



GOD OF FIRE & RAIN

—THE STORY OF—
ELIJAH & GOD

2



YES, NO & MAYBE

1. I don't get nervous when I'm in the bad part of town.
2. I would have a really difficult time asking a stranger to provide me with something to eat.
3. God likes working with pagans more than with His followers.
4. God blesses those who worship the devil.
5. God typically gives you just the amount that you need so that you'll stay focused on Him.

DIG DEEPER

◊ Have you ever been desperate for God's divine intervention? Did He intervene, and was it in a way that you expected?

› **READ 1 Kings 17:7-16** (NIV)

7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9 "Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food." 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" 11 As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."

12 "As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."

13 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. 14 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.'"

15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

» **9 "Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon"** - Zarephath (modern Sarafand, thirteen kilometers south of Sidon) lay in the Phoenician territory controlled by Ahab's father-in-law (Jezebel's dad). Elijah was visiting enemy territory and showing the power of God in an area where Baal was worshiped. Elijah challenges a seemingly poor woman to help as she gathered mere stubble or sticks ('twigs,' qšš) to respond to a stranger's request.

- Why do you think that God led Elijah to the center of Baal worship to live for about 2 years?
- Does God typically lead you to dangerous or to safe places?

DIG DEEPER... CONTINUED

» **9 I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.** - Zarephath was 80–90 miles from Kerith. God told Elijah that a widow would feed him (cf. Luke 4:25–26). Widows were usually poor people; normally they ran out of food first in a famine. This famine had been created by the drought. Therefore going to a widow for food was a strange directive. God was again using an unusual source to feed His prophet. This verse says that God had already communicated with this widow that she would supply someone food. She was on the lookout for Elijah for a miracle as much as he was looking for her.

- Why do you think God chose a widow, instead of directing Elijah to a more influential citizen?
- What does God's choice of the widow say about Him and how He works?

» **10 Bring me a little water** - The gift of water to the thirsty is always regarded as a sacred duty in the East. If you were to ask a stranger for water there, you would not be refused a drink of water by a single individual of any sect or race. The Bedouin in the desert will even share the last drop in his water-skin if you ask.

» **11 And bring me, please, a piece of bread.** - The request for food will soon reveal to him whether this is the widow woman who is to sustain him.

- Does God typically test people's faith like this? Why or why not?

» **12 "As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied** - It is noteworthy that the words are, "Jehovah *thy* God," words which show that she recognized Elijah, perhaps by his Jewish face, probably by his prophetic dress (2 Kings 1:8) as a worshiper of Yahweh. But had she also been the same, it is probable that she would have said "my God." Here was a Gentile woman in Phoenicia who believed in the Lord; she said she believed He is alive. At the same time, everyone was saying that Baal was dead.

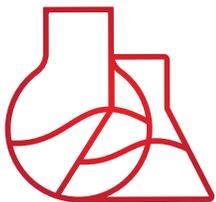
« What does it say about God that he would send Elijah to a pagan instead of a faithful Jew?

» **13 Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said.** - The believing widow, however, received from the prophet not only a material blessing, but a spiritual blessing also. Elijah was not sent to this widow in order that he might be safely hidden at her house, although this object was better attained in this way than by his remaining longer in Israel; but because of her faith, namely, to strengthen and to increase it, he was sent to her, and not to one of the many widows in Israel, many of whom would also have received the prophet if they had been rescued by him from the pressure of the famine. The miraculous increase of the meal and oil did not merely serve the purpose of keeping the prophet and the widow alive; but the relief of her physical need was also meant to be a preparatory means of quieting her spiritual need as well.

« What does it say about God that he was concerned for the health and life of this pagan widow and her son?

» **15 "So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.** - In ver. 12 and 13 her son only is mentioned, which means that there was so much flour and oil that even her poor relatives came to partake of her food.

« What does God's actions to feed the extended family of a pagan woman reveal to you about God's character?



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MY PRAYER...

1. Am I resisting God when He asks me to go to unfamiliar places for Him?
2. How does God want me to be a conduit of miracles to those who don't know Him?
3. What new aspect of God's character does He want me to know?