

Oil: Old Testament, Hanukkah and Jesus



GOD WHOSE OIL NEVER RUNS OUT"

Oil Miracles → Loaves & Fishes → Hanukkah → Messiah



PASSAGE TEXTS (TLV)

1. Elijah & the Widow of Zarephath — 1 Kings 17:8–16 (TLV)

8 Then the word of Adonai came to him saying: 9 “Arise, go to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain you.” 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and said, “Please bring a little water in a jar to me, so I may drink.” 11 As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand.” 12 But she said, “As Adonai your God lives, I have nothing but a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. Now I am gathering a couple of sticks, so I may go in and prepare it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.” 13 Elijah said to her, “Fear not! Go and do as you said, but first make me a little cake from it and bring it to me; afterwards make some for you and for your son. 14 For thus says Adonai God of Israel: ‘The jar of flour shall not be exhausted nor shall the jug of oil run dry, until the day Adonai sends rain upon the land.’” 15 So she went and did according to the word of Elijah—and she and he, and her household, ate for many days. 16 The jar of flour did not exhaust nor did the jug of oil run dry, according to the word of Adonai which He spoke through Elijah.

2. Elisha & the Widow's Oil — 2 Kings 4:1–7 (TLV)

1 Now a certain woman from 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 Adonai. Now the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.” 2 “What should I do for you?” Elisha asked her. “Tell me, what do you have in the house?” She answered, “Your handmaid has nothing in the house except a flask of oil.” 3 Then he said, “Go borrow containers from all your neighbors—empty containers—don’t get just a few. 4 Then go inside, shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour into all those containers. Then set aside what is full.” 5 So she left him and shut the door behind her and her sons. They kept bringing the containers to her and she kept pouring. 6 When the containers were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another container.” But he said to her, “There isn’t another container.” So the oil stopped. 7 Then she came and told the man of God. So he said, “Go sell the oil and pay your debt, then you and your sons can live on the rest.”



1. CONTEXT & SETTING

Oil in Scripture

- Symbol of the Ruach (Holy Spirit)
- Symbol of dedication, consecration, and divine empowerment
- Agent of healing, anointing, worship, and covenant life
- Represents God’s supply that cannot be duplicated by human strength

Hanukkah Setting (John 10:22–30 ● John)

- Feast of Dedication = rededication of the Temple
- Themes: light, purity, holiness, consecration, oil
- Jesus stands in the Temple announcing:
“I and the Father are one.”

Kingdom Pattern

God meets human lack with divine abundance.

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2. NARRATIVE FLOW

1 Kings 17 – Elijah's Oil Miracle

- Widow expects death.
- Elijah asks for what she cannot afford to give.
- She obeys first → the miracle activates.
- Oil does not run out until the drought ends.

2 Kings 4 – Elisha's Oil Miracle

- Widow faces debt slavery.
- Elisha asks: "What do you have?" → God uses the little.
- She gathers vessels → the size of the miracle matches her faith.
- Oil fills every vessel → stops when capacity ends.

Feeding of the 5,000 & 4,000 — John 6, Matt 14/15, Mark 6/8, Luke 9

- Jesus takes the little (5/7 loaves & 2/few fish).
- Blesses, breaks, multiplies.
- 12 baskets left from 5000+ people (Israel).
- 7 baskets left from 4000+ people (nations).

Hanukkah Theme Connection

- Oil that should not last does (traditionally).
- Light that should fade grows (one candle added nightly).
- God's presence fills the Temple again.
- Jesus declares Himself the Light of the World.



3. GREEK/HEBREW WORD STUDY

Oil — *יְנֻעָם shemen*

- Root linked to "fatness," "richness," abundance
- Represents the overflow of blessing
- Basis of anointing (*מַשְׁחֵת mashach*) → Messiah = Anointed One

Bread — *ἄρτος artos*

- Physical bread
- Metaphor for life, teaching, sustenance
- Jesus: "I am the Bread of Life."

Multiply — *χορτάζω / πληθύνω*

- To satisfy fully
- To increase beyond measure
- Used in OT Greek text for God's supernatural provision

4. THEMATIC CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE OIL STORIES & JESUS' MULTIPLICATION

A. Scarcity → Abundance

- Widow: "I have only a little oil."
- Disciples: "We only have five loaves."
- Hanukkah: "We only have one jar of oil."
- God's answer: "That is enough for Me."

B. Act of Faith Unlocks Provision

- Widow gives Elijah her last cake.
- Widow gathers jars in faith.
- Disciples place the loaves in Jesus' hands.
- Maccabees light the menorah with inadequate oil.

Kingdom Principle: God multiplies what is surrendered.

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C. Overflow as a Sign of Messianic Identity

- Prophets cause multiplication → God is present through them.
- Jesus causes multiplication directly → He IS God's presence.
- At Hanukkah, Jesus reveals Himself as the Light in the Temple.

D. Provision with Purpose

- Oil saves households.
- Bread feeds thousands.
- Hanukkah oil lights the Temple for worship.
- Messiah's provision leads to mission, witness, and renewal.

5. PROPHETIC & MESSIANIC IMPLICATIONS

A. Messiah as the Greater Elijah & Elisha

- Elijah gave ongoing oil
- Elisha gave abundant oil
- Jesus gives the Spirit without measure (John 3:34)

B. Messiah as the Light of the Temple

- The menorah was a perpetual light (Exod 27:20–21)
- Hanukkah celebrates its rekindling
- Jesus steps into the Temple declaring Himself: "I am the Light of the World."

C. Outpouring of the Spirit Foreshadowed

- Oil that never runs out → Spirit poured out at Pentecost
- Bread that multiplies → Gospel feeding the nations
- Light increasing → Kingdom expanding in darkness

6. THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. God's supply is not dependent on human resources.
2. God honors the faith that acts first.
3. God delights in overflow, not minimum survival.
4. Jesus is the divine source of all provision—material and spiritual.
5. Hanukkah is fulfilled in Messiah, who brings true light and true dedication.

7. DISCIPLESHIP APPLICATION

A. Bring your “little oil” to God

Your weakness is not a barrier; it's the starting point of the miracle.

B. Gather your empty vessels

Make space for God to fill:

- time
- prayer
- relationships
- obedience
- repentance

C. Place what you have in Jesus' hands

He breaks → He multiplies.

D. Rededicate your inner Temple

Hanukkah = dedication.

Let Jesus cleanse, illuminate, and restore.

E. Shine the increasing light of Christ

Each act of obedience = another candle added.