

# Elisha's Double Portion (For us too!)

## Lesson #1: Elisha's Commitment

(I Kings 19:19-21)

### Background:

Elisha is the successor to the prophet, Elijah. His 60-year ministry as a prophet, preacher, political activist, leader of a school of prophets and man of God came during the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. He ministered in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, during the reign of four ungodly kings (Jehoram, Jehu, Joash and Jehoash).

He was from the tribe of Issachar, the son of Shaphat and apparently a wealthy landowner from the city of Abelmeholah (near the Jordan river, south of Bethshean). His name means "God is Salvation." Luke mentions him in Luke 4:27.

Apparently, he was not married and lived with his parents. In spite of their wealth, he worked the land right along-side the servants.

We can see his character in his actions. He was a humble man and known for his care for others (see II Kings 2:21, 4:1-7. 42-44). He was also quite courageous (see II Kings 3). Elisha was a man of faith (see II Kings 5 and 6).

### Comparison of Elijah and Elisha

Elijah was a solitary prophet who called people to repentance. Elisha had more personal relationships and focused on resolving people's problems. Elisha was also more politically involved than Elijah. Both were miracle workers. But Elisha preformed twice the number of miracles than Elijah.

#### *Elijah's 8 miracles:*

1. *Shut up the heavens causing a drought ([1 Kng 17:1](#))*
2. *Multiplied flour and oil for a widow ([1 Kng 17:14-16](#))*
3. *Raised a widow's son from the dead ([1 Kng 17:17, 22-23](#))*
4. *Defeated the prophets of Baal with fire from heaven ([1 Kng 18:25-38](#))*
5. *Brought rain to end the drought ([1 Kng 18:41-45](#))*
6. *Destroyed 51 soldiers with fire ([2 Kng 1:9-10](#))*
7. *Destroyed 51 soldiers with fire and lightening ([2 Kng 1:9-11-12](#))*
8. *Parted the waters of the Jordan River ([2 Kng 2:8](#))*

#### *Elisha's 16 miracles:*

1. Parted the waters of the Jordan River ([2 Kng 2:14](#))
2. Purification of the water source for Jericho ([2 Kng 2:18-22](#))
3. Protection of the prophet by two she-bears ([2 Kng 2:23-25](#))
4. Water for the army of Israel and success over the Moabites ([2 Kng 3:16-25](#))
5. Providing the widow's oil ([2 Kng 4:1-7](#))
6. Elisha's annunciation prophecy for the woman from Shunem ([2 Kng 4:8-17](#))
7. Resurrection of the son of the Shunammite woman ([2 Kng 4:18-37](#))
8. Purified the poison soup ([2 Kng 4:38-41](#))
9. Multiplication of loaves ([2 Kng 4:42-44](#))
10. Healing of Naaman ([2 Kng 5:1-19](#))
11. Gehazi cursed with a skin disease ([2 Kng 5:25-27](#))
12. Miracle of finding the axe ([2 Kng 6:1-7](#))
13. Capturing a band of Aramaeans by striking them blind ([2 Kng 6:8-23](#))
14. Prophesizing relief from the enemy and the famine ([2 Kng 6:24-7:20](#))
15. Prophesizing the death of Ben-Hadad and the rise of Hazael ([2 Kng 8:7-15](#))
16. Prophesizing that Israel's defeat of King Hazael of Damascus ([2 Kng 13:14-19](#))

(From Agape Bible Study)

### **Elisha's Call (vs. 19-20)**

Unlike Moses (remember the burning bush incident) or Abraham (note that he was told to leave his home land), Elisha's call to service had no direct encounter with God. His call came at the end of Elijah's retreat to Horeb after his amazing encounter with Ahab and Jezebel (I Kings 19:19-21)

The language in I Kings 19:16 is usually reserved for the anointing of kings. But God has a successor in mind for Elijah. In the beginning, Elisha was a kind of aide to Elijah. (Much like Joshua was to Moses or John Mark was to Paul and Barnabas). He came to be known as "the man who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah" (see II Kings 3:11).

The setting: Elisha is out in the field plowing. The 12 oxen suggest that he and his family were wealthy.

The anointing: Elijah's cloak was thrown over his shoulders. Zechariah describes a prophet's cloak (symbol of his office) in Zech. 13:4 as a "garment of hair."

His response: Elisha responded immediately (note the reaction of the apostles in Mark 1:18). He also showed respect for his parents and returned to give them the news of his anointing.

Special note: Elijah's response: "What have I done to you?" is a way of deflecting the request. He is saying that the CALL is coming from God, not Elijah.

## **Elisha's Commitment (vs. 21)**

Slaughtered his oxen: Provided a meal for his family and friends. He may also have offered some of the meat as part of the sacrificial system outlined in Lev. 1-7. See the example in II Sam. 24:22.

Burned his ploughing equipment (yokes and plows): He made certain that he would never return to the job of farmer.

Celebrated with joy: Elisha's commitment was not a somber occasion, but rather a moment of great pleasure. His commitment to Elijah (and Yahweh) and his separation from his previous life was marked with a public celebration.

### **So What?**

Elisha is not the only one who has to respond to a calling. You and I have to respond as well. And God expects a commitment from us.

Our Call: Admittedly the Spirit of God does from time to time, give a specific calling to specific individuals (consider Esther 4:14). But in a more general sense, every Christian has a call on their life.

I Peter 2:9-10 declares our royal position.

Eph. 4:1-6 says that we are to live a life that is worthy of our calling.

I Cor. 7:17 asserts that we are to live within our assigned calling.

Matthew 28:18-20 outlines our responsibilities as ambassadors of the gospel. There is a definitive call on the life of every child of God and it must not be ignored.

Our Commitment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deut. 6:5)

**Present Yourself:** II Tim. 2:15, **Devote Yourself :** Acts 2:42, and **Be Fully Committed:** I Kings 8:61.

Luke 9:62 "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

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### Discussion Questions:

1. Can you articulate God's call on your life? Does that thought bring you great joy? Why or why not?

2. Has there been a time when you formally committed yourself to follow hard after Christ?
3. Have you “left some things behind?” Discuss the evidence of that.
4. Is it time for some re-commitments? Can you share them with others?

Sherry Worel (sworel@stonebrooke.com)