

Elisha

The Prophet of God

Lesson 7 – Miracle of Bread
2Kings 4:42-44
Date: 29 July 2020 – Elisha20

1. The Need

- a. The setting of our story takes place in one of the locations where Elisha abode. He may have still been at Gilgal (v.38). It was likely at one of his schools for the sons of the prophets.
- b. In context, it was during the time of famine.
- c. At least 100 hungry men were present. They needed food.
- d. God knew their need. God also knows your need right now.

2. The Giver

- a. An unnamed man came from Baalshalisha.
 - 1) Likely, Baalshalisha was a place in Ephraim near Gilgal.
 - 2) Because the name begins with Baal, we know it was under the influence of Baal worship.
- b. The man obviously feared Jehovah rather than Baal. He desired offer his firstfruits to the LORD. (Psalms 37:23) **"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way."**
- c. He gave to please the LORD and to minister to God's servants. He brought the bread to the man of God.
- d. Keathley notes, "In this act of faith by this one unknown man, we see how God takes the faith of one believer, never mentioned again in Scripture as far as we know, and uses that man as a demonstration of His steadfast love and as a means of encouragement and hope, but also as a training aid for Elisha to use with his men."

3. The Gift

- a. He brought **"bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof."** The word "bread" is a generic word for food. The fact that the bread was "firstfruits" indicates that he brought it of the first of his harvest. He had baked 20 loaves of barley bread. The phrase "full ears of corn in the husk thereof" literally describes garden produce in a sack. The word used here is not the usual word translated corn that refers to grain of any kind. So the gift was 20 flat barley breads and a bag of garden produce.
- b. The gift was not large, but he gave it from a generous heart. God does not need our money; He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. However, He blesses those who give what He prescribes when they give with a right

heart. (Proverbs 3:9-10) **"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."** God also blesses generosity to the needy. (Hebrews 6:10) **"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."**

- c. The unknown man from Baalshalisha had no idea that God was going to use his small gift to feed a multitude. So too, you and I do not know what God may do with our little contributions (e.g., money, witness, prayer, tract, testimony, encouragement, phone call, alms). Jesus said, (Matthew 10:42) **"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."** We must do what we can.

4. The Command

- a. Elisha told his servant to serve this food to the people who were present (v.42).
- b. His servitor (i.e., minister or servant) questioned this unreasonable request (v.43). How could this little amount of food feed 100 men?
- c. Elisha restated his command with a promise from the Lord. All those present would eat and there would be some leftover.
 - 1) We easily see here a parallel to the two miracle feedings during Jesus' ministry. He fed 5000 men plus women and children, with 12 small baskets of leftovers (Matthew 14:16-21). He also fed 4000 men besides women and children with seven large baskets of leftovers (Matthew 15:32-39).
 - 2) Our God fed millions in the wilderness manna every day for 40 years. He caused ravens to feed Elijah by the brook. He filled Peter's net with fish. He has unlimited power over nature.

5. The Miracle

- a. The servant set the small portion before one hundred hungry men and they ate until they were full.
- b. When they were finished eating, there was still some left just as the Lord said there would be.

6. The Applications

- a. God knows our needs and He cares about us.
- b. God delights to use the small gifts of the unknown for His glory.
- c. We must give God what we have even if it is not much.
- d. God is able to multiply our little to accomplish great things.