

וַיָּרָא

Vayyera

(and came)

B'reshit [Genesis] 18:1-22:24

הַפְּטָרָה וַיָּרָא

Haftarah Vayyera

Malakim Bet (2nd Kings) 4:1-37

The Cry of the Widow

Malakim Bet (2nd Kings) 4:1

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead; and you know that your servant did fear YHWH; and the creditor is come to take my two children to be his servants."

This woman who comes to Elisha tells him two things that are significant. First, that she is a widow. Why is this significant?

Shemot (Exodus) 22:22

"You shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child."

YHWH tells us that we are not to afflict any widow or children that do not have a father in the home. This creditor who was distressing the widow was guilty of both.

The second thing that she tells Elisha was that her husband did fear YHWH. She was telling him that her husband had served YHWH with his whole heart, mind and strength; in short, that when he was alive he did shema YHWH.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 27:19

“Cursed be he that distorts the justice due to the sojourner, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, ‘Amen’.”

It seems apparent that this creditor was more interested in getting his money than he was in following Torah and obeying the Voice of YHWH. This man was about to bring a curse down upon himself for taking this woman’s two sons to be his servants in payment of the debt. We can see that what was in his heart was greed, for if he had simply been interested in doing right according to YHWH, he would have only sought one son for payment of the debt, not both of them.

Use of Available Resources

Malakim Bet (2nd Kings) 4:2

And Elisha said to her, “What shall I do for you? Tell me; what have you in the house?” And she said, “Your handmaid has not anything in the house, except a pot of oil.”

Elisha then asks this woman what she had available. The only thing that she had was a jar of olive oil. Please note this next verse.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:20

“When you beat your olive-tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow.”

One of the things that YHWH has provided for in His Torah to Israel is that when it is time to harvest the olives, each tree is only to be gone over one time. Anything left on the tree after that belongs to the sojourner, the fatherless children and to the widow. If a person were to go over the olive tree a second time this would be nothing short of stealing from these to whom the second gleanings actually belong.

YHWH has made provision for us even before we are aware of the need. In this case His provision came from within this woman’s own home. She was not aware of this provision and could not see it because of the distress of losing her sons to this creditor. And the same is true in our lives today; when a person becomes distressed quite often he is focused upon the situation causing the distress, rather than looking to YHWH for His provision in any particular situation. What we need to do then is to quiet our hearts before Him so that we can hear His Voice clearly to know what His instructions are, and thus see His blessings flow into our lives.

Obedience Begets Blessing

Malakim Bet (2nd Kings) 4:3-4

3 Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels abroad of all your neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

4 And you shall go in, and shut the door upon yourself and upon your sons, and pour out into all those vessels; and you shall set aside that which is full."

Elisha then instructs the woman to go and borrow anything and everything that will hold oil. Don't just borrow a few, but borrow as many as you can find. Once you have borrowed all available containers, then go into your house, both you and your sons and shut the door. Then she was instructed to take her pot of oil and pour it into the other containers until all the containers were full.

These are some pretty fantastic instructions. Whatever this woman's thoughts were at the time, we know that she did as instructed. This teaches us that not only did her husband fear YHWH, but he taught his whole household to fear and serve YHWH as well. This woman's obedience to the instructions of Elisha speaks well of not only herself, but especially of her husband who had died.

This brings us to the question directed to us who are husbands and fathers: how well are we doing at instructing our entire household, our wife and children and servants, to fear and serve YHWH our Elohim? If we are not properly instructing our own households, then are we truly serving YHWH with our whole being? It would not seem so.

The Flow of Oil

Malakim Bet (2nd Kings) 4:5-6

5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons; they brought the vessels to her, and she poured out.

6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." And he said to her, "There are no more vessels." And the oil stopped.

As we know from Scripture, oil, particularly olive oil, is often representative of the Ruach Qodesh (Holy Spirit). And so it is here in this passage. Please note that as long as the woman was pouring the oil into other containers, the oil flowed. But as soon as there were no more containers, and thus she stopped pouring, the oil stopped flowing.

And so it is in our own lives: as long as we are pouring our lives into others, His Spirit flows through us. And it is this point that marks a distinct difference between Israel and Babylon. He who dwells in Babylon gets things to spend them upon himself.

Ya'aqov (James) 4:3

You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it in your pleasures.

A person may be able to fool himself, or even at times other people, but he cannot fool YHWH. YHWH knows what your motives are at all times and in all situations. And He uses the word to determine what those motives are in the depths of our heart.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 4:12

For the word of YHWH is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Why has YHWH made available His Spirit to His people? It is not for our own pleasures, but rather for us to build up one another.

Ephesians 4:11-12

11 And He gave some as apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministering, for the building up of the body of Mashiach.

It is His Spirit who works in us and through us that we might all attain to the unity of the faith, being properly fitted together according to His will and design. His Spirit was not given to us to elevate an individual, for we are all brothers and we are to serve one another in the love of Mashiach, even laying down our lives that others might be perfected in the love and brotherhood of Israel.

Living According to One's Means

Malakim Bet (2nd Kings) 4:7

Then she came and told the man of Elohim. And he said, "Go, sell the oil, and pay your debt, and live you and your sons off of the rest."

Elisha then instructed this woman to go and sell all the oil and pay off the debt. With the money that was left over, she and her sons would then have enough to live on until her sons were old enough to earn wages for themselves and their mother to live on.

One thing that we need to understand is the purpose for which we work to earn wages. Why do you earn wages? Why should you earn wages? One is to provide for his own household, for he who does not is worse than an unbeliever.

1st Timothy 5:8

But if any man provides not for his own, and specially his own household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

But we are not only to provide for our own household, but we are also to provide for His household which is hinted at in the words “provides not for his own” as being different from his own household. We also see this in the passage below.

Ephesians 4:28

Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have something to give to him that has need.

A person may be employed by a man, but that is not who he is working for if he is a talmid of Yeshua our Mashiach. He is working for the Master. As such, we should give Him our best effort in everything that we do. Furthermore, the paycheck that we receive is not from that man even though he may be the one who signed that check, but rather our pay is from our heavenly Father.

Ya'aqov (James) 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

It is YHWH that blesses us with a paycheck. Do not forget to thank Him each time, for it is from His hand that all blessings flow to us. Receive them with the proper thankfulness to Him and He will bless you beyond anything that you can imagine.

Luqa (Luke) 6:37-38

37 “And judge not, and you shall not be judged; and condemn not, and you shall not be condemned; release, and you shall be released;

38 give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure you measure with shall be measured to you again.”

May each of us learn to live with great compassion, understanding and righteousness towards all men because of our love and devotion to our heavenly Father, YHWH our Elohim!

ABBA YHWH, we love You with our whole being, so teach us to also love our neighbor as we do ourselves that we may truly be a part of Israel; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

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