

The CHRONICLES of the KINGS

Elisha – A Double Portion

2nd Kings 6:15-17

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Elijah and Elisha walked together, when suddenly Elijah was taken up – and Elisha witnessed the whole thing. He saw Elijah's wild – Chariot of Fire ride, the sign that Yahweh had granted his request for a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

Now all alone, Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak, struck the waters of the Jordan and walked back across on dry land.

The 50 prophets from Jericho, who had been waiting, recognized that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha, but they also thought that Yahweh had just moved Elijah elsewhere, so volunteered to go search for him.

Elisha said, "*no need,*" but they insisted until he was too ashamed to refuse them. The search party looked for Elijah for 3 days, but couldn't find him. Upon returning to Jericho, Elisha said to them, "*Didn't I tell not to go looking for him?*"

According to Ellen White (PK 235.1), Elisha's ministry was very different from Elijah's – the voice of judgment and fearless reproof. Whose mission it was to call Israel to turn back from her evil ways. Elisha, on the other hand, was called to a more peaceful mission – to build up and strengthen the work Elijah had begun and to teach the people Yahweh's ways.

Here are the highlights of Elisha's long career:

The Boys and the Bears – 2 Kings 2:23-25

After returning to Jericho, Elisha performed a miracle by healing the water. Now he was on his way to Bethel.

Bethel had once been a place to worship and communion with Yahweh (Genesis 35:9-15; Judges 20:17, 26; 21:2-4), but Jeroboam had turned it into a center of calf worship and idolatry (1 Kings 12:28-33).

As Elisha walked along the road, a gang of youths came out from Bethel and began to mock him. Elisha turned around and called down a curse on the young men in Yahweh's name. 2 bears came out of the woods and mauled 42 of the young men.

Ellen White (PK 235.2-2361.1) - *Had Elisha allowed the mockery to pass unnoticed, he would have continued to be ridiculed and reviled by the rabble, and his mission to instruct and save in a time of grave national peril might have been defeated. This one instance of terrible severity was sufficient to command respect throughout his life. For fifty years he went in and out of the gate of Bethel, and to and fro in the land, from city to city, passing through crowds of idle, rude, dissolute youth; but none mocked him or made light of his qualifications as the prophet of the Most High.*

Elisha went on to Mount Carmel and then returned to Samaria.

The Widow's Oil – 2 Kings 4:1-7

A widow of one of the "*Sons of the Prophets*" came to Elisha with a problem. A creditor was coming to enslave her 2 sons as payment for a debt because the only asset she had was a small jar of olive oil – not nearly enough to pay the debt.

Elisha told her to go to her neighbors and borrow as many empty jars as possible - then go home with her sons, close the door, fill the empty jars with olive oil and set them aside.

The widow did as Elisha instructed. When all the jars had been filled, the oil from her small jar stopped flowing. The widow sold the oil, paid off the debt and lived off the residual income.

The Shunammite Woman ~ 2 Kings 4:8-37 and 8:1-6

Elisha traveled regularly. In the town of Shunem (Issachar), he was a regular guest in the home of a prominent local woman and her husband – they even constructed a small upper room for his use whenever he was in town.

Elisha was touched by the woman's generosity and instructed his servant, Gehazi, to inquire what could be done for her as a way of saying thank you. She said she didn't need anything, but Gehazi mentioned to Elisha that woman had no children, so Elisha told the woman that at the same time the next year, she would have a son.

Her response is interesting, she said, *"don't lie to me."* But just as Elisha said, the next year the woman had a son.

The boy grew. One day he was in the field helping his father. Suddenly, he grabbed his head and said, *"My head, my head,"* before collapsing. The boy died and his mother laid him in Elisha's chamber and closed the door.

She and a servant raced to find Elisha. When she found him, she fell at his feet..... *"Did I ask for a son? No, I did not and now the boy is dead."*

Elisha instructed Gehazi to take his staff and run quickly to the where the boy lay and place the staff on the boy's face. Gehazi did as instructed, but the boy did not wake up.

When Elisha arrived, he went to the upper room and closed the door. He prayed and then laid on the child putting his mouth, eyes and hands on the boy's mouth, eyes and hands – the boy started to get warm. Elisha paced the room then repeated his actions – this time the boy sneezed 7 times and opened his eyes.

Gehazi called the boy's mother and when she saw that the child was alive, she fell at Elisha's feet, then took her son and went out.

Sometime later..... There was another famine. Elisha told the woman to leave Israel because Yahweh had declared the famine would last for 7 years – she and her family went to the land of the Philistines....

At the end of the 7 years, the king asked Gehazi to tell him *of all the great things Elisha had done."* Just as Gehazi got to the story of death/resurrection of the woman's son, she came before the king to beg for her house and land to be restored to her. When asked, the woman confirmed the story.

The king ordered that everything that belonged to her, including all the income from the last 7 years be returned to her.

The Deadly Pot of Stew and the Unending Bread ~ 2 Kings 4:38-44

Gilgal was experiencing another famine. While Elisha was visiting the prophets there, he requested that a pot of stew be made. One of the young prophets, who did not have his badge in wild plant identification, went scavenging for wild herbs to add to the pot - he also found a wild vine with some gourds. He gathered some of the gourds, returned to town and added the gourds to the stew. As the men began to eat, they recognized that the stew was deadly so called for Elisha, *"There is death in the pot, O man of God!"* Elisha requested a little flour. He threw the flour into the pot, saying, *"Serve the people and let them eat."* Everyone enjoyed the meal and no one experienced any ill effects.

About this time a man from Baal Shalishah, brought Elisha 20 loaves of Barley Bread along with some heads of new grain. Elisha told his servant to give the gift to the people, but the servant said there wasn't enough bread to go around.

Elisha repeated the instruction, *"For this is what Yahweh says: 'They will eat and have some left over.'"*

After the men had finished eating, there was bread leftover, just as Yahweh had said.

Naaman ~ 2 Kings 5

Naaman was a Captain in the Syrian Army. He was a man of great honor and valor ---- he was also a leper.

In the service of Naaman's wife was a young Israelite girl. One day she said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." Naaman took the girl's advice and went to Israel.

When he arrived at Samaria, he presented to the King many gifts and a letter from the king of Syria. The king of Israel misinterpreted the letter as an attempt by Syria to pick a fight. He tore his clothes in despair and sent Naaman to see Elisha.

Elisha knew Naaman was coming, so before he even arrived at the house, Elisha sent a message telling Naaman to go wash in the Jordan river 7 times, after which he would be healed.

Thinking himself to be important enough to receive "hands-on treatment", Naaman was a little put out. He declared that the rivers back home were better than the muddy old Jordan, so he turned around and started for home. His servants were able to convince him to give Elisha's instructions a try and he was healed.

In gratitude, Naaman tried to give Elisha all the gifts he'd brought, but Elisha refused - Naaman headed home.

Gehazi, was listening and it didn't take long for him to catch up to Naaman and report that Elisha had changed his mind. Apparently, 2 needy young men had just arrived at the house and Elisha could use the gifts after all (Gehazi was lying).

Naaman gave Gehazi 2 talents of silver and 2 changes of clothing then resumed his journey. Loot hidden, Gehazi returned to Elisha's home.

When Elisha asked him where he'd gone. Gehazi denied having gone anywhere. Elisha, however, knew the truth and told Gehazi that because of his deception and greed, Naaman's leprosy would cling to him and his descendants forever.

When Gehazi left the presence of Elisha he was covered with Leprosy.

The Floating Axe head ~ 2 Kings 6:1-7

The Sons of the Prophets were out-growing their accommodation, so decided to do a little renovating. Elisha was invited to join them to cut trees near the Jordan and he agreed to go.

The group were hard at work when suddenly the axe head, from a rented axe, flew off into the Jordan - immediately sinking out of sight.

The young man, who had been using the axe, was understandably distraught. Elisha asked where he saw the axe head land, cut a stick from a nearby branch and threw it in the water. Immediately the iron axe head floated to the surface and was retrieved by the relieved young man.

The Blind Army ~ 2 Kings 6:8-23

Aram (Syria) and Israel were at war again..... The king of Aram was keen to capture the king of Israel, but every time a trap was set, Elisha would send word to the king of Israel. Time and again Elisha warned the king of Israel, thwarting the plans of the king of Aram.

The increasingly irritated king of Aram accused his officers of conspiring against him. One brave officer replied, "We would not conspire against you. Elisha, is the one who is telling the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom."

The king said, "Go find him." When it was reported that Elisha was at Dothan, the king of Aram sent horses, chariots and a strong force to capture him – during the night they surrounded the city.

The next morning Elisha's servant looked over the city wall and was terrified by what he saw - he ran to Elisha.

Calmly, Elisha said, "Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then he prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see."

Yahweh opened the servant's eyes, and he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

As the enemy approached, Elisha prayed that they would be struck with blindness – they were – then he went out of the city and met the now blind army.

"This is not the road to Dothan," he said. "Follow me and I'll take you where you want to go." ----- he took them to Samaria.

Yahweh opened the eyes of the blind army and they saw that they were INSIDE the walls of Samaria.

The King of Israel was thrilled, "Can I kill 'em? Can I? Can I? Huh, huh, huh?"

Instead of killing the enemy, Elisha directed the king to feed them and send them home. He did and the Bible reports that the bands from Aram stopped raiding into Israel's territory.

The Samaritan Siege – 2 Kings 6:24-7:20

Sometime later, Ben-hadad, king of Aram, gathered his army and laid siege to Samaria. The siege lasted so long that the people willingly purchased a donkey's head for 80 shekels of silver and 8 oz. of dove droppings for 5 shekels of silver.

Joram was walking the wall of Samaria one morning when a woman called out to him and told him a pretty gruesome story: A neighbor had come to her the night before and suggested that they eat her son for dinner and the neighbor's son for breakfast. They boiled and ate the woman's son, but in the morning, the neighbor's son was MIA.

In grief, the king tore his clothes, but instead of seeking help from Yahweh he blamed Elisha and ordered his death.

Elisha saw the King's messenger coming and instructed that his door be closed and barred because, "the son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head – and the king is not far behind,"

The messenger delivered his message: "Per the king - Surely this calamity is Yahweh's fault, why should I wait for Him any longer?"

Elisha: This is what Yahweh says: About this time tomorrow, at the gate of Samaria, a measure of flour will sell for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel.

The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to Elisha, "You're kidding, right? Even if Yahweh opened the floodgates of heaven, what you are suggesting is impossible."

Elisha: You'll witness it, but you won't benefit from it!

The next day, 4 lepers decided to surrender. At dusk they went to the camp of the Arameans, only to find it empty, "for Yahweh had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great army, so that they said to one another, 'Look, the king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!'"

The lepers did not immediately return to Samaria, instead going from tent to tent, carrying off as much plunder as they could. Finally, however, they agreed that they were not doing the right thing and reported the good news to the king.

Interestingly, the king was suspicious, thinking that the Arameans were setting a trap, but finally some soldiers and horses, "who would die anyway - either by famine or by sword," were sent to investigate.

The men followed the trail of the Arameans clear to the Jordan river. They found the whole road strewn with Aramean clothing and equipment – discarded as the army ran away.

The messengers returned and when the people heard the siege was over and that there was a camp full of food, they rushed the gates trampling to death the officer of the king.... just as Elisha had said.

Unfinished Business – 2 Kings 8:7-15 and 9:1-10

Yahweh had given Elijah 3 instructions at the cave on Mount Horeb – 1 Kings 19:15-17:

- Anoint Hazael king of Aram
- Anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi king over Israel.
- Anoint Elisha to succeed you as prophet.

For an unknown reason, Elijah did only 1 of those things – anointing Elisha to replace him. The other 2 instructions remained undone – left to Elisha to fulfil.

~Hazel~

Elisha went to Damascus. Ben-Hadad was ill, so told his servant, Hazael, to take gifts to Elisha and ask if he would recover from his illness.

Hazael was told to tell Ben-Hadad that he would survive, but that Yahweh had revealed that he would actually die.

After speaking, Elisha stared at Hazael until Hazael felt ashamed, then Elisha began to weep. Hazael asked him why he was crying and Elisha said, *"Because I know the harm you will do to the Israelites. You will set fire to their fortified places, kill their young men with the sword, dash their little children to the ground, and rip open their pregnant women."*

Hazael: *"How could your servant, a mere dog, accomplish such a feat?"*

Elisha: *"Yahweh has shown me that you will become king of Aram."*

Hazael went home and told Ben-Hadad, *"Elisha told me that you will recover"*, but the next day he took a thick cloth, soaked it in water and spread it over the king's face, so that he died. Hazael was now king of Aram.

~Jehu~

Elisha instructed one of the prophets to take a flask of oil, go to Ramoth Gilead, look for Jehu (*son of Nimshi*), take him into an inner room – away from his friends – pour the oil over his head and declare him king of Israel. Task complete - open the door and run away.

When the young man found Jehu, he poured the oil over his head, *"This is what Yahweh, says: 'I anoint you king over My people Israel. You are to destroy the house of Ahab As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her.'"* Then the young man opened the door and ran.

Elisha's Final Days – 2 Kings 13:14-21

Elisha was ill. He had spent more than 50 years ministering in Israel. Jehoash was now king in Israel (798-782 BC). When he heard that Elisha was ill, he went to see him and was moved to tears, *"My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!"*

Elisha told Jehoash to get his bow and an arrow and together they shot the arrow out the east window. Elisha declared, *"Yahweh's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Arameans at Aphek."* Then he instructed Jehoash to take his arrows and strike the ground. Jehoash struck the ground just 3 times. Elisha became angry, *"You should have struck the ground 5-6 times; then you would have completely destroyed Aram. But now you will defeat it only 3 times."*

Elisha died and was buried.

Now Moabite raiders used to enter Israel every spring. Once while some Israelites were burying a man, they suddenly saw a band of raiders. In their haste to get away, they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.

Until Next Time.....