

Three Miracles

As mentioned in our previous session, Elijah plays a prominent role in the Old Testament. He appears during Jesus' transfiguration together with Moses, symbolising the Law and the Prophets. However, he did not have an elaborate introduction in 1 Kings. The author only takes one verse to introduce him, before immediately starts talking about his ministry. This is important as it goes to show that it is not Elijah himself that's important, but rather it is Yhwh himself who was working through Elijah.

In this chapter, we see Yhwh working three miracles in the life of Elijah. Yet, these three miracles testify to Yhwh's greatness and not to Elijah's greatness. Oftentimes, mankind is tempted to elevate the person, but in our chapter today, it is obvious that only Yhwh is deserving of all glory and praise. Miracles are never an end in of themselves, but rather they serve to point mankind to the one who does them – Yhwh. Let's have a look at the chapter.

Launch

- 1) What are some common reactions that you have read/seen with regards to miracles?

THREE MIRACLES

Read 1 Kings 17:1-24

- 2) What do we know about Elijah from verse 1 and what did he announce?
 - a. Who is Ahab and what is he like? (cf. 1 Kings 16:29-34)
 - b. How do you think Ahab would have responded to Elijah's pronouncement?
- 3) What is the first miracle that happened to Elijah? (v2-6)
 - a. What does this show about Yhwh?
- 4) What does Yhwh ask Elijah to do once the brook dried up? (v7-9)
- 5) What is the second miracle that happened to Elijah? (v10-16)
 - a. What does this show about Yhwh?

- 6) What is the third miracle that happened to Elijah? (v17-23)
 - a. What does this show about what Yhwh can do?

- 7) What is the response of the woman after these two miracles in her home? (v24)
 - a. How does she know to praise and acknowledge Yhwh for these miracles instead of Elijah? (v14, 20-21)

 - b. With that in mind, what do you think are the purposes of these miracles?

- 8) Who else do you know in the New Testament that performed miracles similar to the ones in this passage? (cf. Matt 14:13-21, John 11:38-44)
 - a. What do you think is the purpose of these miracles? (cf. Matt 14:32-33, Mark 2:8-12)

- 9) How should we treat claims of miracles today? (cf. Heb 2:1-4)

Conclusion

Miracles in the Bible are always pointing to God. They are never an end in of themselves. The miracles that we read in 1 Kings 17 shows us that Yhwh is a God who provides, and a God who has authority over life and death. Elijah doesn't draw attention to himself, nor did he need a large elaborate meeting to perform his miracles. There was no fanfare. The miracles were just done matter-of-factly, because it is Yhwh himself who directed him. At the end of the chapter, we see that the widow at the house recognises that he is a man of God, and that he *speaks* the word of Yhwh. The miracles prepared the way for the widow to accept Elijah's word, which was from Yhwh himself.

It is the same with Jesus. He performed miracles, but these miracles are always pointing to who he is, and importantly, pointing to his message of salvation. There is much debate today whether God still works miracles today. Whichever side of the debate you take, the most important point is that people are pointed to the message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ. There should not be any elaborate fanfare/meeting surrounding the miracles, because it is all about Jesus Christ. Any elevation of the person who performs the miracles minimises the attention that should have been paid to Jesus Christ. As John the Baptist said, "he must become greater; I must become less." (cf. John 3:30)