One of the men of God to whom a lot of space is given in God's Word is Elisha. Elisha was a follower of Elijah, whose ministry he succeeded (see 2 Kings 2). He walked very powerfully with the Lord and from the many miracles that God did through him, we will consider in this study only two of them. In both cases our focus will be on the ability of God to deliver those that seek Him from any problem they may have.

2 Kings 4:1-7: Elisha and the widow with the two sons

The first of the two cases that will be examined in this study regards a widow and her two sons. 2 Kings 4:1 tells us about this woman and a great problem she faced, after the death of her husband.

2 Kings 4:1

"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"

According to the passage, this woman was the wife of a man that feared, deeply revered, the Lord. Unfortunately, her husband died leaving to his family a debt that they could not afford. As a result, the creditor was coming to take her two sons to be his slaves. From this we can easily understand the
emergency of the situation: the woman because of an unpaid debt was about to lose her two sons. To face this problem she cried out to Elisha, the man of God. Of course, her choice to run in this critical time to the man of God was not accidental. Really, when the time is so limited ("the creditor was coming" imperfect i.e. he was on the way) you don't go but to those that you know that can help you. Obviously, the man that this woman believed that could help her was Elisha, the man of God. Evidently, she had determined to FIGHT this difficulty and to fight it WITH GOD. Having seen what the widow said to Elisha let's now see what Elisha replied to her:

2 Kings 4:2
"So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?"

See Elisha's availability. Elisha was there ready to help this widow. He didn't condemn her for the debt. In my personal opinion, there must have been much time before the widow or her husband reached the stage of insolvency. You certainly don't arrive at this point from the one day to the other and without in the meantime handling many things wrongly. However, the point now was not what had happened. What had happened, had happened. What counted now was not the past but that in the present time she needed immediate support and to find it she sought the Lord. Also see that Elisha didn't try to get rid of her because the problem was "too difficult". He certainly didn't have a solution to her problem, before God provided the miraculous solution that we will read in a moment. Nevertheless, this does not mean that he was not available to help her. In contrast, his reply shows that

1 She most probably knew Elisha through her husband who was one of the sons of the prophets and a man that revered the Lord.
he was ready to help in any way he could. Verse 2 gives us the reply of the woman to Elisha's question:

2 Kings 4:2
"and she said "your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil."

This widow was really in great poverty. There was nothing in her house but a jar of oil. Obviously in her effort to get rid of the debt she sold everything. There was no table, no beds, no cooking utensils. The only that was left was this jar of oil. However, this jar of oil was enough for God to bring deliverance to her. Verses 3-4 tells us:

2 Kings 4:3-4
"Then he [Elisha] said, "Go borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors - empty vessels; do not gather just a few. 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."

God through Elisha told the woman to borrow empty vessels and to pour the oil from her jar into them. If we don't take God into account, these instructions may sound really crazy. For, according to the scientific laws, a jar of oil cannot fill but another jar of oil of the same size. Therefore, scientifically speaking, what Elisha told the widow that would happen was impossible. However, it was impossible if, I repeat, we don't take God into account. For, if we do take God into account the things are entirely different. The reason is that God is not restricted by the scientific laws. Really, when it comes to Him what counts is not whether something is scientifically possible but whether it is His will or not. When something is His will, it will come to pass, whatever the scientists may say. Obviously, from what we have read by now, we can
conclude that God desired the deliverance of this woman from her problem as He always desires His children to live in victory. Therefore biblically speaking, what Elisha said corresponded to the will of God about the situation, and it would certainly, 100%, come to pass, if the widow followed what God told her i.e. if i) borrowed the empty vessels ii) shut the door behind her and her sons and iii) poured the oil from the jar into the empty vessels. I don't believe that the widow had ever seen in her life a jar of oil to fill many empty vessels. However, for God to perform His will she had to believe that she would see it for first time. With God it doesn't count whether something has happened for others. What counts is whether we will believe and act upon what He says. Let's see therefore whether the woman finally believed God or not:

2 Kings 4:5

"So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured it out."

The woman BELIEVED what God told her and followed it. So as soon as she left from Elisha she borrowed empty vessels, "shut the door behind" her and her sons, and poured the oil from her jar into the vessels, exactly as God told her. What happened as a result is given in verse 6.

2 Kings 4:6

"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 stayed."

All the vessels she borrowed were filled with oil. The oil "stayed" only when there was no other empty vessel. However, the filled vessels were enough to
pass her and her children from bankruptcy to affluence. Really, verse 7 tells us:

2 Kings 4:7
"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."

The oil was so much that she and her sons could pay the debt and live on the rest. Thus the widow was not only delivered from her problem but she was more than delivered: she got an oil-treasure. And all this because she sought the deliverance of the Lord. She went to God and to His man poor and oppressed and she left rich and delivered. Praise be to our God Who is always ready to deliver.

2 Kings 4:8-30: The Shunamite woman

The above record of the widow is not the only one in the Bible where we see the delivering power of God in manifestation. As we said, our God is a God of deliverance and as a consequence the Bible is full of cases that speak about people that trusted in Him and were delivered. One of these cases can be found in the same chapter of 2 Kings and follows the record of the widow with the two sons. Starting therefore from verse 8 we read:

2 Kings 4:8
"Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food."
Once again, a woman is one of the main persons of the story. However, in contrast to the previous case where the woman was very poor, this woman was a notable one i.e. a person of position that most probably didn't have any economic problem. Now, one day that Elisha was in the area, this notable woman persuaded him to eat at her home, and finally every time that he passed by he ate there. From this we can understand the respect and care of this woman for Elisha. For you don't invite someone to eat at your home every time he passes by, if you don't respect him and care for him. But really why this woman cared so much for Elisha? The remaining of verse 8 gives us the answer.

2 Kings 4:8
And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly...."

For this woman, Elisha was "a holy man of God". That's why she was so kind to him. Her respect and care for Elisha was a reflection of her respect and care for the God of Elisha. Nevertheless, the woman's care didn't finish with the food. Indeed, verses 9 and 10 tell us that it went further:

2 Kings 4:9-10
And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly. "Please let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there."

Really how thoughtful was this woman for Elisha. Not only she offered him food but also she wanted to build a room for him so that he may stay there
whenever he passed by. Needless to say that God couldn't leave the care and concern of this woman without a reward. Verses 11-13 tell us:

2 Kings 4:11-13
"And it happened one day that he [Elisha] came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there. Then he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunamite woman." When he had called her, she stood before him. And he said to him, "Say now to her, "Look you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?" She answered, "I dwell among my own people."

Elisha recognized and was thankful for the concern of this woman for him. So, as a return to her goodness, he initially suggested to her to speak on her behalf to the king or to the commander of the army. However, this was not something that the Shunamite desired as she was satisfied by living among her own people. What she actually greatly desired is given in the next verse:

2 Kings 4:14-17
"So he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehazi answered, "Actually she has no son, and her husband is old." So he said, "Call her." When he had called her she stood in the doorway. Then he said, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son."

This woman didn't have a child, and scientifically speaking, she didn't have probabilities for one, because her husband was old. Nevertheless, this does not mean that she couldn't have one. For, there is someone that satisfies desires even when the science gives zero probabilities for their satisfaction. Who is this? The answer is GOD. As we said examining the case of the widow,
for God nothing is impossible and when something is His will, it will come to pass, irrespective of what the probabilities may say. For science this woman had no probabilities to have a child. And yet, because it was God's will to have one, she would have it.

Apart from this, another point that is also noteworthy is that Elisha didn't know from the beginning the desire of the woman that would be satisfied. Otherwise, he wouldn't initially suggest to her to speak on her behalf to the king or to the commander of the army nor would he ask Gehazi to tell him what to do for her. However, there is nothing strange with this. For, Elisha, as any other man that has holy spirit, could acquire knowledge only either through his five senses or through God's revelation. Obviously in our case God hadn't revealed to him from the beginning that the woman greatly desired a child. Instead, He said it to him via Gehazi for He thought that this is the best way to make the relative information available. Then, after Elisha knew from Gehazi that the woman didn't have a child, God gave him directly revelation telling him that in one year from then the woman would have a son, and that's why Elisha announced it to her. The reaction of the woman to this wonderful promise is given in verse 16:

2 Kings 4:16
And she said, "No my lord. Man of God do not lie to your maidservant!"

The woman thought that Elisha was lying to her. She couldn't believe that her great desire would finally be satisfied. This is not unusual: sometimes we are slow to believe the wonderful things that the Word of God says that we have or the things that God promises to us. We think that they are too good to be true. However, we have to understand that from God only gifts that are good and perfect come (James 1:17). When it comes to Him, there is no such thing as "too good to be true", for from God only GOOD and TRUE things
come. As Ephesians 3:20 tells us God "IS ABLE TO DO EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK". He has no problem to do whatever He wants. Returning to the woman, in my opinion, the promise of a child was for her something that really belonged to the sphere of "the exceedingly abundantly, above all" that she asked or thought. That's why she thought that Elisha was lying to her. However, apart from wonderful this promise was also true. Verse 17 records its fulfillment:

2 Kings 4:17
"But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her."

After a year the woman bore a son exactly as God promised her. Though it may seem that the story could very well finish here, this is not the end. And this because, the verses that follow tells us for a great problem that appeared to the child's health when he grew:

2 Kings 4:18-20
"And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers. And he said to his father, "My head, my head!" So he said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother." When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died."

The child was hit by such a serious disease that he died very quickly. As we can see despite the fact that the child was a gift from God that, according to James 1:17, was perfect and good, the devil managed to hit him. But again, this is not strange. Really, nowhere the Word of God says that the believers' children (or parents or brothers or wives or the believers themselves) will never be ill. There is an enemy, the devil, whose job is to cause illness. That's
why the Bible calls those sick that were healed by the Lord Jesus Christ as "oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38): it calls them as such because the devil oppressed them with illness. Thus, death and illness are not things that come from God. In contrast they are things whose source is the opposite to God spiritual power, the devil. Nevertheless, though the adversary is able, when he finds the way, to bring illness, God, who is far greater than the devil (I John 4:4), can heal us from any kind of disease. As Psalms 103:3 says:

Psalms 103:3

"WHO [GOD] HEALS ALL YOUR DISEASES"

God does not heal half of our diseases but ALL of them, irrespective of the science's opinion about the curable of them. Returning now to the woman, could God go so far as to revert the seemingly irreversible fact of child's death? We will see the answer in a moment, after we first see the reaction of the woman to this fact.

2 Kings 4:21-24

"And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door upon him, and went out. Then she called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back. So he said. "Why are you going to him today? It is neither the new moon nor the Sabbath." And she said , "It is well." Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, "Drive and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you."

From the reaction of the woman it is clear that she didn't consider the death of her son as an irreversible reality. Really, instead of mourning around the child and tell her husband about the death, she put the child on the bed of the
man of God and asked her husband to give her a donkey and a young man that she may go to him. Obviously, this woman recognized that her child was a gift that God gave her and that his death was not God's will. Thus she didn't accept that the death of her son was a reality that couldn't change. That's why she rushed to Elisha, and didn't say to anyone what had happened. Verses 25-28 tell us what happened when she met Elisha.

2 Kings 4:25-28

"And so she departed, and went to the man of God at mount Carmel. So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look the Shunamite woman! Please run now to meet her, and say to her, "Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?" and she answered, "It is well" Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me. So she said, "Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, "Do not deceive me?"

Once more we can see that without the Lord telling him, Elisha, as any other man, was impossible to know in advance what was happening to the woman. The woman was obviously very sorrow. However, despite her great sorrow, she found the courage to leave her dead child at home and visit the man of God. Elisha's reaction was immediate:

2 Kings 4:29-31

"Then he [Elisha] said to Gehazi, "Get yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him; but lay my staff on the face of the child." And the mother of the child said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not
leave you." So he arose and followed her. Now Gehazi went on ahead of them, and led the staff on the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, the child has not awakened."

Gehazi arrived first into the house. But though he did what Elisha told him, the child didn't awake. After a while, Elisha and the mother of the child arrived as well:

2 Kings 4:32-33
"When Elisha came into the house, there was the child lying dead on his bed. He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them AND PRAYED TO THE LORD."

Elisha PRAYED to the Lord. This was his reaction to the situation. He certainly was in a difficult situation: the child that God promised to this woman through him was dead, and without any sign of recovery even after Gehazi did what Elisha told him. Nevertheless, we don't at any point see Elisha to lose his trust in God, or feel frustrated and laid down. Instead, he faced the situation as he should: HE PRAYED TO THE LORD. It is the Lord that is the source of all answers, and Elisha needed to have an answer about what to do with the situation. So he prayed to the only One that knew the answer: to the Lord\(^2\). As result, God answered his prayer. Verses 34-35 tells us:

2 Kings 4:34-35
"and he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child; and the flesh of the child became warm. He returned and walked

\(^2\) For more about the importance of prayer see: [Jesus' opinion about prayer](#)
back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

All these things that the above passage tells us that Elisha did, were not something that came out of his mind. Instead they were done after God's revelation. That this is the case is obvious by the result: the child was healed and Elisha gave it back to his mother:

2 Kings 4:36-38

"And he called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite woman." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Pick up your son." So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out. And Elisha returned to Gilgal"

God delivered the woman and reversed the seemingly irreversible fact of the child's death, showing by this that He can really go as far as it is needed to deliver those that seek His delivering power.

3. Conclusion

In this article we examined two cases that showed us the delivering power of God. The reader is encouraged to study the Word of God for himself to find more examples. In both cases that we examined and generally in all cases that one can find by studying the Bible, the lesson that is given is the same: those that trust in the Lord and seek Him will never be ashamed whatever problem they may face. Our God is a God of deliverance and there is no limit in His delivering power. He can go so far as to fill empty vessels of oil or to raise dead children in order to deliver His people. He is really "able to do
exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think". May therefore in everything that we may need, TRUST in the delivering power of God being sure that if we do this only one thing will happen: we will be delivered.

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