

# The Compassionate Provision of God

*2 Kings 4:1-7, 38-44 + 2 Kings 6:1-7*

<sup>1</sup>A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves.”<sup>2</sup>So Elisha said to her, “What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?” And she said, “Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil.”<sup>3</sup>Then he said, “Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few.”<sup>4</sup>And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones.”

<sup>5</sup>So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured it out.<sup>6</sup>Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, “Bring me another vessel.”

And he said to her, “There is not another vessel.” So the oil ceased.<sup>7</sup>Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest.”

<sup>38</sup>And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.”<sup>39</sup>So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were.<sup>40</sup>Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it.<sup>41</sup>So he said, “Then bring

*some flour.” And he put it into the pot, and said, “Serve it to the people, that they may eat.” And there was nothing harmful in the pot.*

*<sup>42</sup>Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, “Give it to the people, that they may eat.”<sup>43</sup>But his servant said, “What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?” He said again, “Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: ‘They shall eat and have some left over.’”<sup>44</sup>So he set it before them; and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.*

—2 Kings 4:1–7, 38–44

*<sup>1</sup>And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. <sup>2</sup>Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell.” So he answered, “Go.”<sup>3</sup>Then one said, “Please consent to go with your servants.” And he answered, “I will go.”<sup>4</sup>So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. <sup>5</sup>But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, “Alas, master! For it was borrowed.”*

*<sup>6</sup>So the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float. <sup>7</sup>Therefore he said, “Pick it up for yourself.” So he reached out his hand and took it.*

—2 Kings 6:1–7

### **Read 2 Kings 4:1–7, 38–44 and 2 Kings 6:1–7**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus assured His followers of the constant provisional care of His Father in heaven. Jesus informed His listeners that God not only knew their need but was prepared to provide for that need if they would only seek Him first and His way of righteousness—His means of meeting the need (Matthew 6:25–33). The Apostle Paul reiterated this divine assurance when he wrote, *and my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*

(Philippians 4:19). God not only meets our every need, but He often exceeds that need, if we will only seek Him first. At times, because of our own folly, stupidity, or failure, we don't expect God to provide or help us. Such reasoning is wrong. God is a compassionate Father who is willing to help us whenever we call out to Him, even when we have been at fault.

It is this same compassionate provision of God that is displayed in our reading this week. God miraculously provides in various and unique ways for a variety of different people in different situations.

As you read through these Scriptures this week, remember that your compassionate Heavenly Father wants to meet your needs in varied and unique ways as you seek Him first and foremost.

1. Use 2 Kings 4:1 to list the pressing conditions that this woman was facing.
  
2. From 2 Kings 4:2:
  - a. What two questions did Elisha ask the widow?
  
  - b. What did the widow have?
  
3. Use 2 Kings 4:3–7 to detail:
  - a. Elisha's instructions

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Impoverished and indebted people often were forced to sell themselves or their children into slavery because of their debt.

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is possible that this widow was the wife of one of the prophets who was killed by Jezebel.

- b. The widow's obedience
  - c. The outcome
4. What is your greatest takeaway from this account?
5. From 2 Kings 4:38–41, comment on the following:
- a. The situation in Gilgal (verse 38a)
  - b. Elisha's instructions (verse 38b)
  - c. The mishap (verse 39)
  - d. The ensuing crisis (verse 40)
  - e. The rectification (verse 41)
6. What does this event convey to you about God's provision?

7. Use 2 Kings 4:42–44 to remark on the following:
- The gift
  - Elisha's instruction
  - The objection
  - The promise
  - The fulfillment
8. Use 2 Kings 6:1–3 to answer the following questions:
- What was the problem?
  - What was the proposal?
9. Using 2 Kings 6:4–5, summarize what happened when they were preparing to build.

**FOOD  
FOR THOUGHT**

These had been brought to Elisha as firstfruits (verse 42). Normally these portions were reserved for God (Leviticus 23:20) and the Levitical priests (Numbers 18:13; Deuteronomy 18:4–5). Because the religion in the Northern Kingdom was apostate, the loaves had been brought by their owner to the one whom he considered to be the true repository of godly religion in Israel.<sup>8</sup>

—David Guzik

**FOOD  
FOR THOUGHT**

The bread was multiplied at the word of the Lord through Elisha, anticipating Jesus' even greater miracles of feeding the 5000 and 4000 (Mark 6:30–44; 8:1–10).<sup>9</sup>

—NIV Study Bible

10. According to 2 Kings 6:6–7:

- a. What did Elisha ask?
  
- b. What did Elisha do?
  
- c. What was the outcome?

11. Share a personal lesson you received from:

- a. The widow
  
- b. The sons of prophets in Gilgal
  
- c. The sharing of the bread
  
- d. The ax head that was lost

12. What was your greatest takeaway from your study this week?