

Elijah and the Widow – God’s Miraculous Provision

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

In I Kings 17, Elijah had prophesied to the wicked King Ahab who promoted Baal worship in Israel, saying that there would be no rain or dew in the next few years except at his word. Baal was supposedly the god of fertility and lord of the rain clouds, and The Lord God would demonstrate the impotence of Baal to the people of Israel by withholding rain from the land through His word spoken by the prophet.

After his prophecy to Ahab, the word of the Lord came to Elijah telling him to leave and go hide by the Kerith Ravine. There he could drink from the brook, and the Lord told him that He had commanded ravens to provide food for him also. Elijah did as he was told, and the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening. After a while though, the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

God’s provision for our lives by way of a particular source is many times only temporary. There will be provision for us in a certain place for a time, and then at some point, “the brook dries up” so to speak, and we must move on to find provision elsewhere. God had provided for Elijah by the brook for a time, when the brook was still flowing, and the ravens brought him food. When his provision by the brook ran out, the Lord then made other provisions for Elijah. This time He commanded a widow to provide for him, and a very poor widow at that.

At this point the Lord told Elijah to go to Zarephath, as we see from I Kings 17:8-16. When Elijah came into the town, he saw a widow there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked her for a drink of water and a piece of bread. She

replied to the prophet saying that she did not have any bread, only a small amount of flour in a jar and a little oil left in a jug. She was gathering the sticks to make one last meal for herself and her son, after which she expected that they would both die of hunger.

Elijah replied to her, telling her not to be afraid, but to go home and to first prepare a cake of bread and bring it to him from the flour and oil that she had left, and then to prepare something for herself and her son. Elijah then spoke to her with these words: “For thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth.’” (I Kings 17:14).

Hearing the word of the Lord given by the prophet, the poor widow obeyed that word, even though it seemed completely contrary to human reasoning. After all, she might have thought that the cake she gave to Elijah could have been used to sustain her and her son for one more day. Nevertheless, she obeyed the word of the Lord, and she did receive a miraculous provision to sustain both her and her son. Instead of having just one more portion of flour and oil to sustain her and her son for one more day, she received God’ provision so that the bowl of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry until the Lord once again gave His rain, and the provision of food was no longer scarce in the land.

The widow obeyed the word of God, and as a result of her obedience God provided for her needs, just as He promised that He would. In the same way, Jesus told us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all of the things that we need to sustain our lives will be given to us as well (Matthew 6:33). In both of these passages of Scripture the lesson is the same: we are to obey God’s word first and foremost, and when we do so, He will command that provision be made for our lives. In some cases, this provision may come in ways that we could not possibly manage by ourselves.