



BETHEL CHURCH
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE

A STUDY ON THE LIFE OF
ELISHA



INTRODUCTION

As the dust of the miraculous whirlwind settled, and the chariot of fire bearing Elijah disappeared, Elisha picked up not only Elijah's mantle, but also his position as the prophet of Yahweh. The meaning of the name Elisha is "*God saves*".

A study of Elisha's life reveals the prophet's humility (2 Kings 2:9; 3:11), his obvious love for the people of Israel (2 Kings 8:11—12), and his ardent faithfulness in ministry. Elisha was obedient to God's call and devotedly followed Elijah. He clearly believed in the call of God, which cleared the path for God to work powerfully in and through his life.

With Elisha, there were no stupendous, dramatic scenes, no outstanding achievements, no exhibitions of the grandeur of the soul, and no fresh revelations. As a secondary character, he carried on what Elijah began, without the spectacular dimensions of Elijah's ministry. The same Spirit that was on Elijah was upon Elisha, but his gifts were different. The life of Elisha is, therefore, an encouraging reminder that we need not create headlines to be effective for God.

Jesus spoke of Elisha in Luke 4:27 when the people rejected Him in Nazareth. He said, "*No prophet is accepted in his hometown*" (Luke 4:24). In context to being rejected by his own people, Jesus stated that there were many lepers in Israel in Elisha's time, yet only Naaman, a Syrian, was cured.

THE BIG LESSON FROM THE LIFE OF ELISHA

The courageous compliance to God's call

When the mantle fell on Elisha as he ploughed his farm, he knew that assuming the prophetic office was no bed of roses. But he was determined to follow in the footsteps of Elijah and take on God's assignment for his life. For several years Elisha followed Elijah as an apprentice. Elisha had no idea about what was to come, but he was ready to face any challenge. There was no turning back for him. He courageously followed the call of God and went on to become a prophet to the nation. This is a challenge for every follower of Christ, *'are you willing to trust and follow God, even when you don't have all the details?'*

The difference maker

Though Elijah and Elisha were in close proximity for an extended period of time, Elijah was called the *"prophet of judgment"*, while Elisha was known as the *"prophet of grace"*. He ministered among unnamed commoners and his miracles were mostly private, unlike Elijah's mountaintop experiences. Elisha lived with tenacity to the call of God. At the same time, he was sensitive to where God had placed him. He lived amongst the people and did not isolate himself as Elijah did. He even became a counsellor to three kings and proved his worth to the point where the kings called him their father and strength of Israel. God's anointing on Elisha was to serve humanity without any self-promotion, which

was evident in the various miracles he performed such as providing food for the widow, purifying the water source, feeding hundreds, healing people, and so on. *Just like Jesus who went about doing good, Elisha was a doer of good works.*

A prayer warrior

Elisha was a bold prayer warrior who would ask God for anything no matter how hard. If Elisha had compared himself with Elijah, or listened to those who did so, he could have concluded that he was unsuited for his role. But thankfully Elisha was in a conversational relationship with God who called him. Therefore, he had no confusion about his identity or the purposes that God wanted him to fulfil.

A figure of Christ

Out of all the Christ-types in the Old Testament, Elisha is one of the most obvious if not the most obvious one. His ministry closely resembles the ministry of Christ. While Elijah was similar to John the Baptist – the prophet of Judgment, Elisha was like Christ – the messenger of Grace. The miracles that Elisha performed were not great outward miracles like Elijah, but his miracles offered grace to ordinary people. Though we draw a comparison between Jesus and Elisha, the power of Jesus' ministry surpasses the greatness of both Elijah and Elisha.

THE CALL OF ELISHA

Elisha was from a wealthy family, evidenced by the passage that talks about his servants behind twelve pair of oxen that pulled ploughs in a tier formation across the field. The casting of the mantle by Elijah on this young farmer was his ceremonial way of drafting him for his God-appointed prophetic task. Elisha obviously knew what it meant because *“He left the oxen and ran after Elijah”* (1 Kings 19:20). He symbolically put his former life behind him by sacrificing his oxen and burning them in a fire fuelled by the wooden plough.

Despite being warned to remain behind, Elisha refused to leave Elijah before the latter was ushered into heaven. Needless to say, Elisha spent almost every waking hour with Elijah. When it was time, Elijah asked what he could do for his protégé before he left this world. Elisha requested a **double portion of Elijah’s spirit**. This was not a greedy request, but one that indicated Elisha’s desire to be considered as Elijah’s son. Elijah told Elisha that if he saw him when he was taken into heaven, the double portion would be Elisha’s. Elisha did, indeed, see the chariot of fire and horses of fire that separated the men, and he saw Elijah taken up into heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha picked up Elijah’s cloak and walked to the Jordan River. He struck the water with the cloak, and it divided, just as it had done for Elijah. The other prophets who witnessed this recognized

Elijah's spirit now rested on Elisha. As God had decreed, Elisha would now be His prophet to the people (2 Kings 2:1–18).

The parting of Jordan brings back memories of Moses and Joshua, another story of prophetic succession. Moses parted the Red Sea, while Joshua parted the River Jordan. In this context, Elijah symbolizes Moses, and Elisha (God saves) proved himself to be the new Joshua (the Lord saves).

THE DAWN OF ELISHA'S MINISTRY – HEALING WATERS & CURSING MOCKERS

Healing Waters (2 Kings 2:19-22)

2 Kings 2:22:- *“And the water has remained pure to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.”*

As the waters of Jordan parted under Elisha's stroke, we see that the God of Elijah was indeed with Elisha. Elisha proved to himself and the fifty prophets who were watching that he was Elijah's successor (2 Kings 2:15).

The inauguration of Elisha's ministry is narrated in a couple of brief episodes that show two different sides to his prophetic power and authority. One is positive and life-giving, while the other is negative and death-dealing.

The first incident happened in Jericho. The rebuilding of the city occurred under the shadow of Joshua's ancient curse (Joshua 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34). Perhaps as a consequence,

the water caused barrenness in the land and infertility in women (2:19). Years later, Elisha – the new Joshua – crossed the miraculously parted Jordan and neutralised the first Joshua’s curse with a blessing.

Calling for a new bowl filled with salt, Elisha went to the source of the spring and ceremonially poured the salt into the water. The spring was miraculously purified.



The purification was not a result of some natural chemical reaction triggered by the salt. Rather, the salt, representing preservation from corruption, was used by Elisha as a symbol of divine cleansing. Please note that this was not a magical salt cure; rather the Lord’s doing: “Thus says the LORD: *‘I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness’* (2:21). The writer of 2 Kings added in **verse 22**: “*So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke*”

Reading this account, one can hardly resist the impulse to relate it allegorically to the moral situation in our own cities. Many of the wells of human thought, action, and influence today are polluted. The world offers superficial solutions to the problem – nothing more than sweeteners or perfumes that cover the underlying reality. The only solution to such moral pollution is to address the problem at the source. Humanity’s sinful condition must be dealt with first.

Elisha purified the springs of Jericho with salt. Jesus called us the salt of the Earth. Our lives must influence the lost to seek Jesus, the only Saviour. He alone can save sinners, stop the decay, and “*heal the springs*” at the source to transform this crooked and perverse generation.

Cursing Mockers (2 Kings 2:23-25)

The second incident took place in Bethel. A few young boys made fun of Elisha’s baldness: “Go up (*perhaps referring to Elijah’s translation into heaven*), you bald-head! Go up, you baldhead!” (v. 23). Elisha cursed their mockery and two female bears come out from the jungle to attack them.

Since forty-two of the boys were struck by the bears, the group must have been quite large and therefore dangerously out of control. Elisha may have needed miraculous intervention to escape. The ultimate outcome of the miracle was to break up the gang, frighten the offenders, and punish them not so much for insulting Elisha but mocking the prophet and hence despising God.



THE ACCOUNTS OF ELISHA'S MIRACLES

2 Kings 4:1–6:7 accounts for Elisha's first batch of miracles that were performed for individuals in need. The second batch comprises miracles that are more political and national in purpose

The first set of miracles:

- *Elisha and the Widow's Oil (4:1-7)*
- *Elisha and the Shunammite's son (4:8—37)*
- *Elisha and the Miraculous Food (4:38—44)*
- *Elisha and the Leper Naaman (5:1-27)*
- *Elisha and the Floating Axe Head (6:1-7)*

These sections in 2 Kings highlight the differences between Elisha and Elijah.

The second set of miracles:

- *Elisha blinds the Syrian army (6:8-23)*
- *Elisha delivers Samaria from the enemies (7:1-20)*
- *Elisha appoints Hazael over Syria (8:13)*
- *Elisha anoints Jehu over Israel (9:3)*

Elijah was the prophet of the desert. He would appear suddenly from the lonely wilderness when a religious or political crisis developed. Then, when the problems were resolved, he would dramatically disappear into a remote dwelling place.

Elisha, on the contrary, was more social. He felt at home with the daily experiences of common folks. His miracles were less spectacular than Elijah's but more humane, characterized by small acts of kindness, courtesy, and individual consideration of ordinary persons. This

characterized by small acts of kindness, courtesy, and individual consideration of ordinary persons. This compassion displayed through his miracles gave greater charm and appeal to his personality. To that extent, Elisha was more like Jesus who “*went about doing good.*”

ELISHA AND THE WIDOW’S OIL (2 KINGS 4:1-7)

2 Kings 4:4:- *“Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.”*

The first miracle, reminiscent of Elijah’s miracle in **1 Kings 17:16**, provided help for a prophet’s family. The poor widow, whose husband was a young prophet in the school of prophecy, was in deep debt and in danger of being sold into slavery with her children. Elisha performed a miracle where her little jar of oil multiplied until there were no more jars left to be filled. She was to sell the oil and use the money to repay their debts.

The multiplication of oil was directly proportional to the empty vessels that she gathered. Our God keeps giving Himself to us as long as we bring to Him that into which He can pour Himself. When we stop bringing, He stops giving. Of course, God can give many things whether we want them or not, but His best gift can only be given if we desire it. That gift is Himself, His saving presence within us. “*You do not have because you do not ask*” (**James 4:2**).

Feeble wishing for things is one thing, but the intense, steadfast desire of faith is quite another. Wish for anything else and you may or may not get it, but come to God with empty vessels of expectant faith, earnestly desiring His gifts, and He will fill them.

ELISHA AND THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON (2 KINGS 4:8—37)

2 Kings 4:32-35:- *“When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch.... He prayed...The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.”*

This second miracle is very similar to the one in **1 Kings 17:17** where Elijah raises the son of the widow of Zarephath. Both accounts present striking similarities - a prominent woman provides hospitality for the prophet, her son dies, he is brought to an upper room and placed on the bed, the prophet lies prostrate on the dead body, and the boy is miraculously brought back to life.

The passage reveals much about the character of Elisha. We can see his gentleness and concern for human suffering. Approachable as always, when Elisha recognized her from a distance, he took the initiative and reached out to her (v. 25). With admirable empathy, he sensed her problem without the need for her to state it. She was angry and bitter, but Elisha did not rebuke her. She even accused him and God of deceit. They had given her a son and then, suddenly and unpredictably, taken him away. *“Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, ‘Do not deceive me?’”* (v. 28).

But instead of rebuking her, Elisha wisely discerned the death of the child and readily admitted his limitations. He was surprised by the sad turn of events and confessed, “*The LORD has hidden it from me, and has not told me*” (v. 27). We need to copy the modesty of Elisha and say about a great many things, “*The Lord has hidden it from me.*” How much better it would be for the church today if more of its leaders were willing to copy Elisha’s modesty and admit their limited knowledge.

800 years later, Jesus visited the city of Nain, which is the New Testament city of Shunem. It was the very same city where Elisha had been, and there’s no doubt the people still remembered the Shunammite woman’s son who was miraculously brought back from the dead. As Jesus entered the city, it so happened that He walked right into a funeral procession where a young man was being carried out of the city for burial. As in Elisha’s story, this young man was the only son of a widow. Luke’s gospel tells us that Jesus, having compassion, raised her son and handed him back to her.



ELISHA AND THE MIRACULOUS FOOD (2 KINGS 4:38—44)

In this passage, two culinary miracles of Elisha are grouped together. The first describes how Elisha purified a poisonous cauldron of stew for a school of young prophets and the second talks about how he fed one hundred men in the city during the famine with twenty loaves of barley bread.

Though God did marvellous works through Elisha, it was just a preview of the much greater work God would do in and through the true bread from heaven, Jesus Christ. Notice that here in 2 Kings it was 20 loaves for about 100 people. In the ministry of Jesus, it was 5 loaves for 5,000 people! In 2 Kings there was some left over, but in the ministry of Jesus they filled 12 big baskets with the leftovers (John 6:13). Jesus is greater than all the Old Testament men and women of faith, and He is the One to whom they all pointed. John 6:35 says, *“I am the bread of life,”* Jesus told them. *“No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty again.”*

ELISHA AND THE LEPER NAAMAN (2 KINGS 5:1-27)

2 Kings 5:14:- *“So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.”*

Naaman, whose name means “*pleasant*,” is described as the commander of the army of Syria, great, honourable, victorious, mighty, and valorous. But he was a leper. His help came from an unexpected source, a servant girl who worked in his house. She was an Israelite who knew that Elisha could cure her master (5:3). Naaman came to meet Elisha at his doorstep. But Elisha refrained from contacting Naaman directly and sent word through his messenger to dip himself in the river Jordan seven times. Naaman couldn’t comprehend how healing would happen without the presence of the prophet. But he obeyed anyway and was healed of leprosy. Elisha wanted to drive home a new lesson that it is God who saves and not the prophet. The result of that is seen in the words of Naaman: “*Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel*” (5:15).



An elated Naaman returned to Elisha and begged him to accept some form of payment for healing him. Elisha repeatedly refused. But a pitiful character, Gehazi (name means covetous or greedy)

who was Elisha's opportunistic servant was fatally infected with materialism and worldliness. He couldn't stand to see the caravan of Naaman disappear with its rich treasures. So, he devised a sad story and asked for some of the riches stating the need for a school of prophecy. But Elisha supernaturally found out about Gehazi's wickedness and allowed the leprosy of Naaman to come on him and his descendants. Ironically, we observe a pagan who by an act of faith is cured of leprosy and an Israelite who by an act of dishonour is cursed with it.

Jesus used the story of Naaman and Elisha as an illustration of Israel's unbelief. In **Luke 4:27**, Jesus tells the crowd in the synagogue of Nazareth, *"There were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian."* The lepers of Israel overlooked the healing that could have been theirs through Elisha, so God healed a Syrian instead. In the same way, the Israelites of Jesus' day were missing the Power right in front of their eyes. But God is no respecter of persons (**Acts 10:34–35**), and the Gentiles eventually received the gospel that Israel rejected.

ELISHA AND THE FLOATING AXE HEAD (2 KINGS 6:1-7)

2 Kings 6:6:- *"...Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float."*

While on course to expand the school of prophecy, a student lost an axe head in the river Jordan while cutting down trees. Iron was expensive in those times, and the loss of



a borrowed tool would have thrown the poor student-prophet into debt. But Elisha threw a stick into the water where the axe fell, which was followed by the miracle of the floating Iron-Axe.

The lesson from this story is very simple - God cares for the little details of our lives. Just like the prophet called Elisha for help, we can call on God for help in every little area of our life!

Everyone knows iron does not float. But when Elisha threw the stick into the water, the iron took on a new nature. Its old nature caused it to sink, but its new nature caused it to rise and float. We have a new nature through Jesus Christ because of the work on the cross and His great love for us. Just like that iron axe head became buoyant and was set free from its old nature, so do we become spiritually buoyant as find our identity in Jesus. By the action of Elisha, the iron started to float. By the word of the Lord Jesus, Peter started to walk on water.

ACCOUNT OF ELISHA'S ROLE IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS

ELISHA BLINDS THE SYRIAN ARMY (2 KINGS 6:8-23)

2 Kings 6:18:- *“As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, “Strike this army with blindness.” So, he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked.”*

In this narrative of Israel's scuffle with Syrian troops, we observe four miracles of the prophet Elisha: his supernatural knowledge of the enemy's plans, the opening of his servant's eyes to see the heavenly hosts, the blinding of the Syrians, and the restoration of their sight.

The great prophet's reputation as a miracle worker was known even among the soldiers of Ben-Hadad (king of Syria)! Apparently, his supernatural knowledge was legendary. *“Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom,”* (v.15)

The great Syrian army decided to capture Elisha by surrounding the city where Elisha stayed. His frantic servant lost all hope and cried out to Elisha. His eyes were miraculously opened to see the heavenly army surrounding the army of Syria to defend Elisha. This emphasizes the importance of seeing things from God's point of view, with spiritual insight, and faith. Elisha's words encouraged the servant,

“Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them” (v. 16). *“Seeing is believing”* is the motto of the secular world. *“Believing is seeing”* is the motto of faith. We must have eyes of faith to see the evidence of God’s powerful presence.

Elisha prayed and the Syrian army was struck with blindness. He led them to the city of Samaria to the king of Israel. Once inside Samaria, Elisha prayed again, and the fourth miracle of this passage took place. *“The LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria!”*(v.20)

Interestingly, Elisha embarrassed his enemies with kindness and impressed them with the all-sufficient power of Yahweh by advising the king of Israel to give them food and water and send them back to Syria. With their release, Yahweh’s power was glorified, and peace was ensured, at least for a while.



ELISHA DELIVERS SAMARIA FROM THE ENEMIES (2 KINGS 7:1-20)

2 Kings 7:1:- *“Elisha replied, “Hear the word of the Lord. This is what the Lord says: About this time tomorrow, a seah of the finest flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria.”*

The conditions in Samaria were dreadful due to famine. Women were boiling their children for food; the citizens were eating dung; the frustrated king was in a murderous rage. Above all, the Syrian army was ready to attack the city again. Amidst this, Elisha pronounced a direct prophecy of a divine turnover.

Things began to change in a day. *First*, God defended Samaria and Israel against the Syrian army and the threat they posed to Israel's national security. This put an end to the blockade of the city. *Secondly*, there was an abundance of food for the people of Samaria. God



turned the Syrian plans of destruction into deliverance. What a marvellous God we serve! He seldom works according to the same script, but the end result is always victory!

ELISHA APPOINTS HAZAEL OVER SYRIA

2 Kings 8:13:- *“The Lord has shown me that you (Hazeal) will become king of Aram (Syria),” answered Elisha.*”

At Elijah’s departure, two of his commissions at Horeb were left undone. He had neither installed Hazeal over Syria (Aram) nor Jehu over Israel (**1 Kings 19:15-16**). It became clear that he passed those tasks on to Elisha. The fact that Elijah did not perform these tasks in no way undermines his obedience to God. Rather, this freedom proves that he was an active colleague of God rather than a robotic instrument.

Elisha informed Hazeal of his destiny as Syria’s next king (2 Kings 8:13). Hazeal served as the chief minister for the King of Syria. Interestingly, Hazeal was sent to Elisha by the King of Syria to enquire about his sickness and know God’s will for his life (this could have happened because of the story of Naaman from Syria). But Elisha’s answer was, *“Go, say to him, ‘You shall certainly recover.’ However, the LORD has shown me that he will really die”* (v. 10). Nevertheless, it was no contradiction. Both prophecies came true. The illness was not fatal, but the king was killed on his sickbed by Hazeal.

Before the murder itself, Elisha recited the unthinkable atrocities that Hazeal would later commit (2 Kings 10:32–33; 13:3). But Hazeal seemed unaware that such cruelty lurked in his personality, and he was insulted that Elisha had thus accused him.

Isn't it true that none of us knows the depth of sin that we could potentially commit? The most horrendous evil may lie dormant in the most unlikely personality. Perhaps most people are good basically because they've never been tried and tested to expose their limits. To counter the horrendous evil that lurks, there is always God's goodness that covers our lives. The power of sin is broken with Christ's work on the cross. Nothing can separate us from the love of God when we repent and join with Christ.

ELISHA ANOINTS JEHU OVER ISRAEL

2 Kings 9:3:- *“Then take the flask and pour the oil on his head (Jehu) and declare, ‘This is what the Lord says: I anoint you king over Israel.’”*

Jehu was the only anointed ruler of the Northern Kingdom. His anointing was a private affair conducted by one of the prophetic students assigned by Elisha. “*Jehu*” means “*Yahweh is He*.” He was probably one of the commanders of the army of Israel. Elisha’s prophecy was a precise restatement of Elijah’s prediction years prior (1 Kings 14:10; 21:23).

The author turns our attention to the kings of Judah - Jehoram and his son Ahaziah for a reason. He wants us to see how wicked these kings of Judah had become. He wants us to see how intertwined Israel and Judah have become. We see that Judah and her kings are really no better than the

kings of Israel. This explains why God brought about the deaths not only of Jezebel and Joram of Israel, but also Ahaziah of Judah. These closing verses of 2 Kings 8 also explain to the reader just how these three people (Joram, King of Israel; Ahaziah, King of Judah; Jezebel, wife of Ahab) happen to be in the same place at the same time.

According to the word of Elijah's earlier prophecies, Jehu executes divine justice by killing all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and his close acquaintances and his priests, until he left none remaining.

Jehu was in his seventh year on the throne in Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom, when the boy king, Joash, was crowned in Jerusalem, the capital of the Southern Kingdom. For the next twenty-plus years these two neighbouring rulers held the line against Baal in their respective nations.

ELISHA PROPHECIES ON HIS DEATHBED

2 Kings 13:18-20:- *"Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him (Joash), "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. ¹⁹ The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram (Syria) and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times." ²⁰ Elisha died and was buried."*

Elisha was not mentioned in the narrative of Kings for fifty years after he anointed Jehu in 2 Kings 9:1–10 (The sons of the prophets also fade from the picture at about the same time). When the spotlight was turned on him again, Elisha was an old man, sick and at the point of death. Unlike the flamboyant Elijah, whose life ended in a dramatic whirlwind exit in a fiery chariot, Elisha died from an illness. But God was just as near to him while he passed through the valley of death, as He had been with Elijah while he passed through the skies on a fiery chariot.

Joash, the king of Israel, visited Elisha on his deathbed (*Please note that there are two kings with the same names – one in Israel and another in Judah - King Joash of Israel began his reign in the thirty-seventh year of the reign of King Joash of Judah*). Joash's wept over Elisha and referred to him as the "*chariots of Israel and their horsemen!*" According to Joash, Elisha had been their chariotry and cavalry and now that he was dying, they were being left unarmed and defenseless before the Syrians.

Elisha's last prophecy, with the visual employment of bows and arrows, dramatized the future victory of Israel over Syria. Elisha asked Joash to continue shooting arrows into the ground through the east window, which faced Syria. He shot only three arrows and stopped. Elisha was angry with Joash because he did not strike the ground more often. By limiting the number of times he struck the ground,

he limited the number of times Israel would prevail over Syria. The point of the passage is that the king stopped too soon. He lacked perseverance and determination. He was content with half measures and incomplete achievement; therefore, the future victory over Syria would be limited. The fulfilment of the prophet's prediction is reported in 2 Kings 13:22–25.



As believers, we need to live out our faith through actions. Giving lectures on faith is not enough. If we want others to understand what a Christian life is all about, we need to demonstrate it, not just once, but consistently, and in a way that will encourage them to trust Christ for themselves. We continue to conquer life's obstacles and live in the victory that Christ provided for us.

ELISHA'S BONES RAISED A DEAD MAN

2 Kings 9:21:- *“When the body touched Elisha’s bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.”*

In comparison to Elijah’s glorious transportation to heaven, Elisha’s last day on Earth was quite ordinary. The author sums it up succinctly by saying, *“Elisha died and was buried.”* (2 Kings 9:20) However, that wasn’t the end of Elisha’s era of miracles. In fact, his last miracle was unlike any other in the Bible.

An Israelite man had died, and his body was being carried to the burial place outside the city. As this funeral procession reached the burial place, a Moabite party of thieves appeared on the horizon. Fearing them, they quickly dropped the dead body into the tomb of Elisha not

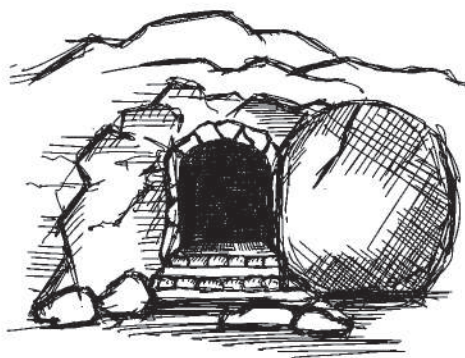


tomb of Elisha not knowing that it was his. When the dead man touched the bones of Elisha, he was revived and stood on his feet.

This is one of the more unusual miracles in the Bible. There is no explanation about how or why this happened, and this silence suggests that there was no magic in the bones of Elisha to bring anyone else to life. If there was, a queue of people would have waited outside Elisha's tomb with their dead loved ones! Instead, this was a unique, one-time miracle that brought honour to the memory of this great prophet. As such, this passage should never be used as an excuse for the superstitious practice of veneration (or worship) of relics and dead people.

The incident indicates that the ministry of Elisha outlives him. When a man or woman of God dies, nothing of God dies. We tend to forget that. We get so caught up in the lives of certain individuals that we begin to think we cannot do without them. But God and His work continue for generations!

This tomb of Elisha points to a tomb that brings life - the empty tomb of Jesus, who rose from the dead and promises eternal life to all who believe.



MIRACLES OF ELIJAH VS ELISHA

MIRACLES OF ELIJAH

1

Stopped the rain and brought a famine

1 Kings 17:1

2

Widow's flour and oil never run out

1 Kings 17:15

3

Widow's son resurrected

1 Kings 17:22

4

Fire fell on Mount Carmel

1 Kings 18:38

5

Rain fell after 3 years at his command

1 Kings 18:41

6

Elijah ran ahead of Ahab's chariots

1 Kings 18:46

7

Fire from heaven and killed 100 soldiers

2 Kings 1:12

8

Parted the waters of Jordan

2 Kings 2:8

MIRACLES OF ELISHA

1

Parted the waters of Jordan

2 Kings 2:13

2

Heals the waters of Jericho

2 Kings 2:21

3

2 Bears mauled 42 boys who jeered at Elisha

2 Kings 2:24

4

Water filled in the valley for the soldiers

2 Kings 3:17

5

Widow's olive
oil multiplied

2 Kings 4:4

6

A son was born to a
Shunammite woman
in her old age

2 Kings 4:17

7

Shunammite Lady's
son resurrected

2 Kings 4:35

8

Healed the poisonous
pot of stew

2 Kings 4:41

9

20 loaves of barley bread
multiplied and fed 100
people with leftovers

2 Kings 4:44

10

Naaman healed
of leprosy

2 Kings 5:14

11

Gehazi
got leprosy

2 Kings 5:27

12

An axe head
floats

2 Kings 6:6

13

Elisha's servant's eyes
opened to see a heavenly
vision

2 Kings 6:17

14

Syrian Army was blinded
by Elisha and later he
restored them

2 Kings 6:18

15

An overnight
famine restored

2 Kings 7:16

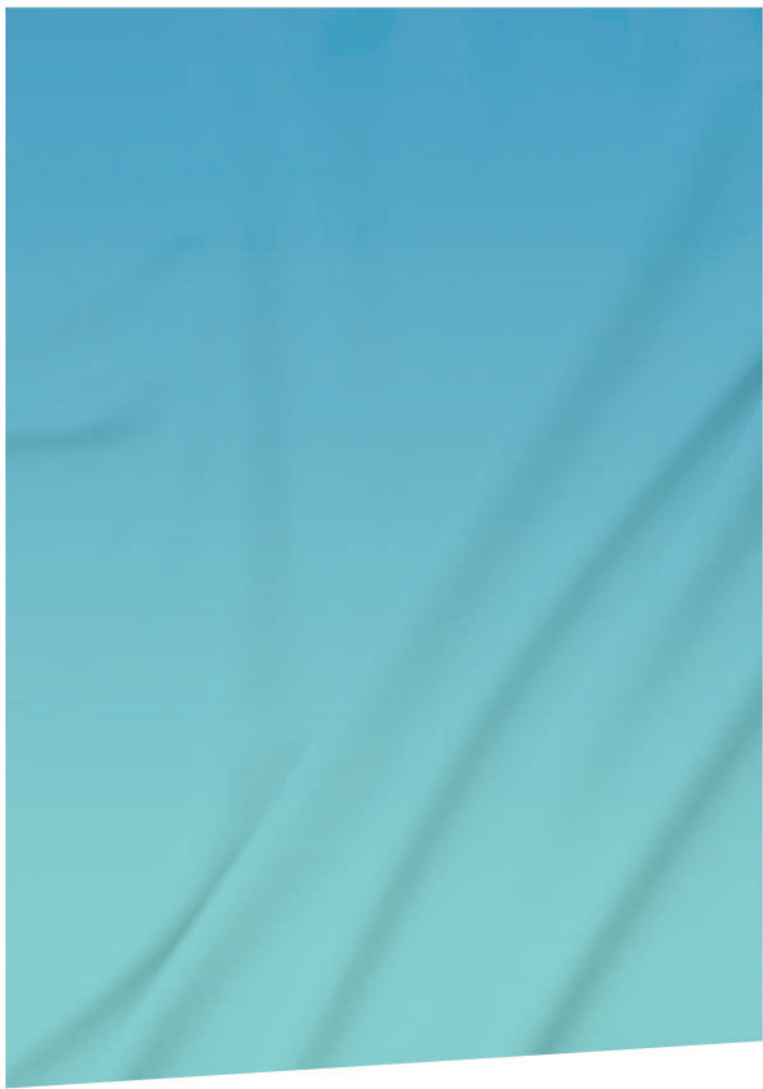
16

Elisha's bones resurrect
a dead man

2 Kings 13:21

● CONCLUSION ●

Elisha's life and ministry are important in the biblical narrative, as they illustrate God's power, compassion, and involvement in the lives of people. His actions demonstrated God's care for individuals and nations. Elisha defined his greatness by his relationship with and obedience to God. Elisha never wrote any books; he never defined his greatness by society's definitions. The secret behind Elisha's power here on earth was his fierce devotion to the God of heaven. Elisha teaches us that if you encounter the God of the Bible, He will change your mind, and then your desire will only be to see His Kingdom on this earth.



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