

LOST AN AXE HEAD?

By Carl McMurray

In 2 Kings 6 there is an interesting account that I have wondered about. It appears that during the days of Elisha the prophets there arose an institution referred to as the “sons of the prophets” or “school of the prophets.” Without getting bogged down in speculation it appeared at least to be a group of men under the supervision of Elisha.

On the occasion in this text one of the men accidentally flings the head off his axe into the Jordan River, near where he was working. It is easy to see his concern as the axe head flies off into the muddy, perhaps quickly flowing river, when he cries out to Elisha that, “It was borrowed.” Elisha promptly performs a miracle and restores the axe head to the worker. My question is “why?” Why use the power of God to defy natural laws for this mundane lost item? Why is this occasion recorded for all time here in God’s word? I believe God’s word has a purpose; my question is what is the purpose here?

I might have a suggestion. I admit it’s just a surmising and may be absolutely wrong, but it harmonizes with other things I see in the Scriptures. I’m wondering if this account has been preserved for us, in all its commonality and plain everydayness because the message is...God cares. He doesn’t just care about us when we’re on the pew without head bowed or listening to the preacher. He cares about us every single day. He doesn’t just care when we’re in a Bible study or talking to a friend about the gospel. He cares when we’re working at our desks, or chopping wood with an axe. He cares when we’ve got a geography test the next day or when our job is on the line for downsizing.

This appears to coincide with what Jesus was saying in Matthew 7 about how a loving Father is with His children. When a father is asked for bread, he doesn’t give a stone. When he is asked for fish, he doesn’t give a serpent. A loving father is interested in the interests of his children. Whatever they are caught up in, he also is interested in.

I believe our Heavenly Father is interested in His children like this. He is interested when you are concerned or consumed over the affairs of this life. He loves you when you fall, just as he does when He sees you take your first spiritual steps or sprint toward some spiritual goal post. The occasion of Elisha using the power of God to restore an axe head may just be there to remind us that our Father does not just care when 3,000 ask to be baptized into Christ. He also cares when we lose our axe head and desires for it to be restored. THIS axe head is a reminder of a Father’s love.