

Elisha, the Prophet of Grace

8) What Goes Down, Must Come Up

*'And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha,
"See now, the place where we dwell with you is
too small for us. Please, let us go to the Jordan,
and let every man take a beam from there, and
let us make there a place where we may dwell."
So he answered, "Go." Then one said, "Please
consent to go with your servants." And he
answered, "I will go"'*

(2 Kings 6:1-3)

- ✓ **Elisha devoted much of his time and attention to the training of young prophets**
- ✓ **Under his ministry at least one of the schools had flourished, and there was such an increase of numbers that their accommodation became too cramped**
- ✓ **The sons of prophets brought the situation to the attention of Elisha and he approved of their suggestion to build a larger place**
- ✓ **Elisha was a humble man, and did not resent them taking the initiative. He saw it for what it was - a necessary project**
- ✓ **He encouraged them: 'Go'... 'I will go'**

- ✓ **It is God who gives growth, but we have to facilitate that growth**
- ✓ **They were humble men who did not look for something extravagant**
- ✓ **The real building is not bricks and mortar, but people. And growth is measured in terms of lives being saved and transformed by the preaching of the gospel and discipleship**
- ✓ **But they were very practical. They suggested that every man could bring a beam**
- ✓ **It needed everyone to be involved. Our gifts dictate how we are to be involved**

'So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas, master! For it was borrowed." So the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float. Therefore he said, "Pick it up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it'

(2 Kings 6:4-7)

- ✓ **While they were cutting down trees, an axe head came loose and fell into the river**
- ✓ **This was a significant loss because:**
 - 1) Although iron was in use at this time in Israel, it was not common enough to be cheap**
 - 2) The man who lost the ax head had borrowed it. He lost something that belonged to someone else. Literally, the iron axe-head had been 'asked for', or even 'begged'**
- ✓ **This miracle is a picture of the fall and redemption. Like the axe head that sank to the bottom of the river, when Adam fell he took the whole human race down with him**

- ✓ **And like the axe head, Adam became lost**
- ✓ **The axe was not the man's to lose. In a similar way, Adam's life was not his to lose because he was created in God's image with the purpose of bringing glory to Him**
- ✓ **Jesus said we are to render to God the things that are God's. *'whatever you do, do all to the glory of God'* (1 Cor.10:31). *'...that in all things God may be glorified'* (1 Pet.4:11)**
- ✓ **The axe head broke away from its fixed position where it could have been useful. Likewise, mankind has committed 'glory theft'. They *'...exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator'* (Rom.1:25)**

***Like the axe head, the human race went down after the fall, not up, sinking to the depths (see Rom.1:19-32)**

***Elisha threw a stick into the river at the place where the axe head fell, and the axe head miraculously floated to the top**

***Jordan represents death, and the stick is a picture of the cross**

***Jesus entered into death for us, that we might rise in newness of life**

***What happened to the axe head was contrary to nature, like Jesus walking on water. *'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death'* (Rom.8:2)**

He told the man, *'Pick it up for yourself'

***As with Elisha's previous miracles we see that it is God who does the miracles, but He gets us involved at a practical level. *'You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's'* (1 Cor.6:20)**

***Life was designed to be a series of opportunities to reflect and reveal the glory of God, including in the midst of our needs**

***Living for the glory of God is radical Christianity. Paul said, *'...Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death'* (Phil.1:20)**

'If by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many...For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous'

(Rom.5:15, 17-19)