

Handout 1: 2 Kings Lesson 2

Elijah performed 8 miracles but Elisha will perform 16:

1. Parted the waters of the Jordan River (2:14)
2. Purification of the water source for Jericho (2:18-22)
3. Protection of the prophet by two she-bears (2:23-25)
4. Water for the army of Israel and success over the Moabites (3:16-25)
5. Providing the widow's oil (4:1-7)
6. Elisha's annunciation prophecy for the woman from Shunem (4:8-17)
7. Resurrection of the son of the Shunammite woman (4:18-37)
8. Purified the poison soup (4:38-41)
9. Multiplication of loaves (4:42-44)
10. Healing of Naaman (5:1-19)
11. Gehazi cursed with a skin disease (5:25-27)
12. Miracle of finding the axe (6:1-7)
13. Capturing a band of Aramaeans by striking them blind (6:8-23)
14. Prophesizing relief from the enemy and the famine (6:24-7:20)
15. Prophesizing the death of Ben-Hadad and the rise of Hazael (8:7-15)
16. Prophesizing that Israel's defeat of King Hazael of Damascus (13:14-19)

Women in the New Testament who showed the same generosity to God's representatives:

1. St. Peter's wife and mother-in-law opened their home in Capernaum to Jesus and His disciples (Mt 4:13; 8:5; Mk 1:21-28; 2:1; Lk 7:1).
2. Mary and Martha of Bethany opened their home to Jesus and His disciples (Lk 10:38-42; Jn 12:1-2).
3. The house of Mary of Jerusalem became the first Church-home of St. Peter and the Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12).
4. The widow Lydia offered St. Paul her hospitality (Acts 16:14-15).
5. Priscilla and her husband Aquila took in St. Paul and founded a Church-home in Ephesus and later in Rome (Acts 18:26; 1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:3-5).

Stories of God intervening in the lives of barren women in the Old and New Testaments:

1. In the story of Abraham and Sarah, they were both elderly and Sarah was barren, yet God made Sarah fertile and she bore a son in their old age. God told them to name the child Isaac (Gen 18:9-11; 21:1-3).
2. Rebekah was barren until Isaac prayed for her and God gave them twin sons whose names are given as Esau and Jacob (Gen 25:20-24).
3. Rachel was barren until God gave her a son which we are told she named Joseph (30:22-24).
4. Manoah's wife was barren but God answered her prayer and gave her the judge Samson (Judg 13:2-7, 24).
5. Hannah was barren, but God heard her prayer and gave her the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 1:1-2, 10-11, 20).
6. The birth of the son of the barren Shunammite woman (2 Kng 4:14-17).
7. Zechariah and Elizabeth were elderly when God made Elizabeth fertile and she bore a son which Zechariah was told to name John (Lk 1:1-25, 57-58).

Handout 2: 2 Kings Lesson 2

There are three differences between Elisha’s announcement of a future birth and the gift of a child to the other barren women:

1. All the other stories of the gift of children to barren women originate from the word of God, but this one is from the prophet’s own initiative as recompense for the woman’s kindness to him.
2. The son from the birth is named in the other stories.
3. All the other stories lead to the birth of someone destined to play a significant role in salvation history, while this unnamed child does not play any significant role in the national story.

Only Sarah, Manoah’s wife, the Shunammite woman, Elisabeth and the Virgin Mary’s experiences are “annunciation” stories in which the women received a direct message of a future birth by an agent of God. Resurrection of the Shunammite woman’s son recalls the miracle of Elijah in 1 Kng 17:17-24 when he resurrected the son of the widow of Zarephath whose boy was restored to life by Elijah in a similar way; both resurrection miracles took place in an Upper Room with each boy laying on the prophet’s bed (1 Kng 17:19; 2 Kng 4:11). Elijah stretched out on top of the boy three times and Elisha seven times.

Similar resurrection miracles will be performed by Jesus in the New Testament:

1. The resurrection of Jairus’ dead daughter (Mt 9:23-26; Mk 5:35-43; Lk 8:49-56).
2. The resurrection of the dead son of the widow of Nain (Lk 7:11-16).
3. The resurrection of Martha and Mary of Bethany’s dead brother Lazarus (Jn 11:32-44).

All these resurrection miracles prefigure the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but unlike Jesus these individuals went on to live a normal life and died a second time.

The parallels between Jesus’ feeding miracle in Matthew 14:13-21 compared to Elisha’s feeding miracle in 2 Kings 4:42-44:

Elisha’s Feeding Miracle	Jesus’ Feeding Miracle
In Elisha’s miracle there was only a small amount of food (20 loaves of barley bread).	In Jesus’ miracle there was only a small amount of food (5 loaves of barley bread and 2 fish).
Elisha’s servants protested that there was not enough food to feed so many men.	Jesus’ disciples protested that there was not enough food to feed so many men.
The small amount of food became enough to feed 100 men.	The small amount of food became enough to feed 5 thousand men not counting women and children.
There was some food left over.	There were 12 large baskets of food left over.

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The Jews who saw the parallels between Jesus’ feeding miracle and the feeding miracle of the 9th century BC prophet Elisha would conclude from the comparison between the small amount left over in Elisha’s miracle and the abundance of left over bread in Jesus’ miracle that Jesus of Nazareth was a greater prophet of God than the great Elisha.