

## **Emmaus Chapter 11 – Mike Baran**

### Grasping God's Word – Chapter 11

#### **Assignment 11-1**

Read 1 Kings 17:1-6 below and use your imagination to develop a far-fetched allegorical interpretation. Ignore the context completely and try to come up with a “superspiritual” meaning for as many of the details as possible. Keep in mind that the point of this exercise is to misrepresent the passage intentionally. Don't be concerned with the real meaning of the passage. Be as creative (and wrong) as you can.

<sup>1</sup>Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Galilee, 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.” <sup>2</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: <sup>3</sup>“Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. <sup>4</sup>You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there.” <sup>5</sup>So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of Jordan, and stayed there. <sup>6</sup>The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

#### **Your far-fetched allegorical interpretation:**

Elijah was a prophet and Jesus was also a prophet. Therefore, the story about Elijah and his criticism of Ahab and Jezebel is really just a prophetic allegory about Jesus and his criticism of the Scribes and Pharisees. Ahab was a corrupt king who did not follow the true laws of God for he and his Ba'al-worshipping evil and covetous wife Jezebel had Naboth murdered so that they could illegally gain his vineyard and so gain added status among the people as well as added wealth. In this, Ahab and Jezebel represent the self-aggrandizing egotistical Scribes and Pharisees who wanted to be rid of Jesus, whom they saw as usurping their function and status as teachers of truth and tradition. The Scribes and Pharisees saw nothing wrong with placing heavy burdens on the people when they preached the unreasonable demands of the Oral Law, about which they lied when they insisted that it was secretly given to Moses by God and then also secretly passed down to them by word of mouth from their teachers. By contrast, Jesus had compassion for the people's struggles under the harsh teachings and demands of the Scribes and Pharisees and offered the people truth and compassion when he taught about brotherly love in his preaching. This annoyed the Scribes and Pharisees no end.

God through Elijah said that he would stop the rain for three years because of Ahab's corruption, which then explains the prophetic statements by Jesus about how Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed – the land of Israel would be over-run and “parched” by the Roman armies during an approximately three-year period – because of the same corrupt behaviour and false teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees. Of course, the Scribes and Pharisees were angry at the way Jesus insulted them and made them look bad in the eyes of the people and so they planned to kill him, just as Ahab and Jezebel planned to kill Elijah.

However, when Elijah hid himself in the Kerith Ravine and was fed by a few ravens, the ravens as birds could not hope to bring Elijah enough food to satisfy his hunger, since there would need to be many flocks of ravens flying to him with tiny morsels of food in their beaks. This would then give away Elijah's secret hiding place and allow Ahab's troops to arrest and execute Elijah. Therefore it is quite obvious that these were not real crows that supplied Elijah with food but birds that symbolized the Holy Spirit in the same way that the dove that hovered over Jesus at his baptism

also represented the Holy Spirit, by means of which Jesus was spiritually sustained throughout his life and especially during his 40-days of so-called fast in the wilderness; a symbolic or spiritual fast.

But because Elijah was not the actual son of God in the way that Jesus was, his crows were black (symbolic of him being a sinner like all humans) while the dove that hovered over Jesus was white because Jesus was the pure and sinless son of God. In the same way as Elijah was saved from Ahab and Jezebel so Jesus was also saved from being murdered by the Scribes and Pharisees because God hid him; in that he could not be identified among the crowds in Jerusalem until his time had come to be revealed and to be crucified, after which time he was then saved from death through resurrection into heaven, just like Elijah who was saved from death at the hands of Ahab and Jezebel and was then eventually carried into heaven in a fiery chariot.

It is evident, therefore, from such parallels in the lives of Elijah and Jesus that the story of Elijah's problems with Ahab and his evil and idolatrous wife Jezebel is really just a prophetic allegory about Jesus and his confrontation with the equally evil Scribes and Pharisees.

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P.S. The above is an allegory invented by myself, but for at least one millennium following the death of Jesus, Christian teachers were teaching a variety of allegorical interpretations about many of the events in the Bible.

One such relatively harmless allegorical interpretation was how Abel represented Jesus and Cain represented the Jews.

Another more base allegorical interpretation from the second-century *Epistle of Barnabas* relates to the Old Testament injunction against eating unclean foods: "Among other things, [Moses] also says, *you are not to eat of the hare*, by which he means you are not to debauch young boys, or become like those who do; ... And *you are not to eat the hyena* signifies that you are not to be a lecher of libertine, or copy their ways; ..."

Here we can wonder how and why any so-called Christian would come up with the sort of disgusting allegorical examples of subjective interpretations of God-given instruction. ■

Mike, I am delighted to read your "afterword" here, as the entire exercise simply illustrates the deviances that have been propagated throughout history. Again, well done! We can all chuckle a bit!