

ELISHA

The Great Things That

- p. Frightening of the Syrians (II Kings 7:6).
- q. Divinely-aided smiting of Syrians (II Kings 13:25).
- r. Reviving of a dead man at Elisha's tomb (II Kings 13:21).
- [Eighteen miracles.]

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 #12: Final Miracles

Scripture: II Kings 13:14-25

Key Verse:
II Kings 13:19
“And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.”

Hath Done

Years went by, and the time came when Elisha was to die. As his life was filled with miracles, so miraculous events were involved in his last days. As his ministry was energized by faith in God, so an important lesson in faith was taught at the end of his ministry. According to II Kings 13:14, *“Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died.”* Joash was *“the king of Israel”* at the time, and he came to visit him. This Joash was the grandson of King Jehu, whose anointing as king was ordered by Elisha the prophet. The last two miracles of Elisha's ministry were the divinely-aided smiting of the Syrians, and the reviving of a dead body at Elisha's tomb. You will remember that the prophet had requested that a *“double portion”* of Elijah's *“spirit”* be given him (Read again II Kings 2:9-14). Bible students have long noted that there are about twice as many miracles recorded in the Bible in Elisha's ministry as there are in Elijah's. The lists of miracles will vary with different teachers of I and II Kings, because people will define and identify miracles differently. But always the number for Elisha is about double that of Elijah. Here are two possible lists:

1. Miracles of Elijah:
 - a. Divinely-sent drought (I Kings 17:1).
 - b. Multiplying meal and oil (I Kings 17:14).
 - c. Raising of the widow's son (I Kings 17:22).
 - d. Fire from heaven (I Kings 18:38).
 - e. Divinely-sent rain (I Kings 18:45).
 - f. Pronouncement of Ahab's doom (I Kings 21:19).
 - g. Consumption of fifty (II Kings 1:10).
 - h. Consumption of another fifty (II Kings 1:12).
 - i. Division of Jordan (II Kings 2:8).[Nine Miracles.]
2. Miracles of Elisha:
 - a. Division of Jordan (II Kings 2:14).
 - b. Healing of Jericho's spring (II Kings 2:21).
 - c. Punishment of children (II Kings 2:24).
 - d. Water for the army (II Kings 3:17).
 - e. Defeat of Moabites (II Kings 3:18).
 - f. Miraculous pot of oil (II Kings 4:7).
 - g. Gift of a son (II Kings 4:16).
 - h. Raising of a son (II Kings 4:36).
 - i. Healing of pottage (II Kings 4:41).
 - j. Multiplying of food (II Kings 4:43).
 - k. Cleansing of Naaman (II Kings 5:14).
 - l. Leprosy of Gehazi (II Kings 5:27).
 - m. Recovery of an axe head (II Kings 6:6).
 - n. Blinding of the Syrians (II Kings 6:18).
 - o. Opening of the Syrians' eyes (II Kings 6:20).

(II Kings 8:4)

I. The King's Weak Faith (II Kings 13:14-19, 22-25)

The king of Israel at the time of Elisha's death was Joash the son of Jehoahaz. King Joash felt a friendship with the prophet that motivated him to visit Elisha at his deathbed. We have noted more than once in this study that Elisha maintained warm relations with many kings and nobles. His teacher Elijah was despised by King Ahab and had little social contact with the “upper crust” of society in his day. It was not that Elijah reproved the nobility and Elisha coddled them, because we read of several occasions when both prophets spoke divinely-given rebukes to the leaders of the people. God just had a different plan and a different ministry for each man. We notice the differences between the ministries of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ (Read Matthew 11:13-19 and John 10:31-42), and we see similar differences between the manner and style of Elijah and Elisha. The truth is that God uses many different kinds of people, and God has a different plan for each of His servants. We should not compare ourselves with each other (See I Corinthians 4:1-6 and II Corinthians 10:12-18) but should seek only to please the Lord.

Notice what the king said when he saw Elisha laying there dying:

“O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.”
(II Kings 13:14)

Compare these words with the recorded words of Elisha as Elijah was taken to Heaven (II Kings 2:12). Mostly, they were the same words. Certainly Elisha had told the king, and many others, the story of Elijah's translation. Realizing that Elisha would soon go to Heaven, too, Joash spoke of the angelic escort that would take him there (Note Luke 16:22). Elijah went to Heaven in the way that living saints will be taken up at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ..

“For the Lord himself shall descend

from heaven
with a shout,
with the
voice of the
archangel,
and with the
trump of
God: and the
dead in
Christ shall
rise first:
Then we
which are
alive and
remain shall
be caught up
together with
them in the
clouds, to
meet the
Lord in the
air: and so
shall

Notes:

*we ever be with the Lord.” (I Thessa-
lonians 4:16-17)*

Elisha went to Heaven in the way believers
go there when they die.

*“Therefore we are always confident,
knowing that, whilst we are at home
in the body, we are absent from the
Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by
sight:) We are confident, I say, and
willing rather to be absent from the
body, and to be present with the
Lord.” (II Corinthians 5:6-8)*

The spirits of Christians whose bodies sleep
in death on earth will return to earth with
Jesus to be reunited with their bodies for a
glorious resurrection.

Before he died, however, Elisha tried to help
the king with a problem and with the matter
of faith. Remember that *“without faith, it is
impossible to please”* God, according to
Hebrews 11:6. Remember also that the
ministry of the prophet Elisha was filled
with lessons on faith. The biggest problem
King Joash had was the continuing warfare
with Syria. Elisha had predicted and Israel
under the father of Joash had known the
bloody aggression of Syria’s King Hazael (II
Kings 8:7-13 and 13:1-7, 22-24). Now Joash
was dealing with Ben-Hadad the son of
Hazael. The old, dying prophet ordered the
king to *“take bow and arrows”* and to let
him guide his hands in the shooting of an
arrow out the window (II Kings 13:15-17).
When the arrow had been shot, Elisha said,
*“The arrow of the Lord’s deliverance from
Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in
Aphek till thou have consumed them.”*
Clearly the arrows, the bow, and the shot
represented victory over Syria, and the
prophet’s guiding hands symbolized God
helping King Joash in battle. Then Elisha
wanted Joash to express his faith, much as
he challenged the widow’s faith in II Kings
4. He asked him to *“smite”* the arrow on the
ground (v. 18), using the same word
(*“smite”*) as he had just used in referring to
victorious battles over Syria (v. 17). The
king *“smote”* the arrow only three times,
and Elisha became angry (vs. 18-19).. The
number of times the king had smitten the
arrows on the ground would be the number
of times Israel would defeat the Syrians in
battle. Joash should have hit the ground
“five or six times” to ensure that Syria’s
army would be *“consumed.”* Of course,
Joash *“beat”* Syria three times, recovered
certain cities that Hazael had taken, but did
not destroy the Syrian army (v. 25). Jesus
said, *“According to your faith be it unto
you”* (Study Matthew 9:28-29). God
responds to faith, and to the *amount* of faith
we have in His power to keep His promises.
To a man who had lived by faith, the weak

faith of the king was enraging (v. 19). When a person has tried the trustworthiness of God, and found Him always true to His Word, it is disgusting to see somebody doubt.

II. The Power of Elisha's Corpse (II Kings 13:20-21)

The final miracle of Elisha occurred after he had died! This strange occurrence indicates that God was keeping His promise to grant a double portion of Elijah's power to Elisha. It also teaches us about the influence of a godly life even after it is over. This account, too, makes us think about the importance of the Christian's body, even after his death. Notice what was done to Elisha's body when he died. It was put into a "*sepulcher*." See also what was done when another man died. We find in II Kings 13:21 that people were "*burying*" his body. If you were to take the Bible alone as your source of information about what to do with the body when a person dies, you would *bury* it. Look at Genesis 25:9, Genesis 50:13, 14, and 26. Only once in the Bible were men cremated, in I Samuel 31:12. However, no comment is made whether this was good or bad, and

this was a case in which the bodies had been mutilated and burning them would seem to have been a way to restore some honor or dignity to the disposal of the bodies. Then in the next verse we learn that the cremated bodies were *buried*. Without question, the Biblical way of handling the dead bodies of believers is to *bury* them. Look up I Corinthians 6:13 and 14.

"Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power."

The body of a Christian is a sacred thing! I Corinthians 6:19 calls the body God's temple. The Lord lives in the body, uses the body, and will raise the body in glory some day. For these reasons, the body of the Christian is to be honored when it dies. A funeral and a burial are appropriate at the death of a child of God. God used Elisha's body even after his spirit had left and gone to Heaven.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
(Revelation 14:13)

Elisha's life and his death were used of God in mighty ways. May we yield our lives to the Lord so that He can use them, too.