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God Can Make Iron Float

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“And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha... Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take every man a beam...But as one man was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water... and the man of God said, Where fell it? And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.”—2 Kings 6:1-6

What the Acts of the Apostles is to the New Testament, the books of Kings are to the Old Testament. I would like to rename the two books of Kings as “The Acts of the Prophets.” Here, as in the Acts of the Apostles, you see men of God performing miracles in the midst of a troubled world. By changing the titles of these books the eye of the reader would be more focused on the 49 references to Elisha than the 29 kings listed here. From the start there would be greater attention to:

- God's power compared to man's weakness.
- God's holiness compared to man's wickedness.
- God's fullness compared to man's emptiness.
- God's hope compared to man's despair.

Iron floating rather than iron sinking

In this book we see that all those who stuck with Elisha were taken care of, blessed and empowered. We also see that everything God did here was somewhat upside down, non-traditional and out of this world. In other words, if you go with God you never know what is next. For example, at first God, rather than choosing one of the 50 seminary graduates from the prophets' school, chose a farmer to become Elisha's successor. Didn't Jesus do the same thing? He passed by the seminary graduates to pick fishermen and a tax collector to be His apostles. The unusual continues: Elisha healing the bitter waters of Jericho, supplying water for the army, replenishing a widow's oil, restoring a child's life, feeding 100 men, healing a foreign general's leprosy, and making iron float.

What you have here in the second book of the Acts of the Prophets is a sweet divine correction to the erroneous perception in many minds that the God of the Old testament is lacking in compassion, gentleness and personal one-to-one care, compared to the God of the Gospels. But we see here clearly that God is God, was God, and will be God and that His character and attributes have never changed, nor will they ever change.

The whole wonderful story of man and God began with the great Creator walking with Adam and Eve in holy intimacy. Also notice that He paid far more attention to Jacob's speckled goats than to the creation of the entire celestial universe. God's focus has always been His people such as you and me. And when one of us loses an axe head, or a button or a ticket, He knows all about it and is ready to help us if conditions are right on our side to invite a miracle. So then, what are the circumstances that caused an unnamed prophet's axe head to float? What invited

the supernatural? If we have an answer to that we may know what causes many other hopeless conditions to invite or trigger the supernatural.

In this case (as in so many other stories of the Bible) we see that God is not only the God of Sunday, but also the God of Monday. We see here that God is not obsessed by the dramatic or spectacular as the newspapers or TV. God shows himself here as the God of the common man getting involved in his ordinary everyday affairs.

What happens in the story is something that happens to everybody. Some time in life, everyone borrows something, breaks something or loses something. And nearly everyone gets flustered and bent out of shape when it happens. So if you have ever borrowed, broken or lost something, you are in this story. And, in this very flustered situation, you can find God in the midst of it, for His “eye is on the sparrow” and He watches over you (Mt. 10:29).

You have to remember that He is so interested in you that He does not even allow you one moment of privacy. There is not one second that God ever takes His eyes off of any person. Hence Job complained, “*Lord, I can't even swallow my spittle without you knowing it*” (Job 7:19). I marvel at our God. He knows and cares about an ordinary man losing his axe head. It made the bells of heaven ring.

So then, what can make iron float in our lives, in our churches? What will invite the supernatural? Indeed, there are several conditions that must be met. I cannot list them all in one article. Let me list some from this story that may apply to some of your lives.

1. There was a most sacred relationship between the prophet and his followers. There must be such a relationship between the pastor and his congregation. Here there was nothing between the leader and the followers but love and trust: no criticism, no judging, no lining up from either side. Jesus could not do many mighty works in Capernaum because of criticism, resentment, distrust, and unbelief (Mt. 13:58). In Capernaum much of the iron remained submerged that otherwise would have floated. Also the Holy Spirit could not fall upon His apostles until Judas had been removed from among them. There are times when we all need a Judas, as Jesus did. But when it comes to revival praying the Judases must go. In case of Elisha, his servant Gehazi was like Judas because he wanted self-gain. Elisha did not have a school of prophets until God had struck Gehazi with leprosy to remove him from Elisha's ministry. Do not grieve over such removals. It is better to have a small church without Gehazis and see the iron float than a large church with many Gehazis yet without the supernatural. Numbers don't bring miracles. Purity does!

2. The iron floated because the leader Elisha was approachable by his followers. Elisha had an ear as to what was in the hearts of his people. He knew that this should not be a “me” ministry, but an “us” ministry. “*And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us*” (2 Kgs. 6:1-6). There was a divine humility in the heart of this prophet. He was lacking the “know it all” mentality which prevents the Holy Spirit from working.

3. There was also humility in the sons of the prophets. Nobody here had a Gehazi spirit, with grandiose ideas for the things of the earth for showing off. Hence the sons of the prophets did not ask to build a cathedral or a glass-caged seminary, but rather they asked for a log cabin. They said, “let every man take a beam,” a rather modest request (v.2). They did not ask for cedars, marble stones or artisans to put up the new building. They were content with the least if only God could be in it, because then they knew they would have the best. If you have a spirit

that always want to get something or acquire something; a spirit that is ever wanting more; a show off spirit, then your axe head will not be raised. Your problems will continue to burden you down. Jesus said, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (Mt. 5:23). Jesus made this scripture the foundation of the whole Sermon on the Mount. These prophets didn’t care about building credentials with man, but with God.

4. Elisha was not afraid of his followers taking the initiative. When they asked if they could enlarge the place, Elisha agreed. They said, *“Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye”* (v 2). Yet, if Elisha had said no to their request they would have willingly and happily remained in the same place. To their “let us go,” Elisha responded, “go.” This smooth divine cooperation helped to create an atmosphere for iron to float. Does this remind you of why the Holy Spirit fell upon the early church: they were of one heart, of one spirit, of one mind.

5. These sons of the prophets had such love for their master that they did not want to do anything without him. If people love their pastor that way they would want to have him with them all the time in all their endeavors, that would be another factor to invite the supernatural. Again, love should be reciprocal. Anything can happen under those circumstances. Any time we violate the law of love we cancel out the supernatural.

Now coming to the end of this story, verse 6 says, *“And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.”* Once again, we are all in this story. We have all borrowed, broken and lost things. We have all been at wits' end about it. Dear child of God, your Heavenly Father knows all about your problem. The iron may well represent sin in our lives, a burden, and the lostness of man; or in general the hopelessness of a situation. The stick may well represent the tree on which Jesus died. Salvation is through the cross, and it will work wherever we do our part.

Examine your heart, make all things right between you and your God, between you and your pastor and between you and your fellow men, then your axe head will also float.

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