

The Compassionate Provision of God

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

¹A 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.”²So 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.”³Then he said, “Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few.”⁴And 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.”

⁵So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured it out.⁶Now 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.⁷Then 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.”

³⁸And 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.”³⁹So 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.⁴⁰Then 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.⁴¹So 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.

⁴²Then 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.”⁴³But 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.’”⁴⁴So 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

¹And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. ²Please, 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.”³Then one said, “Please consent to go with your servants.” And he answered, “I will go.”⁴So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. ⁵But 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.”⁶So 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. ⁷Therefore 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*

- 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:

- a. The gift
- b. Elisha's instruction
- c. The objection
- d. The promise
- e. The fulfillment

8. Use 2 Kings 6:1–3 to answer the following questions:

- a. What was the problem?
- b. 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.⁸

—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).⁹

—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?