

Lessons from Old Testament Biblical History and Characters – Elisha

Elijah, in **obedience** to God's command, 1 Kings 19:16, casts his **mantle** on Elisha signaling the continuation of Elijah's prophetic ministry, 1 Kings 19:19-21.

1. **The setting** of Elisha's ministry is the same as with Elijah. There is overlap in the time of their ministries.
 - **Baal** worship continues even though Elijah has demonstrated clearly that there is a God in Israel and Baal is not it. The episode on Mt. Carmel should have settled that debate. There would be incidences of retreat from Baal worship, 2 Kings 3:2, but Baal worship was entrenched in the land, cp. 2 Kings 10:16-31, and other **false** worship continued to dominate.
 - The prophets were announcing God's **judgment** upon Israel for rejecting Him and His Word (the Law, the covenant). The things happening to the nation were because of this national judgment. Cp. 2 Kings 17:7-23 (Remember that this historical record was written during the exile)
 - These historical narratives demonstrate the reliability of the **written** Word through the fulfillment of the **prophetic word**, Cp. 2 Kings 10:10. God always acts according to His Word. The people's relationship to the **prophet** = their relationship with the **Law** of Jehovah. When they rejected God's prophet, they rejected God and His **Word**. God always **blessed** those who accepted the **prophetic** activity and **cursed** those who did not.
2. There is quite a **contrast** between Elijah and Elisha. God uses both.
 - Elijah was from a poor background. Elisha was **wealthy**. 1 Kings 19:19-21 (see below)
 - Many of Elijah's miracles were confrontational. Elijah's miracles were more **compassionate**. The life of Elijah is presented in the form of 18 short stories, all but two within the reign of one king.
 - Elijah was a "man of **moods**." Elisha more stable.

Note 3 Episodes:

3. **Elisha – picking up the mantle.** 1 Kings 19:19-21
 - The sacrifice of the **oxen** and the burning of the **yoke** demonstrate Elisha's **devotion** and commitment to what he was being called to do; he did not plan to **return** and use them again.
 - Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:11, 28; 9:23; Following will involve a **leaving**, with the thought of not returning. That specific leaving, and the results of it will be different for every disciple; John 21:20-23.
 - Mark 10:28-30; The leaving will be **worth** it.
4. **Elijah's offer to Elisha.** 2 Kings 2:1-9. "... ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken from thee."
 - Elisha asks for a **double portion** of the spirit.
 - Elisha's request for something "**spiritual**", not **material**.
 - Elisha's request was for the Lord and His service, not for **self**.
 - Elisha's request was not for the same, but for **more**... to advance the work and build upon what was already done.
 - Matthew 7:2, 21:22; John 14:14, 15:7; 16:23; James 4:3; 1:5-7;

5. **“Go up, thou bald head”** 2 Kings 2:23-25.

- Bethel. The headquarters of **calf**-worship. Cp. 2 Kings 10:29,31;
- “Little children” – these boys are “responsible moral agents”, most likely teens to young adults.
- “Go up” – the mocking was a **rejection** of Elisha and hence a rejection of **Jehovah**.
- The curse is a **fulfillment** of Leviticus 26:21-22;
- See above: # 1, 3rd point.