

RIVERBANK NEWS

A Publication of The Ol' Ship of Zion

April 2000

ELIJAH FED AT ZAREPHATH!

By Gordon F. Nelson

"Arise, get thee to Zarephath...and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." 1 Ki. 17:9.

Elijah's deliverance was not based on Christian Science, mind-over-matter, or the positive confession. The modern day faith movement, so prevalent in our churches and among our televangelists, is completely foreign to scripture. *"Every day,"* the Psalmist David said, *"they wrest my words."* Ps. 56:5. Apostle Peter, in defending St. Paul, said, *"As also in ALL HIS EPISTLES, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood ('All things are lawful.' 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23), which they (the legalist mindset) that are unlearned and unstable (not grounded in the Galatians' error) wrest, as they (the legalist) do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."* 2 Pet. 3:16. The Kenneth Copland-Kenneth Hagin doctrines (based completely upon the writings of E.W. Kenyon) produce, through memorization of scripture, a formula for success. There is no substitute for hearing directly from God. The hearing of God's voice needs no misplay on words, or magic ploy to succeed.

"But now we are delivered from the law...that we should serve in newness of spirit (not the letter), and not in the oldness of the letter." Rom. 7:6. *"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit (should be a capital "S"): for the LETTER killeth, but the spirit (Spirit—why do Bible translators of even the King James, belittle the Holy Ghost?) giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit (Ministration of the capital "S" Spirit, is the act of the Holy Ghost commencing at Acts 2:4.) be rather glorious?"* 2 Cor. 3:6-8.

Even the best translations from the original Greek are guilty of "wresting the scripture" to fit their own code or religion. We, who are called Pentecostal, should be set for the defense of the Holy Ghost! If we who claim to be baptized in the Holy Ghost don't come to His defense, who will? You can't expect a Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Catholic or Seventh Day Adventist to defend Acts 2:4. You know they will *"wrest the scriptures"* for the sake of their own religion. They will murder Mark 16:19-20, stating it should be removed from the Bible based on the most ancient manuscript. Any way you slice it, these religions will not permit the record to remain that Jesus Christ declared, *"And these signs shall follow*

them that believe...they shall speak with new tongues.” Mk. 16:17. As a denominational, how do you handle that one? Quite naturally. You must “*wrest the scripture,*” or get out of your church.

In Pentecostal circles we’ve been bombarded by scripture quoters. Why? They have invented a formula for financial wealth and prosperity, but first you must learn to sow your seed into the good ground. Your local churches are built on hillsides, therefore, no longer considered fertile ground. It must be bottom ground! What ground could be more fertile than the televangelist teaching this “Prosperity Gospel”? If you only desire a 20% return on your investment, tithe to the local church!

Wake up children, and smell the coffee, for now one tithes to get! One plays the slot machines in Reno for the same reason. However, with your using a little intelligence, you can increase your 20% return to 100%, or even 1000%. Of course, to receive the 1000%, you would have to really have some smarts and invest only in “bottom land,” which Kenneth Copeland-Kenneth Hagin-Paul & Jan Crouch-Oral Roberts hold together, exclusively.

Do you know who the greatest scripture quoter is in the Bible? It is the devil. He quoted scripture every time he opened his mouth in tempting Christ in the Wilderness. Did Jesus need the devil to tell Him what is written? *“If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.”* Matt. 4:6. Be superman. Fly off the pinnacle of the temple. Nothing is going to hurt you. “You’re called to be a preacher; let me teach you how to get a real crowd.” (the Devil)

Christ was not concerned with Himself. *“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* Lk. 19:10. The prosperity message gets you to be concerned about yourself. You are not a millionaire? When are you going to wake up? The scriptures provide a magic formula. Just learn about it, instead of Him, and you’ve perverted the gospel.

First off, forget about that negative preaching about hell. Speak positively, like Robert Schuller. Think positive, and you’ll eventually grow into a “little god.” Does not the scripture say, *“Ye are gods”*? Jn. 10:34.

Of course, the most blasphemous is that Christ, once He became sin for us, had to go to hell to atone for His own sins, and get born again. They accomplish this by “wresting the scripture to their own destruction.” 2 Pet. 3:16. *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.”* 1 Tim. 4:1.

I am going to shock some of you scripture-formula-quoters. For financial success, Elijah never quoted a single scripture! You have “the dead letter that killeth” (2 Cor. 3:6), but Elijah had communication with God.

What scripture would Elijah use “to shut heaven, that it rain not”? Rev. 11:6. *“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead (a Gentile), 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.”* 1 Ki. 17:1.

Do you really think Elijah ran around quoting scripture? Was this positive confession, to bring evil upon Ahab’s kingdom? Or, did Elijah know God? Elijah was performing “exploits” of faith that Daniel prophesied. *“But the people that do KNOW their God shall be strong, and do exploits.”* Dan. 11:32.

“And the word of the LORD came unto him (Elijah) (not some scripture memorization system), saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. SO HE WENT AND DID according to the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.” 1 Ki. 17:2-5.

“So then faith cometh by HEARING, and hearing by the word of God.” Rom. 10:17. These scripture quoters and positive confession folk have HEARD NOTHING! They quote scripture positively! Because they can’t hear from God, is why they create their own god—themselves and the scriptures. Someway, these non-communicators relate to their scripture quoting as being godly. At that moment, they are as gods! Was the devil god when he quoted what God had said to Eve? *“Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”* Gen. 3:1.

Elijah had no wife, no fleshly kinfolk. We actually know nothing about him until he makes his dramatic appearance before King Ahab and Jezebel! Shutting up the heavens so that it would not rain, God had to protect Elijah during his own created famine. The Lord told Elijah to go down to the brook Cherith and *“drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.”* 1 Ki. 17:4. The Apostle Paul taught us, *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”* 1 Tim. 6:6-8. Greed is never satisfied, and finds no contentment.

Elijah had water to drink, and food to eat, brought by the ravens. You want to communicate with God? Live like Elijah did. *“Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: FROM SUCH WITHDRAW THYSELF.”* 1 Tim. 6:5. These folks that believe “gain is godliness,” or the prosperity message, withdraw thyself from their fellowship. Their “gain” could be because they stole money from you. Don’t trust them with your money!

I loaned a brother in Carmel \$5,000 a while back. God gave me a dream that if I didn’t receive the \$5,000 from him by March 30, 2000, to forget all about it. We read and hear about the success of people

that are into the prosperity message. The basic message is to get rich quick. Don't lend these people a dime! Their success could be based on your money, borrowed from you. *"The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again."* Ps. 37:21.

Jesus told us how to live. *"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"* Matt. 6:25. Elijah was not into fancy duds. Taking care of the body was more important than the raiment.

Elijah, on the banks of the brook Cherith, with the ravens feeding him, had escaped the cares of this life that cause men to die spiritually first, and then die physically. Stress kills them off. KISS—"Keep it simple, stupid." Ask God to lower your overhead. Live within your means! Is this the message of Kenneth and Gloria Copeland? It was Elijah's message.

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" Matt. 6:26. Elijah had the coolest, cleanest water to drink, because God picked the brook. God only knows what the ravens brought him to eat. *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek (humble) and lowly in heart: AND YE SHALL FIND REST unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."* Matt. 11:29-30. Keep the overhead down! Live within a budget! Have money to give to God. This is how we are happy! Non-tithers have robbed from God before they ever robbed from you. I wouldn't want a non-tither as my next door neighbor. Nothing is safe! He could steal my lawnmower. *"Will a man rob God?"* Mal. 3:8. He is a stupid idiot that thinks he can rob God! *"Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me."* Mal. 3:9. That tithe is not yours, therefore, God will collect it! Just try and keep it!

Some of us have learned that God has a way of disciplining His children. *"But if ye be without chastisement...then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence."* Heb. 12:8-9.

Randy B., at sixteen, hit his father and left him on the garage floor, leaving home to be a Tahoe gambler and getting involved with drugs for the quick bucks to gamble some more. Does a leopard really change its spots, or only change the scene of action from Tahoe to Carmel, to pull off the biggest con job of all—marrying a doctor's daughter of Carmel.

I've been his spiritual father for over thirty years. He borrowed \$5,000 from me that, after I'm deceased, he will claim as his own. "Better to owe you, than to cheat you out of it." He imagines he is one of God's pet pigs, that doesn't have to pay tithes like the rest of us. What a rude awakening he is going to have. *"For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith*

the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God.” Heb. 10:30-31.

We are supposed to *“contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”* Jude 3.
“Cleanse your (greedy) hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” Jas. 4:8.

Randy is “double minded” in that, like a chameleon, he can be both Pentecostal and Calvary Temple. Every sales operation encourages the salesmen to either go to the largest church, or the golf course, to make contacts. Besides, Christians are like sheep; so gullible to salesmen with the Christian jargon. The innocent sheep are left unprotected in a hireling’s fold. Therefore, the wolf has free access to all the sheep in the pen. The con, or the wolf, cares not whether the sheep talk in tongues. His chief concern is whether the color of the money they possess is green. The smaller the sheepfold, the less likely for the wolf to appear. *“For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of our Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”* Jas. 1:7-8. His heart can’t be in his wife’s religion and the Ol’ Ship of Zion. *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also...No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”* Matt. 6:21,24. The problem is this: you only have one heart. His heart evidently is somewhere else because none of his treasure comes the way of the Ol’ Ship of Zion. Randy imagines he is still a captain. He is a captain over his own created kingdom. His subjects are all Carmelites. However, much to his surprise, rebellion against the king of this kingdom will occur. They will rebel against the king. Solomon said, *“Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”* Ecc. 7:29. Man’s mental inventions of the mind deceive him into thinking he is a god.

We tried another young man, who came aboard ship, as Commander; James S., another “non-tither.” He was also a “double minded” individual. He gave us a pretense of loyalty to the Ol’ Ship of Zion, while his heart was deeply engrossed in E.W. Kenyon’s writings. His desire was to straighten up the Ship to conform to the positive confession revival in Pentecostal circles. He cost me only \$1,000. I’m a retiree, 79 years old! Is this the “double honour” of an elder? or is it the “double mind” of a shipmate?

“Let the elders that rule well be counted with double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine...Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.” 1 Tim. 5:17-20. The church today has no fear of God. It is as though there is no God in heaven, counting every sparrow that falls to earth, and knowing the number of hairs in your head. During the time of the Judges, when Israel had no king, *“every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”* Jdg. 17:6.

Apostle Paul declares emphatically, *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”* Acts 20:29. How did Paul know these wolves would enter into the sheepfold? To guard the sheep is more than a one-man operation. *“Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you OVERSEERS, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”* Acts 20:28. Only true “under-shepherds” know how to protect the sheep from the wolf. (Jn. 10:12) What is it they oversee? To protect and guard the sheep from the enemy; the wolf!

Have you not read in Romans 13:1-7, *“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.”* Saints were to honor the powers that be, whether in the church, or the civil government. *“For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute WRATH upon him that doeth evil...For this cause pay ye tribute (tithes and or taxes) also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues.”*

In the story of Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, they sold some property they owned. No man in the New Testament was ever struck dead because of adultery, but here is a legitimately married couple that Peter asked the question, *“Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?”* (Evidently he pledged or vowed to give all the profit from the sale of the land to lay it ‘at the apostle’s feet.’ But he kept back part of the price [far more than a tithe] and brought only a certain part.) Peter said, as an avenger to execute wrath on Ananias, *“Thou has not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.”* Acts. 5:1-5. This death was strictly over “the love of money, which is the root of all evil.” 1 Tim. 6:10.

The last man on this earth that you ever wish to shortchange on money, is God’s man! You could drop over dead. Why? Indirectly, you’ve touched one of God’s anointed by stealing from a *“minister of God to thee for good.”* Rom. 13:4. *“Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”* Ps. 105:15.

“For the love of money is the root of all evil.” 1 Tim. 6:10. Why is this sin more evil than adultery or fornication? This particular sin places you in the realm of the enemy’s camp, serving the god of mammon. Jesus said, *“Ye cannot serve God and (the) mammon (god).”* Lk. 16:13.

The church of today exalts the god of mammon as the real god! The exaltation of this particular god of mammon came about through an Oral Roberts' interpretation of one verse of scripture. *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest PROSPER and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."* 3 Jn. 2. The misinterpretation of one word, "prosper", created a new religion foreign to scripture. The Greek use of this word, translated "prosper" in this particular scripture, implied a prosperous journey with no mishaps, to succeed in your chosen vocation; but never implied wealth as Oral Roberts interprets.

"And the ravens brought him (Elijah) bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook." 1 Ki. 17:6. Do you think God was supplying all of Elijah's needs *"according to His riches in glory"*? The Bible teaches, *"But godliness with contentment is great gain...and having food and raiment let us be therewith content...For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* 1 Tim. 6:6,8,10.

Elijah was happy and enjoyed himself along the brook Cherith, but one day the brook dried up. Did Elijah panic! No. God knew the brook would dry up, and Elijah would have to move on. God led the children of Israel for 40 days and nights by a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. When the cloud moved, they moved! *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* Rom. 8:14. Watch out for anything firmly implanted into the earth family that it cannot move. The Mafia makes family really work!

The entire religious world has found a common bond that they can relate to; the sanctity of the family, whether they be Christian, Jewish, Catholic or Moslem. The family will be the glue to mold all religions into One World Religion. After all, you're a nobody in this earth without family. It was only Jesus that declared the family to be a war zone. *"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth('s family): I came not to send peace, but a sword...And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."* Matt. 10:34,36.

"And it came to pass after a while, that the brook (Cherith) dried up, because there had been no rain in the land." 1 Ki. 17:7. This was a self-inflicted curse that represented the judgment of God on King Ahab's rule over Israel. I would to God an Elijah would be sent to Washington D.C. to call God's people to the horrors of the Clinton-Gore administration. Benedict Arnold was a gentleman compared to Bill and his accomplice wife, Hillary. Our government shot and killed Benedict Arnold for treason. These culprits have paved the way for the Chinese Communists to take over, not only the Panama Canal, but Taiwan as well. One day on planet Earth, a greater evil than Clinton will bring an Elijah to once again torment the earth of Antichrist for three and one-half years! *"And if any man will hurt them (Moses and Elijah), fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them,*

he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy (Don't throw away your water bottles from Y2K. 3½ years of drought is still coming.); and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." Rev. 11:5-6.

Why doesn't the church tell you about Elijah's coming to earth? He'll be here for three and one-half years! The earth will rejoice over the dead bodies of Moses and Elijah, *"and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."* Rev. 11:9. The only giving of gifts recorded in scripture was practiced while the world viewed on worldwide television these dead bodies. *"And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth."* Rev. 11:10. You'll see a different Elijah during the tribulation than the one that hid out in a cave (1 Ki. 10:9) from Jezebel who swore to kill him.

Jezebel is a type of the one world religion that will soon be dedicated to killing all Christians because their presence torments the earth given over to Sodomy, euthanasia and abortion. The rule of the majority (democracy) will prevail. The Elijah of Revelation will not run from Jezebel (type of One World Religion). Jezebel will make war with the saints and overcome them. (Rev. 13:7)

After the brook dried up, God then told Elijah what to do. *"Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee."* 1 Ki. 17:9.

This is the one story that made millions of dollars for Robert Tilton, a Dallas-based televangelist and ex-druggie. But, Robert Tilton has twisted the story to read that the widow woman had the need! The way Robert Tilton told the story of the widow of Zarephath was fraudulent. He always presented the idea of the widow of Zarephath having the need, when in reality the Word says just the opposite.

ABC television's Diane Sawyer, on her Prime Time Live telecast exposé of the fraud of three Dallas-based televangelists, W.V. Grant, Jr., Larry Lea and Robert Tilton, knocked them all out in a single exposure of their fraudulent empires. W.V. Grant, Jr. went to prison on income tax charges by the IRS following the telecast.

Don't ask me why God didn't send Elijah to a rich widow. The rich can't hear! God has only five workers, the Apostle Paul declares. *"For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the FOOLISH things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the WEAK things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and BASE things of the world, and things which are DESPISED, hath God*

chosen, yea, and THINGS WHICH ARE NOT, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.” 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

The widow of Zarephath qualified completely as one of God’s workers. She could hear the voice of God that commanded her to take care of Elijah during the famine. God said, *“I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.”* 1 Ki. 17:9. Why didn’t Elijah go to one of his flesh brothers or sisters in Gilead to help him? *“Thus saith the LORD: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.”* Jer. 17:5. *“Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.”* Matt. 8:22. That which is flesh is flesh; and flesh will relate to their own flesh. An outsider can easily be interpreted as an intruder. Elijah was being sent to a widow’s house to sustain him. Elijah had the need according to God’s Word.

What did the widow have to take care of the prophet? *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* Heb. 11:1. Elijah did not need the evidence of the abilities after he heard the voice of God. The “hearing” must proceed the doing! If God didn’t tell you to do it, you’ve no business doing it. Being religious, doing religious activity, no matter the sincerity, is not faith. *“Faith cometh by hearing.”* Rom. 10:17. Man seeks another way today, assuming no one hears from God directly as Elijah did. They develop a philosophy based on the fact that no one hears from God, thus they come up with the wrong religion to present to the masses.

When I pastored my church in Hayward, I gave my audience only one challenge. “We won’t go after popularity, the money, increase membership drive, or great sermons. However, I will convince you that God communicates with man. Being convinced of that one thing, you will never be the same!”

Elijah knew he belonged at Zarephath. Do you know where you belong? Elijah was sent to a widow who said, *“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.”* 1 Ki. 17:12. Elijah was looking for miracles, not because of what he saw, but what he heard.

I remember Brother Branham before prayer would always ask this question, “Do you believe I am a prophet of God? If you do not believe this, I can’t help you!” The widow of Zarephath believed and prospered as a result. God met her every need. Elijah also was sustained through the famine as a result of obeying God’s command!

In the choosing of Gideon’s band, God always told Gideon, “You’ve too many men, Gideon!” Jdg. 7:2. God looks for quality, not quantity, in His war against Satan’s kingdom. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Parents often have to join their kid’s kingdom in order to preserve the flesh kingdom, called, “the family.”