

7600

ELISHA: THE MAN OF GOD

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Study #5A (Exhortation)

The Widow's Flow of Oil

Reading: 2 Kings 4:1-7

My beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course, b&s, the character of the meeting is completely changed this morning, we come here not merely to study the Word of God, but with a very personal responsibility. For let me remind you of the words of the apostle Paul when commenting upon this feast said, 'for whosoever eateth this bread and drinketh this wine unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord'. What did he mean by that? This is what he meant, b&s, that when I finish speaking this morning, and I sit down, every brother and sister who has been baptised into the Lord Jesus Christ is going to be held personally responsible for his or her thoughts. And the responsibility for the continuance of this meeting will not revolve around bro. Henry as chairman, or myself as speaker, but with all of us as individuals. He that does not do this, but partakes of those emblems unworthily, stands with the Lord's murderers. They are powerful words! consequently b&s, the character of the meeting changes this morning, and you become very much involved in this meeting. And we haven't come here to remember Elisha; and I see no reason why we should deviate from our story of Elisha because, we've never been very far away from remembering the Lord Jesus Christ, because you can't study the life of Elisha without those shadows stretched forward to finally be swallowed up in the blazing light of He who was the anti-type of them all, the Lord Jesus Christ. And Elisha, b&s, was a most remarkable type of the Lord Jesus Christ; and if Elisha was the hub of the chariot of the cherubims, who were round about Elisha, surely a greater than Elisha is here, who in the garden of Gethsemane, was the hub of the chariot of the cherubim, and as the Israel of God could call upon 12 legions of angels. Here was, b&s, above all others, who not only kept the way of the tree of life open, but who said I am the way and the life. It wasn't a matter of only keeping it open in the sense of guarding something already established, HE WAS THE WAY, and consequently, to keep the way to the tree of life open, HE HAD TO KEEP HIMSELF UNDER CONTROL, because He was that way, and so all the reflections that we've had upon Elisha, surely must centre themselves upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

But this morning, b&s, as we come to examine the record of Kings again, we've got to do so with exhortation in mind, not that we haven't already done that, but I thought this

morning that we may select two stories, which are very, very personal ones. You and I may appreciate our position, be encouraged, stimulated and exhorted to do more in the service of our Lord. And there's not a brother or sister alive that can't do more in the service of his Lord! And don't ever tell me that you don't have the capabilities, especially when we finish this exhortation, because I won't listen to you, and you wouldn't listen to me either. For the stories we have to tell this morning, b&s, are of two people who provided for others, and at least one of them thought that she ought to be provided for by everybody else! and there are grand principles to be absorbed this morning in two very short stories, and we're able to tell these stories together because, you see, the stories of the life of Elisha are all out of chronological order; when I say 'all' we know that most of them are. The stories of Elisha are not told in chronological order, they are obviously out of that order, so we are able to take each separate story and deal with it as such. And I want to speak about two people this morning, a man and a woman; a woman first and then we'll come to the man.

I want to speak about a widow woman who was a member of the sons of the prophets, because she, although being a woman was comprehended under that term 'sons of the prophets' because it included a group of people, both men and women, and I want to talk about a man who came from a place called Baal-shalisha, and as we talk about them you're going to find them very relevant to the situation in which we find ourselves this morning, because when we come to the man from Baal-shalisha we're going to come to the memorial feast; in both cases, my dear b&s, we're going to have shown to us, that we can do more in the service of the truth. Now in 2 Kings chapter 4, we come to that reading that bro. Peter read to us this morning, and here we have a very short but a very graphic story of a widow woman.

Now look at the circumstances, b&s, of this woman. Her husband had been a faithful servant of Yahweh; she said that to Elisha, not only that but in his service to Yahweh, he had served Elisha because he recognized Elisha as God's representative. So she said, 'thy servant, my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear Yahweh', so here was a man who fear God and who served Elisha because he saw there was a mediator between God and man, and that man at this moment of time was Elisha. And he evidently was very faithful as this woman reminded Elisha; she'd lost him, she'd suffered a shattering blow, she'd not only lost her husband but she'd lost a guide and evidently a very faithful guide; she felt desolate and then to add to sorrow upon sorrow, she was in debt! and the payment of that debt meant that she was going to lose her two sons, to a man who's described as a creditor. And that word 'creditor' in another place in the scripture is rendered 'an extortioner'. So she didn't know as to how long her son's would be in servitude, in slavery, although she fully realized that under the Law of Moses, that she had certain rights and privileges which she could press. So here's a widow woman, she's got two boys that are going to be sold into slavery because she's in debt, and she comes to Elisha for help. And you know, b&s, I feel she represents Israel, because in the 54th chapter of Isaiah for example and at verse 4 God told Israel they were suffering the reproach of widowhood; and there were two houses of Israel, and Israel had sold themselves into slavery. Their iniquities had done that and they went into servitude where they served the king of Babylon for 70 years; and here is

a little cameo of a woman who represented the widowhood of Israel, deprived of her guide and her husband, faced with an enormous debt that she cannot meet, and with the possibility of losing her two children into slavery. And she comes to 'the salvation of God' to get an answer, Elisha.

And what's he going to do? Now before we get on to the fact of what he did for this woman, let's just review a little bit, as to the rights that she had under the Law, that is! Now you take the position of a widow under the Law of Moses. You've only got to get hold of a concordance, b&s, and run through the scriptures on the position of a widow, to see that Yahweh exercised particular care for widows and they are equated with the stranger and the fatherless. So the stranger, the fatherless and the widows were all equated together and come under the hovering protection of a very merciful God. Not only that but they also were equated with the Levites, so whatever privileges the Levite had, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow had likewise. And you'll find under the Law of Moses that when the Levite was given the tithes, he had to share them with the widows; you'll find when the Israelite gleaned his fields and reaped down his harvests he was to leave behind him the gleanings for the widow, she had the right to those also. And so you see, b&s, right throughout the scriptures there is that constant reiteration of that principle, that God will care for widows. So that James when commenting upon pure, and undefiled religion, said that one of the ethics of that was, 'to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction'. He wasn't giving a summary of the Christian life as some people imagine, he was giving an illustration of what is meant by 'purity' and 'undefiled', what those terms meant. And for example, he said, 'they don't mean ceremonially to be pure or ceremonially to be undefiled, but to be morally such as, and he gave an example, and one of those examples was to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. And so with all these thoughts in her mind, of course, and the woman wouldn't be ignorant of them, she felt that she had a good cause; and with these scriptures of truth ringing in her ears, no doubt she had poured over these things and thought about them, and felt she had a cause second to none, and that she was to be the recipient of mercy, that God would not forsake her, and when she went to Elisha that he would fix up the whole thing for her, absolve her debt and release her sons from bondage, and that she would be able to live as a free woman once again amongst the sons of the prophets.

He did nothing of the sort! Oh, yes, he finally released her, no doubt about that, but like the Lord Jesus Christ, my dear b&s, who never gave the gifts of God indiscriminately, but always went to the root of the trouble, He called upon the persons concerned, whoever appealed to Him for help, He put the onus and responsibility right back on them. And very often it was couched in the phrase, 'have faith, believe, and these things shall be granted unto you!'; and that placed a very onus responsibility upon them, to search their hearts and minds, to search the scriptures, to draw upon the sources of spiritual power that they might generate that faith, otherwise they'd go away in the same state they came to Him. And was Elisha going to grant this woman all those privileges of the Law, without some comparable response from her? Not on your life! And there's a tremendous exhortation in what Elisha said to her, b&s, and what finally happened.

Now you look at this record! In verse 2, 'Elisha said unto her, what shall I do for thee?' Now that was a good question, because if he had given the woman time to answer, she would have no doubt, answered with a barrage of scripture, such as I've quoted, Deut.14, Deut.24, Deut.10, Psalm 68 and a host of others that spoke of her privileges. So Elisha says, 'what shall I do for thee?' Tell me? He didn't give her time to answer, He never gave her time to lay her claim at all, 'what am I going to do for you he said', Tell me this, what have you got in your house? Oh, that's a different matter, isn't it! She perhaps never considered that she had anything in her house at all! she was poor, she couldn't pay her debt, but now she's got to consider, b&s, what she had in her house, 'what have you got in your house?' How many people do we have come to us and to other brethren and say, 'you know, I get a raw deal in the ecclesia; no one asks me to do anything! I'm never taken into the confidence of the click of brethren! Nobody cares for me, and I'm just not wanted'. What they mean by that is this, nobody asks me to do the jobs that are prominent which will gain me notoriety; nobody will take me into their confidence so that my ego will be boosted, and then I'll become a figure that will be sought out by everybody else. That's what they really think; they've got no friends in the ecclesia because they won't show themselves friendly, and Solomon said, 'he that will have friends, must show himself friendly'. What have you got in your house, b&s? And with that searching question the woman started to think, 'well, what have I got in my house?' See, he didn't give her an opportunity to put forth her complaints, and the Lord Jesus Christ never did that either.

And what did she have in her house? Well, what Elisha was getting at, of course, was this; she was a member of the sons of the prophets. Her sons were going to be sold into slavery, b&s, because she couldn't pay her debt; but all around that woman were people who didn't belong to the sons of the prophets, and who were under a greater debt and a greater slavery than that woman would ever be under, for as Paul said, 'they were sold under sin'. And that was a slavery that she'd never face because she was within a circle where people were free, because she knew the truth. And there were other people who were not free because they didn't know the truth, and what are you going to do, b&s, with what you've got in your house? This is the burning question! and no doubt Elisha would have made her understand that, and what did she have in her house? You have a look what she found there! She found there, b&s, as the record says a pot of oil; well, fancy that, she found in that house a pot of oil. Now you turn to the 21st Proverb, she reckoned that she was poor but she had a pot of oil, now look what Proverbs 21 and verse 20 says, 'there is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up'. So she had something in her house, but it had never dawned on her that it was there, perhaps, she had a pot of oil and if she knew it was there, she thought perhaps it was of no value because it would soon go! But she had failed to realize, b&s, that that oil was a symbol of something far greater than just material substance; and there is oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a fool spendeth it up. And the Lord Jesus Christ took that up when He spoke about the wise and the foolish virgins, didn't He? And the widow woman was a wise woman because she at least had that left.

So now look at this! that was not an ordinary pot of oil that she had in that house; you

see, when the widow of Zarahetha came to Elijah, or rather he came to her and she was gathering her two sticks to cook her son a meal which she was going to mix with the oil she had left, she had only enough for one mixing! That was oil that was going to be mixed for food. But this is not oil for food here! this is completely different oil, and it seems to be at one time, a parallel and yet a contrast between this widow and the widow that Elijah went to. The widow that Elijah went to was a Gentile who was trying to find food, here is an Israelite who's got something more than food, but doesn't know what to do with it! That oil, b&s, the very term 'pot of oil' doesn't signify food oil at all, it was anointing oil that she had! That's what she had, she had anointing oil, completely different, and that 'pot' is used in that sense and in no other; and you see, the idea of that oil is this, they use to use that oil after bathing. There are several references in the scriptures to it, that when the Israelite bathed they use to anoint themselves or to smear themselves with that oil. The word is not the same which is used for 'Messiah' but it's the word used in some cases, for anointing. It means to 'smear or to rub' the body, and the whole idea of that oil was that it would give them an invigoration; it was the symbol of health, of joy and of gladness. It is called the 'oil of gladness' with which God anointed His Son and He was the poorest of all men and yet He was rich; but He knew He was rich and He spread those riches. He was healthy, He was prosperous, He was rich because He was anointed with the oil of gladness, above His fellows. And she had in her house that pot of oil.

What shall I do for you? What have you got to offer? And you know, my dear b&s, this is a principle of life; we pray to our Heavenly Father for certain things, material and spiritual, we pray to our Heavenly Father to sustain ourselves and our families in mortal being but you would never dream of not going to work, would you? Of course you wouldn't! because you know that God won't bless you unless you go to work and earn a living. We pray for the understanding of His Word, but you would never dream of praying for the understanding of His Word until you had studied so that your head was spinning, would you? I wouldn't! because I've learnt by experience, b&s, that you'll get nothing unless you do. Hour after hour, week after week, all day Saturday if it's necessary if you're going to get something out of that book; and you would never dream of asking God for understanding unless you'd given that hours of consideration. What have you got in your house? Well, I'll tell you what we've got, everyone of us has got this, a pot of oil; you turn to 1 John chapter 2 and verse 27, the apostle says, 'but the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him'. So we have an anointing, which we have received of Him; now where is the brother and the sister that hasn't got in their house a pot of oil? Where are they? They don't exist because the apostle John says that pot of oil, that anointing oil that we have received, we've received of Him and it's the truth!

What are you going to do with it? And isn't it a principle of life, b&s, haven't you found this by experience, that the more you give the more you receive? Haven't you found by experience in your life that when you extend yourself to the limit, that God extends Himself to the limit? Haven't you found as Malachi says that 'when we bring into the

storehouses of God the firstfruits of our labours, that He opens the windows of heaven and deluges us with blessings?' Of course, we've found that by experience; He doesn't give us all that we want, but we get everything that we need; and as far as the truth is concerned, b&s, we get more than we ever require. And the abundance that He's showered upon us as bro. Henry said, is incomprehensible! and every one of us has received from that Man a pot of oil! What have you got in your house? and who's moaning and groaning about not getting something out of the truth, and being left out? Well, there's only one way to stop being left out, and start coming in and giving and giving and giving and giving! And then, b&s, we'll find that all that we ever require will be there; the anointing that we've received abideth with us, and there is oil in the house of the wise but fools spend it up, that's what the prophet says!

And so the woman, of course, was then told to get busy. And when we come back to 2 Kings we read in verse 3, 'Then Elisha said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours', now the word 'abroad', b&s, is a word that means 'without', now she had to go without and get vessels. She had to go without and get vessels and she had to leave her own house where the truth was, with that little pot of anointing oil, a symbol of joy, health and gladness, and she had to go without and find vessels that were empty! And she had to get them from her neighbours, and they were the sons of the prophets. They were members of the sons of the prophets who were struggling in the things of God; and don't ever imagine that the spreading of the oil of the truth is only to the outsider, as important as that is, and we will underline the importance of that when we come to the story of Naaman. The spreading of the Word of truth, b&s, is as much a need in the household as anywhere else, because how many brethren and sisters are brought into the truth, (and I'm guilty of this) bringing people into the truth and tutoring them up for baptism, and then we drop them because we haven't got time for them anymore, we go onto somebody else, and they drift away. And there are empty vessels everywhere! and we've got to go outside and get them. And if you're lonely in the truth, take up that work and you won't be lonely any longer, and you'll find that companionship with others that you never dreamed you could have, and a greater one, a companionship with God too! And that widow woman who should have had the sons of the prophets coming into her house, rushing royally to her, what do we find her doing?

Going and getting empty vessels and bringing them back to her house, that she might fill them for them, because you see, there was a dearth in the land. But she had something in her house ! incredible, b&s, absolutely incredible; and they were empty vessels. Now isn't this remarkable, that the only time in the bible that Israel were called 'empty vessels' was on the very eve of their going into captivity into Babylon, in the 51st chapter of Jeremiah, where Jeremiah said that Nebuchadnezzar was going to 'take into captivity empty vessels'. And this woman reckons that she was going into captivity, and she had a vessel that was full! and she was free because she had the anointing oil of truth. But, there were others outside who didn't have it, and they were going into captivity alright, the captivity of the bondage of sin and death because they didn't have the power to withstand it, and she did!

And so she went without her house to bring vessels to her, and her sons went and got

them; and they brought those empty vessels in, and you know, b&s, when Israel had to present themselves three times a year before Yahweh, He said to them, 'Look, when you come up to the feast, there's not one single person that's going to come before me empty! None shall present themselves to the LORD empty', and woe betide the day, woe betide us, my dear brethren and sisters, if we go to the Lord Jesus Christ with an empty vessel and say that nobody was prepared to help us! Can't go to Him empty, He won't receive us empty, and we have a treasure in an earthen vessel; it's an insecure vessel, easily broken! but inside is the most precious treasure; but make sure it's there. And this woman had it, there was oil in the house of the wise, but without were fools that would spend it up; and now she's got to go and help them.

And so her two sons go abroad and Elisha said to her, 'listen, don't you borrow a few', in the margin it says 'don't you scant on this'; do you think that Elisha was worried about wealth that she should get as many vessels as she could, so that when she sold it she'd be a rich woman? do you think he was concerned about that? Why do you imagine he says now, 'look, don't you scant, you get as many vessels as you can, because he was trying to drill into her mind, that there were in Israel, a lot of empty vessels who needed filling And remember this, that oil was not being brought to her for food, but to get money to pay a debt. Do you see the difference? The widow of Zarephath wanted oil to physically live because she didn't have enough food, but this woman was in debt, and what she needed was the wherewithal to pay the debt; not food, and we b&s, every one of us, are heavily in debt to God. If you don't know that, it's time you did! and I, b&s, can tell you from personal experience, the best way to keep yourself humble, is to go home and spend a long time thinking about all the things you've done wrong, and then you'll come to understand how heavily in debt we are to God, and we've got to pay that debt. We'll never pay it fully, the Lord Jesus Christ has laid the foundation for that, but that's not a paid debt in the sense of a substitute, b&s, that's what they may believe in the 'clean flesh theory'; we don't believe it, we believe that man has paid the debt alright, but there's got to be a response on our part because He represents us. And we're in debt to him, and we need to repay that debt! How then can we repay it? By doing exactly for others, what He did for us! helping them.

That's what we've got to do! and she went out and got those vessels, and she brought them in. And I want you to notice what she did; when they came in, in verse 4, 'they shut the door'. They shut the door, and you know, wherever you find that expression used in a context like that, it's remarkable what it means, because, for example, the Lord Jesus Christ went to the house of the ruler, Jairus, to raise his daughter. He threw out all the mourners who were being paid,(they were professionals, you know they could cry easy!) He threw them out on the street and He took Peter, James and John and the parents in the room and He shut the door. How many times do you read that in the life of the Lord, He took them in and He shut the door? The idea of that, b&s, is that the only ones that were going to be filled with oil, the only ones to witness miracles are going to be those who are inside the household of faith. She had got those vessels from outside, now they were in the household of faith and that door's shut! and all those not in there go empty.

And away she went! And what happened? Well, here she is pouring and there are her sons passing to her, the empty vessels. Now they'd brought them over to the house and they had already shut the door, so that in verse 4 when it says, 'and thou shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out'. Her sons didn't pour out; where normally, I suppose in a household where there was a widow with two boys, it would have been a natural thing for them, one of them to get the vessels and say, 'look mom, we'll handle this; you've had a lot of sorrows, you've just been to the prophet, (the woman would have been disturbed in mind); 'we'll handle this mom, you go somewhere else. I'll hand the vessels to my brother and he'll pour out'. NO, she poured out, and furthermore, b&s, the Hebrew is quite dramatic here, it says 'and they were handing vessels and she was pouring continually'. She never ceased to pour, and here's a widow woman who's suppose to be sustained by the nation because she's got no sustenance, and she's pouring out continuously. And yet she's got two boys in her house who could have done it for her, but she, I believe, got the point that Elisha was getting at, 'what have you got in your house? You're complaining to me, you want help from God, well, what are you going to do about it?

And there she was pouring and pouring and pouring, and she was so engrossed in what she was doing, b&s, that she just said to her son, 'another vessel, another vessel'. He says, 'mom, there are no vessels left!' and do you know what? when the last vessel was filled, the oil stopped. She didn't stop it, it stopped itself, and when there were no more vessels to be filled there was no more oil left to fill them! And the Lord Jesus Christ, b&s, said this to us, He said, 'blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled!' and that oil will never cease to be poured until the last vessel is filled, and while there are people who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, let's make sure that there are people in the ecclesia, who think they can't do anything, but suddenly wake up to the fact that they can do something, and find what they have got in their house, and pour it out as long as it will last. And I'll tell you what, you'll be staggered to find how long it will last! you'll be staggered to find how long it will last! and you won't be able to explain the circumstances. And when you stop giving you'll find that God will stop giving! and it's a divine principle, my dear b&s, and we'll never deviate from it! Well, what have we got in our house? Well, let's find what we've got in our house!

And you know, when she sold that, she had to sell that back to them; she sold it back to her neighbours and then she lived, her and her sons on the rest. And so you see the point was this, it was not until she had given the oil back to them, that she was in a position to pay her debt! but the oil having been given back to those from without her house, now she had the money to pay her debt; she became free and her sons were released from bondage, and in Israel there were people who knew the truth! they were filled with oil. And God was teaching her that until she was prepared to do what He was doing for her, then she could not expect to partake of the privileges of the Law, simply because she was a widow! Now you think about that! and there are widows here, spiritual widows who feel, well, I'm not much in the truth, I don't know, I don't seem to

get on anywhere, I can't do very much, my dear brethren and sisters and young people, never imagine that standing where I stand is the criteria of Christadelphia! This is a lot of nonsense; there is work in the truth going begging today; wonderful work that will be amply rewarded by the Lord Jesus Christ with eternal life, and it's going begging.

The Lord's got it all there for you to do, and He's asking you to do it, the rewards eternal life; and what is it? Visiting the sick, I know a brother that's been months, years in hospital within what? 2 miles, 3 miles of our ecclesia of 180 members. And until just recently you could count on one hand his regular visitors. But of course, that goes unnoticed, nobody wants to do that! What about we distribute leaflets, we get replies in, we publicize them and say, 'look, we got 70 replies, a 100 replies', you try and get people to go and contact them. And people with empty vessels, who know not a thing about the truth and they go away empty because nobody's going to go and pour because it's difficult to contact the stranger! And there's young sisters struggling to bring up a family, nobody goes and tells them as to what's the best way to do that, and try and organize their homes so they can bring some kind of spirituality into it! The sisters meet at the sister's class and study the bible, what are you going to do with all this knowledge? Fill another pot of oil, and another pot of oil and put it all on the shelf, so that we can go into our own pantries and say, 'look at all the pots of oil I've got'. That woman only had one and look what it did, it filled everybody! There's a tremendous lesson, my dear b&s, in the story of the widow's oil, and Elisha as the salvation of God was able to provide that woman, not only with things for herself, but she became the hub in the centre of joy and gladness, as the anointing oil was a symbol of, in a dearth! 'A widow woman to sustain thee'.

Now in the other story which we want to tell very briefly, in 2 Kings chapter 4, I want to tell the story because it'll bring us right down to our memorial feast. We have another story in the 42nd verse to the 44th verse of a man who came to Elisha. I'll read these few verses to you, b&s, and then we'll relate them to our feast this morning, and to show here, once again, how that we can help others! We read, 'There came a man from Baal-shalisha, and he brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn (and the AV says in the husks thereof, but really he brought them in a bag). And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. (that is Elisha did) And his servitor or servant said, What! should I set this before a hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat; for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave. So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the Word of Yahweh'.

You know, there's a remarkable parallel with this miracle here and the one which the Lord Jesus Christ performed on the shores of the Lake of Galilee in the 6th chapter of John. After which He gave a discourse upon 'I am the bread of life', when He broke that bread and He distributed it amongst 5,000 people and fed them; there's a remarkable parallel with this miracle here! But have a look at this one, b&s, we'll just deal with this briefly. There was a man from Baal-shalisha, that's a peculiar name, and who was he? We don't know, but this we know, that the very story before this, deals with a dearth which was in the land as with the widow, and during that dearth the sons

of the prophets were having a memorial feast at Gilgal, or a communal feast, whatever you'd like to call it. But they were all sitting around Elisha listening to him expound the Word, and they were going to set on this great basin, this pot, and they were going to have a communal feast at Gilgal, the place of the rolling away of the flesh. And the sons of the prophets are going to be there, and they were going to have this feast with Elisha; and one of them went out, unbeknown to the others, and he went and gathered wild cucumbers! Poisonous food and he put it in that pot and nobody knew that he put it there!

But it was discovered by the taste of it. The pot was healed by Elisha and the sons of the prophets were fed, and here's a story, b&s, where the inner circle of the disciples of Elisha are having a feast with him, and one of them has poisoned the pot! and it's unknown to the others. 'And Judas went out and it was night!' and he would poison that feast, he would poison it for all others, but the Lord knew him, and He allowed the feast to continue. And isn't it remarkable, b&s, that after that incident when one of the sons of the prophets had dealt so deceitfully, that we have a man from Baal-shalisha coming and offering the very principles of the Passover season; and the 'man from Baal-shalisha', do you know what that means? 'Baal' of course, means 'lord' and 'shalisha' means 'three lands', here was a man, the lord of three lands, he was obviously a man, who was not associated with the sons of the prophets. Perhaps even a Gentile, who had come from the lord of three lands, because you know, 'three' you know, in the bible is used to repeatedly for a sense of a multiple. So he became the lord of all lands, he had come from other lands, and he'd come to Elisha. He may not have come literally from other lands, because we have a Shalisha mentioned in the bible, in a rather interesting context, for you see, it was Shalisha were Saul had lost his father's asses. And the first notice we have of David in the scriptures, is a shepherd minding his father's sheep, and the first notice we have of Saul in the scripture is a man who is wandering around looking for asses that he's lost! And both the sheep and the ass are symbols of Israel; and they were lost in three lands!

And out of those three lands a man came to Elisha. In a dearth, b&s, when the sons of the prophets were there with him, when one of them had betrayed him, out of 'the lord of three lands' came a man and he offered unto Elisha, the bread of the firstfruits, which were the right of the priests under the Law of Moses, in token recognition that they were the priests of Yahweh. What was he doing? He was offering to Elisha, bread of the firstfruits, he was acknowledging him virtually as priest of the Most High God, and as representative of God on the earth! and he came from the lord of three lands. He not only offered him that, however, it says he offered him '20 loaves of barley'. We'll leave that to last, because I want to dwell upon it a little, but then he offered him, 'full ears of corn'. Do you know what that word is in the original Hebrew? you wouldn't believe it, he offered him the fruit of Carmel! The word 'full ears' is the Hebrew word for 'Carmel', where Elisha was wont to stay and where Elijah had made such a great name for the God of Israel. And he offered him the fruit of Carmel, and they were green ears, b&s, the word 'corn' here signifies green ears, and it was Passover time because barley had been made into bread, and there were green ears of corn.

It was Passover season, and here's Elisha sitting down there, with the sons of the prophets and a man representing three lands, and he's got all the ingredients of the Passover feast, because you see, barley was in season in the Passover scene when they left Egypt. Do you remember, 'the barley had come to the ear but the wheat had not', Exodus 9 and verse 31, and so it was Passover season. What's barley, b&s? what does it symbolize? No problems here, the Word of God is quite explicit; barley's a humble food, it's coarser than wheat. Solomon used it to feed his horses, Ezekiel ate it as a symbol of Israel's humility, Gideon when he was taught that God would overcome the host of the Midianites with a few men, did so by representing a little barley loaf knocking over all the tents of Midian. And when they offered the Passover lamb, and then three days later they waved the sheaf of the firstfruits, that was barley; and it represented Jesus Christ, the firstfruits of them that slept, the most humble of all men, and yet the most powerful!

And how many loaves did he have? Well, he had 20, you do some mathematics on this problem; he had 20 barley loaves, and there were 100 men, how much did they get? Of each loaf they would have got $\frac{1}{5}$, where have you heard that before? And if ever, b&s, there's a clear principle in the Law, it was the principle of the $\frac{1}{5}$, because the principle of the fifth part under the Law of Moses, was always without exception, the principle of grace! And there were 100 men and there were 20 humble barley loaves, and in the offering of He who was the most humble of all men, as the bread of life, the Passover season, everyone of us gets a fifth part. And where do we come from? three lands where Baal is worshipped, we've come from the lord of three lands, b&s, we've repudiated Baal, haven't we? we are not possessed by anything else but the truth, and having come from all nations, Christadelphians from all nations, we gather together from three lands, and we bring into our midst, that which we have in our house, and in a time of scriptural dearth in this country, in a time of scriptural dearth all over the world, we sit down this morning with the great High Priest of our profession, a greater than Elisha, and we participate with Him in this memorial feast, of barley loaves, the firstfruits of God. Of full ears of Carmel, fruitfulness, b&s, because our feast is fruitful in all spiritual fruit when other people are dying of starvation!

And let us remember the lesson of these two very wonderful people, the lesson of the widow, and when we go away from here this morning, let us determine when we move from this camp, that we're going home and we're going to sit down with our wives and or husbands as the case may be, and we're going to say, 'listen, what have we got in this house? that we can give? And if we find, b&s, that the capabilities which God has endowed us with, are best suited to humble work, then accept it! and you'll find your reward is great at the coming of the Lord. And start filling empty vessels, and if you can't do it with the exposition of the Word, which is not in all of us, you can do it in many other ways! And let us remember as we come to this memorial feast, not only this morning, but on future occasions, that we're from Shalisha the land of three lands, where the asses of Israel are lost, because of Saul's incompetence and because he was not interested, and all Israel was scattered from him, but out of those lands where Israel had been scattered, b&s, we've come together! and we're going to offer up to God, the firstfruits of our labours. We're going to get a $\frac{1}{5}$ part of the barley loaf, and we're going

to heap upon the prince of Carmel, fruitfulness, and Carmel, b&s, a symbol of the fruitfulness of the land, where the latter rains and the early rains first saturated that shaggy mount of Carmel, speaking of the coming of Christ, and as we do these things, let us do so with a great deal of enthusiasm and joy, b&s, for our joy as our bro. chairman said, is indeed full. And let us now, eat that bread and drink that wine, not only remembering the death of the Lord Jesus Christ but His life, and let us translate the terms of that bread and wine, into living principles in our own beings, determined to do that which is right in the sight of God, and to give something, whatever it is, to give it; to give it, in the service of the truth, for His sake!