

SERMON OUTLINE

STUDIES IN THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ELISHA

'Elisha: the messenger of salvation' - 6

2 Kings 4 v38 - 44

The two miracle stories in this passage seem to be, at first reading, somewhat trivial. Is there anything to learn from them? Yes - there is!

1. THE STORY OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE STEW

(v38 - 41)

Immediate lesson and practical application - God is the God of mercy and grace who is able to overrule the very worst of our mistakes.

Dale Ralph Davis - 'What a consolation to have such a Lord.'

There is a deeper lesson and application to be made here.

Key Question - Why do we have this miracle (and all the other miracles in 1st and 2nd Kings) - what does it mean, what does it say, what does it tell us? Key Point - this miracle was (as were all the miracles) a sign of the kingdom of God. See - 1 Jn 20 v30 - 31 & Matt 12 v28. That is - 'Jesus is the King who has come to set up His kingdom.' We need to look at this miracle in this light - in doing so, we are then told 2 things:-

A. HOW THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ADVANCED

Context - a time of famine! See - v38a. In Old Testament days famine was (more often than not) a judgement from God upon the people of God. See - 8 v1. Note - Not just a famine of food for the stomach, but a famine of food for the soul. Remember that this was a day when religious pluralism was rife in the church. See - Amos 8 v11 - 12. Key Question in the light of this - How was the kingdom of God to be advanced? See - v38b. Through the company of the prophets - that is, through the faithful preaching of the gospel of God and the faithful teaching of the word of God.

B. HOW THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ATTACKED

We see another hand at work here - Satan's. He was at work to wipe out these men who were to be God's instruments in advancing His

kingdom work. Satan hadn't been able to do it through Jezebel's full-force violence - and so he seeks to do it, so very subtly, in this way.

2. THE STORY OF THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES **(v42 - 44)**

Key Point - We are all involved in the work of advancing God's kingdom. How? Look at the example of this man:-

A. THE SACRIFICE IN WHAT HE BROUGHT

See - v42a. This wasn't easy - it was costly. Notice where he came from - Baal Shalishah. He came from a community which was devoted to the worship and service of Baal. In doing what he did here he was swimming against the tide!

B. THE ADEQUACY OF WHAT HE BROUGHT

His gift was totally inadequate - but in the hands of God, it was more than adequate.

Application - Give what you can (no matter how inadequate it might seem to be) and God will multiply it again, and again, and again.