

The Widow of Zarephath

The OT reading for this coming Sunday (Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost) is 1 Kings 17:8-16.

Because of Israel's unfaithfulness, the Lord sent a drought to the land. God took care of Elijah at the Brook Cherith. But when that stream dried up God had other options for Elijah.

God had Elijah go to Zarephath. It was a coastal town located between Tyre and Sidon. The territory was ruled by Jezebel's father Ethbaal. This was the heart of Baal worship which was causing so much trouble in Israel.

While the Israelites relied Baal, Elijah demonstrated his faith in the Lord by doing what God was telling him.

There were many widows in Israel who, theoretically, could have provided for Elijah. But God pronounced judgment on His people's unbelief by sending His prophet to a Gentile woman. When God's own people worship idols instead of the Lord, then God sends His prophets and His blessings to others.

In verse 12 it states: *as the LORD your God lives*. The widow recognized Elijah as an Israelite, and her expression may indicate frail faith in the true God. Though Zarephath lay outside of Israel, Israelite beliefs had influenced its people.

The widow was also being impacted by the drought. When Elijah comes to her house she is making preparations for the last meal for her and her son. Elijah persuades her to give him something to eat. He promises her that her food supply will never end. And, it doesn't.

Through Elijah, the Lord miraculously provides food for a widow in Zarephath. This story illustrates God's never-ending goodness. He daily and richly provides for all our needs, blessings us far beyond what we deserve or what we ask.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for always providing for not only earthly food but also spiritual nourishment. Help me to be a witness to your great love. Amen