



COVENANT DEMANDS AND BLESSINGS ARE CARRIED OUTSIDE THE COVENANT CIRCLE

17:7-9

Then the word of the LORD came to him

- The Word of the Lord that led the prophet from the brook Cherith to Zarephath. God's command broke up Elijah's time of waiting into two periods.
- By contrast, nothing had changed in Israel. There would be no new phase "except at my word."
- God's motivation in using covenant wrath is equally unchanged. His deep longing for His people is as evident in withholding the rain as it is in bringing it again.
- But that was not how Elijah experienced the drought. Elijah, the representative of the Word of the Lord, was cared for with miraculous power broken into two periods – Cherith and Zarephath.



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17:7-9

Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there.

- Why Zarephath in the region of Sidon
- The Lord's command to leave Cherith and go to live in Zarephath intensified His judgment on Israel.
- At Cherith, God was isolating His people from His Word.
- At Zarephath, God was replacing His covenant people with a woman outside the covenant.
- At Cherith, God was sustaining Elijah directly.
- At Zarephath, God specifically chose a human instrument outside of Israel.
- The Bible tells us exactly where Zarephath was. It was in the region (or protection) of Sidon which was under the control of Ethbaal, King of Tyre, Jezabel's father.



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17:10-11

Elijah – “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

- The widow was in desperate straits for Israel’s drought had reached Sidon.
- Elijah was acting again at the command of the Lord. He was not being harsh.
- This is exactly Elijah’s message to the people on Mt. Carmel (18:21) – *“How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is god, follow him.”*
- The Lord is always asking everything of His people.

The widow – “As surely as the LORD your God lives,” she replied

- Same oath used by Obadiah in 18:10.
- What is clear is that she did honor the Lord in some manner.



THE DEMANDS AND BLESSINGS OF THE COVENANT ARE CARRIED OUTSIDE THE COVENANT CIRCLE

17:13-14

Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.’

- The promise is a necessary consequence of the demand. The Lord promises to give the woman exactly what He asks of her. The Lord always provides what He requires.
- Word called for a response – faith or unbelief, conversion or aversion, no time to decide.
- Here faith reached out for the powers of heaven, and heaven embraced the earth.
- Faith is defined by and bound by the expressions of it – Hebrews 11, 2 Corinthians 1:18-20, James 2:17-26, Hebrews 6:13-18
- The widow believed the Word of God is more than flour and oil. Israel, under Ahab



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17:17-18

Some time later . . . It appears the Word of the Lord has suffered a setback.

. . . the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. The boy's death suddenly broke upon the lives of Elijah and the woman as a great riddle. It shattered her sense of security.

- The miracle after all was a constant presence and reminder in her own house. All around people were dying in hunger and misery. But not the widow.
- The shock posed a burning problem for both the widow and Elijah. "WHY?!!" The boy's death was not ordinary, it appears extraordinary.
- Elijah even prays "*LORD my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?*". The Lord clearly had done it. And that cried for explanation.



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17:17-18

"What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?" The woman believed it had something also to do with her – a perspective likely bound up with her heathen perspective.

Then he cried out to the LORD, "LORD my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" Essentially Elijah reframes the widow's conclusion in his prayer to Yahweh.

- "Even upon the widow!" These words contained the whole problem.
- There are several answers and they all must focus on the unfolding Word of the Lord.
- First, through the death of this child Elijah must play the prophet to his hostess.
- Second, the widow must now deal with Elijah as a prophet.



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17:20

Then he cried out to the LORD, "LORD my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?"

- Here was an inflection point in the plan of God. God had indeed caused the boy's death. And now Elijah knew he could not continue on in Zarephath.
- Away from the widow with the dead boy in his room, the prophet was free to voice his anxious concerns and raise his burning questions to the Lord.
- Elijah saw only one path through which the Word of God could win recognition – the path of miracles.
- So Elijah prayed for this outcome. And as in his earlier prayer for judgment, here his prayer was full of energy.
- The Lord was using this miracle to typify I believe the life of Israel.



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17:23

Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

- The first prophecy to the woman did not contain the light of personal revelation. Here, the second one did.
- Note her recognition of the Word of the Lord. Here she moves from the sign to the Word. Israel remains far behind this woman.
- The woman reasoned correctly and became an eternal testament to the truthfulness of the Word.