

## 2 Kings Chapter 04 Verses 01-17 Bible Study

2Ki 4:1 ¶ "Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. 2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil. 3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. 4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. 5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. 6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. 7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."

We point out first that Israel was not to lend money on usury to another Israelite, and that the Levites were also free from being sold. *Le 25:35 "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. 36 Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. 37 Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase."* Also see *Le 25:33 "And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in the year of jubile: for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. 34 But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it is their perpetual possession."* We point this out to say; apparently this Levite had borrowed from a stranger, who was not bound by the laws of Israel, therefore, he could charge usury.

We have in these verses the performing of a miracle of God through Elisha. A widow, of one of the sons of the prophets under Elisha's tutelage, comes to him begging him to relieve her needs, that her sons not be taken from her to pay a debt they owed. Elisha asks her what she has, and she says nothing but a pot of oil. Elisha commands her to borrow many pots from her neighbors, go into her house and close the door, and pour oil into all the vessels. She did as commanded, and the pot of oil filled every borrowed vessel, and ceased after they were all filled. She returns to Elisha and tells him what has transpired, and he tells her to go sell the oil, pay her debt, and for her and her sons to live off the remaining funds.

Under the administration of the law commandments, the Israelites were commanded to supply the need of the widows, who were widows indeed, meaning that the widows had no other source of supplying their needs. We have here the principle, of the sufficiency of God to provide our every need, which is repeated to us in *Php 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* Just as God has promised to provide our every need, we are commanded to provide for those who cannot provide for themselves.

We can see in Elisha a picture of Jesus, how you ask? Elisha did this miracle out of the goodness of his heart and without cost to the widow. Jesus supplied eternal remission of sins and eternal life for God's people out of his love and compassion for God's people. Jesus does not charge us for the gift of eternal salvation.

This miracle, of oil providing for the sustenance of the woman and her children, is encompassed in the phrase we sometimes hear "the oil of Grace." It certainly was oil of grace to this widow. While the actual phrase "the oil of Grace" is not in the bible, the concept of holy anointing oil is symbolic of God's presence and consecration. We find the concept of oil representing the grace of God in *Ex 30:22-32; 22 ¶ Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23 Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, 24 And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: 25 And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. 26 And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, 27 And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, 28 And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. 29 And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. 30 And thou shalt anoint*

**Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations. 32 Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.**" We see here that this oil is an oil of consecrating things to be holy to God.

This concept carries over to the New Testament seen in **Jas 5:13-15; 13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. 14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.**" What were we before we were born again? We were sick with, and debtors to sin. The anointing oil of God's grace being placed upon us by the indwelling Holy Spirit, is the power that makes us whole, as the blood of Christ makes us eternally free from sin.

This miracle is still happening today in the lives of God's born-again children. Before we were born again, we were in bondage, we were indebted to Satan, who would love to take away from us any form of livelihood that we may live in peace. When we are permanently indwelt with the Holy Spirit, we have an unending supply of the "oil" of the grace of God in our lives. This indwelling Holy Spirit of God is sufficient for us to live out our days on earth, seeing our sin debt has been paid in full, and God's grace is sufficient to carry us through life into the eternal abode prepared for us by Jesus Christ.

We noticed that the widow was to shut the door while she was pouring the oil and filling the containers. This reminds us of what we are told in scripture by Jesus in **Mt 6:1-4; 1 ¶ "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.**" This widow did exactly as she was commanded by Elisha, just as we should do exactly as commanded by Jesus. This reminds us that eternal salvation is personal to each person to whom it is gifted. This eternal salvation is not to be flaunted before the world. Rather, it is to be cherished, and humbly carried throughout our lives on earth.

This widow was rewarded in secret by God providing enough oil to pay her debt. And an overabundance to provide for the sustenance of her, and her two sons, to live their lives on. This miracle is a reminder to us that when we are freely given eternal salvation by the grace of God; we have a storehouse which is abounding in mercy and grace, which shall never be diminished in its abundance. Our heavenly storehouse has plenty of the bread of life and the water of life for our earthly, and our eternal existence.

**8 ¶ "And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to; eat bread. 9 And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. 10 Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither."**

Shunem was a city in the tribe of Issachar, which lay in the road between Samaria and Carmel, a road that Elisha often travelled, as we find in **2Ki 2:25 "And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria."**

Hospitality was a virtue of the Israelites by the commandment of God in **Ex 22:21-22; 21 Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.**" Likewise it is a virtue of the children of God today, seen in **Mt 25:34-40; 34 "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King**

***shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."***

Thus, we see this Shunammite woman fulfilling this principle for Elisha, recognizing that he is a holy man of God.

We notice that she consulted her husband about adding on a simple room for Elisha. This demonstrated that she was a woman well acquainted with her place in the house, and apparently knew well the word of God.

**11 And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. 12 And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. 13 And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. 14 And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. 15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. 16 And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. 17 And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life."**

One day Elisha is there in the room she has supplied for him. He calls his servant to ask this woman what she desires in return for her kindness unto them. We see that Elisha asks if she would be spoken for to the king. This woman sought not anything from the king of this world. However, we shall see that Elisha does apply to the true King in Heaven on her behalf, and she is granted a son in her old age. Matthew Henry points out: The giving of a son to such as were old, and had been long childless, was an ancient instance of the divine power and favour, in the case of Abraham, and Isaac, and Manoah, and Elkanah; we find it here among the wonders wrought by Elisha.

Elisha's servant, Gehazi, told Elisha that she has no child and her husband is old. Elisha says to call her to come to him, and when she stood in the door, Elisha tells her that in about a year she shall have a son. She, in unbelief, says to Elisha "***do not lie unto thine handmaid.***" We do not know Elisha's response to this, but she does miraculously have a son as Elisha said.

Today, we are not prophets of God as Elisha, but we can say to those, who have been born again, and do not understand what has happened in their life: we were once as you are now and did not know what to do. We can reason with them out of the scriptures, and through the Holy Spirit guidance and effectual working in their hearts and minds, help them to understand that God has made them a child of God. We can explain to them the surety of the salvation of God, and the need to embrace a life of discipleship to Jesus Christ.