

FEEDING THE PROPHETS. 2 KN. 4:38-44. 08/2723. #09.

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28 And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and *there was* a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him; and he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets." 29 So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced *them* into the pot of stew, though they did not know *what they were*. 40 Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, "Man of God, *there is* death in the pot!" And they could not eat *it*. 41 So he said, "Then bring some flour." And he put *it* into the pot, and said, "Serve *it* to the people, that they may eat." And there was nothing harmful in the pot. 42 Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give *it* to the people, that they may eat." 43 But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?" He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have *some* left over.'" 44 So he set *it* before them; and they ate and had *some* left over, according to the word of the LORD.  
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1. A servants' stew

- a. When Elisha returned to Gilgal, the 100 prophets there were hungry (perhaps the same 100 that Obadiah had hid from Jezebel)
 - a1. Prophets primarily lived on the charity of those around them
 - a2. Elisha orders Gehazi to put on a large pot of water to make a stew
- b. The prophets gathered what vegetables they had
 - a1. Some men gathered herbs to add to the pot
 - a2. One young man gathered gourds that looked good to eat
 - b1. No one knew what the gourds were
 - b2. They put the gourds in the pot anyway
- c. Gourds come in 5 basic varieties:
 - a1. Cucumber family (edible)
 - a2. Squash family, including pumpkins (edible)
 - a3. Melon family (edible)
 - a4. Decorative gourds (not edible)
 - a5. Bitter cucumber family (poisonous)
- d. When the prophets began eating the stew, a prophet cried out, "There is death in the pot"
 - a1. Bitter tasting & nausea resulted
 - a2. Contain toxin cucurbitacins

2. Flour power

- a. Elisha orders that some flour be put in the pot
 - a1. Flour was a prop & not a cure, just like salt put in the well at Jericho or the Moses throwing a tree into the bitter water of Marah in Sinai to sweeten the water
 - a2. God, & not the flour, detoxified the stew
- b. God took care of the prophets
 - a1. Avoided a disastrous situation
 - a2. Even though the ignorant student was well-meaning, accidental harm & death is just as deadly as murder
 - a3. Can't take chances on guessing about risky ventures & untested things

3. Dividing of the loaves

- a. The Temple of God was in Jerusalem of Judah
 - a1. There was no temple of God in Israel
 - a2. After the Assyrian conquest a temple in Samaria was built (Jn. 4)
- b. Israelites who could not donate in the Temple would give their tithes to the Levites who had not left Israel to go to Judea
 - a1. A man brought his first fruits to the prophets
 - a2. The food was not enough for everyone
- c. Elisha told Gehazi to set the food before the prophets
 - a1. Like Philip in Jn. 6, Gehazi stated that the food was not nearly enough for 100 men
 - a2. El. told Geh. to put the food out anyway
- d. As a foreshadowing of the feeding of the 5,000 the food was multiplied until there was enough for all with a little left over
 - a1. God once again provided for His servants
 - a2. Like the boy who gave his lunch to Jesus, the man who provided the meal was blessed by having his gift multiplied
 - b1. God multiplies what we offer Him
 - b2. God will provide for His servants
- e. We never know what God is going to do through our service & our giving