



THE VISIBLE HAND
— OF THE INVISIBLE GOD —

PART ONE

Sermon Overview

The ministry illustrates how God can use ordinary people who are willing for the sake of His ministry, providing for them and growing them in times of “hiddenness” until they are spiritually prepared for greater things and greater faith.

PART ONE

God invites His sons and daughters to call on Him in prayer, and intervenes in their lives. This is an example of the visible hand of God. Such intervention in response to prayer is visible in the life of Elijah, an ordinary man with no credentials who became a prophet.

¹ Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “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.”

² Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah:

³ “Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan.

⁴ You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there.”

⁵ So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there.

⁶ The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

⁷ Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to him:

⁹ “Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.”

¹⁰ So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?”

¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

¹² “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

¹³ Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son.

¹⁴ For this is what 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 day the Lord gives rain on the land.’”

¹⁵ She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.

¹⁶ For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

¹⁷ Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing.

¹⁸ She said to Elijah, “What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?”

¹⁹ “Give me your son,” Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed.

²⁰ Then he cried out to the Lord , “O Lord my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?”

²¹ Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the Lord, “O Lord my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”

²² The Lord heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived.

²³ Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, “Look, your son is alive!”

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

1 KING 17

HERE I AM, SEND ME

Elijah appears from nowhere. He had no credentials, and throughout his ministry he experienced suffering, fear, and depression to the point of being suicidal. He was an ordinary man that God used because Elijah was available and willing to serve.

AHAB AND JEZEBEL

Israel had been creeping towards Baal worship and idolatry for generations, and the wickedness of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel plunged the nation further into immorality. Elijah was sent to confront their immorality by confronting their leadership.

HIDDEN BY GOD

Immediately after confronting the King and Queen, Elijah was hidden by God in the wilderness. When God hides a believer, He hides them in plain view, growing them inwardly, for the sake of greater service and ministry.

During this time, God provides for the believer. When the provision runs out, it means that God is planning to take the believer to a higher level of faith, and greater things.