As the water zigzags around and over the stones, the Master in charge of lighting, stages a delight for any eyes. The sparkling reflections appear as weightless diamonds dancing on top of boiling water. One hand wants to quickly cover one eye to retard the hypnotic spell the diamonds produce.

With great effort your eyes pull away from the diamond dance leftward to discover the foundations on either side of the brook that once held a stately old covered bridge.

You know the kind I mean. The ones that sheltered animals from the driving rain and fear of the waters below.

No way to tell if this was a Kissin' bridge. "A kiss passin' thru makes the wish come true." I am sure at least one pair of initials carved in the kingpost, declared two lovers would never part. Gone with the bridge were the posted advertisements for high button shoes, and horseshoeing while you wait. Trips to carry the family across the frozen stream to grandmothers for that Thanksgiving turkey would never be the same. I suppose if you stood on tiptoes, you'd see the new bridge. You guessed it. Steel and concrete; no character at all.

Now I've said all that, to say this:

WATER RUNS DOWN HILL!

No. I mean it.

Water really runs down hill.

Everywhere on the face of the earth -- even where you are: **water runs down hill**. Whether thru a pasture, along a cliff or thru rocks, **water runs down hill**. Whether diamond dance or rain, **water runs down hill**. No matter how technology changes from oak kingposts to concrete and steel, **water will run down hill till the Lord comes**.

The lesson of this chapter goes far beyond gravity's effect on old tree limbs or flowing water. Our brook, stuffed with all its contrasts, is also a great place to discover many of God's laws meant to give pattern and purpose to your life and mine. We're told in God's Word that the things around us even tell us of Himself so that we are without excuse. (You can read more about that in Romans 1:20).

First of all, this spot had to be sought out; looked for; desired with a healthy purpose in mind. The quiet water on

Oh me! God had a good thing going. He was taking care of His man. Now it looks as if He's lost control again. Elijah was supposed to drink from the brook, but it dried up.

How about the brook and circumstances in your life? Do you sometimes see your brook dried up? God answered your prayer or a particular need you had; things were going really well. Then, the brook dried up - the promise dried up!

It almost looks as though God is moving this man from one uncontrolled situation to another situation that is out of control. Evidently God had something else in mind for Elijah. He had already provided an escape for him. He had performed a miracle by having the ravens feed Elijah.

Surely, God isn't going to let Elijah die now; He doesn't waste His efforts and energies like that. So, what happens? This man of God has to just trust in his God. We read in verse 8-10:

"And the Word of the Lord came unto him, saying Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks..."

Did you notice the word THERE? It's interesting to note some of the places you see that word in the Bible. God says, "I want you to go THERE and when you go THERE, I will be THERE with you." It's easy for us to act for God when He says I want you to do this particular thing; pick up this stone, or do this or that - when we have all the things right in front of us.

We size up the situation and tell God we'll do it. But, that doesn't exercise any faith. It's just a command and we obey. The verse says, 'whatsoever is not of faith is not of

"Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan."

Oh, that'll be great! He's going camping! He's going backpacking! No, he doesn't get to take any food, cooking utensils or canteen. This doesn't sound too good!
Verse 4 says:

"And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there."

You and I have read this story many times. We've told it to our children. We've heard it in Sunday school class. It's interesting when you have enough desire to dig into the Word and look up the meaning of these words and descriptions of these animals.

You'll be surprised to find a raven is the largest bird of the crow family. It can have a wingspan of fifty-six inches. That's almost the distance from tip to tip of a man's fingers as he spreads his arms. What's more interesting is that ravens eat dead animals. They eat road kill. Isn't that neat! God's man stands before an evil king and says what he supposed to say, and God sends roadkill caterers to feed him. Verses 5-7 says:

"So he went and did according unto the Word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land."

the right contains life and rest for the continuing journey. God has formed us with a requirement for quiet times that prepare us for what's ahead. Quiet water reflects what is beyond. God doesn't always show us what is out there, but he always gives us opportunity to prepare according to His leading. That's the law.

The layers of shale are captivating to say the least. It appears that almost every layer has its own character. Some support a clump of moss or maybe a small bush. Others are stained by years of water oozing out of its cracks. The only claim to fame of others is that they are solid and very supportive.

So loudly, these stones cry out, saying to the observer, "The God of heaven has placed some of us in the middle of the brook to produce dancing diamonds, others at the brook's edge to make an effect on the erosion of time. Others are placed in the wall to be supportive to those above."

There's a law in our members that gives no purpose or direction in our life until we take the quiet time and discover God's Will for us. Sometimes this is necessary each day, or each hour on those really tough days.

Even here in our favorite spot, if you look hard enough you'll see the tracks and trash of shallow minded people. Had I been totally focused on these negatives, I'd not have noticed the unexpected three small ducks paddling thru the middle of the diamonds.

So whether your day holds diamonds, ducks, or disappointments, expect always to be blessed in surprising and beautiful ways by God's provision to those who are focused on Him and willing to be in the spot where He wants them... **IT'S THE LAW!**

One day not long ago, I had someone very close, really disappointment me. It hurt so much on the inside; it was like a

boxer punching me in my chest as hard as he could. Sure I quoted several verses to myself, refreshed my memory with assurances that God gets even with those that do harm to those who are His. I reviewed the passages that tell about the mansions, streets of gold, crystal sea, the day that has no night, and others that are in my future. But, know what? It still hurt. It still hurt so much that tears would not put the heart flame out.

Retreating to my favorite spot I expected some sort of balm to be there to show me how to flip a switch within me that would instantly make the hurt go away, and my smile come back. Little did I guess what timing God uses in working out His plan, and the lesson I was about to learn.

When I reached my special spot, it seemed not to be mine. Oh sure, the shale, the trees, the tracks and trash were all there. But nothing seemed calm and inviting. The rain of the last two days gorged the once quieting stream almost to its limits and spelled danger and destruction to anyone advancing without real purpose and direction.

Please don't think I spiritualize everything. But when I stared at that torrent of mad, muddy water rushing through "my quiet place" it was as though I was looking inward at my own soul.

Have you had those moments too?

Have you found yourself in the middle of lots of commotion with no clear calculated direction. You feel as though your heart is about to self-destruct and there's nothing you can do about it. Your senses tell you to scream so loud that people from miles away will rush to you and take you out of this holocaust of the soul.

Your mind says no one cares or can hear your scream above the torrents." No I didn't scream or run or stick my

was just such a man. So we see Elijah standing before King Ahab. He says to the king:

"As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand."

Even though Elijah was physically standing before Ahab, a ruthless rotten king, Elijah still recognized he was obeying and bowing down to the God of heaven and of Israel. What does he say after that? -

"there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

Now, that's something any king would "love" to hear. First of all, King Ahab is not your king but you are bowing down to someone else's God. Furthermore, things are going to happen, not according to Ahab's words, but because of the Word of God, which, in this case, was Elijah's words too, because he was God's prophet. After that, I'll bet Ahab loved Elijah about as much as fish love fishing.

That wasn't bad enough. But, right in between those two statements he said there would be a drought to last three years. Why, you would ask, would a loving God shut off the rain and the dew for three years? Keep reading. God's magnificent plan starts to unfold.

We look at our world today and see strikes and wars. We don't call them wars anymore, but rather police actions. We see bombings and all types of disturbances throughout the land, abortions, Aids, suicide, and national shame. We tell ourselves that it looks like God has lost control. If He doesn't come back soon, there'll be nothing to come back to. Have you ever said that? I have. This is the world situation that Elijah comes into. Yet, he did what God told him to do. The next thing God told him to do is in verse 3:

It's interesting that almost nothing at all is said about Elijah's background. It doesn't say if he had any brothers or sisters, or anything about his parents; not really much at all. But, look what happens. All of a sudden - BOOM! - he comes on the scene. He is standing before King Ahab, the king of the northern portion of the land of Canaan called Israel that is made up of ten of the original twelve tribes.

Lest an important, but wrong, assumption is made, I'll hasten to remind the reader that God is not in the habit of just 'throwing' one of his faithful servants into the middle of a situation, without first offering him the opportunity for preparation....

Some light is shed upon what kind of preparation Elijah had for this monumental confrontation with King Ahab, as we consider the inspired words:

"who was of the inhabitants of Gilead."

Gilead is a strip of land about twenty miles wide and stretches down from the Sea of Galilee to the north end of the Dead Sea, about sixty miles in length, on the east side of the Jordan River. It's a land so filled with great forests of mighty Oak trees and fertile pasture lands, the tribes of Reuben and Gad preferred to remain in this land rather than crossing the Jordan river and possessing the 'promised land' that God had intended for all twelve tribes, not just ten. The inhabitants were of such befitting this desirable land, called Gilead. In the same way that 'to be rough' gives the meaning to the name Gilead, 'mighty', 'robust', 'hardy fighting men' describes "the inhabitants of Gilead".

Elijah must have been raised in a family and a people that knew well, the importance of being physically fit, having a good understanding of one's potential and how to stand for what one believes in. II Kings 1:8 give us an indication he

head in the sand. My first decision was that I didn't want to go on feeling like this.

Make it very clear, I didn't say, "I don't want to go on." This shorter statement is one of the seeds of deceit that Satan plants. The first one comes from God, and merely states I want my situation to change to something better. That's the critical one. Ever met people that actually wanted to go on hurting, or harboring anger toward someone? I have.

In wanting to destroy others, they actually destroy themselves, by creating poisons within themselves. Sad case. Sad case. My body just doesn't have the stamina for that sort of thing.

My second decision was, "God, I've told so many people you have the power to quiet the storm, whether inside or out. Please do it here and now."

'Course I didn't think I could snap my fingers and the water stop its mad travels through my quiet spot, but God as my judge (and He will be), I realized which way the water was going. See, anger and hate so scramble our vision and reasoning we can't even tell which direction things are REALLY going.

THE WATER WAS GOING DOWN HILL!!

Sure it was muddy, but it was still going down hill! You bet, it was moving at a mad frenzied pace!

**BUT IT WAS STILL OBEYING GOD!
IT WAS STILL GOING DOWN HILL!**

I wanted to thump the side of my head several times as though I was pounding some sense into it, and saying "you lunkhead... Jim, seek direction by looking into God's laws of grace and truth for your life.

I left my special spot and started the six-mile drive back home, when a boulder hit me. No not some great big piece of rock - bigger than that. A humongous hunk of truth I hadn't expected.

**God had began preparing the answer
to my need, when he started
it raining several days before!**

Now that's real timing! Place an order on Friday and find out it was packed and shipped three days earlier - Never from Sears, but routine with our Loving Heavenly Father.

In this chapter we've seen God's power, His presence, His direction, and magnificent timing, with regard to our needs.

Do you wish to be able to navigate around the torrents with control and contentment? Can you find in these words, the God of all power? Can you now, just for today, give Him your control rudder without reservation and let Him guide you to your next quiet spot of refreshment?

Whether your day holds diamonds, ducks, or disappointments, expect always to be blessed in surprising and beautiful ways by God's provision to those who are focused on Him and willing to be in the spot where He wants them...

IT'S THE LAW!

In the following chapter is the brook in Elijah's life. Will he learn from his brook, the same laws, you and I are learning from ours?

[~]

3 - ROADKILL CATERING

Elijah wakes up to a beautiful blue sky and a bright orange sun overhead as his ears remind him; he's been camping next to a brook of crisp sparkling water. To his left, on the horizon, there appears what looks to be a dark cloud. His eyes stay fixed on the 'cloud' because it doesn't move like a cloud and besides, it was the only one in the sky.

Elijah rubbed his eyes, hoping for clearer vision, as this black 'cloud' got closer. Did he have some strange magnetism that drew this bit of confusion to him? He didn't have time to ponder that question, because he now saw clearly - the largest flock of birds in all of his born days!!

**Large black ones!!
Anyone of which, was large enough
To tear a man apart!!!
And they were heading right for him!!**

Now wait a minute....

We've skipped some important background events that we'd better go back and fill in, sorry.

Remember now, we've just spent most of the first chapter, getting an inkling of the corrupt king Ahab and his treacherous wife, Jezebel. Now, you'll be miles ahead, if you assume, by faith, that God has a plan, and it's still in operation.... I Kings 17, verse 1 says:

“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, 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.”