

THE IRON MADE TO SWIM

BIBLE TEXT : II Kings 6:1-7.

LESSON 314 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: : "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works" (Revelation 2:5).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Kings 6:1-7

¹ And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.

² 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.

³ And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.

⁴ So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.

⁵ But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Therefore said he, Take *it* up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

The School of the Prophets

The Prophet Elisha gave all his time to the service of God. We are told that one of his occupations was that of headmaster of a school of prophets. Young men who wanted to know more about God and the religion He had given to the Israelites attended the school.

Elisha was the right man for this position, for he had the power of God upon his life. He could teach the young men how to live for God and how to tell others about the true religion. Elisha served God in such a manner that God heard and answered his prayers.

Moving Day

One day the young prophets decided that they wanted to move to a place where they would have more room. Elisha told them to go ahead; but they did not want to leave him. Elisha had prayed for them when they were in trouble. No doubt he had been an inspiration to them by his life; and through the power of God upon him, he had provided food for them when there was nothing to eat. They needed him with them for both spiritual and physical help.

Elisha was willing to go, and the day came when all the men in the school packed up their belongings and moved to the banks of the Jordan River. There was no building for them to move into, so everyone had to go right to work cutting down trees and preparing lumber for their school and home.

The Lost Axe head

One young man started energetically to chop down a tree, and off flew his axe head, down, down into the Jordan River, and he must have known it was loose. It could not have come off if it had been on tight, but he had not fixed it when he could, so now it was gone. What could he do with only a handle? The worst of it was that the axe had been borrowed. Poor man! He was really in trouble, but he knew where to go for help.

How relieved the young man must have been that Elisha had come along! He ran to the Prophet to tell him his tale of woe. He admitted that he had lost the axe head, and that he needed help.

What if the prophets had not asked Elisha to go along? The young prophets might not have had enough faith to get help from God. Do you ever think how helpless you would feel if you had deliberately gone away from God's people and had become very ill or had some other trouble, and there was no one near you to help you pray?

Forsaking the House of God

Some people serve God faithfully at His house for a time, and accept His blessings. But after a while they become used to the good things God has given them, and take them for granted. They forget that all these good things come from God, and that they should appreciate them by giving service back to God. They may move away from Christian people for some unimportant

QUESTIONS

1. What position did Elisha hold in the school of the prophets?
2. What did the students want to do?
3. Where did Elisha go?
4. What happened while the students were building?
5. What did the unhappy young prophet do when in trouble?
6. How did Elisha help him?
7. What is our business for the Lord in this world?
8. What do we need in order to work for the Lord?
9. How can we strengthen and encourage one another in the faith?
10. What can a backslider do again to receive God's favour?

reason such as a better job where they can earn more money.

What happens then when they get into trouble? There is no one near to pray for them. Perhaps their trouble will cost them more than they gain by the new position. And by not having any Christian people with whom to enjoy fellowship and to talk with about the things of the Lord, they may have let the love of God slip from their lives.

The Bible tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is (Hebrews 10:25). We gain strength and courage by meeting with other Christian people, and by praying and worshiping together.

Help in Trouble

When the poor student who had lost his axe head told Elisha what had happened, Elisha was ready to help him right away. He asked, "Where fell it?" When he was shown the place, he cut a stick, threw it into the water where the axe head had fallen, and the iron came to the surface.

That iron could never have floated except through the power of God; but God will do the impossible for His children who trust Him. All nature is subject to God and will obey His commands.

The word does not tell us that Elisha prayed at this time, but we have learned that he tarried with Elijah until he was taken into Heaven so that he might have a double portion of Elijah's power. He had received what he wanted, and that power was from God. He kept in close communication with God at all times. It was through that power that he worked miracles.

The Mercy of God

This incident shows the mercy of God to those who will call upon Him when in trouble. It may be that a person has once loved the Lord, but has backslidden. He may continue to go through the motions of serving God, just as this woodman might have gone on waving his axe handle. But we know that hitting the tree with the stick would never have chopped it down. Neither will our work for the Lord accomplish anything if we do not have the Spirit of God in our lives. Jesus said: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). We need the Lord with us to work through us when we serve Him.

But there still is hope for the person who has lost the Spirit of God. First he must admit his loss, rather than try to cover it up or excuse it. Then if he will ask the Lord for mercy and forgiveness, he will have the love of God restored to him. The woodsman was quick to admit that he had lost his axe head, and he was certainly sorry that it was gone, for alas! It was borrowed.

Anything we get from the Lord is lent to us. All the blessings He has given us we hold in trust. We are stewards to take care of the Lord's business in this world. How much we should appreciate what God has bestowed upon us, and how carefully we should handle it! And if anything should happen that we lose it, quickly and earnestly we should ask God to forgive us and to again give us His favour.