



SABBATH 49—DECEMBER 7, 2024

Multiplication Math

1 Kings 17:13-14—“Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.’”

In vain, the widow from Zarephath looked to the sky for any sign of rain. Her heart was saddened to see the first shreds of evidence of starvation in her son. One morning, her fears began to come true. There was flour and oil just for one more meal. So, with a heavy heart, she went out to gather some sticks to prepare what should be their last meal.

As she was lost in her thoughts, a stranger wearing travel-tattered clothes stopped in front of her shack and asked her for water to drink. Giving water to a stranger was fine. After all, a glass of water would not threaten her livelihood. However, as she went in to fetch water for the prophet Elijah, he stopped her unexpectedly and asked her to bring him bread too!

And she responded, “As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die” (1 Kings 17:12). When the widow expressed the crude reality of her situation, she was still limited by her subtraction math.

As she heard Elijah’s words (see today’s scripture), she realized the limitation of her subtraction math, and decided to abide by God’s multiplication math and to see God’s proposal as the answer to her desperate situation.

The same perspective of Elijah regarding the widow applies to us today. One of the many reasons we fail to return our tithes and offerings is that we are paralyzed with fear. We still accept and follow subtraction math and become convinced that fidelity will bring us financial difficulties. When we are challenged to put God first, we wonder how we are going to survive!

Appeal: Today, cast away your fear and, by faith, ask God to kindly help you to turn away from the mathematics of worldly and temporal subtraction and accept the one of heavenly and eternal multiplication.

