

# The Widow's Mite: A Misunderstood Story with a Shocking Lesson

Mark 12:41-44

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## Mark 12:41-44 – An Outline

- ❧ I. The Traditional Interpretation
  - ❧ Jesus is commending her devotion to God, her spirit of sacrifice, and her generous gift.
- ❧ II. Some Troubling Questions

## Some Troubling Questions...

- ❧ A. In neither of the NT accounts does Jesus directly commend the actions of the woman.
- ❧ B. The immediate context—both before and after the passage—doesn't fit with the traditional view.
- ❧ C. In both Mark and Luke the closest reference to "widows" comes immediately before this paragraph and is exactly the same.
  - ❧ Mark 12:40; cf. 12: 41-44
  - ❧ Luke 20:47; cf. 21:1-4

## Some Troubling Questions...

- ❧ D. Scripture never commands anyone to give away all he has to live on.
  - ❧ Cf. 1 Cor. 16:2 – On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper.
  - ❧ 2 Cor. 8:12-15
- ❧ E. Scripture demands that widows be cared for and supported by God's people and their leaders.
  - ❧ Negative: Ex. 22:22, 24; Deut. 27:19; Job 24:3, 21; 29:13; 31:16-17; Jer. 7:6
  - ❧ Positive: Dt. 10:18; 14:28-29; 24:17-22; 26:12-13; Ruth 4:5, 10; Is. 1:17; Acts 6:1-3; 1 Tim. 5:3ff; Jam. 1:27

## Some Troubling Questions...

- ❧ F. God personally cares for widows.
  - ❧ Ps. 68:5 – A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation.
  - ❧ Ps. 146:9 – The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow.
  - ❧ Pr. 15:25 – The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow.

## Some Troubling Questions...

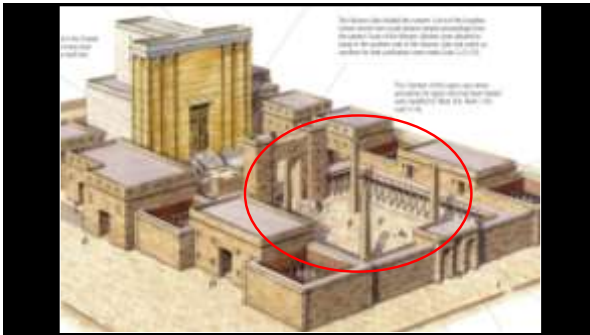
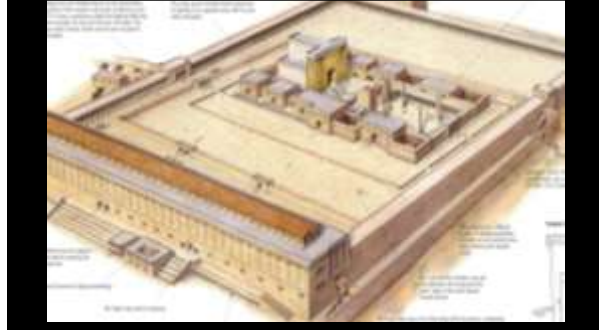
- ❧ G. God promises to bring severe judgment on those who take advantage of widows.
  - ❧ Ps. 94:6-10; Is. 1:23-25; 10:1-4 \*; Jer. 22: 3-6\*; Ezek. 22:7-16, 25-31; Zech. 7:9-14; Mal. 3:1-5

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- ❧ I. The Traditional Interpretation
- ❧ II. Some Troubling Questions
- ❧ III. An Alternate Interpretation (41-44)



## 13 Shofar-shaped Chests

- ❧ For the temple tax (2); one for currently due; the other for past due.
- ❧ For bird offerings.
- ❧ Four young birds for whole offerings.
- ❧ For wood.
- ❧ For incense.
- ❧ For gold for the mercy seat.
- ❧ For free will offerings (6).

## Gr. "Lepton": Copper coins



## Three Observations...

- ❧ 1) She gave out of her poverty.
- ❧ 2 Cor. 8:1-2 - Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup> that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.
- ❧ 2) She gave all she owned.
- ❧ 3) She gave all she had to live on.

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## IV. The Personal Application



- ☞ 1) Every person must take seriously his or her responsibility to the widows in his own family.  
☞ 1 Tim. 5:3ff
- ☞ 2) Every church must take seriously its responsibility to the widows in that congregation.  
☞ 1 Tim. 5:1ff
- ☞ 3) Every Christian should hate – as Jesus did – how false religion and false teachers take advantage of the poor, the disadvantaged, and widows.