

# Luke 21:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

## Analysis

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**For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.** Jesus provides the theological explanation for His startling evaluation. The wealthy gave *ek tou perisseuontos autois* (ἐκ τοῦ περισσεύοντος αὐτοῖς, 'from their surplus/abundance')—from what exceeded their needs. Their giving cost them nothing; they suffered no loss, felt no sacrifice, experienced no risk. After their donations, their lifestyle remained unchanged.

The widow, by contrast, gave *ek tou hysterēmatos autēs* (ἐκ τοῦ ὑστερήματος αὐτῆς, 'from her poverty/need')—from what she lacked. More dramatically, she gave *panta ton bion hon eichen* (πάντα τὸν βίον ὃν εἶχεν, 'all the life/living that she had'). The word *bion* (βίον) means 'life' or 'livelihood'—she gave not merely money but her means of survival. After her gift, she had nothing left for food or shelter. **She trusted God with her very existence**, embodying the faith Jesus constantly commended: radical dependence on divine provision rather than self-sufficiency.

## Historical Context

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This teaching climaxes Jesus' temple confrontations recorded in Luke 19-21. He had cleansed the temple (19:45-46), challenged religious authorities (20:1-8), told parables condemning them (20:9-19), debated taxes and resurrection (20:20-40),

and exposed scribal hypocrisy (20:45-47). Now He highlights a poor widow's faith as the antithesis of religious leaders' corruption. The contrast is devastating: leaders hoarded wealth and exploited the poor; this widow gave everything. Within days, Jesus Himself would give everything—His life—for humanity's redemption. The widow's sacrifice foreshadows Christ's total self-giving on the cross.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does giving from abundance differ spiritually from giving from poverty, according to Jesus' analysis?
2. What does it mean that the widow gave 'all the living that she had,' and what level of trust in God does this demonstrate?
3. In what ways does Jesus' commendation of total self-giving challenge comfortable Christianity that gives only what is convenient?

## Interlinear Text

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|        |             |       |               |       |               |       |         |         |
|--------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|---------|
| ἅπαντα | γὰρ         | αὕτη  | ἐκ            | τοῦ   | περισσεύοντος | αὐτῆς |         |         |
| all    | For         | she   | have of       | G3588 | abundance     | their |         |         |
| G537   | G1063       | G3778 | G1537         |       | G4052         | G846  |         |         |
| ἔβαλεν | εἰς         | τὰ    | δῶρα          | τοῦ   | Θεοῦ,         | αὕτη  | δὲ      | ἐκ      |
| cast   | in unto     | G3588 | the offerings | G3588 | of God        | she   | but     | have of |
| G906   | G1519       |       | G1435         |       | G2316         | G3778 | G1161   | G1537   |
| τοῦ    | ὑστερήματος | αὐτῆς | ἅπαντα        | τὸν   | βίον          | ὃν    | εἶχεν   |         |
| G3588  | penury      | their | all           | G3588 | the living    | that  | she had |         |
|        | G5303       | G846  | G537          |       | G979          | G3739 | G2192   |         |
| ἔβαλεν |             |       |               |       |               |       |         |         |
| cast   |             |       |               |       |               |       |         |         |
| G906   |             |       |               |       |               |       |         |         |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 15:12** (Parallel theme): And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.