

Life lesson 88
Elisha's Later Miracles
Text: II Kings 4:38-40; 6:1-7; 13:20-21

Introduction

Healing a man of leprosy, bringing dead people back to life, capturing whole armies by himself -- Elisha certainly had an interesting, powerful life. The things he did were impossible, but impossible things aren't a problem to God, and it was God who gave Elisha his special power. In this lesson we'll look at just a few more of the things wonderful, exciting things that happened to Elisha during his 66 years as a prophet of God.

The Story

Elisha journeyed to Gilgal, a town where many of the prophets came together and studied God's Word. They were probably skinny prophets, because it was another terrible time of famine. The rulers were wicked at the time, and God sent troubles to let the people know they were going the wrong way. There wasn't enough rain and the crops didn't grow. The people had a hard time finding enough food to eat.

Elisha told his servant to fix dinner for the young preachers, or prophets. One of the young men wanted to help, so he went out and found some vegetables in the field to add to the stew. He found some vegetables that looked good. He brought them back, cut them up, and added them to the stew -- not realizing they were poisonous gourds!

The hungry young men dug into the stew. Suddenly they stopped and cried, "Poison! There is poison in this stew!" And they had already eaten some!

"Bring me some meal," Elisha said. He took the meal and threw it into the pot.

"Now you can eat it," he said.

They tasted it and saw that it no longer had the bad flavor. They ate it up and none of them got sick.

God can heal leprosy -- and He can heal food poisoning. He cares about the big things in our lives, and the little things, too.

The prophets came to Elisha with another problem.

“There are so many of us now,” they said, “that we have outgrown the house where we are staying. Would it be okay if we went down to the river where there are logs and build another, bigger place?”

Elisha said that would be fine, and the young preachers went to work. One of the men was chopping a log when the head of his ax flew off the handle and plopped into the river with a big splash.

“Oh no!” the young prophet cried. “I lost the head of the ax -- and it was a borrowed ax. Now what will I do?”

At that time you couldn't go to the hardware store and buy tools, even if you had money for it. You had to make it yourself or buy it from someone who could make it. This young man probably didn't have any money to replace the axhead -- and the ax is no good with just a handle. He knew that when you borrow something, you are responsible to bring it back in at least as good a condition as when you borrowed it. If you can give it back cleaner and stronger, that's even better.

What would he do?

Elisha said, “Where did it fall into the river?”

The man showed him the spot. Elisha threw a stick into the river in that place. Suddenly, up bobbed the axhead! Do axheads float? No, it was probably made of iron, which is very heavy, yet there it was floating on top of the water as if it were made of plastic.

The young man fished it out and fixed the ax, good as new, to give back to the person who loaned it to him.

Many more wonderful things happened in Elisha's long life. At last he grew old and died. He didn't go off in a fiery chariot like Elijah did, but was buried in a cave like an ordinary person. But even in death, Elisha wasn't ordinary.

One day some men were bringing their dead friend to the graveyard caves where Elisha was buried. Before they could have the burial, a band of Moabite robbers came along. The men knew the Moabites were mean and would beat them up and steal their stuff. They had to get rid of the body and run away as fast as they could. They tossed their dead friend into a cave -- the cave where Elisha was buried. The man landed on Elisha's bones.

When he hit the bones, the man sprang up -- alive! There was such power of God even in Elisha's bones, that the man came back to life again. He was probably surprised to wake up and find himself in a tomb. His friends were probably even more surprised when he came running out after them!

The Life Lesson

God cares about the big things in our lives, but he cares about the little things, too. We can see from this story that God wants us to come to Him when we have lost and broken things, when we are sick with a stomach bug, when we have a small need. One great hymn writer, John Newton, wrote a song that said,

“Not one concern of ours is small,
If we belong to Him,
To teach us this, the Lord of all
Once made the iron to swim.”

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It was a miracle that the man came back to life, but life and death are in God’s hands. We can also see from this story a spiritual lesson. When people are their own gods, running their own lives, the Bible calls them “dead in sin.” When we come to God, trusting Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross to pay for our sins, and surrender to Him, we are “born again.” It’s even more of a miracle that God takes sinful, wicked people and brings them to Him and gives them new, eternal life!

Review Questions

How long did Elisha serve God as a prophet?

66 years

What was wrong with the stew the prophets were eating with Elisha?

It had a poisonous gourd in it.

What did Elisha do to fix the stew?

He threw some meal into the pot.

Why were the prophets building a new place to live?

Their old one was too small.

What happened to the axhead?

The head of the ax flew off and fell into the river.

Why was the man so upset?

Tools were expensive and hard to get, and this ax was borrowed.

What did Elisha do about the axhead?

He threw a stick into the water in the place where it fell.

What miraculous thing happened to the axhead?

It floated to the surface.

Why were the men in the story going to the graveyard where Elisha was buried?

They were bringing their dead friend to be buried.

Who interrupted them before they could bury him?

A band of Moabite raiders, or robbers.

What did they do with the body of their friend?

They threw it into the cave where Elisha was buried.

What happened when the body landed on Elisha's bones?

The man came back to life.

Does God care about the little things that trouble, or just the big things?

He cares about both!