

LOOKING FOR OIL

Lyrics and music by Ros Schwartz © 2004

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The question: how was that one vial of oil missed by the Greek soldiers?
The image: a child hiding it away, deep inside a tiny cavern in the rock of the temple wall
... and another child finding it, many years later.
And perhaps it was a miracle that the oil was thus hidden, and found when it was time.

Come with me to the Temple, as it stood so long ago
And I'll tell you of a story that not many people know
A story of two children who helped keep the Temple clean
And the jar of oil that linked them, across many years between.
The first child helped the family keep the Temple clean and bright
And each night they poured new oil to refill the Eternal Light.
This Light must be kept burning and it never must go out
To show God's Eternal presence, with no flicker of a doubt
The oil was pressed from olives, took a whole week to prepare
So jars were filled with oil so there was always extra there.
The first child set the jars of oil out neatly in a row
So whoever went to fill the Lamp would know just where to go.
And when the child was tired, there was a special place to hide:
A tiny hole in the stone wall that child just fit inside
And in that secret place the child hid a tiny jar
just waiting for a spark to make its oil shine like a star.

Years passed, the child grew older, and then there was a war
and the Temple was invaded and the family was no more
Angry soldiers burned and smashed up all that they could find
But they never found the jar of oil that child had left behind.
The next part of the story now may come as a surprise
Cause it was *me* who saw the Temple through the second child's eyes.
I remember all the broken things that made me feel so sad
I felt better when I cleaned the mess, that made me feel glad.
"There's so much to clean up here, the job feels so very big
The Temple's filled with idols, they even sacrificed a pig
The windows all are smashed and there's big holes in every door
And there's broken jars all over, and there's oil spilled on the floor
The Holy Temple is so huge, and I feel so very small
The echoes are so frightening, I want to melt into the wall
But look! - I've found a space where I just barely fit to hide
And look!! - a tiny jar of oil is waiting - deep inside!!!

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Now carefully I lift it and I hold it to the light
it fits my hands so perfectly and the seal is holding tight
The grownups shout with laughter when I tell them what I've found
Til they see how small the jar is - and suddenly, there's not a sound ...
Cause the Temple's clean and ready, and it's time to celebrate
But there's only oil for one day - and to make more will take eight
Should we light the lamp tonight, and have our party as we'd planned?
And when the light goes out tomorrow ... we hope God will understand
And now the grownups argue, and they can't seem to agree
I wish I'd never told them - this is all because of me.
Til at last my parents turn to me and say, "What shall we do?
You found this jar of oil ... so we will leave it up to **you**."
It was such a big decision, resting on my little head:
Should we light the Lamp tonight, or should we wait a week instead?
And I thought of all those years the oil waited, just for **me**
and I said: "Let's light the Light tonight. Tomorrow ... we shall see."

Each day we searched for oil that could keep the light aglow
But there was no more to be found, though we kept searching high and low
Some said we should have waited - even I began to doubt
But each day there was a miracle ... and the Light did not go out.
And now it was the eighth day and still the lantern shone
The new oil was almost ready ... the old oil was almost gone
Now the light began to flicker and the light began to dim
and as we watched ... the oil-maker poured a week of oil in.
I'm old now, with grandchildren, and most people do not know
that I'm the one who found the oil, so many years ago
And I'm very glad I chose to light the Lamp, and not to wait
Cause God's Light is always with us ... and that's why we celebrate.
Yes each day there was a miracle, as the Light did not go out
shining God's Eternal Presence, with no flicker of a doubt
For there was more than oil burning, as that Lantern glowed so bright
Cause through the flames that flickered ... I saw God's Eternal Light.

Yes through the flames that flickered ... I saw God's Eternal Light.