

## A Study of the Life of Elisha

### Introduction

People often confuse Elijah and Elisha because of the similarity of their names, that they lived during the same Biblical time period, and Elijah was a mentor to Elisha and thus there are well known stories that include the two of them together. Let's first do a brief review of the Timeline of the Bible and see where Elijah and Elisha fit in.

The stories of the prophets Elijah and Elisha are some of the most remarkable in the entire Bible. In this study we will look at a few of the highlights of Elisha's life and the power of God working through him. Moses (the "Law Giver") and Elijah ("the Prophet") are often considered the two greatest figures of the Old Testament. Recall that it was they who appeared with Jesus at the Transfiguration. However, in the typology of the Bible we see this pattern:

Moses followed by Joshua ("Joshua" means "Jehovah is Salvation" and he was a "type" of Jesus. "Jesus" also means "Jehovah is Salvation."  
Elijah followed by Elisha ("Elisha" means "God is salvation" or "God saves" and he was a "type" of Jesus as well)

Let's look at a brief example of how we get this typological pattern. Who is the "antitype" of Elijah?

Compare **Malachi 4 (pg 1462)** with **Matthew 11: 7 – 15 (pg 1484)**

---

As we examine Elisha's life look for parallels to Jesus that would indicated that Elisha is a type of Jesus.

### The Call and Transition of Elisha to be the chief prophet of Israel

We will start our examination of Elisha just after the major event of Elijah on Mount Carmel when Elijah flees to the desert to avoid execution by Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah is very discouraged and believes he is the only faithful person left in Israel.

Read **I Kings 19:14 – 21 (pg 505)**.

How does God encourage and comfort Elijah in his despair?

---

---

What is the significance of Elijah throwing his cloak over Elisha?

---

When Elijah calls Elisha, Elisha asks to first go back and say goodbye to his parents, family, and community. Compare this account to **Luke 9:57 – 62 (pg 1580)**. How would you explain Elijah response to Elisha in light of the words of Jesus? (Hint: What is the significance of Elisha slaughtering his oxen and burning is plow?)

---

---

How do we apply this to our lives when it comes to “balancing” life and service to God?

---

---

Elijah personally mentors Elisha for approximately six or seven years by the time we get **2 Kings 2 (pg 514)** where we have the story of Elijah being taken up to heaven. Read verses 1 – 10.

Why does Elijah wants to separate from Elisha and why does Elisha refuse to leave Elijah?

---

---

What is the significance that Elijah tries to separate from Elisha three times and Elisha refuses? What other similar “trios” of events in the Bible do you recall?

---

---

How do you think the prophets of Bethel knew Elijah would be “taken” away on that day?

---

---

What is the significance of that compared to how God works in the church today through our Pastors and church leaders?

---

---

Elisha asks Elijah for a double portion of his spirit. Why did Elisha request this of Elijah rather than God?

---

This request that he receive a double portion of Elijah's Spirit seems rather forward of Elisha and could seem rather arrogant. Why is Elisha asking for this gift and why/how should we be doing the same?

---

---

As we read **2 Kings 2: 11 – 18** consider the following questions:

How was Elijah actually taken up to heaven and how might this differ from the classic images?

---

Describe Elisha's reaction to Elijah being taken up to heaven?

---

How is that a comfort to us? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Note Elisha's "prayer" when he stands at the banks of the Jordan. What does this indicate and how reassuring is that to us?

---

---

What is the significance of the cloak of Elijah for Elisha and the other prophets?

---

What are the parallels to Moses and Joshua as well as John the Baptist and Jesus in this story of the departure of Elijah and succession of Elisha?

---

---

Read **2 Kings 2:19 – 22**. In light of Jesus' promises in **Mark 11:22 – 24 (pg 1543)** and **John 14:12 – 14 (pg (1642))**, what does it say about our faith when Elijah and Elisha perform all of the miracles we witness in **1 Kings** and **2 Kings**? Also, many Charismatic groups use these verses to "name it and claim it". How do you respond to this?

---

---

Read **2 Kings 2:23 – 25**. What do we learn about Elisha, what are your thoughts on him cursing the band of youths, and what is the message to us in this account?

---

---

**Read 2 Kings 3 (pg 515).**

How did the king of Israel, Joram, and the King of Judah, Jehoshaphat, behave like leaders today and like us as well in launching their attack on the Moabites?

---

Why did Elisha respond to Joram the way that he did? What is the significance of this for us?

---

---

Why did Elisha ask for a harpist and what is the lesson for us?

---

---

**Read 2 Kings 4:1 – 7 (pg 517).**

What lessons are there for us in this story?

---

---

How does **James 4:1 – 3 (pg 1842)** apply to this story?

---

**Read 2 Kings 4:8 – 17.**

What characteristics do we see in the Shunammite woman?

---

---

What does her reaction to Elisha's promise in verse 16 tell you about her?

---

How do we often react in the same way and what are some common expressions of that reaction? What is the source of that reaction?

---

---

The Story of the Shunammite Woman continues with **2 Kings 4:18 – 27**.

What is the significance that the woman wants to rush to Elisha and how does this compare to her husband's response?

---

Why does she not tell Gehazi, Elisha's servant, that her son was dead?

---

How does her question of Elisha in verse 28 compare to verse 16?

---

Why did it not work for Gehazi to bring the child back to life by laying the staff on the boy's face?

---

Skeptics claim he did mouth to mouth resuscitation and that there was no miracle. How would you respond to this?

---

**2 Kings 5** is the story of the healing of Naaman. Let's start with **2 Kings 5:1 – 8 (pg 519)**.

Why did the King of Israel tear his clothes when Naaman arrived with the request of the King of Aram?

---

Why did Elisha question or scold the King of Israel for rending his garments?

---

What is the difference between the King of Israel and the captive Israelite girl who told Naaman's wife about Elisha and what is the message to us in this?

---

---

Read **2 Kings 5:9 – 14**. What was Naaman’s attitude in his approach to coming to Elisha?

---

How does God address this attitude with Naaman and what is (are) the lesson(s) for us?

---

---

What does Naaman do that ultimately results in his healing and what does that say to us?

---

---

**Read 2 Kings 5:15 – 27.**

Why does Naaman want to take soil from Israel with him back to Assyria?

---

---

How do you interpret verses 18 – 19a? Is this not a compromise of faith and yet Elisha says “**Go in peace**”?

---

---

What point is Jesus making with the healing of Naaman in **Luke 4:22 – 30 (pg 1566)**?

---

---

What do we learn about the frequency of miracles in Old Testament times from Jesus and what does this say about Elijah’s and Elisha’s ministry?

---

---

Considering that Israel did not repent of its ways and was eventually destroyed, what does this say about the purpose of miracles? See also **Luke 16:25 – 31 (pg 1594)**.

**2 Kings 6:8 – 23 (pg 522)** is one the most interesting and comforting stories in the Bible. Let's start with **2 Kings 6:8 – 14**.

What is happening in that so enrages the King of Aram?

---

---

What does **2 Kings 6:15 – 18** tell us about:

Elisha? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The world around us? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does Jesus say during his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane that gives us the same thought or indication of the spiritual world? (See **Matthew 26:53**)

---

Us, as witnesses for Christ in this world? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think Elisha could always see the armies of God around him? Have you ever asked for that level of faith?

---

---

Read **2 Kings 6:19 – 23**.

What is Elisha doing in verse 19 and how do we apply this to our lives?

---

---

What is (are) the message(s) for us in how Elisha directed the King of Israel to treat the soldiers?

---

---

**2 Kings 6:24 – 7:20** is a great story of deliverance by the power of God and also an excellent examination of the consequences of lack of faith. Let's start with **2 Kings 6:24 – 7:2** (pg 522) and consider the following questions:

What is the attitude of the King in verse 27 in response to the woman's initial cry for help?

---

How does the two women's bargain relate to today's society? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Why did the king blame Elisha for what was happening and want him killed and what is the lesson for us? What should be the King's attitude toward Elisha?

---

---

Why did Elisha prophesy against the officer? \_\_\_\_\_

---

How do we scoff at the promises of God in our own lives and what is the warning for us?

---

---

Read **2 Kings 7:3 – 9**. How does this deliverance by God from the enemy differ from that of Gideon? Why do you think God acts differently?

---

---

How did the behavior of the lepers differ from that of the two women who made the agreement to eat their own children?

---

What examples can we take from the thoughts and actions of the lepers?

---

---



Read **2 Kings 7:10 – 20**. What does the King's action say about his faith in God as proclaimed beforehand by the words of Elisha?

---

How do we do the same thing? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Read **2 Kings 13:14 – 21 (pg 535)**. What do you think of how Elisha tells the King after the fact that he should have struck the ground five or six times?

---

What is the message to us about our prayer life? \_\_\_\_\_

---

See **Matthew 7:7 – 11 (pg 1478)** for possible additional perspective on this.

Note how Elisha's death was so different from how God took Elijah yet Elisha had a double portion of the Spirit compared to Elijah. What is God telling us in that succinct description?

---

How is the man coming back to life after his body touched the bones of Elisha reinforce that Elisha is a type of Jesus?

---

When it comes to Elisha's level of trust in God compared to our level of trust in God:

Who is responsible for getting us to that level? \_\_\_\_\_

---

How do we get to that level? \_\_\_\_\_

---

*[Elisha] answered; Fear not; for those with us are more than those with them. (AMP)*  
**2 Kings 6:16**