

# ELISHA

**The Great Things That**

**I. Skepticism Among the Students**  
(II Kings 2:16-18)

Those called “they” in verses 16, 17, and 18 were “the sons of the prophets” mentioned in verse 16. As we have said, they were

One of the great prophets and miracle-workers of the Bible was Elisha. His ministry after the translation of his master Elijah covered over fifty years, and was marked by mighty evidences of the power of faith in God. Let us let our faith grow as we study what Elisha did.

**Lesson #2:**  
A Miraculous Beginning

**Scripture:**  
II Kings 2:16-25.

**Key Verse:**  
II Kings 2:22  
“So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.”

## Hath Done

“The Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha” (II Kings 2:15). That’s what the “sons of the prophets” (students in the prophets’ school at Jericho) said when they saw Elisha part the Jordan River after having received the mantle from Elijah. Yes, God’s power now rested upon Elisha. He sought it in the final days of his teacher Elijah on earth, and God had granted this blessing. Oh the wonder of God’s power upon a man! Soon the sons of the prophets and everyone else would see much more to convince them that the Lord was with this man.

Look over all of II Kings 2, and notice the route of Elisha’s travels recorded there. If possible, follow them on a Biblical map of the Holy Land during the “Divided Kingdom.”

1. He and Elijah went from Gilgal to Bethel (where a prophets’ school was located), and from Bethel to Jericho (the location of another prophets’ school), and from Jericho to the Jordan River.
2. Across the Jordan, Elijah was translated and Elisha received his mantle along with the power of God.
3. He crossed the Jordan (miraculously), and went to Jericho (vs. 15-22) where he “tarried” for a time and “healed” the spring of waters.
4. From Jericho, he went to Bethel, and from Bethel to Mt. Carmel, and from Mt. Carmel to Israel’s capital city, Samana.

Note the significance of these places. *Gilgal* was the place of Israel’s first encampment after they had crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land (Joshua 4). *Bethel* was the place where Jacob met God (Genesis 28). *Jericho* was the city where the Israelites first confronted and defeated the Canaanites (Joshua 6). The *Jordan* River was the barrier the Lord miraculously opened so that the Israelites could enter the Promised Land of Canaan (Joshua 4). *Mt. Carmel* is the place where Elijah embarrassed and destroyed the prophets of Baal and Ashtaroath (I Kings 18). *Samaria* was the place where Elisha was to meet the king of Israel in his first big assignment from God as the chief prophet.

## (II Kings 8:4)

students at a prophets’ school. Probably Samuel started having such schools more than 150 years earlier (See I Samuel 19:20). It is interesting that Elisha’s training was probably not in such a school but instead directly under Elijah as his personal servant (I Kings 19:21). These students were afflicted with a malady that has stricken many other theological students since: an unhealthy skepticism. After they had seen God’s power working through Elisha’s life (vs. 14-15) and heard the story of how this power had come upon the prophet, they wanted to “check out” the story (v. 16). Elisha told them not to carry out the investigation they wanted to conduct, but they “urged him till he was ashamed” (v. 17). So he let them go and look for Elijah. Of course, they “found him not,” and Elisha rebuked them for even investigating (v. 18). When we hear the Word of God, we should simply believe it. Biblical criticism, as it is called, whether “higher” (literary criticism) or “lower” (textual criticism) can be based on unbelief and because of this can do much harm. God’s Word can stand investigation, as we see in this case (v. 17), but that is not the point. If we approach the Word of God with an attitude of skepticism, unbelief, demanding further proof and investigation, we will miss the blessing. Men must bow before the authority of God before they will ever know God or understand His Word.

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”  
(I Thessalonians 2:13)

## II. Salt to Heal Jericho’s Water

(II Kings 2:19-22)

Often called Elisha’s second miracle (the parting of Jordan in verse 14 was his first), the healing of the water at Jericho was really this prophet’s first *ministry* miracle. It was his first great act of service to others in God’s name. The “situation in the city” was

pleasant, but the water supply was “*naught*” so that the ground was “*barren*” In other words, the water was bad. Apparently the people of Jericho were not poisoned by drinking the water, but they could not get anything to grow in the soil because of some problem in the “*spring*” that watered the

Notes:

whole area. It was God that did the miracle to correct the water problem, but Elisha’s actions in connection with that miracle seem to have important symbolic significance. He asked for a cruse of salt (v. 20) and “*cast the salt in*” the water. Then he said, “*Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters. . .*” From that day, the fountain of Jericho (now called Elisha’s Spring) has given healthy water and made Jericho’s ground green and fruitful. What was the meaning of the salt?

Jesus said to His followers,

*“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”* (Matthew 5:13)

In the context, this verse means that the contrasting lives of Christian believers will have the effect of holding back the corruption of the world around them. The power of their influence will be in the difference of their lives. Several times in the Bible salt is used to represent preservation from evil. See Numbers 18:19 and also II Chronicles 13:5, and notice the idea of permanence by preservation symbolized in salt. See Leviticus 2:13 and then read Mark 9:49-50, and find salt used to picture the influence of holiness. When Elisha found barrenness, his solution was holiness. Sometimes believers are troubled by a lack of fruit in their lives. We ought to be troubled by spiritual barrenness (Read John 15:1-8). If our lives do not produce for the Lord, something is wrong (Look at Mark 1:17). When dealing with a barren life, the first thing to examine is your holiness. Are you separated from sin and consecrated to Christ? Is your life conforming to the image of Jesus Christ and contrasting with the ways of the world? Changing the life to meet God’s standards will often cure spiritual barrenness. What is the Lord speaking to you about changing?

**III. Smart-Alecks Punished  
(II Kings 2:23-25)**

The two words translated “*children*” in this story can mean young people of many different ages. These were probably teenagers. At least they were old enough to mock God knowingly and willfully. That’s what they meant to do when they said, “*go up, thou bald head.*” They were making fun of the story Elisha told about Elijah going to Heaven in the whirlwind (v. 11). They were also making fun of the physical appearance of a man of God. These were a bunch of smart-alecks. Sometimes kids learn pretty young to have a smart mouth, and they think little of it. They do not really believe that it makes any difference if you talk or act

respectfully toward  
God or toward  
people you are  
supposed to honor.  
These boys  
certainly learned  
that it *does* make a  
difference to God!  
This was a  
miraculous event in  
many ways, and so  
we must realize  
that God was doing  
it, not Elisha. God  
punished the smart-  
mouthed young  
fellows in defense  
of His honor and of  
His man.  
Disrespect is a  
dangerous habit to  
acquire. God  
commands us to  
honor Him and to  
honor many others  
(Look up  
Ephesians 5:3,  
Ephesians 6:1-3,  
and I Peter 2:17-  
18). He warns us  
about being careful  
with our words  
(See Matthew  
12:33-37). We live  
in a sarcastic,  
disrespect-ful age,  
but let us not be  
caught up in its  
ways! God wanted  
everybody to know  
that Elisha was His  
servant, and that  
they should treat  
him with respect.