



## Lesson 116

# Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath

## Story Elements

**Text:** 1 Kings 17:7-24

**Setting:** circa 875 B.C.

**Main Characters:** God, Elijah, and an unnamed widow

**Plot:** Elijah is sent to a widow in Zarephath where he is given provision and she is challenged to have faith.

**Key word(s):** “according to the word of the LORD”

**Climax:** *1 Kings 17:14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.*

## Faith Challenged

1. (1 Ki. 17:7-9) As the drought continued in the land of Israel, the brook Cherith dried up and Elijah would need a new place of refuge. The LORD sent him unto \_\_\_\_\_ where a widow would give him shelter and food.

(a) (1 Ki. 17:10-12) Upon arriving at the gates of Zarephath, Elijah discerned a widow gathering sticks for fuel. The prophet asked for a bit of food, but the widow described her desperate condition: *“As the LORD thy God liveth, 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 \_\_\_\_\_.”*

(b) (1 Ki. 17:13-16) But Elijah insisted that she share with him first. At first, his insistence smacks of selfishness, but, in reality, he was challenging her to have \_\_\_\_\_ in God.

## Faith Changed

2. (1 Ki. 17:17-18) Though the flour and oil were continually replenished, another tragedy befell the poor widow of Zarephath: her only son became sick and died.

(a) In desperation, she charges Elijah for causing her son's death by invoking God's wrath for past \_\_\_\_\_.

(b) (1 Ki. 17:19-24) Elijah carried the boy up to his room where he interceded for his life. God heard Elijah's prayer and the boy revived and was delivered into the arms of his grateful mother. She declared, “Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is \_\_\_\_\_.”

## Application

3. In the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath, we find a striking example of how God uses common things for his mighty purposes (cf. 1 Cor. 1:27). Notice that, in the

story, not only was the source of provision from a person who would be the least capable to provide, but the location of provision was the least likely \_\_\_\_\_ Elijah would seek for help. (Zarephath was next Zidon, Jezebel's hometown and the epicenter of the spiritual war that was ravaging the soul of Israel).

**1 Corinthians 1:27** *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;*

4. In Luke 4:24-26, Jesus referred to this story when his own hometown of Nazareth generally rejected him. With these words of the Savior in mind, what do you think is the significance of Elijah resurrecting a Gentile widow's son? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Jesus said, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." (Matt. 10:41) In light of what happened to the widow of Zarephath, what do you think these words of Jesus mean? \_\_\_\_\_

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Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): according • 1. Zarephath; a) die; b) faith • 2. a) sins; b) truth • 3. Place • 4. Elijah's miracle gave a foretaste that God's mercy would be lavished amongst all nations and that Gentile faith was just as pleasing as Jewish faith. • 5. They mean that though we may not do the works of other great servants of God, if we serve them, we share in their labors and God honors our service as he does theirs.

**How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study:** (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. Keep in mind that some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.