

# Church of God Sunday School

## ELISHA AND THE WIDOW'S OIL

2 Kings 4:1-7

God had taken Elijah to Heaven in a whirlwind, and Elisha continued the work of God's prophet. God's Spirit was with Elisha, just as He had been with Elijah.

Before this happened, Elijah and Elisha had visited the schools of the prophets, which were in several cities. These schools trained young men to be priests and prophets. These men were called "sons of the prophets." Elisha continued to visit these schools after Elijah's death.

A wife of one of these young men came to Elisha, telling him that her husband was dead. (Jewish history tells us his name was Obadiah.) Her husband was a godly man, who "did fear the LORD." It is quite possible that he was one of the 7000 whom God told Elijah had not bowed in worship to Baal (1 Kings 19:18).

Sometime before the young prophet died, he had borrowed money that he had been unable to repay. (The famine during King Ahab's reign had been several years before this. This might have been the reason for the debt.) The "creditor" (the man who had lent the money) had come to take the widow's two sons to be slaves in repayment of the debt. The laws and customs of that time allowed children to be sold to pay a debt.

After the widow had told Elisha the whole story, he asked her, "What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house [that can be sold]?" She told Elisha that she had nothing "in the house, save a pot of oil." (This was a very small vessel that held anointing oil.)

Elisha told the widow to borrow empty vessels (pots, bowls, and jars) from all of her neighbors. Elisha told her to "borrow not a few." Then she and her sons were to bring those vessels into her house and shut the door.

Elisha gave her further instructions: "pour out [the anointing oil] into all those vessels, and . . . set aside that which is full."

The widow woman went and did exactly as Elisha had told her to do. Once her sons had brought the borrowed vessels to her, she closed the door of her house. The widow took the small pot of oil and began to pour the oil from that pot into all the empty containers.

When she had filled one vessel, the widow called for another vessel. When that vessel was full, she called for another one and then another one and another one. Each time the widow filled a vessel with oil, her sons brought her an empty one.

The pot of oil never seemed to run dry! The widow kept pouring and pouring! Each borrowed vessel, full of oil, was set aside.

Finally, when the widow had filled the last pot and asked for another one, one of her sons said, "There is not a vessel more." Then the oil in the widow's pot stopped flowing! She might have tried to pour more out, but none came out. If there had been more empty pots, there would have been more oil. But since there were none, the oil stopped flowing.

The widow went to tell Elisha what had happened. Elisha told her to go, sell the oil, and pay her debt. There was enough money to pay the debt and money left over for the widow and her two sons to live on.

The widow must have been very thankful to the Lord! God had provided for this woman and her sons in a miraculous way! She was not disappointed after she had gone for help to Elisha, the man of God.



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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think . . . Unto him be glory . . ."*

*—Ephesians 3:20-21*