**A Study Of The Miraculous - Part I**

Series:

**A Study of the Miraculous**

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Lesson One:

Commentary by Reverend DR R. L. Hammonds

2 Kings 4 The Miracle:

1 ¶ Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, …

\* The wife of a man who had been a student in the school of the prophets under Elijah’s ministry most likely from Bethel. (2 Kings 2:3) These were for the most part non-Levitical, non-priestly men who felt called and compelled to learn the ways of the Lord and dedicate their lives to His service. Since the days of Samuel and continuing throughout the Old Testament period, men who entered the school of the prophets were prepared to stand beside monarchy and the priest, to guard the nation and to proclaim and protect the God ordered rules of life and reward. Schools were established at Ramah, Bethel, Gibeah, Gilgal and Jericho. Before Elijah’s final departure he found it desirous to visit these schools and give parting instruction to the young prophets.

\* In answer to the call of God, she and her husband had relegated their lives and futures to a meager existence. In these times of spiritual drought for the masses of people, without a secure job and secular occupation, those who had dedicated their lives to serving God could not expect income as it was almost non-existent and certainly undependable.

\* Perhaps it is because she had learned the value of a Godly man’s counsel from having a husband so committed to God. Now in her desperate moment she seeks out the advice of one she trusts as a true servant of the Lord.

saying, Thy servant my husband is dead;

\* This evidently was a sudden and unexpected death that had not been prepared for. As often does, sudden departures, even of servants of the Lord, can cause great and continuing hardship on those left behind to manage the affairs of life.

\* Since Elisha is Elijah’s recognized successor and chosen replacement, 2 Kings 2:15, it seems reasonable that this widow would go to Elisha for assistance in solving her problem. Thus she continues:

and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD:

\* The widow establishes that her late husband was not a careless nor reckless man who did not pay attention to his affairs but rather this statement lends credibility to the thought that he died suddenly and without fair notice or opportunity to make arrangements himself for the payment of his debt and provision for his family after his death.

\* The widow is saying to Elisha that he too was personally familiar with her husband’s service to God and spiritual credibility.

and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

\* The husband has left family debt that the widow and surviving sons cannot pay.

\* Even though they have faithfully and fearfully served the Lord and been employed by choice and at personal cost in the spiritual service of God’s Kingdom, nonetheless, the current laws of the land apply to them. One cannot claim to be exempt nor excused from the laws governing others just because they have given their all in service to God. Even Jesus paid taxes, rendering custom to whom custom is due. (Luke 20:25) The Apostle Peter encourages saints to obey every ordinance of man while the Apostle Paul encourages us to submit to the magistrates in place. (1 Peter 2:13 & Romans 13)

\* The two sons, regardless of age, must by law fulfill the contract of payment either by monetarily satisfying their father’s debt or by serving out the debt as slaves until the year of Jubilee does set them free again.

\* This woman’s cry was for the freedom of her sons. She no doubt is crying, as well, for her own recent loss and fearing the added loss of her only two sons, which seems an unbearable event.

2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee?

\* It is unclear from which frame of mind Elisha ask this question. Whether he is truly wondering or from an attitude of despair as to what to do.Even seasoned men of God can and do feel both when faced with solving others’ problems in the visible place of God. The Apostle Paul rehearsed that daily there came upon him the care of all of the churches (2 Corinthians 11:28) and he wondered at times if he had actually run and sown and laboured in vain. (Galatians 4:11) No matter, genuine care and dedication was present in the prophet’s life and actions.

\* It is perhaps certain that Elisha knew that there was nothing which he, of himself, could do. This would require a miracle and thus he needed to move this woman into a position to receive from God. In order for a person such as this to receive a miracle they must:

> first be motivated to depend on God and not the arm of man;

> next they need offer what they have to God for His touch;

> then they must obediently follow the prescribed course of action required for God’s intervention: (this can be anything from dipping in the river Jordan seven times, to walking the isle at a church and humbly submitting to the laying on of hands for help); and

> finally they should use the blessings and benefits received for that which God intended when He thus blessed them.

\*Perhaps Elisha is using this interim time to think of a way to move this woman into faith filled action or maybe he is waiting to receive divine direction from God. At any rate there seems appropriate to the moment a certain pause after this question and before the next one.

tell me, what hast thou in the house?

\* It might seem to some that a true prophet of the stature of Elisha could have already discerned what it was that the woman had in her house.This brings to mind two possibilities of which both are, at times, true.

> First: Even true and gifted men of God do not always know everything, even about the works and miracles they themselves are involved in. (such as the Prophet Nathan: 2 Samuel 7)

> Next: Often men of God, though they know, they await others to come to the knowledge as though arriving at it by themselves. People guided to truth who uncover it often feel more joined to it since they feel they discovered it.

\* Note the prophet is going to identify something personal and costly to the widow … something in her house. Even though she has recently lost much, still the road to her salvation is to offer yet more of what she has. Much like the widow of 1 Kings 17, this woman must act in faith for her miracle. Trusting God is often easier when it is out of one’s abundance, however, seldom does that type of action produce miracles for the ones who supply even though it often is a miracle for those who receive.

And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house,

\* She evidently did not go immediately running to Elisha, but rather had waited, most likely trying every other natural means to supply. Now, only when she possesses nothing, do her creditors come as vultures, in their right advance, to lay claim to her most prized possessions. It can seem like when all else has left you and there is no ability in reserve, that the problems of life unfairly pile onto the shoulders of God’s people. Through necessity many finally despair of any other way and turn to the way, Jesus.

save a pot of oil.

\* The things we so lightly esteem are often raised to become our salvation. God chooses the simple things of this world and the things which are nothing to bring about great things. (1 Corinthians 1:28)Little David, from the backside of the desert, tending a few sheep, was brought from obscurity to greatness in the hand of the Lord. (1 Samuel 16:11 & 17:28) God has decided to place more of His honour on the unseemly. (1 Corinthians 12:23) In our humility we are exalted and in His gentleness are we made great. (1 Peter 5:6 & Psalms 18:35) It is in the weak of this world that God chose to place His greatest treasure. (2 Corinthians 12:10) These ignorant and unlearned men, earthen vessels or clay, just because they had been with Jesus were elevated to eternal recognition as their names are written on foundation stones of our new Jerusalem, the holy city ascending down from God. (Acts 4:13; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Revelation 21:14) As then, so now, the stone that the builders rejected becomes the head of the corner. (Matthew 21:42)

\* how appropriate to have only a little oil become much more than was enough. Oil is representative of the Holy Spirit in the house. At one time there was most likely much more in abundance and in reserve.Probably there was a plentiful supply for the daily needs of the home and family, any unexpected visitors and even enough to share with others in need. Now, with the loss of the spiritual head of the house, the oil had dwindled. However, the great truth is seen in that only a little of the Spirit of God is enough when given proper attention, miraculous opportunity and first place in the home. It is enough to meet any need and solve any problem and last for the season to come.

\* What grace can pour from an earthen vessel containing oil in the hand of God.