

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 18.3, 2 Kings 3-4, Part 3 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 18.3, 2 Kings 3-4, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture explores the miracles of Elisha in 2 Kings, drawing parallels with Elijah's ministry to emphasize God's consistent care and provision. He highlights stories of miraculous oil, purified stew, and multiplied food as evidence of God's grace towards the marginalized, such as widows and the hungry. **Oswalt argues these miracles demonstrate God's ability to overcome earthly limitations and provide abundantly for those in need, contrasting Yahweh's power with that of Baal.** He connects these Old Testament narratives to New Testament themes, suggesting that while material blessings are present, spiritual abundance is the ultimate goal. **The lecture underscores the importance of faith and willingness to offer what little one has to God, trusting in His power to multiply and provide.** Ultimately, Oswalt encourages listeners to seek spiritual richness and become instruments of God's peace and hope.

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 18.3 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).



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on18_3.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 18.3, 2 Kings 3-4, Part 3

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 2 Kings 3-4, Part 3:

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 2 Kings 3-4

Source: Excerpts from "Oswalt_Kings_EN_Session18_3.pdf" (Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 18, Part 3)

Overall Theme: The lecture focuses on the narratives within 2 Kings 3-4, particularly the miracles performed by Elisha, and uses them to illustrate God's character as a gracious provider, especially for the marginalized. It also emphasizes the continuity of God's work through Elijah and Elisha, and ultimately connects these Old Testament themes to New Testament concepts of spiritual abundance.

Key Ideas & Supporting Quotes:

1. Elisha's Miracles as Reinforcement of God's Character & Continuity with Elijah:

- Oswalt argues that the placement of the miracles in 2 Kings 4 (the widow's oil and the Shunammite woman's son) is intentional. He suggests the story of the oil may have been placed before the resurrection of the son to "reinforce in our minds, the ministry of Elisha and the ministry of Elijah are part of a single whole."
- He refutes the idea that these miracles are simply duplicated stories attributed to different prophets. "The data here is different enough that if somebody or if simply the tales were told as is often suggested, I think it's difficult to explain how the details get this much different."
- The miracles highlight that "God is at work here from Elijah through Elisha, and it's one ministry."

1. God's Provision for the Marginalized:

- A major theme is God's special concern for the vulnerable, specifically widows, orphans, and immigrants. "Who are God's favorites? People whom society looks upon as throwaways...widows, orphans, and immigrants are looked upon with special favor in the Bible precisely because they are helpless."
- The story of the widow and her oil is presented as a prime example: "...their status in life is not determined by their wealth; it's not determined by their ability

to contribute; it is determined by the fact that they're my beloved sons and daughters."

- God uses what little the widow has – "a little olive oil" – to demonstrate his power and provision.

1. **God Uses What We Have, No Matter How Little It Seems:**

- The miracle of the multiplying oil is used to illustrate that God can expand and use whatever we offer Him, regardless of how insignificant it seems. "What do you have, and how much are you willing to have that expanded? How much are you willing for God to have that used?"
- The lecturer encourages listeners to be willing to give God their "all," quoting E. Stanley Jones: "in return for your all, give you his all."

1. **God as the Gracious Provider (Especially During Famine):**

- The stories of the poisoned stew and the feeding of the hundred men with twenty loaves are presented as demonstrations of God's ability to provide even in the face of scarcity and disaster (famine). "In all three cases, God is providing for persons in need. The point is being made again and again, God is the gracious provider, not Baal. Baal cannot do these kinds of things, but Yahweh can."
- The incident with the poisoned stew illustrates that God's presence can defuse evil: "Can you go into situations where evil is prevailing? And with the presence of your flour, your leaven, your whatever it is, somehow defuse that situation? Somehow defang it?"

1. **Old Testament Blessings Point to Spiritual Abundance:**

- Oswalt contrasts Old Testament conceptions of blessing (primarily physical and material) with the New Testament emphasis on spiritual abundance. He cautions against equating earthly wealth with God's favor: "Well, if you're serving God, you're going to be rich, you're going to be healthy, you're going to be comfortable. And if you're not rich and healthy and comfortable, then obviously there's something wrong in your devotion. May I say it reverently? Hogwash."
- He argues that the ultimate goal is spiritual richness: "It is spiritual abundance that he wants to give us...He wants to make you and me abundant...free to give away the abundance that he pours onto us and thus feed the nations."

- He clarifies he is not saying the Old Testament has *nothing* to do with spiritual blessing, but that spiritual blessing will allow someone to appreciate whatever earthly blessings God provides in a deeper way. "If the Lord blesses you spiritually, you will be able to rejoice in whatever physical or material goods he gives you in ways that the rich worldling never can."

1. **God Cares, is Able, and Provides Abundantly:**

- The lecture concludes with the assertion that these miracles teach us about God's nature: "These miracles then teach us God cares. He cares about our needs. He cares about us. They teach us that he is able. He is able to defeat evil at every turn. They teach us that he's the God of abundance, who wants to give over and above what we ask and what we need."

Important Quotes Highlighting the Lecturer's Passion:

- "That's our God. That's our God. He loves to work in abundance."
- "I want to be a man of God. I want to be a man who belongs to God. How about you? Do you want to be a woman of God? You want to be a man of God? Don't be double-minded."

In Conclusion:

Dr. Oswalt uses the miracle stories of Elisha to illustrate God's providential care, especially for those on the margins of society. He emphasizes the importance of offering what we have to God and trusting that He can use it in powerful ways. Ultimately, he connects these Old Testament narratives to the New Testament emphasis on spiritual abundance, urging listeners to seek spiritual richness and be channels of God's blessing to others.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 18.3, 2 Kings 3-4, Part 3

A Study Guide to Oswalt on 2 Kings 3-4

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Oswalt, what is the primary reason the stories of the widow's oil and the Shunammite woman's son are placed together in 2 Kings 4?
2. What is Oswalt's response to the claim that the miracles of Elijah and Elisha are simply doubled versions of the same story?
3. What groups of people does Oswalt identify as being viewed with "special favor" in the Bible, and why?
4. In the story of the widow's oil, what does Oswalt emphasize as a crucial element for experiencing God's miraculous provision?
5. In the story of the poisonous stew, what does Oswalt suggest is symbolized by the flour that Elisha adds to the pot?
6. What New Testament event does Oswalt use as a comparison to the feeding of the hundred men with twenty loaves of bread?
7. According to Oswalt, what kind of blessing is often emphasized in the Old Testament?
8. How does Oswalt refute the notion that serving God guarantees material wealth and comfort?
9. What does Oswalt claim is God's primary concern in blessing people?
10. According to Oswalt, what is the source of the joy that comes with spiritual blessing?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Oswalt argues that these stories are intentionally placed together to emphasize that the ministries of Elijah and Elisha are part of a single, unified work of God. By presenting the stories in this order, the author reinforces the idea that God is at work through both prophets.

2. Oswalt dismisses the idea that the stories are simply doubled versions, pointing out that the differences in details between the stories make it unlikely they originated from a single, altered narrative. He believes the differences emphasize that the ministries of Elijah and Elisha have unique facets.
3. Oswalt states that widows, orphans, and immigrants are viewed with special favor. This is because they are helpless and vulnerable, and God demonstrates particular care for those whom society often overlooks.
4. Oswalt stresses the importance of offering what you already possess to God and being open to having it expanded beyond what seems possible. The widow's small amount of oil represents a willingness to let God use what she has, leading to miraculous provision.
5. Oswalt suggests that the flour represents the presence of God and the ability to defuse or transform evil situations. It symbolizes how believers, filled with God's presence, can bring peace and hope into difficult circumstances.
6. Oswalt compares the feeding of the hundred men to the feeding of the 4,000 in Mark 8, highlighting the common theme of God providing abundantly, even with limited resources. This highlights the themes of faith, abundance, and God's provision for those in need.
7. Oswalt notes that blessing in the Old Testament is often primarily understood in physical and material terms, such as wealth, health, and comfort. He acknowledges the physical blessing while also stating that spiritual blessings should be more highly sought.
8. Oswalt refutes this idea by calling it "hogwash," asserting that while God cares about our physical needs, material wealth is not a guaranteed result of serving Him. He emphasizes that spiritual abundance is far more important.
9. Oswalt claims that God is primarily concerned with giving us spiritual abundance. He wants to make us overflowing so that we are free to share with others.
10. Oswalt states that this joy is solely dependent upon what God has done in our souls, not on external circumstances or material possessions. This is an internal joy that is tied to a right relationship with God.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the miracle stories in 2 Kings 3-4 in relation to the themes of God's provision and care for the marginalized. How do these stories challenge societal values and expectations?
2. Compare and contrast the ministries of Elijah and Elisha as portrayed in the text. What are the similarities and differences in their approaches, and what do these differences reveal about God's multifaceted work?
3. Analyze Oswalt's argument that the Old Testament focus on physical blessings should be understood in light of the New Testament emphasis on spiritual abundance. How does this perspective impact our understanding of prosperity and well-being?
4. Explore the concept of "abundance" as presented by Oswalt. How does he define abundance, and how does it relate to the believer's relationship with God and the world?
5. Examine the role of faith and obedience in the miracle stories of 2 Kings 3-4. How do the characters' actions demonstrate their trust in God, and what can we learn from their examples?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Elijah:** A major prophet in the Old Testament known for his powerful displays of God's power and opposition to Baal worship.
- **Elisha:** Elijah's successor, another significant prophet who performed many miracles and continued Elijah's ministry.
- **Baal:** A Canaanite deity associated with fertility, rain, and prosperity. The Israelites often turned to Baal worship, which the prophets opposed.
- **Widow:** A woman whose husband has died and who, in ancient Israelite society, often faced economic and social vulnerability.
- **Orphan:** A child who has lost one or both parents and who, like widows, was considered a vulnerable member of society.
- **Immigrant:** A person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country.
- **Abundance:** A state of overflowing provision, both materially and spiritually, that comes from God's grace and generosity.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 18.3, 2 Kings 3-4, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Elisha and God's Provision

- **Why are the stories of the widow's oil (2 Kings 4:1-7) and the Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4:8-37) presented in this order?**
- The story of the miraculous provision of oil for the widow is placed before the resurrection of the Shunammite woman's son to reinforce that the ministries of Elisha and Elijah are part of a unified work of God. The positioning highlights that what God does through one prophet, He can also do through another, albeit in different ways and settings, showcasing the continuity of God's activity.
- **Why does the speaker dismiss the idea that the miracle stories of Elijah and Elisha are simply embellished versions of the same event?**
- The details within the stories are significantly different. If the stories were simply doubled and developed from a single source, one would expect a higher degree of similarity between them. The distinct characteristics of each narrative suggest separate, authentic occurrences.
- **What do the stories of miraculous provision, such as the widow's oil and the feeding of the prophets, reveal about God's character?**
- These stories repeatedly emphasize that God is a gracious provider, particularly for those in need and those whom society overlooks, such as widows and the poor. This challenges the worship of gods like Baal, which the text suggests, cannot provide in the same way. God sees these individuals as valuable and worthy of His care, regardless of their social status or perceived contribution.
- **What significance does the use of existing resources (like the little oil the widow had) play in Elisha's miracles?**
- In many of the miracles, Elisha utilizes what little the person already possesses. This detail adds a layer of realism to the stories, suggesting real events rather than mere legends. It also illustrates that God can work through seemingly insignificant means, transforming them into abundance.

- **How does the story of the poisonous stew being made edible relate to a Christian's life?**
- The story illustrates how those who follow God can enter situations where evil is present and, through the presence of God within them, defuse the negativity and bring peace and hope. It encourages the believer to rely on God's power to transform challenging circumstances.
- **How does the feeding of the hundred men with twenty loaves connect to similar events in the Gospels?**
- This miracle is reminiscent of instances in the Gospels, such as the feeding of the 4,000. Both stories emphasize God's ability to provide abundantly, even when resources seem insufficient, highlighting His nature as a God who exceeds expectations.
- **What distinction is made between Old Testament and New Testament blessings, and why is it important?**
- While the Old Testament often focuses on physical and material blessings, the New Testament emphasizes spiritual abundance. It's crucial not to base theology solely on the Old Testament, assuming that serving God guarantees wealth and comfort. God is concerned with our temporal needs but is primarily focused on spiritual growth and blessing.
- **What is the key takeaway regarding our attitude and God's provision, based on the reference to Psalm 23?**
- The key takeaway is that true fulfillment comes not from constantly craving more but from trusting in God as our shepherd. When we adopt an attitude of dependence on God, we discover that He provides abundantly because He cares for us deeply, filling us spiritually, no matter our physical circumstances.