

Setting

Locate the following places on the Bible map:

- Tishbe (?)¹⁷
- Zarephath (?)
- Gilead (region)
- Sidon
- Brook Cherith (?)
- Samaria

Key Terms and People

Elijah: Prophet of God from Tishbe.

Ahab: Seventh king of Israel. Built an altar to Baal in Samaria. See 1 Kings 16:30–33.

Brook: “The word *naḥal* is used variously of a perennial stream, the flow of water and the dried course of a river-bed.”¹⁸

Widow of Zarephath: Hostess to Elijah during his time in Zarephath.

Story Moments

Note: This chapter begins a series of stories that focus on the prophet Elijah. These stories continue through 2 Kings 2.

Elijah Predicts a Drought

17:1. What judgment does Elijah declare will come on the nation of Israel?¹⁹ _____

17:2–4. Where does the Lord tell Elijah to go after confronting King Ahab? _____

How will Elijah’s need for food and water be met? _____

- Water: _____
- Food: _____

17:5–6. What is the result of Elijah’s obedience? _____

17:7. What happens to Elijah’s source of water? _____

Why? _____



The Widow of Zarephath

17:8–11. Where does God tell Elijah to go and why? _____

Why is this location a counter-intuitive place for God to call Elijah to travel (see the map)? Hint: Who was from Sidon (see 16:31)? _____

What does Elijah notice when he sees the widow? _____

What requests does Elijah make of the widow? _____

- Water: _____
- Food: _____

¹⁷ A question mark after a city name indicates that scholars are unsure of its precise location.

¹⁸ J.M. Houston, *New Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Brook,” 149.

¹⁹ In the previous chapter, King Ahab erected an altar to the Canaanite god Baal in Samaria. In Canaanite culture, Baal was the god over fertility and rain. Note the irony that the establishment of Baal worship is followed by a divinely ordained drought.

17:12. How does the woman respond? _____

How does her response demonstrate she is an unusual choice for God to use to care for his prophet? _____

17:13. What instruction does Elijah give the widow despite her protest? “Do not _____.”

What additional direction does he give? _____

17:14–16. What does Elijah prophesy regarding the woman’s resources? _____

The Widow’s Son

17:17–18. In your own words, describe the tragedy that befalls the widow woman: _____

Describe the tone of the widow towards Elijah after her son’s death: _____

17:19–20. How does Elijah respond to the death of the widow’s son? _____

17:21–23. What method does Elijah use to raise the widow’s son?

- First, he _____ out to the Lord. (20)
- Next, he _____ himself on the child three times. (21a)
- Then, he _____ to the Lord one more time. (21b)

How does the Lord answer Elijah’s request? _____

17:24. Based on the response of the widow, what is one purpose of this miracle? _____

How does this story continue to develop our theme of “the Word of God to a Divided Kingdom?”

Ask Yourself

The Lord repeatedly provides for Elijah’s needs in this chapter. Do I ever doubt whether the Lord will provide for me? See Matthew 6:25–27.

Consider all the ways God provided through unlikely means (a brook in a time of drought, ravens—scavenger birds—who brought food, a widow woman who provides food). How does God use unlikely things in my life to teach me about Him?

Consider how God prepares Elijah for the first two tests (17:2–4 and 17:8–9) but doesn’t warn him about the last one—the death of the boy. How do I respond when I face an unexpected trial? How is Elijah’s response of faith an example for me to follow?

What are some specific ways I have seen the Lord supply my needs?

The widow’s fearful response in 17:12 is met with Elijah’s instruction: “Do not fear.” What are my fears? How can I submit them to the Lord? See Philippians 4:6–9.

Cross References

Matthew 6:25–27

²⁵ “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?”

Philippians 4:6–9

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. ⁹ The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.