

THE WIDOW OF SIDON. 1 KN. 17:8-16. 2/12/23. #26.

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⁸Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁹“Arise, go to Zarephath, which *belongs* to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.” ¹⁰So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow *was* there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.” ¹¹And as she was going to get *it*, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” ¹²So she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I *am* gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” ¹³And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go *and* do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring *it* to me; and afterward make *some* for yourself and your son. ¹⁴For thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.’ ” ¹⁵So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for *many* days. ¹⁶The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

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1. Strategic move

- a. Elijah had pronounced a drought & famine on the land of Israel due to their rebellious adultery
 - a1. It would not rain again except by Elijah’s command (of the Lord)
 - a2. Elijah escaped to the Brook Cherith where we was fed by ravens
- b. Soon, the brook dried up, so Elijah had to move
- c. God tells Elijah to move to Zarephath
 - a1. Zarephath is in Phoenicia near Sidon
 - a2. Zarephath also impacted by the drought

2. Outside the covenant land

- a. Several ironies about God’s command
 - a1. He sends Elijah outside of Israel
 - a2. The widow is from the same area as the wicked Queen Jezebel
 - a3. God chooses a foreign widow to serve the prophet from Israel
 - a4. God states that he commanded a widow to take care of Elijah, but she is unaware of the command (not expecting Elijah)

- b. Often God uses people & things without telling the one used in advance of their service (God prepared a fish to transport Jonah, a Shunemmite woman to minister to Elisha, Jael to slay Scisera, Ruth to hide 2 spies, midwives to save baby Moses, a donkey to speak to Balaam, Cyrus to release the Jews...)

- c. God can command people to do his will without them knowing that that is what they are doing
 - a1. There is a compulsion placed within them to do a certain task
 - a2. God prepares those who wants to use
- d. No direct mention is made of the widow’s faith
 - a1. She refers to “your God” when she addresses Elijah (not “our God”)
 - a2. God was referred to as the “God of Israel” or the “Hebrew God”

3. The absurd command & an act of faith

- a. The widow is picking up sticks to make a fire so she & her son can make their last meal
- b. Elijah asks the widow to bring him so water
 - a1. As she is complying, Elijah also asks for some food
 - a2. The widow explains that she has just enough food for her & her son
- c. Elijah tells her to make him a cake 1st & then make something for her & her son
 - a1. This is a brazen request
 - a2. Elijah states that God will make the flour & oil last as long as the drought does
- d. The widow had to choose whether to believe Elijah or not
 - a1. Her actions showed that she did believe him, for she complied
 - a2. Indicates that she was a woman of faith
- e. Not only did the oil & grain last, but she served Elijah many days, along with herself & son
 - a1. Her trials are not over
 - a2. God is concerned about her faith
- f. God works in small unseen areas as well as big ones