

Stories from the Old Testament: 2 Kings 4

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen.

Aim

- † To appreciate the Old Testament from a New Testament perspective
- † See how tender, merciful and caring God is to the faithful!
- † God's ability and grace is unlimited, what about our faith?

Key verses

*"You **search the Scriptures**, for in them you think you have eternal life; and **these are they which testify of Me**" (John 5:39)*

"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5:46-47)

Lesson

The Holy Bible is made up of an Old Testament and a New Testament. So why do we still have the Old Testament, if Christianity is in the New Testament? What is the Old Testament about? What's different between the Old and New Testaments?

[Class Discussion]

The Old and New Testaments are 2 parts of the same story, the same Word, the One Word, the Word of God, our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ! Yes, the Old Testament IS ALL ABOUT JESUS CHRIST! In fact we only really begin to understand the Old Testament when we look at it through the New Testament. Our beloved Saviour said it Himself, in John 5:39: "*search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me*". So we, as Christians, must read the books of the Old Testament to search for Christ in them!

Sometimes the links are easier to see in some of the verses than others, and some of the clearest links are found in the prophecies. The Old Testament is full of special people who God talked to and revealed to them certain things about the future, including the New Testament. These people are called prophets...who can name some prophets from the Old Testament?

[Class Discussion – Mention that Elijah is a prophet that DID NOT DIE!]

Today we're going to learn about 4 amazing miracles that happened through Elisha who was the prophet after Elijah. Please open 2 Kings Chapter 4; let's go through the 4 stories:

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(1) The widow's oil (Read 4: 1– 7)

- ❖ This poor mother of 2 sons just lost her husband (who was faithful in his service to the Lord), and because he hadn't paid off all his loans before his death the debt-collectors were coming to sell her 2 sons to be slaves.
 - So it seems that bad things are happening to good people, but really, this turns out to be a huge blessing in disguise, and through her faith, it all turns around!
- ❖ This woman's name isn't mentioned, so she probably wasn't anybody special at the time.
 - BUT God shows us that she's special to Him!
- ❖ Elisha asks what she's got in the house, and all that she had was a single jar of oil.
 - She offered all that she had, and even though it was very small, that's all God needs, He will deal with the rest! When you are asked 'what talents have you got to serve the Lord with?', if you say 'none' you aren't being honest with yourself, and don't think that you're just being humble, because if you offer anything to the Lord, even if in your eyes it's very small, that is ALL THAT GOD WANTS, leave the rest to Him, and you will see an abundance of blessings!
- ❖ When Elisha asked her to gather empty vessels, he never told her how many to get.
 - The number she gathered indicated her faith, and even though it was great, we see that God's blessings are always more than we can even imagine, so we're limited only by our faith!

(2) The Shunammite woman's son (Read 4: 8– 37)

- ❖ God never leaves a good deed unrewarded! Why did the Shunammite woman prepare a room and place for Elisha to stay whenever he needed? Do you think she did it to get something in return? Do we really ever do things without wanting or "expecting" to get something in return, even if it's "recognition" (as in not something physical).

[Class Discussion]

- ❖ It truly is better to give than to receive, and in God's books we always end up receiving! Here the woman was given something she didn't even consider asking for, she didn't even know it was possible! Sometimes we think we know exactly what we want and what we should ask and pray for in life, but often we're surprised with much greater blessings, let us pray that we learn to see and appreciate all the blessings in our lives.
- ❖ When her son died, she didn't spend time complaining, she ran to the 'man of God' who granted her this son in the first place. Her faith is incredible, and reminds us of the faith of the centurion in Luke 7:6. But what else about this story is something that we would normally only expect in the New Testament?

[Class Discussion]

- ❖ There is only One who has the power to raise the dead and it is He who raised Himself from the dead, and defeated death itself! Why was it so hard for the Jews to believe what they had already seen before?

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(3) Purifying the poison pot of stew (Read 4: 38– 41)

- ❖ How weird and yet awesome is this story! Elisha is trying to help out the fellow servants of the Lord, offering them some food in times of famine, but because of the famine, all they could find to cook was some strange plant that turned out to be harmful!
- ❖ Here we learn 2 things:
 - (1) Man cannot always know if what's best for him, and this reminds us to rely on God, which leads straight on to the second point!
 - (2) You can always count on God! He knows what you were trying to do, and he knows that your motivation is good! If your heart is in the right place, and you act in the love of God then don't worry because "*All things work together for God to those who love God*" (Rom 8:28). God provided Elijah with the solution which worked immediately! Who would have known that the solution was as easy as simply adding flour!¹

(4) Feeding one hundred men (Read 4: 42– 44)

- ❖ Even though to most of us the idea of feeding 100 men with very little food sounds impossible, Elisha is faithful and obedient!
- ❖ Does this story remind you of anything from the New Testament? (eg. *Matt 14:16-21*)

Conclusion

We can see clearly, from events in this chapter that God always provides for us in our times of great need, and not always in ways that we expect or even understand! A poor widow who was about to lose her sons, offered God all that she had, it might not have seemed like much, but to God it was, and he blessed her accordingly (this is exactly like the story of the widow who donated 2 mites in Mark 12:42). remember to the (Even though there was a famine, God provided for those who loved and served Him.

This is optional

Glory is to God, forever. Amen.

¹ Just for interest: In 1920, David Macht published an article called "A Pharmacological Study of Biblical Gourds" where he demonstrated that flour worked as an antidote to the specific 'wild gourds' mentioned in 2 Kings 4!